

Archaeological Assessment
Tawnies Lower, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Máiréad Ní Challanáin BA MSc MIAPO and Avril Purcell MA MIAI
May 2023

Lane Purcell Archaeology,
64 Fr Mathew Road,
Turner's Cross,
Cork
Job Ref. LPA1200

on behalf of

Cork County Council ,
c/o Walsh Design Group,
The Mall,
Maryborough Woods,
Douglas,
Cork

1 Introduction

1.1 It is proposed to develop a site at Tawnies Lower, Clonakilty, Co Cork (ITM 537436 541551). The proposed development site comprises a large field on the western side of Fernhill Road adjacent to Gaelscoil Mhicíl Uí Choileáin (Figs. 1 & 2). The town of Clonakilty lies 900m to the east. This preplanning archaeological assessment was carried out following consultation with Mary Sleeman, Cork County Archaeologist, in order to inform the layout of the proposed development site.

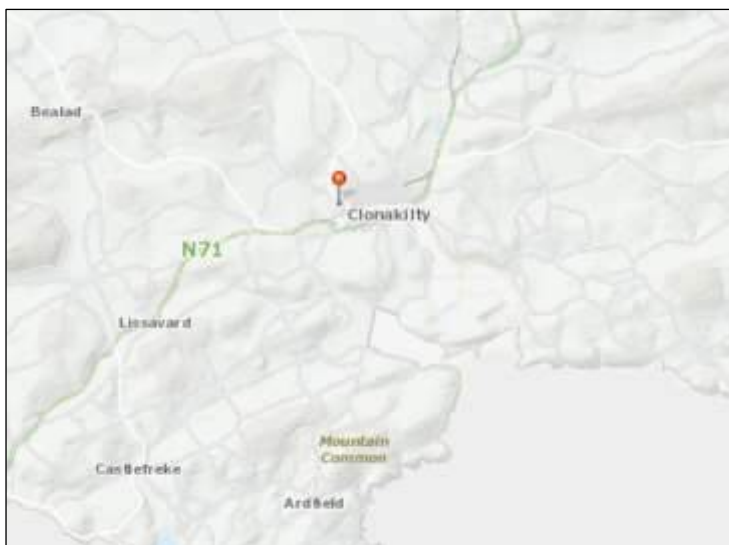


Figure 1: Proposed development site on Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) site location map



Figure 2: Aerial image of proposed development site in current condition (provided by Walsh Design Group)

1.2 There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed development site. The closest recorded site is a mass rock (CO135-136) 210m to the northeast, in the same townland of Tawnies Lower. Three fulachtaí fía (CO135-145, CO135-146 and CO145-147) c.300m to the southwest were partially excavated during flood relief works (Long 2014, Sutton 2021).

- 1.3 This archaeological assessment, comprising a desktop study and site inspection, assesses the archaeological potential of the site. It also assesses the results of a geophysical survey carried out in 2023 (Murphy 2023). This report was compiled by Máiréad Ní Challanáin and Avril Purcell, Lane Purcell Archaeology, 64 Father Mathew Road, Turner's Cross, Cork on behalf of Cork County Council, c/o Walsh Design Group, The Mall, Maryborough Woods, Douglas, Cork.



Figure 3: Proposed development site on OS digital globe (2011-3013) www.archaeology.ie

2 Archaeological and Historic Background

2.1 The proposed development site is located in the townland of Tawnies Lower in the parish of Kilgarriff and barony of East Carbery, c. 900m to the west of the town of Clonakilty, Co. Cork. There are no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed site. The closest recorded archaeological site is a mass rock (CO135-136), 210m to the northeast in the townland of Tawnies Lower. It is listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for Co. Cork, and the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) database of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). The RMP lists all archaeological monuments and places known to be of archaeological importance in the county and affords them statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1930 to 2004 (1994 amendment). The SMR database is a working database of all known archaeological monuments in the state and is continually updated. The mass rock is described in the Archaeological Inventory of Co Cork (2005) as follows:

CO135-136 Incorporated into a boundary fence on the N side of the road. This possible mass-rock comprises a flat-topped sandstone block (L 0.74m; Wth 0.29m; H 0.5m) which features a number of rough linear marks on the E end and one on the W end of the upper surface. The stone was uncovered during cleaning back of the boundary and reported to the NMI in 1965. According to local information, when the stone was found there was a cross marked on it but it has since faded. The adjacent road is known as a famine road and there is a local tradition of a mass-rock in the townland.

2.2 There are 22 recorded archaeological sites within approximately 1km of the proposed development site dating from the Bronze Age (2400-500BC), early medieval (5th – 12th century AD) and the post-medieval period (1550-1850), with the majority dating to the post-medieval period (Table 1).

RMP	Site Type	Townland	Distance from site
CO135-013001-	Graveyard	Kilgarriff	1km to NW
CO135-013002-	Church	Kilgarriff	1km to NW
CO135-014	Souterrain	Kilgarriff	890m to NW
CO135-018	Ringfort	Tawnies Upper	1km to NE
CO135-019001-	Graveyard	Tawnies Upper	911m to E
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CO135-049001-	Enclosure	Miles	829m to SW
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CO135-049003-	Souterrain	Miles	833m to SW
CO135-050001-	Holy Well	Miles	485m to W
CO135-050002-	Mill	Miles	423m to W
CO135-052001-	Historic Town	Scartagh, Tawnies Upper, Youghals	900m to E
CO135-052002-	Brewery	Youghals	647m to E
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CO135-147	Fulacht fia	Miles	360m to SW
CO135-148	Fulacht fia	Cloheen	994m to SW

