

PROJECT DETAILS

Project M3 Clonee–Kells Motorway

Site NameRoestown 3Ministerial Direction NumberA008/003Registration NumberE3056

Senior Archaeological Consultant Donald Murphy
Site Director Lydia Cagney

Excavated 03–14 October 2005

Client Meath County Council, National Roads Design

Office, Navan Enterprise Centre, Navan, County

Meath

Townland Roestown
Parish Dunshaughlin

County Meath

National Grid Reference 295739 253964 Chainage 21100–20800

Report Type Final

Report Status Submitted

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Report by Vicky Ginn

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 Direction Number issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The site at Roestown 3 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 possible foundation remains of a structure were fully exposed, cleaned and partially excavated. Excavation of the extant remains revealed a WSW–ENE foundation trench filled with rubble, stone and occasional redbrick fragments. A culverted drain ran parallel to this foundation trench. An additional French drain ran perpendicular to the above features, this extended for 6.30m within the site limit; both drains were similar in construction and considered to be contemporary, and the foundation trench probably represented the remains of a post-medieval field wall or a structure.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The site at Roestown 3 was identified during advance testing carried out by Jonathan Dempsey during March 2004 under licence number 04E0415 (Dempsey 2004). The site, a large, sub-rectangular plot, was bounded to the east by the existing N3 and to the south by a driveway. Two wall foundations (WSW–ENE and north–south), placed within foundation trenches, were observed (Dempsey 2004). These were constructed of roughly squared, random rubble, built to courses and bonded with lime mortar. A group of buildings, with which these foundations may have been associated, was marked on the 1836 Ordnance Survey map, but not on subsequent editions. A sub-circular spread of stones with modern pottery and a sub-oval, ash pit (0.74m x 0.58m x 0.20m) were also identified, along with a sub-oval stakehole which was cut into the western side of a sub-circular spread of reddishyellow clay (ibid.). A Topsoil Assessment (Metal Detection and Field Walking) was conducted in 2005 and produced 60 modern finds from two phases of metal detection and a further 16 modern artefacts from the field walking (Appendix 4). Full resolution of the site occurred in 2005 and one of the foundation trenches was relocated.

1.1 Development

Meath County Council and the National Roads Authority are constructing 49km of two-lane, dual-carriageway motorway between Clonee and Kells and 10km of single carriageway from Kells to Carnross, north of Kells, along with additional road upgrades, realignments and associated ancillary works. For the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the subsequent archaeological investigations the scheme was subdivided into five separate sections as follows: Clonee to Dunshaughlin (Contract 1), Dunshaughlin–Navan (Contract 2), the Navan Bypass (Contract 3) Navan to Kells (Contract 4) and and Kells to North of Kells (Contract 5). This section of the scheme (Contract 2) commences at Dunshaughlin (NGR 295633, 253070) and continues to Navan (NGR 287968 263697).

The archaeological components of the Environmental Impact Statement published in 2002 where carried out by Valerie J. Keeley Ltd (VJK) and Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd (MGL) in 2000–2001. This included desk-based studies and field surveys of each section (VJK Sections 1 & 3 and MGL Sections 2, 4 & 5). Additionally on behalf of MGL geophysical survey was undertaken on the Dunshaughlin–Navan section and at Nugentstown on the Navan–Kells section by GSB Prospection (2000 & 2001). These studies carried out as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment were augmented by further geophysical survey conducted by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy on the remainder of the scheme (2002). Archaeological testing was completed by ACS and Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (IAC) in 2004 (ACS Sections 1–3 and IAC Sections 4–5). Excavation of the sites identified

during testing was conducted by ACS and IAC between 2005 and 2008 (ACS Sections 1–3 & 5 and IAC Section 4).

2 EXCAVATION

Excavation occurred between 03 and 14 October 2005 under Ministerial Direction Number A008/003 issued to Meath County Council NRDO. The work was carried out by Lydia Cagney on behalf of ACS. The topsoil (F31: 0.20m depth) consisted of a loose, mid-dark-brown, clayey silt and was removed by machine equipped with a grading bucket. A compact, orange-brown, sandy clay with moderate small and medium sized limestone inclusions comprised the subsoil (F32). F21 (0.04m depth) was ascribed to the ploughsoil, a loose, mid-light-brown, sandy clay with moderate stones and occasional redbrick fragments.

