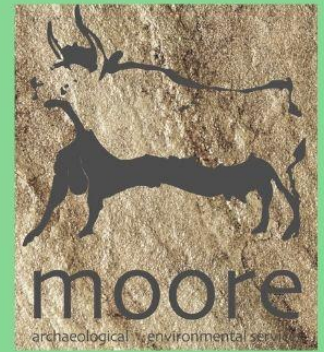

Prepared for
Meath County Council

Presented on
25th January 2022



CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared by
Declan Moore

Our Reference 21184

Your Reference NA

ATHBOY TOWN CENTRE PROJECT, ATHBOY, CO. MEATH

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21184 Athboy TC CHA	18 th August 2021	Client for review
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Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Tobin for Meath County Council.

Report prepared by: Declan Moore

Archaeological Consultant

Report reviewed by: Billy Quinn

Archaeological Consultant

Purpose

This report describes the results of a cultural heritage desktop and walkover assessment of a proposed town centre project at Athboy, Co. Meath. The results, conclusions and recommendations contained within this report are based on information available at the time of its preparation. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that all relevant data has been collated, the author and Moore Group accept no responsibility for omissions and/or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available after the reports completion. Moore Group accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

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Non Technical Summary

Moore Group was commissioned to complete a cultural heritage impact assessment of the potential impact of a proposed town centre project at Athboy, Co. Meath.

This study aims to assess the baseline archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage environment (hereafter referred to as cultural heritage resource), to evaluate the potential or likely impacts that the proposed development will have on this environment and, where appropriate, to suggest mitigation measures to ameliorate potential impacts. Following on from this, the residual impact that the proposed scheme will have on the baseline cultural heritage resource is identified and evaluated.

The subject site is partially within the zone of archaeological notification for the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023----) and is in the vicinity of several recorded archaeological monuments. The subject is also located immediately adjacent to the Architectural Conservation Area for Athboy and immediately adjacent to St. James Church and its curtilage (NIAH reference number: 14324011, RPS No. MH029 208).

The site is partially located within the zone of archaeological notification for the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023----) and in the vicinity of several recorded archaeological monuments. All proposed excavation works will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. After the completion of preparatory works for the proposed development further mitigation may be recommended.

Care should be taken to ensure that no inadvertent impacts to any of the sites, monuments, sites of architectural significance and vernacular features identified in this report are caused by machinery or personnel operating in these areas.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the National Monuments Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and the Meath County Council Archaeologist and Heritage Officers.

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Abbreviations

AAP	Area of Archaeological Potential
ACA	Architectural Conservation Areas
ASI	Archaeological Survey of Ireland
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DLHG	Demesne Landscapes and Historic Gardens
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record

Coordinate System

All GPS coordinates given in this report are in Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM).

1 Introduction

Moore Group was commissioned to complete a cultural heritage impact assessment of the potential impact of a proposed town centre project at Athboy, Co. Meath.

This study aims to assess the baseline archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage environment (hereafter referred to as cultural heritage resource), to evaluate the potential or likely impacts that the proposed development will have on this environment and, where appropriate, to suggest mitigation measures to ameliorate potential impacts. Following on from this, the residual impact that the proposed scheme will have on the baseline cultural heritage resource is identified and evaluated.

The subject site is partially within the zone of archaeological notification for the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023----) and is in the vicinity of several other recorded archaeological monuments. The subject is also located immediately adjacent to the Architectural Conservation Area for Athboy and immediately adjacent to St. James Church and its curtilage (NIAH reference number: 14324011, RPS No. MH029 208).

1.1 Scope of Work

This study aims to assess the baseline archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage environment (hereafter referred to as cultural heritage environment or cultural heritage resource), to evaluate the potential or likely impacts that the proposed development will have on this environment and, where appropriate, to suggest mitigation measures to ameliorate potential impacts, in accordance with the policies of:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- The National Monuments Acts (1930-2005).
- Meath County Development Plan; and
- Best practice guidelines.

Following on from this, the residual impact that the proposed scheme will have on the baseline environment is identified and evaluated.

For the purposes of this report the definition of "cultural heritage" is taken broadly from the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972, which considers the following to be "cultural heritage":

- Tangible cultural heritage.
- movable cultural heritage (artefacts).
- immovable cultural heritage (monuments, archaeological sites, etc).
- underwater cultural heritage (shipwrecks, underwater ruins, and cities); and
- Intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, folklore etc).

1.2 Methodology

The methodology used in the preparation of this assessment is broadly based on guidance provided in the National Roads Authority's (NRA) Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Heritage Impacts on National Road Schemes (NRA 2005a), and Advice notes on Current Practices in the preparation of

Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2003), as well as the draft Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2015).

1.2.1 Desktop Assessment

The desktop assessment was undertaken by Declan Moore.

All known cultural heritage sites were reviewed on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) along with aerial photography and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping. Sites mapped included the following:

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the tentative list of candidate sites.
- National Monuments, be they in the ownership or guardianship of the State, in the ownership of a local authority or monuments under preservation orders.
- Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) from www.archaeology.ie.
- Records of Protected Structures from Meath County Council.
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) for County Meath; and

All townlands located within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project were listed and crossed referenced with:

- National Monuments, a list for Co. Meath available from www.archaeology.ie.
- Preservation Orders, a list available from the National Monuments Service; and
- Lists contained in the Report of the Commissioners or Church Temporalities of Ireland (1879) which contain lists of Churches, School Houses and Graveyards that were vested in the Representative Church Body and the Burial Boards under The Irish Church Act, 1869. These sites which have the potential to be in the ownership of the Local Authorities were highlighted as potential National Monuments.

To assess the potential impact of the proposal the following sources were also consulted or reviewed:

- Excavations Bulletin.
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland.
- Cartographic Sources.
- Toponyms.
- Aerial photographs.
- Meath Industrial Heritage Survey, 2010.
- Athboy Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character, 2009.
- Published archaeological inventories; and
- Documentary Sources: several literary references were consulted.

1.3 Terms and Definitions

Cultural Heritage

The phrase 'cultural heritage' is a generic term used to identify a multitude of cultural, archaeological, and architectural sites and monuments. The term 'cultural heritage', in Environmental Impact Statement compliance with Section 2(1) of the Heritage Act (1995), is used throughout this report in relation to

archaeological objects, features, monuments and landscapes as well as all structures and buildings which are considered to have historical, archaeological, artistic, engineering, scientific, social, or technical significance/merit.

Record of Monuments and Places

A feature recorded in the 'Record of Monuments and Places' (RMP) refers to a recorded archaeological site that is granted statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004. The RMP is the most widely applying provision of the National Monuments Acts. It comprises a list of recorded monuments and places (resulting from the Archaeological Survey of Ireland [ASI]) and accompanying maps on which such monuments and places are shown for each county. The information contained within the RMP is derived from the earlier non-statutory Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). However, some entries were not transferred to the statutory record as they refer to features that on inspection by the Archaeological Survey were found not to merit inclusion in that record or could not be located with sufficient accuracy to be included. Such sites however remain part of the SMR. The record is a dynamic one and is updated to take account of on-going research.

When reference is made to the distance between an RMP and the proposed development site, this relates to the minimal distance separating the site from the known edge of the RMP. Where the edge of the RMP is not precisely known, the distance relates to that which separates the site from the boundary of the RMP zone of archaeological potential as represented on the respective RMP map; where this is applied, it is stated accordingly.

Sites and Monuments Record

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is an inventory of the known archaeological monuments in the State. There are more than 150,800 records in the database and over 138,800 of these relate to archaeological monuments.

An 'area of archaeological potential' refers to an area of ground that is deemed to constitute one where archaeological sites, features or objects may be present in consequence of location, association with identified/recorded archaeological sites and/or identifiable characteristics.

Register of Historic Monuments

Section 5 of the 1987 National Monuments Act states that the Minister is required to establish and maintain a Register of Historic Monuments. Historic monuments and archaeological areas present on the register are afforded statutory protection under the 1987 Act. Any interference with sites recorded in the Register without the permission of the Minister is illegal, and two months' notice in writing is required prior to any work being undertaken on or in the vicinity of a registered monument. This list was largely replaced by the Record of Monuments and Places following the 1994 Amendment Act.

1.4 Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was reviewed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the Council's heritage policies and objectives regarding archaeology and architecture. This evaluation was carried out with due regard to these policies and other relevant information contained within the plan.

The relevant policies and objectives for Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage management were reviewed.

These policies and objectives are outlined in Chapter 9 of the Draft Plan.

1.5 Description of Project

The proposed development comprises a proposed town centre project at Athboy, Co. Meath. The proposed development will be carried out on Side Road, north and west of St. James's Catholic Church and N51 junction.

The proposed development will consist of:

- Amendments to the junction between the N51 and Side Road.
- Road Alignment upgrades to remove a 90° bend close to Church, Creche and Primary School.
- Amalgamation and upgrade of three existing car parks into one proposed carpark, for the provision of 57 no. car parking spaces, including 4 no. accessible spaces, 6 no. age friendly spaces and 2 no. EV spaces.
- Removal of undesignated parking zone adjacent to St. James' Catholic Church and creation of a designated bus stop and turning facility.
- Removal and relocation of existing Bring Facility.
- All associated ancillary highway works relevant (drainage, utilities, public lighting, KFPA, signs and lines and pavement design).

The relocation of existing bus stops on Main Street, located northeast of the intersection of Main- Street (N51) and Connaught Street, has been identified as causing traffic backups on the main street. In addition, the location of the existing bus stops requires passengers to make their way through parked cars in order to embark/disembark from the bus services. This represents a significant safety issue. The existing operation has a negative effect on both motorists and pedestrians. The introduction of a defined bus stop would eliminate these issues.

In addition to the provision of a designated bus stop facility, the scheme will enhance the public space adjacent to St. James Catholic Church, through the development of new pedestrian facilities and an upgraded urban realm space.

The subject site is partially located within a zone of archaeological notification for the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023----) and is in the vicinity of several other recorded archaeological monuments. The subject site is also located immediately adjacent to the Architectural Conservation Area for Athboy and adjacent to St. James Church and its curtilage (NIAH reference number: 14324011, RPS No. MH029 208).

This portion of the Athboy ACA is made up of rear garden spaces, set out in long narrow plots. To facilitate the proposed development, approximately 55m² of one housing plot will be removed.

The proposed works also entail the realignment of a portion of the western boundary wall to St. James Church.

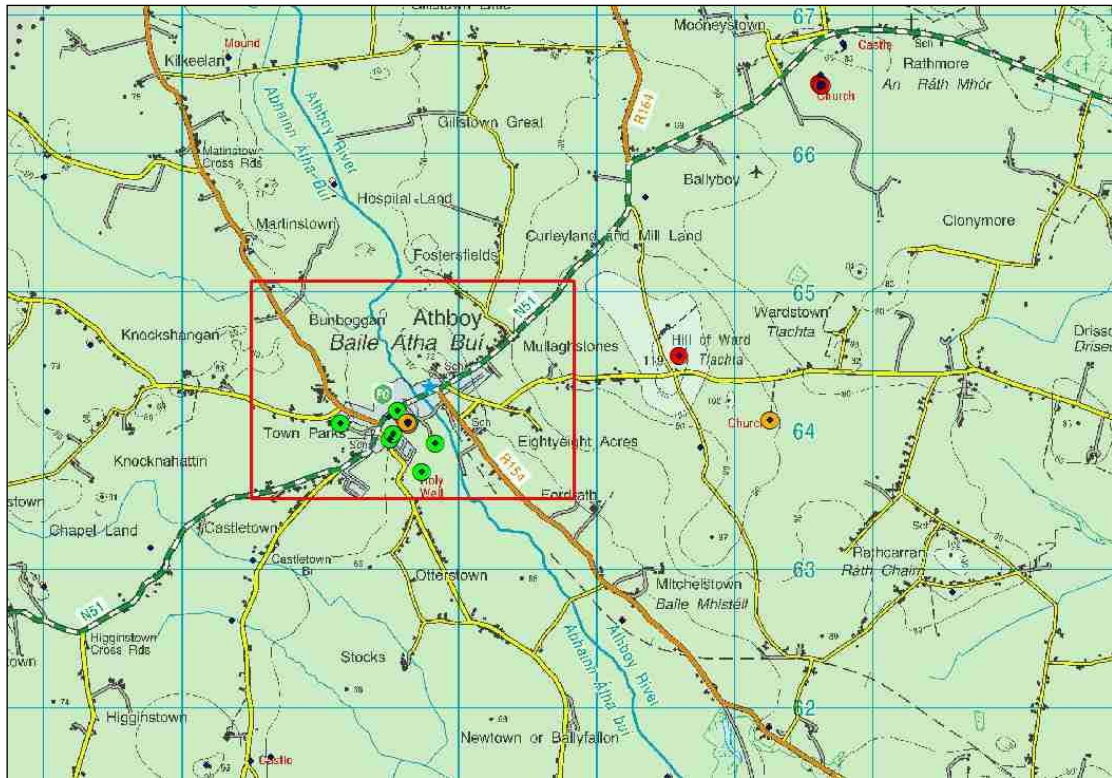


Figure 1 Extract from Discovery map showing the project location.