Table 1: RMP sites within a 1km radius of the development

2.3 Five of these sites date to the prehistoric period - a standing stone (CO135-131) and four fulachtaí fia (CO135-145-148). Burnt mounds or fulachtaí fia are generally interpreted as ancient cooking sites and are usually dated to the Bronze Age (2400-500BC). They were used for heating large quantities of water. They

usually survive as a mound or spread, of heat-shattered and burnt stone although many are levelled and are visible as black spreads in ploughed fields. The burnt stone generally fills and covers one or more troughs or pits cut into the ground. The trough, which was sometimes lined with timber, wattle or stone, would have been excavated below the water table, near a spring or stream and allowed to fill with water. A fire was set adjacent to the trough, to heat stones, and the water was then heated or boiled by immersing the fire-heated stones in it. Experiments have shown that large quantities of water can be boiled in this way in about twenty minutes and joints of meat wrapped in straw can be cooked over several hours. After each use the burnt and heat-shattered stones would have to be cleaned out of the trough. Over time this material accumulated to form a crescent-shaped mound of burnt material surrounding the trough. Fulachtaí fia are usually dated to the Bronze Age (2400-500BC). Although they are generally interpreted as cooking sites, they were also used for bathing, processing textiles, tanning, brewing, extraction of fats from meat, and soap making, or even a combination of these functions (Ó Drisceoil, 1988; Monk 2007; Quinn & Moore 2007). Three fulachtaí fia (CO135-145, CO135-146 and CO135-147) were within the intake of a proposed flood bank in Miles townland. One (CO135-145) was investigated in 2014 (Long, 2014) and two spreads of compacted heat-affected stone and charcoal-rich silt were found representing the remains of the monument. The other two (CO135-146 and CO135-147) were investigated during later phases of works associated with the flood relief project and were identified as heavily disturbed burnt mounds, a rectangular stone lined trough was also identified (Sutton 2021).

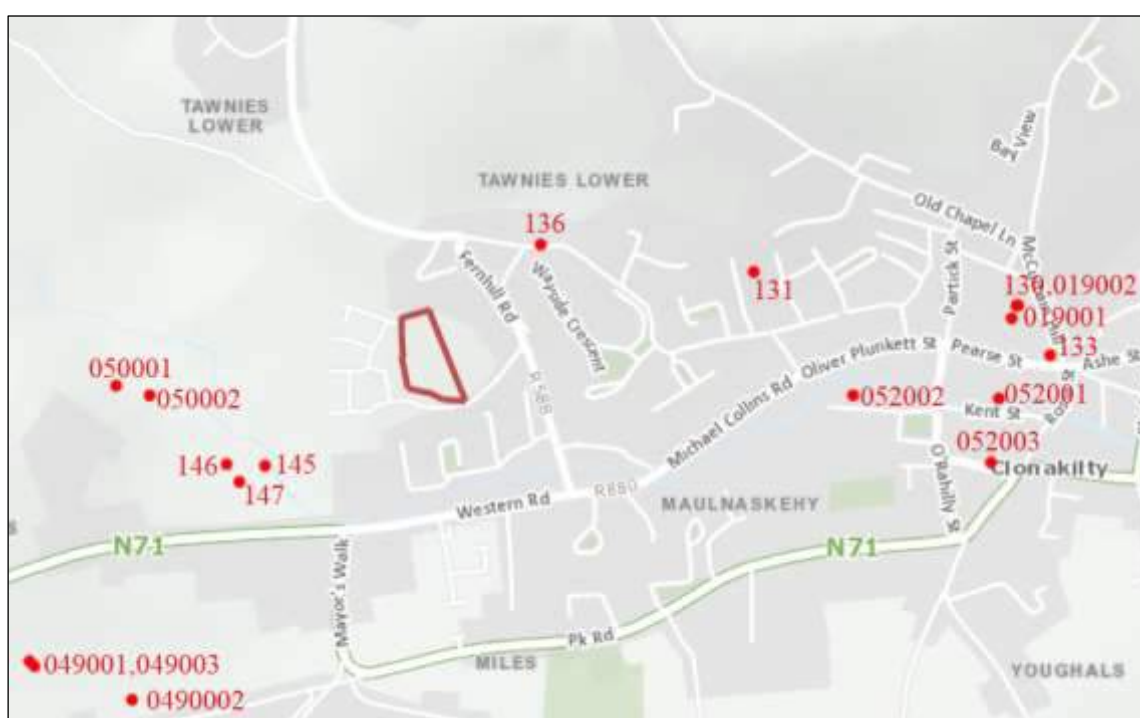


Figure 4: Proposed development site on OS RMP map showing recorded archaeological sites within approximately 1km radius of the development site (www.archaeology.ie)

- 2.4 Although the standing stone (CO135-131) in Tawnies Lower may also date to the Bronze Age, these monuments were also erected in the Iron Age (*circa* 500 BC to AD 400) and some can even date to more recent centuries. Those erected in the prehistoric period tend to be generally orientated SW-NE, as is the case with this stone.
- 2.5 A further six of the archaeological sites in the study area date to the early medieval period including the ringforts, souterrains, and probably the enclosure and holy well (CO135-014, CO135-018, CO135-049001-, CO135-049002-, CO135-049003- and CO135-050001-). This period is characterised by the introduction of Christianity from the late 4th century onwards, becoming widely established during the second half of the sixth century. Ringforts, also known by the names rath, lios, cathair or caiseal/cashel are the best known monuments of this period and one of the most characteristic in the Irish landscape. They are defended

farmsteads. Their main phase of construction and occupation dates from the beginning of the 7th century AD to the end of the 9th century. They are generally circular or oval in plan, defined by an earthen bank with an external ditch or fosse. Larger ringforts with double defences (bi-vallate) and triple defences (tri-vallate) are generally interpreted as higher status sites and these can be particularly associated with specialised craft working. The sub-surface remains of circular dwelling houses and associated outbuildings are frequently revealed within ringforts during excavation. Ringforts tend to be geographically focused in what is considered relatively good agricultural land and this has led, on many occasions, to their destruction in the course of agricultural improvements. Substantial remains may, however, still exist below ground. Some ringforts have associated souterrains (underground chambers connected by narrow creepways). Others have associated corn-drying kilns and sometimes external structures. In more recent archaeological investigations, particularly on road infrastructure projects in Co. Cork, the number and type of unenclosed early medieval settlements identified has been growing, suggesting more diversity in contemporary settlement patterns and challenging the perceived importance of ringforts within the early medieval landscape (Monk 2019).

