N2 Finglas-Ashbourne Road Scheme

Report on
Archaeological Excavation of
Site 25
Cookstown
County Meath

Licence Number: 03E1252 (ext.)
Licensee: Richard Clutterbuck
CRDS Job Number: 428

Volume I: Report Text, Figures & Plates

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MEATH
COUNTY COUNCIL

Project Details

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Site	Sites 24 and 25
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County	Meath
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Summary

The following report contains, in three volumes, the results of excavations and post excavation analysis at Site 25, Cookstown, Co. Meath, by Richard Clutterbuck for CRDS Ltd. Excavations at Site 25 were carried out in advance of the N2 Finglas – Ashbourne Road Scheme, on behalf of Meath County Council. The site was located in the townland of Cookstown, Co. Meath (centre point NGR 304860E 253000N), *c*. 1.6km west of Ashbourne town and *c*. 21km from Dublin. Site 25 was initially identified during a geophysical survey carried out by ArchaeoPhysica Ltd in advance of the Road Scheme in 2002. Test excavations by JCNA Ltd in 2003 confirmed the archaeological significance of Test Area 25, as well as the presence of a prehistoric ring ditch to the south in Test Area 24. The excavations at Site 24 and Site 25 were carried out under a single licence as an extension to the existing testing licence for Site 25 (03E1252). The excavation was carried out with a team of between 24 and 51 archaeologists between 15th January and 31st May 2004, resulting in the preservation of the site by record.

Cookstown Site 25 constitutes a multi-period site with material and features from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Early Medieval, High Medieval, Early Modern and Modern periods. It is located on a knoll beside a modern pastoral farmstead overlooking the Broadmeadow River to the south. The Middle Neolithic material consisted of several stray pieces of worked and struck flint (Appendix 10). The earliest archaeological features exposed dated to the Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age, and consisted of a poorly preserved crouched inhumation (Appendix 15). A pit truncating the burial produced a radiocarbon date of 2900-2250BC (Appendix 6), and contained a sherd of Beaker Pottery (Appendix 7). Beaker pottery was found elsewhere on the site, but generally as residual finds in later features. A series of pits around the site proved difficult to date, although a late Bronze Age radiocarbon date from one pit (Appendix 6) suggests settlement throughout the Bronze Age. The Iron Age phase at Cookstown consisted of corn drying kilns and a ritual ring-ditch complex. A series of intercutting Iron Age kilns on the site were found to contain barley and wheat grains and were radiocarbon dated to first and second century BC (Appendix 6). A double ring–ditch consisting of double ring-ditches and surrounding, although slightly later, burnt pits, appear to represent some form of Iron Age ritual activity on site. Detailed analysis of the ring-ditches material culture (Appendix 11 & 13) and plant macro remains (Appendix 19), combined with radiocarbon dates from the fourth century BC to the second century AD (Appendix 6) and the morphology of the features, provide some insight into the nature of Iron Age local ritual activity. Evidence for crop cultivation continued into the early medieval period, where a corn-drying kiln radiocarbon dated to the fifth to seventh century AD (Appendix 6) produced wheat and oats in addition to barley. The first significant settlement remains on the site, a ringfort, were built some time in the ninth century on the crest of the knoll. Only the ringfort's enclosing ditch survived; any interior stratigraphy was either outside the area of excavation or truncated by cultivation. Extensive evidence for high medieval settlement from the 12th to 14th century did survive, in the form of three structures consisting of a forge, its workshop and a probable domestic structure. This settlement was accompanied by an adjoining garden bounded by substantial enclosing and drainage ditches and adjoining lane which appears to have been in use from the early medieval to the modern periods and still used to access the modern farm and lands beyond by several land owners. Considerable quantities of medieval pottery, the majority of domestic origin but including some imported French wares (Appendix 9), and metal artefacts (Appendix 13) were discovered, illustrating Cookstown's place in the broader medieval world. The site continued in use through the late medieval and early modern periods, although the focus of settlement appears to have shifted outside the area of excavation. Pastoralism was the dominant farming activity in the eighteenth century Meath, and it is likely that the farmhouse and farmyard beside the excavation area were built at this time. Pottery and glass from this period were found in large quantities in the ditches beside the lane, and the medieval field boundaries were finally backfilled. Meath's countryside was densely populated in the nineteenth century, and evidence for a cottier's cabin and potato garden, discovered beside the lane leading to the farmhouse, provide a stark illustration of the physical reality of the severe poverty alluded to in the numerous documentary accounts of this period. The material culture of table and kitchen wares, wine and

medicine bottles, personal items, musical instruments and clothes-making items add further detail to our understanding of consumption, day-to-day life in nineteenth and twentieth century rural Ireland.

The following volume, the first of three, containes Cookstown's stratigraphic description and discussion. This volume details the site location and scope of archaeological works at Cookstown Site 25, the previous phases of archaeological works at the site and the geological and topographical characteristics of Cookstown, followed by a detailed survey of the known archaeology and history of Cookstown and its environs. The following sections describes in detail the archaeological stratigraphy excavated at Cookstown Site 25, for 1129 archaeological features and seven main phases of occupation. A detailed discussion of the results of the excavation and post excavation analysis follow before the conclusions are set out. The report contains figures, plates and illustrations and refers to the appendices in Volume two and three. Volume two contains the lists of archaeological sites (Appendix 1) and finds and previous excavations (Volume 2 & 3) from the environs of Cookstown. Volume two also contains the feature register (Appendix 4) and finds register (Appendix 5). Volume three contains the results of the specialist analysis, including the radiocarbon dates from Waikato University (Appendix 6), the prehistoric pottery by Helen Roche and Eoin Grogan (Appendix 7), medieval pottery by Clare McCutcheon (Appendix 8), the post-medieval pottery report by Rosanne Meenan (Appendix 9), including a catalogue of post medieval pottery by Gordana Baljkis; a lithics report by Dermot Moore (Appendix 10) and small finds reports for glass (Appendix 11), clay pipe (Appendix 12), metal objects (Appendix 13), bone and ivory (Appendix 14) by Milica Rajic. The single human burial discovered in Cookstown Site 25 is detailed in a report by Linda Fibiger (Appendix 15). Both Dr. Emily Murray and Linda Fibiger analysed the burnt bone from the site (Appendix 16), whilst the results of the analysis of animal bone assemblage is detailed in a report by Dr. Emily Murray (Appendix 17). The wood and charcoal identification are detailed in a report by Ellen O'Carroll (Appendix 18), and the plant-macro remains are detailed in a report by Susan Lyons (Appendix 19). The results of an examination and analysis of the industrial waste from the site, and specifically from the forge, are detailed in a report by Dr. Effie Photos-Jones (Appendix 20). Each of the appendices is illustrated, where appropriate, with photographs of artefacts, eco-facts and industrial waste material.

1. Introduction

1.1. Site Location

Site 25 is located in the townland of Cookstown (centre point NGR 304860E, 253000N), in the Civil Parish of Cookstown and the barony of Ratoath, 1.1km south west of the old N2, *c*. 1.6km west of the town of Ashbourne, Co. Meath and *c*. 21.7 km from Dublin City Centre. This corresponds with the area between construction chainage 15280 and 15770 on the N2 road (Figure 1).

The site extended over three fields adjacent to a typical Meath farmstead owned by Mrs. Byrnes (Figure 2). An avenue from the Ballybin Road on the east to Mrs. Byrnes farmstead on the west ran through the site; this avenue continued as a lane further to the west and appears to have once been a road (see below). Site 25 was located on a relatively high point or knoll in the surrounding countryside, around the 75m OD contour line (Figure 3); the ground slopes away on the south towards the Broadmore River, on the east towards boggy ground, and to the north towards a small stream which forms the northern boundary of the excavation area (Plate 1).

Plate 1: Oblique aerial view of the excavation site facing south, with the Ballybin road to the leftt, the avenue through the centre of the excavation, the ringfort to the centre right, the medieval structures beneath the polythene tunnel and the Iron Age ring-ditches in the centre background (Photo by MCC).

Archaeological remains were initially identified at Site 25 during the geophysical survey (then called Area 3); their significance and extent was confirmed during testing (Testing was carried out in Areas 24 and 25 under licences 03E1313 and 03E1252 respectively; Bonner 2003a & b; see Figure 2). Both Site 24 and Site 25 were excavated under an extension to the original licence used for testing of Site 25 (03E1252); Areas 24-25 will be referred to as Site 25 throughout the remainder of this report. The archaeological features exposed extended to the west outside of the footprint of the current development; all of the archaeological features within the Compulsory Purchase (CPO) Area were recorded and excavated.

1.2. The Scope of the project

CRDS Ltd were retained by Meath County Council to carry out archaeological excavations on the route of the N2 road realignment between Finglas, County Dublin and Ashbourne, County Meath. The route extends north-northeast from the original N2/M50 junction to the north side of the town of Ashbourne (Figure 1). The scheme includes a bypass around the west side of Ashbourne and a 17km long dual carriageway with grade separated junctions and is an entirely green-field scheme. The new N2 was part of the *National Development Plan*. Archaeological investigation of the proposed N2 road scheme was undertaken in line with an Environmental Impact Statement (RODFMA 2001) to meet the requirements of the *Roads Act 1993*, the *Roads (Amendment) Act 1998*, the *Roads Regulations 1994* and *E.C. Directive 85/337/EC 1985*.

1.3. Previous archaeological work

A number of archaeological studies have been carried out since 1999 on the proposed route of the N2 Improvements. These include:

- Archaeological Assessment, Preliminary Area of Interest, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd, 1999 (Keeley 1999a);
- Archaeological Assessment for Environmental Impact Statement, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd, 2001 (Keeley 2001);
- An Archaeological Aerial Survey of the Road Corridor, Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd, September/October 2001 (Gowen 2001).
- A Geophysical Survey of Sites 49, 55 and 58 as referred to in the Environmental Impact Assessment, GSB Prospection, 2002 – Report 2002/14, Licence 01R058;
- A Geophysical Survey of the road corridor, GSB Prospection, 2002 – Report 2002/43, Licence 02R051 (Figure 2
- Archaeological Monitoring of Geotechnical Site Investigations, Valerie J. Keeley, 2002 – Licence no. 02E1353;
- Archaeological Test Excavations of Test Areas 24 and 25 by JCNA Ltd. in August 2003 (Hackett & Bonner 2003a and Hackett & Bonner 2003b) (Figure 2.

Fieldwork for the EIS was carried out in 2000. The field walk over the area subsequently excavated as Site 25 identified a series of cultivation ridges, noted as Site 51 in the EIS (RODMA 2001, 9). There were no surface indications of the features later excavated as Site 25. The geophysical survey, carried out between 24th April and 10th May, consisted of a gradiometer scan of the entire length of the road route leading to detailed surveys of anomalies in 30 areas; one of these anomalies was Area 3, which was eventually excavated as part of the Site 25 (Figure 2).

Licensed predevelopment archaeological testing on the route of the N2 – Finglas to Ashbourne Road Scheme was carried out in August 2003. For the purposes of pre-development testing the route was divided into 31 Test Areas. The testing strategy consisted of a pattern of central test trenches with regular off-set lateral trenches at 20 meter intervals; all test trenches were excavated using a machine with a two meter ditching bucket; sites identified by the geophysical survey were subject to more intensive testing. The archaeological testing of the section of the route called Test Area 24 and Test Area 25 was carried out David Bonner of Judith Carroll Network Archaeology (JCNA) Ltd (Figure 2 licence no. 03E1313 for Site 24 and 03E1252 for Site 25) in August 2003. Test Area 24 was investigated with 14 test trenches (covering 12.8% of the area of the site). These test trenches were designed to investigate the ridge and furrow identified by the EIS (RODFMA 2001, 9); the test excavation revealed the presence of a number of curvilinear features and a posthole. Test Area 25 was investigated with 17 test trenches designed specifically to test the results of the geophysics survey (covering 10.3% of the area of the site). The test excavation confirmed the presence of a circular ditch on the site, as well as a series of linear field boundary ditches. In addition, a concentration of linear features was exposed flanking the avenue; all of these features were associated with thirteenth-century to fourteenth-century century medieval pottery. The test excavation characterised Sites 24 and 25 as prehistoric and medieval rural respectively.

Archaeological excavation of both test areas was subsequently carried out under a single licence (extension to the Site 25 Licence no. 03E1252ext.) by Richard Clutterbuck of CRDS Ltd.

1.4. Circumstances and dates of fieldwork

The topsoil at Site 25 was removed, under archaeological supervision, from an measuring 11000m^2 using tracked mechanical diggers equipped with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket and tractors and trailers to stock-pile the spoil. Excavation of this site was carried out by a 24 to 51 person team of archaeologists between the 15th January and 31st May 2004. This team consisted of a director, five supervisors, and 16 to 45 site assistants. The excavation identified and recorded the full extent of archaeological deposits within the road take. All archaeologically significant features were excavated, preserving this site by record.

2. Geology and Topography

2.1. Solid Geology and Soils

The bedrock in this area of Meath consists of Lower to Middle Carboniferous Age Limestone, a fine-grained grey/blue calcareous fossiliferous rock. These rocks represent the northward return of the sea at the end of the Devonian, *c*. 360 million years ago, owing to the opening of a new ocean to the south called the Palaeo-Tethys in what is now central Europe. Interbedded with these limestones are thin dark grey fine grained parallel laminated mudstones in the form of shale horizons, representing periods of deeper water deposition. Upper Carboniferous shales and sandstones occur to the north of Ashbourne, in the Garristown area (Aalen *et al.* 1997).

The boundary with older Silurian Age rocks occurs less *c*.5km to the north of Ashbourne, north of Naul and Garristown. Here the bedrock consists of greywackes; a type of sandstone that was deposited as a result of tectonic activity (each bed representing a separate earthquake event), during the closure of the Laepetus Ocean; a major ocean which at its widest was probably greater than 3000km across (McConnell *et al.* 2001).

To the south of the site occurs the Rathcoole Fault, a major tectonic divide between the Carboniferous rocks of the area and the older Cambrian to Devonian Age rocks that make up much of south Leinster. The rock types in this area are extremely varied, including granite, sandstones, mudstones, schists and slates (McConnell and Philcox, 1994).

The overburden deposits of the area consist of glacially derived boulder clays, probably relating to an advance of the Irish Sea Glacier during the last glaciation. In general the soils of the area relate to the underlying overburden and bedrock, consisting of grey brown podzols, providing good farming land (Aalen *et al.* 1997). These ground conditions are relatively consistent across the route of the new N2 and comprise typically of 0.40m of topsoil overlying 3-6m of mixed, firm to stiff glacial till material. On Site 25 the topsoil varied in depth from 23cm to 78cm with an average of 45cm deep, and consisted of a heavy clay soil. The natural subsoil consisted of two distinct layers: an upper layer of yellowish brown silty clay *c*.36cm deep, most probably the result of fluvo-glacial outwash, overlying a more compact stone and cobble rich layer of glacial till; the upper layer thinned out and disappeared at the highest part of the site around the area of the ringfort in Area 2.

Topographically the landform of the route of the N2 Improvement can be divided into three distinct topographical sections. The first section from the M50 to the Ward Upper townland comprises of gently undulating ground with streams running from west to east. From the Ward the landform descends into the valley of the Ward River through a very flat landscape with numerous watercourses crossing the scheme until

the tributaries of the Broad Meadow River are reached south of Ashbourne. North of the Broad Meadow River the landform rises to the higher ground at Rath to the north of Ashbourne.

Site 25 is situated on gently rolling terrain; several of the field boundaries carry flowing water and may represent the trained-in course of natural streams; water drainage through the topsoil on the site is quite poor. The highest point on the site at the 76m OD contour has a relatively thinner layer of topsoil and appears to have been better drained. From this point in the site the ground gently slopes away on all sides (Figure 3).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1. Baseline Survey

As part of the baseline survey of this site the Records of Monuments and Places for County Meath was consulted for the relevant parts of Co. Meath Ordnance Survey 6" Sheet 45. All sites within a radius of *c*. 1.5km of the site were identified. The relevant files for these sites, which contain details from aerial photographs, early maps, OS memoirs, OPW Archaeological Survey notes and other relevant publications, were then studied in the Sites and Monuments Records Office. These monuments are listed in Appendix 1 and are shown on Figure 1.

The topographical files in the National Museum of Ireland were consulted to determine if any archaeological artefacts had been recorded from the area. Other published catalogues of prehistoric material were also studied: Raftery (1983 – Iron Age antiquities), Eogan (1965; 1983; 1994 – bronze swords, Bronze Age hoards and goldwork), Harbison (1968; 1969a; 1969b – bronze axes, halberds and daggers) and the Irish Stone Axe Project Database (Archaeology Dept., U*C*.D.). The finds from the area are listed in Appendix 2.

The excavation bulletin website (www.excavations.ie) was consulted to identify any previous excavations that may have been carried out in the vicinity of this site. This database contains summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland from 1970 to 2005. Details of previous excavations, including excavations on the N2 project within 1km of Site 25, and CRDS Ltd excavation projects in Ashbourne not part of the N2 project, are listed in Appendix 3.

Cartographic sources consulted included the Down Survey Parish map (Figure 4) and Barony map (Illustration 1) for Ratoath (NLI Mss 715), Larkin's Grand Jury Map of County Meath (1812; Horner 2007); the first (1837, Figure 5) and third edition (1909) Ordnance Survey six inch maps; the Ordnance Survey Fair Plans (National Archives OS 105E/201 & 209) and the Primary Valuations Maps (1854) held in the Valuations Office on Lower Abbey Street and available on-line (www.askaboutireland.ie)

A number of primary and secondary sources were consulted in relation to the medieval and post-medieval history of the area. The British and Irish Bibliography was consulted (www.biab.ac.uk) and the Irish Historical Bibliography (www.rhs.ac.uk/bibl), as well as Hayes' *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation* (1965) and *Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation* (1970). Primary sources included the published medieval documents such as the *Calendar of Papal Registers*, *Calendars of Justiciary Rolls*, *Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland*, *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland* (Sweetman 1875-86); material from the early modern period consulted included the *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions* (White 1943) *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor sovereigns (1994)*, *The Civil Survey of County Meath* (Simington 1940), the *Census* of 1659 (Pender 1939), and *Bishop Dopping's Visitation Books* (Ellison 1971). A wide variety of material was available from the modern period: *The Tithe Applotment Books for the Barony of Ratoath* (1827), Griffith's *Primary Valuations for County Meath* (1854), Ordnance Survey records such as the *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Herity 2001), *Ordnance Survey Name Books* transcripts of which are held in the National Library, and the *Ordnance Survey Field Content Books*, held in the National Archives. The records of various British Parliamentary commissions of enquiry from the 19th century also provide a valuable source of information; examples studied for this project include *The Censuses* of 1841, 1851 and 1901 (HMSO 1843;1852-3; 1902), *The Royal Commission on Conditions of the Poorer Classes in Ireland* (1835) and *Select Committee on the Turnpike Roads, Ireland* (1837). More general information on County Meath was provided by Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837) and *The Statistical Survey of County Meath* (Thompson 1802).

3.2. Prehistoric Period

There is extensive evidence for prehistoric settlement in Counties Meath and Dublin (Stout and Stout 1992; Cooney and Grogan 1994; Stout & Stout 1992; Stout 1997; Grogan et al 2007).

The site of the excavation was located in the townland of Cookstown, northwest of the town of Ashbourne, County Meath and northeast of the town of Ratoath. While no prehistoric monuments had been identified and recorded in the townland of Cookstown prior to the current archaeological works, a number of recorded monuments are located in the vicinity and a significant number of prehistoric sites have recently been identified and excavated in the vicinity. These are briefly discussed below. Appendix 1 provides descriptions of recorded monuments extracted from the records of the archaeological survey of Ireland and Appendix 3 provides summaries of the results of the relevant excavations:

A Bronze Age barrow was identified 600m to the south on Site 23, and excavated by Laurance McGowan during the current works (Appendices 1 & 3). A ring-ditch (ME045-002), identified by aerial photography, is

located 0.98km to the south in Killegland. This site is visible as a small circular crop mark, c. 20m in diameter (Moore 1987, 9). A Bronze Age ring–ditch was also excavated in Killegland, some 1.4km eastsoutheast of Site 25, by William Frazier (See Appendix 3). Excavations in advance of the N2 Road Improvement Scheme, directed by Mr. Holger Schweitzer, uncovered a multi-period site in Rath (Site 27) 1.12kmto the north, which contained Bronze Age settlement and burial phases (see Appendix 3). Further evidence for Bronze Age activity in the area was uncovered in Rath townland, 1.36km to the northeast of the site, during topsoil stripping of the Bord Gáis Éireann Pipeline to the West project in 2002. Upon excavation, the site revealed evidence for four large, successive, univallate enclosures, all roughly circular in plan and measuring from 17.25m to 38.75m in external diameter. There were also a number of smaller features and deposits within the enclosures and the fills of the ditches including hearths, a cremation burial and pits with cremated bone deposits (Byrnes 2004, 428-29; Grogan et al 2007; see Appendix 3). Further Bronze Age burials are also known from Ratoath, less than 3km to the southwest with the discovery of a stone lined cist which contained an unusual funerary vessel (Waddell 1974). The lack of upstanding prehistoric monuments is not surprising; many were probably destroyed by intensive tillage since the medieval period.

3.3. Early Medieval Period

Settlement during the Early Medieval period (500-1170AD) is predominantly represented by circular or sub-circular enclosures called ringforts or raths. These are generally accepted to be the defended homesteads of Early Medieval farmers. Cookstown is located in an area of low ringfort density in Leinster (Stout 1997, 59). Stout argues that the intense agricultural activity of the High Medieval or Norman period is partially responsible for the low distribution of ringforts in Co. Meath, and more widely in Leinster, but that Leinster was still a lower density area due to geographical conditions such as the Wicklow mountains. The gradual reduction of ringfort density in Co. Meath from northeast to southwest may represent a preference for upland areas by the ringfort builders. The remains of an enclosure survive at Tankardstown (less then three kilometres from site 25) and two enclosures have also been identified at Killegland (ME045:003), 1.3km to southsoutheast, and Kilrue (ME045:012), 3.12km to the south. The former, identified by aerial photography, only survives as a cropmark and is of uncertain date while the latter may simply be the remnants of a landscape feature. Site 22 on the N2 Road Scheme, excavated by Mr. Laurence McGowen, also contained Early Medieval material; the site was located 1km to the south of Site 25 adjacent to a crop mark which, although small at c.20m diameter, may represent the remains of an early medieval settlement (Appendix 3).

The archaeological site (Site 21) at Raystown, on the N2 Road Scheme and directed by Mr. Matthew Seaver of CRDS Ltd was also a significant Early Medieval settlement and contained evidence for substantial enclosure, milling and burial; Raystown is located *c.* 1.5km south of Site 25. Excavations in Killegland 1.35km to the

southsoutheast of Site 25, directed by William Frazier of Margaret Gowen Ltd, indicate Early Medieval settlement, including corn drying (ME045:040) predating Killegland Castle (ME045:005; Appendix 3). Lagore Crannog, famously excavated by the Harvard Archaeological Expedition in the 1930s, and one of the most important Early Medieval settlement sites in Ireland, is just 5km from Cookstown (Henken 1950). *Lough Gabhair,* was the seat of the kings of southern Brega (Edwards, 1996, 38-41), which included Cookstown.

The Early Medieval Christian church became an integral part of the Irish landscape, at about the same time Irish written history in the Annals began to record more specific records of people, places and events. They record such detail from Gaelic life as the social ranking system and the extent of ringforts and land enclosure. They also record the gradual population of the country by churches. The earliest churches were isolated structures, but by the end of the first millennium AD, religious centres become proto-urban centres, with evidence for settlement and industry. Often, the Christian churches from the Early Medieval period were contained within enclosures, possibly as at Cookstown (ME045:001), 0.4km south of the site, and Killegland (ME045:004), 1.47km east of the site. The regionally significant ecclesiastical site at Dunshaughlin (ME044:033009) is located 8km west of Site 25. Burials at Baltrasna (ME045:006) and, in association with enclosures and milling, at Raystown (Site 21 03E1229ext; excavated by Matthew Seaver on the N2 project; Appendix 3), some 1.5km south of Cookstown, may indicate the presence of an early church site.

3.4. Medieval Period

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in 1169 substantially changed Meath's social and political structures. Meath was granted to Hugh de Lacy, a Welsh marcher Lord, in 1172, as part of a substantial lordship, "the Liberty of Meath" consisting of modern counties Meath, Westmeath and parts of Longford and Offaly (Orpen 1921; Curtis 1988; Otway-Ruthven 1968).

Lying between the de Lacy Lordship to the north and the Dublin to the southeast, the area was intensely settled, and remained securely under colonial control throughout the remainder of the medieval and into the early modern period: "Meath…was, perhaps, more intensively colonized by the Normans than any other rural area in the island with the possible exception of the region around Dublin" (Graham 1974, 40).

Cookstown is situated within the manor of Ratoath, a seigniorial manor of the Earl de Lacy after the subinfeudation of Co. Meath in the late 12th century (Orpen 1921, 69). Ratoath (ME044:034), some 3km westsouthwest of Site 25, is believed to have been one of the earliest Norman settlements in Co. Meath. A motte earthwork castle, still surviving, was constructed at Ratoath in the late 12th to early 13th century and a similar structure is to be seen in Donaghmore, 23km northwest of Site 25. Whilst Ratoath was probably

incorporated as a borough in the early 13th century, it is only first mentioned in an inquisition in 1333; at this time the borough returned an annual rent of £6 6s 4d, and was the site of a manor court and a hundred court (Orpen 1921, 73). Walter de Lacy granted his brother, Hugh, the manor of Ratoath in 1194. In 1227 Hugh was granted the right to hold an annual fair of thirteen days at Ratoath. The manor passed to Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, in 1283 (Orpen 1921, 70-72). In 1290-1 the de Lacy family granted the church in Ratoath to the church and canons of St Thomas' in Dublin (*Cal*. *Documents 1285-92*). The manor of Ratoath was granted to Robert Steven in 1306 (*Cal*. *Justiciary Rolls 1305-07*), while in 1307 the ecclesiastical taxation valued the town at 20 pounds, and the vicarage at 8 marks (*Cal*. *Documents 1302-07*).

The earliest reference to Cookstown in the documentary sources appears in deeds in the Register of St. Thomas's Abbey dating to the end of the 13th century (Gilbert 1889, 55-58). From these, it appears that the lands at Cookstown at that time belonged to one William Cocus (Cook), from whom the townland presumably derived its name. In an Inquisition dated to 18 June 1333, his son, Philip FitzWilliam, is listed as holding three carucates (equivalent to about 300 hectares) in *Kokeston* for which he rendered 6*s* service and held suit at the Court of Ratoath fortnightly (Orpen 1921, 76).

Significant later medieval remains were excavated in the adjacent parish at Killegland, about 1.4km eastsoutheast of Site 25 by William Frazier (Appendix 3). Here, Frazier excavated a medieval towerhouse, erected for Walter Wafre after 1400 (ME045:005), as well as a millrace for a mil (ME045:041).

3.5. Early Modern period

The growing influence of the English administration was expressed in a number of surveys undertaken for the purposes of redistributing land in the Early Modern period (c.1540-1699). These surveys also recorded much of the patterns of society and settlement of the period. These include the Civil Survey (Simington 1940), the cartographic *Down Survey* of 1656 under the direction of William Petty, and the *Census* of 1659 (Pender 1939).

The Civil Survey (Simington 1940, 97) describes Cookstown as containing 146 plantation acres (equivalent to 236.5 statute acres or 95.7 hectares) of mixed arable, meadow and pastureland. There was one stone house, house of offices and cabins on the land and the proprietor is listed as *David Russel of Cokestowne*. The Down Survey parish map for Cookstown also lists *David Russel* as the proprietor but measures the townland at over 212 plantation acres (equivalent to about 343 statute acres or 139 hectares). The mapped townland contains some thatched houses and cabins, about 100 ash trees and a ruined church. On the Ratoath Barony index map, this church is called "The Parish Church". The location of this church as depicted on the Down Survey parish map does not seem to correspond to that of the extant church site (ME045:001) which is located

adjacent to the Broadmore River (Figure 4). The ecclesiastical visitation of 1622 recorded that the church at Cookstown was a chapel-of-ease for Rathoath, was ruinous and contained no buildings on its glebe (Elrington 1847, lxxii). Bishop Dopping's visitations of 1682-85 mentions a chapel in Cookstown attached to the parish of Greenoge in the Deanary of Ratoath, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and impropriate to Sir Samuel Smith. The church was enclosed by a fence and had a glebe of half a stang, (Ellison 1971, 37), roughly equivalent to 820m^2; unfortunately the visitations don't shed further light on the location of this chapel in Cookstown. In the Census of 1659, Cookstown is listed as containing 17 heads of household: two were unnamed English; the remainder were Irish (Pender 1939, 486). The ownership of Cookstown, like much of the rest of east Ireland at this time – and particularly the counties east of the Boyne and Barrow – appears to have been owned by New English protestants following the Cromwellian confiscations. However, this appears to have been reversed as, by the later seventeenth century Cookstown townland was owned by Sir. Anthony Molady, old Irish Catholic and a substantial land owner in the barony of Ratoath (Loeber et al. 2001; see Fallon 2009a, 27-28); a Richard Morgan was the immediate leaseholder (Loeber et al. 2001, 80). An *Anthony Mulledy* was recorded as a Captain in the Army of King James (D'Alton 1855, II, 41-43); he was attainted in 1691, forfeiting his lands for fighting for King James II. Molady appears to have forfeited his lands to a Thomas Carter (Fallon 2009a, 27); the Carter family held this estate into the later half of 19th century at least.

3.6. Modern Period

Eighteenth century Meath prospered under the Protestant Anglo-Irish ascendancy, with rich agricultural production. Economic prosperity necessitated the construction of a suitable infrastructure, particularly roads and canals. The introduction of turnpike (toll) roads was an attempt at creating a self-financing, quality infrastructure (Andrews 1964; Broderick 1996). These new toll roads are recognisable in the countryside by cut across the existing field and road patterns in straight lines, the product of engineers' design rather than organic growth of the preceding roads network. The road through Ashbourne, later to become the N2, was a turnpike road. The Ordnance Survey *Fair Plans* show a tollgate and house straddling the road just north of Ashbourne Town. The turnpike road was recorded in Griffith's Valuation (1854) as running through Cookstown for a distance of 93 linear perches; Edward Hogan and Thomas Flood, the Trustees of the turnpike road, were responsible for £4 worth of rateable property on the road. The House of Commons *Select Committee on Turnpike Roads, Ireland*, chaired by Robert Wallace, established that in 1837 the tolls levied on the turnpike roads were excessive and constituted a monopoly (Wallace 1837, 397); faced with a lack of traffic, local resentment at levies, and competition from a relatively dense concentration of roads, the turnpike of North Dublin were wound up in 1855 (Broderick 1996, 50).