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. All radiocarbon dates are quoted in calibrated form, to two sigma.

2.1 Results

Thirty one contexts of archaeological interest were identified within the excavation area. Only the principal archaeological features of Roestown 3 will be discussed within this report; full details of all these, and further, contexts are located in Appendix 1.

Linear features

WSW-ENE trench F12 (13.30m x 1.00m width) was one of the trenches observed during the testing phase. It contained one fill, F4, which consisted of limestone nodules and redbrick inclusions; the stones were faced along the sides. F25 represented the bonding material with occasional redbrick and shell inclusions.

F11 (4.80m x 0.95m x unknown depth) contained a red-black, clayey silt with stones, rubble and limestone inclusions and may represent the remains of a boundary wall. It followed the same trajectory as F12; the stones also appeared to be faced along the side.

A culverted drain, F13 (13.00m x 1.00m x 0.90m), parallel to F12, contained one fill of limestone and redbrick fragments (F5).

Stone-filled (F19), drain F20 (6.30m x 0.52m x 0.25m) cut a WSW–ENE ditch (F23: 2.50m width x 0.25m depth) and is of French-type.

Other features

To the northeast of F11 lay three sub-circular features. F14 (0.82m length x 0.54m width) contained four fills, the primary of which (F30) was a carbon-rich lining of loose, darkbrown, clayey silt with moderate charcoal flecks. Charred gain (5g) and a small amount of charcoal (>1g) was recovered from this fill and a radiocarbon date of AD 1670–1960 was returned (Beta 241304, Appendix 5). The secondary fill, F29, contained charcoal flecks and oxidised clay while the tertiary, F28, was a stoney fill and F6, the fourth fill, consisted of a silty, clayey peat with frequent charcoal flecks. A soil sample was derived and three nails (A008/003:6:1–3) were recovered from this upper fill. With its charcoal-rich fills and oxidised clay, F14 is likely to represent a fire-spot, or a pit containing dumped, burnt material.

Sub-circular posthole, F16 (0.48m x 0.41m x 0.29m), contained F8, a brown sandy clay with unidentifiable wood fragments (Appendix 6), and was located to the west of F14. Stakehole F27 (0.15m width x 0.45m depth) was cut into this fill. A second stakehole (F24: 0.19m x 0.11m x 0.01m) was revealed during excavation; it had previously been discovered during the testing phase.

Posthole F18 was adjacent to F20 and had one fill, F10, which had occasional redbrick fragments. A sample was also taken from this fill.

2.2 Finds

Apart from the abovementioned nails (A008/003:6:1–3), the artefacts from Roestown 3 were recovered from the topsoil (F31). These consisted of a sherd of white glazed, modern pottery, a metal button and a metal plate fragment (A008/003:31:1–3).

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Form and function

A group of buildings were located in this area on the 1836 OS map but not on subsequent editions and it is likely that trenches F11 and F12 relate to these buildings; perhaps, with their redbrick inclusions, faced edges and traces of bonding, they were directly associated with the structures and represented remains of wall foundations trenches. Alternatively F11 and F12 may represent field boundaries which incorporated robbed out material from the ruined structures, although with the faced edges and rubble infill (Plate 2) this seems less likely.

Roestown 3, A008/003

During the excavations F11 and F12 were thought to have different functions but their similar fills and same trajectory suggests otherwise.

The stone-filled trenches F13 and F20 form drains. Of the various pits on site, F14 with its carbon-rich fills and oxidised clay probably represents a fire pit.

3.2 Date and sequence

The structures in this area were present on the 1836 OS map but not on any further editions; therefore it would appear likely that the majority of the activity pre-dates this period. Due to the redbrick and bonding inclusions the structures are interpreted as post-medieval in date.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Roestown 3 (A008/003) was excavated from 03–14 October 2005 by Lydia Cagney (ACS) as part of the M3 Clonee–North of Kells Motorway Scheme on behalf of Meath County Council NRDO and the NRA. The stone foundations of a wall, either belonging to a pre-1838 structure, or a field boundary post-1836, were recovered along with several drains and three pits, one of which contained three nails in a carbon-rich, oxidised clay matrix.

