

N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme:
Waterford to Sheepstown – Phase 2
Archaeological Resolution
Dunkitt to Knocktopher townlands, Co. Kilkenny

FINAL REPORT
Scheme Reference Number: A032/000
Excavation Registration Number: E3017
Site Name: AR048
Townland: Sheepstown and Ballygeardra

Senior Archaeologist:	Maeve Grant
Site Director:	John Channing
Contributor:	Gerry O' Neill
Job No:	1265-06-400
Client:	Kilkenny County Council
Date:	February 2008

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

SUMMARY

This report comprises the final results of the archaeological excavation of AR048 in the townlands of Sheepstown and Ballygeardra, Co. Kilkenny. This excavation was undertaken as part of the archaeological programme for the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Waterford to Knocktopher section. The excavation was conducted by John Channing under Ministerial Direction for Valerie J Keeley Ltd from 20 July to 10 August 2006.

Excavations at this site produced a deposit of heat-cracked stones, silt and charcoal.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Valerie J Keeley Ltd was appointed by Kilkenny County Council to excavate archaeological sites first identified during a programme of centreline testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006).

The scope of the archaeological measures was:

- To strip the topsoil from an area measuring approx 1600m² along the road corridor and locate the previously identified archaeological features and any other archaeological features that may be present in this area.
- Photograph and plan any archaeological features or potential archaeological features.
- Excavate all archaeological features identified, record their contexts and sections; retaining samples where necessary, in order to resolve them by means of preservation by record.
- Reinstatement of excavated areas where required.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The proposed excavation was carried out following the initial archaeological assessment by Valerie J Keeley Ltd (2005) and completion of the subsequent centreline testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006). The goal of this project was to preserve by record the archaeological site/s exposed within the take of the proposed route.

These works took place in accordance with the Directions issued by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Section 14A(2) of the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), in accordance with the terms of the Contract between Kilkenny County Council and Valerie J Keeley Ltd and according to the terms of the *Code of Practice* agreed between the National Roads Authority and the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The excavations also complied with the Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (Govt of Ireland 1999) and were overseen by the Project Archaeologist.

The proposed development will involve the construction of one section of a new N9/N10 road between Kilcullen and Waterford.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site (AR048, E3017) was located adjacent to, but separated by a stream from AR047. The ground consisted of boggy grassland currently under pasture, c1.7km northeast of Newmarket village and 1.7km southwest of Knocktopher in the townlands of Ballygeardra and Sheepstown, Co Kilkenny. The remains of a horizontal mill (SMR no KK031-020) were located nearby.

Townland	County	Barony	Civil Parish	PLU
Ballygeardra & Sheepstown	Kilkenny	Knocktopher	Knocktopher	Thomastown

4.0 METHOD

The topsoil at this site was removed from the site utilising a hydraulic excavator under the direction, supervision and monitoring of a qualified archaeologist. Once the topsoil had been removed, the entirety of the site area was cleaned back to reveal the features identified during the previous testing (see above) and to try to identify any new features which may have been exposed.

Upon location all archaeological materials were cleaned and excavated by hand using methods appropriate to their composition, nature and date. All archaeological contexts were photographed and planned (in relation to the site grid) prior to excavation. Sections were excavated through all features to obtain profiles and to expose the stratigraphic sequences and then fully excavated. Features that proved to be of modern origin tended not to be fully excavated.

The composition, stratigraphic position and interpretation of all contexts were recorded on a context sheet prior to excavation. Contexts have been sampled for palaeobotanical material, radiocarbon dating, petrology and wood identification, where appropriate. All sections and cut features were photographed and drawn. The position of all finds and samples were recorded in three-dimensions (where practicable) in relation to the site-grid.

5.0 RESULTS

Excavation revealed a deposit of black, friable, silt, charcoal and heat-cracked stones ([c7]=[c8]=[c15]), located beside a modern boundary ditch [c10]. The deposit was sealed by a layer of peat [c3] and cut by a test trench [c5]. The remaining deposits were non-archaeological and consisted of stony silty clay [c4], light-grey sand containing flecks of organic matter [c9], stones and charcoal [c12], dark brown peat with stones and charcoal [c13] and coarse sand with decayed burnt stone [14].