Ashbourne town, located 1.6km to the east of Cookstown, developed in the early nineteenth century as a post-town on the turnpike road. Ashbourne is located in the parish of Killegland, and adopted its name from the coach proprietor Fredrick Bourne who encouraged its growth. By the early nineteenth century it contained 60 houses with 473 inhabitants, a constabulary police station, a new Roman Catholic chapel and a dispensary; the market at Ashbourne was held five times a year (Andrews 1964, 38; Lewis 1837 Volume 1, 79; Harris 1998, 151). Cookstown parish contained 1947 statute acres and 98 inhabitants (Lewis 1837 Volume 1, 395). The Grand Jury map of County Meath, 1802, shows Site 25 in Cookstown on a hill, with the lane running from the Ballybin road past a number of houses – the modern farmstead – towards the west (Horner 2007, map 17). This map shows the prominent location of the site in the local topography. Much of the physical characteristics of the Irish countryside were systematically recorded by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland for the first time. Consistent population growth during the first half of the century contrasted with the steady decline in population in the second half following the disaster of the Famine. The Statistical Survey of County Meath, prepared for the Royal Dublin Society, recorded Meath in detail at the turn of the nineteenth century (Thompson 1802). Thompson commented on the necessity of proper drainage and impermeable nature of the soils in the Barony of Ratoath (1802, 39); much of his discourse details the inadequacies of the systems of agricultural tenure and the affects this system had on the landless class of labourers or cottiers. In 1854 Griffith's Valuation recorded the names of landowners, lessor and descriptions of tenements in the townland of Cookstown in the mid-19th century; the principal landowner in Cookstown is listed as William H. Carter, who leased a number of plots of land and houses in the townland to various people, some of whom in turn sublet parcels of land to others. The Valuation maps show the location of the plots of land listed in the Valuation Books. The area of Site 25 is shown as having been in the possession of William Borbidge, who leased a house, offices and land with a total annual valuation of £101 from William H. Carter (Griffith 1854, 40); the Carter family, it appears, held Cookstown from the late 17th century following the Williamite confiscations. William Borbridge, a protestant, appears to have been a strong farmer and was in favour of Catholic Emancipation (Wyse 1829, ccxxxi). The catastrophic Great Famine (1845-1850) changed the nature of Irish rural settlement. In 1841 the population of Cookstown was 142, with 18 inhabited houses containing 18 families (HMSO 1843). The majority of these families were employed in agriculture (14); 10 of these families were employed by the direction of labour and 8 were employed by their own labour. By the census of 1901 the population of Cookstown was reduced to 32 people from seven families (HMSO 1902).

4. Archaeological Excavation Stratigraphy

4.1. Excavation Overview

Excavations on Site 25 produced a substantial archive of archaeological objects consisting of artefacts and ecofacts, a written archive consisting of pro-forma feature record sheets, registers, levels books, and note books, a graphics archive consisting of drawings, photographs, a digital archive consisting of spread sheets (MS Excel), a relational database (MS Access), photographs and surveys.

Site 25 consisted of an area of 1.1 hectares stretched over three fields and an avenue; the avenue bisected the site and was the main access to the farmstead adjacent to the excavation and a right-of-way to lands beyond (Plate 1). The site was divided into four areas roughly corresponding with the four corners of the site. A 10m by 10m grid was set out over the site and tied into the National Grid so that each grid peg's co-ordinates corresponded with the last three digits of its National Grid Co-Ordinates e.g. grid peg 860, 980 was located at NGR 304860 East, 252980 North (Figure 6).

The basic stratigraphic information produced on the site consisted of the pro-forma feature record sheets. These sheets were based on the principle of the single context recording system, with the sheets themselves being a combination of The Museum of London guideline (Spence 1990) and the CRDS design. Each feature was given a unique identifier number; the information in the record sheets were designed to be input into a database.. The feature sheets allowed each feature or stratigraphic unit to be individually described and interpreted. A total of 1129 features numbers were assigned; of these 227 were not archaeologically significant. The remaining features were assigned to the following archaeological phases (Figure 7):

- Phase 1: Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age, 2500-1700BC; 4 features
- Phase 2: Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age, 900-600BC; 2 features
- Phase 3A: Iron Age, 600BC-AD; 37 features
- Phase 3B: Iron Age, AD-230AD; 18 features
- Phase 4: Early Medieval, 400-700AD; 18 features
- Phase 5A: High Medieval, 1169-1300AD; 405 features
- Phase 5B: Late Medieval, 1300-1500AD; 6 features
- Phase 6A: Early Modern, 1540-1700AD, 31 features
- Phase 6B: 18th century, 1701-1799AD, 11 features
- Phase 7A: 19th Century, 1801-1900, 240 features
- Phase 7B: 20th – 21st Century, 1901-2003, 15 features

In addition, 103 features could not be assigned a specific date or function and are recorded as being from an unknown phase (Phase 8 for the purpose of stratigraphic comparison; Figure 8).

4.2. Phase 1: Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age, 2500-1700BC

The earliest material recovered during the excavation at Cookstown were lithics found in topsoil dating to the Middle Neolithic (*c.* 3600 - 3100 BC): a hollow scraper and a small lozenge-shaped arrowhead (Plates 2-3; See

Appendix 10). However, no archaeological feature could be assigned to this period; these were stray finds from the topsoil in Area 3.

Phase 1 at Cookstown consists of an Early Bronze Age crouched inhumation burial (B1) and associated features (F2126, F2127, F2511, F2512) discovered in Area 2 to the south of the ringfort (Appendix 15). This burial was contained in a shallow grave cut (F2511; 0.85m long, 0.65m wide and 0.06m deep) badly damaged by ploughing over the years. The individual was buried on its left side with its head to the north; the individual appears to have been an older adolescent or young adult. Unfortunately, poor preservation has prevented sexing the individual (Plate 4; Figure 9).

Plate 2: Middle Neolithic hollow scraper (3000:27)

Plate 3: Middle Neolithic lozenge-shaped arrow head (3000:359)

Plate 4: Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age crouched inhumation (Burial 1 - scale is 20cm long).

The burial was cut by a small pit (F2126) which measured 0.47m long, 0.23m wide and 0.15m deep and contained a single fill (F2127): a mid-brown dry plastic silt which contained moderate charcoal inclusions. This fill also contained a large flint flake (2127:4; Plate 5) and bladelet (2127:5; Plate 6) and two joining sherds of Domestic Beaker pottery (2127:1-2) dating to the Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age periods (Plate 7; Appendix 7). Unfortunately the absence of surviving collagen from the burial from the human bone prevented radiocarbon dating.

Plate 5: Large flint flake (2127:4)

Plate 6: Small fine flint bladelet (2127:5)

However, a radiocarbon date from the fill of the fill (F2127) of small pit (F2126) cut into the burial returned a date of 2900BC to 2250 cal. BC (2 sigma; Wk-17938; Appendix 6), providing a *terminus ante quem* in for the burial In the final Neolithic to early Bronze Age. Rather confusingly, the fill of the burial cut itself (F2512) returned a radiocarbon date of 0AD – 130 cal AD (2 sigma; Wk-18213; see Appendix 6), falling in the Iron Age; this appears to be an erroneous date.

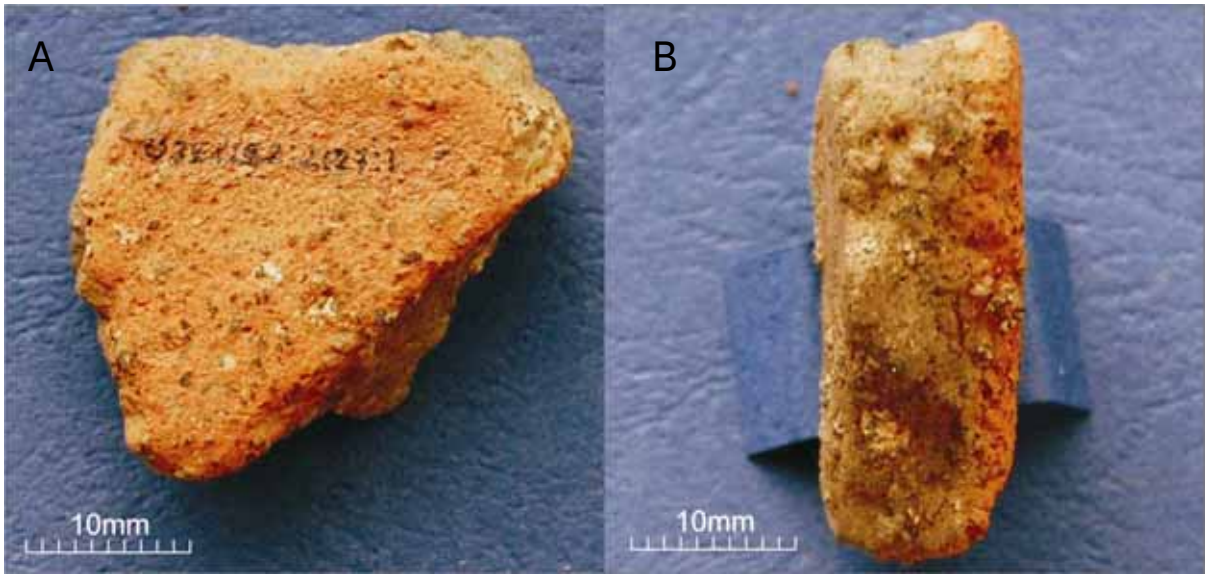

Plate 7: Sherd of Domestic Beaker Pottery (2127:1) showing the outer face (A) and the section (B).

Stray or residual artefacts, particularly lithics, found over the rest of the site, primarily in topsoil, suggest broader Early Bronze Age activity on site. These include a sherd of Fine Beaker (2079:2; Appendix 7) discovered as a residual find in a medieval hearth inside the Early Medieval ringfort, and Domestic Beaker Pottery found in the fills of an Iron Age (Phase 3A) double ring ditch (4003:2 & 4005:1; see Appendix 7). Six thumbnail scrapers were recovered as residual finds in topsoil (1000:20; 2000:73; 2000:168; 3000:237; 3000:255) and the fill of a medieval channel (3791:3), whilst six flint blades were found in a water channel (1093:1), a shallow boundary ditch between two medieval buildings (3083:59 & 3083:155), a nineteenth century pit (1106:1) and ditch (1097:65) and topsoil (3000:280; Appendix 10).

4.3. Phase 2: Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age, 900-600BC

Only two features could be assigned to this phase: a small pit (F3163; 0.50m by 0.46m by 0.23m deep) with a single charcoal flecked fill (F3151). The charcoal returned a radiocarbon date of 920 - 540 cal. BC (2 sigma; Wk-17937; see Appendix 6). This pit was located in the south sector of Area 3 in an area containing pits which could not be assigned to a specific date or function (F2056, F2057, F2059, F2062, F2507, F3141, F3142, F3143, F3144, F3145, F3146, F3147, F3153, F3154, F3159, F3160, F3168, F3173, F3181, F3425; Figures 8 &

10). These pits ranged in size from 0.18m (F3173) to 4.5m (F3145) long, 0.13 (F3173) to 0.76m (F2507) wide and 0.06m (F3153) to 0.34m (F3173) deep. Excluding the larges of these pits (F3145, which measured 4.5m by 1m wide by 0.3m deep), the average size of the pits in this area was 0.58m by 0.41m by 0.18m deep.

4.4. Phase 3A: Iron Age, 600BC-AD0]

Archaeology from the Iron Age 600BC to AD0 (Phase 3A) consists of a sequence of intercutting burnt pits in Area 3 and a double ring-ditch complex consisting of concentric ring ditches in Area 4.

4.4.1. Iron Age Kilns: Phase 3A

Five burnt pits were exposed in Area 3 (cut numbers F3864, F3865, F3869, F3872 & F3874) beneath a large medieval redeposit layer (F3038, F3776; Figure 11).

Plate 8: Iron Age corn drying kilns F3864, F3865, F3869, F3872 & F3874.

The earliest pit (F3865) measured 2.68m by 0.8m by 0.12m deep and contained a single fill (F3866) consisting of a mixture of clay, ash and occasional unidentifiable burnt animal bone. A second smaller pit (F3872) cut across the first; this measured 0.7m-1m in diameter and *c*. 0.20m deep. It contained four fills described in sequence from base to top: The primary fill was a burnt clay base (F3870), the second fill consisted of charcoal rich clay containing barley grains (F3873). The third charcoal rich fill (F3871) which produced a radiocarbon date from willow charcoal of 170 to 0 cal AD (2 sigma; Wk-18210; see Appendix 6). The fourth and final fill

consisted of ash-rich soil containing contain barley, wheat and hazel (Appendix 19). A third small pit (F3869; 0.17m by 0.14m by 0.04m deep) with a single charcoal-rich fill (F3868) was exposed cutting into this tertiary fill. A fourth long shallow cut (F3874) measuring 4m long, 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep cut north-south across the second and third pits.. This contained a single fill (F3867) consisting of charcoal-rich clay containing the remains of wheat, barley, oat and raphanus or raddish (Appendix 19). Two sherds of late 12th to early 13th century Dublin-Type Cooking Ware (3874:1-2) recovered within were assumed to be intrusive finds from the overlying medieval garden deposits; it is unlikely three similar burnt pits would be found cutting each other but separated in time by almost a millennia. The fifth pit and the last in stratigraphic sequence (F3864) measured 0.6m by 0.5m by 0.25m deep and contained three fills: a primary fill with moderate charcoal inclusions (F3863) containing poorly preserved barley (Appendix 19), a layer of heavy burning containing burnt oak wood and poorly preserved barley and wheat grains (F3862; Appendix 19). The final fill (F3859) consisted of charcoal rich and fire-reddened clay containing poorly preserved barley. These intercutting burnt pits were assumed to be a sequence of corn-drying kilns.

4.4.2. Double Ring-Ditches

A complex consisting of a double ring ditch and three associated pits was exposed in Area 4 (Figure 12). Area 4 corresponding with Test Area 24 (Hackett & Bonner 2003a - Excavation 03E1313) is situated *c.* 40m south of the rest of the main site in a separate field (Figure 6; Plate 9 and 10). The double ring-ditches' concentric rings (F4002, F4004), a pit between these ditches (F4027), and three external surrounding pits (F4032, F4037, F4042) were found approximately 115m south of the Iron Age corn-drying kilns. The fills of inner ring ditch (F4004) yielded charcoal radiocarbon dated to 360 – 50 cal. BC (2 sigma; Wk-16313; Appendix 6). It is assumed both the ring ditches are contemporary, and date to Phase 3A. One of the surrounding pits (F4032) was radiocarbon dated to 0 – 230 cal. AD (2 sigma; Wk-17940; Appendix 6), placing it in a second Iron Age phase on site: phase 3B.

The double ring-ditches were located on the gentle south facing slope of a pasture field overlooking the river valley of the Broadmeadow some 150m to the south-west (Figure 3; Plates 9-10). Prior to excavation there was no surface indication of the archaeological features and no evidence to suggest any associated banks or mound, other than a thin layer of redeposited natural spread over the ditches by ploughing. Unfortunately, both the ring-ditch and the adjacent pits in this were heavily truncated by ploughing over the centuries. The double ring-ditches have slightly flattened southern quadrants. Their concentric arrangement and their shape – the corresponding flattened southern quadrant – would strongly suggest both ditches were contemporary. The diameter of the outer ditch (F4002) was 15m; the inner ditch (F4004) was 6.6m in diameter and separated from the outer by approximately 3.5m. The inner and outer ditches were 0.54m (F4002) and 0.4m (F4004) wide; the

inner ditch (F4004) was shallower at 0.27m than the outer ditch (F4002) at 0.45m. The outer ring ditch (F4002) contained six fills (F4003, F4018, F4026, F4029, F4030, F4044), of which one (F4003), a primary fill, contained moderate inclusions of charcoal and fragments of bone and occasional inclusions of burnt bone.

Plate 9: Concentric double ring ditches (F4002 & F4004) and surrounding burnt pits in Area 4 (Photo by MCC).

Plant macro analysis of the primary fill (F4003) identified cereal grain of indeterminate species (Appendix 19); the bones of cattle, sheep/goat and pig (Appendice 17) were also identified. The fills of the outer ditch (F4002) were for the most part silty clay; the lowest fills of the outer ditch (F4018 & F4030) had a more sandy silt composition, indicating the ditch may have been left open and silted up gradually. A more compact fill (F4044) was found at the southern quadrant of the outer ditch (F4004). This fill consisted of silty sand, which appears to have been deliberately used to backfill a section of the ditch 1.7m long; it is assumed to have consolidated an entrance point into the double ring-ditches interior (Figure 9).

The inner ditch (F4004) contained five fills (F4005, F4016, F4017, F4020 & F4047). Four fills contained frequent to occasional charcoal inclusions from unidentified species, and moderate to occasional animal bone inclusions (F4005, F4016, F4017 & F4020), identified as cattle (F4005 & F4017) sheep/ goat (F4005 & F4017) and horse (F4017; Appendix 17; Figure 13). Three fills contained frequent to occasional inclusions of burnt bone (F4005, F4016, F4020), none of which could be identified. As with the outer ring ditch (F4002) a compact sandy fill (F4047) occupying a portion of the southern quadrant of the inner ditch, c. 1.5m long; this is assumed to have consolidated an entrance point into the enclosure. This inner entrance feature was but slightly off-set

from the outer ring ditch entrance (Figure 9). The tertiary fill of the inner ring ditch (F4005) produced two radiocarbon dates: 360 – 50 cal. BC and 360 – 160 cal. BC (2 sigma; Wk-1613-16314; Appendix 6).

Plate 10: Iron Age ring ditches facing south towards the Broadmeadow River.

Very few finds were recovered from the fills of the two ring ditches. The primary fill (F4003) of the outer ring ditch (F4002) contained a fragment of a glass bracelet (4003:0001; Plate 11). The bracelet or bangle is toffee brown or amber in colour, with a D shaped section; the original internal diameter was approximately 60mm. The interior is slightly rough, most likely from the metal or ceramic form around which the bangle was originally made. The shape of the bangle suggests that the original form upon which it was created was slightly conical, allowing the glass object to be easily removed. Although the piece appears to have been made as one colour – possibly amber which stained toffee in the ground – banding is clearly visible where the glass layers were laid down. The quality of the glass is poor: the surface is pitted, most likely from impurities in the glass ingredients, and this appears to have resulted in the breakage in prehistory.

A sherd of Domestic Beaker pottery was also recovered from this primary fill (F4003:2); this appears to be a residual find. In contrast to the outer ditch, where the objects were recovered from the primary fill, in the inner ring ditch (F4004) objects were recovered from the upper fill (F4005); these consisted of a penannular bronze

spiral ring (4005:2; Plate 12); a similar ring was found at Lisnacrogher where a hoard of Iron Age object were recovered from a bog where, it appears, votive offerings were made(Wakeman 1883-4; Rafter 1984, 181 & fig. 150:484; Raftery 1994). Two fragments of unworked flint were also recovered from this feature (4005:3-4; Appendix 10).

Plate 11: Iron age glass bracelet (4003:1). Photo scale = 2cm.(photo by John Sunderland)

Plate 12: Iron Age bronze penannular ring (4005:2)

The only feature exposed inside the ring-ditches was a shallow pit (F4027) exposed between the northern quadrants of the inner (F4004) and outer (F4002) ring ditches. The pit measured 0.25-0.29m in diameter and 0.13m deep; it contained a single fill (F4028) consisting of sandy clay with frequent charcoal inclusions and occasional burnt bone but no finds. One pit or possible post hole (F4010) measuring 0.7m by 0.25m by 0.25m deep, appeared to truncate the outer ring ditch (F4002) to the south-east (Figure 9). This contained a single fill (F4011) consisting of small stone with occasional charcoal; this yielded a chert flake with some evidence for reworking (4011:1; Appendix 10). A second possible post hole (cut F4014; fill F4015) was identified in the south sector of the outer ring ditch (F4002). This post hole measured approximately 0.18m-26m wide and 0.07m deep at the base of the ring-ditch cut. It is possible this represents a post cut into the trench, although no cut and fill for the post was discerned within the fill of the ring-ditch. It is equally possible this is the remains of a truncated post hole which predates the ring-ditch. The double ring-ditch and associated features appear to have served a ritual purpose (see below).

4.5. Phase 3B: Iron Age, AD-230AD

Three pits (F4032, F4037, F4042) surrounded the exterior of the double ring ditches (F4002 & F4004; Illustration 3; Figure 9; Plates 13-14). The pits were positioned at the north (F4032), south-east (F4037) and south-west (F4042) quadrants of the outer ring ditch (F4002). They ranged in size from 0.68m by 1.42m (F4032) to 1m by 1.52m (F4042) and were between 0.1m (F4032) and 0.34m (F4042) deep. The northern pit (F4032) contained two fills (F4033, F4036), the south-western pit (F4037) contained four fills (F4038, F4039,

F4040, F4041) and the south-eastern pit (F4042) contained two fills (F4043, F4046). The base of each pit showed evidence for burning and all the fills contained charcoal inclusions. Blackthorn charcoal (Appendix 18) was recovered from the upper fill (F4033) of the north pit (F4032); this yielded a radiocarbon date of 0 – 230 cal. AD (2 sigma; Wk-17940; Appendix 6). The same fill yielded barley and indeterminate cereal (Appendix 19). The upper fill (F4038) of the southwest pit (F4037) contained alder charcoal, barley and other indeterminate cereal grain (Appendix 19).

Plate 13: Burnt pit (F4042) at the south-west exterior quadrant of the Iron Age double ring-ditch.

Plate 14: Iron age burnt pit (F4032) in section, at the exterior north of the double ring-ditches.

All of the fills in the south-west pit (F4037) contained inclusions of occasional bone or flecks of burnt bone, as did one of the fills (F4033) of the northern pit (F4032); unfortunately this bone was in too poor a condition to identify. A single find was recovered from the three pits: a flint flake from the upper fill (F4033) of the northern pit (F4032). These pits may have been used for drying grain or preparing food and may be associated with some ritual activity focused on the double ring-ditch (see below).

4.5.1. Iron Age Kiln Phase 3B

A single shallow burnt pit (F2062), located 64m north of the double ring-ditch also dates to Phase 3B (Figure 7 & 11). This feature appeared to have been a corn drying kiln. This oval pit measured 1.48m by 0.86m and was 0.23m deep. It contained six fills (F2125, F2502, F2503, F2504, F2505 and F2506). The primary fill of the pit (F2505) appeared to be burnt. Secondary fills of the pit contained barley (F2502, F2503), wheat (F2502, F2503 & F2504), and chenopodium or goosefoot (F2504). A radiocarbon date from a barley grain recovered from the secondary fill (F2503) of 20AD to 220AD (Wk18211; 2 sigma; Appendix 6) dates this feature to the later Iron Age. This feature appeared to have been a corn drying kiln.

4.6. Phase 4: Early Medieval, 400-1169AD

The archaeological remains of the Early Medieval phases of activity at Cookstown consisted of a corn drying kiln, a ringfort ditch, associated features and finds.

Plate 15: Early medieval (Phase 3) corn-drying kiln (F1080) facing north.

4.6.1. Early Medieval Corn Drying Kiln

A corn-drying kiln (F1080) was discovered 53m north of the ringfort (Figures 7 & 14; Plate 15). This consisted of a circular pit measuring 1.1-1.3m in diameter and 0.35m deep with a 0.25m to 0.4m wide flue extending north. The base of the pit and the flu was burnt and contained a large flat flag-stone.

The kiln contained one fill (F1085), which contained frequent wheat and barley, less frequent oats and other indeterminate cereal grains, as well as the charcoal of oak, ash and blackthorn – presumably the remains of the fuel for the last firing (Appendix 19). The blackthorn charcoal produced a radiocarbon date of 410 - 600 cal. AD (2 sigma; Wk-17939; Appendix 6).

4.6.2. Ringfort

During the Early Medieval period a circular enclosure or ringfort was constructed on site (Figures 7 & 15; Plate 16). The ringfort was built at the highest and driest point of the site (around the 76m contour), with the land falling away to the south towards the Broadmore River and to the north towards a small stream, which formed the northern boundary of the excavation (Figure 3). There was no surface indication of the ringfort prior to the soil strip and the feature only became apparent during the geophysical scan; archaeological testing subsequently confirmed the feature was at least medieval. The geophysics identified a circular enclosure which had an overall diameter of approximately 54m or 2289m^2; however, only 489m^2 or 21% of this lay within the area to be impacted by the road and, therefore, subsequently excavated (Figure 2).

Plate 16: Ringfort (F2043 & F2044) with the modern farmstead in the background, facing west (Photo by Hawkeye).

No Early Medieval internal occupation layers or remains of the bank survived in the portion of the ringfort excavated; these features appear to have been thoroughly ploughed out over time; the only internal features consisted of a medieval pit (F2046; Phase 5A) and a series of parallel modern drainage gullies (F2010, Phase 7A; F2012, Phase 7A; F2014, Phase 7A; F2032, Phase 7A). The most substantial surviving portion of the ringfort consisted of the ditch and its fills. The excavated portion of the ringfort was made up of two sections of ditch (F2043 and F2044) and an intervening causeway entrance facing east. The ditches of the ringfort were cut into the underlying natural subsoils which consisted of clays overlying a more sandy stony glacial moraine. The ditches were also cut into the water table; the water level in the ditch varied considerably between the winter and summer months (Plate 17).

The ringfort ditches (F2043 & F2044) were between 3.2m and 5.5m wide and approximately 1.2m deep (Figure 16). The two sections of ditch contained 50 fills (F2073, F2074, F2075, F2076, F2109, F2110, F2111, F2115, F2116, F2117, F2118, F2119, F2121, F2122, F2123, F2130, F2136, F2137, F2138, F2139, F2140, F2150, F2159, F2160, F2161, F2165, F2169, F2181.

Plate 17: Section of the ringfort ditch, facing south.

F2184, F2185, F2186, F2187, F2188, F2189, F2190, F2191, F2193, F2195, F2201, F2202, F2203, F2204, F2205, F2206, F2207, F2208, F2209, F2210, F2211, & F2212); these fills consisted of ten Early Medieval (Phase 4) fills at its base (F2119, F2122, F2130, F2150, F2165, F2169, F2193, F2195, F2206 & F2212), overlain by 19 medieval fills (Phase 5A; F2110, F2115, F2116, F2117, F2118, F2123, F2140, F2181, F2184, F2185, F2187, F2201, F2202, F2205, F2207, F2208, F2209, F2210 & F2211), which in turn were overlain by 11 early-modern (Phase 6A; F2075, F2076, F2159, F2160, F2161, F2188, F2189, F2190, F2191, F2203, & F2204) and nine modern (Phase 7A; F2073, F2074, F2109, F2121, F2136, F2137, F2138, F2139 & F2186) fills.

The Early Medieval fills consisted of wet sandy or clay-rich fills formed by the gradual silting of the ditch, often associated with a layer of iron pan (F2169) which formed as water lay stagnating in the ditch; a step down into the ringfort ditch at the southern side of the causeway may have been used to provide access down to this water (Figure 15). Three fills found on the western side of the ditch (F2118, F2130 & F2150) were formed as the up-cast material which formed the internal bank slipped back into the ditch. It is probable that the ringfort ditch was subject to recutting. The ringfort ditch does appear to have been open into the 13th or 14th century; a number of silty fills indicate the ditch was still holding water (F2207, F2117 and F2208), and several show continued evidence for slippage from the ringfort ditch (F2191, F2202 and F2212). However, there does appear to have been at this time a concerted effort to backfill the ditch, with material being thrown down (F2188, F2115, F2116, F2121, F2123, F2140, F2075, F2185, F2211, F2189, F2190, F2191, F2202, F2203, F2204, F2205, F2209, F2210 & F2212) possible from the remains of the ringfort bank (Figure 16). Few finds were made in the primary fills of the ringfort: a corroded iron nail shank (2122:1) and an undecorated copper alloy ringed pin (2150:1; Plate 18) typical of the eight to ninth century (Fanning 1994). Disappointingly, little ecological material was recovered from the primary fills of the ringfort ditch: fragments of split oak from one (F2165; Appendix 18) and the remains of land snails, unidentified, from another (F2195). Small fragments of frothy black slag from one primary fill (F2122; see Appendix 20) suggests occasional metal working in or near the ringfort.

Plate 18: copper alloy early medieval ringed pin (2150:1) (scale = 2cm).(Photo by John Sunderland)

The entrance into the ringfort was east-facing. It consisted of a causeway of unexcavated natural material, a maximum four meters wide; the cutting for the ditch was considerable steeper on the northern side of the causeway (F2043) than on the southern (F2044) where a step appears to have been left, perhaps to gain access more easily to the base of the ditch. There was no surviving evidence for a palisade or a gate at the entrance, although a metalled surface (F2171) was laid down to consolidate the ground.

4.7. Phase 5A: High Medieval, 1169-1300AD

A large proportion of the site can be characterised as medieval rural settlement ranged along a medieval lane dating from the 13th or 14th century. Within this period of occupation a number of separate phases of activity were identified, including the construction of at least three structures (one, a forge), a number of drainage and enclosure ditches, and a medieval garden (Figure 17). Drainage appears to have been a major consideration in the medieval period, which is understandable given the impermeable nature of the clays on the site; shallow ditches or channels appear to have been dug around structures and within the garden to take water away. There is also indirect evidence to suggest that at least part of the ringfort ditch remained in use during this period.

4.7.1. Medieval Structures: Structure I

Each of the three medieval structures appears to have been built and occupied around or about the same time. The buildings were constructed to the side of a medieval path or road, like a sunken-way,

Plate 19: Elevated oblique photograph of Structure I and II, facing south (Photo by Hawkeye)

which appears to have been deepened and transformed into an avenue in the modern period. Stratigraphically Structures I and II were contemporary (Plate 19); Structures II and III were separated by a shallow ditch (F3328), which appears to indicate they were in use at or about the same time. Structure III was surrounded by a medieval ditch (F3421 & F3466), which was also fed by a long drainage ditch (F3780) stretching from the area of the medieval garden. The three medieval structures were wood built, with shallow slot trenches serving to fix the structures to the ground.

There is little evidence to suggest that Structure I, which appears to have been a medieval forge, was roofed; a shallow linear depression (F3106) parallel to and outside the channel surrounding the medieval forge (F3002) may be interpreted as the result of dripping from the eve of a roof. However, only a small number of post holes near the centre of the structure could have functioned as support posts (F3353, F3308, F3315); it may even have been the case that the building was not earth-fast, the majority of the weight of the structure may have been supported on post pads or wooden supports sitting directly on the ground, leaving the interior, it appears, without enclosing (and flammable) walls, open to the elements.

