



Cappagh, Clonburris SDZ (Tile 2)
County Dublin

Amended Method Statement for Licence No. 22E0719
to undertake Archaeological Excavation

Date: 15 November 2023
Applicant: David McIlreavy

1 INTRODUCTION

This method statement accompanies an application for the amendment of Licence No. 22E0719 to include excavation (preservation by record) of archaeological features identified at Tile 2, Clonburriss SDZ, Cappagh, County Dublin in advance of a permitted development (ITM 705980,732537). Excavation follows on from previous test trenching carried out in November 2022 and March 2023 within Tiles 2 and 3 of the permitted development (Murtagh 2023, Licence No. 22E0719) and a geophysical survey (Dowling 2022, Licence No. 22R0200).

Archaeological testing within Tile 2 revealed one area of archaeological interest. This comprises the possible remains of a recorded enclosure, DU017-036, which extends to the west into the Tile 3 development area (Figure 1). This was shown as a discontinuous curvilinear anomaly in the geophysical survey and revealed as a heavily truncated shallow curvilinear enclosure ditch in testing. Excavation and monitoring are currently underway in Tile 3 (under Licence No. 22E0719), located immediately adjacent (west) of Tile 2, in fulfilment of planning condition no. 26 as issued by South Dublin County Council (Ref. SDZ22A/0017).

Planning has now been granted for Tile 2 by South Dublin County Council (Ref.: SDZ22A/0018). Consequently, it is requested to extend the current Licence No. 22E0719 in order to cover a) the excavation of previously identified archaeological features associated with DU017-036, and b) monitor ground disturbances within Tile 2, in fulfilment of conditions (No. 27) attached to the grant of planning.

It is envisioned that excavation will commence on or after the 27th of November with monitoring of ground works continuing over the course of four weeks.

