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ARCHAEOLOGY & CULTURAL HERITAGE

Archaeological Impact Assessment Report

Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

Excavation Licence No. 23E0025

ITM: 702057E, 726664N

Further Information (FI) request from South
Dublin County Council SD Planning Ref:
22A/0323, item 12

For

Ciarán Reilly

Author: Liam Coen, Siobhán Deery

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This archaeological impact assessment report (AIA) details the results of archaeological testing carried out in advance of a proposed residential development at Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. These works are being carried out in response to a Further Information (FI) request from South Dublin County Council (SD Planning Ref: 22A/0323, item 12).

The site, c. 0.51 ha in extent, is located on the southern side of Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin (centre of site ITM 702057E, 726664N). It consists of a long linear plot with the northern part containing a Protected Structure, a house dating to 1820 (RPS ref. 323, NIAH 11213023) with associated modern shed/workshop; parking areas and access road. To the rear of this, beyond a palisaded fence, lies a relatively level grassy area otherwise surrounded by the modern block walls of adjacent developments.

The proposed development site is located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for the medieval village of Rathcoole (RMP DU021-030). There are no individual recorded monuments within or near the development lands and no stray finds have been recorded in the area by the National Museum of Ireland. Cartographic, historic and aerial sources examined have not revealed any features of archaeological potential within the lands. The linear plot within which the development lies is reminiscent of medieval linear burgage plots, similar to those found on the northern side of Main Street, the integrity and legibility of this plot is retained within the proposed development layout.

Archaeological testing took place on 16th January 2023 at the site. The purpose of the programme of archaeological testing was to establish if there were any archaeological remains on the site and if so, the nature and extent of any such remains and the impact of the proposed development on them.

Six trenches were excavated in the green space area to the rear of the Protected Structure (RPS ref. 323) and its associated workshop and surrounding hard landscaping. No features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during the course of test excavation. The testing revealed that the green space area has been subject to significant earlier disturbance indicated by the presence of modern rubbish and the remains of a crushed stone surface. It is considered likely that the field was always in use for agriculture and that any medieval or later activity that might be present would be located at the northern end of the site where the existing structures lie.

Given the site's location within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for Rathcoole village it is recommended that all ground disturbances associated with the development be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist to ensure that any subsurface isolated sites or stray finds are identified and appropriately recorded.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General

This Archaeological Impact Assessment report details the results of a desk study and archaeological testing carried out in advance of a proposed residential development of a site off Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. These works are being carried out in response to a Further Information (FI) request from South Dublin County Council (SD Planning Ref: 22A/0323, item 12).

The site, c. 0.51 ha in extent, is located on the southern side of Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin (centre of site ITM 702057E, 726664N) (Figure 1). It consists of a long linear plot with the northern part containing a Protected Structure, House (RPS ref. 323); associated modern shed/workshop; parking areas and access road. To the rear of this, beyond a palisaded fence, lies a relatively level grassy area otherwise surrounded by the modern block walls of adjacent developments.

The site lies within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for RMP DU021-030 Rathcoole Village.

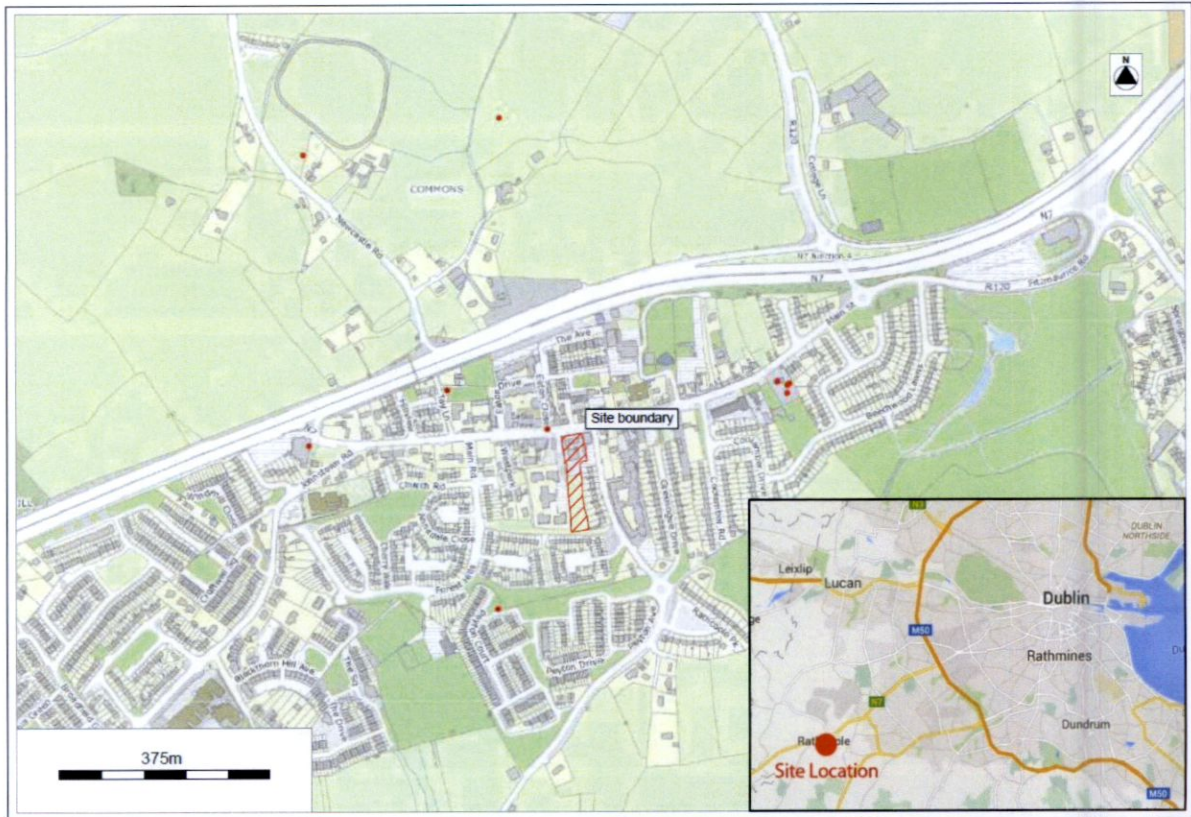


Figure 1: Site Location

1.2. Methodology

A review of the following information took place in order to inform the testing report:

- National Monuments in State care, as listed by the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH);
- Sites with Preservation Orders and Sites listed in the Register of Historic Monuments;
- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) from the Archaeological Survey of Ireland;
- A review of artefactual material held in the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland;
- Cartographical Sources, OSi Historic Mapping Archive, including early editions of the Ordnance Survey and other historical mapping (such as Down Survey 1656 Map);
- The Irish archaeological excavations catalogue i.e., Excavations bulletin and Excavations Database;
- Place names; Townland names and toponomy (loganim.ie);
- A review and interpretation of aerial imagery (OSi Aerial Imagery 1995, 2000, 2005, Aerial Premium 2013-2018, Digital Globe 2011-2013, Google Earth 2001–2022, Bing 2022) to be used in combination with historic mapping to map potential cultural heritage assets.