The cut defining the limits of Structure I was a shallow open channel or drain (F3002 and F3005), which appears to have been an attempt to keep water out of the forge area (Plate 19). The area enclosed by this shallow channel measured 8.5m by at least 5m – the northern side of the structure was truncated by an early modern (phase 6A) ditch (F3332) – with a *c*. 0.6m wide entrance on its

Plate 20: Sections through the gully (F3002 & F3005) enclosing Structure I, the medieval forge

Plate 21: Fragmented base of a Leinster Cooking Ware vessel found in the gully surrounding the forge in Structure 1 (Scale = 2cm).(Photo by John Sunderland)

southern side formed by a gap or causeway in the channel (Figure 18). The enclosing channels were between 0.6m and 0.95m wide and approximately 0.2m deep; the corners of the enclosed area were curved (Figure 20). The primary fills of these open channels (F3286 and F3306) were silty, suggesting they were waterlogged; both fills also contained medieval ceramics: Dublin-Type ware and Leinster Cooking Ware, including a fragmented Leinster Cooking Ware pot base (Appendix 8; Plate 21). The channel's upper fills (F3020, F3087, F3094 and F3322) contained charred barley, oat and wheat grain and burnt bone (F3094) and industrial refuse – slag (F3020, F3094 & F3322) and metallurgical ceramics or fragments of the clay walls of furnace (F3087, F3094 & F3322). Finds from these features consisted of 13th century pottery – Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type coarse wares and cooking wares (F3020, F3087, F3094 and F3322; Appendix 8) and iron shanks and nails (F3094 & F3322; Appendix 13). All of this material appears to have accumulated in the open ditch (F3002 & F3005) which surrounded the forge. The interior of the forge consisted of an earthen floor surface (F3317) with trodden-in charcoal, slag and sherds of medieval pottery – Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type wares, coarse wares, cooking wares and fine wares and a sherd of unidentified French ware

(F3247; Appendix 8). There was no direct evidence for the hearth, furnace or fire used to heat the metal, although the presence of the furnace fragments and a disk-tuyere (3091:0019; Plate 22) clearly indicate it was located close-by, and most likely in the area of the structure truncated by

Plate 22: Post holes for a working bench or anvils in the forge

the later ditch (F3332). A shallow doughnut-shaped trough (F3298) was found in the centre of the structure. This trough measured 3m by 2.5m, was 0.65m wide and 0.28m deep, and contained 16 fills (F3009, F3012, F3014, F3260, F3279, F3297, F3299, F3300, F3301, F3303, F3313, F3316, F3319, F3320, F3321 & F3325). This appears to be a quenching trough. The silty primary fills of the trough (F3301, F3320, F3321 and F3325) indicated the feature held water during its initial phase of use. As with the channel surrounding the structure (F3002, F3005), large quantities of slag from iron working, include fragments of copper-alloy sheet metal (3297:1-8; Plate 24) were found in the trough, as well as the charred remains of wheat (F3309, F3014, F3313 & F3319), oats (F3009, F3014 & F3313) and peas (F3014; Appendix 19). The trough surrounded an area which contained four large postholes with single fills (F3285 & F3016, F3287 & F3280, F3288 & F3254, and F3289 & F3113). These would appear to have acted as supports for a raised area or bench (Plate 22). This bench appears to have been replaced with a less sturdy structure supported on stakes (F3296, F3294, F3295, F3305, F3304, F3293 & F3290). The trough appears to have gone out of use and filled up over time with refuse and

industrial waste. This may have corresponded with a change in use for the structure from industrial to domestic, or a period of abandonment when refuse built up in the area. A small shallow circular pit (F3438) measuring 0.9m by 0.8m by 0.06m deep cut into the trough and therefore postdates the use of this feature. This pit contained four fills (F3281, F3302, F3310 and F3312). The fills of this shallow pit contained a mixture of domestic refuse (Leinster Cooking Ware and Dublin type wares, and the plant-remains of wheat, oats, peas and radish; Appendix 19) as well as industrial material such as slag and corroded iron (Appendix 20).

Plate 23: Disk tuyere (3091:0019)


Plate 24: Copper-allow sheet metal (*3297:1-8) Before conservation*

4.7.2. Structure II

Structure II was annexed to the western side of Structure I (Figure 18; Plate 19). This structure consisted of an earth-fast building measuring 9.5m by 3.5m, with a south facing entrance *c*. 1.1m wide. Only the outline of the foundations of this building survived. The building appears to have been wooden, the walls of which were set into narrow shallow slot trenches (F3329, F3330 & F3333; Figure 20); there may have been an internal subdivision wall also set in a slot trench (F3338). The foundation trenches ranged between 0.5m and 0.6m wide and between 0.22m and 0.3m deep. The profile of these slot trenches, with near vertical sides and flat bases, indicate they were dug to take the uprights of a wooden wall, possibly made of split planks; an external post hole (F3339) may have been associated with the structure of the building also. A slot (F3338) 1.4m long appeared to either close the western end of the structure or act as an internal division. The 1.3m gap between the slot trenches appeared to act as a south-facing entrance. The exit to the exterior of the structure on the south had a series of post-holes (F3323, F3324, F3326 & F3327), which may be interpreted as a wind break for the building. There were no internal post holes or structural elements in the building other than the western slot trench. The building was quite narrow and it would appear that any roof over the structure was carried on the buildings walls; in addition it would appear that the building was open to the east where it abutted the forge in Structure I.

Structure II and Structure III were separated by a shallow ditch (F3328) measuring 2.1m wide and 0.6m deep (Figure 17; Plate 19). This ditch contained two fills (F3083 & F3462), one with iron slag (F3083), presumably from the forge in Structure I. The ditch fill (F3462) were also found to contain wheat and oat grains as well as the remains of weeds – Galium or Bedstraw and Rumex or Dock – presumably collected with the crops (Appendix 19). Pottery recovered in the ditch fill (F3083), consisting of 13th century Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type coarse ware and cooking ware, are consistent with the pottery types found in the adjacent medieval structures.

Plate 25: Elevated oblique photograph of Structure III facing south (Photo by Hawkeye).

4.7.3. Structure III

Structure III, on the western side of this ditch (F3328), was a medieval building also severely truncated by the modern avenue to the north (Figure 19; Plate 25). The remains of the structure measured *c*.5m by 5m. The cut for the foundations of Structure III (F3441, F3443 and F3478) was between 0.57m and 0.7m wide, and 0.2m and 0.4m deep. These foundations contained four fills (F3356, F3361, F3442 & F3450). The fills of the foundation trench contained thirteenth-century to fourteenth-century century Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type Ware and Dublin Type cooking ware (F3356 & 3442) and Dublin Type Coarseware (F3356). The walls of the structure were probably made of planks set upright in the slot trench. There is no evidence for a wooden base plate; instead, pack stones (F3450) were set around the planks to hold them in place. Some of these pack stones survived on the western slot trench (F3441; Plate 26). An external post hole (F3453) may have been structural. A series of eight stake holes on the eastern side of the structure (F3484, F3485, F3486,

F3487, F3488, F3489, F3490, F3491 & F3492) may also have been structural; it would appear they closed a gap in the plank walling and may have been associated with an entrance. The internal house floor did not survive. However, the interior did contain a series of stake holes which appear to have been associated with internal furnishing. A series of 18 stake holes (F3390, F3391, F3392, F3393, F3394, F3395, F3396, F3397, F3398, F3399, F3400, F3401, F3402, F3403, F3404, F3405, F3406 & F3407)

Plate 26: Packing stones (F3450) for the foundation (F3441) of Structure III.

were ranged in a roughly square outline and may have been used as a pen or to support a work surface or bench. There was no direct evidence for a hearth in the building; a patch of scorched earth (F3360) beside the eastern wall of the structure may represent the site of a hearth, although the centre of the building would appear a more likely spot for such a feature considering the walls were wooden. It is conceivable that evidence for the hearth, along with other internal features, were truncated by an extension of the avenue. Structure III was surrounded by a shallow ditch (F3421) on its western side and a shallow ditch (F3428 = F3466 = F3482) to the immediate east. The surrounding ditch (F3421) measured 1. 7m at its widest and 0.65m at its deepest, and contained four fills (F3064, F3355, F3422 & F3423) with medieval pottery – Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type wares, coarse wares, cooking wares and fine wares (See Appendix 8) – and unidentified burnt bone

(Appendix 16). Another ditch (F3780) extended to the south-west (Figure 17). This ditch measured 1.27m wide by 35m long and was up to 0.9m deep and contained seven fills (F3431, F3432, F3451, F3769, F3779, F3781, & F3782). The primary fills (F3432, F3781 & F3782) were silty to sandy clays with no finds and appear to have been laid down as the ditch carried water. The secondary fills (F3431 & F3779) were silty sand and clay with organic and artefact content: the charred remains of wheat, oat and peas and 13th century Dublin Type wares (F3431). The ditch's tertiary fills (F3451 & F3769) contained more artefacts: early 13th century Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type Cooking Ware (F3451 & F3769) and Dublin Type Coarse Ware (F3769): an assemblage fairly consistent with that found and around the medieval structures and garden. Similarly, the fills of the shallow ditch to the east of the structure (F3428 = F3466 = F3482) contained medieval pottery – Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin Type Coarse Ware, Fine Ware and Cooking Ware – and a fragment of a sheet of bronze metal (3465:0012) similar to examples recovered from the medieval forge Structure I (see Appendices 8 & 13).

4.7.4. Drainage Ditches & Garden Features

The ditches (F3431 & F3780) appear to have functioned as a water channels. They may also have served to enclose an area of cultivation or gardening (Figure 17). A small area measuring 6m by c.5.4m appears to have been a garden feature. It was defined by a broad and shallow cut (F3244) measuring 1m at its widest and 0.27m deep (Plate 27). Later drains and the deepening of the road for the avenue and animal burrows all damaged the stratigraphy in this area of the site. The fills of the cut (F3051, F3389, F3446, F3479 & F3480) consisted of moderate to well-sorted silty clays, which contained large quantities of medieval pottery - 13th century Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin type coarse wares, cooking wares and fine wares - and moderate to frequent amounts of animal bone (Appendix 8). The feature appeared to be an open drain which silted up or was filled in with refuse. It is likely that the cut (F3244) enclosed a small area such as a garden or plant bed. Two shallow cuts (F3505 & F3497) inside may have been the remains of planting activity; their fills (F3379 & F3506) consisted of silty clays with charcoal inclusions; medieval pottery – Dublin type coarse wares, cooking wares and Leinster Cooking Wares – are consistent with pottery types found over the rest of the medieval site.

The association of the medieval houses and cultivation with shallow drains or channels illustrates that water management was an important consideration in the medieval settlement at Cookstown. The relatively impermeable clays which constituted the top-soils of the site were drained on a much larger scale by ditches running across and enclosing large areas of the site. The ditch (F3780) associated with Structure III and the garden bed only appears to have been in use for a short period and was backfilled before a larger north-south ditch (F3049) cut across it. This ditch, along with its east-west equivalent (F3140) served to enclose a large area – approximately 1900m^2 – between the medieval road, the ringfort (F2043 and F2044) and the

presumably open fields to the south on the hill stretching down to the Broadmore River (Figures 17 & 21). These ditches appear to have separated an

Plate 27: Garden feature (F3244).

area of intensive cultivation like a garden, from an area of pasture and more extensive crop cultivation. The medieval ditches were larger (2.9m wide and between 1.1m and 1.7m deep) and were designed to take large quantities of water. The profile of the east-west ditch (F3140) deepened from both ends towards the junction with the north-south ditch (F3049), where a narrow deep slot at the base of the ditch would have both aided flow and acted as a soak-away (Figure 22). The north-south ditch (F3049; Plate 28) was cut after the east-west (F3140); a shallow band of natural subsoil was left separating the two ditches; a thin surface of gravel (F3265) was thrown down to form a path across the ditch. The ditch (F3140) contained 27 fills (F3214, F3216, F3217, F3270, F3271, F3272, F3273, F3274, F3495, F3496, F3500, F3161, F3215, F3207, F3239, F3177, F3178, F3179, F3180, F3232, F3233, F3234, F3235, F3236, F3237, F3238 & F3206); the primary fills (F3207, F3217, F3232, & F3500) were generally made up of silt rich layers, again consistent with fills formed in standing water. These fills contained very few finds: a body fragment of a late 12th to mid 13th century Dublin Type Cooking Ware (F3217: Appendix 8). The secondary fills (F3178, F3179, F3180, F3206, F3216, F3233, F3234, F3235, F3236, F3237, F3271, F3273 & F3274)) were for the most part consistent with those created as the ditch silted and filled up in the medieval period, and contained Leinster Cooking Ware and Dublin Type Coarse Wares (F3178 & F3216). The tertiary fills (F3161, F3177, F3214, F3215, F3238, F3239, F3270, F3272, F3495 &

F3496) appear to have formed as material subsided into the ditch, or perhaps when the ditch was deliberately backfilled, as well as the usual selection of medieval pottery clay pipe and utility bottle fragments and sherds of North Devon Gravel Temper Ware (F3177, F3214, & F3161) were recovered from the fills (Appendices 8-9, 11-12).

Plate 28: Medieval boundary ditch (F3049), facing south.

The north-south ditch (F3049) measured 20m long by 2.9m wide and up to 1.1m deep and contained 24 fills (F3049, F3098, F3099, F3100, F3219, F3220, F3221, F3222, F3223, F3224, F3225, F3226, F3227, F3228, F3229, F3230, F3231, F3240, F3241, F3242, F3243, F3245, F3246,
F3268, F3269, F3241, F3242 & F3246). The ditch was cut from south to north from the medieval east–west ditch (F3140) towards the medieval lane. The fall of the ditch is from south to north, and it appears that the

water was intended to flow towards the road, perhaps into a roadside ditch. The make-up of the primary fills (F3221, F3222, F3223, F3224, F3225, F3229, F3230, F3231, F3245 & F3268) of the medieval ditch (F3049) were consistent with those of a ditch carrying water over a period of time and silting up. There also appears to have been some collapse back into the ditch from the western edge (F3245), suggesting this was the side the spoil was originally thrown out of the ditch. The profile of the ditch had deeper section towards its centre, presumably to aid the flow of water and make it easier to dig; the width of the ditch would have served as a deterrent for any animals trying to cross it; the most likely crossing point was the shallow portion of the ditch at the junction with its east-west equivalent (F3140) where a bank of natural sub soil was left in place. The primary fills of the ditch contained very few finds – Leinster Cooking Ware and Dublin Type Coarseware (F3221; Appendix 8) – and animal bone. The secondary fills (F3099, F3100, F3220, F3227, F3228, F3240, F3243 & F3269) formed over a period of time in the medieval period when the ditch was falling out of use. Fragments of slag found in one of the secondary fills (F3099 & F3100) suggest the ditch was open when the forge (Structure I) was in use (Appendix 20); 13th century medieval pottery - Leinster Cooking Ware (F3100 & F3099), and Dublin Type Cooking Ware and Fine Ware (F3100) were also found in the secondary fills. The presence of early modern pottery – North Devon Gravel Free Ware and 18th century slip ware (F3100) – may also suggest the ditch was open for a longer period of time. The ditch's (F3049) tertiary fills (F3098, F3219, F3226, F3241, F3242 & F3246) were probably the result of subsidence or deliberate backfilling at some stage in the 17th century and 18th centuries, when both ditches (F3049 & F3140) were finally completely filled in and the field was ploughed.

The medieval ditches (F3049 and F3140) enclosed an area where intense cultivation was carried out. The problems of water drainage were again evident; this area of the site appears to have been deliberately raised using imported soil (F3038). This covered an earlier series of Iron Age pits (F3855, F2364, F3869 and F3872). It appears that the area was raised in the medieval period to allow drier conditions for cultivation. Evidence for the cultivation took the form of an intense concentration of shallow channels or furrows (F3855, F3210, F3211, F3787, F3794, F3048, F3836, F3824, F3825, F3826, F3827, F3830, F3832, F3833, F3835, F3834, F3775, F3841, F3845, F3846, F3847, F3848, F3043, F3030, F3032, F3033, F3040, F3849 & F3046), partially arranged in a cross-hatch pattern (Figure 21). The fills of these channels (F3818, F3762, F3812, F3813, F3814, F3815, F3853, F3810, F3857, F3809, F3785, F3758, F3856, F3811, F3763, F3802, F3803, F3804, F3805, F3806, F3807, F3808, F3839, F3761, F3753, F3754, F3774, F3777, F3750, F3197, F3840, F3842, F3778, F3766, F3768, F3771, F3773, F3752, F3183, F3184, F3188, F3190, F3195 & F3196) were generally silty and rich in charcoal, sherds of medieval pottery – Dublin Type Wares, Dublin Type Coarsewares, cooking wares and fine wares and Leinster Cooking Ware (Appendix 8) as well as a fragment of sheet metal (3758:002) similar to examples found in the forge (Structure I); fragments of sheet metal (3762:001), a copper-alloy thimble

(3804:001; Plate 29) and an iron nail (3805:007) were also found. All this material was most likely deposited as refuse in this area, probably for manure, although the thimble is likely to be a post-medieval intrusive find (Appendix 13) Cultivation in this area of the site continued until the enclosing ditches (F3049 and F3140) were backfilled, possibly into the 17th century.

Plate 29: Post-medieval thimble (3804:1).

Plate 30: Iron knife from the ringfort ditch (2149:3)(Photo by John Sunderland)

Plate 31: Copper alloy pin, possibly 13th century, recovered from topsoil (3000:28)

Plate 32: Stick pin (1097:24; scale = 2cm).(Photo by John Sunderland)

There is some evidence for the possible use of the ringfort ditches (F2043 and F2044) during the High Medieval period. An isolated hearth was found inside the ditch (F2046), which contained medieval pottery – 13th century Dublin type ware (F2146; Appendix 8), a possible iron needle or pin (F2146:005; Appendix 13), and bone. A

sherd of Early Bronze Age Fine Beaker Pottery (2079:002; Appendix 7) and flint (2146: 001, 002 & 003; Appendix 10) are probably residual. No structural elements were found associated with this hearth, so it doesn't seem that it there was a house here. A number of the secondary and tertiary fills of the ringfort contained medieval pottery – 13th century Dublin Type coarse wares (F2074, F2123 & F2043), Dublin Type Cooking Wares (F2166, F2043 & F2074), Dublin Type Fine Ware (F2043), Leinster Cooking Ware (F2136, F2166 & F2074) and medieval pottery – 13th century Dublin type ware (F2146; Appendix 8), a possible iron needle or pin (F2146:005; Appendix 13), and bone. No structural elements were found associated with this hearth, so it doesn't seem that it there was a house here. A number of the secondary and tertiary fills of the ringfort contained medieval pottery – 13th century Dublin Type coarse wares (F2074, F2123 & F2043), Dublin Type Cooking Wares (F2166, F2043 & F2074), Dublin Type Fine Ware (F2043), Leinster Cooking Ware (F2136, F2166 & F2074) and a sherd of miscellaneous French ware (F2107; Appendix 8). It appears that sections of the ringfort ditch may have been recut, particularly in its north-east segment, to act as a field boundary. A shallow ditch (F2092) measuring 0.5m wide, approximately 0.22m deep and 14m long, ran from the ringfort entrance towards the lane. The ditch contained three fills (F2087, F2088, & F2166), one (F2166) of which contained medieval pottery – Dublin Type Cooking Ware and Leinster Cooking Ware. This suggests that the causeway across the ringfort ditches was still used in the high medieval period. In addition, a series of shallow inter-cutting medieval ditches (F2001 & F2215) to the immediate north of the ringfort appear to have been associated with drainage of some form, perhaps associated with a close-by structure or yard; unfortunately excavation in this area of the site was limited to a small wedge between the avenue to the north and the line of the CPO to the south. Sherds of Leinster Cooking Ware and Dublin Type wares (F2149; Appendix 8) and a fragment of an iron knife (2149:003; Appendix 13; Plate 30), as well as charred remains of wheat cereal (F2179; Appendix 19) were also recovered from the fills of these ditches. This is not of the result of a High Medieval occupation phase for the ringfort; rather, it appears to be the residue of the medieval settlement around the ringfort. Fragments of human bone –long bone and skull – from the medieval tertiary fills of the ringfort (F2116 & F2123) are likely to be residual finds from disturbed prehistoric burials such as the Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age Burial 1 found to the south of the ringfort (Appendix 17). However, it is not unusual to find human burials inserted into ringforts at a later stage.

A number of medieval dress accessories were recovered as residual finds in later features or in topsoil. These include two pins (*1097:24 & 3000:28*) which are likely to be high medieval in date (Plate 31 & 32). One (3000:28; Plate 31) is missing both ends. However, its chevron design has parallels in examples from excavations in medieval Cork city (Carroll & Quinn 2003, 272).

A copper-alloy buckle (*3017:52; Plate 33*) found in the modern tertiary fill of an early modern field drain (F3332) truncating the medieval forge, has parallels in late 12th to 14th century London and north-west Europe (Egan 2002, 76). Cookstown's example has a distinctive oval frame with ornate outside edges and a separate plate with panel decoration; these types of buckles were produced in large numbers from casts. A simpler copper-alloy buckle and plate (*2011:2*) from the fill of a modern drain outside the ringfort also appears to be medieval. A small annular broach with two opposing distinctive knobs or bulbs was also recovered (Illustration 1), but this time from a shallow medieval ditch beside and possibly predating the forge. These pins, buckles and brooches appear to be everyday personal dress accessories found throughout the contemporary Norman Ireland and Britain (see below).

Plate 33: Buckle (*2011:2; scale = 2cm)(Photo by John Sunderland)*

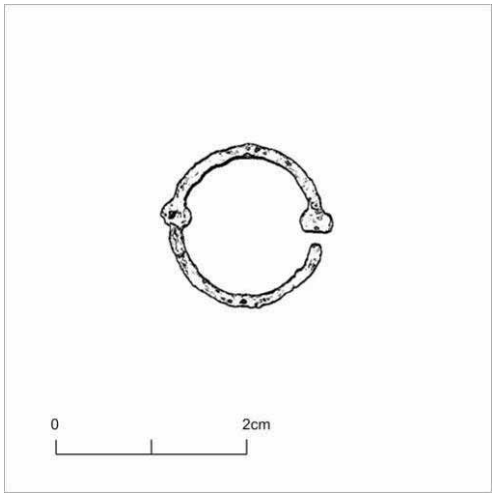

Illustration 1: Brooch (3309:1)

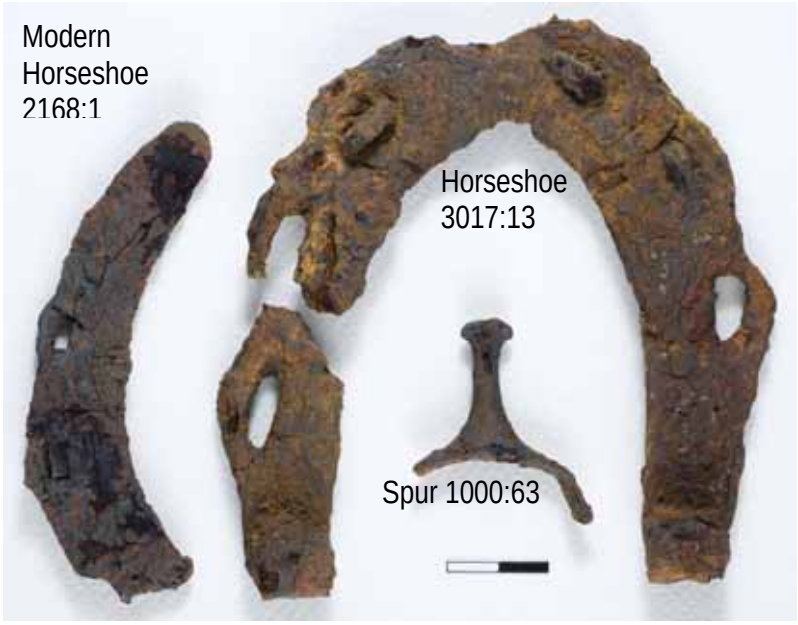

Plate 34: Horse equipment found on Site 25.

A medieval horse-shoe (3017:13) and a rowel-spur (1000:63) were also found as residual objects in later features (Plate 34).

4.8. Phase 5B: Late Medieval, 1300-1500AD

Only six features were tentatively dated to a later medieval phase (F3241, F3242, F3246, F3273, F3274 & F3496); these were secondary and tertiary fills of the garden enclosure ditches (F3049 & F3140). Their date is tentative because no datable material was recovered from them but they overlie datable high medieval fills (Phase 5A) and underlie early modern features (Phase 6A) in an area where it is assumed the ditches remained open until at least the 17th century. Fragments of chafing dish imported from mid-France and dating to the fifteenth-to-sixteenth century (Appendix 8) were recovered scattered across the site, from topsoil (*2000:166*) to the upper fills of the ringfort (*2107:1*) to the area over Structure 1 (*3247:10*). These may not be part of the same vessel, and are in the main not stratified, but they do suggest possible continued use of this area in the Late Medieval period.

4.9. Phase 6A: Early Modern, 1540-1700AD

Evidence for activity on site in the Early Modern period (late 16th and 17th century) consists of a small number of ditches, as well as a collection of finds, mostly ceramic such as imported pottery from the Staffordshire region and Stone Wares from Germany; the historical documents, principle the Civil Survey (Simington 1940) and the

Down Survey, indicate that the "stone house, offices, cabins and ruined church" described in the Civil Survey are located close to the excavation site, possibly on the site of the current farmstead adjacent to the site.

A ditch (F3332) was excavated in the early modern period flanking the medieval lane which later became the modern avenue to the adjacent farmstead; this ditch curved to the south and extended beyond the area of excavation towards the Ballybin Road (Figure 24). The ditch contained six fills (F3017, F3019, F3086, F3331, F3347 and

Plate 35: William and Mary halfpenny (2000:117) (Photo By John Sunderland)

Plate 36: North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware (1098:7)

F3348); the primary fill (F3348) consisting of a silty clay, was probably the result of the feature silting up naturally. The upper fills were generally consistent with gradual infilling of the ditch and contained fragments of early modern pot. This ditch continued to serve as a boundary into the modern period; another drain ditch was excavated into the fills of this ditch (F3460) and was filled with stone at the base to carry water (F3476). It appears that there may have been some continued cultivation in the area of the medieval gardens in the early modern period; this shallow drain feature (F3046) contained a metalled surface base (F3858) and a single fill (F3766) containing a sherd of brownware pottery (*3766:6*) and sheet metal (*3766:1-5*). However, most of the activity in this area of the site was medieval in date, and if gardening continued in this area then it was occasional at best, and eventually finished altogether when the surrounding ditches (F3140 & F3049) were backfilled (F3098, F3161, F3177, F3215, F3238, F3239, F3270 & F3272).

Early modern material was also recovered around the ringfort in Area 2. The ringfort ditch (F2043 & F2044) contained 13 early modern fills (F2075, F2076, F2107, F2159, F2160, F2161, F2175, F2188, F2189, F2190,

F2191, F2203, & F2204). The lower fill (F2076) at the north side of the ringfort (F2043) contained North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware (see Plate 36 for an example of this type of ceramic), which suggests that the ringfort ditch may have been disturbed or re-dug during this period in an apparent continuation of its role as a field boundary, or perhaps a boundary to the adjacent lane. Only one coin from this period, a 1693 William and Mary halfpenny (2000:117; Plate 35) was recovered from the topsoil in Area 2 beside the ringfort.

4.10. Phase 6B-7B: 18th to 20th Centuries

In the modern period (18th – 20th century) the site was located adjacent to a farmstead which is still extant today as Mrs. Byrnes farm house. The fields surrounding Mrs. Byrne's farm house were used for grazing and for cultivating potatoes. By this point the medieval lane that ran from the Ballybin road up to, and beyond, the large farmstead was in use as an avenue; the Ordnance Survey Content Field Books show a set of gate piers on the intersection of the lane with the Ballybin road in 1836, suggesting the lane had at this point become private.

Plate 37: Black glazed earthen ware (1098:12)

Plate 38: Free-blown 18th century glass utility bottles (1097: 1 & 63)

A drainage ditch was excavated flanking the northern side of the lane (F1011). This ditch was 2.5m at its widest and 0.85m at its deepest, and was exposed for a distance of 37m before it curved back under the modern avenue. The ditch contained seven fills (F1091, F1097, F1098, F1135, F1136, F1175 & F1177); the ditch appears to have primarily been dug to aid drainage as the lowest fills are quite wet and silty (F1098, F1136 and F1175). The ditch appears to have been used for disposing of domestic rubbish, including large amounts of broken ceramics and glass. The primary fills of the ditch (F1098, F1136 & F1175) contained pottery, including late 17th or early 18th century North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware (Plate 35) and Black Glazed Red Earthenwares (Plate 37; Appendix 9) and fragments of green glass utility bottles, dating to some time in the 18th century (Plate 38; Appendix 11).

Plate 39: Late 18th to early 19th century cottiers cabin (Photo by Hawkeye).

4.10.1. Cottier's Cabin

At some point in the late 18th or early 19th century a stone walled cabin (Structure V) was built inside this lane-side ditch (F1011; Figure 14; Plates 39-40). This cabin consisted of a single roomed stone structure built into a modern ditch (F1011) bounding the north side of the lane. The structure measured 7.3m by 4.1m externally and appears to have been built in the following fashion: a partially silted up ditch (F1011) on the margin of a lane was chosen for a site; three low walls of stone *c*.0.5m thick were constructed – two short walls (F1028 and F1179) measuring between 2.36m and 2.65m long and between 0.48m and 0.85m high, following the contours of the profile of the ditch, and a long wall along the brow of the ditch (F1178), measuring 7.1m long and a maximum of 0.3m high; the inside of the structure was deepened (F1167), with some of the cast out material banked up against the outside of the walls for extra support or insulation (F1026, F1144, F1145 and F1147). A gap in the short western wall (F1179) at the lowest point of the ditch served as an entrance. The roof, none of which survived, was supported on the northern side of the ditch and leaned across to the long wall of the structure (F1028). There appears to have been a beaten earth floor within the structure (F1163) and three hearths or ash-pits set in scooped out hollows, in the middle of the cabin (F1156 & F1159) and against one of the walls (F1150). The fill of one of these hollows (F1157 in F1159) contained charred grains of oats and wheat. A shallow drain ran along the middle of the cabin (F1142) from the cabin entrance along the side of the ditch

cut. The interior of the cabin had a number of deposits of material from the occupation phase (F1151, F1160 and F1165), mostly consisting of coarse sandy clay or silty sand, mainly surviving in the corners of the structure. The only finds from the interior occupation phase of the cabin were medieval ceramics from the occupation deposits (F1151 & F1163); these finds are residual. The cabin was constructed in a ditch whose primary fills contained modern ceramics and glass (see above). The demolition phase and backfill material into the cabin

Plate 40: Low level photograph facing east of the cottier's cabin show how it was built in the ditch.

contained modern ceramics, glass and clay pipe fragments. It would appear that this structure was home to a cottier's family some time in the 18th or early 19th century; it would also appear that the cabin was not occupied for a long period of time – perhaps only a couple of season. Some time in the later 18th or early 19th century the walls were thrown down into the interior of the cabin (F1141, F1172 and F1174) and the interior of the cabin was filled in with soil (F1137 and F1173) during the construction of a substantial new field boundary bank (F1137/ F1173) which was c.1.8m wide and over 1m high. This bank was flanked by a drain (F1164) which separated the bank from the modern avenue; it was still open and in use at the start of the excavation. This drain was up to 1.8m wide, 0.23m deep and contained four fills (F1152, F1153, F1161 & F1162). This drain was subsequently used for dumping large quantities of broken tableware – including transfer printed wares (Plate

41) and pearl wares – stoneware jars, and glass utility, wine, beer, brandy (Plate 42) and pharmaceutical bottles (F1153).