While souterrains in many cases are associated with ringforts, they can also be found in isolation. They are underground structures generally earth or rock-cut comprising chamber(s) connected by narrow creepways. The term souterrain derives from the French *sous* meaning under and *terre* meaning earth. When in contemporary use they would have been called *óin* or *uam* (*uaimh* in modern Irish) and on cartographic sources are usually noted as caves (Clinton 2001 and Power *et al.* 1992). It is thought that they were probably used as hideaways or defensive features but also that they may have been used for storage (*ibid.*).

The tradition of visiting holy wells goes back to the very beginnings of Irish Christianity, but most wells probably have their origin in pre-Christian ritual activities. The majority of the 'wells' are springs or just depressions in rocks where rainwater collects; some have more recently constructed stone or concrete surrounds (Logan, 1992, 171). Some wells are still maintained for holy use when at certain times of the year they are visited in the form of a pilgrimage often referred to as a 'round' or 'pattern'. Other wells are known through tradition for their reputed curative properties. Logan (*ibid.*) notes the long tradition of visiting holy wells down through the centuries and lists many of the customs, such as votive offerings, associated with these sites. Offerings are an essential part of the pilgrimage and can consist of money, stones, pieces of cloth, buttons, brooches and other everyday items. Sometimes these may be left at the side of the well, tied to a nearby tree or thrown into the well itself. Holy wells are so abundant in Ireland that most parishes in the country have at least one such site, whether in use or not (*ibid.*).

Other sites within a 1km range of the proposed site include two churches, a graveyard and market house in Tawnies Upper to the east, a church and graveyard in Kilgarriff to the northwest, a brewery and prison in Youghals to the east and southeast, a mill in Miles to the west and a mass rock in Tawnies Lower to the northeast. These sites reflect the various religious, secular and industrial aspects of the lives of the inhabitants in the area since the foundation of the town of Clonakilty in the 17th century.

- 2.6 The proposed development area lies on the western outskirts of the historic town of Clonakilty (CO135-052001-). The foundation of the town is attributed to the 1st Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle, and it had a corporation by 1605 and a charter from James 1st in 1613. Unlike the nearby contemporary town of Bandon which was also founded by the Earl of Cork, there is no evidence that Clonakilty was built as a walled town and no 17th century buildings survive in it (Ronan 2009 and Zajac 1995).

Lewis (1837) describes the town as being '...an incorporated sea-port, market and post-town...containing 3807 inhabitants... It consists of four principal streets diverging at right angles from the centre, and is well supplied with water from two public pumps erected by the Earl of Shannon. It has been much improved recently by the erection of several good houses and a spacious square...'. He notes that during the 17th century the town was subject to attacks during the Irish Confederate War and Williamite War, and during the 18th and 19th centuries Clonakilty prospered as a linen and cotton manufacturer (*ibid.*).

2.7 Archaeological testing and monitoring works were conducted as part of the flood relief scheme in Clonakilty in 2021 and the fulachtaí fia mentioned above were partially excavated along with a 19th century earthen mill race (Sutton 2021). Predevelopment archaeological testing was carried out for a residential development in Cloheen to the southwest of the proposed development site in 2018 (Purcell 2018) and no archaeological remains were identified. A recorded levelled fulacht fia (CO135-148) on the site was not investigated but was retained *in situ* and the development was designed around it (Purcell 2018).

2.6 The 1842 OS 6-inch map (Fig. 5) depicts the area of the proposed development site as lying within the demesne of Lower Tawnies Cottage. The larger part of the proposed development site lies in the western section of a large tree-flanked field to the west of a minor road (Fernhill Road), and a small portion of the adjoining field to the north. Lower Tawnies Cottage and associated gardens lie to the west with the avenue to the house extending west from Fernhill Road through a wooded area to the south of the proposed development site. No structures or features are named or depicted within the proposed development site.



Figure 5: 6-inch OS Map (1842) with development site outlined in red

When the 25-inch map (1897-1903) (Fig. 6) was compiled numerous field boundaries had been removed and the proposed development site formed the southwestern part of a very large field. Lower Tawnies Cottage and associated buildings are depicted to the southwest but much of the tree cover and boundaries have been removed. No structures or features are shown within the proposed development site.



Figure 6: OS 25-inch map (1897-1903) with development site outlined in red

When the OS 6-inch map of 1933 was compiled, a new field boundary had been established subdividing the very large field within which the proposed development site lies and forming its northern boundary (Fig. 7).

An OSI aerial photograph from 2005 shows the area of the proposed development site as one large field (Fig. 8) as it remains today.