6.0 DISCUSSION

The archaeological assessment report (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006, p.19) identified the burnt deposit ([c7]=[c8]=[c15]) and a sub-round depression within the grey marl subsoil which, when excavated, appeared to be a natural feature. The remaining recorded features appeared to be of modern origin, probably up-cast from the ditch or deposits made during land improvement works.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The burnt spread did not extend to the boundary dividing AR047 and AR048. The full extent of this feature appeared to be cut by the boundary ditch, which possibly truncated any associated features. The spread could be the remains of a single episode of land clearance activity pre-dating the boundary in this area.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006, *Archaeological Assessment Report – N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme, Contract 1: Dunkitt to Knockmoylan Townlands, Co. Kilkenny*. Page 19.

Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 2003, *Discovery Series - Second Edition, Sheet 67*, 1:50,000.

Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1836, *6" County Kilkenny, Sheet 30*.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF CONTEXTS

C #	Type	Interpretation	Description	Dimensions
1	Natural	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt and clay	n/a
2	Natural	Subsoil	Light grey marl	n/a
3	Deposit	Natural	Brown peat	D=0.12m
4	Deposit	Re-deposited material associated with land clearance	Stony silty clay	D=0.20m
5	Cut	Machined test trench	Rectangular trench	L=13.50m+, W=7.50m
6	Fill	Fill of [c5]	Clay, peat, topsoil	L=13.50m+, W=7.50m
7	Deposit	Burnt mound material	Silt, charcoal and heat-cracked stones	L=2.90m, W=2.80m, D=0.30m
8	Deposit	Burnt mound material	Silt, charcoal and heat-cracked stones	L=2.75m, W=2.25m, D=0.30m
9	Deposit	Re-deposited natural	Light-grey sand, decayed organic material	L=2.20m, W=0.70m, D=0.05m
10	Cut	Field boundary	Linear ditch	W=2.85m, D= 0.90m
11	Fill	Fill of [c10]	Mixed clay, silt, sand and stones	W=1.00m, D=0.30m
12	Deposit	Redeposited material associated with land clearance	Sandy silt, un-burnt stones, charcoal	L=2.50m, W=2.48, D=0.25m
13	Deposit	Natural	Dark brown peat, stone, charcoal flecks	L=3.75m, W=2.25m, D=0.20m
14	Deposit	Natural	Coarse sand, decayed burnt stone	L=2.50m, W=1.15m, D=0.20m
15	Deposit	Burnt mound material	Silt, charcoal, heat-cracked stones	L=3.55m, W=2.25m, D=0.25m