Plate 41: Transfer printed ware (1153:1)

Plate 42: Two-piece cast brandy bottle (1153:119)

The construction of this bank and ditch had the result of both obliterating the cabin and ensuring that no similar dwelling could be rebuilt there. The lane became as it was to remain until the present road-works started – a narrow avenue with flanking drainage ditches (F1164) and hedged banks (F1173) on either side, leading to the farmstead and beyond to grazing fields. The small field to the immediate north of the cabin (corresponding with Excavation Area 1) was used for intensive cultivation. The field is quite wet and slopes down to a small stream that forms the field boundary and the northern boundary of the excavation area. This excavation in this area contained a large number of furrows and drainage gullies (F1005, F1007, F1008, F1022, F1031, F1037, F1038, F1039, F1040, F1044, F1046, F1050, F1054, F1070, F1071, F1072, F1073, F1075, F1077, F1078, F1079). Most of these were shown to run from south to north down hill. The furrows were for the most part very shallow (0.02m to 0.16m) and varied in length (1.7m to 11.7m) and width (0.4m to 0.92m). The furrows were separated by a series of shallow open drains (F1046 and F1075); these drains were on average deeper (0.45m to 0.85m) than the furrows but appear to have been used to allow water drain off the field. The fills of the drains consisted of silty clays, consistent with a water carrying feature. A modern pit (F1023) was also excavated in this area; this pit measured 1.1m by 2.8m by 0.52m deep and appears to have been associated with the potato furrows; it is possible the pit was used for storing potatoes.

Plate 43: Three Jew's harps (scale = 2cm). (Photo by John Sunderland)

4.10.2. Modern ringfort ditch

The ringfort ditch was finally filled in the modern period, from the 17th to the 19th century (F2016, F2073, F2074, F2086, F2109, F2111, F2121, F2136, F2137, F2138, F2155, & F2186). Most of these modern features were fond in the north-east quadrant of the ringfort (cut F2043), and are even found towards the base of the ringfort ditch here, suggesting that the ringfort ditch continued to be used as drainage into the late 17th or 18th century. A series of surfaces (F2093, F2086 F2107, F2111, F2155, & F2175) with an edging of stones (F2016) appears to be a path adjacent to and over the backfilled ringfort which led towards the farmstead. This may correspond with a geophysical anomaly within the unexcavated ringfort interior and may mark an alternative, or earlier, entrance to the adjacent modern farm yard through the interior of the ringfort. The interior area of the ringfort had relatively little evidence for modern occupation with the exception of four shallow modern drainage ditches (F2010, F2012, F2014 and F2032) running from the interior of the ringfort (outside the area of excavation) to the ringfort ditch (F2043 and F2044). Four Jew's harps were recovered from the site: one from topsoil (2000:60), one from the upper fill of a modern ditch near the cabin (1097:23), and two from the upper fills of the ringfort (2050:27 & 2050:50; Plate 43; Appendix 13).

4.11. Features of Unknown Date or Stratigraphic Relationship

A total of 103 archaeological features could not be assigned to a period, phase or function, primarily because they were stratigraphically isolated and contained no identifiable material to date them. We can assign speculative functions and dates to these features, in the main isolated pits and their fills, because of the area of the site they are located in. For example, 15 pits (F2515, F3160, F3159, F3154, F2057, F3181, F2056, F3168, F3153, F3147, F3145, F3146, F3144, F2507 & F2059) and their fills (F2124, F2128, F2129, F2508, F2509, F2523, F2524, F3115, F3122, F3123, F3128, F3129, F3132, F3148, F3150, F3152, F3164 & F3175) were indentified in areas of the site containing identified prehistoric pits: Bronze Age (Phase 2) and Iron Age (Phase 3; Figure 10). A single shallow pit or possible post hole (F4019) was identified next to the Iron Age Double Ring Ditch (Phase 3A). Although burnt ash, willow and bone were identified in the fill (F4023) this was not radiocarbon dated; the period of the feature remains unknown but it is assumed it relates to the activity around the double ring ditch in the Iron Age (Phase 3A and 3B; Figure 12). Similarly, three pits (F1034, F2525 & F2516) and their fills (F1112, F2521, F2526 & F2533) around the medieval gardens (Phase 5A), which contained no datable material, may also be related to the medieval activity on site (Figure 7). However, 17 cut features (F1036, F1042, F1052, F2035, F2141, F2513, F2514, F2527, F2531, F2537, F2540, F2543, F2545, F3170, F3158, F3425, & F3796) were unidentifiable, shallow or irregular with sterile fills (F1100, F1116, F1117, F1118, F2072, F2142, F2517, F2520, F2528, F2529, F2530, F2532, F2535, F2536, F2539, F2541, F2542, F2544, F2546, F3071, F3116, F3119, F3424 & F3765) and may just be the remains of natural hollows or tree-bowls.

5. Discussion

Cookstown Site 25 was a multiperiod site with archaeological material from the Neolithic to the modern period, showing a remarkable continuity of settlement. Evidence for each of these periods ranges from isolated artefacts to structural remains to enclosing ditches. This breadth of material reflects the substantial size of the site at *c*. 1.1 hectare. The wide range of archaeology on the site is also a reflection of the intensity of settlement in this area of Meath from the prehistoric to the present day. The following section is a discussion of the archaeology excavated at Cookstown.

Evidence for prehistoric activity on Site 25 ranges from the presence of isolated finds from topsoil such as the Neolithic hollow scrapers and plano-convex knives, to a selection of scrapers, pottery sherds and a single burial from the early Bronze Age, apparently isolated pits with late Bronze Age radiocarbon dates, to more extensive archaeological features from the Iron Age such as kilns in Area 2 and a concentric double ring-ditch complex in Area 4.

The hollow scraper and the lozenge shaped arrow head, dating from the Middle Neolithic (c.3600 - 3100 bc), were found in topsoil and not associated with any particular set of archaeological features. They have been generally characterised as evidence for transient occupation of the site. There is little evidence for middle Neolithic settlement in this area of Meath and Dublin. Although extensive evidence for Neolithic houses have been discovered in Ireland (Cooney 2000, 56) no Neolithic structures were discovered in this area of Meath. In fact the most intense area of settlement from this period lies *c*. 22km north in the Boyne Valley. However, Neolithic houses are for the most part relatively ephemeral, wooden structures which leave little or no surface expression, so the possibility remains that a Neolithic settlement lies somewhere close but outside the area of impact by the development. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the other lithic material found in the topsoil (Appendix 10) which dates to the Bronze Age. However, in contrast to the Neolithic material, we did discover a few archaeological features associated with the Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age, although these features did not generally appear to be associated with intense settlement.

Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age Burial

The principle evidence for Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age phase of activity in Cookstown was the burial (Burial 1). This was a crouched inhumation orientated NNW/ SSE in a shallow pit: a burial type relatively common to this period. The remains of the individual are thought to be of an older adolescent or young adult, buried on his or her left side with the left and right arm tightly flexed at elbow and legs tightly flexed at the hips and knees (Appendix 15). It would appear that any settlement remains at Cookstown from this were considerably disturbed. This was the case with the burial, which was in a very poor condition, severely truncated by an intrusive pit and later cultivation. Whilst the burial could not be dated due to a lack of collagen in the bone, the intrusive pit contained a sherd of Domestic Beaker and produced a radiocarbon date of 2900BC to 2250BC (2 sigma; Wk-17938; Appendix 6). Crouched burials from the Early Bronze Age in Ireland generally contain pottery vessels in the Bowl tradition (Waddell 1998, 119, 142-144). In fact, single inhumations accompanied by Beaker pottery in Ireland are extremely rare compared to Britain or the continent; Beaker pottery in a funerary context in Ireland are more commonly found in Wedge tombs (O'Kelly 1989, 72; Cooney & Grogan 1994, 87). The majority of Beaker pottery in Ireland is found in domestic contexts (Kelly 1989, 72; Carlin 2006). Evidence for Beaker settlement in Leinster generally follows a dispersed pattern, and generally consists of occupational spreads, pits, post holes not necessarily a recognisable structure (Carlin 2006, 20). Evidence for continuity from the Neolithic appears to be common (Carlin 2006, 22). A number of sites recently excavated were also found to be multi-period, with Beaker phases underlying medieval settlements: Ballinaspig More 5, Co. Cork, Cloongownagh, Co. Cork, Curraheen 1, Co. Cork and Ahanaglogh Area 16, Co. Waterford (NRA Online Database; Johnston, Kiely & Tierney 2008). Whilst no distinctive Beaker period structure was found at Cookstown, it is possible that that such a settlement was disturbed beyond recognition by the subsequent phases of activity on site; the dispersal of lithics in the topsoil and pottery in Iron Age and Early

Medieval features would certainly support this conclusion. What slim evidence for Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age settlement exists in Cookstown generally supports Carlin's characterisation of a dispersed, low intensity settlement (Carlin 2006, 18).

Evidence for a later Bronze Age phase of settlement (Phase 2) consists of a single isolated pit which produced a radiocarbon date of 920BC - 540BC (two sigma; Wk-17937; Appendix 6). This pit was one of a number in this site which was not dated, but which may be from the same phase of activity.

The Iron Age phase at Cookstown consisted of the remains of a number of burnt pits or kilns and a double ring-ditch ritual complex. The Irish Iron Age is generally seen as an enigma: a period with little excavated archaeological evidence for domestic structures but with significant ritual sites which maintained a cultural resonance through the succeeding medieval periods to today (Raftery 1972; Raftery 1983; O'Kelly 1989, 245-339; Cooney & Grogan 1994, 185-205; Raftery 1994; Waddell 1998, 319-372). Recent research and archaeological excavations in advance of development has begun to significantly enhance our knowledge of this period (Becker, Ó Néill & O'Flynn 2008; McLaughlin & Conran 2008).

Iron Age Kilns

The earliest evidence for Iron Age settlement on the site consisted of the four burnt pits in Area 3 are. The pits, each intercutting the other, contained the poorly preserved remains of barley, with smaller amounts of wheat and oats (Appendix 19). The pits which appeared to be kilns, cut each other, which might suggest a prolonged habitual use of one area, perhaps over a number of seasons, for drying grain. A small later kiln (F2062) was also identified c. 58m southsouthwest of the earlier kilns, showing continued cereal processing on site throughout the Iron Age phases. Cereal drying was undertaken for a number of reasons: to harden the grains prior to threshing and grinding to prevent clogging up the quern stones; to dry seed corn prior to sowing; to roast sprouted grain for the production of malt for beer; to fumigate for destructive insects; and to reduce the grain's moisture content prior to storage (Monk 1981, 217-218). Relatively few assemblages of cereals from Iron Age sites have been published (Monk 1986; McClatchie 2007, 210). Grain milling was undertaken, it appears, on a small scale using hand-powered quern stones (Caulfield 1977). Pollen diagrams illustrate a decline in cereals and a re-growth of woodland in the later Bronze Age and early Iron Age, corresponding with deterioration in the climate (Mitchell 1965; Mitchell 1997, 237). However, it appears the range of cereals actually expanded in the Iron Age. At Kerlogue, a multi-period site in Wexford, an Iron Age structure's slot trenches and post holes contained the remains of wheat, barley and oats; although these were secondary deposits – not from a kiln – the remains illustrated a broader range of cereals to the preceding Neolithic phase on the site (McClatchie 2007, 210). At Waterunder, Co. Louth, where four phases of Iron Age occupation and

industrial activity were identified, 16 kilns were found: mostly figure-of-eight shaped, and two keyhole shape kilns, ranging in size from 0.4m to 2.91m long and 0.1m to 1.4m wide (McQuade 2005, 41). An analysis of the cereal remains from some of these kilns identified barley, wheat and cultivated oats (McQuade 2005, 42). Barley was also prevalent in the two Iron Age kilns excavated by Stephen J. Linnane in Rath-Healy, Cork; small quantities of oats were also identified here (NRA Archaeological Database). Cereal drying kilns in the Iron Age may have been a reaction to the deteriorating climate and consequently high moisture content in the grain. The use of individual pits at Cookstown rather than larger, more permanent kilns common from the early medieval period, suggests that the grain processing was carried out on a much smaller scale, like at Waterunder (McQuade 2005, 41), Cookstown's drying kilns appear only to have been used once – perhaps one season at a time; however, rather than dig separate kilns over a wider area the Iron Age inhabitants at Cookstown appeared to pick one specific location for making their drying pits over perhaps a short period of time. In contrast to the Iron Age kilns excavated in Waterunder, Rath-Healy, and the Early Medieval kilns, which had a separate fire pit, flue and drying chamber, grain from Cookstown's Iron Age pit kilns could only be removed once the fire had gone out. More complex kilns provided an indirect source of heat which allowed more grain to be dried and could be used over a number of seasons, as was the case with the later kiln identified in Area 1 (F1080) dated to the fifth to seventh century AD.

Double ring-ditch

The double ring-ditches at Cookstown appear to have been the focus of ritual Activity. Ring-ditches are a relatively common find on archaeological excavations. However, the term "ring-ditch" presents some problems as it is primarily a descriptive term. It has been used to describe monuments or features dating from the Neolithic to the Early Medieval Period and even modern garden features; Ring-ditch features ranging from cropmarks to palisade enclosures; from house foundations to mortuary monuments. A simple search of the Excavation Bulletin reveals the term "ring-ditch" is used in 148 sites excavated between 1970 and 2005 (www.excavations.ie; search in "Report Text Contains"; accessed 6/3/2009). The Record of Monuments and Places records a 20m diameter "ring-ditch" crop mark 950m south of Site 25 in Killegland townland (ME045:002), whilst Bronze Age ring-ditches were excavated in Ballybin (Site 22) 602m south of the Cookstown Site 25, Rath townland, 1.35km northnortheast of Site 25, and Killegland, 1.4km southsouth east of Site 25 (see Appendix 1 & 3). Most Iron Age ring-ditches are associated with burials: cremations in the earlier Iron Age in a continuation of Bronze Age practice, in some cases reusing existing Bronze Age monuments, and inhumation towards the end of the Iron Age (O'Brien 1990, 37; O'Brien 2003, 63; Clarke & Carlin 2006). The size of these ring ditches ranged from 2.95m (Rath, Co. Meath; see Schweitzer 2005 & 2009) to 16m (Ballydavis, Co. Laois; see Keeley 1995 & 1999b), with the average diameter being about 7.7m. The width of these ring-ditches ranges from 0.4m to 2m, with an average width of about 1m: wider than the ditches at

Cookstown. It is likely that a number of these features are truncated barrows, with significant surface expressions – banks and mounds – which have been subsequently removed by ploughing. It's impossible to say if this is the case at Cookstown, although a layer of redeposited subsoil over the ditches may be the remains of a bank.

Were Cookstown's ring-ditches structural? A number of Iron Age sites have concentric circular ditches which have been interpreted as structural, most notably at Navan Fort, Co. Armagh, Site B (Waterman *et al* 1997, 17-47) and Site A/C (Lynn 2000), Knockaulin, Co. Kildare's "Rose phase" (Johnston & Wailes 2007), and Rath of the Synods, Tara, Co. Meath (Grogan 2008), all of which are high status, multi-period ritual sites. Navan Fort's Site B contained a sequence of structures in Phase 3 (A, B and C) ranging in diameter from 10.7m to 13.1m, with evidence for burnt daub in their fill (Waterman et al 1997, 17, 150-151). Subsequently a larger figure-of-eight superstructure was discovered at Navan (Site A/C; Lynn 2000). Similar remains at Knockaulin consisted of a sequence of concentric slot trenches for a 38m diameter enclosure and a 21m annex (Johnston & Wailes 2007, 13-14). In both cases the remains are interpreted as the subsurface imprint of a significant superstructure: a house annexed to an enclosure at Navan B; a large enclosure and a walled – but not roofed – structure in Navan A/C; and a viewing platform annexed to an enclosure at Knockcaulin. Navan Fort B's concentric alignment has been interpreted as the walls of the house being replaced twice during the structures existence (Waterman et al 1997, 150-151). Excavations at Raffin, Co. Meath did uncover the remains of up to three circular buildings (A, B & C), built in slot trenches and ranging in size from 5m (Building C) to 13m (Building A). The larger building (Building A) was interpreted as a ritual structure and had a six surrounding free-standing posts; the smaller structure (Structure C) appears to have been domestic (Newman 1991, 1992 & 1993).

However, unlike these high status site, the ring-ditches at Cookstown were not structural foundations, but rather were made as open ditches which silted up gradually over time. The distance between the two slot trenches at Cookstown – up to 3.5m – makes it unlikely they were part of a structure or even a sequence of structures. Cookstown had little evidence for structural post-holes are were noted at the other sites: only two poorly preserved possible post holes were identified at Cookstown. In fact the majority of the few identified Iron Age houses in Ireland from domestic contexts are circular post-built structures (McLaughlin & Conran 2008; Ó Drisceoil 2008; Becker et al 2008, 25-26).

The deformation apparent in the south side of Cookstown's concentric rings suggests they were contemporary or at least were built relatively soon after each other. Partial backfilling of the south west exterior ditch and south interior ditch appear to represent some form of entrance into the monument's interior. Considering the

width of the ring-ditches was 0.5m wide and less than 0.5m deep, and could easily be stepped over, and also considering these apparent entrance features are off-set, there appears to have been some form of controlled access into and around Cookstown's ring-ditch interior, further reinforcing the interpretation of the complex as a ritual monument (Illustration 2).

It is also apparent that the monument was originally built as complete rings without entrances; the construction of two entrances into the monument's interior supports the notion that the ring-ditches continued to be used, but perhaps with a change in ritual or meaning.

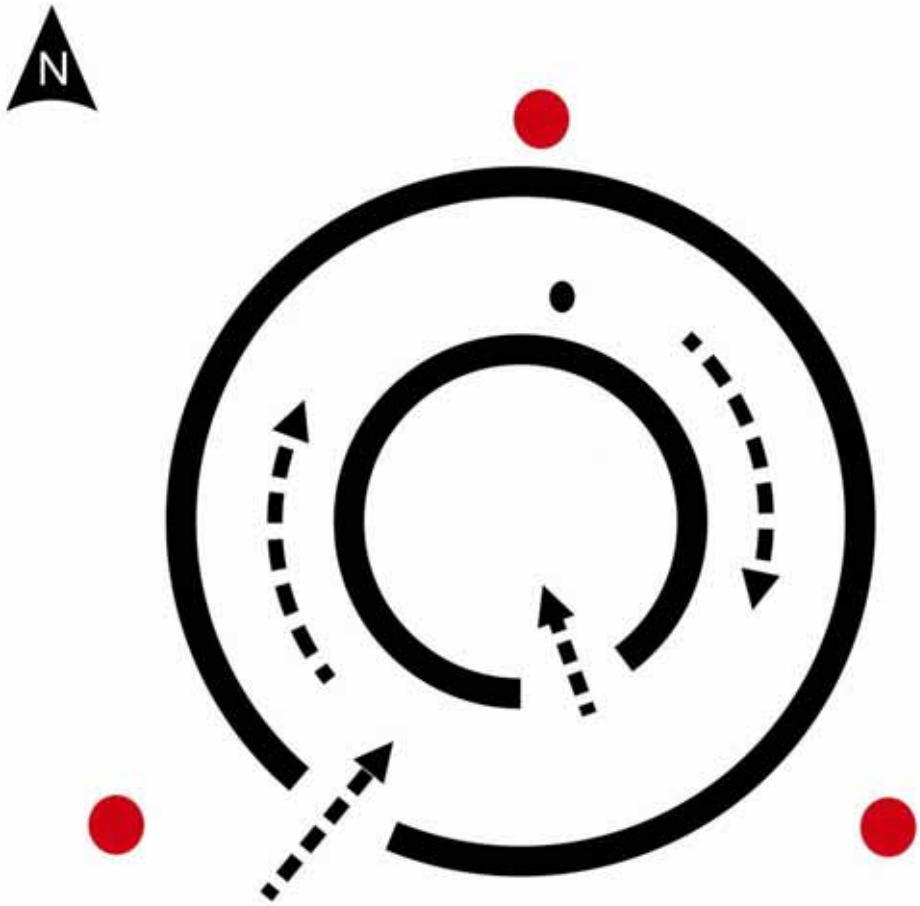

Illustration 2: Cookstown's Iron Age double ring-ditches: controlling movement within and around the monument?.

The primary fills of Cookstown's ring-ditch contained flecks of unidentified burnt bone which may be the token remains of cremations. However, no discrete concentrations of burnt bone were found and the bone was too

small to identify as human. Animal bone from the primary fills, from cattle, sheep/goat, pig and horse, consists entirely of large domesticates and is similar to the range of species identified from other sites such as Knockaulin (Crabtree 1990). The secondary fills of the ring ditches also contained unidentified burnt bone (F4005 & F4016) as well as the fragmented bones of cattle and sheep/goat from the inner ring ditch (F4005) Charcoal inclusions were generally defuse through-out the fills and were found to be relatively frequent in the primary fills of each of the ring-ditches (F4003 & F4020). The primary fill of the outer ring-ditch (F4003 in F4002) also contained the fragment of glass bracelet or armlet (*4003:1*: Plate 11), found in the north-west quadrant of the ring-ditch. Glass objects, mainly beads, are a relatively common grave-good with Iron Age cremation burials. In 1983 Raftery identified five examples of Iron Age glass armlets (Raftery 1983, 170-175). These were all of a single colour, either deep purple, blue, or yellow, in contrast to the Scottish and northern English examples, which tend to be more highly decorated with a number of colours (Kilbride-Jones 1938; Stevenson 1954). In Ireland, multi-coloured glass bracelets or bangles, mostly blue, white and yellow, became more common in the succeeding Early Medieval period (Carroll 2001). Raftery recorded no examples of Iron Age amber coloured glass similar to Cookstown, although two 1st century BC amber coloured glass bracelets were discovered at the Knockaulin or Dun Aílinne ceremonial sites (Johnston et al 2007, 120). Amber coloured glass also appears to be a relatively rare colour-type in British examples (Stevenson 1954, 215). The amber colour was derived from adding a mixture of sulphur or a carbon compound, sometimes horse manure, to the glass mixture (Stevenson 1954, 217-218). The Irish armlets catalogues by Raftery ranged in size from 20mm internal diameter to 61mm internal diameter: the Cookstown example, at c.60mm internal diameter, is towards the higher end of this range. Most were D shaped in section, similar to the Cookstown example. Three of the five examples examined by Raftery were found in burial deposits (Dunadry, Co. Antrim and two from Loughey, Co. Down); two glass armlets came from occupation sites (Feerwore, Co. Galway and Freestone Hill, Co. Kilkenny). Their function is not completely understood: they may have served as bracelets or armlets, although their small diameter would have made them difficult to wear: anything less than 55mm diameter could only have been worn by a child. Alternatively, the objects could have been worn strung in groups of three on torcs as found on the Continent, worn singly as a pendant, or used as a hair ring (Johns 1996, 123; Carroll 2001, 101-103).

The bronze spiral penannular ring (*4005:2;* Plate 12) found in the upper fill of the outer ring-ditch's north quadrant is a relatively common Iron Age object. Raftery's catalogue identified 21 Iron Age penannular and spiral rings (Raftery 1983, 179-184). These rings ranged in size from 11mm to 32.5mm in diameter and 2mm to 5mm thick; the Cookstown example was 19.2mm in diameter and 1.8mm thick. The most common decoration was a fine ribbing or herringbone hatch. At Cookstown, the penannular ring had a fine cast ribbing on its exterior most similar to an example from the Lisnacrogher hoard (Raftery 1983 181, fig 150 no. 484). Most of

the discovery contexts for these rings are either as finds in bogs such as at Lisnacrogher, or on burials. Bronze rings were also the most common copper alloy object recovered during excavations at Knockaulin or Dun Aílinne (Johnston et al 2007, 106-108).

Other objects recovered from the ring-ditches were two abraded sherds of Domestic Beaker Pottery from the primary fill of the outer ring-ditch (*4003:2*) and the upper fill of the inner ring-ditch (*4005:1*) and some fragments of unworked flint from the secondary fill of the outer ring ditch (*4005:3 & 4*). Both pieces of pottery, and the flint fragments, appear to be residual finds which were present on site from the Final Neolithic and Bronze Age phase (Phase 2).

The only feature inside the ring-ditch, a small shallow pit (F4027) in the north quadrant between the inner (F4004) and outer (F4002) contained small fragment of burnt bone which may be the token remains of a cremation. Unfortunately the remains were too small and poorly preserved to say with certainty. This feature was also undated and contained no artefacts.

Each of the burnt pits outside the ring-ditch contained burnt barley grains and unidentified cereal grain. Chenopodium or fat hen – a common weed in waste ground and tillage land which may also have been used as a food source (Mears & Hillman 2007, 124) – and alder were also identified in the south-east (F4042) and south-west (F4037) pits respectively. McClatchie speculated that cereal foodstuffs may have played a part in ceremonial activities in the structure at Kerlogue (McClatchie 2007, 211). This may also be the case at Cookstown. Small quantities of poorly preserved unidentified cereal grain from the primary fill of the outer ring-ditch (F4003 in F4002) illustrates that cereal processing was undertaken nearby when the ring-ditches were first used. No human bone was positively identified from the pits although, as with the burnt bone from the outer ring-ditch (F4002), the possibility remains that these are token deposits of cremations. However, given the presence of animal bone and cereal remains in the pits, there remains a strong likelihood that these pits were used for the preparation, or perhaps ritual use, of food.

As discussed above, kilns and burnt pits have been found on a number of Iron Age sites but none so far have been identified with a spatial arrangement relative to ring-ditches similar to Cookstown. The three burnt pits surrounding the ring-ditches appear to have been used as hearths, or possibly kilns. The fills of these pits contained cereal remains – only barley was identified – and small quantities of unidentified burnt bone and animal bone from the secondary fill (F4033) of the north pit (F4032) and the primary (F4040) and secondary fill (F4034 & F4041) of the south-west pit (F4037).. Blackthorn and alder charcoal suggest both wood-types may have been used for fuel; it should also be said that alder and blackthorn are some of the most commonly

identified woods from prehistoric contexts in Ireland.. Both species can be readily found growing together in by streams, or, in the case of blackthorn, in woodland margins. Alder made poor, slow burning fire-wood (Nelson & Walsh 1993, 49-52; Stuijts 2005, 139), but both types of wood were used for producing objects such as sticks in the case of blackthorn or shields, wheels, turned wood bowls and shoe-bases in the case of alder (Nelson & Walsh 1993, 50; Stuijts 2005, 139 & 142), raising the possibility that the charcoal from Cookstown's pits are the remains of burnt artefacts. Alder also contains tannin and was used in the process for dying cloth black or brown (Nelson & Walsh 1993, 51). Radiocarbon dates from the north pit (F4032) produced a date of AD-AD230 (2 sigma [Wk17940]; see Appendix 6); assuming the three pits are contemporary (see below), they are anything from 50 to 620 years later than the inner ring-ditch. However, given the spatial relationship of burnt pits to the ring-ditches – forming a near equilateral triangle around the ring-ditches – they are likely to have been constructed when the ring-ditches were at least still visible, if not still in use. Assuming the shortest possible date-range between the features, it appears that the ring-ditches and pits may have been in use for nearly two generations.

Ireland's high status Iron Age ritual sites are historic sites that have maintained their place in folklore and popular culture, and have been the focus of archaeological investigations for some time. However, smaller local ritual sites have remained relatively anonymous. Cookstown, it would appear, contained one of these local ritual sites. Like the high status ritual sites, Cookstown's ring-ditches used concentric circular enclosures, but on a much smaller scale. Where as the high status sites were located on prominent locations and incorporated often impressive structures and earthworks, Cookstown's location was discrete, overlooking a river valley, and involved the use of a low-level earthwork. Rather than large scale public ritual, it appears then that sites such as Cookstown were the focus of more localised ritual activity.

Early Medieval Kiln

Material relating to Early Medieval settlement at Cookstown ranged from a corn-drying kiln to a ringfort, only partly within the development foot-print, and a small number of artefacts. The Early Medieval kiln at Cookstown was located on slightly sloping ground, which improved the drying process. The kiln would have originally consisted of a furnace chamber, flue and the drying chamber (Monk & Kelleher 2005; O'Sullivan et al 2008, 203-208). At Cookstown only the firing chamber and the flue survived. The firing chamber was circular, with a burnt stone at its base. Its radiocarbon date, 410 – 600 cal. AD (2 sigma; Wk – 17939; Appendix 6), falls within the general date range – 5th to 7th century - for Early Medieval corn drying kilns in Ireland (O'Sullivan et al. 2008, 203). Ireland's Early Medieval law tracts are a particularly rich source of information on Irish agriculture, including cultivation and corn drying (Kelly 1997, 219-247). Free-holders, persons of *Bóaire* rank, were expected to own their own kiln whilst persons of lower rank had a share in a kiln (O'Kelly 1997, 241). Eight

century law tracts noted seven cultivated cereals: bread-wheat, rye, spelt wheat, to-row barley, emmer wheat, six-row barley and the common oat. Bread wheat was the most valued grain; oats were the least valued (O'Kelly 1997, 219). An analysis of the charred remains from Cookstown's kiln identified frequent wheat and barley, and less frequent oats (Appendix 19). Oats, wheat and barley were identified in kilns excavated in south Kilkenny on the N9/ N10, dating from the 9th century to the 14th century (Monteith & Wren 2008). Early Medieval kilns excavated in advance of other road schemes show that oats are the most common cereal, particularly in Munster (Monk & Kelleher 2005; NRA Archaeological Database). O'Sullivan *et al* (2008, 207) noted that relatively few excavated ringforts have had associated kilns. Whilst the kiln at Cookstown is located next to a ringfort, it appears the ringfort post-dates the kiln by some centuries.