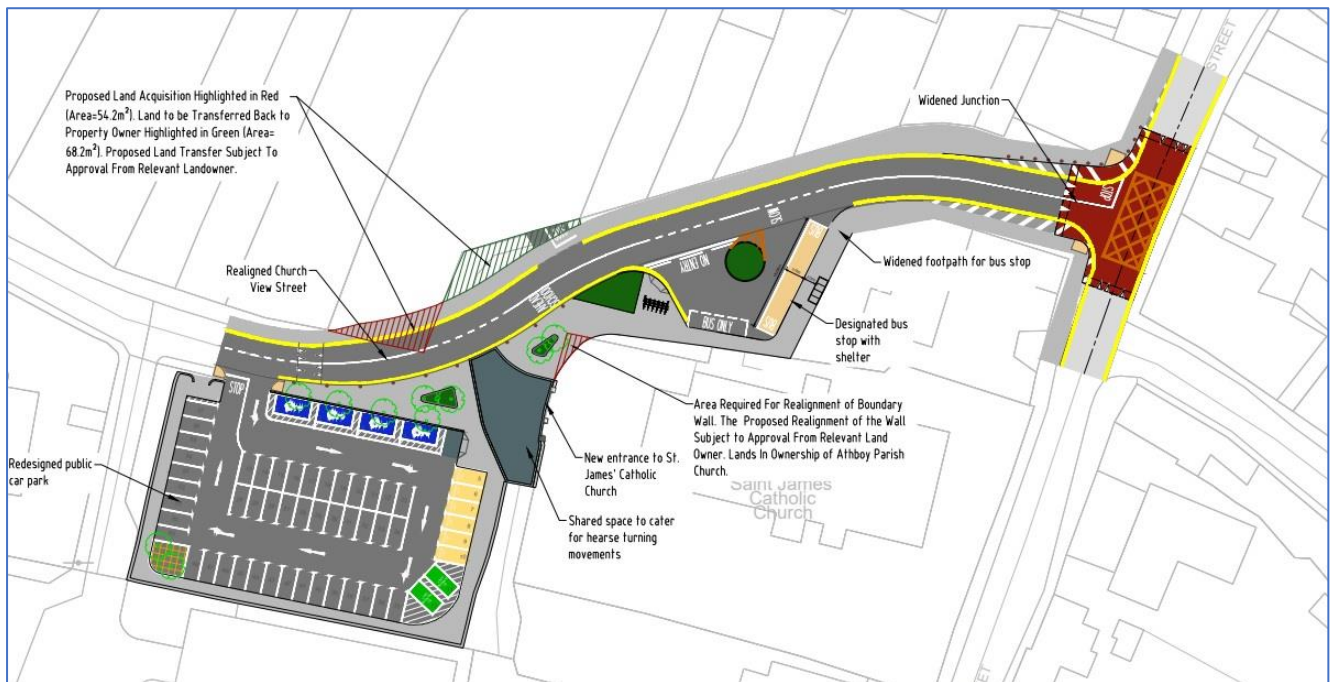


Figure 2 Detail showing proposed works.

2 Existing Environment

2.1 Location Details

The proposed project location is an area adjacent to St. James' church between the Side Road and O'Growney Street. The current layout was created around the early 1990s as a relief road and car parking area.

Table 1 Location details

County and town	Meath, Athboy
Street	Vicinity of St. James' Church
Townland	Townparks
Archaeological Monuments	Partially within the zone of archaeological notification for the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023----
Architectural Sites	Various. St. James' Church (NIAH: 14324011) immediately adjacent. ACA for Athboy immediately adjacent
ITM	Centred on 671277 / 764021

2.2 Archaeological, Architectural and Historical Background

Research was undertaken in two phases. It comprised of a paper study of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources and a site walkover.

2.2.1 Mesolithic Period

The Mesolithic (middle stone age) people were the first inhabitants of Ireland, arriving about 9000 years ago. They were a mobile society relying on wild resources for food, which was hunted and gathered using stone tools as well as boats, nets, and traps. Settlement was in temporary and semi-permanent groups of huts constructed of wood slung with hide, which may have operated as seasonal or hunting camps. During the Mesolithic the population of Ireland probably never exceeded more than a few thousand.

Mesolithic activity to date shows a marked concentration in the north-east of Ireland. This regional concentration of find spots can, in part be attributed to both the availability of flint and the large number of antiquarians and collectors in this area.

County Meath is traditionally known as the 'Royal County' because it contained the seat of the ancient High Kings of Ireland at the Hill of Tara and due to its fertile soil and high-quality pastureland. Meath is said to have been named after Midhe, the son of Bratha, who was the principal druid of the mythological clan Neimhidh. According to the native divisions it formed part of one of the five kingdoms into which Ireland was partitioned and was known by the name of 'Mithe Methe, Media or Midia,' perhaps from its central situation. Other writers, however, derive its name from the Irish 'Maith' or 'Magh,' a "plain," or "level" country. The 'Eblani,' whose territory also extended over Dublin and Kildare, are mentioned by Ptolemy as being settled in Meath. The territory is now much smaller than its ancient boundaries, but

within its present boundaries are some of the most important sites in the mythology, archaeology, and history of Ireland. Although some Mesolithic flints have been found along the River Blackwater and near Newgrange in Co. Meath, the earliest substantial evidence for human habitation in this area dates to the Neolithic period.

2.2.2 Neolithic Period

Farming was first adopted in the Middle East but spread gradually across Europe in succeeding centuries, arriving in Ireland about 4000 BC. Tending of crops and animals required a more sedentary lifestyle and larger permanent settlements were built. The megalithic (from the Greek mega – large and lith – stone) monuments of the Neolithic people built as communal tombs or for ceremonial purposes, are relatively common in the landscape. New methods were adopted for shaping stone tools and the first long distance trade networks were established.

The archaeology of the Boyne Valley in County Meath is well documented and comprises one of the most significant archaeological complexes in Western Europe. The sites at Brú na Boinne, to the west of Drogheda, are the most well-known. Excavations at the sites of Newgrange and Knowth have revealed several phases of activity from the Neolithic onwards. Early historic evidence also shows that these sites continued to have considerable importance many centuries after they were first built. The presence of two passage tomb cemeteries (Loughcrew and Brú na Boinne) as well as isolated passage tombs (including Fourknocks and the mound of the hostages at Tara), and other megalithic monuments strongly suggests that a vibrant Neolithic and early Bronze Age economy existed in this area. Recent excavations along the proposed route of the Dublin to Belfast motorway have revealed a concentration of prehistoric settlement, particularly in the Boyne Valley where an unprecedented number of new sites including several Neolithic Houses, pit cremations and large enclosures were uncovered.

Several 'royal sites' figure prominently in early Irish literature. Four of these, Tara (Temhair), Navan (Emain Macha), Rathcroghan (Cruachain) and Knockaulin (Dun Ailinne) are identified as pre-Christian centres in the calendar of saints known as the Felire Oengusso ('The Martyrology of Oengus') which dates to about 830 AD. In several early medieval sources these sites are variously described as royal settlements or forts, cemeteries, and assembly places. The presence of large, roughly circular earthen enclosures with bank or rampart and internal ditch at three locations has long provided archaeological support for the idea that these sites are in some way related. Large enclosures with earthen embankments are common in the Boyne Valley and aerial photography is beginning to reveal similar examples elsewhere. Many of these are internally ditched and resemble the henges of Britain. They may have been the settings for ceremonies or games and could have been viewed by large numbers. Thirteen examples have been identified in Co. Meath in the vicinity of passage tombs. The monuments take the form of flat-topped banks encompassing circular or oval spaces with entrances facing either east or west. They are frequently located on slopes or, in a small number of cases, on the bottoms of river valleys; their builders contrived to give them a prominent siting within their immediate settings. Some enclose mounds or other features and there is strong evidence to suggest that the banks were formed by scraping the interior of the enclosure rather than by piling the upcast material resulting from the digging of the encircling ditch. Geophysical surveys at Micknanstown in Co. Meath, near the passage tomb of Fourknocks, indicates that the enclosure was predated by an earlier ditched monument of some kind at the site. A similar

situation seems to exist at a site at Batrath in Co. Meath. At Micknanstown beside the enclosure is a fine well-preserved tumulus. Monknewtown, Co. Meath lies on the bank of the river Mattock, a tributary of the Boyne, close to the passage tombs of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth.

2.2.3 The Bronze Age

As stone tools were replaced using copper, later combined with tin to make bronze, the structure of society also changed over centuries. While some communal megalithic monuments, particularly wedge tombs continued to be used, the Bronze Age is characterised by a movement towards single burial and the production of prestige items and weapons, suggesting that society was increasingly stratified and warlike. In late Bronze Age Ireland, the use of the metal reached a high point with the production of high-quality decorated weapons, ornament, and instruments, often discovered from hoards or ritual deposits. Bronze is an alloy of tin and copper could be beaten into different shapes or cast by pouring it into stone or clay moulds. A greater range of tools and implements were now available, and these were stronger and more durable than their stone predecessors. Stone weapons didn't, however, die out, but continued to be used along with the new tools for centuries. These new tools and implements meant that farmers could buy more land and cultivate it better. There is evidence of well-developed field systems at this time, including the use of crop rotation. The sickle was introduced for the harvesting of corn and grass. The ox-drawn plough, and horse seem also to have been introduced to Ireland at this time.

Fulachtaí Fiadh, which consist of small, horseshoe shaped grass covered mounds, are composed of burnt and fire cracked stones and a central pit or trough. They may have functioned as cooking places or as brewing mash tuns. They are common throughout the country, and many are identified each year.

2.2.4 Early Historic Period

The Iron Age is known as a 'dark age' in Irish prehistory. Iron objects are found rarely, but there is no evidence for the warrior culture of the rest of Europe, although the distinctive La Tené style of art with animal motifs and spirals was adopted. Life in Iron Age in Ireland seems to have been much as it was in the early historic period – mixed farmers living in or around small, defended settlements known as ringforts or stone cashels.

In late Bronze Age Ireland, the use of metal reached a high point with the production of high-quality decorated weapons, ornament, and instruments. These are often recovered from hoards or ritual deposits. The Iron Age in Ireland was once regarded as a 'hiatus period' in Irish prehistoric archaeology. Iron objects are occasionally found, though there is no evidence for a warrior culture like that seen in the rest of Europe. The distinctive La Tené style of art incorporating animal motifs and spirals became popular during this period. It is now recognised that life in early Iron Age in Ireland seems to have remained much as it was in the Later Bronze Age. Long established trade routes between Britain and Ireland continued to bring prestige objects into this country. With the Roman invasion of Britain, however, these systems seem to have broken down. New trading contacts with the now much more prosperous Britannia were established, though looting by Irish parties became increasingly lucrative. Metalwork and slaves were brought to this country, introducing new artistic motifs and technologies, Christianity, and the practice of dairy farming. By the collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th-century AD, Ireland was becoming a centre

of artistic excellence and religious devotion, effectively keeping alive the Christian faith and earning its reputation of 'the land of saints and scholars'.

2.2.5 Later historic Period

Christianity was largely accepted across the country during the period, which saw a flourishing in the production of intricate metalwork, manuscripts, and sculpture under the patronage of wealthy monasteries. This was also the period that witnessed the missions of various Irish saints abroad and the establishment of a distinct Irish church. The economy was based on farming and various legal tracts provide valuable information on the variety of land uses and the range of crops and breeds reared; archaeological excavation has generally concurred with the information in these tracts. The settlement pattern in this period was largely rural and isolated, exemplified by ringforts and crannogs. However, some ecclesiastical sites had attained considerable size and complexity during the medieval period while the Vikings had established permanent bases at Dublin (Murphy, 05) Waterford, Limerick and elsewhere. County Meath increased in importance in the centuries following. The fertile land and the large numbers of cattle, which this land supported, ensured the wealth of the people of the area (Dunleavy-Reynolds, 1974). The Irish Annals include references to Viking raids on monasteries throughout the country. In 837 a Viking fleet was noted on the Boyne and a second fleet of ships on the Liffey (Edwards 1990, 172).