1.3. Description of Proposed Development

The development will consist of 12 residential properties with associated roadway and public open space. The development will include the demolition of a shed and workshop at the rear of the Protected Structure (RPS 323; NIAH no. 11213023) to facilitate the provision of 18 car parking spaces (Figure 2). A pedestrian access to Forest Hills at the southern end of the site and ancillary site development works all within the curtilage of a Protected Structure.



Figure 2 Proposed Site Layout

1.4. Archaeological Condition

The following is the relevant planning condition, item 12, from the Further Information request under planning ref. 22A/0323, South Dublin County Council:

12. Archaeology.

(A) The applicant is requested to engage the services of a suitably qualified Archaeologist to carry out the Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) which should include a programme of Archaeological Test Excavation to respond to this request for Further Information. No sub-surface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without their express consent.

(B) The archaeologist shall inspect the proposed development site (PDS) and detail the historical and archaeological background of the site and the boundary walls (consulting appropriate documentary sources) and review all cartographic sources and aerial photographs for the area.

(C) The Archaeological Test Excavation must be carried out under licence from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, and in accordance with an approved method statement; note a

period of 5-6 weeks should be allowed to facilitate processing and approval of the licence application and method statement.

(D) Test trenches shall be excavated at locations chosen by the archaeologist, having consulted the site drawings. Excavation is to take place to the uppermost archaeological horizons only, where they survive. Where archaeological material is shown to be present, the archaeologist shall stop works pending further advice from the Department. Please note that all features/archaeological surfaces within the test trenches are to be hand-cleaned and clearly visible for photographic purposes.

(E) Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Department and the Planning Authority describing the findings of the AIA and the results of the Archaeological Test Excavation. The report shall comment on the degree to which the extent, location and levels of all proposed foundations, service trenches and other sub-surface works required for the development will affect the archaeological remains. This should be illustrated with appropriate plans, sections, etc.

(F) Where archaeological material is shown to be present, further mitigation measures will be required; these may include refusal, redesign to allow for preservation in situ, excavation and/or monitoring as deemed appropriate.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

The proposed development site is located in the historic village of Rathcoole in the Civil Parish of the same name in the Barony of Newcastle. The placename Rathcoole derives from the Irish 'Rath Cumhail' meaning 'ringfort of Cumhail', who according to tradition is the father of legend Fionn Mac Cumhail. Although the mythology associated with the name is not necessarily true, the placename does indicate the former presence of a ringfort in this area (the location of which is unknown).

In his 19th century Ordnance Survey letters, O'Curry describes what he believed were the remains of the ringfort outside the village, located in the 'Raheen field' (cited in Bradley et al., 1986). According to Ua Broin, writing in the 1940s, there was a curving depression on the commons land south of Rathcoole, close to what he refers to as a 'winding passage', a feature that he interpreted as the 'rath of Cumhal' (Healy 1974, 24, OPW files). The 'winding passage', however, is a naturally formed valley of a stream and there are no surface indications to suggest that there was any man-made feature at this location (Ibid.; ref.to RMP site DU021-033, now classified as a redundant record).

There is little surviving evidence in the archaeological record to indicate any significant presence in the Rathcoole area before the medieval period and the archaeological record for the area is centred on the site of a medieval church at the east end of the village and the presence of a number of houses depicted in the mid-17th century Down Survey map.

The earliest literary references to Rathcoole have a range of spellings but it has been consistently spelled Rathcoole since the early 17th Century. Earlier spellings included Rathcul, Rathcowle and Rathcoll.

2.2. Prehistoric Activity

There is nothing in the archaeological record to indicate a prehistoric presence in the immediate environs of Rathcoole, however in the wider area a stone lined burial cist (RMP DU021-028) in Greenoge townland c.735m to the north-west, a fulacht fiadh (RMP DU021-094) in Moneyatta Commons c.1.8km to the east and a standing stone pair (RMP DU021-044) in Boherboy 2.2km to the south-east are indication of a Bronze Age presence. A reference to a possible find of a gold torc between Saggart and Rathcoole could also be an indication of Bronze Age activity (Joyce, 1921). A mound (RMP DU021-027) and a ring-ditch (RMP DU021-103) in Rathcreedan and Collegeland townlands respectively are likely to indicate further prehistoric activity in the wider area.

2.3. Early Medieval Period (c. 5th – 12th Century A.D.)

Rathcoole was already part of the see lands of Dublin before 1170 AD (i.e., prior to the Anglo-Norman conquest), which suggests that there was an early medieval (pre-Norman) church site here (Bradley et al., 1986). The presence of a plain granite cross in the churchyard also supports this view (RMP DU021-030003). There is other recorded early medieval ecclesiastical activity in the wider area, such as the five holy wells (one of which is in Rathcoole village), an ecclesiastical site in Coolmine and the monastic foundation of St Mosacra in Saggart village.

In addition to this, two enclosures located c.640m to the north at Commons (RMP DU021-029) and c.2km to the northwest at Ballynakelly could be an indication of either prehistoric or early medieval occupation. The 'rath' element in the townland names of Rathcoole and Rathcreddan to the north-west could be an indication of an early medieval presence in the area in the form of ringforts, which are usually early medieval in date.

