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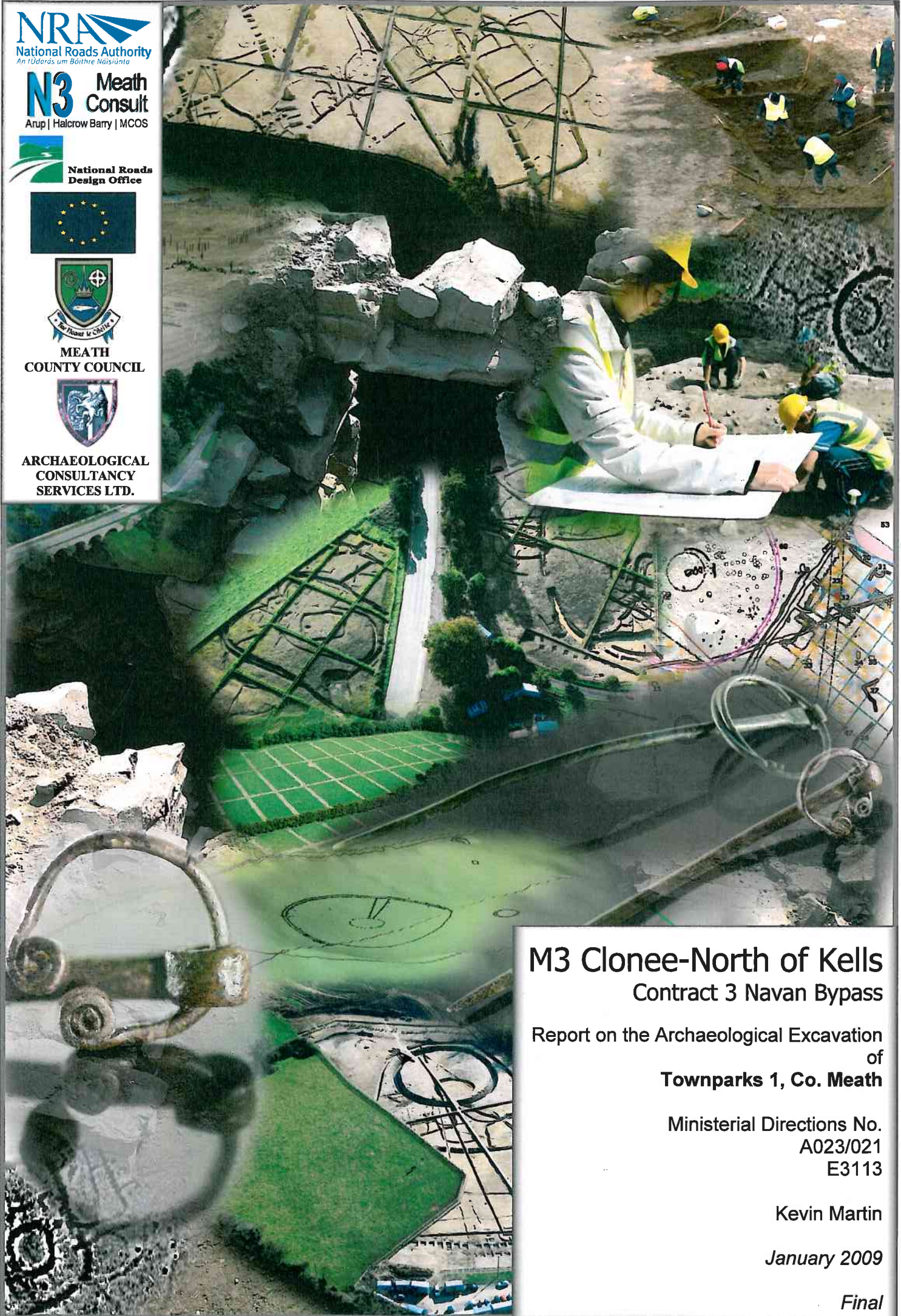
National Roads Design Office



MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES LTD.



M3 Clonee-North of Kells Contract 3 Navan Bypass

Report on the Archaeological Excavation
of
Townparks 1, Co. Meath

Ministerial Directions No.
A023/021
E3113

Kevin Martin

January 2009

Final

PROJECT DETAILS

Project	M3 Clonee–Kells Motorway
Site Name	Townparks 1
Ministerial Direction Number	A023/021
Registration Number	E3113
Senior Archaeological Consultant	Donald Murphy
Site director	Kevin Martin
Excavated	19 January – 01 February 2006
Client	Meath County Council, National Roads Design Office, Navan Enterprise Centre, Navan, County Meath
Townland	Townparks
Parish	Navan
County	Meath
National Grid Reference	285620 267482
Chainage	2600–2400
Height	52.61m OD
Report Type	Final
Report Status	Submitted
Date of Report	January 2009
Report by	Kevin Martin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been prepared by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd on behalf of Meath County Council National Roads Design Office (NRDO) and the National Roads Authority (NRA). The excavation was carried out under Ministerial Directions issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).

Consulting Engineers - N3 Meath Consult

Engineer – Peter Thorne and Thomas Meagher

Engineer's Representative – Mary O'Rourke

Meath County Council, National Roads Design Office

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National Monuments, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

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Irish Antiquities Division, National Museum of Ireland

Keeper – Nessa O'Connor

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The site at Townparks 1 was excavated by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACS) as part of the M3 Clonee–North of Kells Motorway Scheme on behalf of Meath County Council NRDO and the NRA. The excavation was carried out between 19 January and 01 February 2006 under Ministerial Direction Number A023/021 issued by DOEHLG in consultation with the NMI. The site was located within a large field and localised in two areas. The excavated features consisted of a series of shallow field boundary ditches, parallel post-medieval–modern agricultural furrows and a number of potentially archaeological pit-type features. An isolated pit excavated on the site contained charcoal flecks within its fill. The finds assemblage from the site consisted of post-medieval pottery, clay pipe fragments, a Victorian coin, an iron nail, and a fragment of an iron blade. The majority of these were found in the topsoil.

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PLATE LIST

Plate 1: Pre-excavation of pit F24, from the south

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Plate 4: Elevated view of Area 1, from the southeast

Plate 5: South-facing section of ditch F27 in Area 2

Plate 6: South-facing section of linear feature F36 in Area 1

Plate 7: 1897 Victorian half-penny (A023/021:7:1)

1 INTRODUCTION

The site at Townparks 1 (Figures 1–6) was identified during advance testing carried out by Aidan O’Connell during May 2004 under licence number 04E0583. Testing revealed six linear features, some of which represent field boundaries and furrows, as well as five pits, including a charcoal-filled pit (0.70m x 0.50m x 0.07m) and a pit (1.80m x 1.25m x 0.20m) containing burnt bone in its primary fill of soft, charcoal-rich, silty sand (O’Connell 2004). The majority of these features were re-located during full resolution of the site in 2006.

1.1 Development

Meath County Council is constructing 49km of two-lane, dual-carriageway motorway between Clonee and Kells and 10km of single carriageway from Kells to just north of Kells alongside additional road upgrades, realignments and associated ancillary works. The scheme has been subdivided into five separate sections as follows: Clonee to Dunshaughlin (Contract 1), Dunshaughlin to Navan (Contract 2), the Navan Bypass (Contract 3), Navan to Kells and the N52 Kells Bypass (Contract 4), and Kells to North of Kells (Contract 5). This section of the scheme (Contract 3) represents the Navan By-pass.

The desk-based study and the field survey for the whole scheme, carried out in 2000–2001, were divided into sections which were investigated by Valerie J Keeley Ltd and Margaret Gowan and Company Ltd. The Record of Monuments and Places, the Sites and Monuments Record, Topographical files, and literary sources were all consulted. This information was augmented by geophysical testing conducted by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy who undertook a magnetometer survey across sample transects which was then supplemented by magnetic susceptibility, and also by GSB Prospection who undertook gradiometer scanning and a detailed gradiometer survey. The Environmental Impact Survey (EIS) compiled this data set to identify approximately 100 sites of interest either along the route or in its proximity (500m of the landtake). Advance archaeological testing was completed in 2004 by ACS and Irish Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (IAC). Excavation of the sites identified during testing was conducted by ACS and IAC on behalf of Meath County Council, and the NRA under directions issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government following consultation with the Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

2 EXCAVATION

Excavation occurred between 19 January and 01 February 2006 under Ministerial Direction Number A023/021 issued to Kevin Martin on behalf of ACS, Meath County Council, National Roads Design Office, and the National Roads Authority by the Department of the

Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI). The topsoil (F4: 0.45m depth) consisted of a moderate, mid-brown, silty clay with occasional stones and was removed by a machine equipped with a grading bucket under strict archaeological supervision. There were two variations of the subsoil: F5 was a compact, orangey-brown, clayey silt with occasional small stones and F6 represented a compact, brownish-yellow, clayey, silty sand with orange mottling.

All archaeological features exposed were recorded and excavated by hand using the single context method. Each feature was assigned a context number. Where appropriate, samples were retrieved in an attempt to obtain evidence for the date and function of these features (Appendix 3). Unless otherwise stated, the features have been measured length-width-depth. All measurements are in metres. All finds were numbered according to the requirements of the National Museum of Ireland from 1 onwards consistent with licence and feature number. The artefacts recovered from the site underwent an initial archaeological assessment and where deemed appropriate further specialist analysis was carried out on each artefact type.

2.1 Results

Thirty five contexts of archaeological interest were identified within the excavation area. Only the principal archaeological features of Townparks 1 will be discussed within this report; full details of all these, and further, contexts are located in Appendix 1. The site was divided into three areas during the excavation (Areas 1–3 (Figs 7, 8 and Plate 4)), one of which, Area 3 produced no evidence of archaeological activity during excavation so will not be discussed.

Pits (Figures 7–12; Plates 1–3)

Four isolated pits were revealed during the excavation. Sub-circular F24 (0.63–0.65m diameter x 0.22m depth) contained two fills, the primary of which (F21) consisted of a moderately compact, dark-grey-black, silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional stones. The secondary fill (F15) was also moderately compact and comprised a grey-brown, silty clay with occasional stones and charcoal flecks. F39 was a shallow pit with a northeast–southwest cut (0.18m width x 0.06m depth) with a loose, dark-brown, silty clay fill (F13).