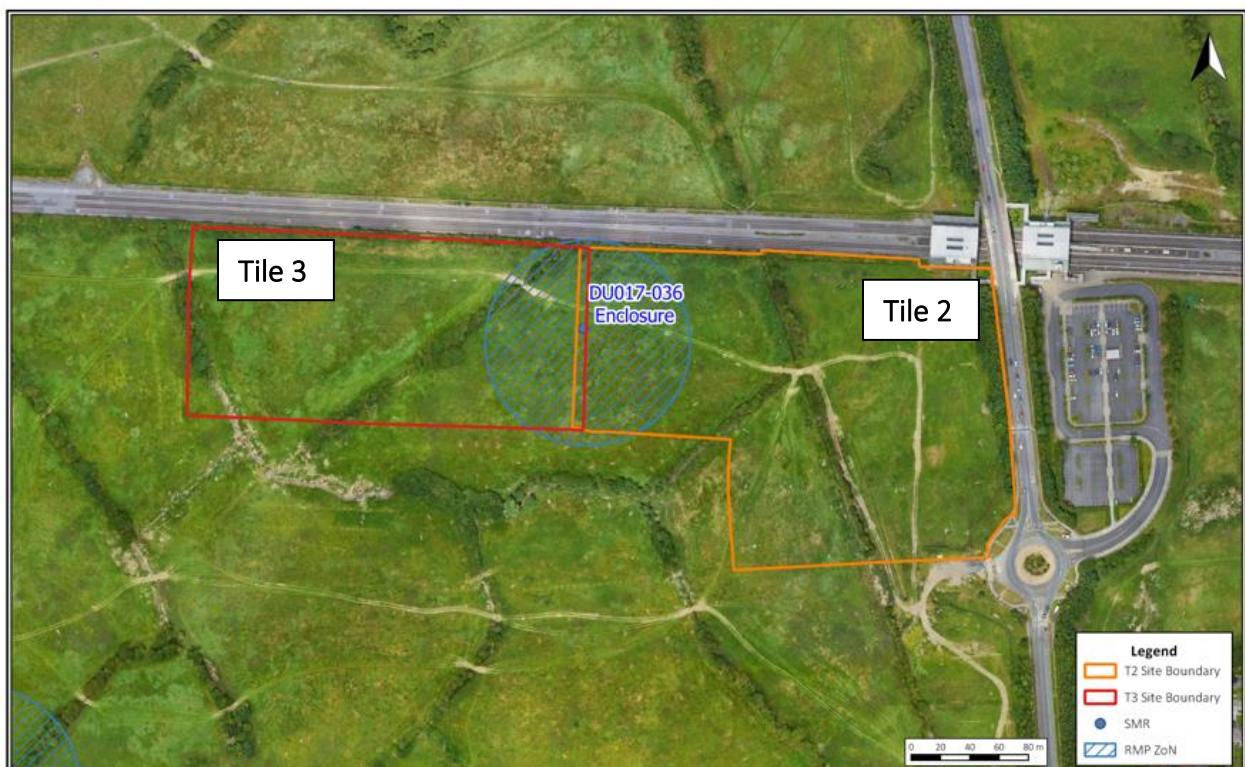


FIGURE 1: Site Location showing nearby recorded monuments

2 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The permitted development for Tile 2 will consist of the construction of a mixed-use development comprising 594 apartments, office floorspace, 4 retail units, a creche and urban square and all associated ancillary works in the Clonburris Development Areas CUCS3 & CSWS3 of the Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme 2019 (Planning Ref.: SDZ22A/0018).



FIGURE 2: Plan of Tile 2 permitted development

3 LOCATION DESCRIPTION

The archaeological and historical context was submitted with the original licence application for Licence No. 22E0719 in August 2022, and the reactivation application for excavation of Tile 3 submitted in July 2023. A summary of the testing results for Tile 2 are provided below.

3.1 2023 TESTING RESULTS

Archaeological testing and metal detection was carried out in November 2022 and March 2023 within Tiles 2 and 3 under Licence Nos. 22E0719 and 22R0359. The trenches targeted the zone of notification for recorded monument DU017-0036, geophysical anomalies and open green space to fully investigate the archaeological potential of the site.

Within Tile 2 of the development area one area of archaeological interest (AA1) was identified. This comprises the possible remains of enclosure DU017-036, which extends into Tile 3 to the west.

AA1 (eastern section)

AA1 was recorded in Trench 7 and 8 and consists of shallow linear features (C7.1 and C8.1) measuring between 1.52m and 2.05m wide and 0.4m to 0.48m deep (Plates 1 and 2; Figures 3 and 4). These features are filled by similar material in both trenches with the upper fill consisting of a compacted bright orange clay and the lower fill consisting of an orange clay with moderate amount of decayed stone present.

These features align with the curving geophysical anomaly identified at this location, which may relate to recorded monument DU017-036. The plotted location of this monument straddles both Tile 2 and 3, although the majority of the site lies in Tile 2. Given the features have a maximum depth of 0.48m, which is relatively shallow for an enclosing feature, it is possible that the site has been subject to horizontal truncation.

AA1 (western section)

The western section of enclosure DU017-036 is located within the Tile 3 development area with Trench 13 and 14 targeted the western projected extent of the possible enclosure DU017-036. One shallow linear feature was identified in Trench 13, which measured 1m in width and 0.48m deep (C13.1, Plate 3). Two fills were present, which differed slightly to those identified in Trenches 7 and 8. No features of archaeological potential were identified in Trench 14. It is possible that C13.1 relates to the enclosure site, but it may also relate to more recent agricultural activities.