2.2.6 Medieval Athboy

Athboy is situated in low-lying flat countryside, equidistant from Kells and Trim. The medieval town was centred on the axis of a long gently curving street now divided into O'Growney-, Main- and Bridge Streets, and lay largely to the west of the River Athboy, a tributary of the Boyne. The river was evidently an important factor in the location of the town because the placename is derived from *Áth Buide* – 'yellow ford', a crossing point. In early sources it is referred to as *Áth Buide Tlachtgha* – 'the yellow ford of Tlachtgha' and was so-named from Tlachtgha (The Hill of Ward) which was traditionally the site of the important Oenach held at Samhain. This site was identified by O'Donovan (O.S. Letters, 181-2) with a low hill to the northeast of the town on top of which is sited an earthwork consisting of four banks and fosses. The plundering of the site in 903 would suggest that it was functioning as a settlement at that time and the presence of subsequent habitation is suggested by the fact that Tighernan Ua Ruairc, King of Breifne, was slain there in 1172 by Hugh de Lacy. Indeed, it is interesting to note that as late as 1496 fires were lit on top of the hill to warn the settlers of the Pale of approaching Irish attackers.

The legendary associations of Tlachtgha suggest that the immediate neighbourhood of Athboy was settled in Early Historic times but the earliest references to the site of the present town occur in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In 1022 *Áth Buidhe Tlachtgha* was the site of a battle between the Norse of Dublin and Maelsechlainn of Meath. In 1090 the Annals of the Four Masters (AFM) notes that Muircherrtach Ua Briain plundered Brega "as far north as *Áth Buide*", while in 1167 it was the scene of a Synod convened by Ruaidhri Ua Conchobair, King of Connacht, at which several civil and ecclesiastical laws were passed. These references indicate the geographical importance of the ford in the period immediately before the coming of the Normans and suggest that it was becoming a focal point.

Under the Normans, Athboy became the centre of an important manor and was probably the caput baroniae of the barony of Lune, granted to William de Muset by Hugh de Lacy in the early 1170s (Orpen, 1911-20, ii, 86). On the death of de Muset in 1213 the manor passed briefly into the hands of the Tuites and then to the Loundres (de London) family which held it until 1386. In that year the manor was partitioned between the two daughters of William Loundres, one portion going to the Prestons and the other to the Browns.

The earliest reference to a Norman fortification occurs in the Irish Pipe Roll of 14 John (1211-12) which notes that the castle of Athboy was then being fortified. The exact date of this motte has not been previously determined but it is likely that it was constructed on top of the hill of Tlachtgha, which O'Donovan (O.S. Letters, 181) as "four (perhaps five) concentric rings, with a moat in the centre now much lowered". The Castletown of Athboy is mentioned on several occasions in the Gormanstown Register, a family cartulary of the Prestons, suggesting that it was some distance from the town. Indeed, as late as 1598 the 'Castle-towne of Athboy' is listed among the castles of Meath, which might explain why Tlachtgha was apparently refortified in the 1640s. In addition, the Gormanstown Register notes the presence of a mill attached to the manor, suggesting that it was close to the town.

The date of the foundation of Athboy as a town is not known and, indeed, there is little information on its history or development during the Medieval Period. The earliest direct reference to the borough is in 1337-8, but the mention in 1329 of John le Forester, provost of Athboy, shows that the town was incorporated by then and it is speculated (Bradley, 17) that it may have been incorporated in the late thirteenth century. The town had all the trappings of a medieval borough including its corporation and court. It received several royal charters of which the most important was that of 1612. In 1407 the provost and commonality received a charter from Henry IV granting several privileges including the right to establish a merchant guild, for which it is recorded that they were paid 10 marks. In 1423 the town subscribed 20s. Towards the expenses of defending the Pale against O Conchobair Failghe in the previous year. This was an amount equalled only by Kells among the towns in Meath and Westmeath, indicating that Athboy was one of the wealthier towns in the immediate region at that time. There is little to indicate the source of such wealth. The town was a marketing centre for agricultural produce in its immediate hinterland and there are hints that skins and furs may have played a role in local trade. In addition, a bakehouse is mentioned in 1402.

The town was on the edge of the Pale and functioned as a frontier post in the Later Medieval Period. It was burned in 1443 during a raid by Conchobair Failghe and was captured by Owen Roe O'Neil in 1643. The monies spent on defence are a further indication of the town's importance. A charter of 1306 included the right to collect murage, while in 1446 Henry VI granted customs for sixty years and these appear to have been continued by the Irish Parliament of 1462.

Little is known of life in the town during the seventeenth century, although the lack of documentary sources does not necessarily imply that it declined in importance. The Civil Survey of 1654 (Simmington, 1940, 210) records thirteen castles in the town together with an abbey, a bridge and one (?) stone house. Topographically, however, this was the time when Connaught Street and Lower Bridge Street were most likely established. During the 1641 Rebellion, Athboy was captured by Eoghan Rua O'Neill. Numerous raids on the town during the 1640s led to the Town Wall suffering extensive damage. Following Cromwell's arrival in Ireland and the collapse of the Rebellion, the ownership of the vast majority of lands passed to

English 'adventurers'. However, twenty-seven years later, the Crown ordered that the Town be given to the London Explorer, Thomas Bligh.

In 1725 the head of the Bligh family was raised to peerage, taking the title Earl of Darnley. A Darnley manuscript map of the eighteenth century indicates that Main Street was lined with two-storey houses and commercial buildings which were punctuated by Connaught Street and Barrack Lane.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Darnley family planned and carried out the further development of the town, largely giving the form that prevails today. During the eighteenth century the Main Street was widened to provide for a Market Place. This market took place every Thursday and was located close to Market House (currently McElhinney's Bridal Shop). To the south of Lower Bridge Street, adjacent the Trim Road, a Fair Green was established, where markets took place four times a year. This Fair Green subsequently evolved to become the town's main public open space. It was subsequently walled and donated to the people of Athboy by the then Earl of Darnley in 1909. The eighteenth century also saw the construction of St. James' C-of-I church, replacing the former Carmelite structure which had fallen into disrepair to the rear of the present library.

During the nineteenth century, a mission to improve the physical façade of the town was undertaken. This involved the building of many new structures and a drive to update and modernise many of the eighteenth-century buildings within the town. This period saw the construction of many mixed-use terraced buildings, the RIC Barracks and a new school, the latter established by the Darnleys in 1885. The Earl of Darnley was also responsible for the construction of a series of almshouses along Market Street (present Main Street), although these were demolished in the 1970s. St. James' RC Church was also constructed on O'Growney Street at around this time, while the Midland and Great Western Railway line was opened in 1846. The Railway Station and Station Masters House were located on the Trim Road, on the opposite side to the Fair Green, and were recently converted to residential use.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw further renovation of the town's building stock. The thatched structures that lined O'Growney Street and Connaught Street were replaced by terraced houses and a new National School constructed. The Courthouse was remodelled in 1910 and used as ancillary quarters, comprising a small barracks and jail. These structures are now used by Macra na Feirme and Bank of Ireland, respectively. In addition, the present Ulster Bank was constructed in 1925.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a significant erosion of power and economic basis of the landed gentry occurred, significant elements of which were the effects of the numerous Land Acts passed over that period. The Wyndham Land Act of 1903 resulted in a significant erosion of the power of the Darnleys in Athboy and subsequently, in 1909, Francis Walter, Earl of Darnley, auctioned the town into 110 lots. This resulted in a difficult period for the town as the old corporation of Athboy had been responsible for law and order, and public utilities and service, most of which rapidly became obsolete after the auction. These issues were not adequately addressed until the later foundation of a Local Council. The Darnley Estate Office remained open until 1948 and now serves as the Old Darnley Lodge hotel.

Further twentieth century development within the town included extensions to the rear of buildings fronting onto Main Street and modern infill housing, particularly to the long plots of land to the north of the town.

The proposed project location is an area adjacent to St James church which is a link road from the Side Road to O'Growney Street. The current layout was created around the early 1990s as a relief road and car parking area.

Previously on O'Growney St, there were walled yards, stables and outbuildings associated with Ludwidge Arms Public House and Coaching Inn – now redeveloped as the Waxies Dargle Public House. The N51, O'Growney Street is the old coaching road to Devlin.

2.3 Archaeological Heritage

2.3.1 World Heritage Sites

Although not formally recognised in Irish legislation, impacts on World Heritage Sites will nonetheless be a material consideration for developments in their wider vicinity. There are no World Heritage Sites within the vicinity.

There are no World Heritage sites, or sites on the tentative list for World Heritage listing, in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

2.3.2 National Monuments in State Care, Guardianship or under Protection Order

On a national level, the highest degree of protection granted to archaeological monuments are those afforded National Monument status, which are protected under the National Monuments Act of 1930 and its various amendments. These are the pre-eminent archaeological sites in Ireland and fall into several categories including:

- Sites that are in the ownership or guardianship of the state.
- Monuments that are the subject of Preservation Orders.
- Monuments in the ownership of a local authority; and
- Walled towns.

Generally National Monuments in state care are numbered amongst the best preserved and most impressive monuments in the country.

There are no National Monuments in the vicinity of the proposed development site. The site is partially within the zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Athboy, which is a historic walled town (see section 2.3.4 for description).

2.3.3 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

The legislation that affords protection to the archaeology of Ireland has seen several amendments since the first National Monuments Act of 1930 and there is a legacy of several different registers and associated terminology.

The following sections contain information relative to the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM), the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Archaeological Survey Database (ASD).

Archaeological monuments are general registered by the National Monuments Service using a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) number.

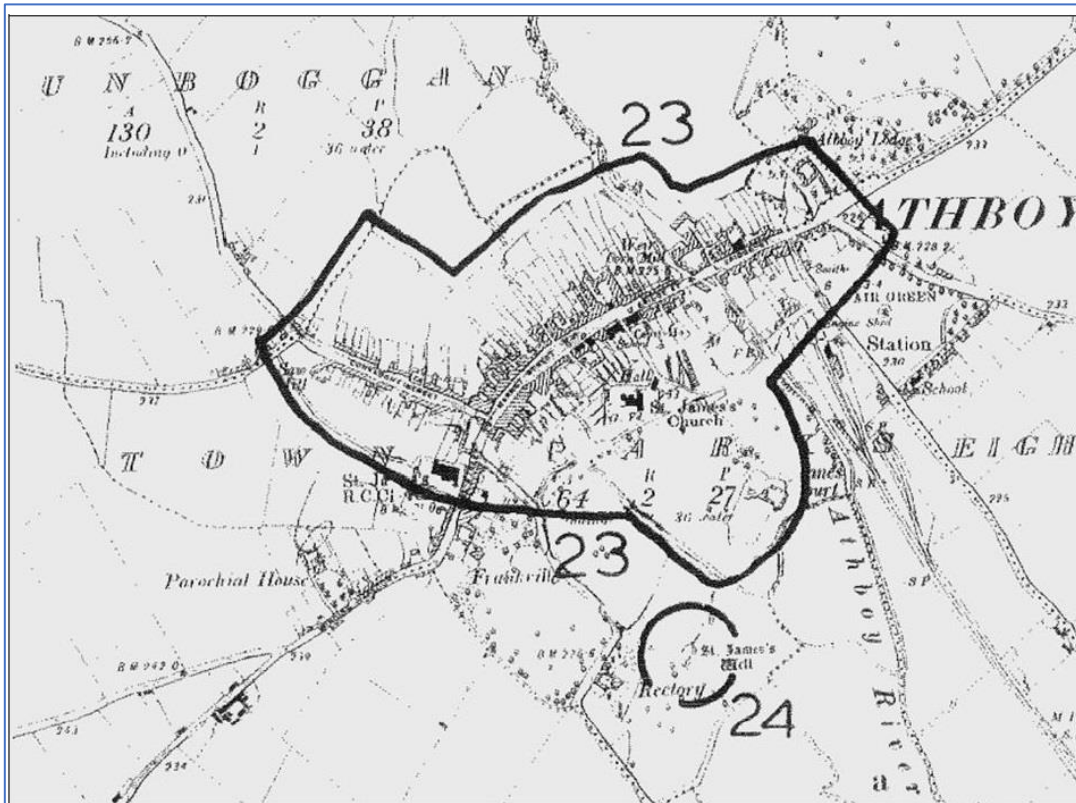


Figure 3 Excerpt from National Monuments service RMP map. The site is partially within the RMP for the Historic Town of Athboy.