The remaining two pits were potentially non-archaeological. F30 (1.18m length x 0.68m width x 0.12m depth) contained a stony fill (F16) as did irregular-shaped F31 (1.48m length x 1.30m width x 0.20–0.22m depth) which contained F22. Both fills contained a noticeable amount of decomposed stone.

Linear features (Figures 7 & 8, 10–12; Plates 5 & 6)

Excavation of the site revealed approximately nine linear features. Linear, northwest–southeast cut F36 (1.47m length x 0.49m width) was originally found during testing and contained animal bone within its only fill, F10. One L-shaped ditch, or two perpendicular ditches were formed by east–west F9 (22.50m length x 2.74m width x 0.76m depth) and northwest–southeast F27 (60m at least in length x 2.80m width x 0.70m depth). F9 contained two stony fills, F7 and F8. Both fills contained animal bone and the excavation of F7 also revealed an 1897 coin (Plate 7), a metal button and a brownware pottery sherd (A023/021:7:1–3). Four clay pipe fragments (A023/021:26:1–4) were discovered during the excavation of F26, the primary fill of F27. Blackware base pottery sherds were recovered from F14 (A023/021:14:1–2), the upper fill of ditch F27, which also contained animal bone. F9 and F27 likely represent a modern, L-shaped field boundary.

F11, F18, F19, and F23 represent parallel furrows uncovered (in Area 1). They measured approximately 4–10m long, 0.60–1.50m wide and up to 0.10m in depth. They ran parallel to ditch F36 in a northwest to southeast direction. Within Area 2 a number of other parallel furrows were uncovered including F12, F34, F35, F37 and F38. All furrows uncovered on the site appeared post-medieval–modern in date. The furrow fills were sterile and no finds were recovered from them.

2.2 Finds

With the exception of the abovementioned finds, the remaining artefacts from Townparks 1 were all recovered from topsoil and consisted of post medieval Blackware pottery sherds (A023/021:4:1–2, A023/021:4:4–16 and A023/021:4:59), clay pipe fragments (A023/021:4:3, A023/021:4:17–55 and A023/021:4:61–63), possible post-medieval iron nail fragments (A023/021:4:56–57 and A023/021:4:64), and a fragment of a post-medieval iron knife blade (A023/021:4:58).

The Victorian coin (A023/021:7:1; Plate 7) recovered from fill F7 the upper fill of ditch F9 has been identified as an English Bronze Halfpenny of Queen Victoria issued in 1897 as its stamped date originally suggested (Appendix 4). It is evident that coins of this type circulated in Ireland from their original issue until 1969 when the halfpenny was demonetised before decimalisation. Based on the considerable wear on the coin surface its likely date of deposition has been interpreted as 1940–1960 (Appendix 4). This indicates that the ditch F9 was still partially open and infilling as late as the middle of the 20th century.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Form and function

The features uncovered in Areas 1 & 2 generally represented post-medieval–modern agricultural activity in the form of furrows and field boundary / field drainage ditches. They were generally of a linear, parallel nature and seemed contemporaneous in date. The potential archaeological features excavated took the form of isolated irregularly cut shallow pits with noticeably sterile fills. The exception to this was pit F24, which contained fills with moderate charcoal inclusions and occasional small heat affected pebbles. The function of pit F24 however remains unknown. It may be the result of the dumping of waste material associated with burnt mound type activity. The charcoal identified from the lower fill F21 of pit F24 included species of Maloideae (hawthorn, whitebeans, apple/pear), blackthorn and cherries. This indicates that scrub woodland with these species may have grown near the site during prehistory and was being used for burning (Appendix 5). A number of heat reddened stones were noted in the inclusions from the fill of pit F24 which may indicate that the charcoal was being used as a fuel in a fire to heat the stones for cooking or activities associated with hot stone technology such as brewing, cloth dyeing and bathing (Buckley 1990), (Quinn & Moore 2007). It was noted though that the charcoal species most commonly associated with this type of prehistoric activity which includes alder, hazel, oak and ash, were not identified in the charcoal from pit F24 (Appendix 5).

Due to the fact that there was no stratigraphical link or additional dateable evidence was obtained from the other pits on site it is difficult to interpret or establish their association if any with pit F24.

A large area was extended and cleaned back around pit F24 and the other pit features on the site and it was evident that no associated archaeological features existed in the vicinity of these features. The closest prehistoric site excavated to Townparks 1 was located approximately 500m west along the C.P.O line at Townparks 2 A023/022. The site comprised an Early Bronze Age burnt mound site. The earliest radiocarbon date produced from Townparks 2 was from the fill of a trough and produced a date of 3620±40BP (Martin 2008). Both sites are unlikely to be related given the 880 year difference in their radiocarbon dated deposits but they indicate that activity was taking place in this region during the earlier and later periods of the Bronze Age period.

The isolated pit features excavated at Townparks 1 likely represent activity associated with a temporary camp or occupation during the later Bronze Age on or within the vicinity of Townparks 1 site.

3.2 Date and sequence

The archaeological activity on the site was represented by a series of isolated, single-filled pits. The similar cut profiles and size of the pits suggests a roughly contemporaneous date for their creation. A charcoal sample from fill F21 the lower fill of F24 was radiocarbon dated to 2740±40BP (Appendix 6). This establishes a Late Bronze Age date for activity associated with pit F24. Definitive interpretations of dates for the other pits based on dated material from F24 would be inaccurate. F24 was located approximately 60m southwest of F31 and F30. F31 and F30 were spaced 3.00m apart and are likely to be contemporary.

The majority of the features recorded on the site were interpreted as being post-medieval-modern in date, based on the excavated evidence and the finding of modern materials such as glass, post-medieval pottery and on occasion plastics in their upper fills, i.e. F14 and F25 of ditch 27. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1836 shows the field Townparks 1 is situated in as a single land unit with no evidence of internal divisions or field ditches (Figure 3). Notably the second and third edition Ordnance Survey maps (1882, 1955) show a linear field boundary precisely in line with ditch F27 running in a northwest-southeast direction (Figures 4&5). The current edition of the Ordnance survey map (2004) shows the field as a single land unit with no internal division (the same as the first edition OS from 1836) - Figure 2. It can therefore be interpreted from this cartographic evidence that ditch F27 was cut as a field boundary sometime between 1836 and 1955. It was likely backfilled and any banks or hedgerows removed and levelled before the most recent Ordnance survey recording in 2004.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Townparks 1 (A023/021) excavated in January 2006 by Kevin Martin (ACS) as part of the M3 Clonee–Kells Motorway Scheme on behalf of Meath County Council NRDO and the NRA represented the remains of generally post medieval agricultural furrows and field boundary ditches. The site of Townparks 1 produced very insubstantial evidence for archaeological activity apart from a number of small shallow pits, of which one pit F24 contained charcoal inclusions which were dated to the Late Bronze Age. This pit may represent activity associated with a temporary encampment on the site of Townparks 1 during

the later Bronze Age period. No evidence for any associated structures was uncovered. It should be further noted that the post-medieval–modern features identified on the site are not visible on any of the three editions (1836, 1882 & 1911) of the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps for the area. On all three maps the field the site was located in is represented as a single land unit with no evidence of internal divisions or field ditches (Figures 3–5). This suggests that the ditch activity recorded on the site post-dates the latter of the OS editions which dates to 1911. The finding of a Victorian coin in the upper fill of one of the linear ditches which was likely deposited during the mid 20th century would support this conclusion.

5 REFERENCES

Buckley, V 1990 *Burnt Offerings: International Contributions to Burnt Mound Archaeology*, 9. Dublin, Wordwell.

Martin, K 2008 *Interim Report on the Archaeological Excavations of Townparks 2, Co. Meath (A023/022) E3114*. Unpublished report prepared for Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.

O’Connell, A 2004 *Report on Archaeological Assessment at Testing Area 10, Townparks, Robinrath, Knockumber, Co. Meath, Licence Number: 04E0583*. Unpublished report prepared for Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.

Quinn, B & Moore, D 2007 ‘Ale, brewing and fulachta fiadh’. *Archaeology Ireland*, Volume 21, No. 3, Issue No. 81

Signed:



Kevin Martin

January 2009

APPENDIX 1 Context Details

Townparks 1: A023/021											
No	Type	Fill of/ Filled with	Strat above	Strat below	Description	Interpretation	Group	Artefacts	Animal bone	Cremated bone	Samples
1-3					used previously during Topsoil Assessment						
4	topsoil	N/A	5	N/A	moderate, mid-brown, silty clay with occasional angular stones. 0.45m depth	topsoil		pottery, clay pipe			
5	subsoil	N/A	6	4	compact, orangey-brown, clayey silt with occasional small stones. 0.15m depth	subsoil					
6	natural	N/A	N/A	5	compact, brownish-yellow with orange mottled clayey silty sand	natural					
7	fill	9	8	4	loose-compact, dark-greyish-black, sandy silt with stones. 22.50m x 1.57m x 0.50m. Similar to 14	upper fill of ditch 09		coin, pottery, button	yes		
8	fill	9	9	7	moderately compact, mid-yellowish-brown, silty clay with occasional rounded, small to large sized stones. 22.50m x 2.74m x 0.47m	primary fill of ditch 09			yes		
9	cut	7, 8	6	8	linear, east-west cut (22.50m x 2.74m x 0.76m) with an imperceptible break of slope at the top, convex sides and a sharp break of slope leading to a flat base	post-medieval ditch, possible field boundary					
10	fill	36	36	10	loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded stones. 1.42m width x 0.53m depth	upper fill of post medieval ditch 36			yes		
11	deposit	N/A	6	4	loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded stones. 10m x 0.60m x 0.10m. Truncated by 28. Associated with 18, 19, 23	furrow					
12	deposit	N/A	6	5	loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with moderate sub-angular stones. 0.49m width x 0.05m depth	furrow					
13	fill	39	39	5	loose, dark-brown, sandy clay. 0.18m width x 0.06m depth	fill of pit 39					