2.4. Medieval Period (c. 12th – early 16th Century A.D.)

The medieval borough of Rathcoole was established by the archbishops of Dublin, possibly in the early 13th century, but by at least 1242 (Bradley et al., 1986). The governing charter survives (a relative rarity), constituting a confirmatory grant of Archbishop Luke Netterville (1288-55) that confirmed to the burgesses of Rathcoole the liberties and customs of Bristol and permitted them to hold their burgages at an annual rent of 12d (MacNiocaill 1964, cited in Bradley et al., 1986). An additional grant survives which gave the burgesses the common rights of pasture and of cutting turf on the mountain of Slestoll (McNeill 1950, cited

in Bradley et al., 1986). According to an extent of 1326, there were 66 burgesses, rendering 101s per annum in rent, but no mention of any major episcopal buildings (ibid.).

Rathcoole formed a small manor, which belonged to the Archbishop of Dublin but was overseen by a portreeve or provost (an administrative or fiscal supervisor). It was a linear settlement, with a triangular market place located at the western end of the main street and the church and graveyard at the eastern end, with grasslands and commonage on its outskirts. A watermill is mentioned in the extent of 1326 and again in 1547, though its location is unknown (McNeill 1950 & D'Alton 1838, cited in Bradley et al., 1986). It is possible that it was on the site of the corn mill shown on the first edition OS map, where a mill is recorded in 1670 (Cf. Section 3.3 below; Ua Broin 1943). Cartographic analysis also identified a small square enclosure designated as glebe land, with what appears to be a leat along one side, c. 265m north-east of the subject lands. At least two fortified houses (presumably late medieval in date, locations unknown) are mentioned in the mid-17th century Civil Survey, which suggests that the borough prospered into the 15th century. The present Church of Ireland church occupies the site of the medieval parish church (DU021-030001), which was assigned in the 13th century to St Patrick's Cathedral (Ball 1905, Vol. III, 125). In 1630 the church was described as in 'good repair' (Ronan 1941, 72).

Along with neighbouring Saggart, Rathcoole was situated in a frontier position on the edge of the Pale. Throughout the next few centuries, the village was affected by Irish and English skirmishes. In 1580 during the rebellion of Viscount Baltinglass, the settlements of Rathcoole, Saggart and Coolmine were burned. In 1596 it is recorded by Christopher Peyton, the Auditor of Ireland and the owner of the village at the time, as a 'poor town lay waste and unmanned, being pillaged by the rebels and burnt by the soldiers' (Ball 1905, Vol. III, 120).

2.5. Post-Medieval Period

Although Rathcoole was maintained as a defence post located just beyond the Pale, it was recorded as being a stronghold of the Irish in the 1641 Rebellion and most of the inhabitants supported the native Irish cause. Subsequent to various attacks and counter attacks by the Irish and English, a garrison was placed in the town by the Government. The town began to thrive and at the time of the Civil Survey in 1654 it was noted as having many habitable houses and cabins, as well as two old castles and the ruin of a chapel (Simington, 291).

By the late 18th century, the poverty and 'mud cabins' or 'clay huts' of the village inhabitants were noted by travellers through the town (St John Joyce 1912, 230 & Ball 1905, Vol. III, 123). A description by Campbell in 1777 (Joyce 230) referred to Rathcoole as "...mostly composed of clay huts.....awkwardly built and so arranged, that even Wales would have been ashamed of them".

Accommodation for such travellers was provided for in the village however, with a 'very good inn kept by a Mr Leedom' in 1789 (Ball 1905, Vol. III, 124). A new inn, The Old Munster Arms Hotel, was built. It became

a coaching inn when a weekly coach service between Dublin and Limerick began around 1760, a journey which took four days to complete. Fresh horses, supplied by the Royal Garter Stables near the present Citywest, took the coach to the next coaching inn: there was one at Blackchurch and another at the Red Cow.

In the mid-19th Century Lewis records the village as having 112 inhabitants, with a patent for holding fairs. He mentions that the land was fertile and was under profitable cultivations. Rathcoole Church and two schools were also present at this time in the small village (Lewis 1837). The National Inventory for Architectural Heritage dates a number of buildings in Rathcoole to this period.

The village was the first stage on the coach road from Dublin heading southwest. One later 19th century traveller, John Loveday, observed that it was ‘a very fine made way of considerable breadth with only one turnpike between Dublin and Naas, at which to his surprise no more than a halfpenny a horse was charged’ (Ball 1905, Vol. III, 124).

2.6. Cartographic Sources

2.6.1. Down Survey Map (1656)

The Down Survey barony map shows the parish of “Racoole” and a routeway named “the high way to the Naas” running through it (Figure 3). In the village of Rathcoole, a church labelled “Oldchurch” is depicted along with what looks like two large houses and possibly some other smaller structures. A short distance away at Sagard (Saggart) a cluster of buildings is depicted including ‘2 castles’ and a ‘stump of a castle’. On the parish map some additional structures are shown and the river ‘Cammack’ is named (Figure 4)



Figure 3 Down Survey Map of the Barony of Newcastle (L)

Figure 4 Down Survey Map of Parish of Rathcoole (R)

2.6.2. Rocque’s Map of the County of Dublin 1760

On Rocque’s map of 1760 Rathcoole village is depicted as linear with houses lining both sides of the road in and open fields are beyond (Figure 5). The church is noted at the east end of the village and other features labelled are a charter school, ‘The Commons’ possibly referring to common grazing land and a lime kiln. A

stream is depicted running north-south through the village. The proposed development area is shown as open greenfield with no development indicated. The village of Saggart is shown to the east.