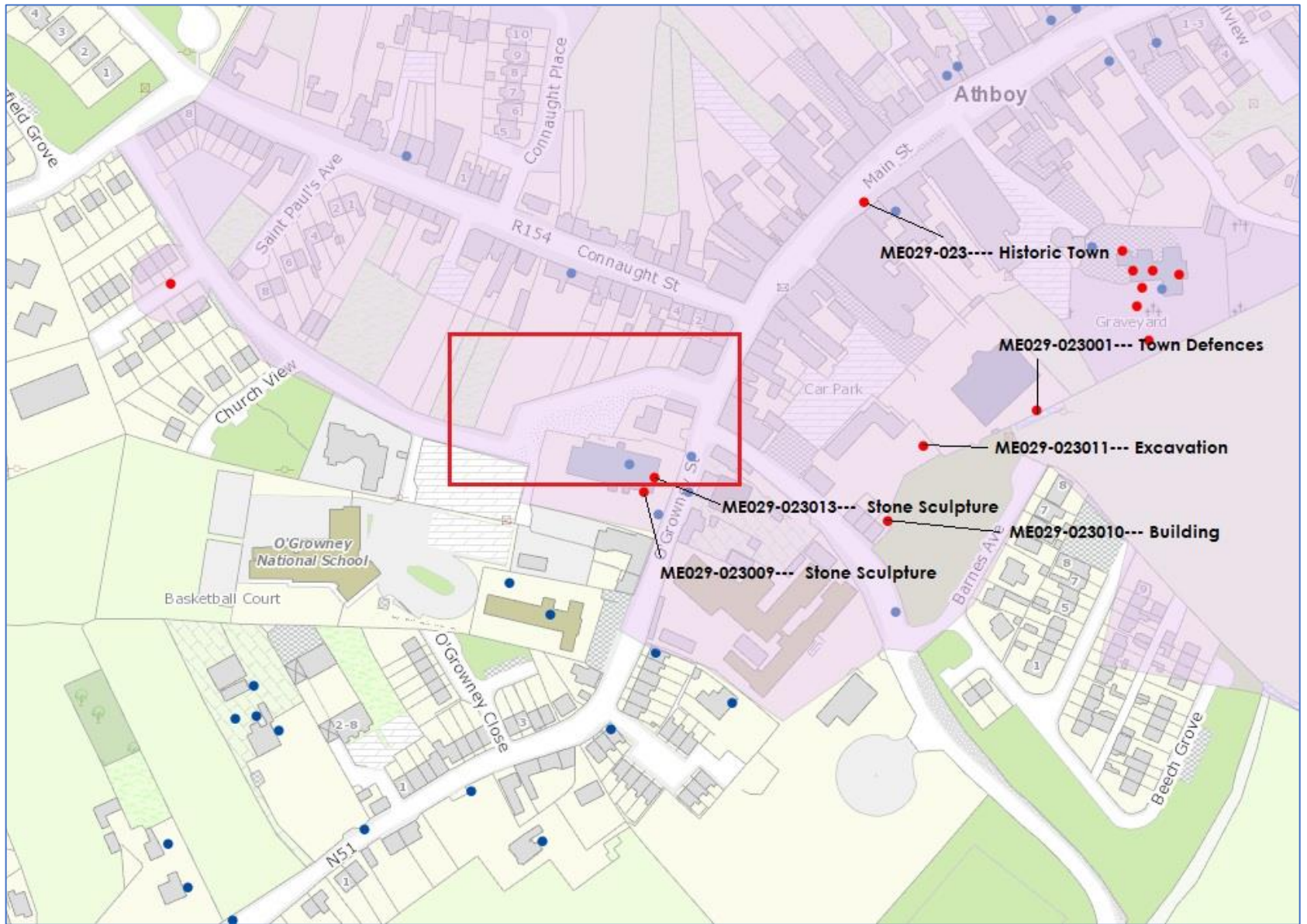


Figure 4 Ordnance Survey (6'') map showing recorded monuments in the vicinity of the proposed project area.

2.3.4 Archaeological Survey Database

The most up-to-date record of archaeological monuments, the Archaeological Survey Database (ASD), is available for viewing and download on the www.archaeology.ie website. This record is continually revised and indicates several additional sites that do not feature in the RMP. The National Monuments Service also makes available SMR Zones of Notification on the website.

Archaeological monuments listed in the ASD that are in the vicinity of the proposed development are presented in Table 2.

Athboy contains two distinct areas of archaeological interest namely, the Town Centre area outlining the initial early development of the Town comprising of Connaught Street, Main Street, and Lower and Upper Bridge Street, and the second zone of archaeological interest surrounds the complex of buildings of Danes Court to the south of St James' Church of Ireland. The Town also contains approximately thirteen items identified on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) with the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). These items highlight the extensive length of human occupation within the Town and are arranged around several separate historical areas, specifically Danes Court, the St James' Church of Ireland ecclesiastical complex, St James' Holy Well and the Town's former defences located along Main Street and the Kildalkey Road. The most relevant recorded archaeological sites are listed below.

Table 2 Relevant recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the subject area.

SMR No	Classification	Townland
ME029-023---	Historic Town	Townparks, Fosterfields, Bogganstown
ME029-023001---	Town defences	Townparks
ME029-023010---	Building	Townparks
ME029-023011---	Excavation - miscellaneous	Townparks
ME029-023009---	Stone Sculpture	Townparks
ME029-023013---	Stone Sculpture	Townparks

The following details the available information on the above sites. The descriptions are derived from the ASD and/or the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).

ME029-023----

Class: Historic town

Description: The town of Athboy is situated in a level low-lying landscape on the W side of a NNW-SSE section of the Athboy River, and close to the headwaters of the river which flows into the Boyne c. 3km above Trim. It is located about halfway between the towns of Kells and Trim. The name is derived from the Gaelic Ath Buidhe – yellow ford – so the crossing point of the river was an important part of its

development, and it may have had old associations with the prehistoric earthworks on Tlachta (Hill of Ward) c. 2 km to the ENE (ME030-001001-). Ath Buidhe Tlachtga was the scene of a battle between the Norse of Dublin and Maelseachlainn, King of Meath, in 1022 (AFM), which the Norse lost, and a Church synod, convened by Ruaráí O'Conchbhair King of Connaught, was held here in 1167 (AFM). (Bradley and King 1985, 16).

During the period of the Anglo-Norman settlement Athboy became the centre of the barony of Lune, which was granted by Hugh de Lacy to William de Muset in the 1170s, and it passed on his death in 1213 briefly to the Tuites. The de Loundres (London) family held it until 1386 when it was divided between the Preston and Brown families (*ibid.* 16-17). A castle, probably a motte, was being fortified at Athboy in 1211-12 but its location is not known (Graham 1974, 43; 1980, 47). The 'Castletown of Athboy' is constantly referred to in the Gormanston Register but the location of a castle is not known. The date of the foundation of the town is not known with any certainty. A grant of murage was made in 1306, but the first mention of the borough is in 1337-8. However, a provost - one of a town's officials - is recorded in 1329 and in 1407 the provost and commoners received a Charter from Henry IV granting privileges, including the right to form a guild of merchants. This was an important concession as the town was at the edge of the Pale and in 1423 twenty shillings in expenses were collected for the defence of the town against O'Connor Offaly. The town was burned by O'Connor in 1443, and in 1446 and 1462 further murage grants were made. In 1598 Athboy was listed amongst the walled towns of Meath, and in 1643 it was captured by Owen Roe O'Neill. There are few details available about the subsequent history of the town, but it may have been quite prosperous. The Civil Survey (1654) describes it as having thirteen castles, which are probably merchants' houses, 73 holdings and gardens, an abbey, a church, a bridge and one stone house (Simington 1940, 210). (Bradley and King 1985, 17-18)

The town occupied a considerable area of at least 10 ha (c. 25 acres), judging by the burgage plots depicted on the 1836 edition of the OS 6-inch map, and these were all built on either side of the NE-SW main route through the town, consisting of Upper Bridge Street, Main Street or Market Street and what is now called O'Growney Street, formerly Chapel Street. The course of the town wall was probably at the distal ends of the burgage plots fronting onto this thoroughfare, which is unusually wide for a medieval street in the central, Main St. part, where the markets were undoubtedly held. A section of town wall (L c. 100m; H c. 2-3m; T 0.9m) survives on the SE side, SW of the graveyard of St James's Church, with one open-backed tower (int. diam. c. 2.45m; ext. diam. c. 4.4m) projecting from it. A fosse outside the wall (L 26m; Wth of top 3.6m; ext. D 2.6m) could be a recent feature but it is probably on the line of an original one. Just W of the surviving tower the wall turned WNW to O'Growney Street as recovered in excavation as a robber trench (O'Hara 2004). No other towers or gates are known, but gates would have been needed to access the town from the NE, NW, SW and SE along the main roads (Bradley and King 1985, 19-21). Within the town are the remains of the parish church (ME029-023003-) and there was a Carmelite friary (ME029-023014-) at Athboy, but its location is not even known. Excavation within the town has produced some evidence of settlement in the form of pits (ME029-023011-) inside the line of the town wall (O'Hara 2004) and evidence of medieval occupation has been found on the E bank of the river (Campbell 1998).

Compiled by: Michael Moore

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6. Graham, B.J. 1980 The mottes of the Norman liberty of Meath. In H. Murtagh (ed.), Irish midland studies: essays in commemoration of N.W. English, 39-56. Athlone. Old Athlone Society.
7. Graham, B. 1974 Medieval settlement in County Meath. *Ríocht na Míde*, 5, No. 4, 40-59.

SMR No.ME029-023001---

Class: Town Defences

Description: Athboy walled from early fourteenth century. Wall ran from river westwards at back of plots on N side of Market Street, crossed Connaught Street and Main Street close to where these streets meet, southwards to surviving stretch (ME029-023002-) and eastwards to river. Enclosing area of c. 26 acres. (Bradley forthcoming).

ME029-023010---

Class: Building

Description: At the SW angle of Athboy town but outside the line of the town wall. Excavation (01E0883) revealed two masonry walls that were parallel with each other and the robber trench of the town wall. One wall (L 6m; Wth 0.6m) was double-faced with a rubble core while the other was clay-bonded (L 1.9m; Wth 1.25m). The walls are undated and may have been unrelated to each other but are covered by post-medieval garden soils (O'Hara 2002, 2004, 401-02). (Danaher 2001; 2003).

ME029-023011---

Class: Excavation - miscellaneous

Description: Excavation (01E0883) within the town wall of Athboy has produced some evidence of medieval occupation in six intercutting medieval and post-medieval pits (max. diam. 4m; max. D 1.3m) inside the robber trench (Wth of top 1.45-2.25m; D 0.9-1.5m) on the WNW-ESE line of the town wall (L 50m plus). The robbed wall would have cut across the burgage plots depicted on the 1836 edition of the OS 6-inch map. (Danaher 2001; 2003; O'Hara 2002; 2004).

ME029-023009---

Class: Stone sculpture

Description: Two limestone plaques, probably from tomb surrounds and sculptured in false relief, are incorporated into the outer walls of the Roman Catholic church of St. James, which was built in the 1830s. This piece is high on the S wall at the E end and depicts a crucifixion with Mary and St John.

ME029-023013-

Class: Stone sculpture

Description: Two limestone plaques, probably from tomb surrounds and sculptured in false relief, are incorporated into the outer walls of the Roman Catholic church of St. James, which was built in the 1830s. This piece is high on the E wall over the main entrance and depicts a crucifixion with a very stylized Mary and St John.

2.3.5 Cartographic Research

Analysis of historic mapping shows how the landscape has changed over time. The comparison of editions of historic maps can show how some landscape features have been created, altered, or removed over time. Sometimes features that appear on these early maps are found to be of potential archaeological significance during fieldwork. For this study the following historic maps were consulted:

- First edition Ordnance Survey 6" Maps circa (1837).
- The Second Edition OS Map (1898).