14	fill	27	25	5	loose, dark-greyish-black, clayey silt with moderate sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. 62m x 0.80m x 0.10m. Similar to 07	upper fill of modern ditch 27		pottery	yes		
15	fill	24	21	5	moderately compact, greyish-brown, silty clay with occasional sub-angular and sub-rounded stones and charcoal flecks. 0.63-0.65m diameter x 0.12m depth	fill of pit 24					
16	fill	30	30	5	moderately compact, mid-light-brownish-grey, silty clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stones. 1.18m x 0.68m x 0.12m	fill of pit 30					
17	NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL				loose, grey-black, silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks						
18	deposit	N/A	6	5	loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded stones. 0.70m width x 0.10m depth. Associated with 11, 19, 23. Overlain by 20, 28	furrow					
19	deposit	N/A	6	5	loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded stones. 4.50m x 0.75m x 0.10m. Associated with 11, 18. Same as 23	furrow					
20	deposit	NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL			loose, mid-brown, sandy clay with sub-rounded stones. 0.97m width x 0.11m depth						
21	fill	24	24	15	moderately compact, dark-grey-black, silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional heat affected sub-rounded and sub-angular stones. 0.63m diameter x 0.10m depth	primary fill of pit 24					#1 soil, charcoal
22	fill	31	31	5	moderately compact, mid-greyish-brown, clayey silt with frequent angular and sub-angular stones. 1.48m x 1.30m x 0.20m	fill of pit 31					
23	cut and fill	N/A	6	5	linear cut with loose, mid-brown, sandy clay and moderate sub-rounded stones. 8.50m x 1.50m x 0.10m. Associated with 11, 18. Same as 19	furrow					
24	cut	15, 21	6	21	sub-circular cut (0.63-0.65m diameter x 0.22m depth) with a sharp break of slope at the top, concave sides and a gradual break of slope leading to a concave base	prehistoric pit					

25	fill	27	26	14	moderately compact, mid-brownish-grey, silty clay with moderate sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. 1.19m width	middle fill of ditch 27						
26	fill	27	27	25	loose, mid-greyish-brown, clayey silt with moderate sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. 1.85m width x 0.40m depth	primary fill of ditch 27						
27	cut	14, 25, 26	6	26	linear, north-south cut (60m at least x 2.80m x 0.70m) with a gradual break of slope at the top, concave sides and a gradual break of slope leading to a concave base. Associated with 09	post-medieval ditch						
28	deposit	NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL			same as 20	removed during cleaning						
29	NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL				loose, mid-brown, silty clay with occasional small stones. 0.46m width x 0.15m depth							
30	cut	16	6	16	sub-oval, northeast-southwest cut (1.18m x 0.68m x 0.12m) with a gradual break of slope (sharp in south), steep, concave sides and a gradual break of slope leading to an irregular base	pit, possibly non-archaeological						
31	cut	22	6	22	irregular cut (1.48m x 1.30m x 0.20m) with a sharp break of slope, concave sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a flat base	pit, possibly non-archaeological						
32	fill	37	37	5	moderately compact, light-brown, sandy clay. 0.87m width x 0.11m depth	fill of furrow 37						
33	fill	38	38	5	moderately compact, light-brown, sandy clay. 0.64m width x 0.08m depth	fill of furrow 38						
34	cut	N/A	6	5	moderately compact, light-brown, sandy clay. 0.50m width x 0.04m depth	furrow						
35	cut	N/A	6	5	moderately compact, light-brown, sandy clay. 0.43m width x 0.04m depth	furrow						
36	cut	10	6	10	linear, north-south cut (1.47m width x 0.49m depth) with a sharp break of slope, concave sides and a gradual break of slope leading to a flat base	post-medieval ditch, found during testing						

37	cut	32	6	32	linear, north-south cut (1.60m x 0.60m x 0.11m) with an imperceptible break of slope, convex sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a flat base	furrow					
38	cut	33	6	33	linear, north-south cut (1.60m x 0.64m x 0.08m) with an imperceptible break of slope, convex sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a flat base	furrow					
39	cut	13	6	13	linear, northeast-southwest cut (0.18m width x 0.06m depth) with a gradual break of slope, concave sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a rounded base	pit, found during testing					

APPENDIX 2 Finds List

Find Number	Description
A023/021:4:1-2	Black glazed earthenware body sherd
A023/021:4:3	Clay pipe stem
A023/021:4:4	Black glazed earthenware base sherd
A023/021:4:5	Black glazed earthenware body sherd
A023/021:4:6	Unglazed pottery body sherd
A023/021:4:7-13	7 Black glazed earthenware body sherds
A023/021:4:14-15	Brown glazed earthenware body sherd
A023/021:4:16	Black glazed earthenware body sherd
A023/021:4:17-21	5 Clay pipe stems
A023/021:4:22	Clay pipe bowl with decoration/stamp
A023/021:4:23-26	4 Clay pipe stems
A023/021:4:27	Clay pipe bowl
A023/021:4:28-55	28 Clay pipe stems
A023/021:4:56	Post-medieval Iron Nail fragment
A023/021:4:57	Post-medieval Iron Nail fragment
A023/021:4:58	Possible Post-Medieval Iron knife blade
A023/021:4:59	Brown glazed pottery sherd
A023/021:4:60	Glazed modern pottery body sherd
A023/021:4:61-63	3 Clay pipe stems
A023/021:4:64	Post-medieval Iron Nail fragment
A023/021:7:1	English bronze halfpenny, Victorian c.1897 (Plate 7)
A023/021:7:2	Button
A023/021:7:3	Brown glazed earthenware body sherd
A023/021:14:1	Black glazed earthenware sherd
A023/021:14:2	Cream glazed stoneware base sherd
A023/021:26:1-4	4 Clay pipe stems

APPENDIX 3 *Sample List*

Sample No	Context No	Description	Results
1	21	soil	2g of charcoal flecks

APPENDIX 4 *Coin Report*

Report on Coin (A023/021:7:1) from Townparks 1 (A023/021) by John Stafford-Langan

Job no.: 04-01
Site Name: Townparks 1
License no.: A023/021
Excavation Number: E3113
Feature no.: 7
Find no.: A023/021:7:1
Description: Coin (1897)
Cons # : -

Plate 7

Analysis:

This find is an English bronze halfpenny of Victoria issued in 1897.

Coins of this type circulated normally in Ireland from their issue until 1969 when the halfpenny was demonetised before decimalisation.

This coin has seen considerable circulation, its date of deposition is 1940-1960, or slightly later.

APPENDIX 5 *Environmental Analysis*



**Townparks 1, M3 Motorway Project, Co
Meath, Ireland**

plant macrofossil and charcoal analysis

on behalf of

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

Report 1943

August 2008

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Townparks 1, M3 Motorway Project, Co Meath, Ireland

plant macrofossil and charcoal analysis

Report 1943

August 2008

Archaeological Services Durham University

on behalf of

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

Unit 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland

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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 An excavation of a burnt mound was undertaken by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd at Townparks 1, Co Meath, Ireland. This report presents the results of environmental analysis of pit fill context (21).

Results

- 1.2 The plant macrofossil analysis provides no information about the palaeoenvironment of the site or the use of the pit, due to the low number of remains recorded. Identifiable charcoal included Maloideae (hawthorn, whitebeams, apple and pear), blackthorn, willow/poplar and cherries (which may include bird cherry, wild cherry and blackthorn).

2. Project background

Location and background

- 2.1 An excavation of a burnt mound was undertaken by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd at Townparks 1, Co Meath, Ireland. The excavation revealed a number of linear features including furrows and modern ditches. Modern glass, barbed wire and a Victorian coin were recovered from these. Five isolated pits (up to 1m in diameter) were identified, some of which contained charcoal and burnt stone. This report presents the results of environmental analysis of pit fill context (21).

Objective

- 2.2 The objective was to analyse the plant macrofossils and charcoal from a pit fill, and identify material suitable for radiocarbon dating.

Dates

- 2.3 Samples were received by Archaeological Services Durham University in November 2007. Analysis and report preparation was conducted between November 2007 - August 2008.

Personnel

- 2.4 Sample processing was undertaken by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. The environmental analysis and report preparation was carried out by Dr Charlotte O'Brien and Mr Lorne Elliott.

Archive

- 2.5 The licence number is A023/021 (E0583). The charred seeds, flint and charcoal are currently at the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University awaiting collection or return.

3. Methods

- 3.1 The residue was examined for plant remains, shells, bones, pottery sherds and metalworking debris. The charred remains were scanned at up to x60 magnification using a Leica MZ6 stereomicroscope and charred seeds were identified by comparison with modern reference material held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Plant taxonomic nomenclature follows Stace (1997).
- 3.2 Charcoal was collected from the residue and added to pre-sorted material. Following Boardman (1995), identifications were made on all fragments >4mm. The transverse, radial and tangential sections were examined at up to x600 magnification using a Leica DMLM microscope. Identifications were assisted by the descriptions of Hather (2000), and modern reference material held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. A single entity of *Prunus* sp charcoal, weighing 55 mg, was selected for radiocarbon dating.