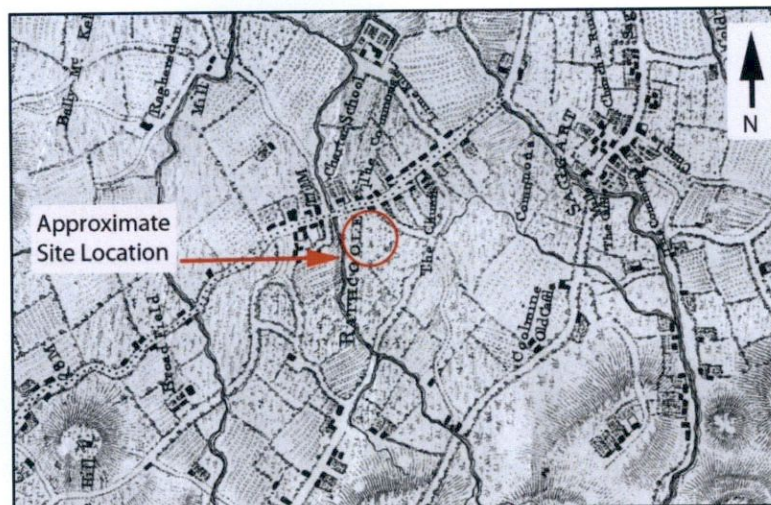


Figure 5 Extract of Rocque's Map of the County of Dublin 1760

2.6.3. Taylor's Environs of Dublin 1816

There are no major changes depicted on Taylor's map since the earlier map by Rocque. Houses are depicted lining both sides of the road and the charter school and church are once again labelled (Figure 6). A college is depicted on a road to the north of Rathcoole and a Glebe house is depicted next to the church. Two inns are depicted, one in the centre of the village and one at the west end. Mills are depicted at the east end of the village and further east an expanded Saggart is also shown.

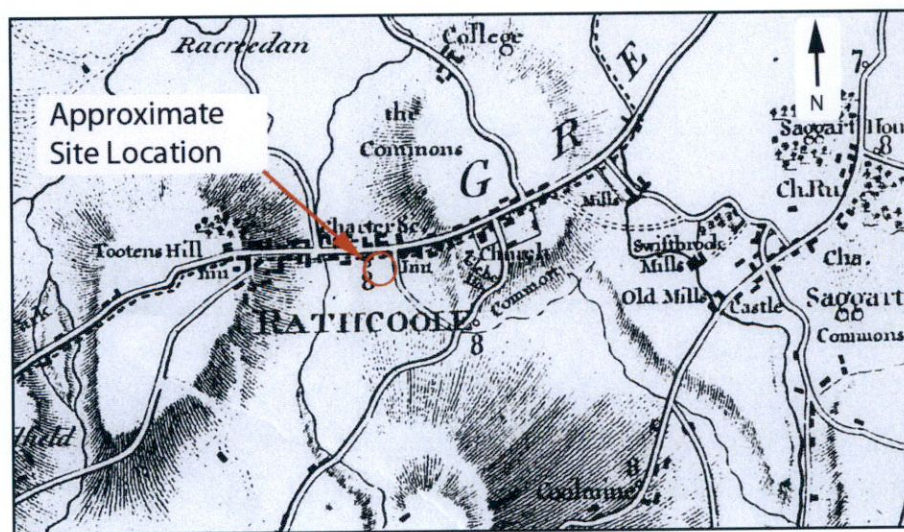


Figure 6 Extract of Taylor's map of the Environs of Dublin 1816

2.6.4. First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1837

At the time of the first edition 6-inch OS map both sides of the road are lined with buildings and individual linear plots are depicted to the rear (Figure 7). At the west end of the village St Bridget's well is marked, as well as a police station. At the east end of the village the church and Glebe house are shown, along with a post office and Rathcoole House. A corn mill is depicted beyond the end of the village to the east (not shown). The subject site is depicted to the rear of a house, built c.1820 which is still present today and is listed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS no. 323) and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH no. 11213023). The proposed development extends to the rear of this structure as a long linear plot of land, perpendicular to the Main Street and perhaps is reflective of an earlier burgage plot, a property division, dating to the late medieval period.

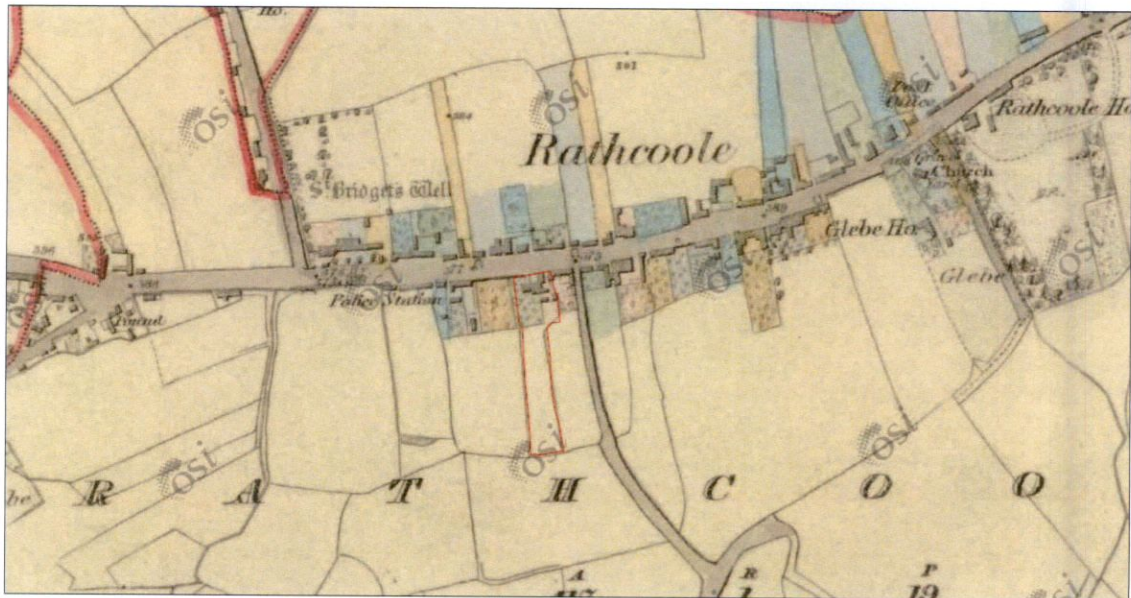


Figure 7 First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1837) with Proposed Development Site outlined in red

2.6.5. Historic 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (1888-1911)

There is little change on the historic 25 inch to the mile OS map (Figure 8). The rear linear plot of the proposed development remains undeveloped. A watercourse/drain is depicted along the western and southern boundary of the site. A building depicted on the first edition map is now labelled "Rectory", there is a court house, and a school is also depicted at the west end of the village. St Bridget's well is still marked and the Glebe House is now labelled Rathcoole Lodge and Dispensary. Beyond the church and graveyard and Rathcoole House at the east end of the village a smithy is depicted.