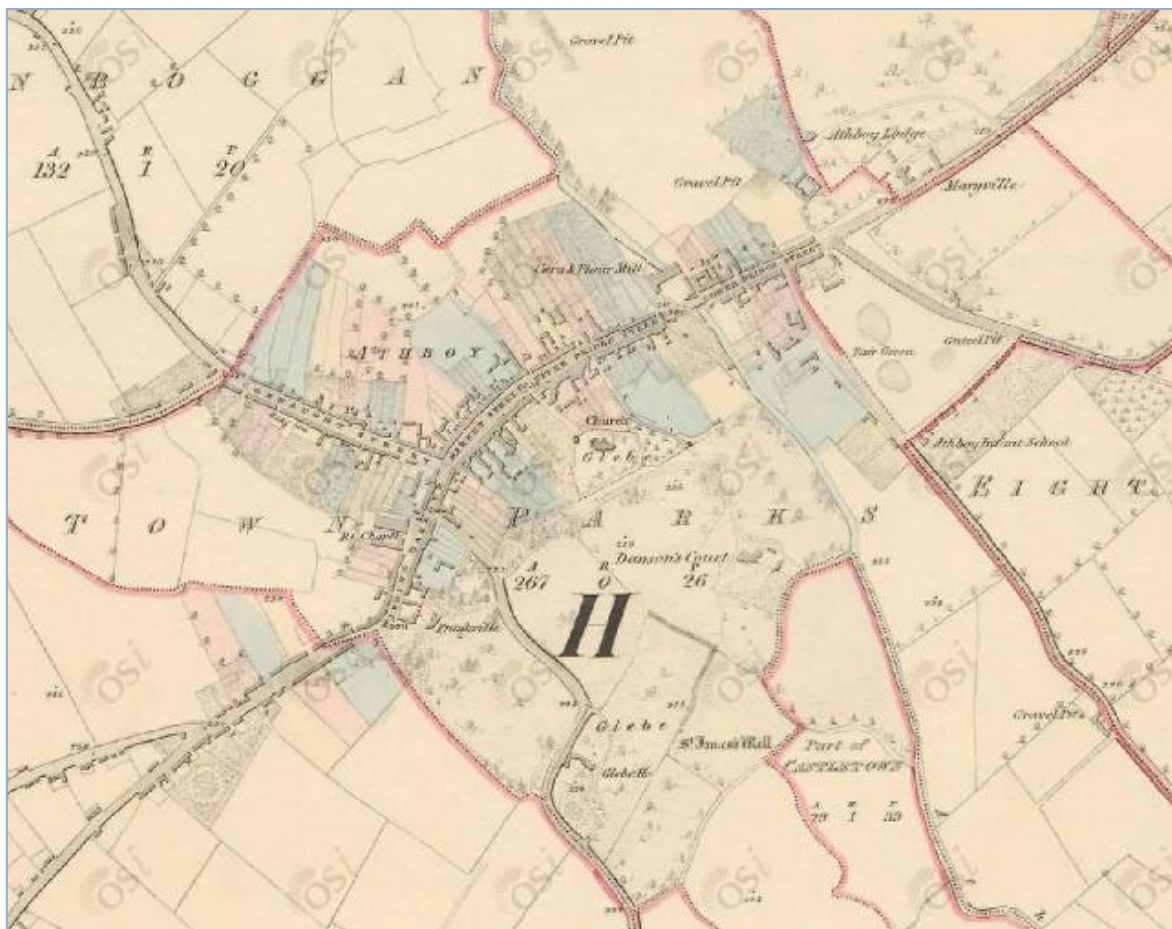


Figure 5 First edition Ordnance Survey 6" Map

The first edition map shows Athboy in the mid-19th century and is the first map to depict the town in significant detail. The Town plan shows the familiar 'Y' shaped street consisting of elongated Main Street forking to the west into Connaught Street and O'Growney Street. For the main part the PDA comprises partially of burgage plots and greenfield to the west with now no longer extant buildings lining O'Growney Street. St. James' Church appears to be partially constructed. By the time of the second edition OS map the church has been completed (construction date 1845). The remainder of the subject site remains much the same, with the construction of some additional structures evident.

2.3.6 Aerial Photography

The usefulness of aerial photography is that it allows for a different perspective, 'the distant view'. Archaeological sites may show up on the ground surface, depending on their state of preservation, by light and shadow contrasts (shadow marks), tonal differences in the soil (soil marks) or differences in height and colour of the cultivated cereal (crop marks). It is also a useful aid in pinpointing existing features and can assist in ascertaining their extent and degree of preservation.

Aerial photographs from both the OSI website and Google Earth were inspected - no additional sites were noted.



Figure 6 Aerial Image showing zones of Archaeological potential Athboy (overall RMP not depicted)

2.3.7 Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The topographical files of the NMI identify all recorded finds held in the NMI archive that have been donated to the state in accordance with national monuments legislation. The files sometimes include reports on excavations undertaken by NMI archaeologists in the early 20th century. Valuable information that can be gleaned might include the exact location, ground type, depth below ground level and condition when found, of each find. However, the amount and the usefulness of the information available on each find can vary considerably. The topographical files are listed by county and townland and/or street name.

A review of the National Museum of Ireland Finds Database (2010) was carried out (available at <https://www.heritagemaps.ie/>). There is one recorded find point plotted in the surroundings of the subject site, but none in the immediate vicinity - a Bronze Axehead (IA/29/1987) located roughly 2.2km to the west found at the National Monument of Tlachtaga.

2.3.8 Previous Archaeological Fieldwork

The Excavation Bulletin is both a published annual directory and an online database that provides summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland and Northern Ireland from 1970 to 2012. The database gives access to over 15,000 reports and can be browsed or searched using multiple fields, including Year, County, Site Name, Site Type, Grid Reference, Licence No., Sites and Monuments Record No. and Author.

A significant number of archaeological testing and monitoring works have been carried out within the vicinity of the subject site, including mitigation for water schemes, housing developments and improvement works.

07E0919 Denis Shine

2008:935

Townparks, Athboy

271430, 264005

A new wastewater treatment plant on northern side of Athboy River to the east of the town and associated access road had a maximum footprint of 65m by 150m. Monitoring works were completed, and no remains of archaeological significance were noted.

08E0865, Denis Shine

2008:938

Townparks, Athboy

272145 263875

Access road to the new wastewater treatment plant.

Possible prehistoric features

Three pits, a single burnt deposit as well as five hill-wash deposits were tentatively dated as prehistoric by a single lithic find within the burnt deposit.

Medieval features

Two medieval features were a substantial ditch, most likely an agricultural drainage/boundary feature and a large pit provisionally interpreted as a gravel/sand extraction pit.

Modern features

Trim Roadside ditch and boundary. Burials Nine burials and 29 bags of disarticulated human bone were recovered. All but one of the burials were contained within identifiable grave-cuts and backfilled with single fills. All burials were extended and orientated broadly east–west. 18th–19th-century pottery sherds were recovered in association with three of the burials. The burials were widely spaced and there is no tradition of a burial-ground at this location but burials in areas of earlier quarrying is a common occurrence. It may be that the burials extend beyond the limits of excavation. It seems likely that the burials represent a small modern cemetery or a small informal burial group, possibly even Famine burials.

C254; E3687, Richard Clutterbuck

2008:937

Townparks, Athboy

271700 264000

Eastern wastewater pipe construction

Test trenching for 407m from Barnes Avenue to the Athboy River within a 25m-wide construction wayleave. Test trenches consisted of a 2m-wide centre trench and offsets every 15m. Trenches ranged in depth from 0.45m to 1.2m. Removed topsoil was metal detected (licence 07R209). Discovered features included large undated quarry pits, modern garden features, paths and flanking ditches and the modern back-garden refuse deposits of the gate-lodge to Danes Court House.

Opposite St James' parish church, immediately south of the town wall, were medieval gravel and sand extraction pits, several flagstone surfaces, a hearth, medieval pottery, a 12th/13th-century dressed-stone window frame fragment and a later wall. This material is possibly associated with the remains of the Carmelite friary. Adjacent irregularities in the field to the immediate south may be the expression of significant subsurface structural remains. This area and two others were identified as archaeologically significant and were preserved in situ as fenced excluded areas.

On re-excavating the earlier sewer trench burnt soil, modern and medieval ditches, deposits of stone, pits, a hearth, and a well were exposed. In addition, there was an undated human burial. Finds included medieval locally produced pottery, blackware and transfer-printed modern pottery as well as corroded metal objects from both medieval and modern features.

Monitoring of removal of material from Athboy River

Twenty-one identifiable modern metal objects and 15 ceramic sherds of pottery (small, abraded sherds of locally produced medieval glazed earthenware and post-medieval stonewares, pearl ware, transfer printed wares and creamware pottery) were retained. 116 coins were recovered; 69 identifiable as

modern and foreign coins, including a Dutch 5 cent coin and an American 1 cent coin, Irish and euro coins; 47 were heavily corroded but likely to be euro or Irish coins.

Athboy Town network pipe construction

Monitoring of network pipe construction work in Athboy town centre was also undertaken in 2008. Following the results of the ground-penetrating radar survey on Main Street and Connaught Street (07R210) in 2007, where a large numbers of services and possible town wall and gate features were identified, and the developers decided to reroute the sewer pipe to avoid these areas. The new route chosen runs from Connaught Street down the Side Road, outside the probable line of the town wall. Monitoring of the network pipes along this road revealed nothing of archaeological significance. Monitoring and construction works are continuing in 2009.

07E0592 James Hession and Peter Kerins

2007:1252

Connaught street, Athboy

271292 264083

Located on the eastern side of Connaught Street at the north-western edge of the medieval town boundary. No features or finds of archaeological significance.

07E0919 Richard Clutterbuck

2007:1251

Athboy town/Bunboggan/Castletown/Eightyeight Acres/Fosterfields/

Mullaghstones/Townparks

271430 264005

ME029-023, 029-024, 030-001

Monitoring of wastewater groundworks in Athboy, but outside the town's zone of archaeological potential. Nothing of archaeological significance has been discovered.

08E0278, Matthew Seaver

2008:936

Fosterfields, Athboy

271882 264422

Athboy Lodge stable block was built c. 1800, although the tunnel is first indicated on the second-edition OS map of 1897. The tunnel is currently blocked off 27m from the entrance. A test-trench located a further section of the tunnel beyond this point. The tunnel is a stone-built structure with a brick arch. It is further capped with a layer of mortar and blue slates to protect it from groundwater. The development will avoid the structure during construction.

07D51; 07R197, Aisling Collins

2008:934

Athboy River, Athboy

Wade survey river channel disturbed by previous sewer. No significance.

04E1369, Brian Halpin

2004:1169

BRIDGE STREET UPPER, ATHBOY

27156 26415

No archaeological significance

03E0949, Ellen OCarroll

2003:1354

St Joseph's School, Athboy

N715638

Monitoring at St Joseph's School, Kildalkey Road. A general ground reduction to an average depth of 0.8m, consisting of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.6m of ploughsoil.

03E1026 Ellen OCarroll

2003:1353

Main Street, Athboy

N715638

Rear of a building on Main Street. A trench was excavated 5m by 1m by 1.5m deep. The upper 0.6m comprised dark-brown garden soil. Underneath was 0.2m of light brown clay. There were small flecks of charcoal present in this layer, some modern ceramics, and an animal bone. This layer lay on the natural, which was yellow/brown boulder clay.

03E0310, Fintan Walsh

2003:1350

Connaught Street, Athboy

271500 264150

Deposits of building rubble and disturbed material over natural sands and gravels.

02E1195 Stephen J. Linnane

2002:1420

Townparks, Athboy

27150 26390

An area measuring c. 10m by c. 3m was stripped to the natural subsoil, along with an extension to the south. On the western edge and in the south-western corner of the stripped area were the limestone foundations of a wall and one corner of a building. The wall, c. 0.9m wide, was not mortar bonded and sat in a construction trench. No artefacts were discovered to facilitate the dating of these features.

01E0883 ext. Robert O'Hara

2002:1419

Townparks, Athboy

26408 27140

Area A: Two lengths of post-medieval wall foundations, both rubble-core constructions covered by topsoil and post-medieval garden soils. Neither structure had a foundation cut.

Area B: Medieval and post-medieval features included a robber trench following the line of the 15th-century town wall, oriented west-northwest/east-south-east. Robber cut dimensions were 1.4–2.5m wide by 0.9–1.5m deep. Also, large medieval (quarry?) pits, smaller post-medieval and modern rubbish pits, an 18th-/19th-century property boundary wall and a 19th-century drain.

Area C: This area contained mortar-bonded masonry visible in its north-west-facing section and a spread of rubble with possible facing along its south-western side.