4. Results

- 4.1 Charcoal was present in the flot and residue, and the residue also contained a few possible fire-cracked stones. Roots and uncharred sedge nutlets were recorded in the flot, but the non-waterlogged nature of the site suggests that these are later intrusive material. The only charred plant macrofossil was a grass seed.
- 4.2 Identifiable charcoal included Maloideae (hawthorn, whitebeams, apple and pear), blackthorn, cherries (which may include bird cherry, wild cherry and blackthorn) and willow/poplar. The results of the environmental analysis are listed in Table 4.1. The proportions of identified charcoal species are presented in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1: Plant macrofossils and charcoal from Townparks 1

Context	21
Sample	1
Feature	Pit
<i>Material available for radiocarbon dating</i>	✓
<i>Volume of flot (ml)</i>	4
<i>Residue matrix (relative abundance)</i>	
Charcoal	1
Cracked/angular stones	1
<i>Flot matrix (relative abundance)</i>	
Charcoal	2
Roots (modern)	1
<i>Charcoal (mg/number of fragments)</i>	
Total charcoal analysed (mg)	264
Number of identifiable fragments >4mm	13
Maloideae	40 (2F)
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> (Blackthorn)	17 (1F)
<i>Prunus</i> spp (Cherries)	143 (6F)
Salicaceae (Willow or poplar)	37 (3F)
Diffuse porous	27 (1F)
Unidentified <4mm fraction	700
<i>Charred remains (total counts)</i>	
(x) Poaceae undifferentiated >2mm (Grass family) caryopsis	1
<i>Uncharred remains (relative abundance)</i>	
(w) <i>Carex</i> spp (Sedges) trigonous nutlet	1

[w-wetland; x-wide niche]. Relative abundance is based on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). F = number of charcoal fragments.

5. Discussion

- 5.1 The plant macrofossil analysis provides no information about the palaeoenvironment of the site or the use of the pit, due to the low number of remains recorded.
- 5.2 The identified charcoal suggests that scrub woodland may have grown near the site, which was dominated by Maloideae, blackthorn, and possibly other species of cherry. This would have provided a source of fuel, building materials and wild foods to the inhabitants. Willow and poplar charcoal cannot be differentiated with

certainty, and therefore the three fragments of Salicaceae charcoal may derive from willows growing in wetland areas near the site, or poplar trees which would have thrived on rich, alluvial soils.

Context 21 (Total charcoal 1g)

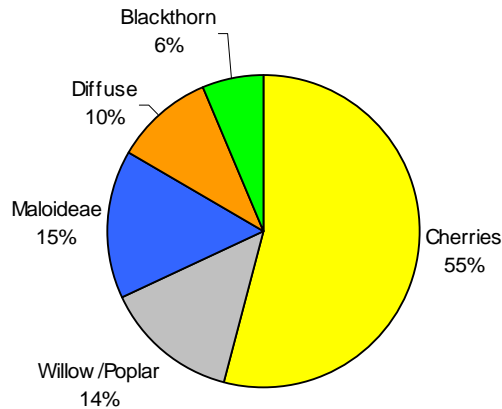


Figure 4.1: Proportions of identified charcoal from Townparks 1

- 5.3 Burnt stones were recorded during the excavation, and the charcoal may represent fuel used to heat stones for cooking or other activities. However, the small charcoal assemblage from Townparks 1 did not include any of species most often associated with prehistoric burnt mound activity, which include alder, hazel, oak and ash (Grogan *et al* 2007).

6. Sources

Boardman, S J, 1995 Charcoal and charred macrofossils, in K, Branigan & P, Foster (eds) *Barra: archaeological research on Ben Tangaval, Sheffield: SEARCH Volume 1*, 149-157

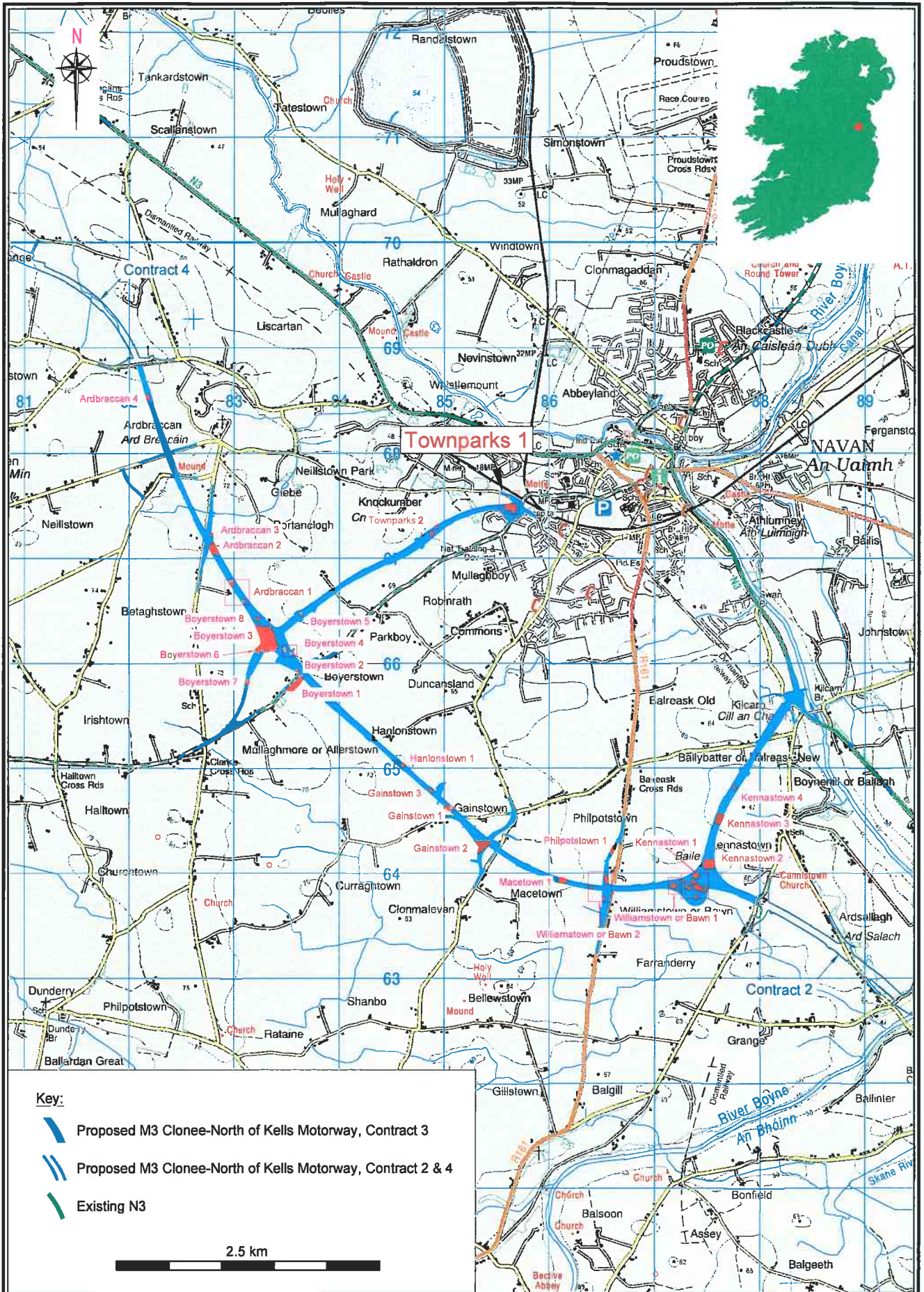
Grogan, E, O'Donnell, L, & Johnston, P, 2007 *The Bronze Age landscapes of the Pipeline to the West, an integrated archaeological and environmental assessment*, Wicklow

Hather, J G, 2000 *The identification of the Northern European Woods: a guide for archaeologists and conservators*, London

Stace, C, 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge

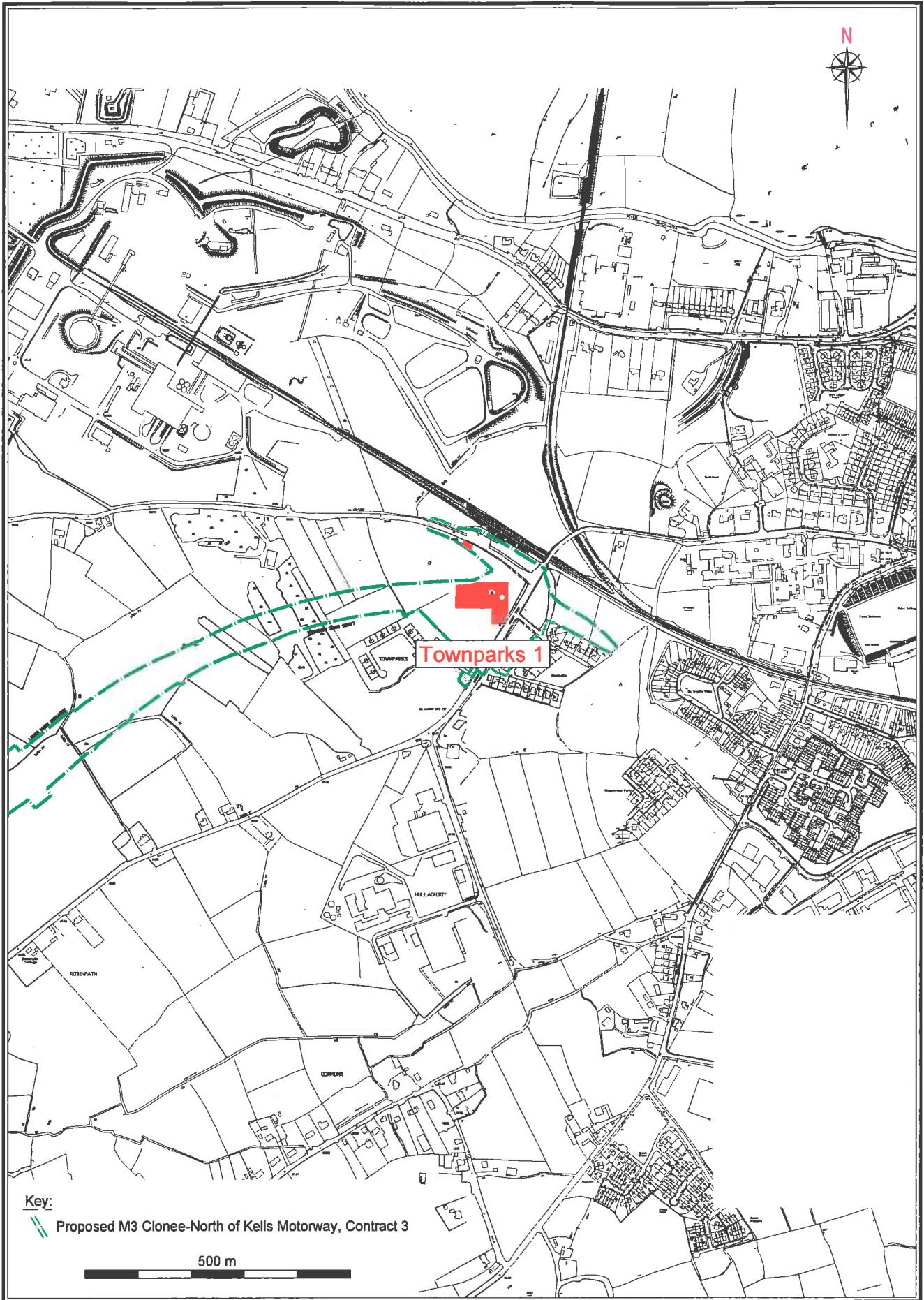
APPENDIX 6: Radiocarbon Dating


Context	Sample #	Material	Species Id/ Weight	Lab	Lab Code	Date Type	Date	BP Date	13C/12C Ratio %
21	1	Charcoal	Cherry	Beta	241325	AMS (Std)	980-810 BC	2740±40	-23.5



Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Site: M3 Clonmel-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1	Scale: 1:50,000 A4 Date: Jul '08
	Issued for: Excavation Report Client: Meath County Council	Origin: OSi Discovery Series Drawing no.: 04 01 C79321

Figure 1: Location of Townparks 1

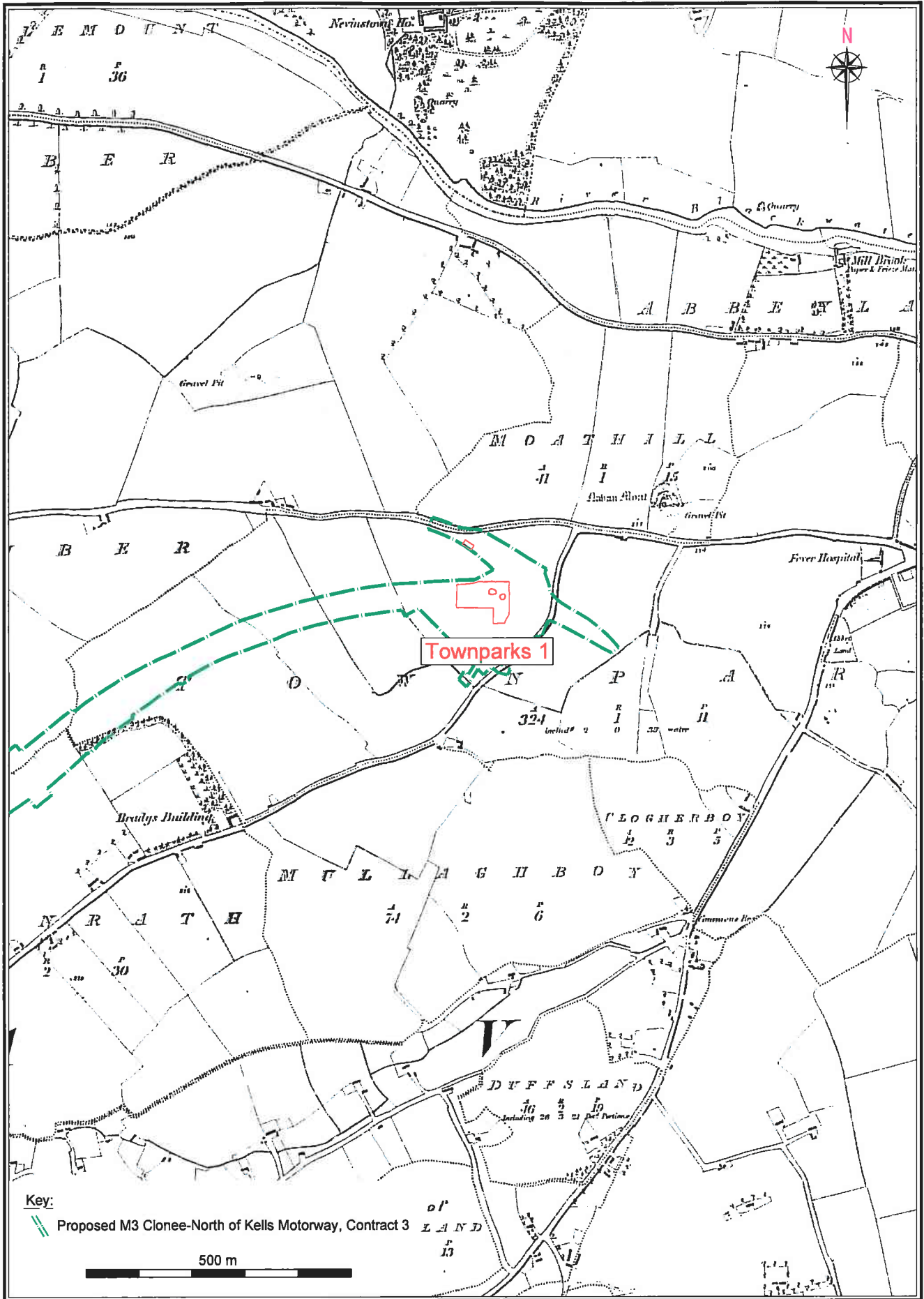



Key:
 Proposed M3 Clonee-North of Kells Motorway, Contract 3

500 m

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1	Scale: 1:10,000 A4 Date: Jul '08
	Issued for: Excavation Report	Origin: Client/ACS Ltd.
	Client: Meath County Council	Drawing no.: 04_01_C79322

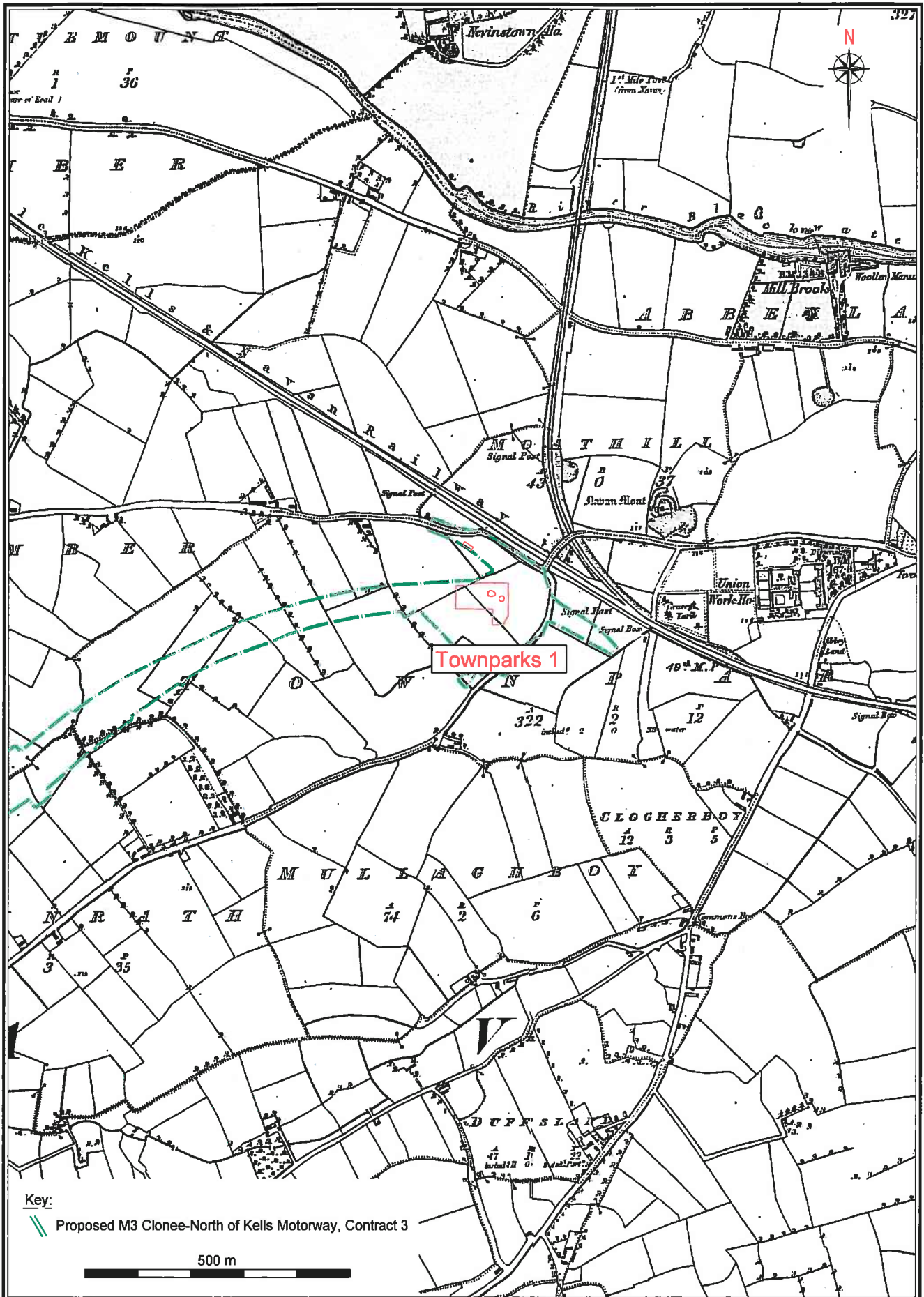
Figure 2: Location of Townparks 1 on current OS background



Key:
 Proposed M3 Clonee-North of Kells Motorway, Contract 3
 500 m

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1	Scale: 1:10,000 A4
	Issued for: Excavation Report	Date: Jul '08
	Client: Meath County Council	Origin: OSI (1836)
		Drawing no.: 04_01_C79323

Figure 3: Townparks 1, extract from 1st edition OS map, Meath sheet 25



Key:

Proposed M3 Clonee-North of Kells Motorway, Contract 3

500 m

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.