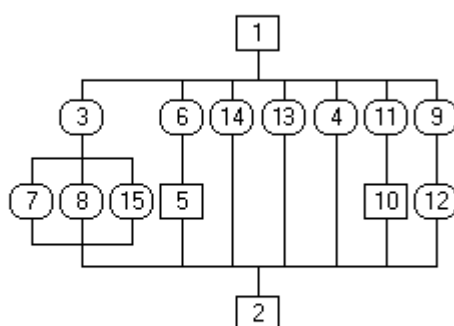
APPENDIX B: LIST OF SAMPLES

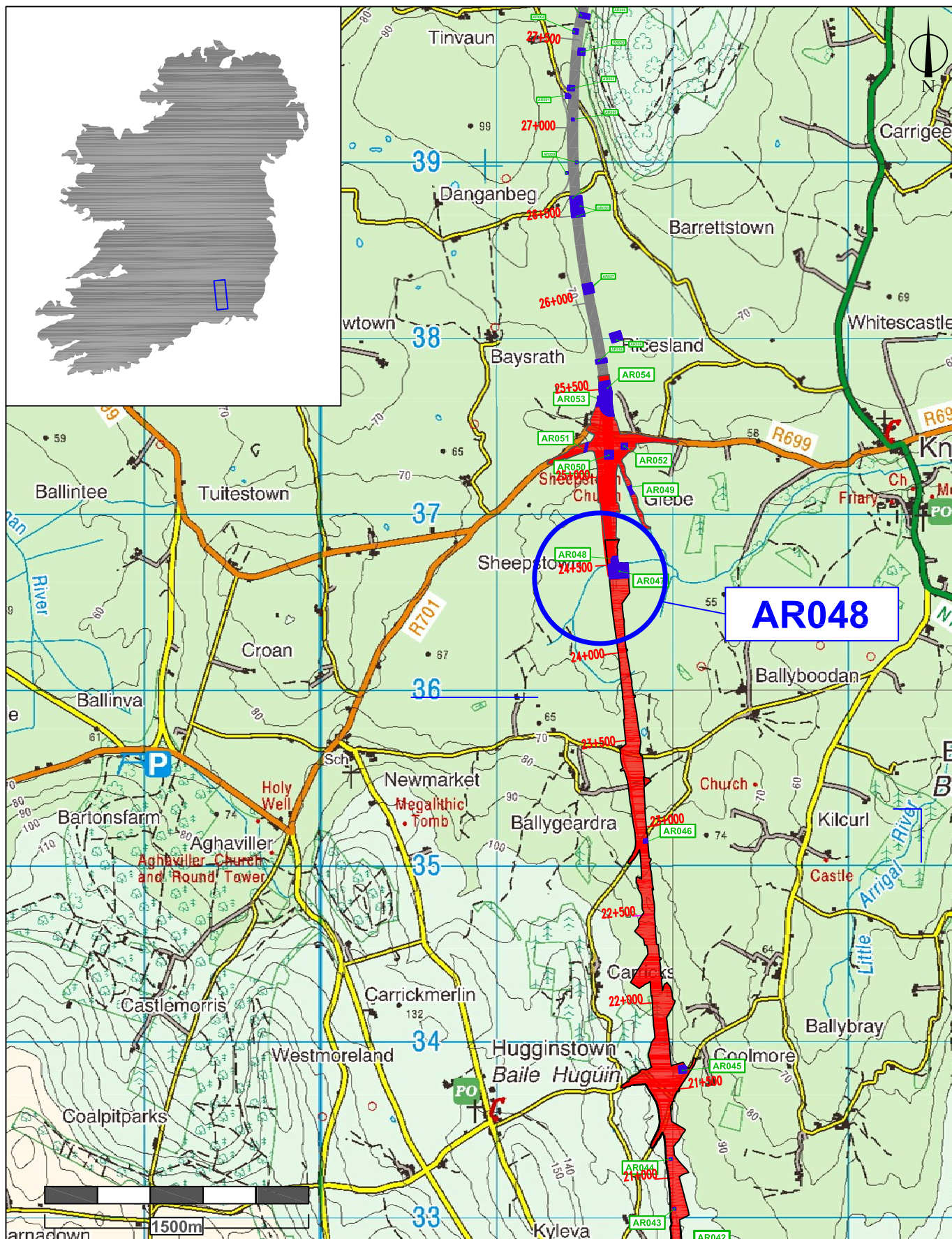
Sample	Context	Type/purpose	Specialist Analysis	No. of Bags	Feature Type	Cut
1	[c7]	Silt/charcoal	None		Burnt mound deposit	n/a
2	[c8]	Silt/charcoal	None		Burnt mound deposit	n/a
3	[c15]	Silt/charcoal	None		Burnt mound deposit	n/a

APPENDIX C: LIST OF QUANTITIES

Context Sheets	Drawings	Samples	Finds	Photos	Registers	Notebooks
8	5 (4 sheets)	3	0	24	3	0

APPENDIX D: STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX





Title
Fig.1 Location of AR048 on Discovery Series mapping.