Ringfort

Geophysical surveys in 2002 revealed the outline of Cookstown's ringfort to be about 54m diameter, but with only a few internal features, most notably a diagonal linear anomaly which may be a ditch (Figure 2). This feature lay outside the excavation area, and only a narrow slice of the enclosure (*c*.21%) lay within the new road's footprint. The majority of the ringfort survives *in situ*, partially under the adjacent farmstead. Excavations within the interior of the enclosure proved disappointing: later ploughing and land improvement appear to have removed most of the archaeological stratigraphy outside of the ringfort's ditches. Slippage on the inside face of the enclosing ditch suggests that the enclosure had an internal bank. No evidence was found for a surrounding palisade or an entrance gate. The ringfort's ditch, relatively well preserved, measured 5.5m wide and 1.2m deep, and was crossed by an east-facing, 4m-wide, causeway with a metalled surface (Figure 15). The primary silt fills of the ditch, preserved beneath a compact mineralised layer, contained an early medieval ringed pin (Plate 18) but no other datable material; unfortunately, despite extensive sampling, the ringfort's ditches yielded no material suitable for radiocarbon dating. The undecorated pin, along with the ring of a second pin recovered as a residual find in the upper fills, probably date to the eighth or ninth century (Fanning 1994). A small fragment of light frothy black slag from one of the Early Medieval primary fills (F2122) suggests metal working in the vicinity, possibly within the ringfort. The ringfort's secondary and tertiary fills contained occasional sherds of thirteenth- to early-fourteenth-century glazed and unglazed pottery vessels typical of Anglo-Norman Ireland: primarily of Dublin-type wares and Dublin-type coarse wares, although some sherds of Leinster Cooking Ware, Dublin-type fine ware and Dublin-type cooking ware were also recovered (Appendix 8). The nature of its fills and the discovery of a number of steps cut into the entrance causeway to reach the base of the ditch suggest that the ringfort ditch was cleaned out at least once in the medieval period. An isolated burnt pit or hearth inside the ringfort, but only partially within the excavation area, contained similar pottery. A channel leading from the ringfort towards a distinct kink in the farm lane also contained medieval pottery, and appears to have flanked a path running into the ringfort across the causeway.

The late occupation and construction of ringforts during the Anglo-Norman period or later has been the subject of some study. Barrett and Graham, in a study of ringfort distribution in Meath, suggested that ringforts in Gaelic areas continued to be occupied and constructed during the Anglo-Norman period in areas controlled by the Gaelic Irish, but were destroyed by medieval agriculture within the Anglo-Norman colony (Barrett & Graham 1975). While O'Conor proposed something similar for the western Gaelic areas of medieval Ireland, Lynn, Edwards and Stout have rejected this notion (Lynn 1975; Edwards 1990, 18-19; Stout 1997, 22-24 & 30; O'Conor 1998, 89-94). Giraldus Cambrensis, in his *'history and topography of Ireland'* from around the year 1200, mentioned the presence of "ancient … rounded … trenches" in the Irish countryside (O'Meara 1979, 119). Orpen thought it likely that Giraldus was referring to ringforts, implying they were no longer used as settlements in the early thirteenth century (Orpen 1911, vol. 1, 138-9). Medieval pottery found within the Cookstown ringfort raises the possibility that the enclosure did continue in use until the thirteenth century. However, it would appear more likely that the material found in the ringfort came from the adjacent thirteenth-century settlement when the ringfort was incorporated into the settlement's enclosing ditches. The fills of the ringfort, particularly at the north quadrant, were subject to considerable disturbance by being adapted as a field boundary and a boundary to the road, and were redug at least a number of times between the medieval and the modern periods. Cookstown ringfort appears to have been abandoned as a place of habitation by the thirteenth century.

High Medieval Settlement in Cookstown

The thirteenth-century settlement at Cookstown focused on the lane rather than the ringfort, suggesting the occupants primary concern was access rather than defence. Graham proposed that the parish of Cookstown contained a "manorial village" in the medieval period – a notion primarily based on the presence of a medieval church site in the townland (Graham 1974). It is unlikely that the excavated settlement in Cookstown was part of such a village, if one existed at all, situated as it is some 400m from the church (RMP45:01; Moore 1987, 133). In fact this church site may not even be medieval: Cookstown did not appear in the early-fourteenth-century *Ecclesiastical taxation* (Sweetman 1886, No. 712), suggesting that it may only have become a parish later. The Visitation of 1622 recorded that the church at Cookstown was a chapel-of-ease for Rathoath, was ruinous and contained

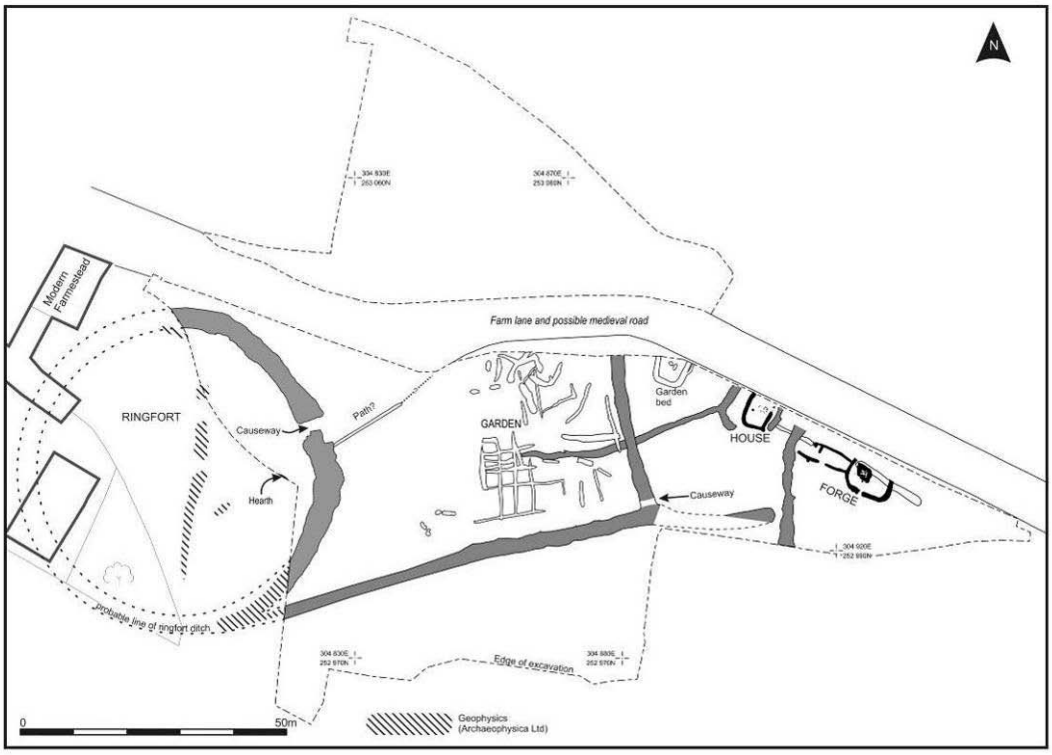

Illustration 3: Cookstown's medieval phase.

no buildings on its glebe (Elrington 1847, lxxii), whilst Dopping's visitation in the latter seventeenth century recorded that the church, still ruinous, had an enclosure and a glebe of about 819m^2 (Ellison 1971, 37); neither visitations record the location of the church. Previous excavations next to the church found no significant medieval settlement features (O'Connor 2004; Myles 2003). Interestingly, the Down Survey parish map from the mid-seventeenth century depicts a church about 300m to the east of the excavation site, beside the farm lane, hinting at the possible presence of another church in the townland (Figure 4). Although the location and characteristics of buildings mapped on the Down Survey should be treated with caution, it is noteworthy that the church appears to have been sited just beside the modern farm lane. Cookstown was situated within the manor of Ratoath – a seigniorial manor of de Lacy lordship founded in the late twelfth century. The townland appears to have been named after a William Cocus, a free tenant of the manor of Ratoath at the end of the thirteenth century. Simms proposed that the adoption by the Anglo-Normans of the existing townland system encouraged a dispersed form of settlement, as the free tenants settled in their own townlands (Simms 1988). This model may reasonably partially explain the form of the settlement at Cookstown.

High Medieval Structures

The thirteenth-century settlement at Cookstown appears to have been relatively simple: a plot containing a house, forge and a garden, all fronting onto a lane or road (Illustration 3). Cookstown's medieval house was relatively small and insubstantial compared to other excavated medieval rural houses like Caherguillamore and

Bourchier's Castle in Co. Limerick (Ó Ríordáin & Hunt 1942; Cleary 1982). A post-built building of comparable size to the Cookstown house was excavated within the moated site at Coolamurry, Co. Wexford (Fegan 2005). Two earth-fast timber buildings excavated at the thirteenth-/fourteenth-century "moated site" at Ballyveelish in Co. Tipperary are also roughly comparable to Cookstown, although these buildings were probably not residential (Doody 1989). The house at Cookstown was a stave-built structure, although part of the wall may have been made of a wattle screen. Stave-built (or cleft-timber) buildings were generally earth-fast structures whose rigidity was provided by the walls (Grenville 1997, 32). The surviving Irish historical record generally contains only incidental details of medieval buildings, although the description of a granary "covered with boards" in the archbishop of Dublin's manor of Colon in 1326 may refer to a stave-built structure (Mills 1889, 31-41). Urban excavations in Cork, Dublin and Waterford revealed medieval stave-built structures similar to Cookstown's house (Hurley 2003, 151-170). A "sill-beam-type stave-built house" on South Main Street, Cork City, had its vertical wooden staves preserved within a narrow foundation trench with packing stones similar to Cookstown; this structure was dated to AD1131–2 by dendrochronology (Hurley 2003, 158). Unfortunately, little can be said about the internal arrangement of the house at Cookstown as the original occupation surface, hearth or entrance did not survive, although stake-holes found inside the house may be the remains of an animal pen, bench or settle. The remains of cereal grains and the large volume of thirteenth-century to fourteenth-century domestic pottery found in the foundation trenches and around the house, which notably reduced with distance from the structures, strongly suggest a domestic function.

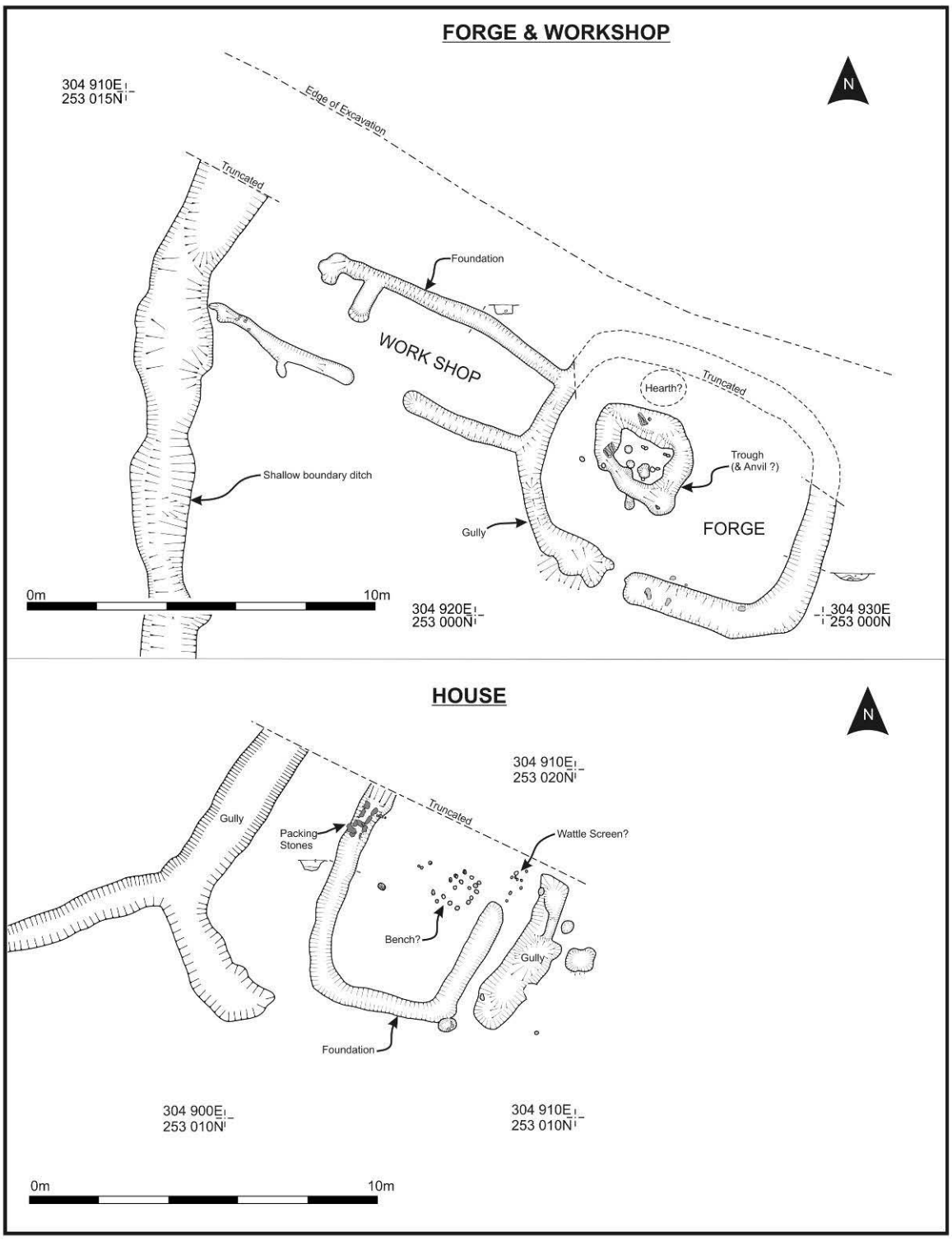

Illustration 4: Cookstown's medieval structures

Forge and Iron Working

Iron-working may have been the principle livelihood of the thirteenth-century occupants at Cookstown. The blacksmith's forge at Cookstown was built facing the lane (Plate 19). This forge consisted of two parts: an iron-working area (Structure I) and an adjoining earth-fast building (Structure II; Figure 18 & Illustration 4). The area

of the forge where metalwork was carried out was defined by a shallow, open, curving gully with a gap in the gully's south side probably indicating an entrance. This iron-working area does not appear to have been roofed or walled, but was rather surrounded by a shallow gully cut which filled with waste material created in the forge. Its earthen floor surface had trodden-in charcoal, slag and frequent fragments of thirteenth-century pottery – Dublin type wares, Dublin type cooking wares,

Leinster Cooking Wares and a single sherd of French Miscellaneous ware (See Appendix 8), – as well as fragments of furnace base. Although the forge's hearth did not survive, the discovery of a perforated ceramic circular disc-tuyère (*3091:19*) suggests that a simple open pit-hearth was used for forging objects (Plate 23). The disc tuyère measures 40–5mm diameter with a 10mm-wide central perforation. Its burnt orange fabric is similar in character to Leinster Cooking Ware; one face of the disc has a glassy surface created by the intense heat generated by the forge hearth (see Scott 1990, 161 & 170 for other examples). The quantity of slag (8.5kg) from within and around the forge suggest that bloom-smithing may also have been carried out here also (Appendix 20; see Rynne 1997, 89, & Tylecote 1981 for a discussion of bloom-smithing). The shallow trough, set off-centre within the metal-working area, appears to have been a quenching trough or trap for hot waste. This was filled with slag, charcoal, pottery (Dublin type wares, Dublin type cooking wares, Leinster Cooking Ware and a single sherd of green-glazed Saintonge ware), occasional furnace-base fragments, twigs, wood, fragments of sheet metal and iron-scale produced by metal-working. Post-holes surrounded by the trough appear to mark the location of a bench or anvil.

The structure (II) adjoining the metal-working area was most likely a workshop (Illustration 4). Its narrow width and the absence of internal post-holes suggest that the building's roof was carried on its walls, possibly as a lean-too. A gap in the south foundation trench may be an entrance, although the structure also appears to have been directly accessed from the adjoining metal-working area. The workshop's earth-fast walls were set in foundation trenches and were presumably made of wood. A short internal trench suggests that the building was divided by a wall or, possibly, a bench. Unfortunately, the original floor surface within the workshop did not survive, although thirteenth-century pottery and a plough pebble were recovered from its foundation trench fills.

Relatively few medieval iron forges have been excavated in Ireland (Scott 1990; Rynne 1997; Dowd and Fairburn 2005). Probable iron-working forges or workshops were excavated at mottes of Lismahon, Co. Down (Waterman 1959), and at Mannan Castle, Co. Monaghan (Moore 2002). As well as the historical records, archaeological evidence for iron-working at Bourchier's Castle, Co. Limerick, and Kilferagh, Co. Kilkenny, also suggests that iron-working was common on medieval manor sites (Cleary 1982; Hurley 1989). Blacksmiths were necessary for the production and maintenance of farm implements and every day items. Among the

various items belonging to Robert Bagod on the manor of Baggotrath in 1325 were an anvil, two small hammers and two tongs, worth in total four shillings (Connolly 1976, 66-74). These tools were probably used – but, it appears, not owned – by a blacksmith on the demesne farm of the manor. Whilst most of the structure and material excavated at Cookstown can be associated with the production of iron objects and, in the case of the 10 sheet-metal objects, copper-alloy working. Evidence for smelting and bloom-smithing was also discovered (see Appendix 20), suggesting that at Cookstown the whole metallurgical process, from ore to finished items, may have been carried out.

Thirty nine metal artefacts were recovered from High Medieval (late 12th and 13th centuries) contexts at Cookstown, 19 of which were from the forge or its vicinity (see Appendix 13). In addition, five identified medieval objects were recovered as residual finds in later features. Most metal objects were every-day items, such as iron nails (12). Only two of the 15 knives found on the site were recovered from secure medieval contexts (*2149:3 & 2117:7*); these knives were incomplete but appeared to be triangular in section, with flat backs and, in one case (2117:7) with the remains of a rectangular tang. Making whittle-tang knives required a high degree of skill to produce a suitable cutting edge. It is likely that the individual smiths bought the steel for the blades elsewhere (Tylecote 1981, 1981, 45-6; Cowgill 2000, 8). A horseshoe (*3017:13*; Plate 34) with distinctive wavy outline typical of 13th century examples, but discovered as a residual find in a later ditch fill, was likely to have been made or repaired in the forge (Appendix 13). Fragments of copper-alloy sheet found in the forge's trough may have been used in decorative work or for repairing vessels. Items such as an annular brooch, two copper-alloy buckles and a rowel-spur were probably produced beyond Cookstown, although they may have been repaired in the forge (Plate 33; Appendix 13). Most of the forge's produce appears to have been nails, horse-shoes and knives, although many more items of every-day use must have been produced and repaired. Perhaps the plough pebble found in the workshop was lost as iron was fitted to the plough.

Medieval Garden

Medieval garden archaeology is a relatively new area of study (Taylor 1991), and particularly so in Ireland. Most research on garden history and archaeology in Ireland has tended to focus on early modern and modern formal gardens or on the gardens of monasteries (Reeves-Smyth 1999). Few medieval gardens have been excavated in Ireland, although "garden soil" is a relatively common occurrence on medieval urban sites; a similar medieval garden was excavated by Donal Fallon at Muckerstown/ Wotton, Co. Meath, on the N2 project (Fallon 2009b). Medieval monastic gardens were laid out in raised beds separated by furrows or paths, often with wooden surrounds. Most of the plants grown in the medieval garden were used for producing pottage (a vegetable soup or stew made in a pot, sometimes with meat or fish), although medicinal plants and flowers were also cultivated. Vegetables such as leeks, onions, chibols (a type of small onion), shallots, peas and broad beans

(although more often grown as field crops), leafy beets, colewort leaves (a type of cabbage), parsley, garlic and hyssop (a sweet herb with medicinal properties) were cultivated. Carrots, parsnips, skirrets (a hardy root vegetable), rapes and turnips were introduced later in the medieval period (Reeves-Smyth 1999, 115; Harvey 1984). Extents of the earl of Norfolk's estates in Carlow and Wexford in late thirteenth century described medieval gardens, surrounded with planted thorns, producing mainly apples, leeks and herbs for sale (Mills 1892, 56). Orchards of apples and pears were also cultivated in gardens. O'Loan, in his study of the manor of Cloncurry, noted that the *cotagi* or cottiers – the lowest order of tenant on the manor – held land about the equivalent size of a modern county-council cottage, and grew peas, beans, vegetables and, perhaps, cereals (O'Loan 1961, 28-29). Some of the characteristics common to these medieval gardens were found at Cookstown. Ditches surrounding the garden protected it from livestock and other foragers; hand-dug furrows created a regular pattern of garden beds; while some of the narrower, linear cuts may be the remains of wooden fencing also found in medieval gardens. The remains of pea, legume and raphanus or radish found in the forge and the adjacent house were probably produced in this garden (Appendix 19). An orchard may even have been present in the west of the garden near the ringfort ditch. It is likely that the produce of the garden, along with beer, bread, and oats provided most of the food for the household, with occasional additional protein from the butchered cattle, horse, sheep and pig (Appendix 16).

Medieval Animal Husbandry

An analysis of the animal bone assemblage from Cookstown by Dr. Emily Murray (Appendix 16) has identified the bones of cattle, sheep, goat, pit, horse, dog, cat, fox and rabbit. Domesticates were the dominant species, with cattle bones forming the largest part of the assemblage, followed by horse, with sheep and pig in fairly equal proportions. The pattern of animal exploitation of the principle domesticates in Cookstown largely mirrors contemporary sites like Trim, Dunboyne and Knowth, but differ from excavated contemporary sites in Drogheda, Dundrum and Ferrycarrig where there appears to have been a higher consumption of sheep. Knife marks were found on cattle and horse bones and the presence of all parts of cattle skeleton in the assemblage from Cookstown suggests that the animals were killed, butchered and eaten on site. Both the cattle and horse remains have evidence for stress related pathologies which may have been caused by heavy work or traction. No remains of fish or bird bones were recovered at Cookstown, in contrast to excavations in Trim Castle and High Street. The presence of wild game may be more typical of high status occupancy. Unusually, the presence of a tiny mature tibia from a small dog, about the size of a modern Pekingese, recovered from the secondary fill (F3100) of the medieval ditch (F3049) enclosing the garden, would generally be associated with high-ranking women.

Early Modern Cookstown

Although no early modern (16th to 17th century) structure was identified at Cookstown, the presence of pottery from the period, as well as the historical record, indicates some form of settlement, most likely a farmstead, in close proximity to the site. All of the early modern pottery from the site – Frechen Stoneware, North Devon Gravel Free, Gravel Tempered, Slip Ware and Sgraffito Ware, glazed and unglazed Red Earthenware, Westerwald Stoneware and clay pipe – were recovered as residual finds from later features, primarily the topsoil, drainage ditches or the later fills of the ringfort's north quadrant, beside the modern lane. One drainage ditch (F3332) at least appears to have been excavated, although it is likely that the medieval ditches remained in use into the later part of this feature. The ringfort at least appears to have still been partially open at its north side.

The range of imported ceramics at Cookstown from this period illustrate the increasing influence of international trade and contacts in rural Ireland. Whereas in the preceding medieval period at Cookstown the vast majority of pottery was produced locally or in that regional, in the early modern period we see pottery imported from Britain and the north-west Europe (Appendix 9). Pottery from North Devon is common on both rural and urban sites from the second half of 17th to the later half of the 18th century (Meenan 2007, 398). Stone wares from Frechen and Westerwald were also common until glass vessels became cheaper (Meenan 2007, 396). It appears that basic utilitarian coarse earthen wares – glazed red earthenwares in the 17th to 18th century (minimum 12 vessels) and black glazed earthenwares from the 17th and 19th centuries (minimum 5 vessels) – made up the a significant volume of the ceramics in the modern periods. By the later 18th and 19th century a distinct change can be seen with a move away from imports of ceramics from the continent and an increase in the factory produced finewares from England, particularly from Staffordshire: Creamwares, Pearlwares, porcelain and transfer-printed wares. These were used for storage jars, serving dishes and tablewares such as plates, cups and tea-pots. Other studies from 19th century Ireland show a similar range of finewares in rural sites such as the tenant houses at Ballykilcline, Co. Roscommon (Orser 2006). At Cookstown these ceramics, along with the numerous bottle fragments (Appendix 11) were most likely consumed in the strong farmer's household adjacent to the excavation, and subsequently discarded as rubbish in the surrounding ditches, particularly beside the lane (F1011 & F1164). Four Jew's harps were also discovered in the site's 18th to 19th century phase. Although Jew's harps are generally found in post-medieval contexts examples have also been recovered from medieval and early-modern sites (Buckley 1983; Carroll & Quinn 2003, 287). Jew's harps were a popular musical instrument in Ireland and were imported in large quantities from England (Buckley 1983, 32-33), although Jew's harps were also manufactured in Ireland (De HÓir 1985).

Cottier's Cabin

The strong farmer's house and farmstead at Cookstown wasn't the only modern settlement in the site. The discovery of a cottier's cabin (Structure V), dating to around the turn of the nineteenth century, provides a stark reminder of the very poor living conditions of the vast majority of Ireland's landless class in the first half of the 19th century. Ireland's countryside at this time was a densely settled landscape of small farmers, cottiers and labourers organised into a pyramid of tenancy from the landlords, their principle tenants, their sub-tenants and so on down to the landless labourers living a marginal existence in conditions of abject poverty. This was most likely the case with William H. Carter, the owner of the farm containing Site 25 in the mid-19th century, where William Borbridge was his tenant and occupier of the farmstead; there is no record of the lower levels of tenancy. The farmstead adjacent to the excavation, the home of Borbridge, appears to have been the only substantial building in the townland in the 19th century. Excavations at Cookstown unexpectedly uncovered the cabin of a cottier. This cabin or *scalpeen* was located within a ditch beside the lane leading to an adjacent farmstead. The structure measured 7.3m by 4.1m externally and appears to have been built as follows. A partially silted up ditch flanking the farm lane was chosen as a site. One side of the ditch formed the cabin's back wall; three low walls of stone half a metre wide formed the remainder; two walls spanned the breadth of the ditch and a third extended along its brow, facing onto the lane. Once the walls were built the interior was deepened to create more space within the structure, making the interior floor level lower than of the ground outside. Soil taken from within appears to have been deliberately banked up against the outside of the walls for extra support or insulation. The structure's entrance was at the lowest point of the ditch. Although no indication of the roof survived, presumably it extended across the ditch, resting upon the edge of the ditch and the low walls to form a lean-to.

The cabin would not have been a pleasant place to live. A bare earth surface served as the cabin's floor. Two small hearths in scooped out hollows, one in the centre of the cabin and the second set against the wall opposite the entrance, provided light and heat, but must have created a very smoky environment. The cabin's situation within the ditch would also have made it damp; a shallow drain extending down the centre of the cabin can only have provided partial relief from recurring flooding. Potatoes were the major part of the Irish diet. A series of parallel furrows, shallow open drains and pits, all of broadly similar date to the cabin, were exposed in the field behind the cabin, evidence perhaps of potato cultivation by the cabin's inhabitants.

The structure's marginal situation, relatively small size and poor construction suggest it was a cottier's cabin or "*scalp*". Glass and ceramics recovered from the ditch fills underneath suggest a date in the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century; no artefacts dating to its occupation were found within the cabin. Whilst the cabin is not depicted the first edition Ordnance Survey maps it is questionable whether the surveyors would have considered such a temporary structure worth recording. Also, the presence of gate posts at the

intersection of the lane with the Ballybin road as depicted on the Ordnance Survey Fair Plans, and still present today, suggests the lane had become a private access route by the late 1830s.

By 1841 two fifths of all families in the country dwelt in cabins (Ó Gráda 1989, 110), the majority presumably of not dissimilar scale and construction to that described above. A brief sketch is given in Arthur Young *A Tour in Ireland from 1780*:

" - - - *a great many cabins, usually by the roadside or in a ditch* [where] *a wandering family will fix themselves under a dry bank and with a few sticks, furze, fern, etc. make up a hovel much worse than an English pigstye (sic), support themselves how they can, by work, begging and stealing* - - - " (Young 1780 -- reprinted 1983, 183-184).

Illustration 5: "The Scalp at Cahermore" from the London Illustrated News December 29, 1849

Conditions in cabins in Meath were described in Robert Thompson's *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath* (Dublin 1802):

"- - - [the cabins were] *wretched beyond description - - - often not sufficiently covered in to keep out rain";* "- - - [the cabins are constructed from clay] *taken to build the walls from the spot, on which they are raised, leaving the surface of the floor, and the ground immediately about the walls, the lowest part* - -" (Thompson 1802, 71).

Thompson also recorded that the family slept on the damp floor, sharing the space with their pigs and fowl. Cobbett describes a similar dwelling in 1834; the dimensions given compare closely with the excavated cabin at Cookstown:

…They consisted of mud walls, with a covering of rafters and straw. None of them so good as the place where you keep your little horse. I took a particular account of the first place that I went into. It was twenty-one feet long and nine feet wide. The floor, the bare ground. No fireplace, no chimney, the fire (made of potato-haulm) made on one side against the wall, and the smoke going out a hole in the roof. No table, no chair; I sat to write upon a block of wood. Some stones for seats. No goods but a pot, and a shallow tub, for the pig and the family both to eat out of. (Ó Gráda 1989, 110)

The cottier class of this period worked on the larger farms, sub-letting small patches of ground for raising potatoes (conacre). The cottiers tenure was fixed by verbal agreement on a yearly basis, limiting the size and permanence of their dwellings (Thompson 1802; Ó Gráda 1989). Living conditions of the cottier class were examined by the *Royal Commission on the Condition of Poorer Classes in Ireland* in 1836. The Vicar of Ratoath, Rev. Robert Torrens Boyle, was questioned on the conditions of the poor in Ratoath Barony containing Cookstown (HMSO 1836, 112). Boyle speculated about 500 labourers lived in the barony, only ¾ of whom were in constant employment. No support existed for these people beyond their meagre seasonal earnings and their own savings. Rev. Boyle stated that their employment consisted of planting and digging potatoes and saving the hay; May, June, July and winter were the periods of least employment. Women and children usually spent their time finding fuel from the stubble and hedges of the farmers, coal and turf being in short supply in this area.

The cottiers in Cookstown lived a marginal existence. They, and millions like them, formed the lowest tier of the rural society. Despite, or perhaps because of, its marginal location the cabin at Cookstown did not last long. Some time in the late 18th or early nineteenth century, based on the artefacts recovered from the ditch below the cabin and the overlying features, a substantial new bank was built flanking the lane. This may have coincided with the insertion of gate piers at the end of the lane, indicating that the lane became a private avenue. To make way for the new field boundary the walls of the cabin were thrown down and its interior backfilled. Perhaps the cottier's employment and lease had expired and they just simply moved on. Perhaps they were ejected and the bank was created to prevent construction of any similar dwellings. The great potato famine of 1845 to 1850, with its catastrophic economic, social and demographic consequences, eventually destroyed the cottier class as they existed before. The structure excavated in the ditch in Cookstown is a poignant reminder of these people.