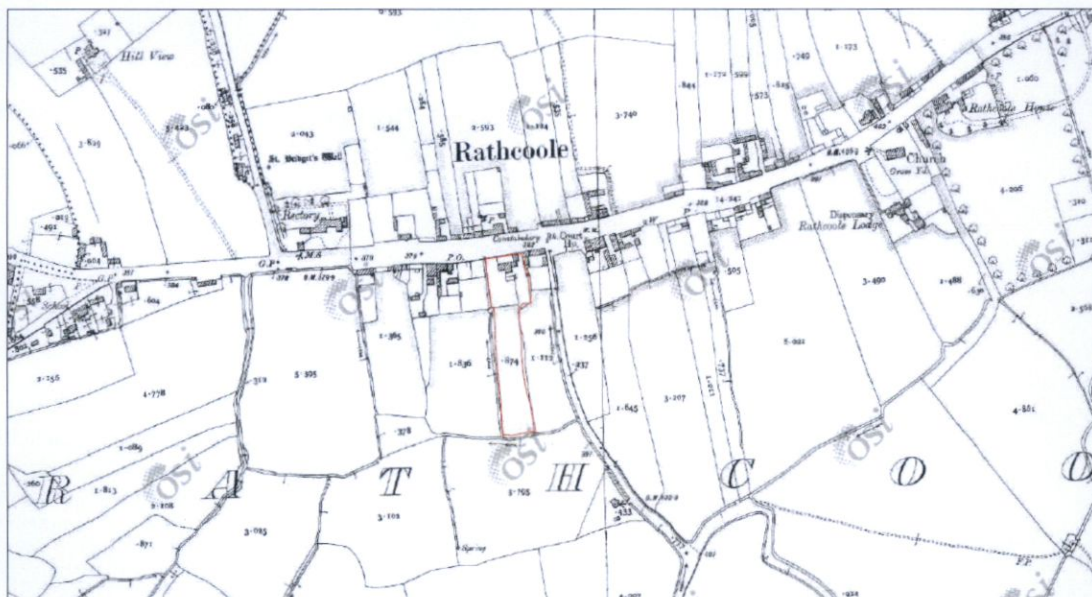


Figure 8 Historic 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (1888-1911) with site location outlined in red

2.7. Recorded Monuments

There are no recorded monuments within the study area, however the site is within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for Rathcoole Village (RMP DU021-030, Figure 9). In the wider area the Church of Ireland church located c. 365m to the east-northeast occupies the site of the medieval parish church which was assigned in the 13th century to St. Patrick's Cathedral and an associated graveyard, graveslab and holy well are also recorded at the site (RMP DU021-030/001-004). A graveslab (RMP DU021-021005) and a 16th / 17th Century house (RMP DU021-030007) are also recorded within Rathcoole village however their precise locations are unknown. The Down Survey (1656) map depicts dwellings at Rathcoole and The Poitín Stíl at the west end of the village, which is reputedly dated to 1649, may be one of these buildings.

The following is a table of sites located in the environs of the village of Rathcoole but outside the proposed development area:

Table 1: Recorded Monuments in the Environs of Rathcoole Village

RMP Number & Townland	Class	Description
DU021-030001 Rathcoole	Church	The present Church of Ireland church occupies the site of medieval parish church which was assigned in the 13th century to St. Patrick's Cathedral. (Ball 1905, 125). In 1630 the church was in good repair (Ronan 1941, 72). A graveslab stands in the graveyard SE of present C of I church (DU021-03003-). This has been trimmed down to form a Latin Cross (Ó hÉalidhe 1973, 53). It is formed from granite and bears a Latin Cross in low relief with rounded hollow in the angles and a double raised ring (dims. H 0.87m, Wth 0.71m, T 0.23m). Austin Cooper's diaries from the 18th century (Price 1942, 54) also describes a stone with traces of a granite cross near a graveslab in the present C of I churchyard (DU021-03005-). The precise location of this monument is unknown.
DU021-030002 Rathcoole	Graveyard	This walled, roadside graveyard in Rathcoole village encloses the site of a medieval parish church (DU021-030001-) and a graveslab (DU021-030003-).
DU021-030003 Rathcoole	Graveslab	Located in the present C of I churchyard SE of the Protestant church. This was formerly a cross-inscribed graveslab which was re-worked to form a Latin cross.

RMP Number & Townland	Class	Description
		The stone is granite (L 1.61m, Wth 0.67m, T 0.25m). The slab bears a Latin ringed cross in low relief with round hollows in the angles and a slight expansion at the top (Swords, K. ed.2009, 81).
DU021-030004 Rathcoole	Ritual site - holy well	This well has been filled in. In the 1970's when it was still venerated water was piped from the well into a stone basin on the roadside N of Rathcoole Village (Ó Danachair 1958, 60). There are no visible surface remains.
DU021-030005 Rathcoole	Graveslab	No details available.
DU021-030006 Collegeland, Rathcoole, Tootenhill	Redundant record	There is no evidence in file to corroborate this entry. Listed in RMP (1998) as 'Dwelling possible'. It may be based on the 17th Down Survey reference to four houses in 1655. The record has been re-assessed and the evidence is not adequate to include this site in the revised RMP (Geraldine Stout 08/12/2011).
DU021-030007 Rathcoole	16th/17 th century	In the mid-17th century Rathcoole is said to have contained many good houses (Ball 1902-20, 2, 123). The Down Survey (1655-6) map shows dwellings at Rathcoole. The Poitín Stíl is reputedly dated to 1649 and maybe one of these buildings. It is a two-storey, three bay building. The roof is hipped and recently thatched with rye.
DU021-031 Rathcoole	Font	This is a hemispherical pieces of granite with hollowed upper surface (diam. 0.60m, D 0.45m). It is situated beside a fence in a field known as the 'trough field'. It narrows to a point along the inner base. Local tradition records that it was used as a holy water font attached to a local church (Ua Broin 1943, 73, 85). Testing carried out in 2003 recommended the font be moved to a safer location in advance of development.
DU021-033 Rathcoole	Redundant record	According to Ua Broin (1943, 82) there was a curving depression on the commons land S of Rathcoole close to what he refers to as a winding passage. This feature he interpreted as the 'rath of cumhal'. The 'winding passage' is a naturally formed valley of a stream. There are no surface indications to suggest that there was any man-made feature here (Healy 1974, 24).



