



Cappagh, Clonburris SDZ
County Dublin

Method Statement to accompany Application to
reactivate Licence No. 22E0719 to undertake
Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring

Date: 13th July 2023
Applicant: Fergal Murtagh

1 INTRODUCTION

This method statement accompanies an application for the reactivation of Licence No. 22E0719 to carry out excavation (preservation by record) of archaeological features and the monitoring of topsoil stripping at Cappagh, County Dublin in advance of a permitted development (ITM 705707, 732566). Excavation follows on from previous test trenching carried out by the applicant in November 2022 and March 2023 (Licence No. 22E0719) and a geophysical survey (Dowling 2022, Licence No. 22R0200). Excavation and monitoring are being carried out to fulfil planning condition no. 26 as issued by South Dublin County Council (Ref. SDZ22A/0017).

Archaeological testing within the permitted development revealed two areas of archaeological potential, which have been designated as Archaeological Areas 1 and 2.

- AA1: This consists of a number of shallow linear features identified in Trenches 7, 8 and 14, which align with the curving anomaly identified in the geophysical survey at the location of recorded monument DU017-0036. No diagnostic material was identified during testing and the remains cannot be definitively interpreted as an enclosure site; however, the site remains listed as a recorded monument and is subject to statutory protection under the National Monuments Act.
- AA2: This consists of a metalled surface orientated northeast to southwest possibly associated with farm buildings.

The testing report concluded with the recommendation that preservation by record should be undertaken under licence to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) (Murtagh 2023).

It is also proposed to monitor all topsoil stripping associated with the construction of the permitted development. It is proposed that archaeological excavation will take place on or after the 14th August 2023 and continue for four weeks.



FIGURE 1: Site Location showing nearby recorded monuments

2 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Tile 2 (Figure 2)

Construction of a mixed-use development comprising 594 apartments, office floorspace, 4 retail units, a creche and urban square in the Clonburris Development Areas CUCS3 & CSWS3 of the Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme 2019 as follows, 594 apartments (255 one bedroom apartments, 307 two bedroom apartments and 32 three bedroom apartments). Mixed use development comprising, commercial office development in Block C of 6 storeys with parapet above to 7 storey equivalent on elevations, as well as a creche (c. 609sq. m) at ground floor and first floor of Block A. Vehicular access will be from the permitted Clonburris Southern Link Street (SDZ20A/0021) and R 113 to the east; Public Open Space/landscaping of c. 0.52 hectares (urban square) and linear open space (0.72 hectares) as well as a series of communal open spaces to serve apartments over undercroft level (and internal communal open space c. 685 sq.m).

The development will also provide for all associated works and infrastructure to facilitate the development to include all ancillary site development works including footpaths, landscaping boundary treatments, public, private open space areas, car parking (396 no. spaces in a mixture of undercroft spaces Block A, Block B&D and Block E&F) and bicycle parking (1,232 spaces at undercroft and surface levels), single storey ESB substations/bike/bin stores, green roofs, solar panels at roof level of apartments, plant areas within blocks and all ancillary site development/construction works; Permission is also sought for connection to water supply, and provision of foul drainage infrastructure.