02E1047 Ruth Elliott

2002:1418

Mercy Convent, Athboy

Wall visible on 1835 OS. Post-medieval garden planting and paths. From top: 0.12m modern soils over soft, mid-brown, silty clay with fragments of modern and late post medieval pottery, mortar and red brick. Beneath this was a layer of light brown, sandy, stony clay min. 0.50m deep with occasional sherds of post-medieval pottery and animal bones. Underlying surface of lime mortar over further post-medieval layers with natural gravels c. 0.90 - 1m down.

00E0109, Ian Russell

2000:0744

The Old Mill, Bridge Street Lower, Athboy

0492 0733

Trenches 1 and 2 revealed natural marl and gravel deposits present at a depth of 0.5m below the topsoil. Trench 3 revealed natural gravel and stone below a thick layer of post-medieval topsoil at a depth of 0.85m. No archaeological features or deposits

00E0109 ext. Robert O'Hara

2002:1417

The Old Mill, Bridge Street Lower, Athboy

268540 266418

No archaeological material was recovered with natural gravel deposits encountered at 2m below present ground level.

01E1164, Carmel Duffy

2001:933

Inn Moderation, Main Street, Athboy

Seven trenches 2m wide and c. 1m deep were opened within the area of the building extension. None contained material, finds, or features of an archaeological nature.

01E0601, Dominic Delany

2001:932

Connaught Street, Athboy

27156 26415

Possible large quarry pit on northern outskirts of Connaught St.

1997:415

TOWNPARKS, ATHBOY

N718645

0.50m Garden soil with post-medieval finds. Possible field ditch.

97E0170, Kieran Campbell

1997:414

THE STATION HOUSE, ATHBOY

27186 26415

Former railway terminus of the Dublin and Meath Railway, opened in 1864 and later absorbed into the MGWR. The line closed in 1959 and soil cover had since reclaimed the yard, which resembled a grass field. Under topsoil the compact stone and gravel surface of the railway yard was encountered in most trenches. Archaeological material was located at depths of 1.25– 1.4m within 5m of the lane at the north end of the site. A deposit, up to 0.6m thick, contained animal bones, charcoal, mussel shells and medieval pottery. Seven sherds of pottery, probably of local manufacture and of 14th- to 16th-century date, and a sherd of Leinster cooking ware were recovered. The material found appears to confirm settlement on the east side of the Athboy River in the late medieval period.

The following summaries of works excavated specifically to look for buried services (and therefore often inside service trenches) show the potential for archaeological remains up to 0.60m below current road surface

BYRNE MULLINS & ASSOCIATES 2009, Water Main Site Investigations

Monitoring 2009 (summarised).

TH-7 (Main Street)

A layer c. 0.58m thick of black silty clay with a high percentage of shell inclusions was uncovered 0.52m below the street surface. This layer contained three sherds of 13th century pottery and one of late 17th- late 19th century pottery. Also, two fragments of 18th/19th century clay pipe stems. ST-5 (Junction of Main St & Barrack Lane) The truncated remains of a shallow layer of black silty clay was recorded c. 1.0m down. A single sherd 13th century pottery was recovered from this deposit.

TH-7C (Upper Bridge Street)

The top of an east-west oriented masonry wall with an edge/face on the north-facing side was uncovered 1.36m below present road level. Further work revealed a layer of stony mortar, possibly the rubble core to the wall, 1.1m below present street surface. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the southern extension: one of 13th century date and the other of late 17th-19th century date. Given the location of this feature, together with the nature of the wall face, it is suggested this may be evidence for the north-eastern Town Gate, of medieval date.

Connaught Street (ST-1A)

An 'organic' deposit from 0.30m down to 1.50m down was in Connaught Street. Depending on where the town walls were in this location, this deposit could be inside or outside the Town Walls.

Unstratified finds

A sherd of medieval pottery (probably 13th century?) was recovered from modern fill in TH-2, located at the northern end of Connaught Street and two sherds of postmedieval pottery were recovered from TH-7D at the western end of Lower Bridge Street.

MOORE GROUP 2011 Water main monitoring (Summarised).

O'Growney Street

The average depth of excavation was 1.1m deep by 0.5m wide. The trench ran parallel to the existing water service along the southern side of the carriageway. Generally, the stratigraphy consisted of road base overlying a grey-brown gravelly sand layer 0.30m to 0.50m down with frequent small to medium sized stones. Below this was a grey natural sand. These layers were sterile with no inclusions.

At the junction of O'Growney Street and The Courtyard/Kildalkey Road excavation uncovered a dark brown organically rich deposit with occasional inclusions of straw, grass, hazel animal bone and leather (shoe making) off-cuts. This material 0.40m thick in places was found 0.60 – 0.70m down. Given the depth and width of the trench it was decided to raise the level of the pipe thus reducing the impact on this layer while retrieving any material of archaeological significance. This deposit continued for approximately 23m occasionally interrupted by services or boulders. Finds retrieved from this layer included one rim sherd of Post-medieval mottled ware, a clay pipe stem fragment, a corroded iron horse shoe and 36 leather fragments that appear to be cobbler offcuts (one fragment was the upper portion of a sole). It is noteworthy that this area corresponds generally to the projected line of the town defences

Main Street/Upper Bridge Street

The stratigraphy varied along the length of the street but generally consisted of 0.20- 0.35m tarmac and modern roadbase overlying a gravelly deposit 0.20-0.40m thick (perhaps previous road make-up and surfaces). Below this was a mid-brown sandy layer with frequent stone which continued to the trench

base (perhaps previous road make-up and surfaces). Occasionally there were pockets of dark 'garden' soil and dump deposits of ash, plaster, and builders' rubble. No structural remains were encountered along the length of the street. However, two in situ sections of roadside gutter cobbling were recorded.

The cobbled gutter ran between the original kerbline and gravelled road. These cobbles were edged to the north by a double line of rectangular stone sets. The three sections were found at a depth of 0.38m and extended over 8m running from the corner of Little Angels Kids Shop towards Carthy's Bar. Plate 1 from the Lawrence collection shows similar cobbles along the edge of Main Street Athboy in the late 19th century.

Licence number: 03E1718

Connaught Street, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: P. David Sweetman, Roestown, Drumree, Co. Meath.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671283m, N 764081m

Pre-development testing took place here. Twelve test-trenches were opened on a 2.02ha site north of Connaught Street and west of Main Street just outside the supposed line of the town wall. Nothing of archaeological interest was found.

Licence number: 03E1840

County: Meath Site name: Connaught Street, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: Carmel Duffy, UMBERSTOWN GREAT, Summerhill, Co. Meath.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671236m, N 764320m

Excavation of foundations for a conservatory extension, c. 16.5m², to an existing dwelling-house was monitored. The monitor revealed no material of an archaeological nature

Licence number: 03E1026

County: Meath Site name: Main Street, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: Ellen OCarroll, The Archaeology Company, Office 1, 17 Castle Street, Dalkey, Co. Dublin.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671436m, N 763820m

Testing was undertaken at Main Street, Townparks, Athboy, Co. Meath. The proposed development is within SMR 29:9, Athboy town. The developer was extending onto the rear of a street-front house. One trench was excavated at the south-eastern portion of the site where the proposed extension is to be built.

It ran for a distance of 5m north-east/south-west by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.5m. The upper 0.6m comprised dark-brown silty topsoil which had been laid down quite recently as garden soil. Underneath this was 0.2m of light-brown clay. There were small flecks of charcoal present in this layer and some modern ceramics and an animal bone. This layer lay on the natural, which was yellow/brown boulder clay. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during the testing.

Licence number: 05E0140

County: Meath Site name: O'GROWNEY STREET, ATHBOY

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 29:23

Author: Carmel Duffy, UMBERSTOWN GREAT, SUMMERHILL, CO. MEATH.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671236m, N 763820m

Monitoring of groundworks associated with the development of the site was undertaken in June 2005. No material of archaeological significance was disclosed by the monitor.

Licence number: —

County: Meath Site name: O'GROWNEY SCHOOL, ATHBOY

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: Rosanne Meenan, ROESTOWN, DRUMREE, CO. MEATH.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671336m, N 763980m

Planning permission was received by O'Growney National School to construct a one-portable classroom (Cabinpac) on the school grounds. Monitoring of removal of topsoil and excavation of foundation trenches was required. Dark-brown topsoil with some modern pottery inclusions was stripped from the area on which the Cabinpac was to be dropped. Five trenches to receive the concrete block footings for the Cabinpac were excavated. Nothing of archaeological significance was exposed.

Licence number: 07E0592

County: Meath Site name: CONNAUGHT STREET, ATHBOY

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME029-023

Author: James Hession and Peter Kerins, MARGARET GOWEN & CO. LTD, 27 MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN 2.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 671228m, N 764103m

An archaeological assessment was carried out with respect to the proposed development of a new medical centre on Connaught Street, Athboy, Co. Meath. The development is located within the historic town of Athboy. The site is located on the right-hand side of Connaught Street heading north out of the town and at the edge of the medieval town boundary. The total area of the development site measures

c. 48m by 25m, though it is narrower at the street front. Prior to testing the existing building and a number of sheds were demolished, while the garden at the rear of the property was under grass and overgrown vegetation.

The trenching was carried out by a 12-tonne mechanical digger on 6 November 2007. Three test-trenches were opened consisting of a trench across the full length of the site and two off-set trenches. These trenches yielded no features or finds of archaeological significance.

Licence number: 09E0061

County: Meath Site name: MEATH WATER CONSERVATION PROJECT

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: Martin E. Byrne, Byrne Mullins & Associates, 7 Cnoc na Greine Square, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

Site type: Urban, medieval

ITM: E 511244m, N 799206m

Monitoring of Geotechnical Site Investigations, undertaken with respect to the County Meath Water Conservation Scheme Phase 2, was carried out on a phased basis between 5 May and 24 September 2009. The overall site investigations programme had been subjected to an archaeological impact assessment which suggested that all investigations within, and in the immediate environs of, the urban zones of archaeological potential established for Athboy, Kells and Duleek be monitored by an archaeologist. This mitigation strategy was agreed with the National Monuments Service, DoEHLG.

Investigations at Athboy led to the discovery of wall remains at Bridge Street and these may relate to the former town defences. The form and nature of the remains, which were not investigated, indicate that the remains of a former town gate may have been uncovered at a depth of c. 1.3m below the present street surface. In addition, organic-rich silty soil deposits were uncovered towards the southern end of Connaught Street and western end of Main Street. Sherds of medieval pottery, a leather offcut, shell and animal bone were recovered from these deposits and it is suggested that these may be medieval in origin. In addition, medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered from mixed backfill deposits of modern service trenches along Connaught Street, Main Street and Bridge Street.

The only feature of note uncovered at Kells was a fragment of wall uncovered on the outside edge of a footpath at Castle Street. While this feature may be of postmedieval or modern origin, and associated with a former culvert, it is noted that it lies on, or immediately adjacent to, the postulated line of the outer monastic enclosure.

Investigations at Duleek led to the discovery of two walls, each located on the southern side of the eastern extent of Main Street. A coin of late 18th/early 19th century date was recovered from the foundation trench of one of the walls and it is considered that both walls may date to this period and that they were subsequently demolished in the late 19th/early 20th century when the street was realigned and widened. A number of sherds of medieval and postmedieval pottery were recovered from investigations in the Abbeyland area of the town, although these were not associated with any archaeological deposits or features.

The results of the monitoring will be incorporated into the archaeological impact assessment to be prepared with respect to the overall proposed water conservation scheme, which will suggest appropriate archaeological mitigation strategies.

Licence number: 09E0388

County: Meath Site name: ATHBOY

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Author: Gill McLoughlin, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, 120B Greenpark Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 511244m, N 799206m

Test trenching took place on 26 August 2009 at the site of a proposed primary healthcare centre at Athboy, Co. Meath. Three trenches were excavated within the area of proposed development and no features or finds of archaeological interest were identified in any of the trenches.

Licence number: E004078

County: Meath Site name: Connaught Street, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME029-023

Author: Declan Moore, Moore Archaeological & Environmental Services Ltd, Corporate House, Ballybrit Business Park, Ballybrit, Galway.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 671436m, N 764120m

A programme of monitoring was carried out at Connaught Street, Athboy, Co. Meath, of a resurfacing and service improvement programme along the street as part of the Athboy sewerage scheme.

Previous work carried out by Martin Byrne (Excavations 2009, No. 629, 09E061) exposed soft silty organic deposits containing fragments of animal bone, leather, shell, wood and a single sherd of probable medieval pottery within a test-trench near the junction with Main Street, indicating its archaeological significance. A GPR survey undertaken by CRDS Ltd in 2007 in advance of the Athboy sewerage scheme detected probable subsurface evidence for the town wall, indicating that it extends in a southern direction from buildings on the northern side of the street, and for an approximate length of 3m from the footpath kerb.