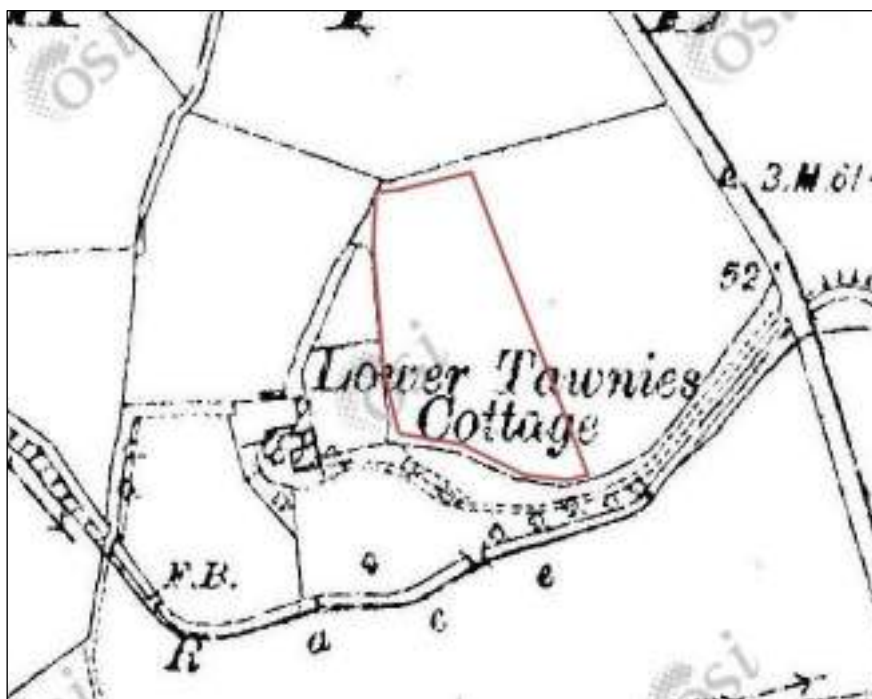


Figure 7: 6-inch OS Map (1933) with development site outlined in red



Figure 8: Aerial photograph from circa 2005 (after OSI) with development site in red outline

3 Site Inspection

- 3.1 The proposed development site was inspected on the 5th April in showery conditions. The site is a single irregular, pasture field to the north of a local road which opens off Fernhill Road. The road runs along the former avenue to Lower Tawnies Cottage and provides access to residential areas to the west. It is bounded to the south, west and north by residential areas and on the east side by Gaelscoil Mhichíl Uí Choileáin (Fig. 2).



Plate 1: View of field from the southeast looking northwest



Plate 2: View of field from north looking south

- 3.2 The field is mostly flat, situated atop a steep southern and western slope and falling to the south and west. The northeast portion is in use as a construction compound for the development of an extension to the adjoining school. Mounds of soil and construction materials lie across this area. A construction road on the eastern side of the field provides access to the construction compound. While the area of the compound appears to be extensively disturbed the remainder of the field appears largely undisturbed.
- 3.3 No evidence of archaeological material, features or finds was identified on the site.



Plate 3: Spoil heaps and building waste from southwest looking northeast



Plate 4: Compound from west looking east at northern end of field



Plate 5: Site from north looking south



Plate 6: Road leading to compound from north looking south



Plate 7: Disturbed ground from east looking west



Plate 8: Base of southern slope from east looking west



Plate 9: Field from northeast corner looking southwest

4 Geophysical Survey

- 4.1 Geophysical survey of the accessible areas of the site was carried out in April 2023 under licence 23R0129 (Murphy 2023). A full detailed gradiometer survey was carried out using a Bartington GRAD 601-2 dual-sensor fluxgate cart system with a view to locating any existing unknown archaeological monuments or features on the site in order to inform a programme of future test trenching. No significant, previously unknown archaeological monuments were noted in the survey (Fig. 9).
- 4.2 The results of the survey are outlined as follow: *“The survey results consisted primarily of dipolar scatters. These are areas of high magnetic variation and are for the most part irregular and amorphous in form. Such anomalies are usually the result of modern ground disturbance, rubbish dumping, landscaping or signs of ‘made up ground’. This is likely the result of recent soil tipping, soil stripping for car parking spaces and then reinstated topsoil that have all occurred in recent years on the site.”*
- 4.3 A programme of archaeological test trenching was recommended to assess the nature, extent and depth of potential archaeological remains on the site if planning permission is granted.