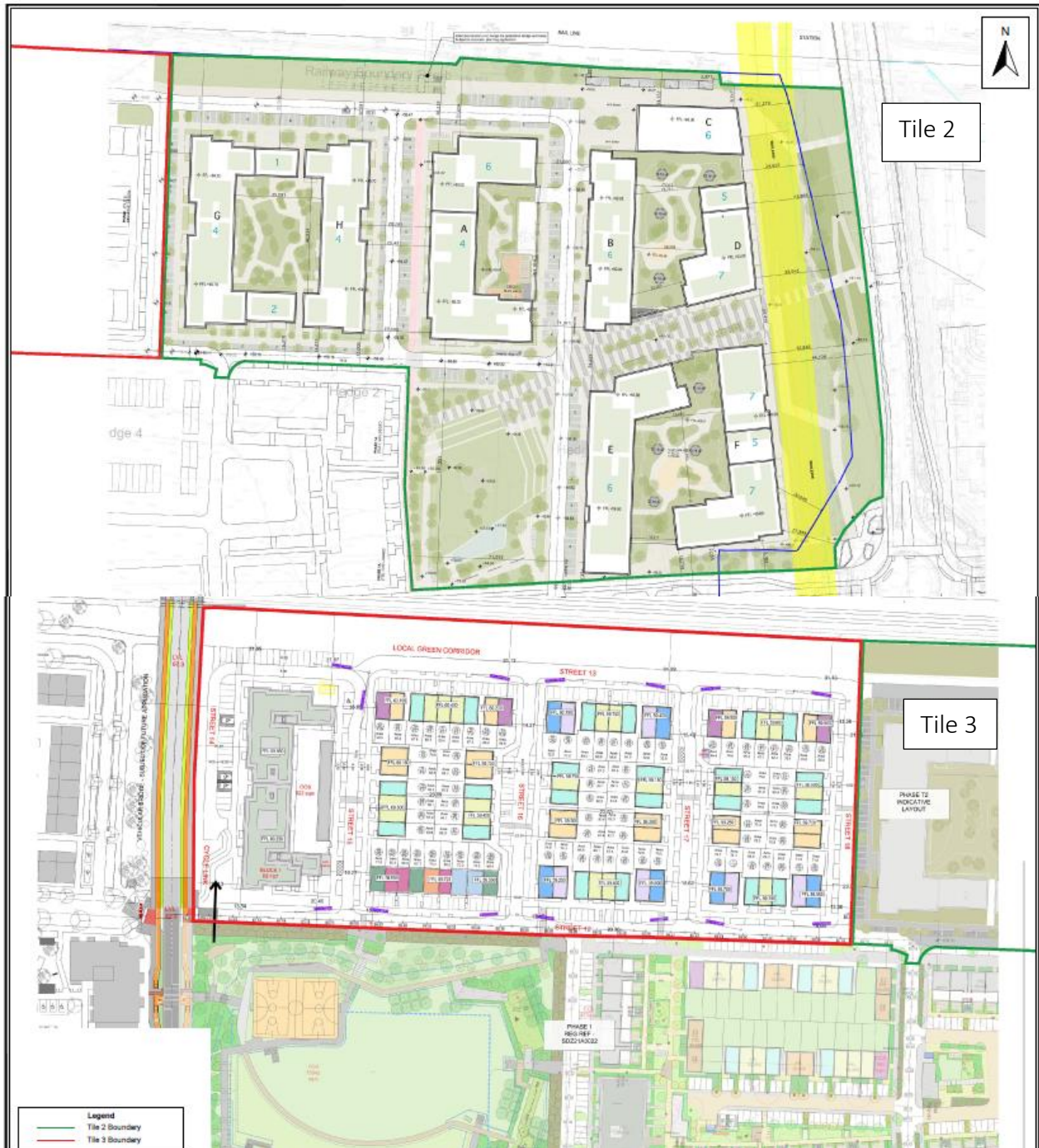


FIGURE 2: Plan of development

Tile 3 (Figure 2)

The permitted construction of 157 no. dwellings on a site of c. 3.45 hectares in the Clonburris South-West Development Area of the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme 2019 as follows:

- i. 81 no. houses comprising 4 no. 2-bedroom houses, 65 no. 3-bedroom houses and 12 no. 4-bedroom houses (all 2-no. storey with associated private open space and car parking);
- ii. 76 no. apartment units consisting of 26 no. 1-bedroom and 50 no. 2-bedroom units within Block 1 (4 no. storeys);

- iii. Vehicular access will be provided from the permitted street under SDZ21A/0022 and the permitted Clonburris Southern Link Street (SDZ20A/0021) and R113 (Fonthill Road) to the east;
- iv. All ancillary site development works including footpaths, landscaping boundary treatments, public and private open space areas, car parking (170 no. spaces) and bicycle parking (170 no. spaces), single-storey ESB sub-stations, bin and bicycle stores and all ancillary site development/construction works.

3 LOCATION DESCRIPTION

A summary of the archaeological and historic context for the area was included in the original method statement submitted with the application for Licence No. 22E0719 in August 2022. Included here are updated details of the investigations carried out to date within the immediate vicinity of Tiles 2 and 3.