It should be noted that excavations had been carried out in the south-eastern end of Connaught Street from the Main Street junction to a distance of approximately 100m north-west of this junction prior to the author's appointment. It should, however, be also noted that Byrne reports that the wall and associated archaeological layers were observed at a depth of 0.52m (on Main Street) to 1m, while excavations for the current works did not exceed 0.65–0.7m. Monitoring was carried out from mid-February to 11 March 2010. Generally works involved the mechanical excavation of the street to a 0.65–0.75m depth prior to replacement of services and reinstatement. No material of archaeological significance was identified during the course of the works.

County: Meath Site name: Meath Countywide Water Conservation Project Watermains Rehabilitation Phase 2

C533 Licence number: E4426

Sites and Monuments Record No.: 12E0096

Author: Judith Carroll

Site type: Monitoring

Monitoring was conducted during the digging of engineer's test pits for Phase 2 of the Meath Countywide Water Conservation Project. Judith Carroll and Company Ltd was contracted by Grontmij Ltd on behalf of Meath County Council to conduct the monitoring of the groundworks. A desktop assessment report was also commissioned prior to monitoring and an archaeological historical background study was provided by this company.

The monitoring was carried out between April 16 and June 20 by Judith Carroll and Kenneth Wiggins. The area covered by this scheme included several Meath towns of medieval or earlier date, extending into the early modern and modern periods. These were Kells, Slane, Navan Trim, Oldcastle, Athboy, Duleek, Ratoath, Mornington and Laytown and their environs in most cases. The scheme also included smaller areas such as Fennor and Kilcarn which were of importance during the early medieval to early modern periods. The pipeline is planned to run through the centres and outskirts of the above locations, in many cases, in areas of high archaeological potential. The test trenching to examine soil and water quality for the scheme took place along these routes. A licence, 12E0096, was issued for the archaeological monitoring of the scheme in general, while a Ministerial Consent was issued for works within the constraint zone of Kells.

Most of the work consisted of the digging of test trenches 0.8-1m in width and 2m in length, though this was occasionally extended when the trench impacted on an existing service, etc. A small number of archaeological features were revealed.

Licence number: 11E0227; E4367; C468

County: Meath Site name: Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME029-023

Author: Billy Quinn

Site type: Urban

ITM: E 671426m, N 764121m

The works entailed Phase 2 of a Water Conservation Scheme within County Meath. Stage 1 of the project – Advanced Mains Rehabilitation Stage 1 – involves the replacement of c. 13.4km of existing watermains in various locations throughout the county. This report concerns works at Athboy. Monitoring of the scheme took place between 22 August and 11 September 2011 and exposed a number of features including two sections of kerbed cobbles on Main Street and a rich organic peaty deposit with leather fragments and animal bone near on O'Growney Street between The Courtyard and Connaught Street. No evidence, however, was found for the town defences along the projected site of the town wall.

Monitoring of at O'Growney Street near the projected line of the town defences revealed an organic deposit which contained a sherd of late 18th-century mottled ware, a clay pipe stem fragment and 36 leather off-cuts all related to cobbling. The leather was in relatively good condition and included the upper portion of an insole with edge stitching and wedge-shaped piece and various off cuts. Other features included a layer of 19th-century cobbles and kerbing on Main Street. No further below-ground structural remains were identified.

Licence number: C000546

County: Meath Site name: Townparks/Fosterfields/Bunboggan, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME029-023, ME029-023001, ME029-023003 and 023012

Author: Billy Quinn

Site type: Urban

ITM: E 671425m, N 764121m

Monitoring in Athboy, Co. Meath was carried out between June and July 2013. Resurfacing, footpath and kerb up-grading works took place throughout O'Growney Street, Main Street and Upper and Lower Bridge Street. The majority of the excavation works were carried out by a Cold Mill Planer. Typically the works involved planing the road surface to a depth of between 0.4-0.6m removing layers of tarmac and roadbase and exposing the underlying brown, silty clay gravel subsoil. Monitoring of the works exposed eight features including cobble sets and guttering along Main Street, an old culvert along Lower Bridge Street and three areas of peaty ground containing organic debris including some fragments of animal bone. No additional finds or features were noted.

Licence number: 14E0013

County: Meath Site name: O Growney National School, Townparks, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME029-027 MH029-023

Author: Donald Murphy

Site type: Non-archaeological

ITM: E 671132m, N 763946m

Testing was carried out at O Growney National School, O Growney Street, Athboy, Co. Meath prior to the construction of a new school building and associated facilities. The site is located outside of but in close proximity to the historic town of Athboy (ME029-023) which is located c.100m to the north-east and a burial site (ME029-027) which was located directly north of the site. The site is located within the curtilage of a protected structure (RPS MH029-205 & NIAH No. 14324010) which is described as a 'detached T-plan national school', built in 1949.

Thirteen trenches were excavated across the footprint of the proposed new building and associated site development by a mechanical excavator working under archaeological supervision. All trenches indicated similar stratigraphy with topsoil above a very stony grey/brown boulder clay. No deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

Licence number: 12E0096 extension

County: Meath Site name: Meath various towns for water rehab scheme

Sites and Monuments Record No.: various

Author: Judith Carroll

Site type: Testing and monitoring

ITM: E 0m, N 0m

Testing and monitoring was carried out during the digging of engineer's site investigation (SI) test pits and slit trenches for the Meath Watermain Rehabilitation-Phase 2. Irish Water is proposing to upgrade the pipeline infrastructure and this upgrade will be carried out in a number of urban, suburban and rural areas throughout the county. This licence (12E0096) is an extension of that granted in 2012 for the same scheme. A monitoring report for this scheme was submitted in 2012 but SI works on the scheme did not recommence until June 2016. In conjunction with this report, monitoring of SI pits and test trenching was carried out in Kells and Fennor townland, Co. Meath under Ministerial Consents for both RMP sites. Monitoring in Kells was carried out under Consent C533 (E004426) and at Fennor, C738 (E004659). All three comprise the total monitoring of the SI pits for this scheme and the trial testing.

The areas covered by this scheme were Kells, Slane (including Fennor), Navan, Trim, Oldcastle, Athboy, Duleek, Ratoath, Mornington, Laytown and Dunboyne and their environs in most cases. The pipeline was planned to run through the centres and outskirts of the above locations, in many cases, in areas of high archaeological potential. Only one feature of note came to light. It was recommended that trial testing should take place to investigate a thick wall feature, 1.5 m wide, found during monitoring of the engineer's slit trench ST3-077 at the east end of St Patrick's Park, Dunboyne.

Licence number: 01E0601

County: Meath Site name: Connaught Street, Athboy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 29:23

Author: Dominic Delany, 31 Ashbrook, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Site type: Historic town

ITM: E 671283m, N 764081m

Test excavation was carried out on the site of a proposed residential development at Connaught Street, Athboy, Co. Meath, on 11 July 2001. Athboy is one of four urban centres founded by the Anglo-Normans in Meath, although references in the Irish annals indicate that there was a pre-Norman settlement here. The earliest reference to the borough of Athboy occurs in 1337-8, but there is no documentary evidence for the existence of a town wall prior to the 15th century. The suggested circuit of the town defences is outlined in the Urban Archaeology Survey of County Meath. The development site lies in the north-east corner of the medieval town, and the north-west and south-west site boundaries follow the suggested line of the town defences.

Testing comprised the mechanical excavation of three 50m-long trenches. The only feature discovered during testing was a wide depression which extended north-east/south-west along the north-west site

boundary. It has a minimum width of 6.5m in Trenches 1 and 2, and 11.5m in Trench 3. It extended right up to the roadside boundary wall, which forms the north-western limit of the development site, but there was a gradual rise in the natural ground towards the south-east. The fills within the depression were very loose and sterile, and appear to be imported. A deposit of coarse sand and cobbles, possibly the remains of a watercourse, was discovered at the base of the depression in Trenches 2 and 3. It was approximately 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.3m. The crushed remains of part of a horse jaw were recovered from this deposit in Trench 2. Although the depression feature follows the suggested circuit of the town defences, there was nothing to indicate that it is associated with them. Unstratified finds from the trenches comprised occasional post-medieval potsherds and a single medieval potsherd. Further monitoring was recommended.

2.3.9 Toponym Analysis

Townland names are a rich source of information for the land use, history, archaeology and folklore of an area. The place name can have a variety of language origins such as, Irish, Viking, Anglo-Norman and English. The names can provide information on families, topographical features, and historical incidents. In terms of the built environment many names reference churches, fords, castles, raths, graveyards, roads and passes etc. In compiling the following data the Placenames Database of Ireland www.logainm.ie and Irish Names of Places by P.W. Joyce (Joyce, 1913) were consulted.

Table 3: Toponyms

Townland Name/ Name	Irish Version	Translation
Athboy town	<i>Baile Átha Bui,</i>	'Town of the Yellow Ford'

2.3.10 Townland Boundaries

The typology of townland boundaries can vary in different parts of the country, with some areas favouring distinctive high, wide earthen banks or just stone walling; sometimes there is a combination of earth and stone, with a stone-revetment or a facing on an earthen bank. Some boundaries are laid out along natural features including rivers, streams and high ground or manmade features such as roads and walls.

The subject site does not impact on any townland boundaries.

2.4 Architectural Heritage

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides that all Development Plans must now include objectives for preserving the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest, or which contribute to the appreciation of protected structures.

In these areas, the protection of the architectural heritage is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure, to retain the overall architectural or historic character of an area.

Within the boundary of the Athboy ACA there are sixteen protected structures comprising: landmark 18th and 19th century public buildings; small terraces of 18th and 19th century residential and commercial buildings; 19th century detached residences, and early 20th century residential buildings. A number of these buildings form significant focal points in the streetscape of Athboy, in particular nineteenth and twentieth-century structures. Others are more modest buildings that represent examples of archetypal shopfronts or pattern-book terraced houses. An additional 7 protected structures lie outside the boundary of Athboy ACA.

The subject site is immediately adjacent to St. James' Church (NIAH: 14324011, RPS No. MH029 208) and borders the ACA for Athboy to the west.

The RC Church of St. James is rated as regional in significance and is described as follows in the NIAH:

'Detached gable-fronted church, built in 1845, with five-bay side elevations to nave, and tower to entrance gable. Pitched slate roof, ashlar pinnacles and castellations to tower. Dressed limestone walls with pair of corner buttresses, ashlar dressings and plaques. Stained glass windows set in pointed-arched openings with stone dressings. Timber panelled double doors with elaborate fanlight above. Some original interior features remain. Stone high crosses and statue to site. Ashlar limestone piers with cast-iron railings and gates.'

The appraisal of its significance reads:

'This church is a dominant feature in the streetscape, due to its scale and form. The tower over the entrance gable adds to the striking height of this building. The features and materials of the building were clearly executed by skilled craftsmen. The carved details and many interior features add artistic interest to the church.'

The ACA boundary for Athboy town encompasses the long plots to the north of Main Street and Upper Bridge Street (approx. the line of the old walled town) until it meets the Tremblestown River to the east, where it extends eastwards to enclose the site beyond the Garda Station on the north side of Lower Bridge Street and the Mill House property to the south of the street. The eastern boundary then continues to the south, along the edge of the Mill House site and across the river westwards. The southern boundary encompasses the plots to the south of Main Street and Upper Bridge Street, including the boundary walls of St. James's Church of Ireland and extends to the southwest until O'Growney Street. At this point the boundary encircles the plots to the south of Connaught Street bordering the Clonmellon Road and then crosses the street to meet the extension of the northern boundary, which bounds the modern development of Connaught Place. The Fair Green and the Roman Catholic Church of St. James are currently not included in the ACA.