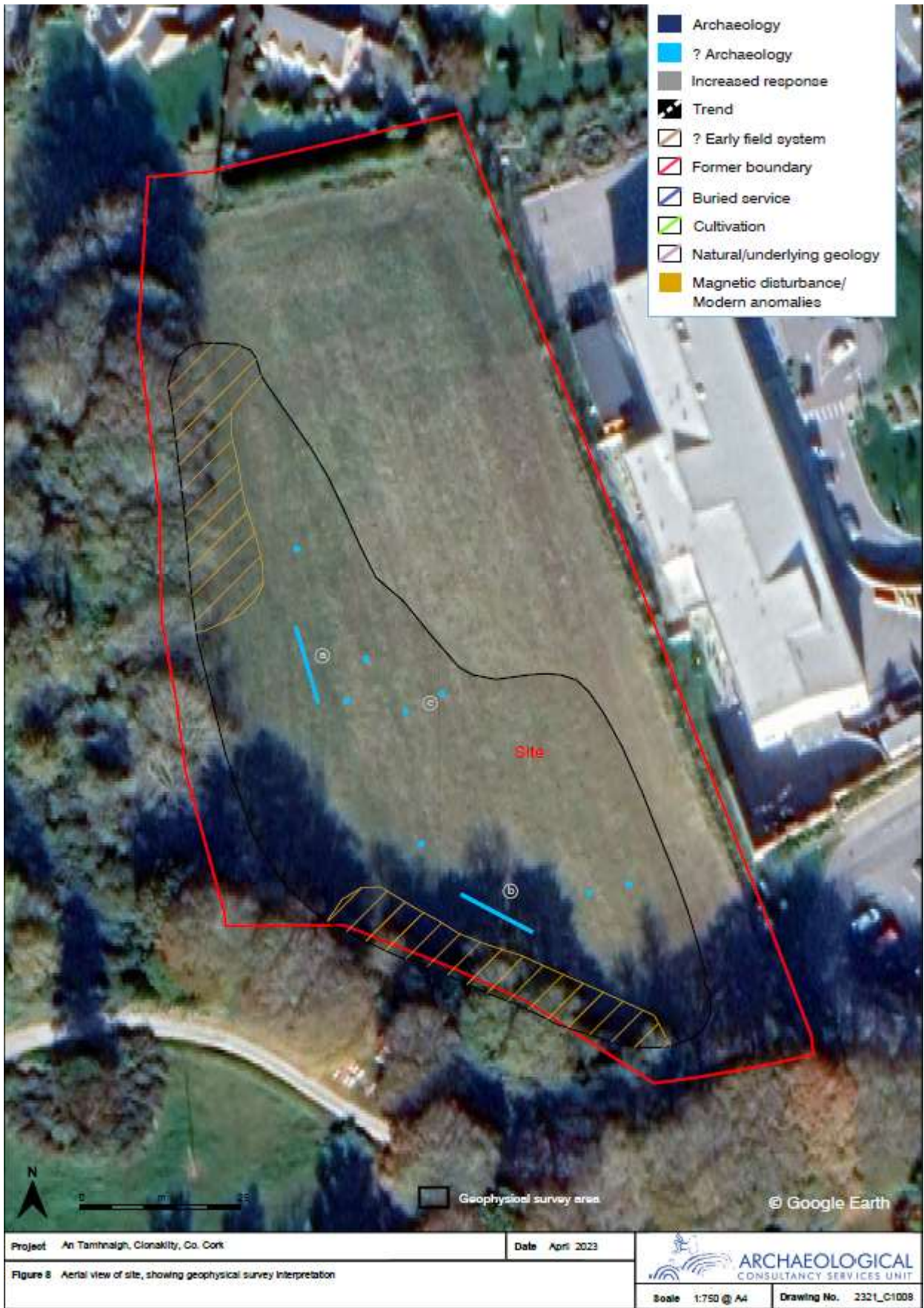


Figure 9: Interpretation of geophysical survey results overlaid on aerial view of site (Murphy 2023)

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 The proposed development site is situated on the western side of Fernhill Road, in the townland of Tawnies Lower on the outskirts of Clonakilty. It comprises a single, irregular, large field. This desktop assessment and archaeological inspection was commissioned to assess the archaeological potential of the field in terms of its potential as a proposed development site.
- 5.2 There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed development site. The closest recorded archaeological site is a mass rock (CO135-136) 210m to the northeast in the same townland. There are 22 recorded archaeological sites and monuments within approximately 1km of the proposed development site. The density of monuments in the vicinity can be partly attributed to its proximity to the historic town of Clonakilty (CO135-052001-) but there is evidence of continued habitation and use of the land from the prehistoric period onwards.
- 5.3 A site inspection was carried out as part of this assessment and no features or finds of archaeological significance were noted. A portion of the proposed development site has, however, been disturbed in the recent past by the construction of a compound and access road. The larger portion of the field appears undisturbed and it is, therefore, possible that subsurface archaeological remains may exist here.
- 5.4 A geophysical survey was carried out on accessible areas of the site in April 2023 (Murphy 2023) and no significant, previously unknown archaeological monuments were noted. Some areas of archaeological potential were noted and archaeological testing of the site was recommended.
- 5.5 It is recommended that archaeological testing be carried out on the site to further inform the development layout. If potential archaeological remains are identified they should be preserved *in situ* or preserved by record following consultation with Cork County Council and the National Monuments Service and as outlined in Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999).

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Archaeological Testing
Tawnies Lower, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Licence number 23E0623

Máiréad Ní Challanáin BA MSc MIAPO and Avril Purcell MA MIAI

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1 Introduction

1.1 The proposed development site is at Tawnies Lower, Clonakilty, Co Cork (ITM 537436 541551). It comprises a large field on the western side of Fernhill Road adjacent to Gaelscoil Mhicíl Uí Choileáin (Figs. 1 & 2). A pre-planning archaeological assessment of the site (Ní Challanáin and Purcell 2023) was carried out which included a geophysical survey (Murphy 2023) and consultation with Mary Sleeman, Cork County Archaeologist at that time. Archaeological testing of the site was recommended.



Figure 1: Proposed development site on Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) site location map



Figure 2: Aerial image of proposed development site (2013-2018 MapGenie www.archaeology.ie)

- 1.2 There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed development site. The closest recorded site is a mass rock (CO135-136) 210m to the northeast, in the same townland of Tawnies Lower (Fig. 2). Three fulachtaí fía (CO135-145, CO135-146 and CO145-147) c.300m to the southwest were partially excavated during flood relief works (Long 2014, Sutton 2021).
- 1.3 The geophysical survey, included in the pre-planning assessment, identified no significant, previously unknown archaeological monuments (Fig. 3) (Murphy *ibid.*). The survey identified dipolar scatters or areas of high magnetic variation which, it is outlined by the author, were the results of modern ground disturbance, rubbish dumping, landscaping etc. and indicate soil tipping and soil stripping.
- 1.4 Archaeological testing was carried out on the 29th of September 2023 under licence 23E0623. Nine trenches were mechanically excavated across the proposed development site following consultation with Annette Quinn, Cork County Archaeologist, during May 2023.

1.5 This report was compiled by Avril Purcell, Lane Purcell Archaeology, 64 Father Mathew Road, Turner's Cross, Cork on behalf of Cork County Council, c/o Walsh Design Group, The Mall, Maryborough Woods, Douglas, Cork.