3.1 2020 TESTING RESULTS

Archaeological testing and metal detection has recently been carried out in advance of the infrastructure development within the Clonburris SDZ under Licence Nos 20E0390 and 20R0168 and a number of the test trenches were excavated immediately south of the development area (Figure 3). A number of archaeological areas were identified within the wider tested area. Of particular significance to the current development area are AA1 and AA2 (O' Neill 2020). AA1 comprises three pits, with evidence for burning and charcoal, identified in Trench 55 in Cappagh to the east of the R113. No dating evidence was recovered from these pits during testing. AA2 comprises a single large pit, capped in clay and containing charcoal. The pit was identified in Trench 57 in Cappagh to the east of the R113. This may be the site of a charcoal production pit. No dating evidence was recovered during testing. AA2 lies across the existing field boundary to the east of AA1 in the field to the west. These sites have been subject to archaeological preservation by record, carried out by ACSU, although no Excavations Bulletin has been published for the work to date.

3.2 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

Geophysical survey was carried out by Ger Dowling in June 2022, under Licence No. 22R0200 (Figure 4). The geophysical survey, comprising high resolution magnetic gradiometry, was focused on five separate fields and covered an area of approximately 8ha. Despite the poor ground conditions at the site, the investigation revealed a number of features of potential archaeological significance, mostly centred in Field 3. A semi-circular, positive anomaly may depict the eastern circuit of a small, sub-circular enclosure, measuring some 36m in diameter (north—south). This feature may correspond to cropmark enclosure DU017-036, which appears to be bisected, east to west, by a possible ditch and is conceivably associated with several possible pits/spreads.

There is extensive evidence for past agricultural activity including a series of linear anomalies that appear to represent a relict field system(s) delimited by ditches. Two of these are potentially associated with former cultivation. Several very faint positive linear trends also hint at the potential presence of other ditches across the site; however, these are barely perceptible above the 'background' levels and their identification is highly tentative.



FIGURE 3: Previous archaeological testing (20E0390) immediately south of Tiles 2 and 3



FIGURE 4: Geophysical Survey Results showing possible extent of enclosure DU017-036, which crosses the boundaries of Tiles 2 and 3

3.3 2022 TESTING RESULTS

Archaeological testing was carried out over the course of three days in September 2022 at Tile 1 of the Clonburris SDZ (SDZ21A/0022) under Licence No. 22E0438 by Fergal Murtagh of IAC Archaeology. The trenches targeted geophysical anomalies and open green space to investigate the archaeological potential of the site. A total of 21 trenches were excavated across the site, equating to 1,275 linear meters. Testing revealed seven areas of archaeological interest with four charcoal spreads or pits identified, some small features containing heat shattered stone and an area with three possible brick clamps or kilns (Murtagh 2022). None of the sites were found to extend into Tiles 2 and 3.

3.4 2023 TESTING RESULTS

Archaeological testing and metal detection was carried out in November 2022 and March 2023 within Tiles 2 and 3 under Licence No. 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. Testing revealed two areas of archaeological significance, which have been designated as Archaeological Areas 1 and 2. These comprise:

AA1

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 in depth (C13.1, Plate 1). 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 view of linear feature C13.1, facing southwest

AA2

AA2 was recorded in Trench 1 and consists of a metallised surface (C1.2) that was overlain by a spread of light brown clayey silt with an orange hue (C1.1) (Plate 2, Figure 5). This metallised surface possibly relates to farm buildings associated with Clonburris Cottage as depicted on the first edition

Ordnance Survey map from 1843, c. 158m southwest of Tile 3. Although, no structures are shown in this area in any of the available historic maps.