6. Conclusion

The archaeological investigations at Site 25 revealed a multi-period site where previously no archaeology was known to exist. The archaeological features and material recovered from the site range from the Neolithic to the 19th century. The concentration of archaeology in this area of the surrounding landscape may be a function of the local topography: this part of Cookstown is on high and relatively dry sloping ground. The site appears to have initially been used in the Middle Neolithic (c.3600 - 3100 bc), with a possible settlement and burial in the Final Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age. Settlement in the Iron Age, including some form of local ritual site, illustrates the continued use of this site throughout prehistory and into the Early Medieval period. The enclosure ditch for a ringfort was excavated most likely in the 8th or 9th centuries, at the highest part of the site. This ringfort would have functioned as a farmstead and probably contained domestic structures, farm houses and possibly work-shops; unfortunately no substantial evidence for this was found during the excavation, although only a part of the ringfort lay within the area of excavation. In the high medieval period (*c*.thirteenth-century to fourteenth-century centuries) a series of fields were established and bounded by drainage ditches; a series of three structures were built facing onto a lane or road. These structures would appear to have functioned both as a domestic dwellings and a forge. There may have been an occupation phase in or around the vicinity of the ringfort. In the Early Modern period at least part of the ringfort ditch was still open beside the lane or road. Cartographic and documentary sources indicate a substantial house and surrounding buildings in this area of Cookstown townland in the mid seventeenth century; only limited archaeological evidence for this settlement, in the form of residual artefacts, were recovered during the excavation, although it is possible that the current farmstead next to the site had an early-modern predecessor. The modern farmstead, the home of Mrs. Byrnes, was most the home of a relatively wealthy grazier farmer in the late 18th or early 19th century. The historical records from the 19th century indicate the farm was owned by the William Carter and was rented by William Borbidge. Whilst farmers like Mr. Borbidge would have lived in a well-constructed farm house with outhouses such as Mrs. Byrnes house, a significant portion of the population of rural Ireland were landless and lived in abject poverty anywhere they could find. The remains of a cabin of one of these cottiers was found in a ditch beside the lane; the parallel furrows of a probable potato patch behind the cabin are a testament to the occupants subsistence farming.

The archaeology excavated at Site 25 extended beyond the edge of the CPO area which delimited the road-take; the geophysical survey indicates that additional archaeology remains to the immediate west of the site where the rest of the ringfort survives *in situ*. These remains constitute an early medieval enclosure site, possibly with Medieval and Early Modern phases. Also, it is possible that additional archaeology, in the form of continuations of the medieval ditches (F3049, F3140 and F3328), exists beyond Area 3 immediately to the south of the medieval structures and outside the CPO area. The site has subsequently been entered in the

Record of Monuments and Places (ME039:009). Should any future development be planned in the vicinity of Site 25 a full archaeological assessment should be carried out to assess the possible impacts of the development on these archaeological remains.

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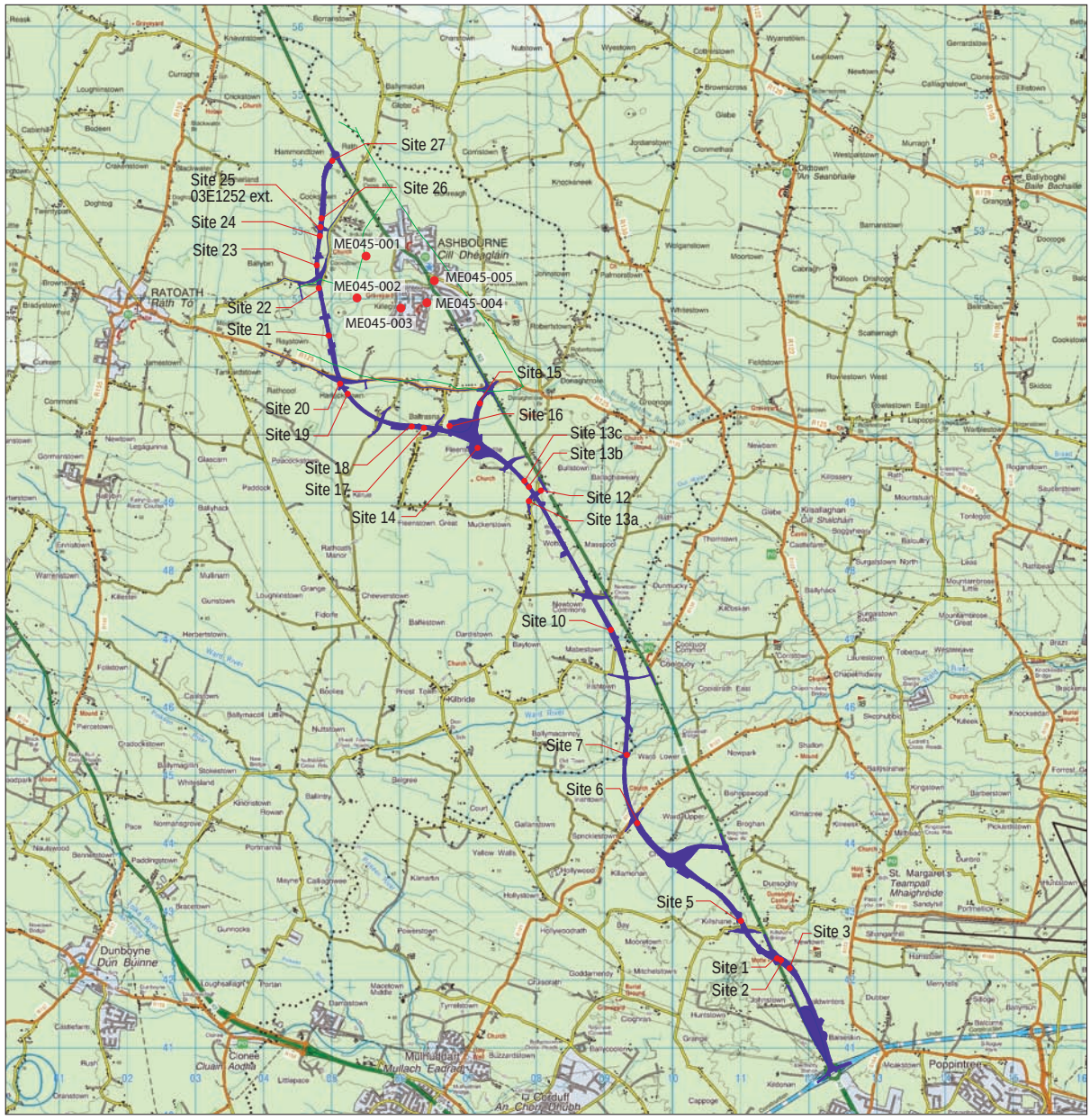
Cookstown Excavation Crew



0km 5km

Site: Site 25 Cookstown
Licence no.: 03E1252 ext.
Job no.: 428
Client: MCC
Drawn by: AW
Date: March 2009

CRDS
Archaeological & Historical Consultants
Unit 4
Dundrum Business Park,
Dublin 14.
Tel: +353 1 2968190-3
Fax: +353 1 2968195
email: info@crds.ie

Figure 1: Cookstown Site 25 location on the N2 road scheme (extract from the OSI Discovery Series Sheet 43 & 50)

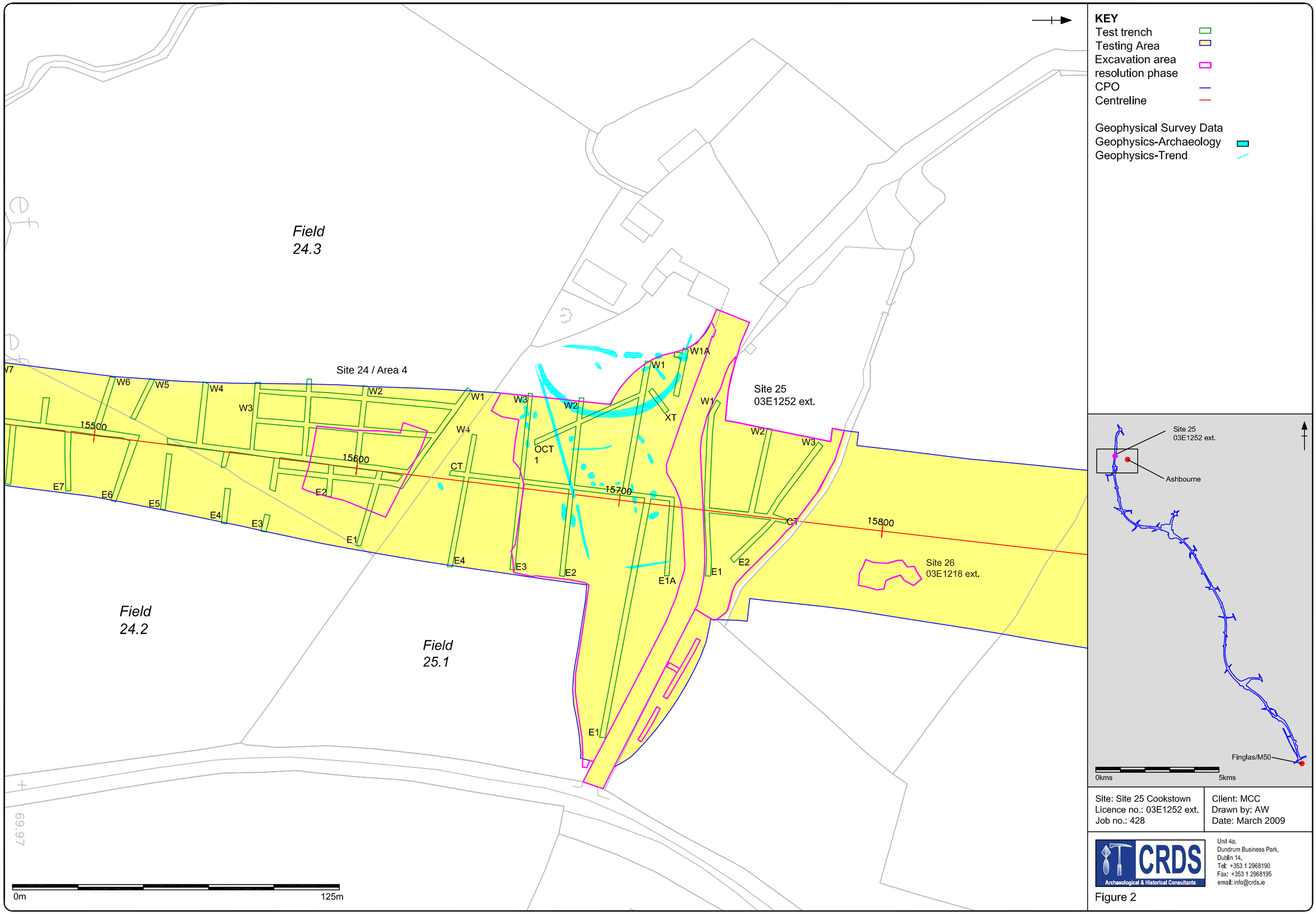
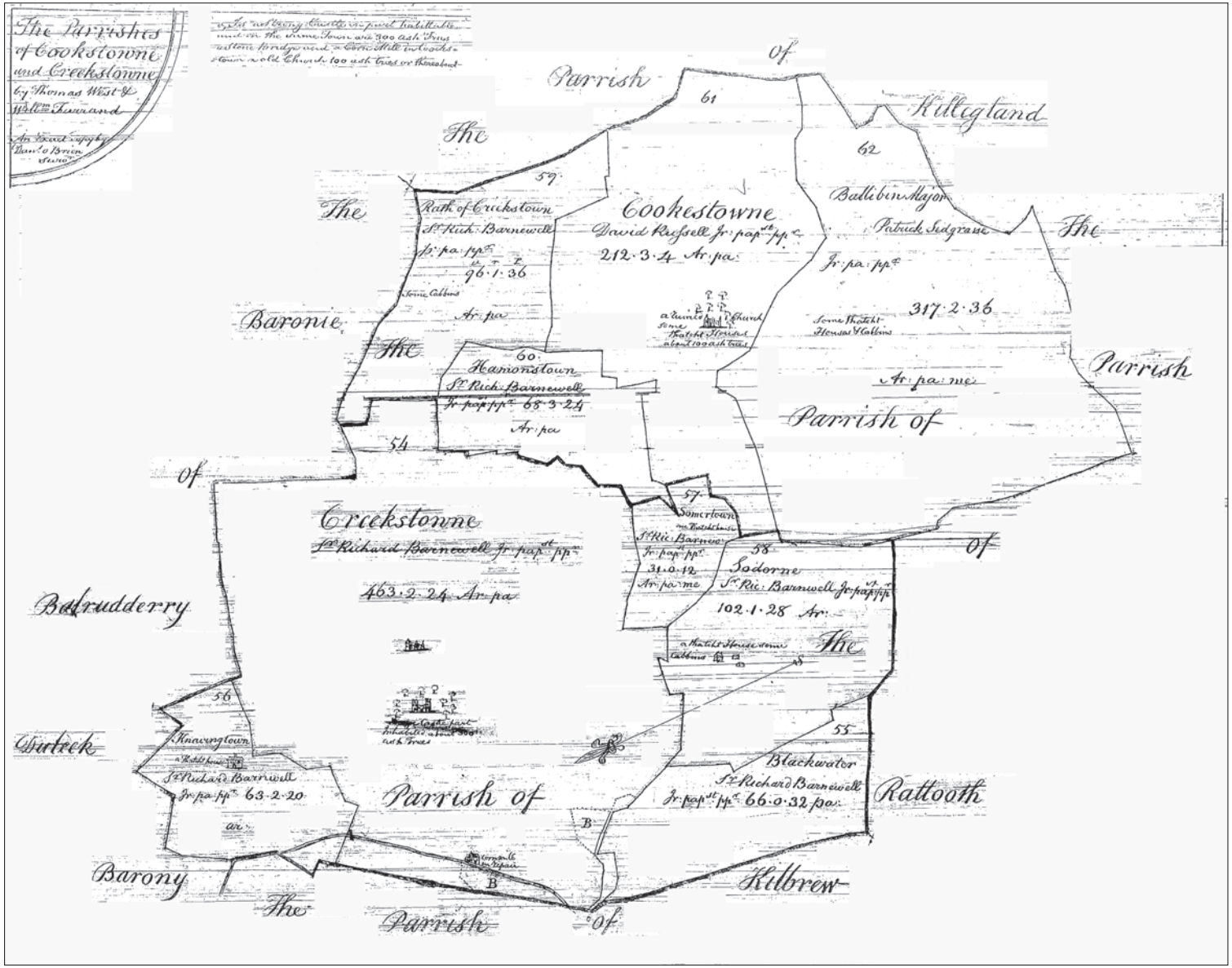


Figure 2 : Extent of Site 24/ 25 showing the results of the geophysical survey and the extent of test excavations

Figure 3 : Location of Site 25 (03E1252 ext) within the N2 road-take superimposed on an aerial photograph showing the topographical contours



Site: Site 25 Cookstown
Licence no.: 03E1252 ext.
Job no.: 428
Client: MCC
Drawn by: NL
Date: March 2009

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Figure 4 : Cookstown Down Survey Parish Map 1656

Site: Site 25 Cookstown
Licence no.: 03E1252 ext.
Job no.: 428
Client: MCC
Drawn by: NL
Date: March 2009

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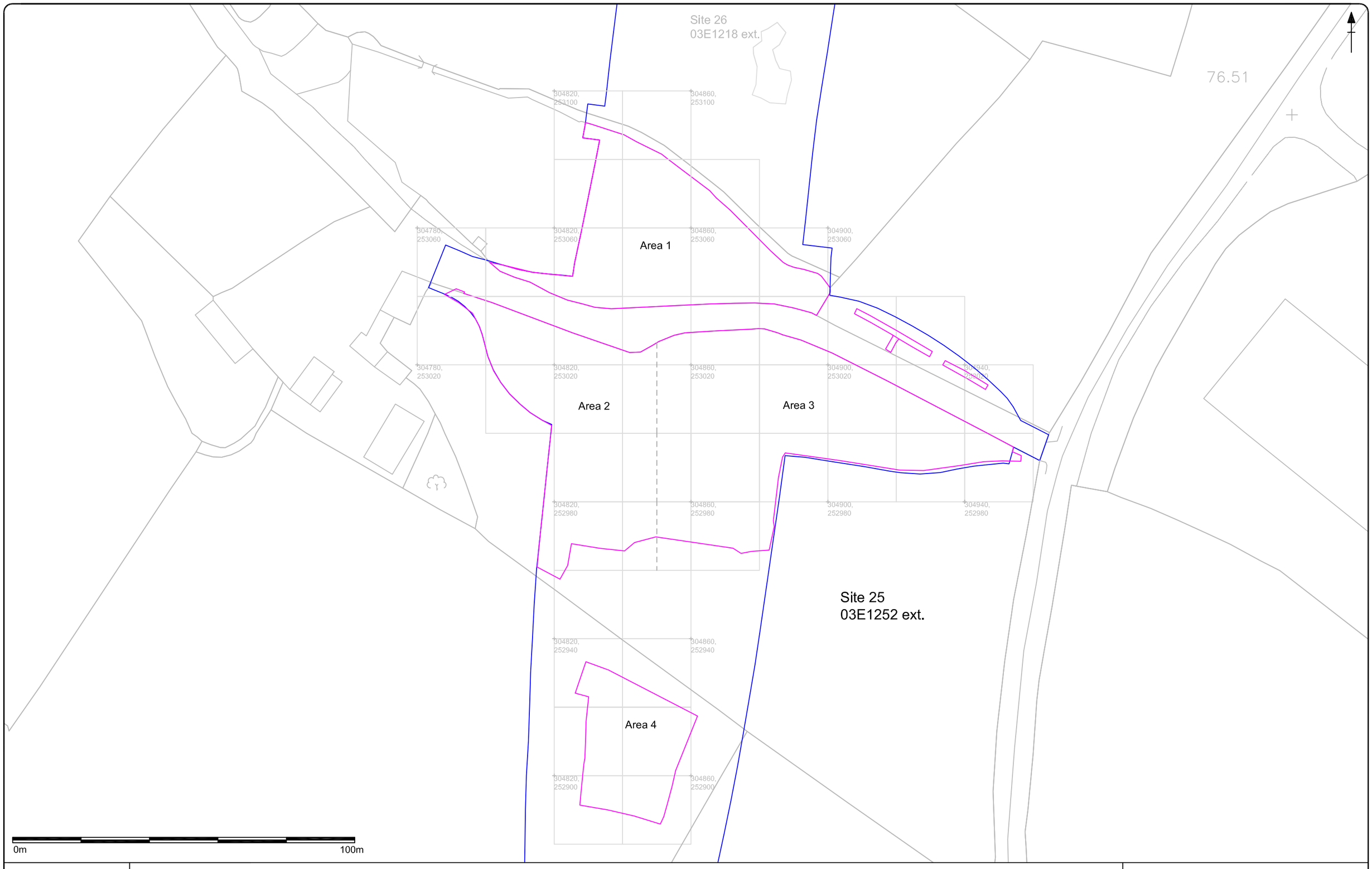
Figure 5 : First edition Ordnance Survey 6" map extract of Cookstown townland, surveyed 1836



Site: Site 25 Cookstown
Licence no.: 03E1252 ext.
Job no.: 428
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Drawn by: AW
Date: March 2009

KEY

Excavation area | Excavation grid | Grid co-ordinate 304860, 252940 | CPO | Area 1 & 2 division

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Figure 6 : Site 25 excavation grid

Figure 7 : Main phases of activity

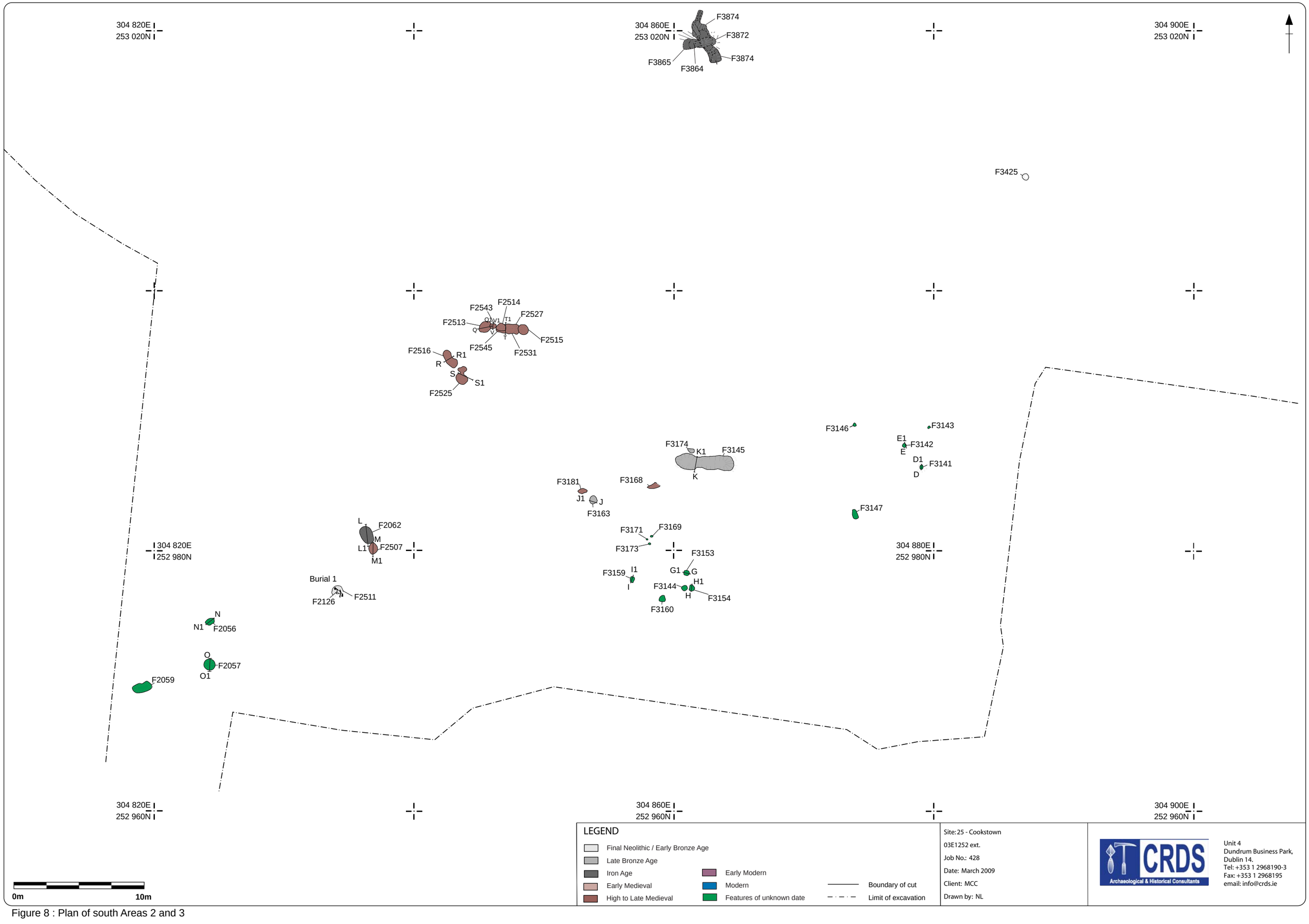
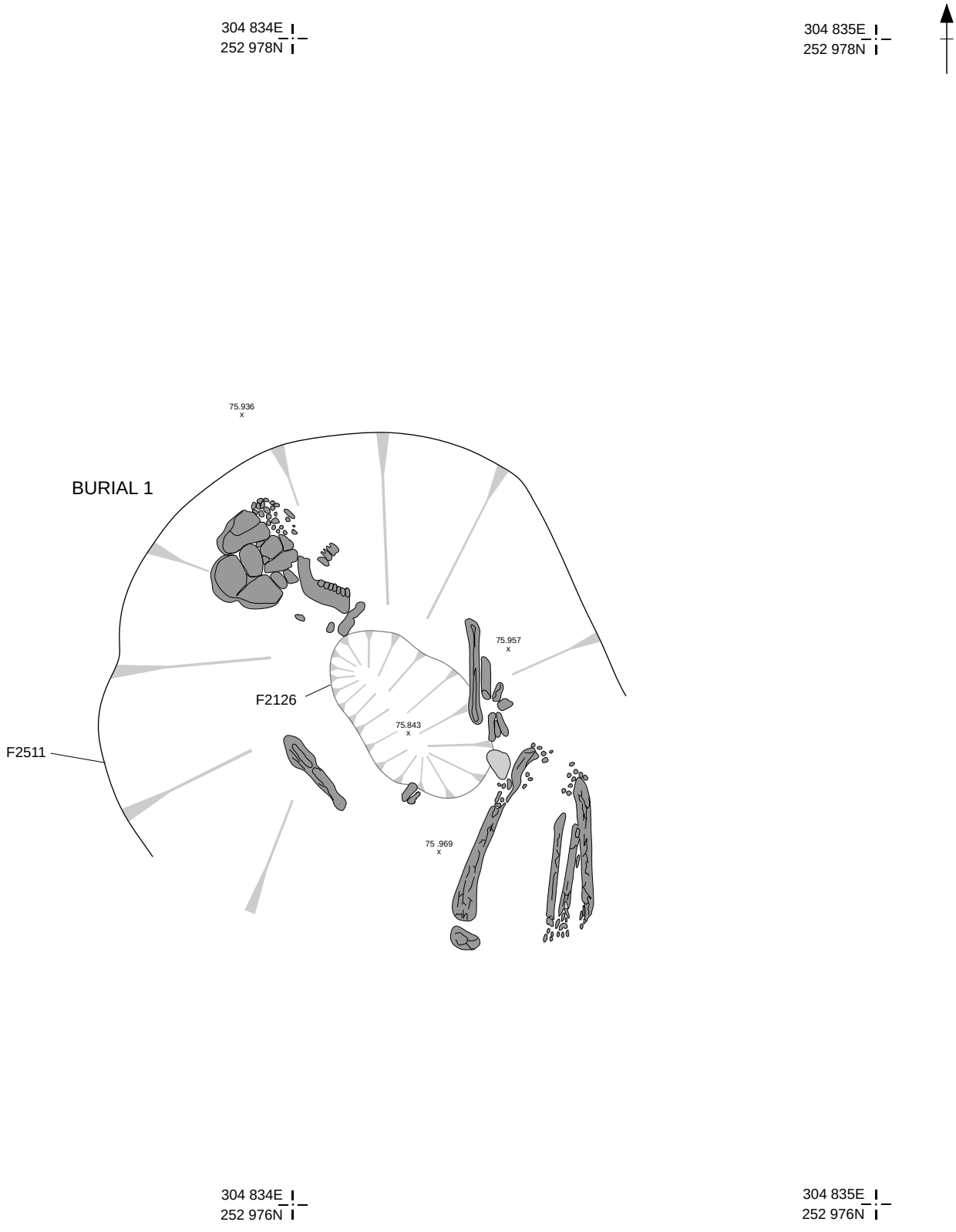


Figure 8 : Plan of south Areas 2 and 3



LEGEND

Stone
Skeletal Remains
Boundary of cut
Context cut by other context
Limit of excavation

Site: 25 - Cookstown

03E1252 ext.