Figure 9 Zone of Archaeological Potential around the Historic Village of Rathcoole

2.8. Record of Protected Structures and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

There is an entry on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) located in the northern part of the subject site (RPS no. 323, NIAH no. 11213023). The structure is a detached two storey house dated to c. 1820. No works are proposed to the body of the structure in this development and any indirect impacts will be assessed by another suitably qualified specialist.

Rathcoole forms part of an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) (South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022) on the basis that it “contains a variety of landmark seventeenth to nineteenth-century structures and some remaining medieval landscape features in the extant linear plots behind the Main Street properties” (Cronin and Associates, 2015). The village is considered to exhibit distinct character and qualities based on its built form and layout. The northern end of the proposed site lies within the proposed ACA.

2.9. Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

There are no stray finds or artefacts recorded from the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland directly linked to the townland or village of Rathcoole. However, Joyce (1921, 227) refers to a gold find, possibly a torc found between Saggart and Rathcoole in 1837:

“In 1837 there was dug up at a place called Hogtherne, between Saggart and Rathcoole, a ring of pure gold.....it was probably, one of the gold torcs so frequently found through the country, specimens of which are preserved in the various museums”

2.10. Summary of Previous Investigations

There have been no previous archaeological investigations carried out within the study area, however, several archaeological investigations have been carried out in the village itself, to the north and south of Main Street and including a site immediately to the west of the proposed development. During monitoring for this development of three apartment blocks and underground parking to the rear of Rathcoole Inn, no archaeological material was revealed during the two phases (geotechnical & construction) of groundworks (Licence No. 02E1565).

Archaeological monitoring at Aubrey Manor to the north of the Main Street in 2014 revealed linear field boundaries that may reflect earlier medieval burgage plots aligned north/south (Licence No. 14E0094). The boundaries were c. 25m apart (5 perches wide), reflecting the narrow nature of the property / burgage plots that extended perpendicular to the Main Street (O'Donovan 2016). Historic settlement was clearly orientated on the street front and is illustrated on early historic maps of the village such as the Down Survey Map of 1656 and Rocque's map of the village in 1760 (Figure 4 and Figure 6).

Archaeological test excavation on the site of the Peyton Housing Estate development in 2003 (Licence No. 03E0765) uncovered no archaeological material. A font or bullaun stone was identified on the margins of

the housing estate along its northern boundary to the rear of the main street (RMP DU021-031) and the area of the site was left as open space.

Two pit features were uncovered beside Rathcoole House and excavated in 2015 when the building was renovated (Licence No. 14E0457). One was stone-lined and the other partially and both produced pottery sherds from the 13th century. This suggests that the focus of the medieval village was around the site of Rathcoole House and the adjacent historic church and graveyard site which are located over 400m east of the subject site.

Despite its known archaeological and historical background, relatively few archaeologically significant features or material have been identified during previous works carried out in the surrounding area. Brief details of those works are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Archaeological Investigations within the Environs of the Proposed Development Site

Licence Reference/Licensee	Location	Type of Investigation and Findings
00E0825, Ruth Elliot	Saggart, Rathcoole, and Newcastle	Monitoring of linear development, no archaeology found in Rathcoole
02E0081, Finola O' Carroll	Main Street, Rathcoole	Testing. No archaeology.
02E0090, Brendan O'Riordan	St. Jude's, Main Street, Rathcoole	Testing. No archaeology.
02E1314, John Kavanagh	Tay Lane, Rathcoole	Testing. No archaeology.
02E1565, John Channing	Main Street, Rathcoole (immediately west of the proposed development area)	Monitoring. No archaeology.
02E1651, Emmett Stafford	26 Beechwood Lawns, Rathcoole	Testing. No archaeology.
03E0195, Claire Walsh	Stoney Lane, Rathcoole	Testing. No archaeology.
03E0765, Donald Murphy	Stoney Road, Rathcoole	Testing. A font (DU021-031) was located within the northern boundary of the development and appeared to have been dumped there. The assessment recommended the font be moved to a safer location in advance of development.
03E0846, Brendan O'Riordan	Main Street, Rathcoole	Monitoring. No archaeology.
07E1080, Nikolah Gilligan	Rathcoole House	Testing. No archaeology.
13E0442, Antoine Giacometti	Courthouse, Rathcoole	Monitoring. No archaeology.
14E0094, Ed O'Donovan	Aubrey Manor, north of Main Street	Monitoring, Linear field boundaries that may reflect earlier burgage plots aligned north-south.
14E0457, John Tierney	Rathcoole House, Main Street	Monitoring and excavation. Two stone-lined medieval pits
15E0570, M. Byrne	Scoil Chronáin, Main Street, Rathcoole	Monitoring. No archaeology found

3. TEST EXCAVATION RESULTS, LICENCE NO. 23E0025

3.1. Introduction

Archaeological testing was carried out over a single day on 16th January 2023. Test trenches were mechanically excavated using a 13-tonne tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket (1.8m wide) under strict archaeological direction. Trenches were set out using GPS. The purpose of the testing was to establish if there were any archaeological remains on the site and if so, the nature and extent of any such remains and the impact of the proposed development on them.

3.2. Methodology

In total, 6 trenches measuring approximately 93 linear metres were excavated across the site (Table 3, Figure 10, Plates 1-6).

The northern part of the subject site contains the Protected Structure (RPS ref. 323); a large shed; and hard landscaped areas in use as access roads and carparks and as such was not considered for test trench assessment principally due to the reduced archaeological potential and the need to maintain access. One trench was proposed for excavation in the location of the carparking area but following consultation with the Client, this trench was relocated to the green space area to preserve the carpark surface.

All trenches were excavated in c. 0.2m spits to the surface of archaeological or potential archaeological deposits or to the underlying natural subsoil, whichever was encountered first. Any potential archaeological features were assessed by the licensed archaeologist, then cleaned and if deemed necessary, a hand-dug test slot was excavated to establish their archaeological nature, extent, and character. Photographs, plans and written recording sheets were used to record the trenches and any features of potential archaeological interest.