Plate 2 Metalled surface C1.2 underlying spread C1.1, facing east

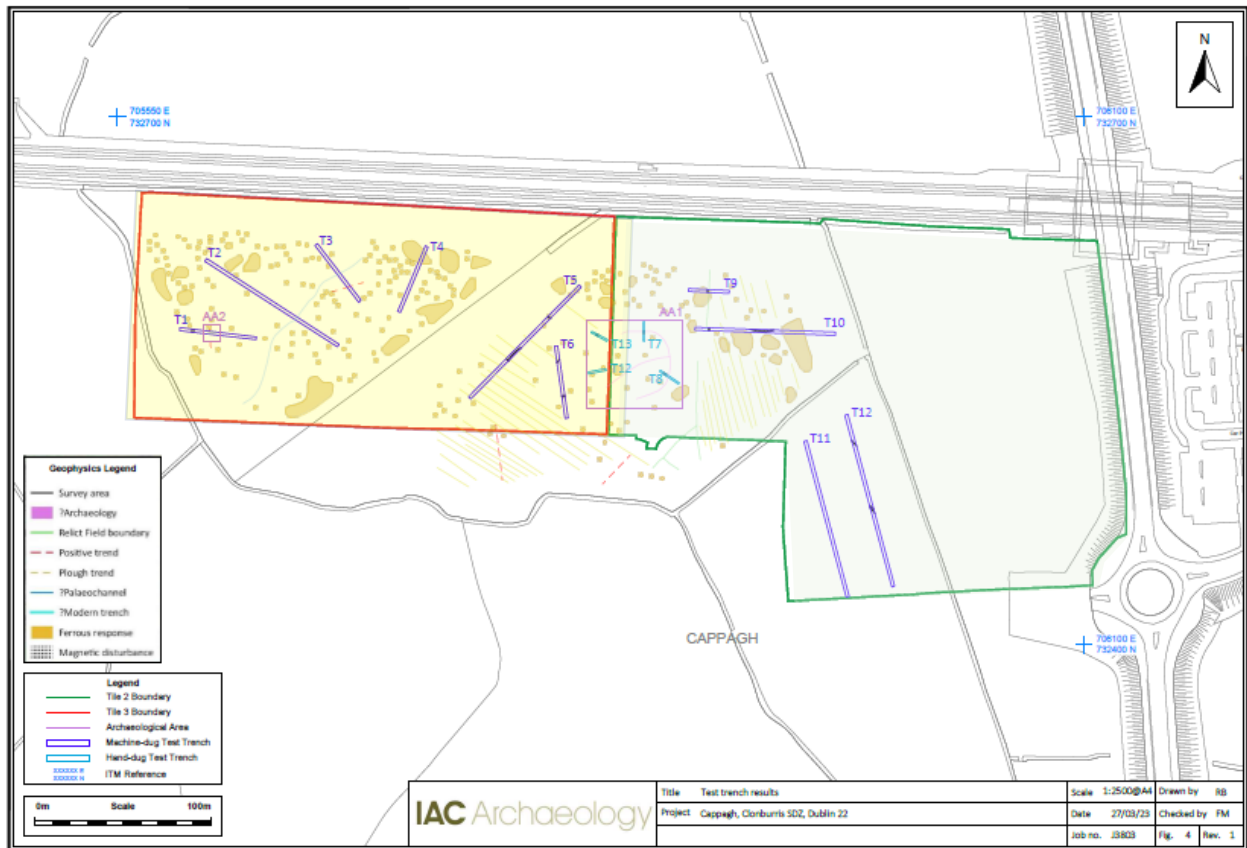


FIGURE 5: 2023 Test Trench results

Figure 5 shows the position of the excavated test trenches with the original proposed development boundary marked in red for Tile 3 and in green for Tile 2. The area shaded slightly orange shows the new extents of Tile 3 and the area shaded green Tile 2. Possible enclosure DU017-036 is located across both of the development areas.

4 EXCAVATION STRATEGY

Excavation will involve preservation-by-record through appropriate rescue excavation of all archaeological features or deposits discovered by earlier investigations associated with AA1 & 2, so as to mitigate impacts on the archaeological remains within the footprint of the permitted development (Figure 6).

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.

Archaeological monitoring ‘involves an archaeologist being present in the course of the carrying out of developments’ and has been defined as being carried out ‘so as to identify and protect archaeological deposits, features or objects which may be uncovered or otherwise affected by the works’ (Department of Arts, Heritage, the Gaeltacht and Islands 1999b).

The proposed excavation areas in Table 1 below include 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 6). 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
AA 2	10m x 10m	705605,732577



FIGURE 6: Proposed Excavation Areas

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. 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 consisting 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 14th August 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 DoHLGH 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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