Notes



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Works No.
A032/026
E3017

Drawn by
BOF

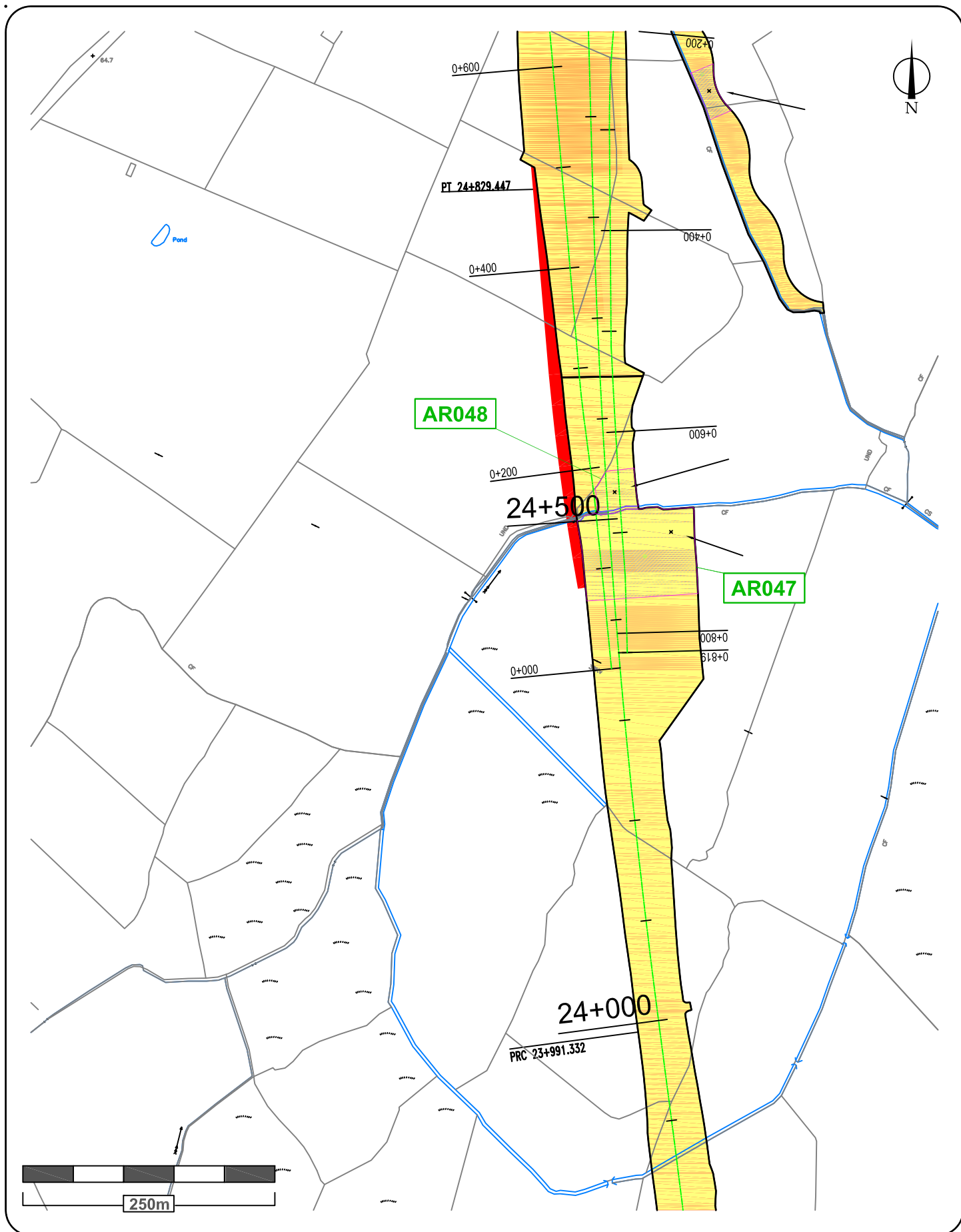
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Date
April 08

Scale
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Drawing No.
Fig.1

Project
N9 / N10 Dunkitt to Sheepstown Resolution Contract



Title
Fig. 2 Location of AR048 on OS mapping.