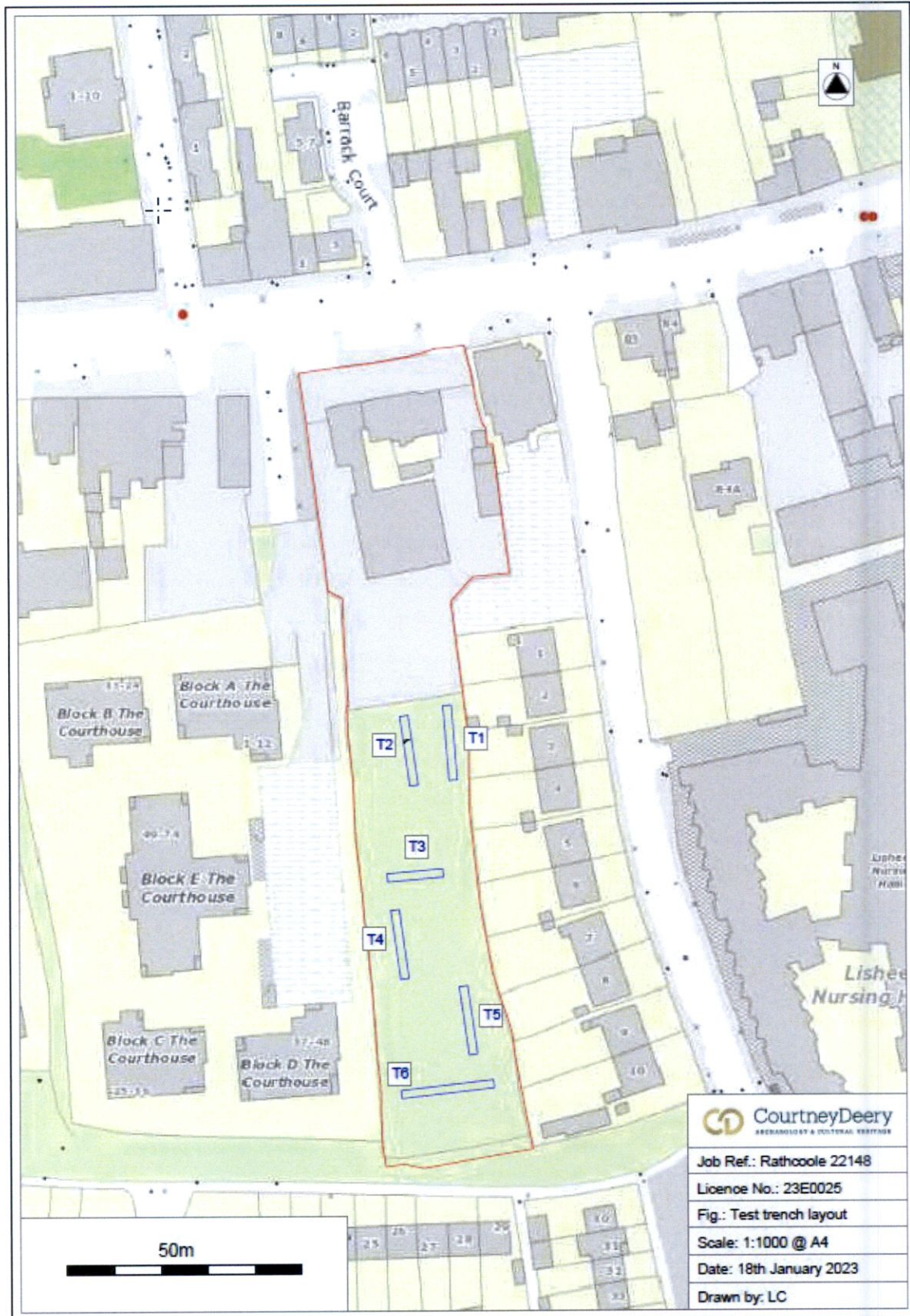


Figure 10 Test trench layout for 23E0025

Trench No.	Dimensions (L X B X D in metres)	Orientation	Comment
1	16 x 1.8 x 0.90-1.00	N/S	Relocated from original M5 position. Two cultivation furrows present.
2	15 x 1.8 x 1.00-1.20	N/S	No archaeology found
3	12 x 1.8 x 0.95-1.10	E/W	No archaeology found. Large concentration of modern rubbish
4	15 x 1.8 x 0.90-1.00	N/S	No archaeology found
5	15 x 1.8 x 0.6-0.65	E/W	No archaeology found
6	20 x 1.8 x 0.6-1.20	N/S	No archaeology found. Overcut (~0.30m in depth) in central portion of trench to investigate subsoil

Table 3 Test trench details 23E0025

The stratigraphic sequence was generally uniform across the six trenches. A shallow grass sod overlay a crushed stone surface in place from the time of the site's use as a carpark or compound in the mid-2010's (visible on aerial images from at least 2016 onwards). This topmost combined layer was 0.2m in depth. A light to mid-brown silty clay deposit, between 0.3-0.7m in depth, underlay the crushed stone layer. This deposit was generally deeper to the north. This layer is likely to at least have partially accumulated through centuries long cultivation of the site with the ground to the south overlooking the site allowing for soil creep i.e., the movement of soil down slope, often initially displaced by ploughing. Sometimes termed a 'plough zone', this deposit contained occasional animal bone inclusions and several concentrations of modern rubbish including frequent car-parts. The tyres and rusted machine parts encountered likely relate to the plot's use as a garage in previous decades (pers. comm. Client). This deposit overlay the subsoil that varied between a dark grey compacted clay with frequent limestone to a yellow stoney clay. Other subsoil variations included localized patches of mottled grey and yellow silt or gritty stoney sandy clay.

The only features of note identified during the course of test excavations were cultivation or plough furrows in two of the trenches; two in Trench 1 and a single one in Trench 4. Orientated in the same direction, roughly north/south, they were filled with a similar material to the overlying 'plough zone' and indicate the site's use for agriculture in the past. No pottery or other artefacts was identified from the fills. They averaged 0.50m in width and test-slots in the furrows saw a depth of between 0.10-0.20m. While the furrows can't be accurately dated as no dateable finds were identified, their orientation roughly perpendicular to the Main Street respect early modern or potentially even late medieval plot layouts and as such could have been formed during either of these periods.

3.3. Results

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1. Summary

This Archaeological Impact Assessment was carried out in response to a Further Information request from the planning authority, South Dublin County Council, under ref. 22A/0323. It comprises a desk study and archaeological test excavation.