Plate 1: Mid-excavation of linear feature C7.1,
 facing east



Plate 2: Mid-excavation of linear feature C8.1,
 facing northeast



Plate 3: Mid-excavation of linear feature C13.1, facing southwest

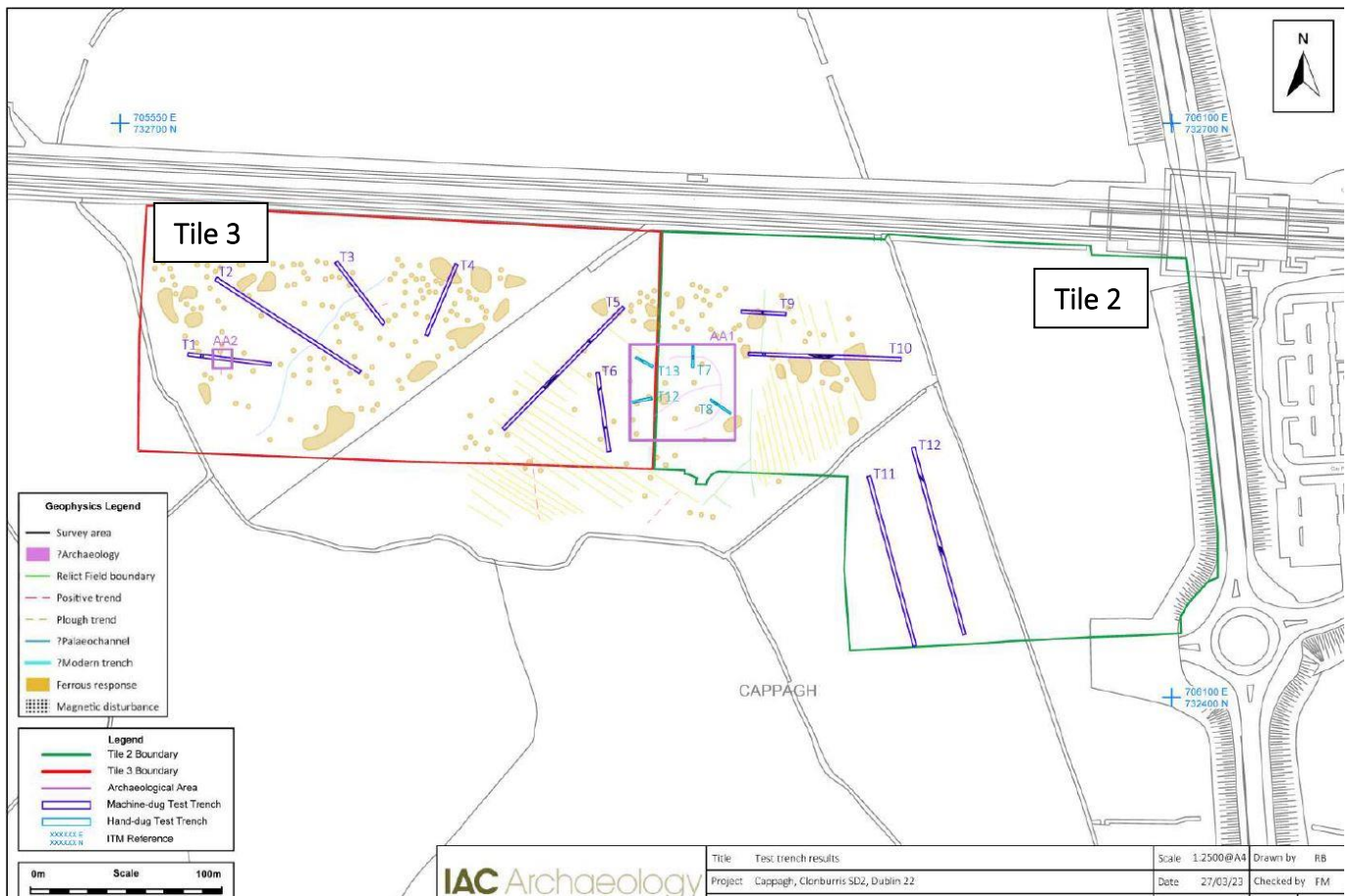


FIGURE 3: Testing Results in Tile 2 and Tile 3

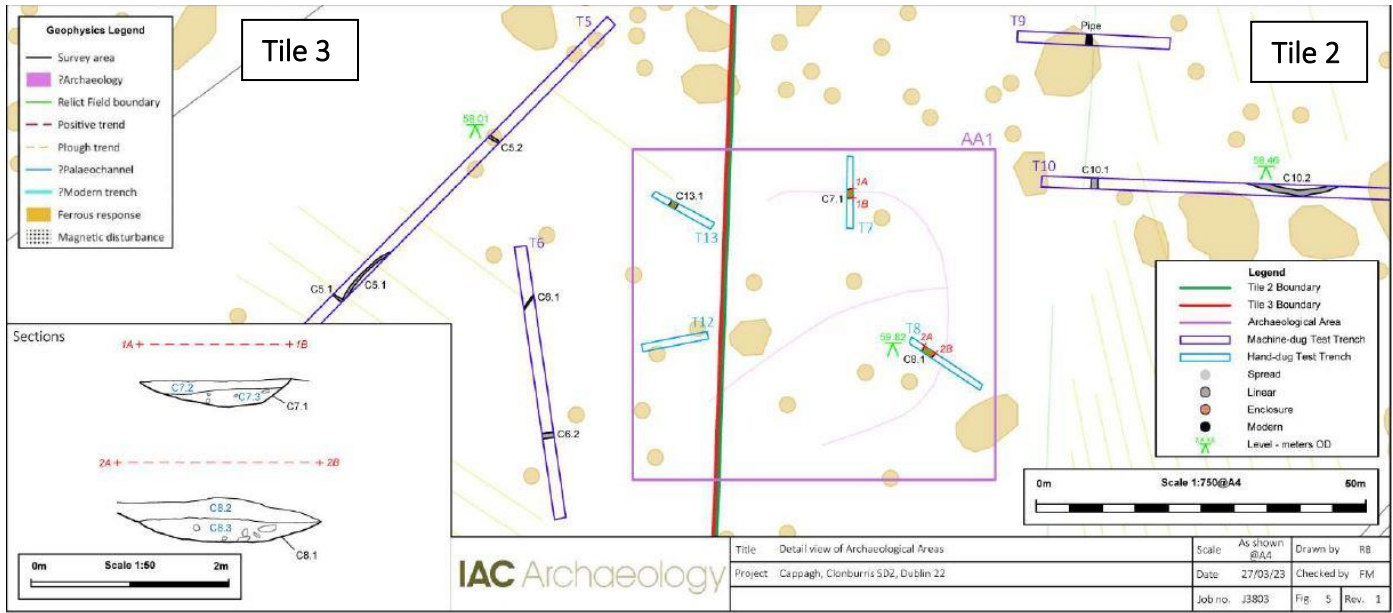


FIGURE 4: Detail of AA1

4 EXCAVATION STRATEGY

The proposed excavation strategy remains unchanged from the original method statement submitted in July 2023.

Excavation will involve preservation-by-record through appropriate rescue excavation of all archaeological features or deposits discovered by earlier investigations associated with AA1, comprising the heavily truncated remains of enclosure DU017-036, so as to mitigate impacts on the archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development (Figure 4).

The excavation areas will be mechanically stripped of topsoil to the level of the archaeological features. The topsoil stripping will be undertaken by a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Topsoil will be removed from the excavation areas in level spits of 0.15-0.20m in depth. This stripping will be subject to constant archaeological supervision and direction to ensure that the upper levels of any features are identified as early as possible. The stripping of the sites will commence at the location of the previously identified features. These features were sealed with geotextile following the completion of the test trenching. Topsoil stripping will cease just above the level of geotextile sealing the features and hand cleaning will commence at this point and will work outward from the centre of the previously identified features.

Topsoil stripping outside areas where known features occur will be undertaken in spits as described above. This careful removal of the topsoil will ensure that the upper levels of any features will be identified as early as possible. Upon the identification of any additional features machine stripping will cease and hand cleaning will commence in those areas.

The proposed excavation area in Table 1 below includes a 5m buffer from the edge of the archaeological features. The areas will be extended if required should features extend beyond these limits, and to maintain a c. 5m buffer around individual features (Figure 4). The National

Monuments Service will be informed in the event that it is required to extend the excavation areas set out below.

TABLE 1: List of proposed excavation areas

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS	PROPOSED SIZE	ITM
AA 1	50m x 55m	705842,732570

4.1 Recording Methods

All archaeological features and deposits will be fully excavated by hand and will be photographed, drawn and recorded. The composition, stratigraphic relationships and interpretation of all contexts will be recorded on *pro forma* context sheets during excavation. The soils and geology will also be recorded.