Unit 21, Boyne Business Park,
Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme
Contract 3, Townparks 1

Issued for: Excavation Report

Client: Meath County Council

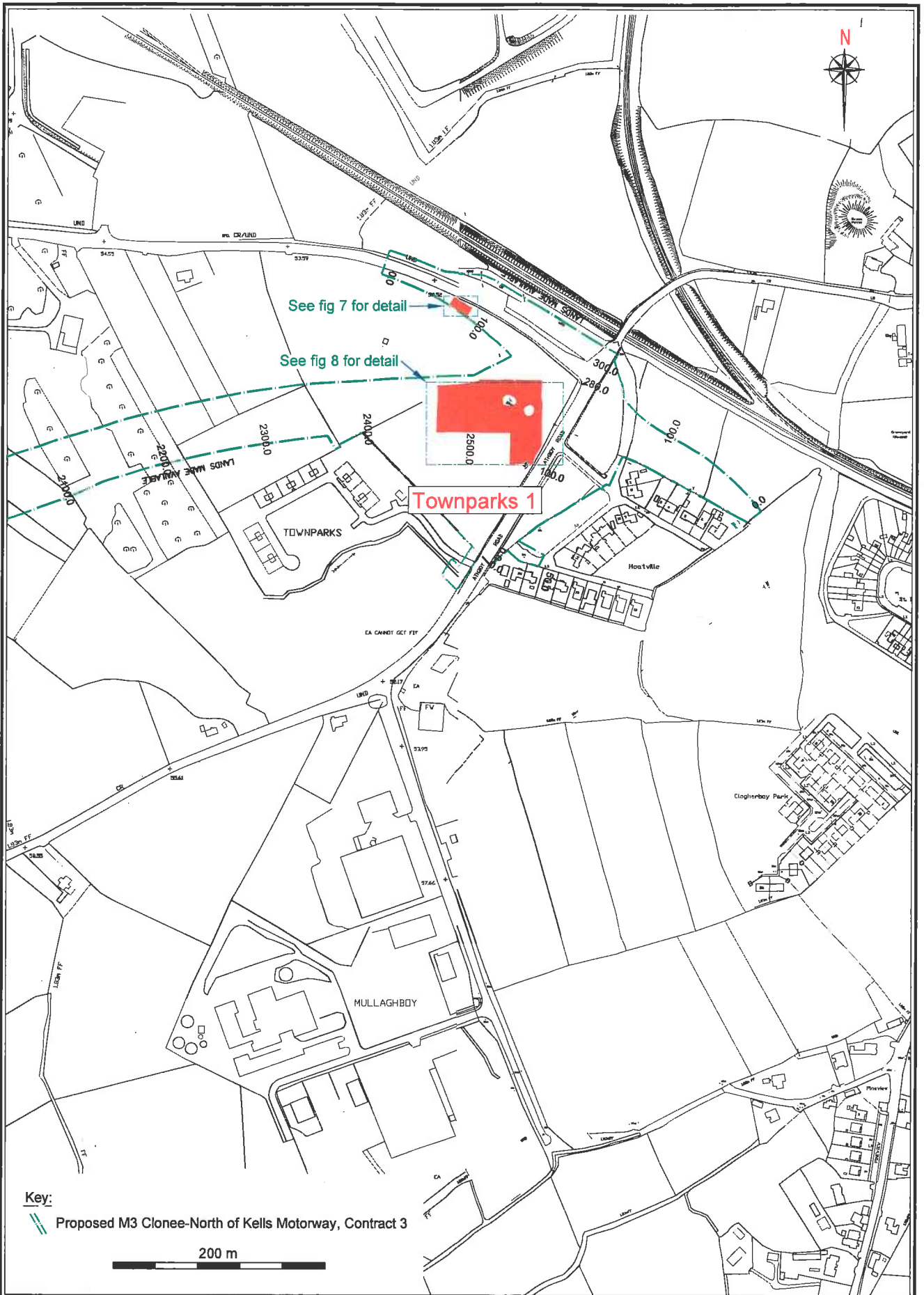
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Date: Jul '08

Origin: OSi (1882)

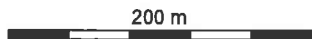
Drawing no.: 04_01_C79324

Figure 4: Townparks 1, extract from 2nd edition OS map, Meath sheet 25



Key:

 Proposed M3 Clonee-North of Kells Motorway, Contract 3

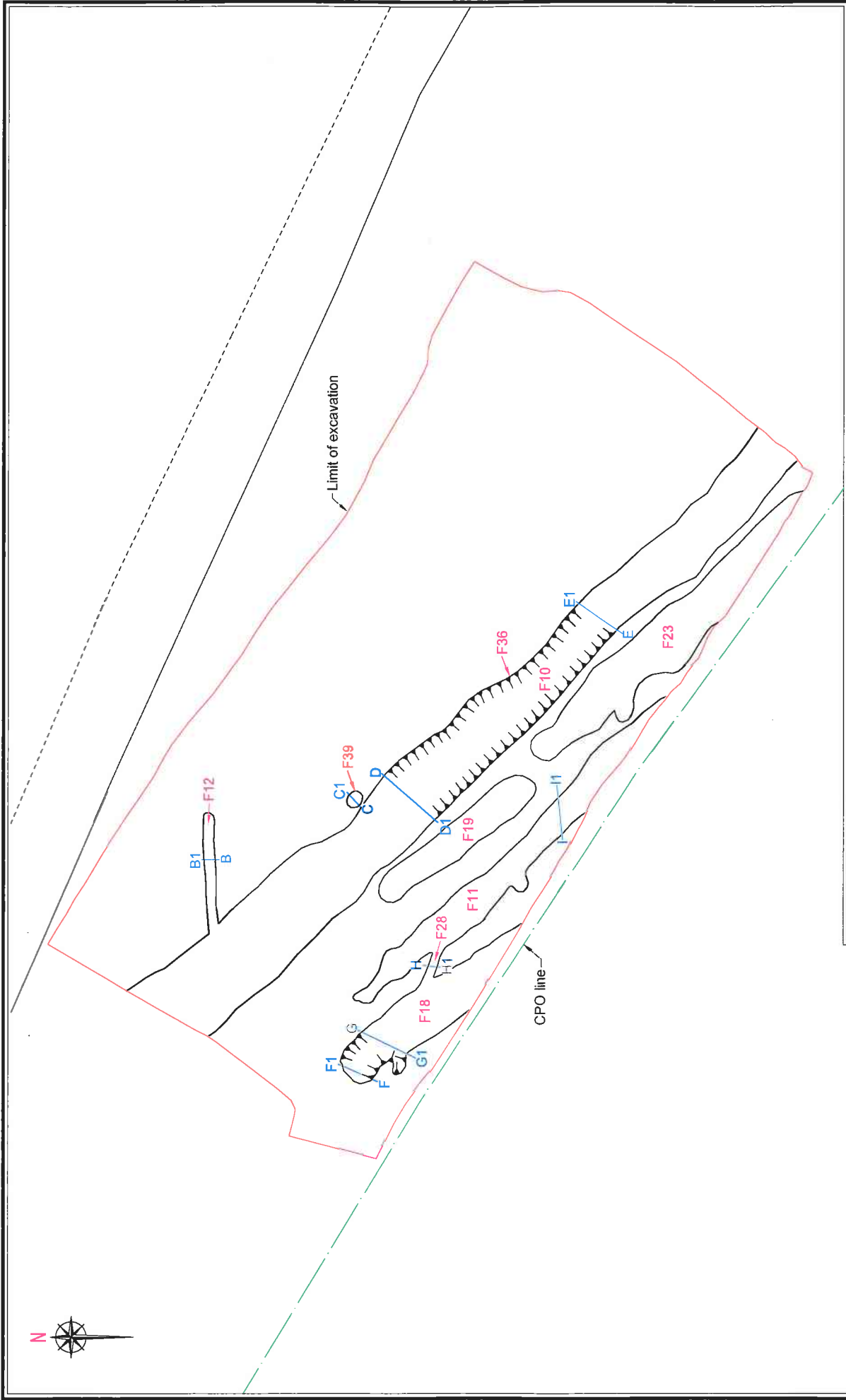


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Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1
 Issued for: Excavation Report
 Client: Meath County Council

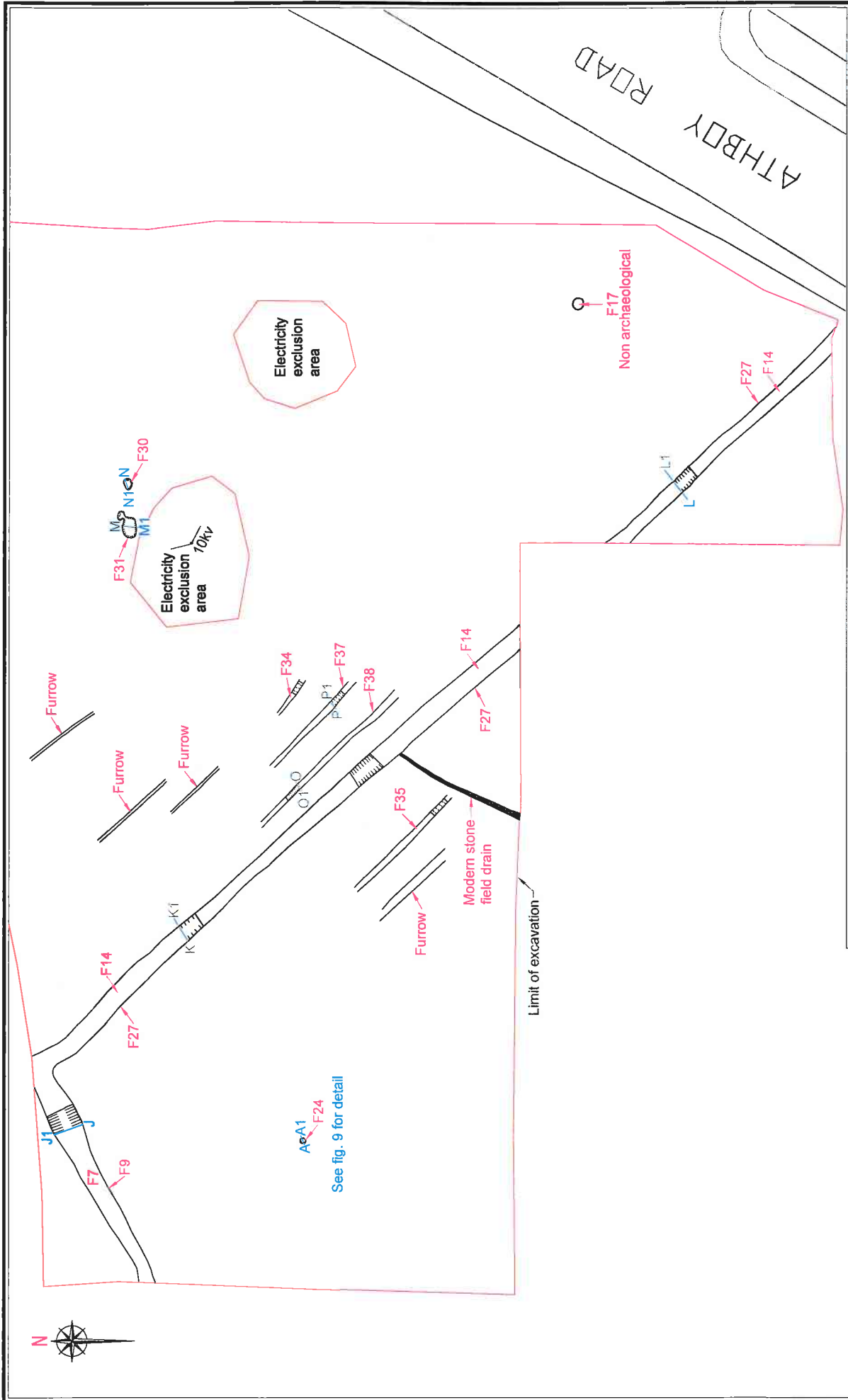
Scale: 1:5,000 A4
 Date: Jul '08
 Origin: Client/ACS Ltd.
 Drawing no.: 04_01_C79326