Job No.: 428

Date: March 2009

Client: MCC

Drawn by: MOD

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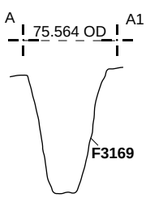
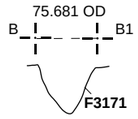
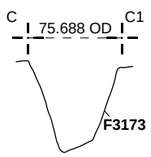
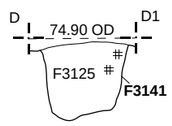
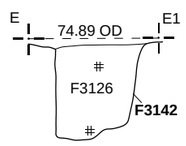
Figure 9 : Final Neolithic / Early Bronze Age Burial 1

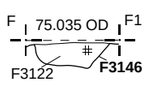


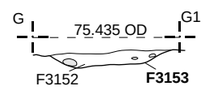


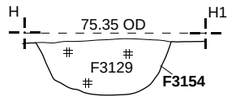


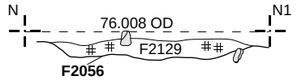


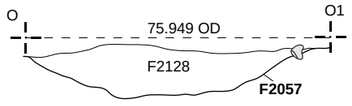




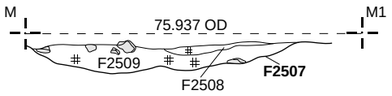


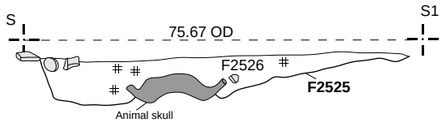


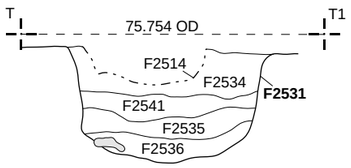


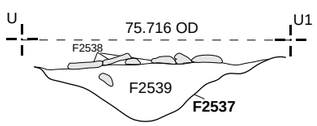


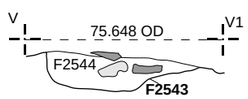
Phase 8 sections



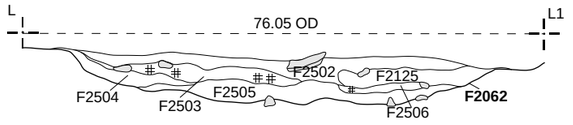








Phase 5 sections



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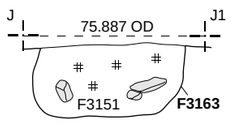
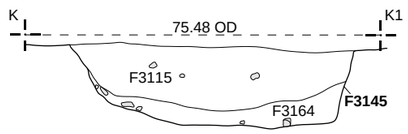
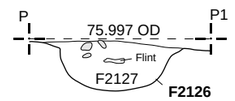




Phase 2 section



Phase 1 section

0m 1m

LEGEND

- Boundary of fill
- Boundary of cut
- Level line
- Limit of excavation
- Context cut by other context
- Bone
- Charcoal
- Stone

Site: 25 - Cookstown
03E1252 ext.
Job No.: 428
Date: March 2009
Client: MCC
Drawn by: MOD

CRDS Archaeological & Historical Consultants
Unit 4
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Dublin 14.
Tel: +353 1 2968190-3
Fax: +353 1 2968195
email: info@crds.ie

Figure 10 : Sections of pit features in Areas 2 and 3

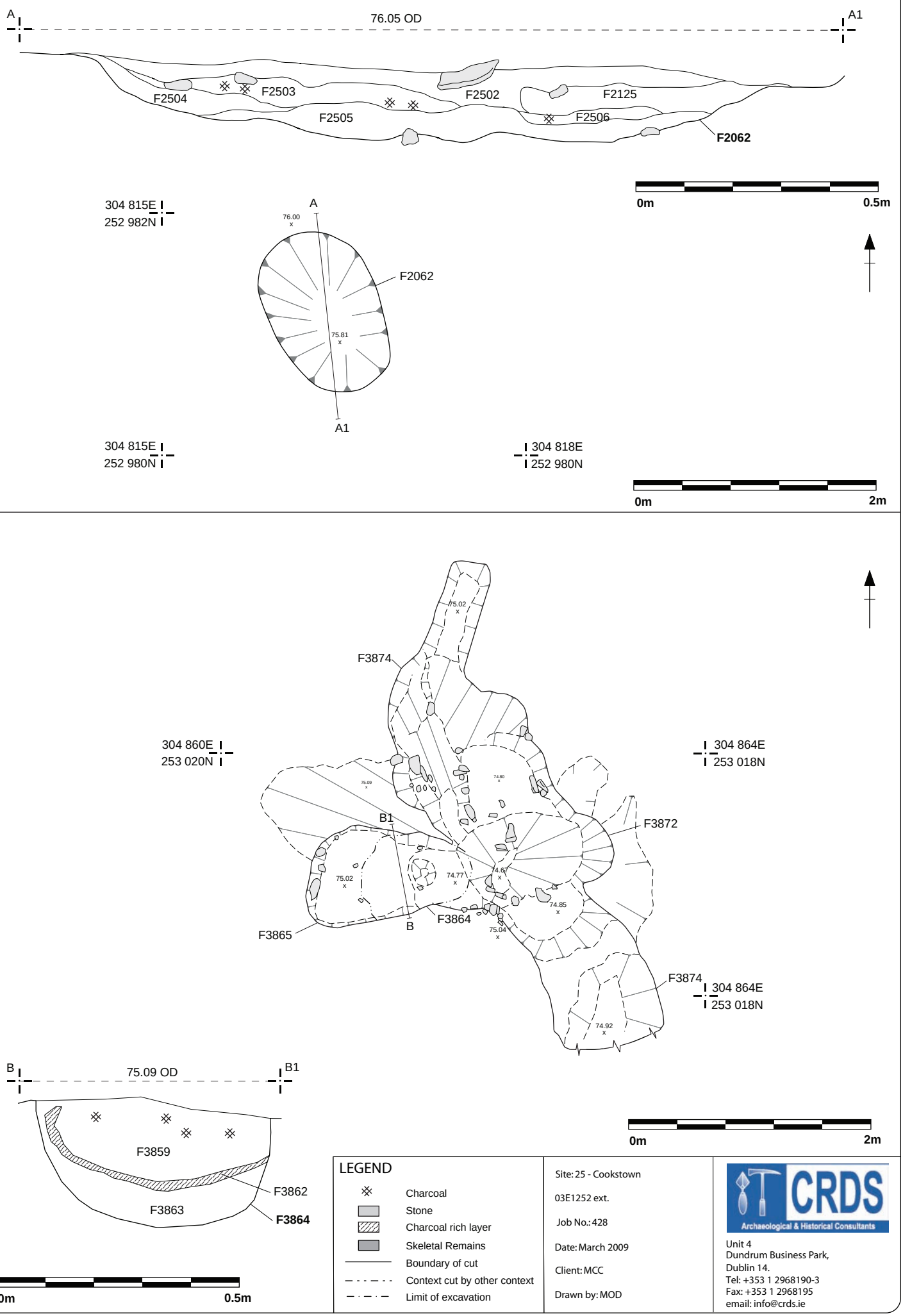
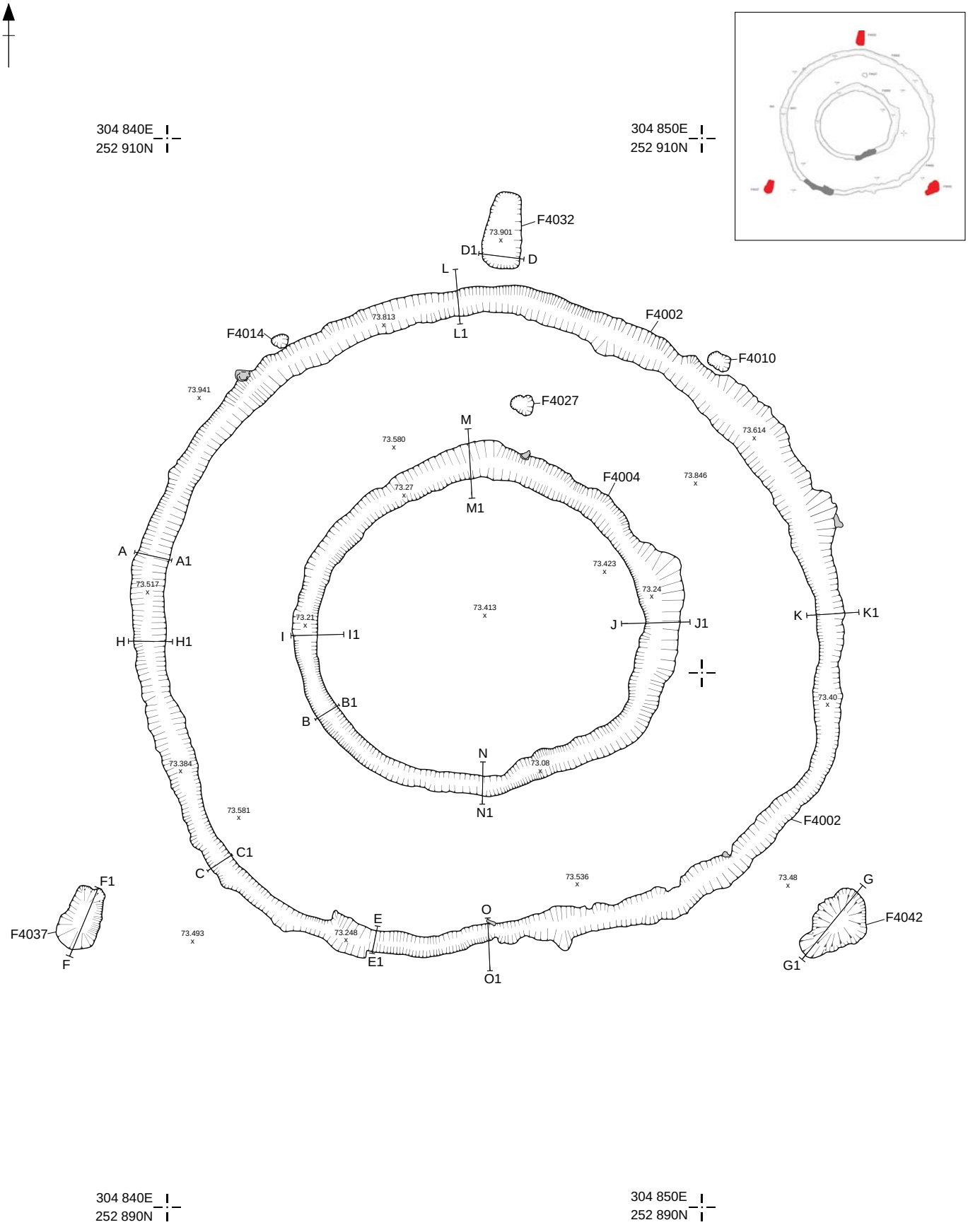


Figure 11: Iron Age (Phase 3A) corn drying kilns



LEGEND

Boundary of cut

Context cut by other context

Limit of excavation

Boundary unclear

Site: 25 - Cookstown

03E1252 ext.

Job No.: 428

Date: March 2005

Client: MCC

Drawn by: MOD

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Figure 12 : Iron Age ring-ditch complex

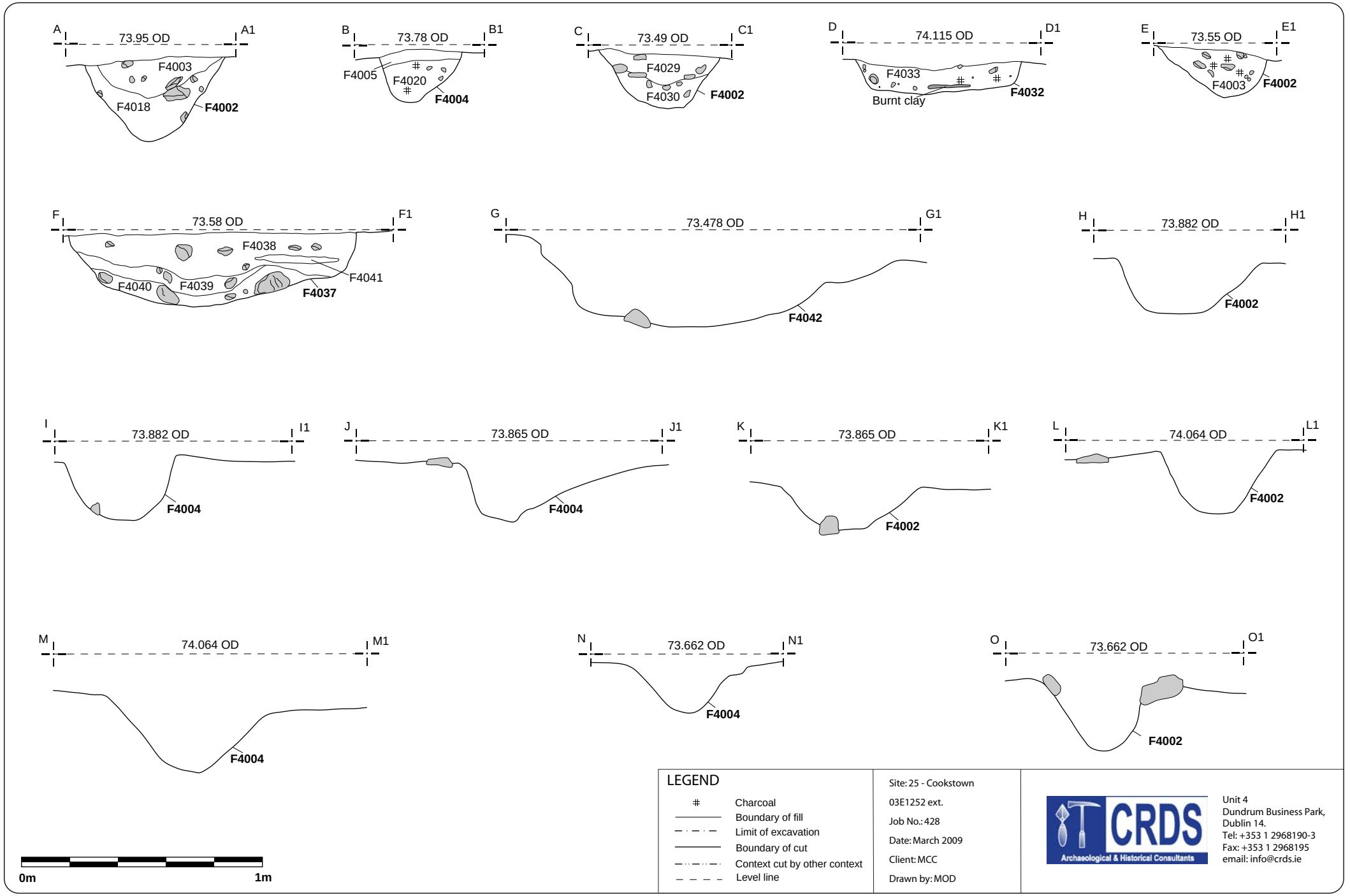


Figure 13 : Sections and profiles of the ring ditch complex

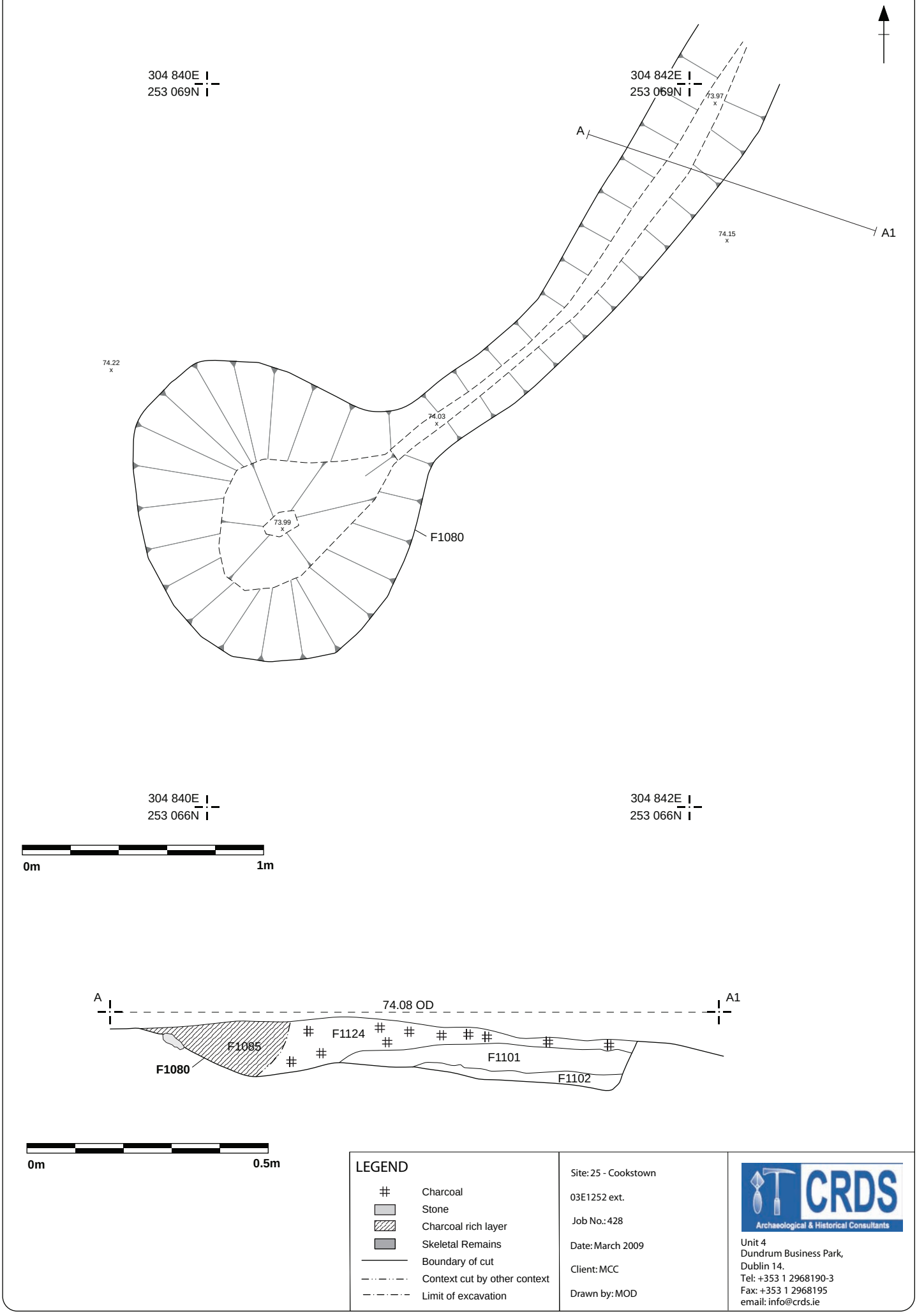


Figure 14 : Plan and section of the Early Medieval corn-drying kiln [F1080]

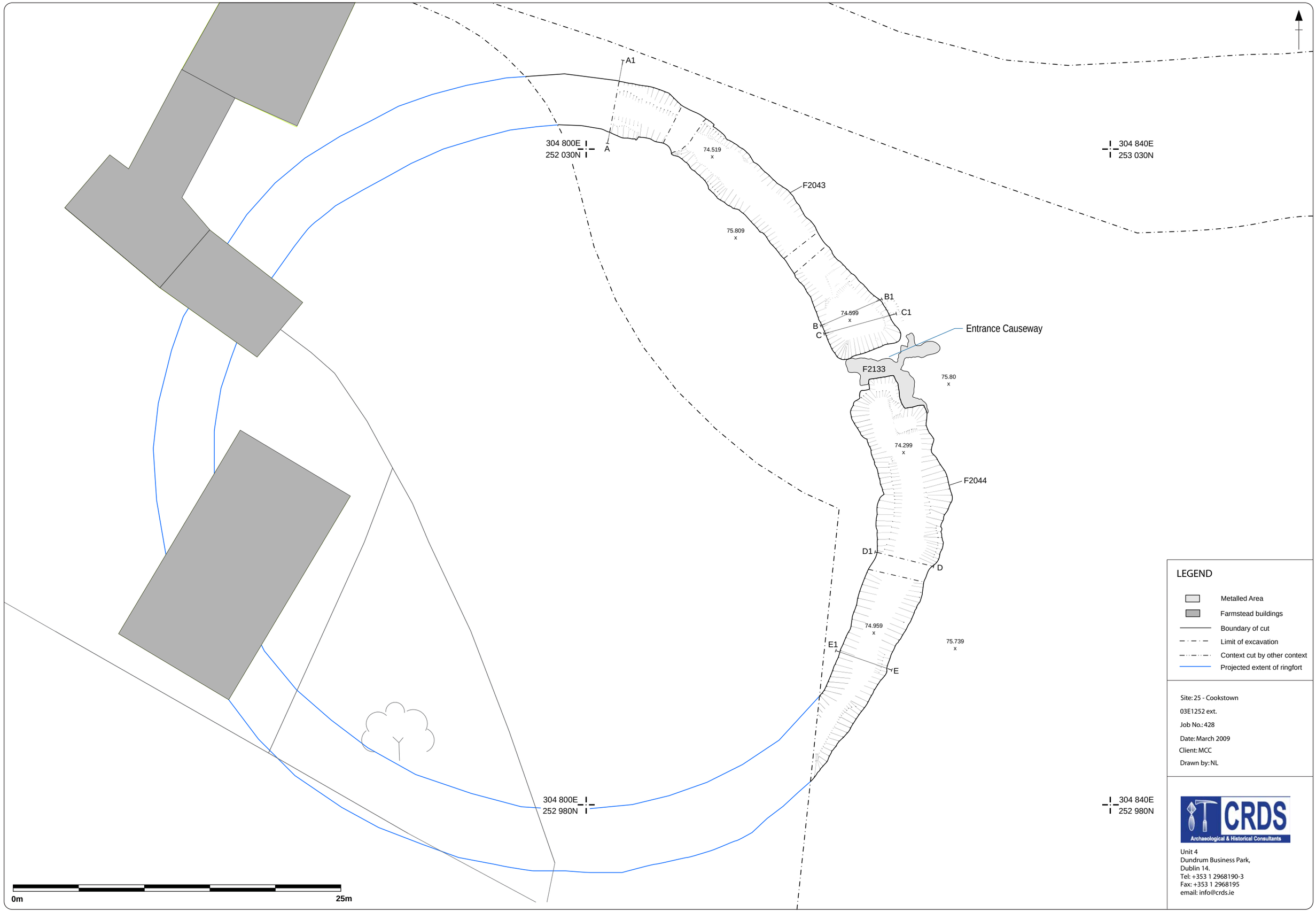
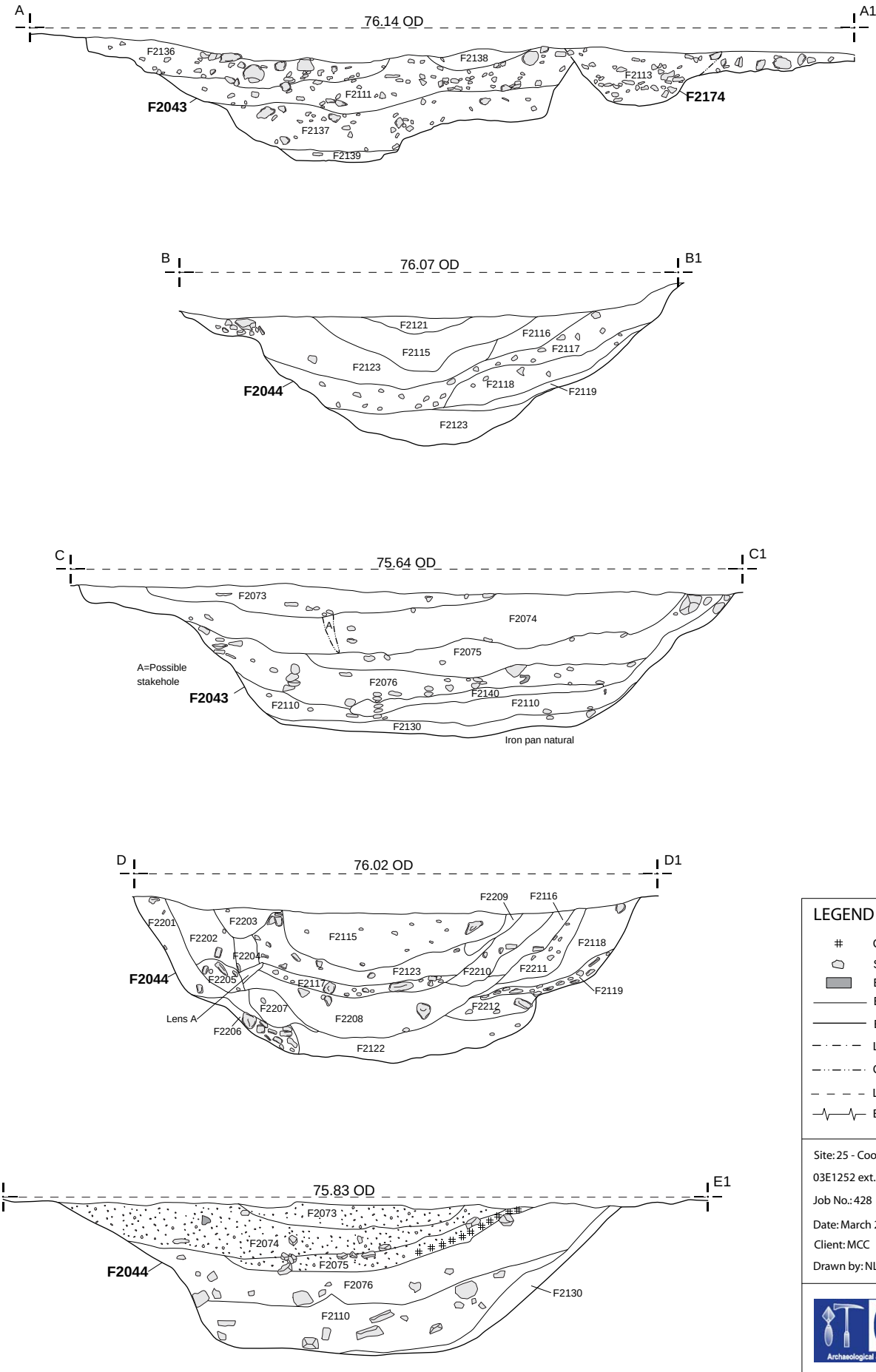


Figure15 : Ringfort post excavation plan



LEGEND

- Charcoal
- Stone
- Bone
- Boundary of fill
- Boundary of cut
- Limit of excavation
- Cut by contextt
- Level line
- Boundary unclear

Site: 25 - Cookstown

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Job No.: 428

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Drawn by: NL

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Figure 16 : Sections through the ringfort ditch

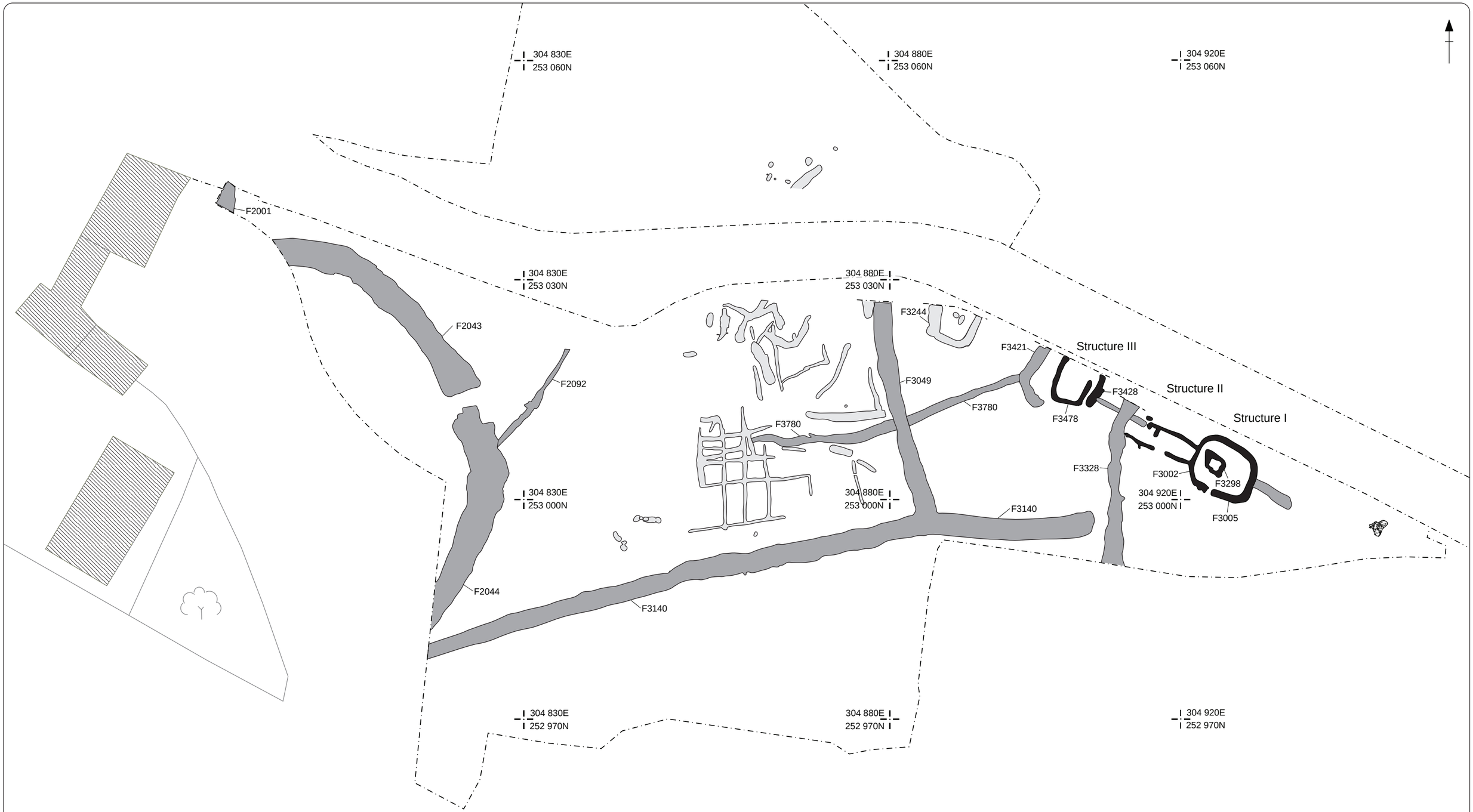


Figure 17 : General plan of the medieval phase (Phase 5)

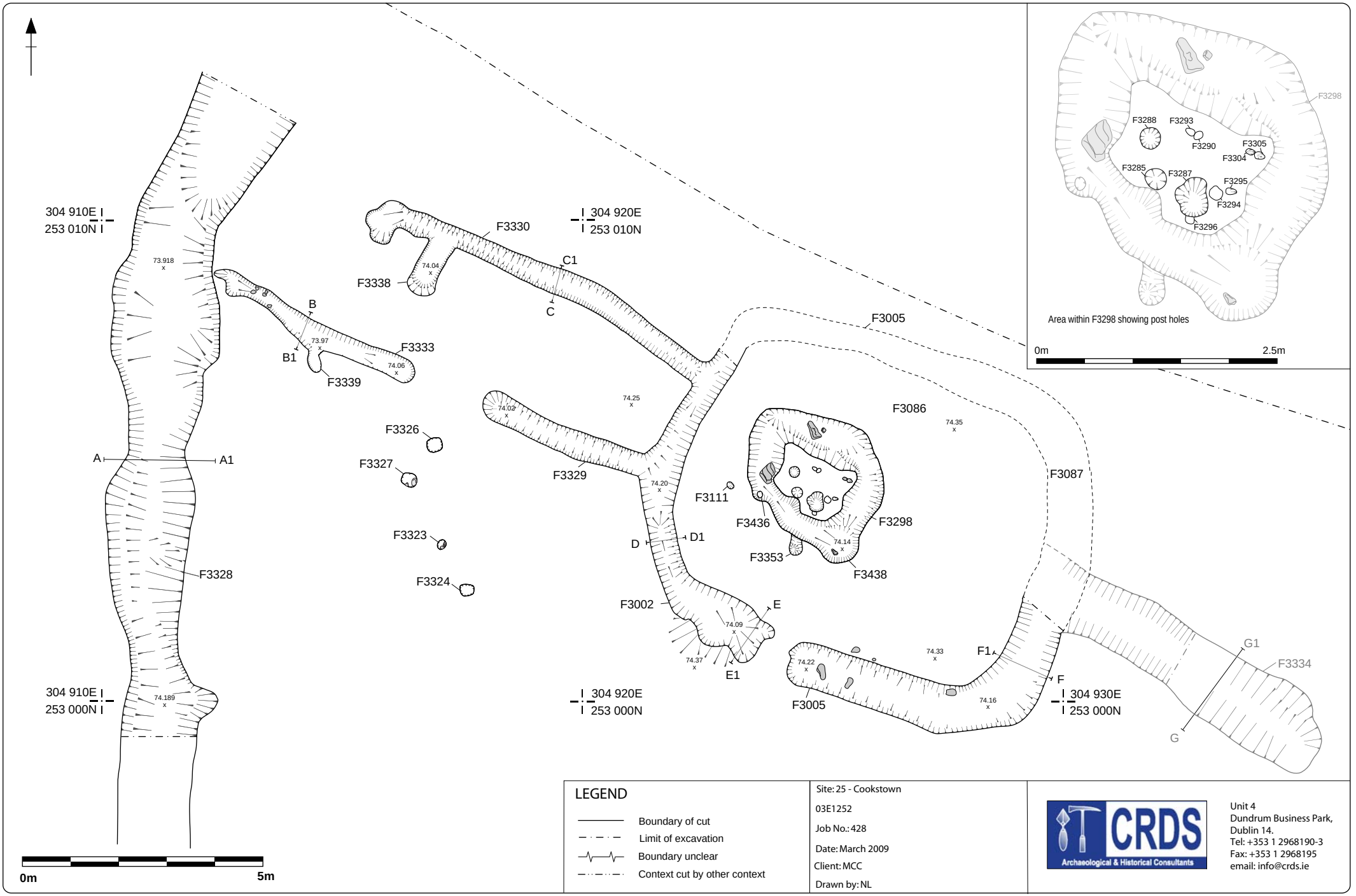


Figure 18 : Medieval Forge (Structure I) and workshop (Structure II)