Figure 3: Interpretation of geophysical survey results overlaid on aerial view of site (Murphy 2023)

2 Archaeological and Historic Background

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Figure 4: Proposed development site on OS RMP map showing recorded archaeological sites within approximately 1km radius of the development site (www.archaeology.ie)

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- 2.5 A further six of the archaeological sites in the study area date to the early medieval period including the ringforts, souterrains, and probably the enclosure and holy well (CO135-014, CO135-018, CO135-049001-, CO135-049002-, CO135-049003- and CO135-050001-). This period is characterised by the introduction of Christianity from the late 4th century onwards, becoming widely established during the second half of the sixth century. Ringforts, also known by the names rath, lios, cathair or caiseal/cashel are the best known monuments of this period and one of the most characteristic in the Irish landscape. They are defended

farmsteads. Their main phase of construction and occupation dates from the beginning of the 7th century AD to the end of the 9th century. They are generally circular or oval in plan, defined by an earthen bank with an external ditch or fosse. Larger ringforts with double defences (bi-vallate) and triple defences (tri-vallate) are generally interpreted as higher status sites and these can be particularly associated with specialised craft working. The sub-surface remains of circular dwelling houses and associated outbuildings are frequently revealed within ringforts during excavation. Ringforts tend to be geographically focused in what is considered relatively good agricultural land and this has led, on many occasions, to their destruction in the course of agricultural improvements. Substantial remains may, however, still exist below ground. Some ringforts have associated souterrains (underground chambers connected by narrow creepways). Others have associated corn-drying kilns and sometimes external structures. In more recent archaeological investigations, particularly on road infrastructure projects in Co. Cork, the number and type of unenclosed early medieval settlements identified has been growing, suggesting more diversity in contemporary settlement patterns and challenging the perceived importance of ringforts within the early medieval landscape (Monk 2019).

While souterrains in many cases are associated with ringforts, they can also be found in isolation. They are underground structures generally earth or rock-cut comprising chamber(s) connected by narrow creepways. The term souterrain derives from the French *sous* meaning under and *terre* meaning earth. When in contemporary use they would have been called *óin* or *uam* (*uaimh* in modern Irish) and on cartographic sources are usually noted as caves (Clinton 2001 and Power *et al.* 1992). It is thought that they were probably used as hideaways or defensive features but also that they may have been used for storage (*ibid.*).

The tradition of visiting holy wells goes back to the very beginnings of Irish Christianity, but most wells probably have their origin in pre-Christian ritual activities. The majority of the 'wells' are springs or just depressions in rocks where rainwater collects; some have more recently constructed stone or concrete surrounds (Logan, 1992, 171). Some wells are still maintained for holy use when at certain times of the year they are visited in the form of a pilgrimage often referred to as a 'round' or 'pattern'. Other wells are known through tradition for their reputed curative properties. Logan (*ibid.*) notes the long tradition of visiting holy wells down through the centuries and lists many of the customs, such as votive offerings, associated with these sites. Offerings are an essential part of the pilgrimage and can consist of money, stones, pieces of cloth, buttons, brooches and other everyday items. Sometimes these may be left at the side of the well, tied to a nearby tree or thrown into the well itself. Holy wells are so abundant in Ireland that most parishes in the country have at least one such site, whether in use or not (*ibid.*).

Other sites within a 1km range of the proposed site include two churches, a graveyard and market house in Tawnies Upper to the east, a church and graveyard in Kilgarriff to the northwest, a brewery and prison in Youghals to the east and southeast, a mill in Miles to the west and a mass rock in Tawnies Lower to the northeast. These sites reflect the various religious, secular and industrial aspects of the lives of the inhabitants in the area since the foundation of the town of Clonakilty in the 17th century.

- 2.6 The proposed development area lies on the western outskirts of the historic town of Clonakilty (CO135-052001-). The foundation of the town is attributed to the 1st Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle, and it had a corporation by 1605 and a charter from James 1st in 1613. Unlike the nearby contemporary town of Bandon which was also founded by the Earl of Cork, there is no evidence that Clonakilty was built as a walled town and no 17th century buildings survive in it (Ronan 2009 and Zajac 1995).

Lewis (1837) describes the town as being '...an incorporated sea-port, market and post-town...containing 3807 inhabitants... It consists of four principal streets diverging at right angles from the centre, and is well supplied with water from two public pumps erected by the Earl of Shannon. It has been much improved recently by the erection of several good houses and a spacious square...'. He notes that during the 17th century the town was subject to attacks during the Irish Confederate War and Williamite War, and during the 18th and 19th centuries Clonakilty prospered as a linen and cotton manufacturer (*ibid.*).

2.7 Archaeological testing and monitoring works were conducted as part of the flood relief scheme in Clonakilty in 2021 and the fulachtaí fia mentioned above were partially excavated along with a 19th century earthen mill race (Sutton 2021). Predevelopment archaeological testing was carried out for a residential development in Cloheen to the southwest of the proposed development site in 2018 (Purcell 2018) and no archaeological remains were identified. A recorded levelled fulacht fia (CO135-148) on the site was not investigated but was retained *in situ* and the development was designed around it (ibid.).

2.8 The 1842 OS 6-inch map (Fig. 5) depicts the area of the proposed development site as lying within the demesne of Lower Tawnies Cottage. The larger part of the proposed development site lies in the western section of a large tree-flanked field to the west of a minor road (Fernhill Road), and a small portion of the adjoining field to the north. Lower Tawnies Cottage and associated gardens lie to the west with the avenue to the house extending west from Fernhill Road through a wooded area to the south of the proposed development site. No structures or features are depicted within the proposed development site.