Notes
 Site Extents



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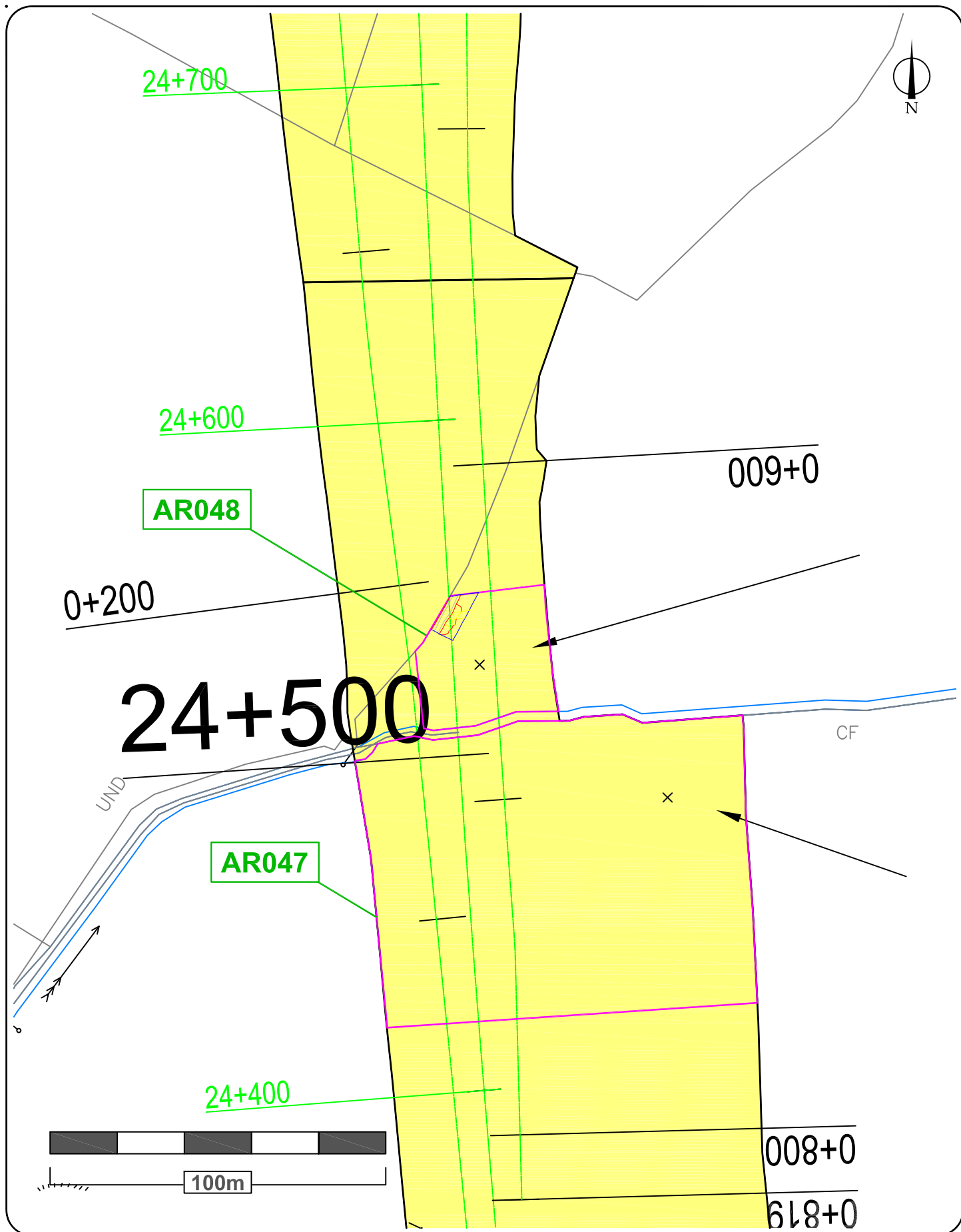
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Drawing No.
Fig. 2

Project
N9 / N10 Dunkitt to Sheepstown Resolution Contract



Title
Fig. 3 Location of AR048 on OS Mapping.

- Notes**
- Site Extents
 - Excavated Area



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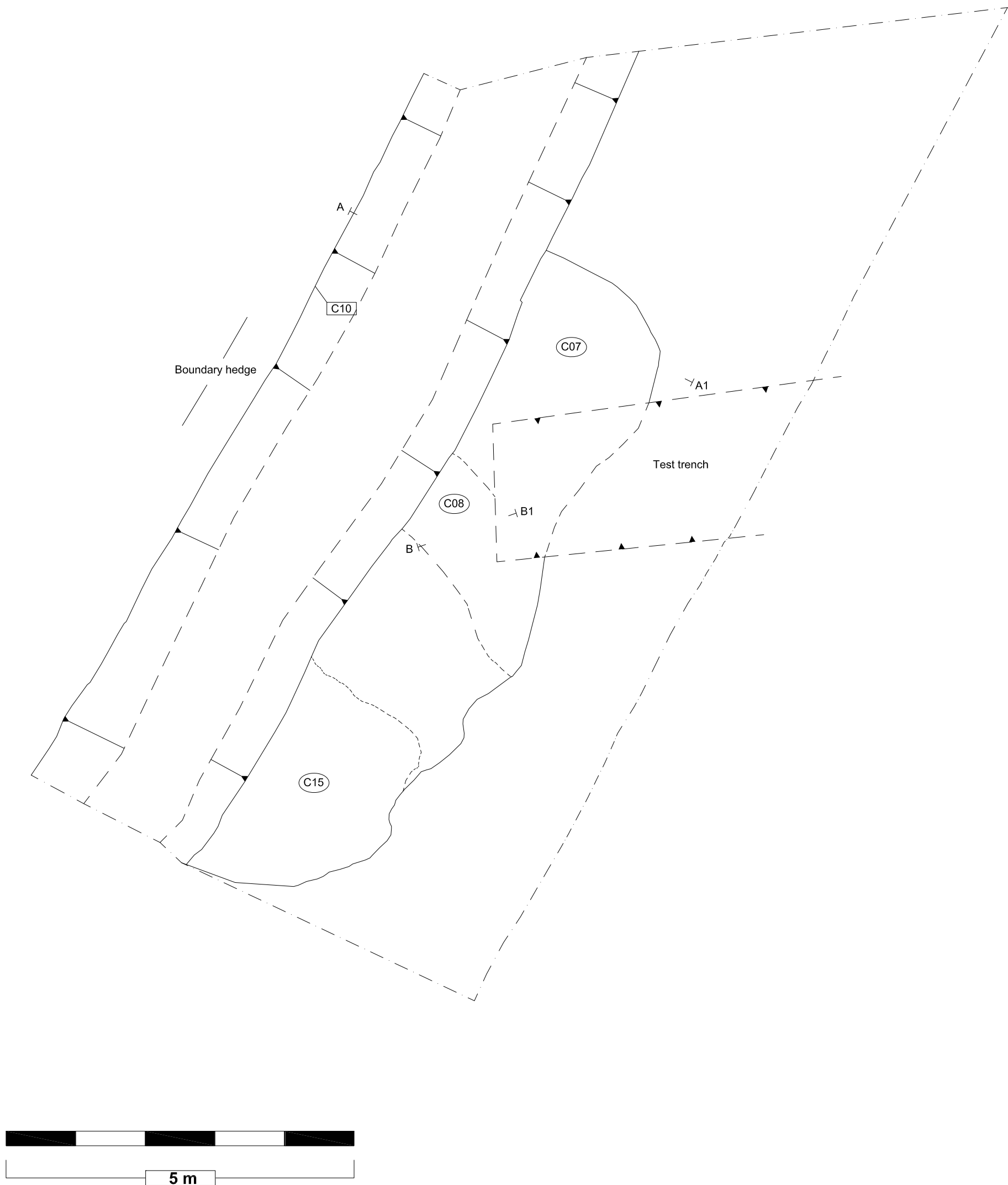
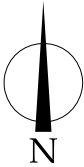
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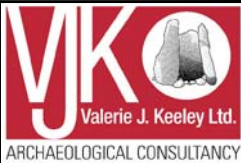
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Fig. 3