The proposed development site is located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for the medieval village of Rathcoole, however there are no individual recorded monuments within or near the development lands and no stray finds have been recorded in the area by the National Museum of Ireland. Cartographic, historic and aerial sources examined have not revealed any features of archaeological potential within the lands. The linear plot within which the development lies is reminiscent of medieval linear burgage plots, similar to those found on the northern side of Main Street.

Six trenches were excavated in the green space area across the proposed development site, to the rear of the Protected Structure (RPS ref. 323) and its associated workshop and surrounding hard landscaping. No features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during the course of test excavations. Test excavations revealed that the green space area has been subject to significant earlier disturbance indicated by the presence of modern rubbish and the remains of a crushed stone surface. It is likely that this area was always in use as farm land and never developed and that any settlement activity that may have taken place was carried out at the northern end of the site fronting Main Street where the existing house is located.

4.2. Impact Assessment

The testing did not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance within the proposed development site. The site is located in the Zone of Archaeological Potential for Rathcoole village and as such there remains a potential (albeit low), that isolated subsurface features or stray finds may survive relating to the medieval or later activity associated with the settlement of the village. This potential however increases in the areas closest to the Main Street where medieval activity may have taken place, this material may have been removed or truncated by the construction of the protected structure at the northern end of the site in the early 19th century.

The historic integrity and legibility of the linear plot within which the development lies will be retained in the development layout.

4.3. Recommendations

4.3.1. Archaeological Monitoring

Given the site's location within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for Rathcoole village (RMP DU021-030), it is recommended that all ground disturbances associated with the development be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

The monitoring will ensure the full recognition of, and the proper excavation and recording of, all archaeological soils, features, finds and deposits which may be disturbed below the ground surface. Should any archaeological sites or features survive within the proposed development there will be a direct impact on them. All archaeological issues must be resolved to the satisfaction of the DHLGH and the National Museum of Ireland. The archaeologist will have authority to inspect all excavation to natural soil level and to temporarily halt the excavation work in the findspot, if and as necessary, and to ensure the temporary protection of any features of archaeological importance identified.

The developer's attention is drawn to National Monuments Legislation (1930–2004), which states that the developer may need to make provision to allow for, and to fund, the necessary archaeological monitoring, inspection and excavation works that may be needed on the site during the site preparation and construction phases of development.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to approval by the National Monuments Section of the Heritage and Planning Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

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5.2. Online Resources:

www.excavations.ie

www.downsurvey.tcd.ie

www.heritagemaps.ie

www.libguides.ucd.ie

www.logainm.ie

PLATES



Plate 1 Trench 1 from the north, note cultivation furrow in centre of trench



Plate 2 Trench 2 from the south



Plate 3 Trench 3 from the west



Plate 4 View of buried rubbish deposit exposed in Trench 3



Plate 5 Trench 4 from the north



Plate 6 Section through cultivation furrow in Trench 4 from the south



Plate 7 Trench 5 from the north



Plate 8 Trench 6 from the west

APPENDIX 1 NATIONAL MONUMENTS LEGISLATION 1930-2004.

All archaeological sites have the full protection of the national monuments legislation (Principal Act 1930; Amendments 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004).

In the 1987 Amendment of Section 2 of the Principal Act (1930), the definition of a national monument is specified as:

any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections,

any artificial cave, stone or natural product, whether forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position,

any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient

(i) tomb, grave or burial deposit, or

(ii) ritual, industrial or habitation site,

and

any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site...

Under Section 14 of the Principal Act (1930):

It shall be unlawful...

to demolish or remove wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with any such national monument without or otherwise than in accordance with the consent hereinafter mentioned (a licence issued by the Office of Public Works National Monuments Branch),
or

to excavate, dig, plough or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in the proximity to any such national monument without or otherwise than in accordance...

Under Amendment to Section 23 of the Principal Act (1930),

A person who finds an archaeological object shall, within four days after the finding, make a report of it to a member of the Garda Síochána...or the Director of the National Museum...

The latter is of relevance to any finds made during a watching brief.

In the 1994 Amendment of Section 12 of the Principal Act (1930), all of the sites and 'places' recorded by the Sites and Monuments Record of the Office of Public Works are provided with a new status in law. This new status provides a level of protection to the listed sites that is equivalent to that accorded to 'registered' sites [Section 8(1), National Monuments Amendment Act 1954] as follows:

The Commissioners shall establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where they believe there are monuments and the record shall be comprised of a list of monuments and such places and a map or maps showing each monument and such place in respect of each county in the State.

The Commissioners shall cause to be exhibited in a prescribed manner in each county the list and map or maps of the county drawn up and publish in a prescribed manner information about when and where the lists and maps may be consulted.

- In addition, when the owner or occupier (not being the Commissioners) of a monument or place which has been recorded, or any person proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such monument or place, he shall give notice in writing of his proposal to carry out the work to the Commissioners and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Commissioners, commence the work for a period of two months after having given the notice.

The National Monuments Amendment Act 2004

The National Monuments Amendment Act enacted in 2004 provides clarification in relation to the division of responsibilities between the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Finance and Arts, Sports and Tourism together with the Commissioners of Public Works. The Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government will issue directions relating to archaeological works and will be advised by the National Monuments Section and the National Museum of Ireland. The Act gives discretion to the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to grant consent or issue directions in relation to road developments (Section 49 and 51) approved by An Bord Pleanála and/or in relation to the discovery of National Monuments

14A. (1) The consent of the Minister under section 14 of this Act and any further consent or licence under any other provision of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004 shall not be required where the works involved are connected with an approved road development.

(2) Any works of an archaeological nature that are carried out in respect of an approved road development shall be carried out in accordance with the directions of the Minister, which directions shall be issued following consultation by the minister with the Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

Subsection 14A (4) Where a national monument has been discovered to which subsection (3) of this section relates, then

- (a) the road authority carrying out the road development shall report the discovery to the Minister
- (b) subject to subsection (7) of this section, and pending any directions by the minister under paragraph (d) of this subsection, no works which would interfere with the monument shall be carried out, except works urgently required to secure its preservation carried out in accordance with such measures as may be specified by the Minister

The Minister will consult with the Director of the National Museum of Ireland for a period not longer than 14 days before issuing further directions in relation to the national monument.

The Minister will not be restricted to archaeological considerations alone, but will also consider the wider public interest.