Figure 5: Extract from OS 6-inch (1842) with development site outlined in red

When the 25-inch map (1897-1903) (Fig. 6) was compiled numerous field boundaries had been removed and the proposed development site formed the southwestern part of a very large field. Lower Tawnies Cottage and associated buildings are depicted to the southwest but much of the tree cover and boundaries have been removed. No structures or features are shown within the proposed development site.



Figure 6: Extract from OS 25-inch (1897-1903) with development site outlined in red

When the OS 6-inch map of 1933 was compiled, a new field boundary had been established subdividing the very large field within which the proposed development site lies and forming its northern boundary (Fig. 7).

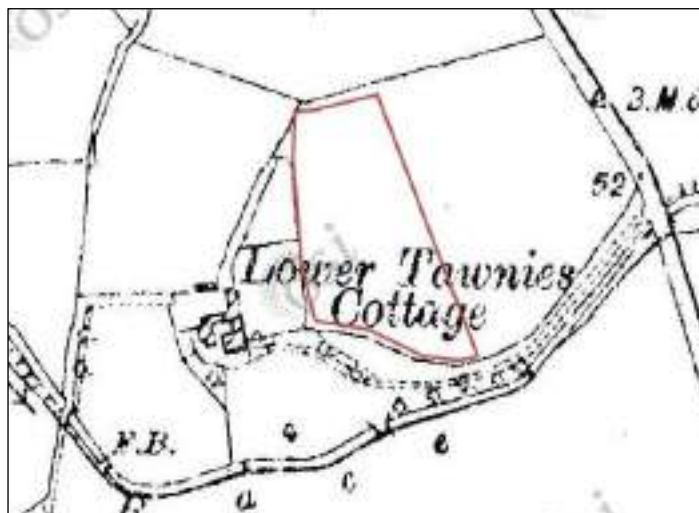


Figure 7: Extract from OS 6-inch (1933) with development site outlined in red

2.9 An OSI aerial photograph from 2005 shows the area of the proposed development site as the western part of a large pasture field (Fig. 8). No features or structures are shown in the field. A recent Google Maps aerial image (Fig. 9) shows the proposed development site during the construction of Gaelscoil Mhicil Uí Choileáin in the eastern part of the field and indicates topsoil was removed from the proposed development site during that time.



Figure 8: Aerial photograph from circa 2005 (after OSI) with development site in red outline (www.archaeology.ie)



Figure 9: Recent aerial image showing the proposed development site in red outline (Google Maps)

3 Archaeological Testing

3.1 Archaeological testing was carried out on the 29th of September 2023 under licence 23E0623 in dry generally sunny weather conditions. The northeastern portion of the site was under hard standing as a construction compound. Nine trenches were mechanically excavated across the remainder of the site using a grading bucket (Fig. 10, Plates 1-9). The ground was found to be heavily disturbed as suggested in the geophysical survey (Murphy 2023) and indicated on recent aerial photographs (Fig. 9). No features or finds of archaeological potential were identified in any of the trenches. All trenches were 1.8m wide.