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Title
Fig. 4 Post-excavation plan of AR048.

Notes

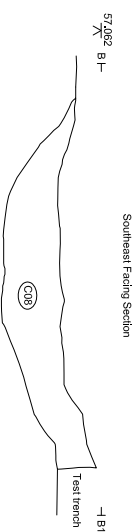
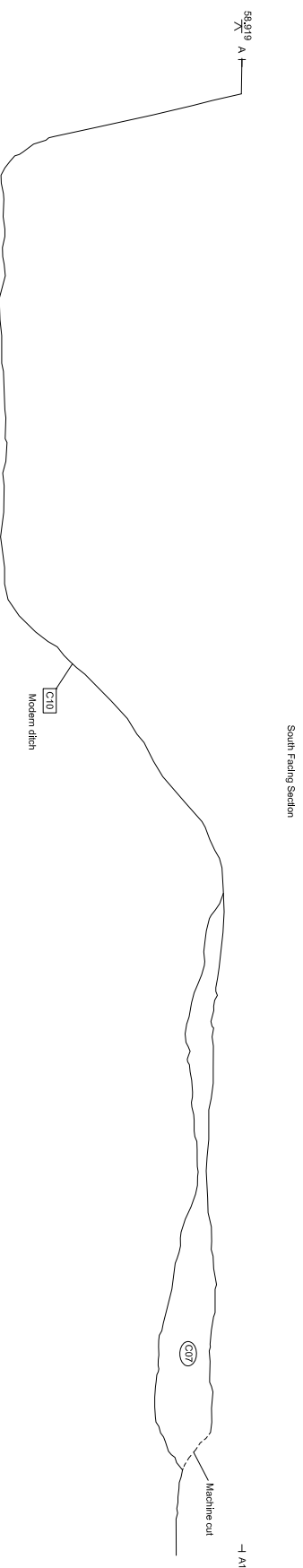


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Title	Notes	Works No.	Compiled by	CAD reference	Client	 Valerie J. Keelley Ltd. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY	Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecorner Co. Kilkenny.	Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
		1265-06-40/TERA3 E3017 April 08	BOF 1:25	1265-06-40/TERA3 Fig. 5	Kilkenny County Council N9 / N10 Dunkitt to Sheepstown Resolution Contract			

Fig. 5 Sections, AR048.



Plate 1: E3017_010. Pre-excavation view of Area 48 with topsoil removed.



Plate 2: E3017_014. Burnt mound material [c7]. Looking south, existing boundary to right of image



Plate 3: E3017_019. Section through deposit [c7]. Looking north



Plate 4: E3017_021. Sections through deposits [c7], [c8], [c15]. Looking south.