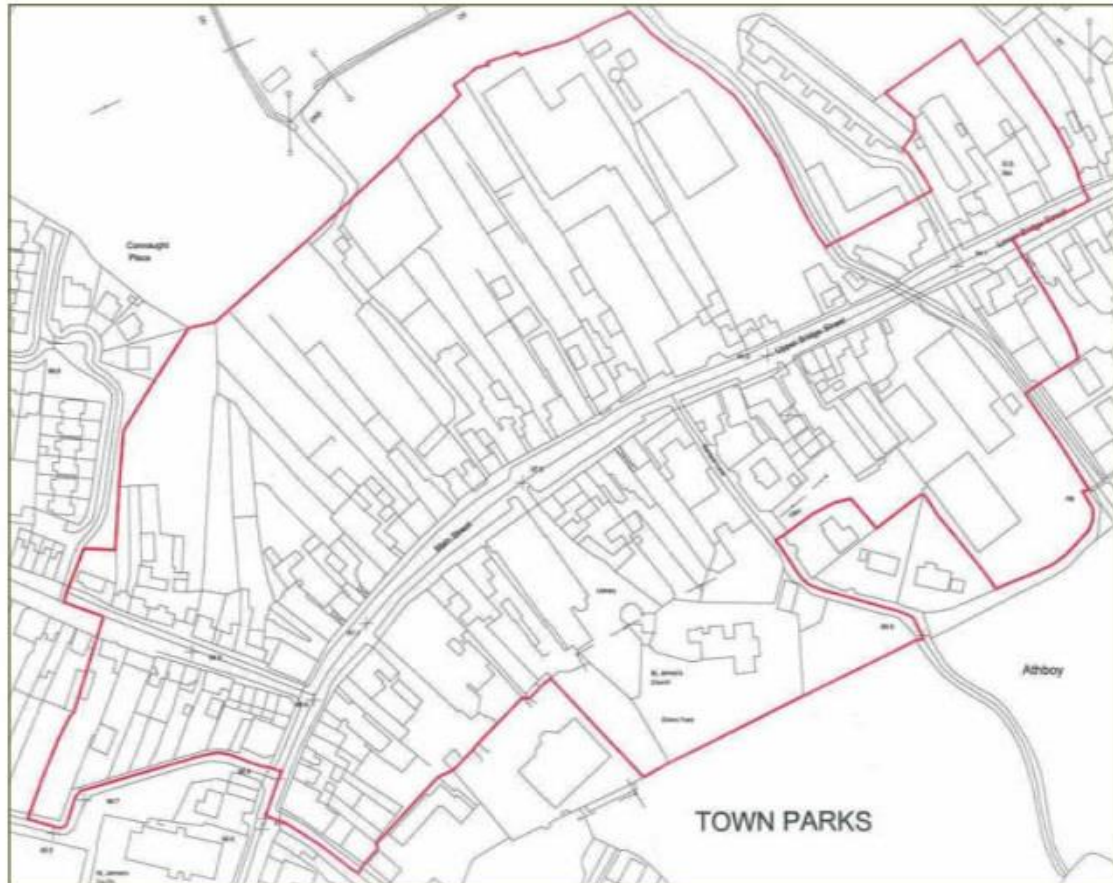


Figure 7 Architectural Conservation Area for Athboy

2.4.1 Vernacular features

Previously on O'Growney St, there were walled yards, stables and outbuildings associated with Ludwidge Arms Public House and Coaching Inn – now no longer extant having been redeveloped as the Waxies Dargle Public House. The Athboy Heritage Trail Sign No 131 mentions extensive vaults associated with the the Ludwidge Public House. (Roycroft, 2021). Several vernacular features are also noted within and in the immediate vicinity of the PDA. These are described in detail in a previous report completed by Meath County Council (Roycroft, 2021). These features include a single-storey masonry building adjacent to the proposed development area at the junction with O'Growney Street, wrought iron railings on O'Growney St. which form the curtilage of the protected structure of St. James' Church, and a masonry wall on the South, West and North side of the Church,

2.5 Fieldwork

The site of the proposed development was inspected on the 5th of August 2021 by Declan Moore (Archaeologist, Moore Group)). The site was accessed via O'Growney Street and walked from east to west. The PDA is located on a roughly east west link road bordered to the north by a recently cleared construction site and a series of burgage plots/backyards to the rear of buildings on Connaught Street. These plots are separated from the PDA by modern walls. To the south the PDA is bordered the masonry wall which forms the curtilage of St. James RC church. At the western end of the PDA, adjacent to the

link road are several areas of car parking facilitating St. James' RC Church and the O'Growney National School. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted during the site inspection.



Plate 1 Looking Southwest at parking area and school in background at west at the subject site.



Plate 2 Looking East at parking area and gate piers to rear of St. James' RC Church.



Plate 3 Looking South at curtilage to rear of St. James' RC Church.



Plate 4 Looking East at link road showing modern boundary wall to north of PDA.

3 Potential Impacts

The nature of the impacts is assessed with reference to the Glossary of Impacts provided in the Advice notes on Current Practices in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements, EPA, 2003, the draft Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements, EPA, 2015, Guidelines for the Assessment of Architectural Heritage Impact of National Road Schemes, NRA, 2006 and Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Heritage Impact of National Road Schemes, NRA, 2006.

3.1 Potential Direct Impacts

Direct negative impacts may occur where sites of archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage significance are located within the footprint of the proposed development, which would potentially be impacted upon by ground disturbances.

In relation to the proposed development, direct, physical impacts on the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage can manifest themselves in the following ways:

- Where an archaeological, architectural, or cultural heritage site, structure, monument, or feature is located within an area where works takes place and the works either intentionally or unintentionally entail the alteration or removal of all or part of the site, structure, monument or feature a direct, physical impact will occur.
- Direct, physical impacts can also occur in gaining access to the site. Where archaeological, architectural, or cultural heritage sites, structures, monuments, or features are intentionally or unintentionally removed or altered when transporting and/or facilitating access for machinery, equipment and/or materials to or from site a direct physical impact will occur; and
- There is the potential for direct, physical impacts on previously unrecorded archaeological and architectural sites, structures, monuments, or features.

If these impacts cannot be remediated, for example if archaeological deposits are destroyed during excavations, then the impacts will be permanent.

3.1.1 Potential direct Impacts on Recorded Archaeological Monuments

Following a site inspection and review of various sources there will be no impact on any recorded archaeological monuments because of GI works for the proposed development.

3.1.2 Potential direct Impacts on unrecorded Archaeological Monuments

The current layout of the subject site was created around the early 1990s as a relief road and car parking area (Roycroft, 2021). Nonetheless, previous works in the immediate vicinity have shown that there is potential to encounter previously unknown archaeological deposits. Monitoring of works nearby at O'Growney Street near the projected line of the town defences revealed a late/post medieval organic deposit and a stretch of cobble guttering was found at corner of the Oldcastle Road/O'Growney Street extending north along the front of Waxy Dargles pub. The Athboy Heritage Trail Sign No 133 mentions extensive vaults associated with the Public House which originally stood at the subject site (*Ibid*).

This indicates that fragmented remains likely to date to the 18th and 19th centuries may survive beneath the current ground level, but no evidence of medieval activity at the site has been identified to date.

There is potential that the works could impact on previously unknown archaeological features.

3.1.3 Potential direct Impacts Architectural Sites

There are no previously unrecorded vernacular features within the subject site. The works will involve moving the existing vehicular Church Entrance to the western boundary of the church grounds which will involve the realignment of a portion of the existing boundary wall to match the road alignment. This will involve removal and reinstatement of 18m of wall. The wall will be reinstated using a blend of old and new stone to ensure homogeneity.

3.1.4 'Do Nothing scenario'

In this instance, there would be no impact on any potential unrecorded sub surface deposits.

3.1.5 'Worst Case' scenario'

In this case, construction work could potentially negatively impact previously unknown sites resulting in the loss or damage of archaeological artefacts and features.

3.2 Potential Impacts on setting

Impacts on setting are primarily visual and examine the effect of the development upon the setting of a site within the wider landscape. Visual impacts can be reduced with sensitive site development and screening. The impact of the development is usually proportional to the extent to which that development is visible to and from the extant recorded monuments and features.

The works will have no impact on the setting of the subject site.

4 Mitigation Measures

Given that the subject site is located partially within the zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Athboy ((ME029-023----) there remains a possibility that archaeological materials or features may be encountered. It is recommended that archaeological monitoring of engineering trial pits and trenches be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

Based on the results of initial works and in consultation with the National Museum and the National Monuments Section of the DHLGH, further mitigation may be required.

The assessment found that the proposed works will directly impact a portion of the boundary wall of St. James Church, which is a protected structure. This protection extends to its curtilage. Structures of architectural heritage value are protected under Section 58 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Local Authority Conservation Officer and the DHLGH should be notified in writing prior to the proposed works commencing in order to determine whether approvals would be required, and any stipulations made should be followed. It is recommended that the removal and reinstatement of the

Church boundary wall be carried out in full consultation and with the approval of the Meath County Council Heritage Officer, the Meath County Council Archaeologist and the DHLGH.

Care should be taken to ensure that no inadvertent impacts to any of the sites, monuments, sites of architectural significance and vernacular features identified in this report are caused by machinery or personnel operating in these areas.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the National Monuments Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and Meath County Councils Archaeologist/Heritage Officer.

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5.2 Electronic Sources

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<https://heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html>

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

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

<https://www.townlands.ie/>

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

<http://www.worldheritageireland.ie/tentative-list/>

6 Conventions, Directives and Legislation

Ireland has ratified several European and international conventions in relation to the protection of its cultural heritage. This section summarises Ireland's obligations as a signatory to several International and European conventions relating to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites. Also included is a synopsis of existing national legislation governing the care and protection of our cultural heritage resources.

6.1.1 ICOMOS Xi'an Declaration, 2005

Ireland is a signatory to an international declaration sponsored by International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas, 2005, that endeavours to ensure the safeguard and conservation of the World's cultural heritage as part of its sustainable and human development.

6.1.2 EIA Directive 85/337/EEC as amended

To assist planning and other consent authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIS thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003.

6.1.3 The European Landscape Convention 2000

In 2002 Ireland ratified the European Landscape Convention - also known as the Florence Convention, which promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues. It is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all dimensions of European landscape.

6.1.4 Valletta Convention, 1997

In 1997 the Republic of Ireland ratified the Council of Europe, European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (the 'Valletta Convention'). Obligations under the Convention include provision for statutory protection measures, including the maintenance of an inventory of the archaeological heritage and the designation of protected monuments and areas.

6.1.5 Granada Convention, 1997

Under the European Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage (Granada Convention), 1997, the Republic of Ireland is obliged to maintain inventories of architectural heritage, to protect the architectural heritage and adopt conservation policies as integrated planning objectives.

6.1.6 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972

This Convention provides for the identification, conservation, and preservation of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value for inclusion in a world heritage list. The World Heritage status is a non-statutory designation, and no additional statutory controls result from this designation. However, the impact of proposed development upon a World Heritage Site will be a key material consideration in determining planning applications.

6.2 Legislation

6.2.1 The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006

The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 ensures the protection of the archaeological heritage resource by requiring that all applications under this Act are accompanied by an EIS including information on material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, and the cultural heritage.

6.2.2 The National Monuments Act 1930 to 2004

Irish legislation for the protection of archaeological heritage is based on the National Monuments Acts 1930 and amendments of 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004. These acts are the principal statutes governing the care of monuments in the Irish Republic. They provide for the protection of national monuments using preservation orders. The overall state archaeological service is provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and delivered through the Planning and Heritage Section of the DHLGH and the National Museum of Ireland (Irish Antiquities Division) on behalf of the Minister.

Monuments are protected under the National Monuments Acts in several ways:

- National Monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister or a local authority.
- National Monuments, which are subject to a preservation order.
- Historic monuments or archaeological areas recorded in the Register of Historic Monuments; and
- Monuments recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).

6.2.3 The Planning and Development Act 2000

Under arrangements which came into operation on 1 January 2000 (The Planning and Development Act 2000), the system of listing buildings was replaced with strengthened procedures for the preservation of protected structures and structures in architectural conservation areas (ACA).

6.2.4 The Architectural Heritage and Historic Properties Act, 1999

This Act provides for the establishment of a national inventory of architectural heritage which forms the basis for recommendation from the Minister to local authorities of sites for inclusion in the local authorities Record of Protected Structures

6.3 Other Policy Contexts and Guidelines

6.3.1 The Archaeological Survey Database (ASD)

The ASD is maintained by the National Monuments Service of the DHLGH and contains the most up to date information on archaeological monuments within the State. The site is regularly updated with new sites as they come to light and has increasing volumes of information about individual sites.

6.3.2 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

NIAH data is available to be viewed and / or download from the www.buildingsofireland.ie website. The website contains detailed notes and photographs of all structures included in the recommendations made by the Minister to the relevant local authorities.

6.3.3 The Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage guidelines, 1999

This document sets out the basic principles of national policy on the protection of the archaeological heritage. A key principle set out in these guidelines is that there should always be a presumption in favour of avoidance of developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage and preservation in-situ of archaeological sites and monuments must be presumed to be the preferred option.