Figure 6: Detailed location of Townparks 1



Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1	Scale: 1:125 A4
Issued for: Excavation Report	Client: Meath County Council	Date: Jul '08
		Origin: ACS Ltd.
		Drawing no.: 04_01_C79327

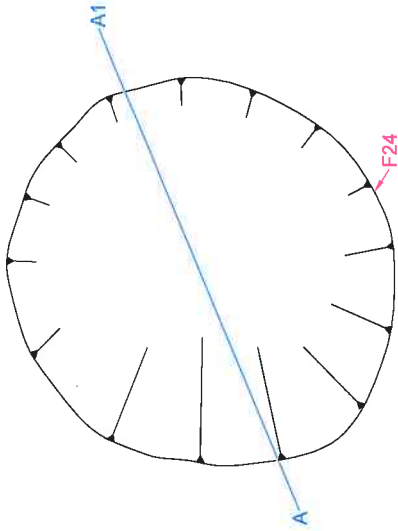
Figure 7: Post-excavation plan of Area 1



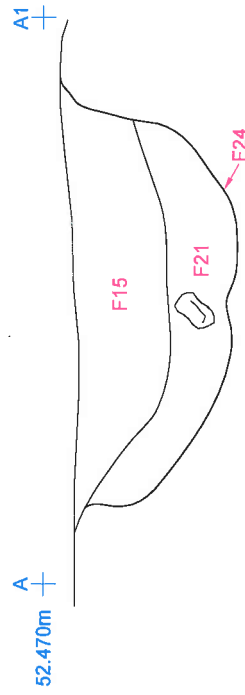
See fig. 9 for detail

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Services Ltd.		Issued for: Excavation Report Client: Meath County Council	Origin: ACS Ltd. Drawing no.: 04_01_C79328

Figure 8: Post-excavation plan of Area 2



SECTION THROUGH F24

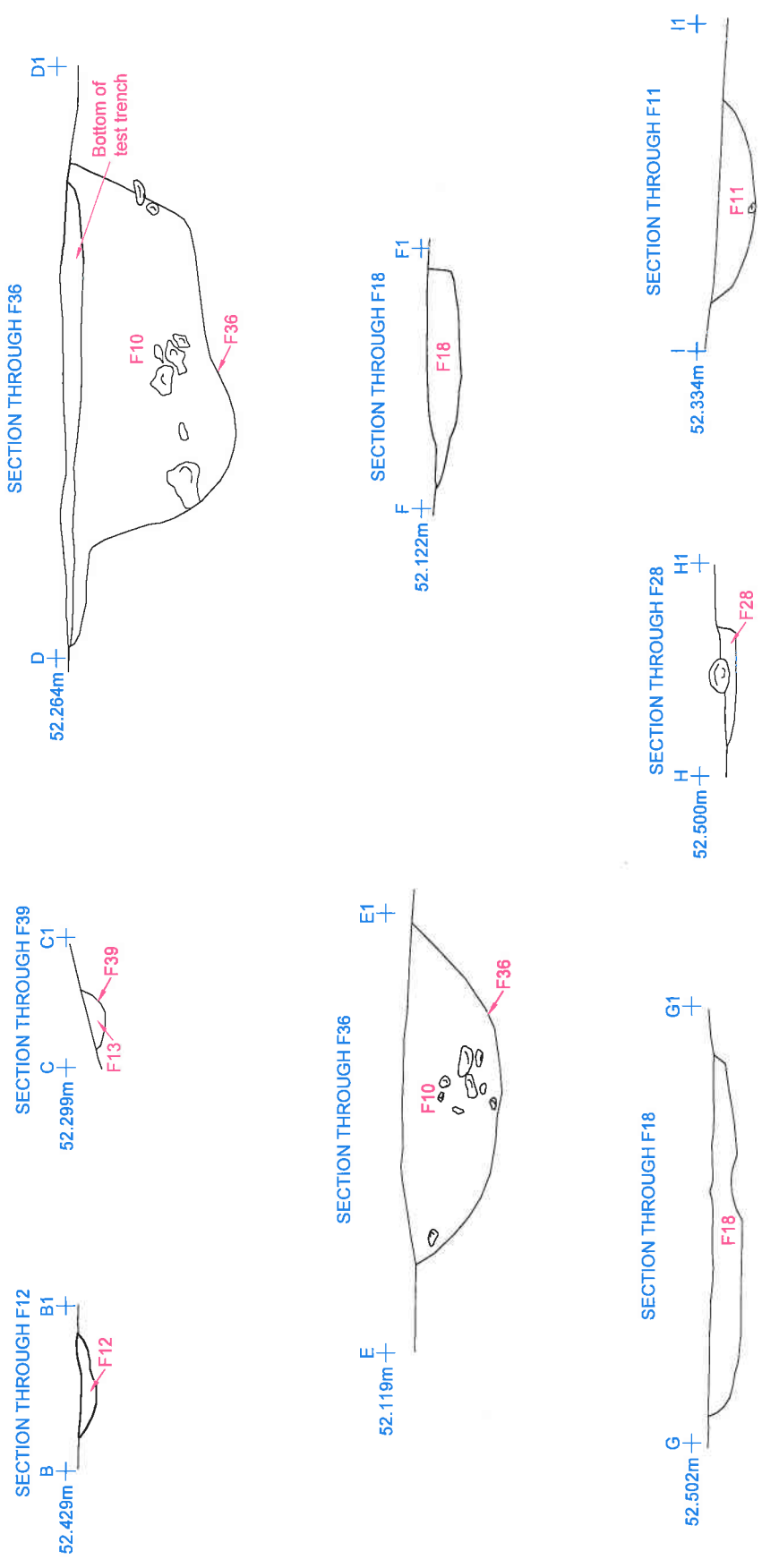


Key:  Stone



Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1 Issued for: Excavation Report Client: Meath County Council	Scale: 1:20 A4 Date: Jul '08 Origin: ACS Ltd. Drawing no.: 04_01_C79329
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Figure 9: Post-excavation and section plan of F24 showing fills F15 & F21



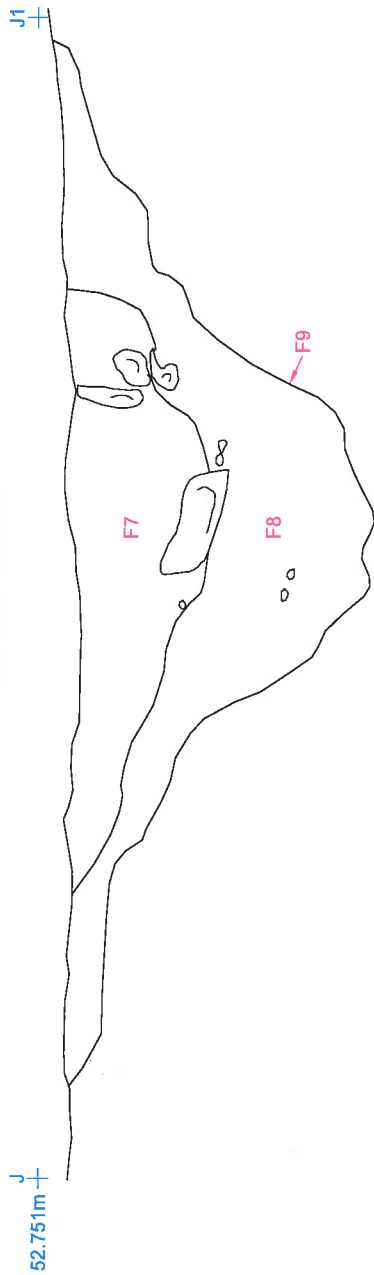
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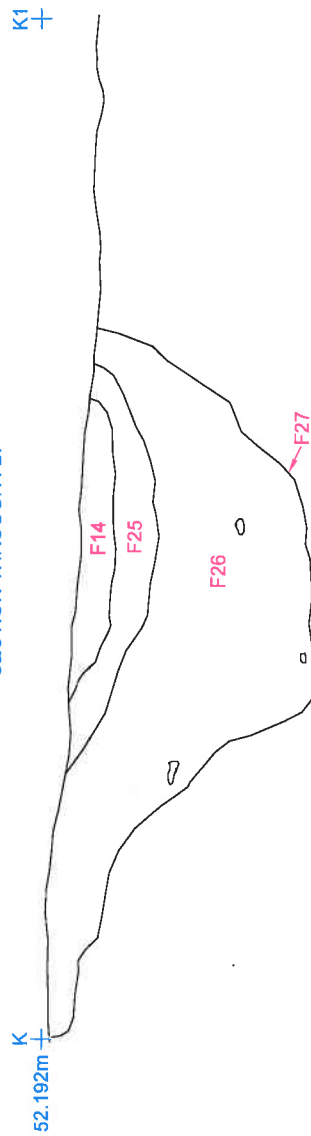
Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd. Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth		Site: M3 Clonee-North of Kells PPP Scheme Contract 3, Townparks 1	Scale: 1:20 A4
		Issued for: Excavation Report	Date: Jul '08
		Client: Meath County Council	Origin: ACS Ltd.
			Drawing no.: 04_01_C79330