A detailed and comprehensive recording process will be maintained, to include the use of specific *pro forma* registering systems such as context records, sample records, drawing records, photograph records, human remains records, wood/timber records (if required), masonry records (if required), finds records, etc.

Comprehensive plans and cross-sectional drawings will be produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. Digital camera equipment will be used, and each feature will be recorded three-dimensionally using a combination of scaled drawings and surveying equipment. Photographs shall include a north point, photo board and appropriate ranging rod/scale. Digital cameras will have a pixel count of no less than four million pixels. Photographs that help to contextualise excavated features in their local environment will also be taken.

All site surveying works will be undertaken using GPS surveying equipment and related to Ordnance Datum and the Irish Transverse Mercator Grid (ITM). Site plans will record all identified archaeological features, and these will be scanned, digitised and georeferenced to ITM projection. The location of all finds and samples will be precisely georeferenced using a GPS.

4.2 Finds Retrieval Strategy

Every effort will be made to ensure the highest possible level of identification and retrieval of archaeological objects during the course of the excavation as per NMI Advice Notes for Excavators (NMI 2022). Advice on finds retrieval and conservation strategies will also be sought from the NMI if any particular circumstances or needs arise. Archaeological objects will be extracted from samples and processed for palaeo-environmental purposes; these will be integrated with the excavated artefactual assemblage.

Finds will be individually recorded per context and location in a register in accordance with NMI numbering conventions (ibid.). Finds will be individually bagged/packed using polythene bags, acid-free paper and plastic boxes as appropriate. All archaeological objects recovered from the site will be cleaned/washed, labelled and stored in accordance with the National Museum’s Guidelines for Excavators and Standards for the Care and Treatment of Archaeological Objects from Excavations. Any items recovered during the excavations which require urgent conservation, will be treated immediately by a professional conservator (Susannah Kelly). Should delicate waterlogged organic materials be encountered (e.g., at the base of a ditch), a professional conservator (Susannah Kelly)

will be consulted. Stabilisation of all artefacts (where necessary) will be carried out in consultation with a conservation specialist.