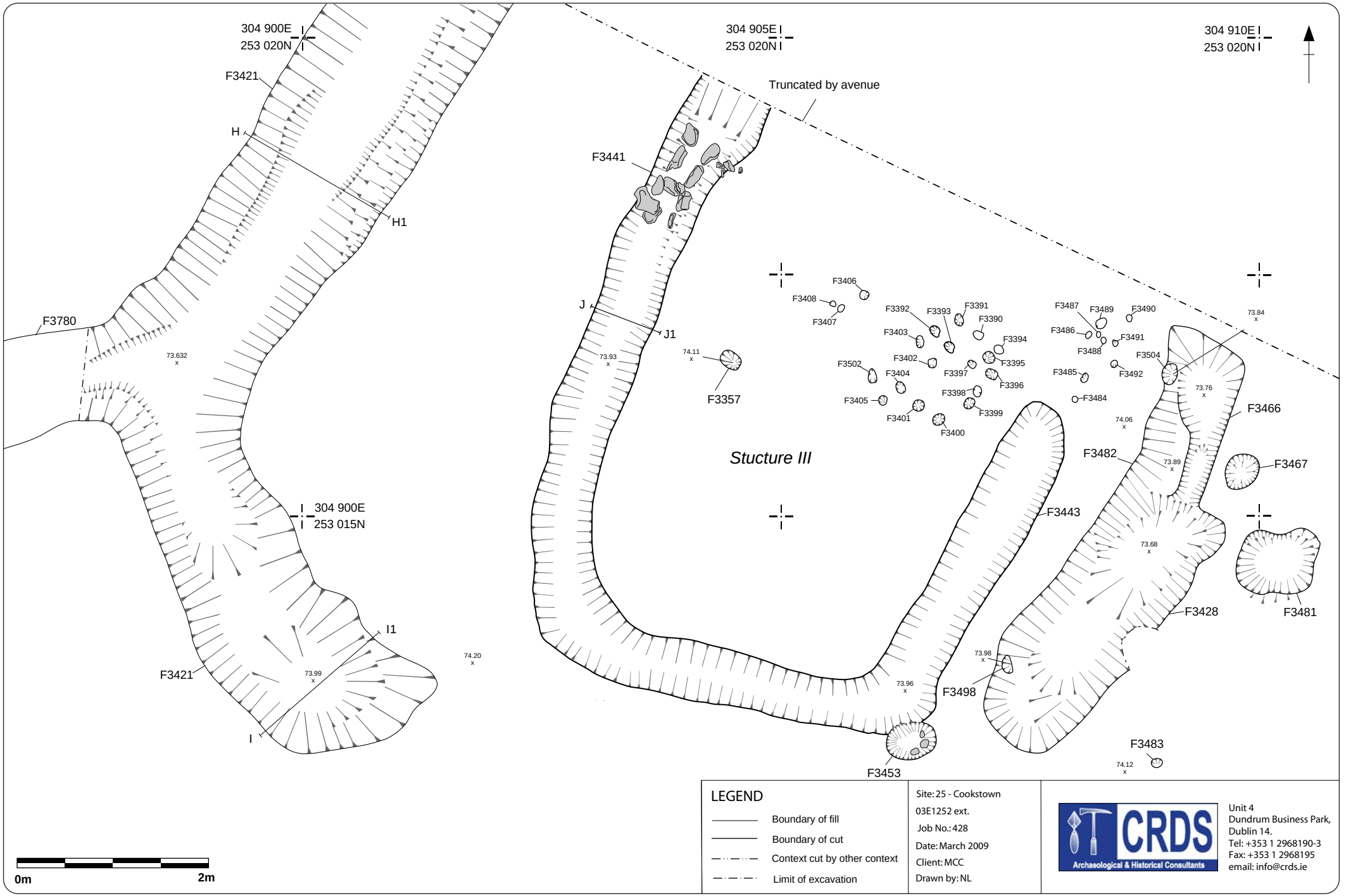
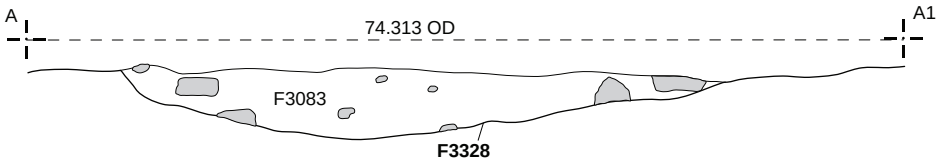
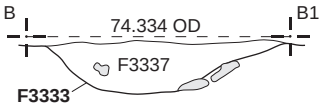
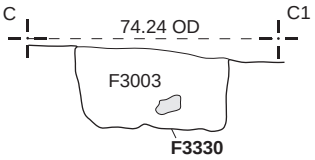
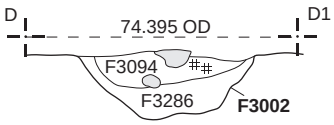


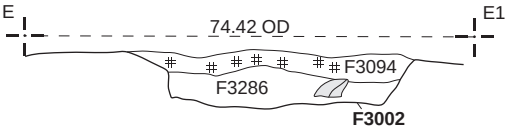
Figure 19 : Post-ex plan of medieval structure III and associated building

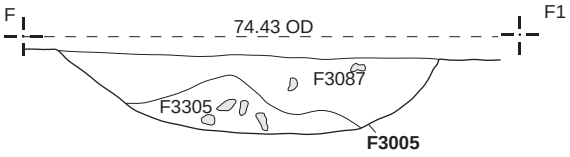


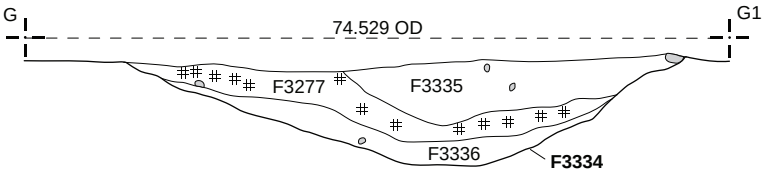


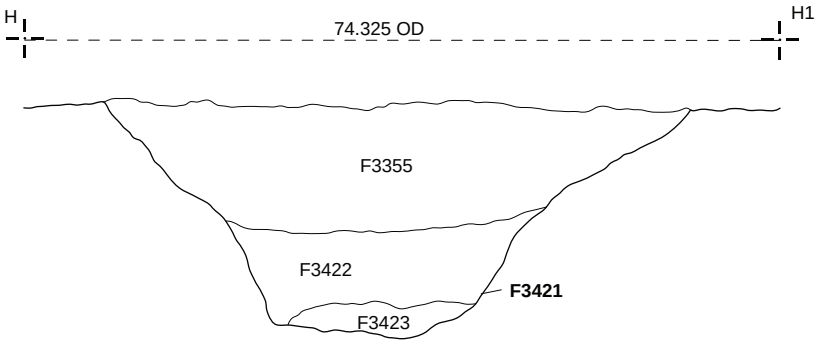


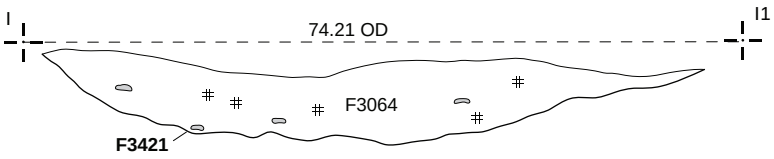


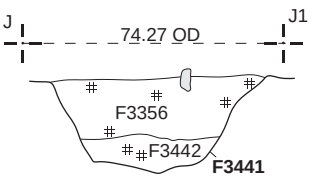












LEGEND

- Boundary of fill
- Boundary of cut
- Context cut by other context
- Limit of excavation
- Charcoal
- Stone

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Figure 20 : Sections of Structures I & II

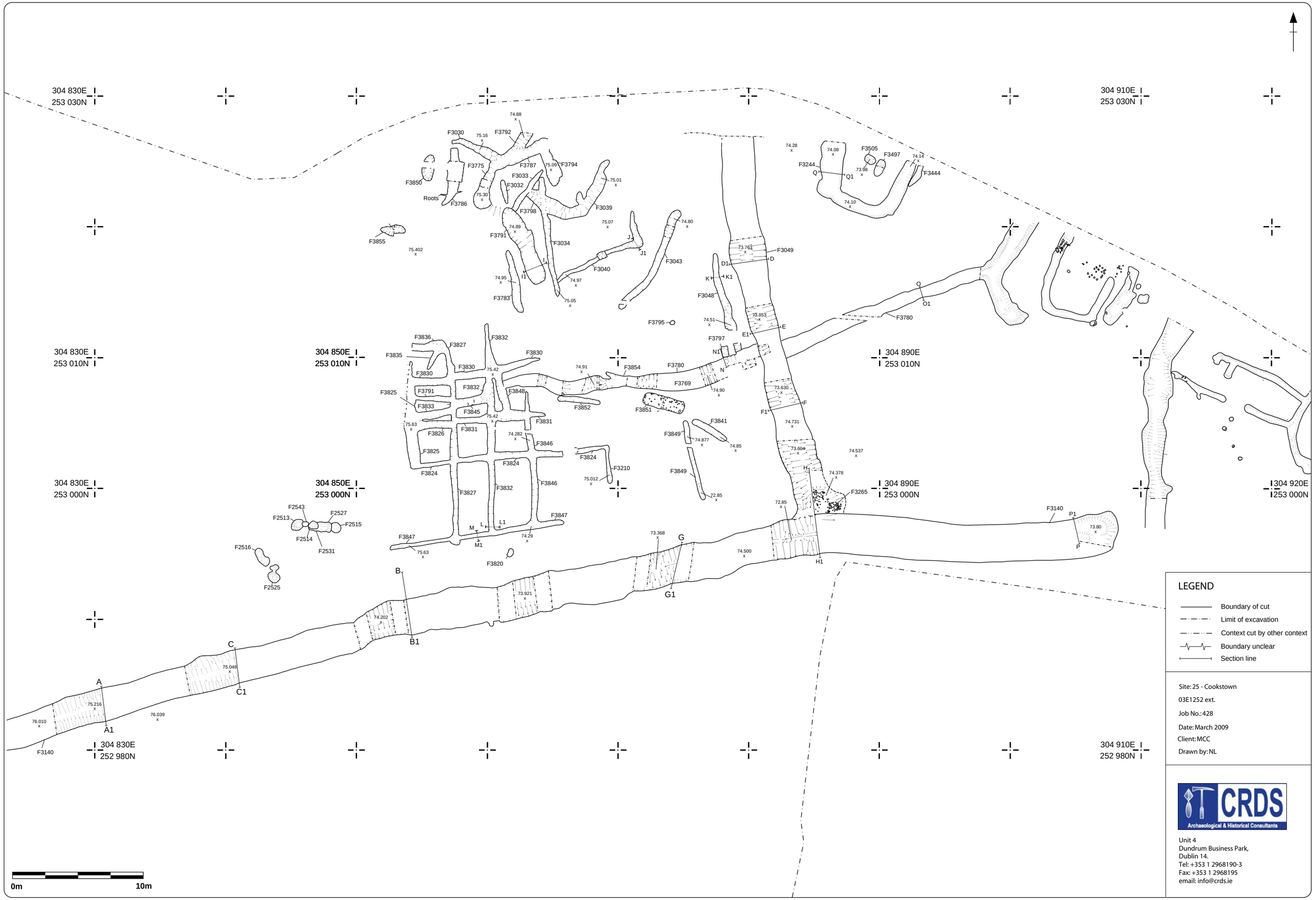
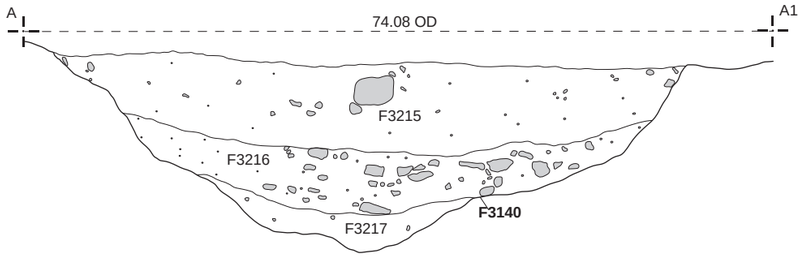
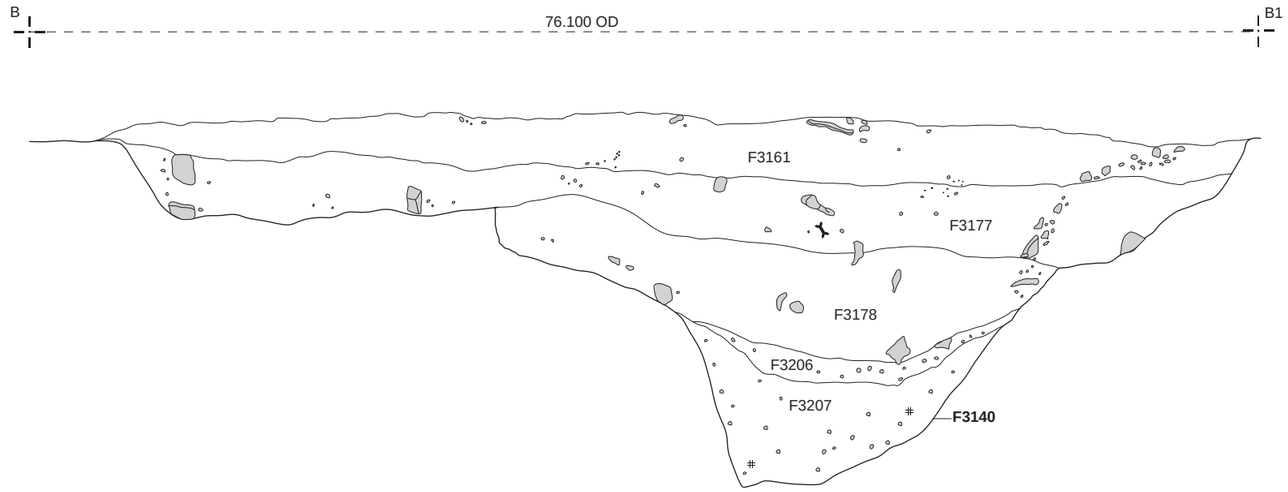
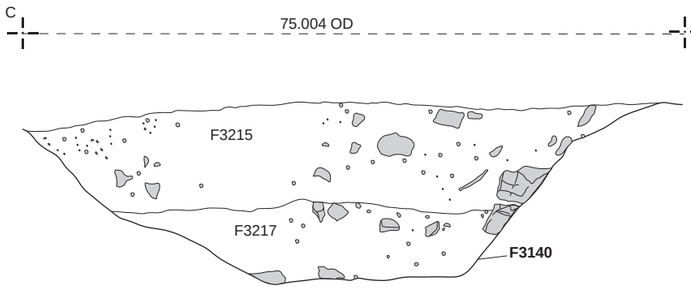
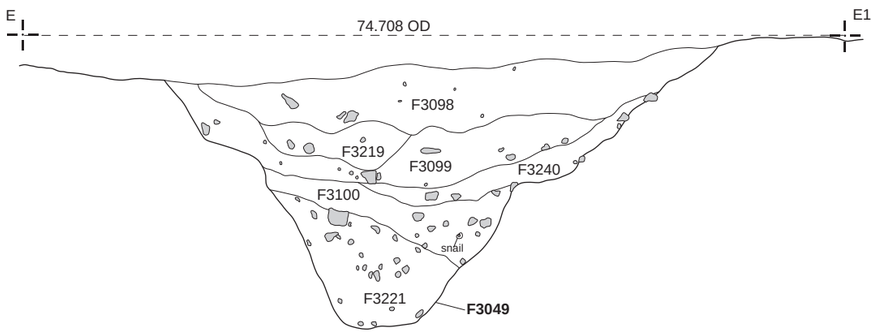


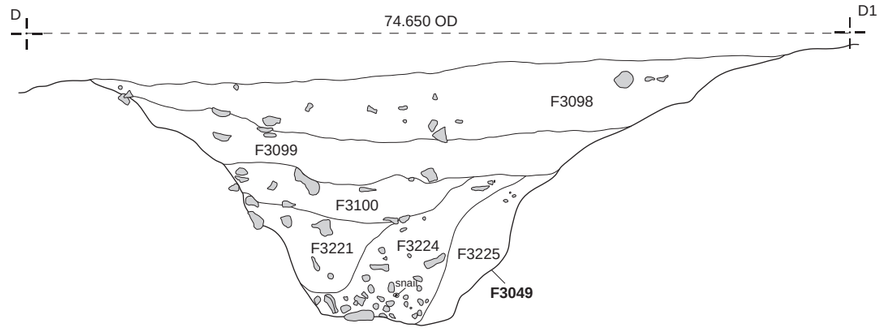
Figure 21 : Plan of medieval garden features and surrounding drainage ditches

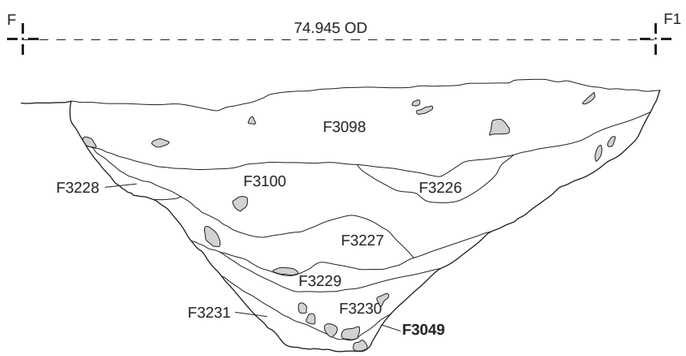


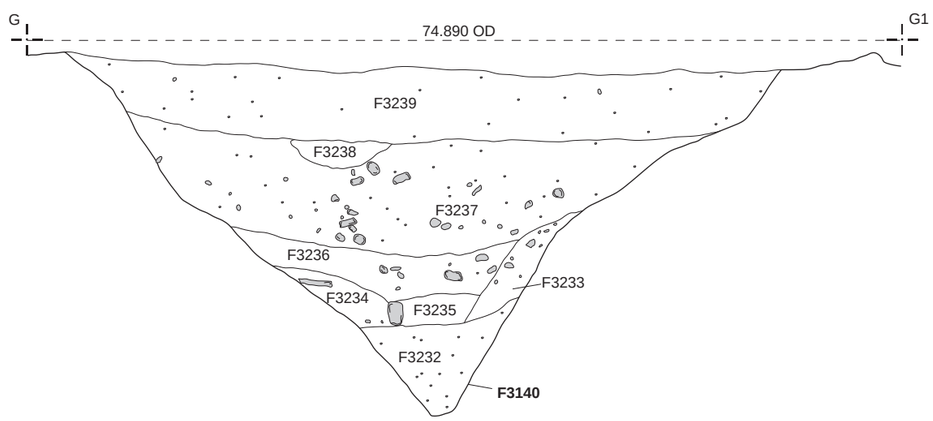












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LEGEND

- # Charcoal
- Bone
- Stone
- Boundary of fill
- Boundary of cut
- Limit of excavation
- Context cut by other context
- Level line

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Figure 22 : Sections of medieval boundary ditches

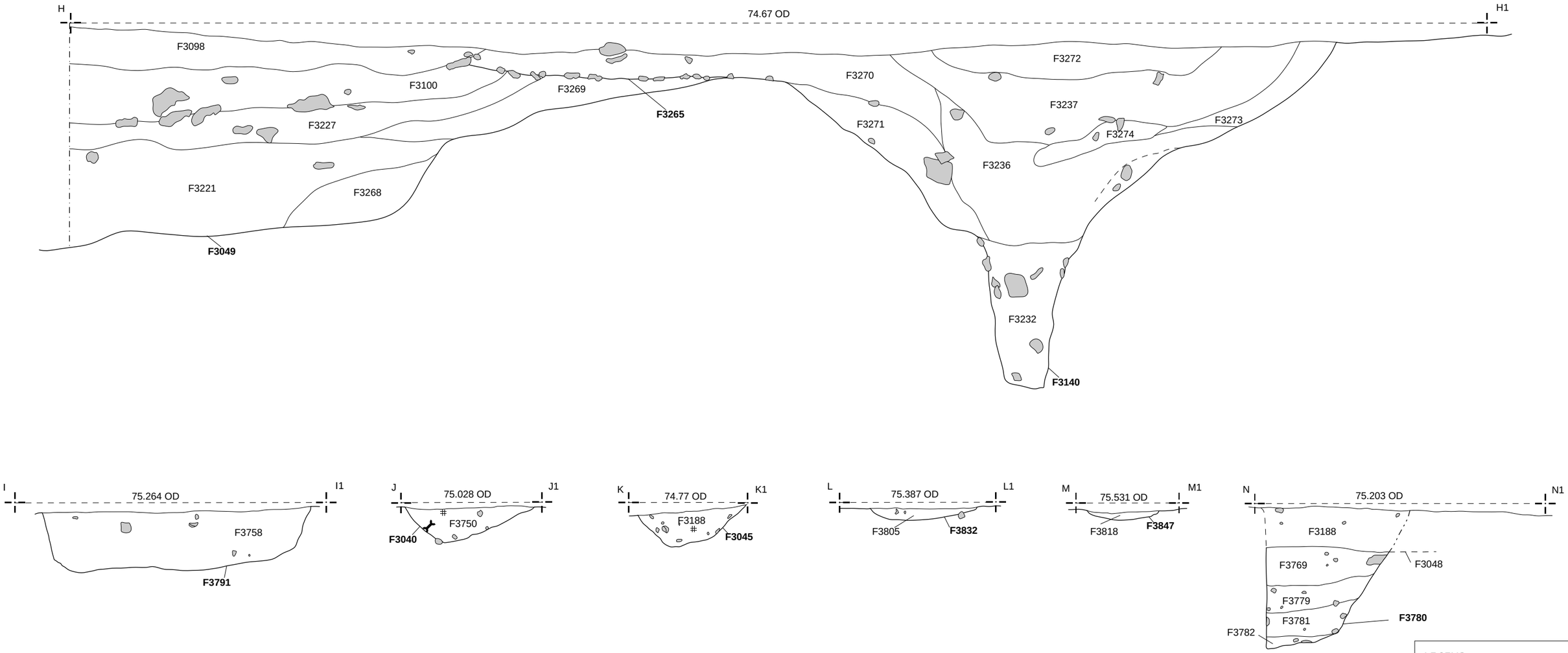


Figure 23 : Sections of medieval boundary ditches and garden features

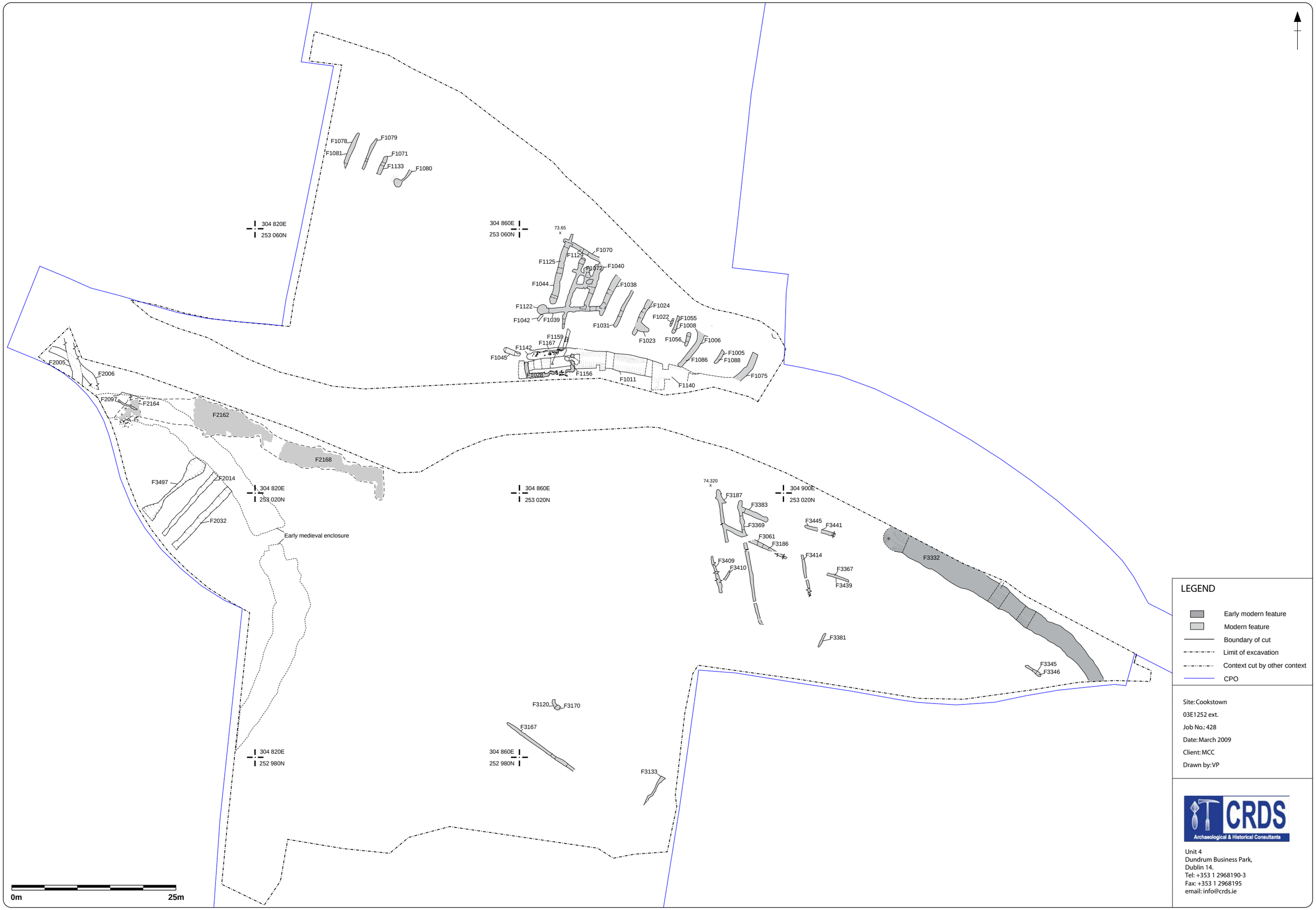
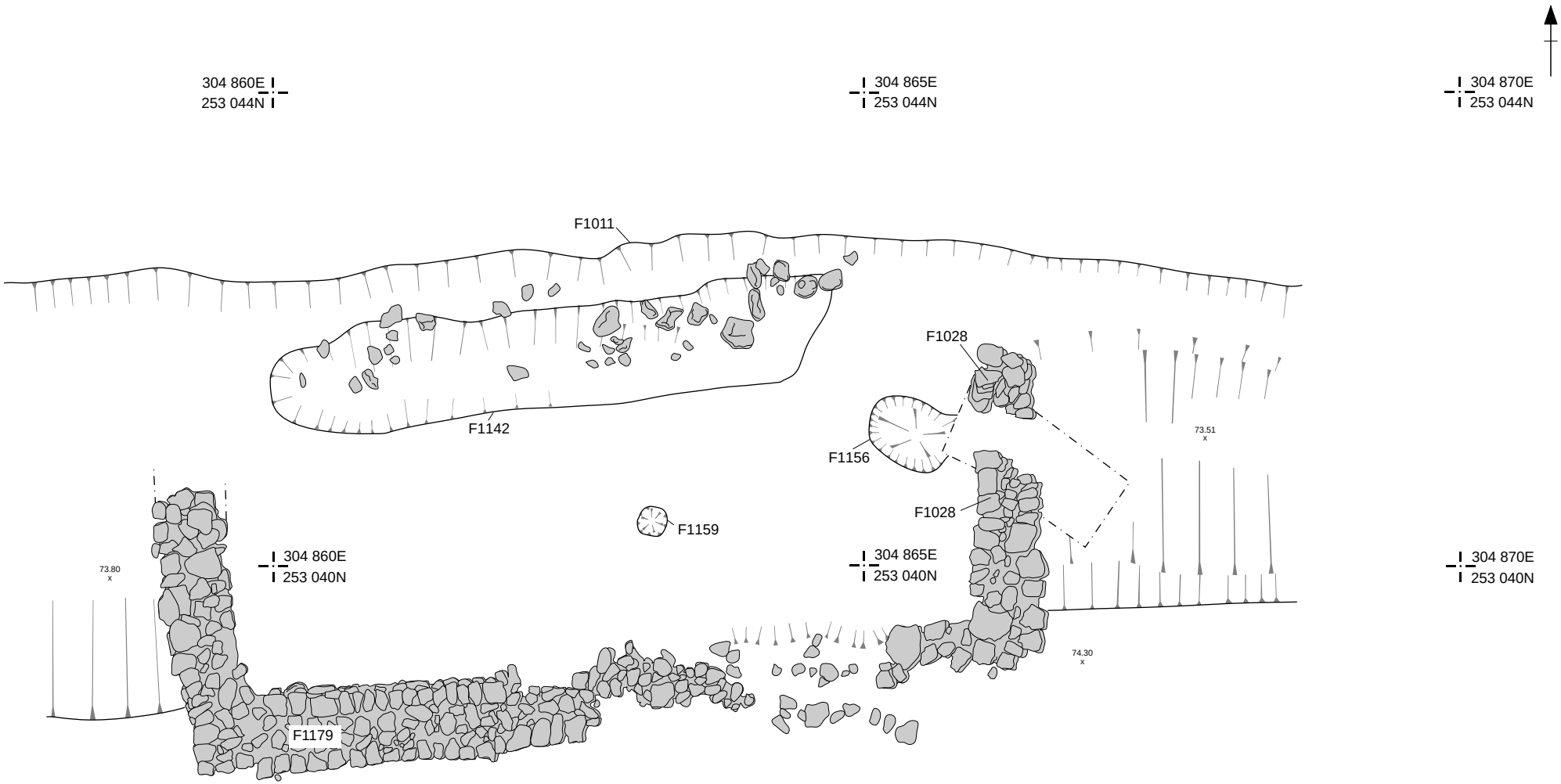


Figure 24 : General plan of the modern phases at Cookstown, Co. Meath



LEGEND

- Stone
- Limit of excavation
- Boundary of cut
- Context cut by other context

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0m 2m

Figure 25 : Plan of late 18th to 19th century cottiers cabin