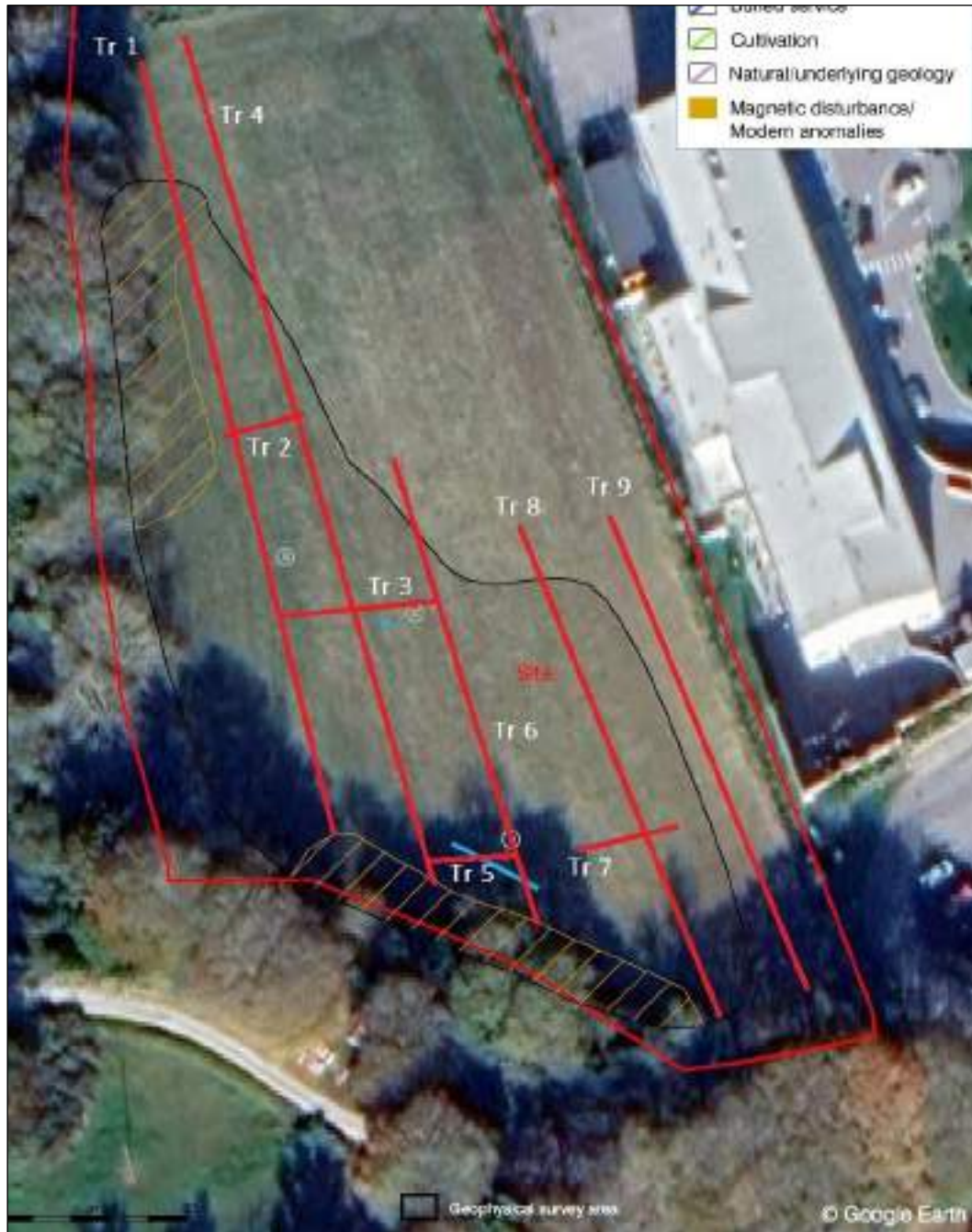


Figure 10: Location of test trenches overlaid on geophysical interpretation (Murphy 2023)

3.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 101m long and 0.27m deep. It was oriented north south.

Section

0 – 0.1m Topsoil

0.1 – 0.27m Mixed orange brown stoney loamy clay containing plastic, timber and tree roots

3.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 9.5m long and 0.3m deep, it extended east from Trench 1 and was oriented east west.

Section

0 – 0.12m Topsoil

0.12 – 0.3m Mid-orange-brown mixed loamy clay



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking west

3.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 20m long and 0.3m deep. It extended east from Trench 1 and was oriented east west.

Section

0 – 0.12m Topsoil

0.12 – 0.3m Mid-orange-brown mixed stoney loamy clay containing plastic and small quantities of construction waste

3.5 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 111m long and 0.45m deep. It was north south oriented and parallel to Trench 1, extending across the eastern end of Trench 2 and across Trench 3.

Section

0 – 0.1m Topsoil

0.1 – 0.45m Mid-orange-brown mixed stoney loamy clay containing plastic, building rubble and hard core



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking east



Plate 4: Trench 4 looking south

3.6 Trench 5

Trench 5 was 11m long and 0.2m deep. It was oriented east west and extended east from the southern end of Trench 4.

Section

0 – 0.1m Topsoil

0.1 – 0.2m Mid-brown stoney loamy clay which was quite clean

3.7 Trench 6

Trench 6 was 61m long and 0.3m deep. It was oriented north south and was parallel to Trenches 1 and 4 and extended across from the eastern ends of Trenches 3 and 5.

Section

0 – 0.12m Topsoil

0.12 – 0.3m Mixed mid-orange-brown stoney loamy clay with small amounts of building rubble



Plate 5: Trench 5, looking west



Plate 6: Trench 6, looking south

3.8 Trench 7

Trench 7 was 14.3m long and 0.45m deep. It was oriented east west.

Section

0 – 0.2m Topsoil

0.2 – 0.45m Mid-brown slightly stoney loamy clay, relatively clean

3.9 Trench 8

Trench 8 was 57m long and 0.28m deep. It was parallel to Trenches 1, 4 and 6 and extended across Trench 7.

Section

0 – 0.14m Topsoil

0.14 – 0.28m Mid-brown mixed stoney loamy clay, with tree roots and patches of hard core



Plate 7: Trench 7, looking east



Plate 8: Trench 8, looking north

3.10 Trench 9

Trench 9 was 63m long and 0.3m deep. It was oriented north south and was parallel to Trenches 1, 4, 6 and 8.

Section

0 – 0.09m Topsoil

0.09 – 0.3m Light brown mixed stoney loamy clay with tree roots and patches of hard core



Plate 9: Trench 9, looking north

- 3.10 The deposits identified in the trenches indicate topsoil was removed from the proposed development site in recent years. Aerial photographs indicate the topsoil stripping coincided with the construction of the school in the adjoining land to the east when the proposed development site appears to have been used as a construction compound and storage area. The proposed development site was subsequently re-topsoiled. Small quantities of construction materials were mixed with the topsoil and are scattered throughout the site. No features or finds of archaeological significance were identified on the proposed development site.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 The proposed development site is situated on the western side of Fernhill Road, in the townland of Tawnies Lower on the outskirts of Clonakilty. It comprises an irregular pasture field.
- 4.2 There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed development site. The closest recorded archaeological site is a mass rock (CO135-136) 210m to the northeast in the same townland. There are 22 recorded archaeological sites and monuments within approximately 1km of the proposed development site. The density of monuments in the vicinity can be partly attributed to its proximity to the historic town of Clonakilty (CO135-052001-) but there is evidence of continued habitation and use of the land from the prehistoric period onwards.
- 4.3 An archaeological assessment of the proposed development site was carried out which included geophysical survey (Murphy 2023). The geophysical survey identified no significant, previously unknown archaeological monuments on the site.
- 4.3 Licensed archaeological testing was carried out in September 2023 following consultation with Cork County Archaeologist. Nine trenches were mechanically excavated across the proposed development site, excluding the northeastern portion which is a construction compound. There was evidence of extensive disturbance to the site. Topsoil appears to have been removed from it during the construction of the school in the adjoining land to the east. The proposed development site appears to have been used as a storage area as well as a construction compound which was subsequently re-topsoiled. No features or finds of archaeological significance were identified on the proposed development site.
- 4.4 There appear to be no archaeological constraints to the development of the site. No further archaeological works are recommended. All recommendations are subject to the approval of the planning authority, Cork County Council, and the National Monuments Service.

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