Finds will be housed temporarily on-site and thereafter stored at an appropriate location with facilities to ensure their proper storage. Details of archaeological objects will be entered in the NMI finds database registry to facilitate accession to the NMI. All finds will be stored in secure storage at Unit G1, Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow during post-excavation works. Ultimately, all finds will be transferred to the National Museum of Ireland following post-excavation and final reporting. Directions for the disposal or curation of such finds will be sought from the NMI.

4.3 Sampling Strategy

Should suitable deposits be encountered during the excavation, an Environmental Remains Strategy (ERS) document will be drafted by the Project Environmental Specialist (PES), Dr Ellen O'Carroll. An ERS is the written report or method statement for the palaeo-environmental archaeology aspects of a project. It will identify the different categories of environmental remains expected to be encountered and will detail the appropriate sampling strategies to be applied. The ERS will also set out the standards for analysis and reporting for each category of environmental remains, advising on the compilation and organisation of an Environmental Register (ER). The ERS will be revised throughout the course of the excavation to take into consideration new features and deposit types that may be revealed.

Once the samples are processed an Environmental Remains Assessment Report (ERAR) will be completed by the PES to advise on what samples should be fully analysed and reported on taking into account the research questions outlined in this document.

This document will be compiled with reference to the TII Palaeo-environmental sampling guidelines, retrieval, analysis and reporting of plant macro-remains, wood, charcoal, insects and pollen from archaeological excavations (McClatchie and O'Carroll 2015). A number of other guidelines issued by professional bodies and expert groups in Britain and Ireland will also be drawn upon in the drafting of this document, including the IAI: Environmental Sampling Guidelines for Archaeologists (Monk et al. 2007) and the English Heritage Guidelines (Campbell, Moffett and Straker 2011).

4.4 Human Remains Strategy

Should any human remains be discovered during the investigation, An Garda Síochána will be notified along with the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH, the Irish Antiquities Division of the National Museum of Ireland and the Dublin City Archaeologist. The treatment of human remains will follow best practice guidelines published by several authors (NMI 2019; Buckley, Murphy and O'Donnabháin 2004; Brickley and McKinley 2004). An Osteoarchaeologist (Maeve Tobin or Jenny Coughlan) will be made available for consultation should this be deemed appropriate. A suitable strategy will be implemented once all parties have been consulted.

5 CONSTRAINTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

No major constraints are envisaged on these works apart from normal Health and Safety matters in relation to on-site ground works and working in proximity to plant/machinery and underground services.

6 EXCAVATION TEAM

The excavation will be carried out with a team of the site director, 1no supervisor, and 3no assistant archaeologists. The team will be supported by a GPS surveyor.

It is estimated that works will take four weeks to complete commencing on or after the 27th of November 2023 subject to NMS approval.

7 SPECIALISTS

A team of specialists will be employed where required and may include the following.

- Radiocarbon Dating – 14CHRONO Centre
- Faunal Remains – Margaret McCarthy
- Palaeoenvironmental analysis/reconstruction – Ellen O’Carroll
- Lithics identification – Shane Delaney
- Small Finds and medieval pottery – Siobhan Scully
- Prehistoric pottery – Eoin Grogan
- Human Remains – Maeve Tobin or Jennie Coughlan

8 STORAGE

The site archive, and any finds, samples etc. would be kept in safe storage during the post-excavation stage. All necessary conservation would only be undertaken by a professional conservator. All finds will ultimately be housed in the National Museum Ireland at the Swords Collections Resource Centre.

The excavation archive shall be ordered, arranged, boxed and deposited with the statutory authorities in accordance with *Guidelines and Forms for the Transfer of Excavation Archives to National Monuments Service Archive* (National Monuments Service 2012) and *Guidelines for producing database record, for Archaeological Archives presented to National Monuments Service Archive* (National Monuments Service 2012).

9 REPORTING

A written report will be compiled that will set out the results of the archaeological excavation. If archaeological features are uncovered, dissemination of the results would take the form of a full report to publishable standard lodged with the Archaeological Licensing and Planning Unit of the NMS of the DoH/LGH and the NMI. This report will also contain an impact and mitigation section that makes recommendations with regards to any archaeological features that may be discovered. A summary of the report would also be submitted to the Excavation Bulletin within six weeks of

the end of fieldwork. Should results warrant it, wider dissemination in the form of full publication may be recommended.

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