Figure 10: Sections of excavated features from Area 1

SECTION THROUGH F9



SECTION THROUGH F27



Key:  Stone

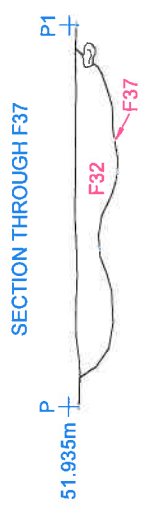
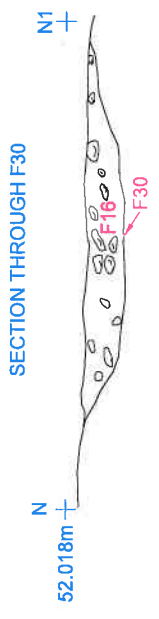
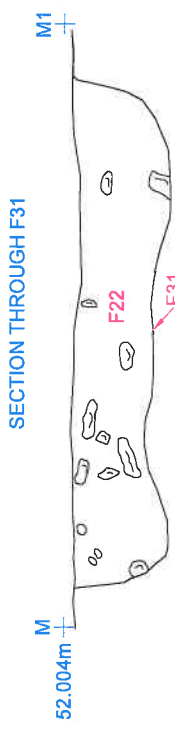
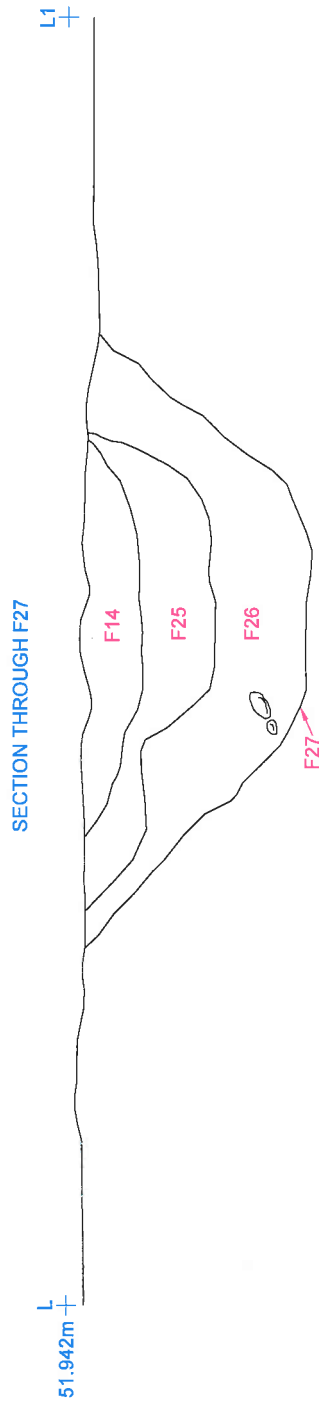


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Scale: 1:20 A4
 Date: Jul '08
 Origin: ACS Ltd.
 Drawing no.: 04_01_C79331

Figure 11: Sections of excavated features from Area 2



Key:  Stone



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	Issued for: Excavation Report Client: Meath County Council	Origin: ACS Ltd. Drawing no.: 04_01_C78932

Figure 12: Sections of excavated features from Area 2



Plate 1: Pre-excavation of pit F24, from the south (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_25)



Plate 2: Post-excavation of pit F24, from the north (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_15)

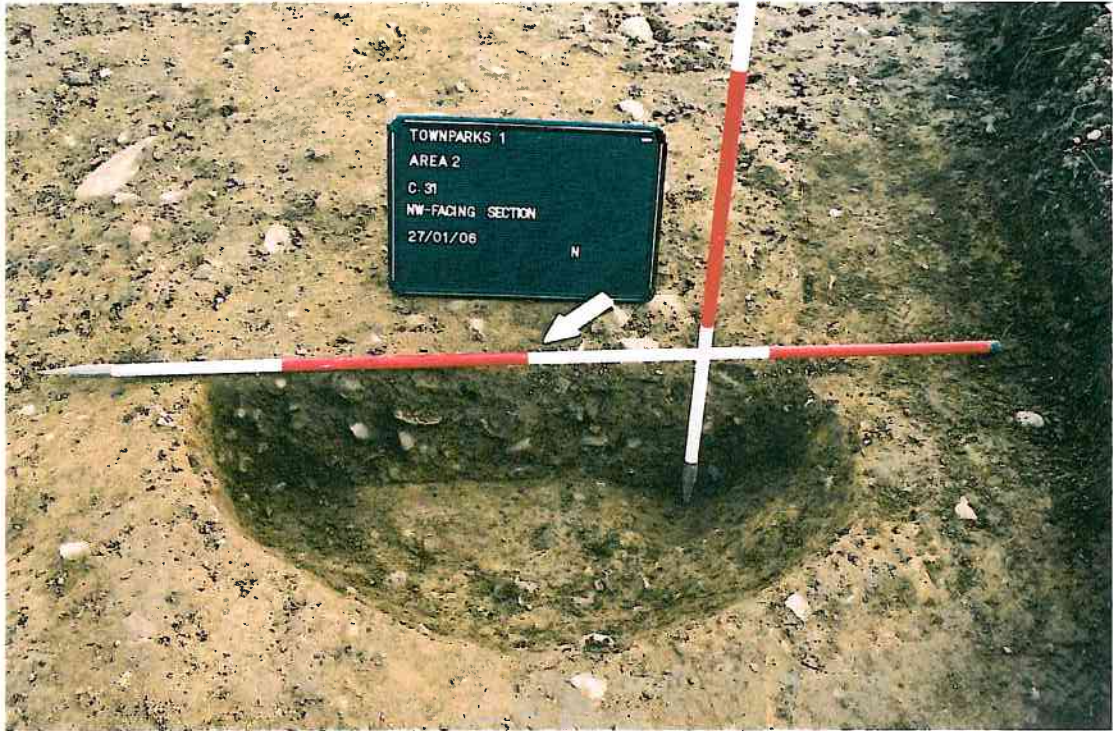


Plate 3: Northwest-facing section of pit feature F31 (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_13)



Plate 4: Elevated view of Area 1, from the southeast (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_19)



Plate 5: South-facing section of ditch F27 in Area 2 (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_16)

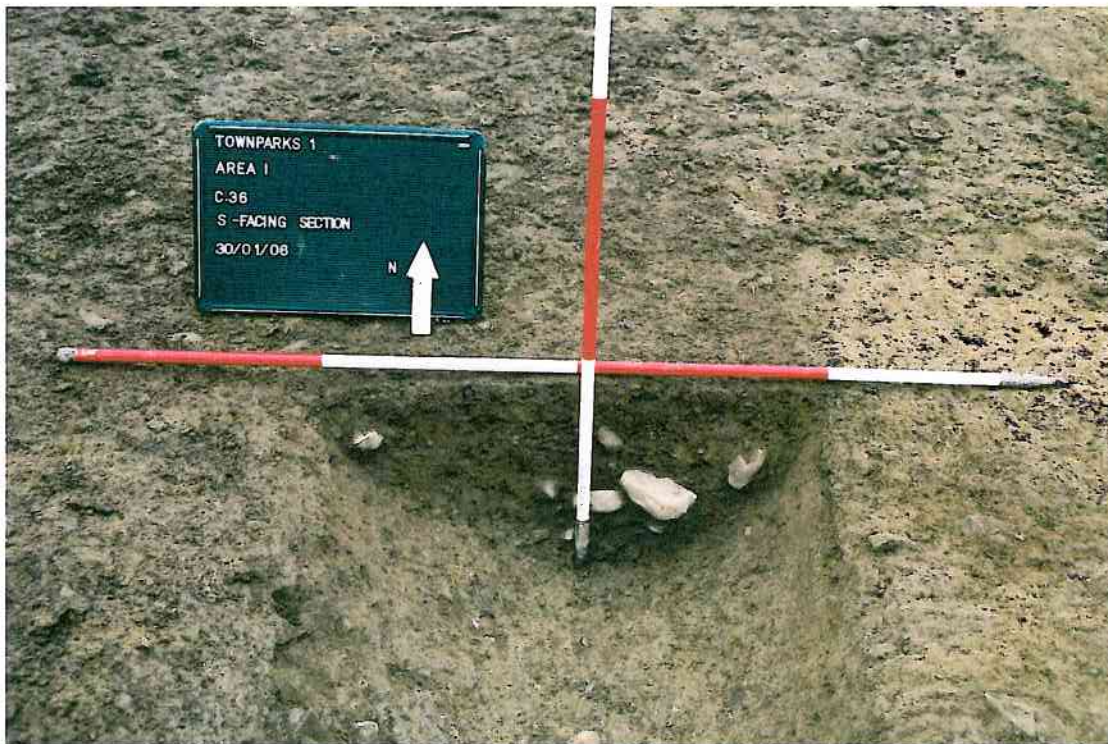


Plate 6: South-facing section of linear feature F36 in Area 1 (04_01_Townparks 1_CP01_09)



Plate 7: 1897 Victorian half-penny (A023/021:7:1)