5 REFERENCES

Dempsey, J 2004 Report on the Archaeological Assessment at Testing Area 1, Contract 2, Roestown and Cooksland, Co. Meath 04E0415. Unpublished report prepared for Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.

Signed:

Lydia Cagney

Lydia Cagany

July 2008

APPENDIX 1 Context Details

Roestown	3: A008/00	3									
No	Туре	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	fill	12	12	21, 25	stony, brown, clayey silt with limestone nodules and redbrick inclusions. 7.00m length x 0.69m width	fill of trench 12					
5	fill	13	13	22	stony material with large, flat limestone and redbrick fragments. 0.53m width x 0.90m depth	stony fill of drain 13					
6	fill	14	28	31	loose, dark-brown-black (mottled with orange re-deposited subsoil) silty clay-peat with frequent charcoal flecks, snail shells and a large limestone stone. 0.65m north-south x 0.58m east-west	upper fill of pit 14		nails			#1 soil
7	cancelle	d, same a	ıs 8								#2 wood fragments
8	fill	16	16	27, 31	compact, greyish-brown, sandy clay with moderate small stones and moist wood fragments. 0.48m x 0.41m x 0.29m	fill of posthole 16					#4 soil
9	NON- AF	RCHEOL	OGICAL								
10	fill	18	18	31	loose, mid-light-brown, sandy clay with moderate small stones and occasional redbrick fragments. 0.26m east-west x 0.19m north-south x 0.36m	small stones and occasional agments. 0.26m east-west x 0.19m fill of posthole 18			#5 soil		
11	cut	33	32	33	linear cut (4.80m east-west x 0.95m north-south) with two rounded corners, a gradual break of slope at the top, gently sloping sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a smooth and rounded base	boundary or garden wall					

12	cut	4, 25	32	4, 25	linear, WSW-ENE cut (13.30m length x 1.00m width) with rounded corners, an imperceptible break of slope, gently sloping sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a concave base. Cut by test trench	trench			
13	cut	5	32	05	linear, WSW-ENE cut (13.00m x 1.00m x 0.90m) with rounded corners, a gradual and sharp break of slope at the top, vertical sides and a sharp break of slope leading to a flat base	linear french-style drain			
14	cut	6, 28, 29, 30	32	30	sub-oval, NNW-SSE cut (0.82m length x 0.54m width) with gradual break of slope (sharp in southwest), steep sides (gently sloping in southwest) and a gradual break of slope leading to a rounded base	possible fire-spot			
15	cancelled	d, same a	as 16						
16	cut	8	32	8	sub-circular cut (0.48m x 0.41m x 0.29m) with a sharp break of slope at the top, vertical sides and a sharp break of slope leading to a flat base	posthole			
17	NON- AF	RCHEOL	OGICAL	1					
18	cut	10	32	10	sub-circular cut (0.26m east-west x 0.19m north-south x 0.36m) with a sharp break of slope at the top, vertical sides and a gradual-sharp break of slope leading to a tapered, pointed base	posthole			
19	fill	20	20	21	stony material with limestone nodules. 6.30m x 0.52m x 0.25m	fill of drain 20			
20	cut	19	32	19	linear, north-south cut (6.30m x 0.52m x 0.25m) with a sharp break of slope at the top, steep sides and a gradual-sharp break of slope leading to a flat base	French field drain			
21	deposit	N/A	44, 19, 22, 25, 32, 33	31	loose, mid-light-brown, sandy clay with moderate stones and occasional redbrick inclusions. 0.04m depth	plough soil			
22	fill	23	5, 23	21	loose, greyish-brown, silty clay with occasional redbrick inclusions and small stones. 2.50m width x 0.25m depth	fill of cut 23			

23	cut	22	32	22	linear, ENE-WSW cut (2.50m width x 0.25m depth) with a gradual break of slope at the top, moderately sloping sides and an imperceptible break of slope leading to a rounded base	shallow ditch			
24	cut	N/A	32	N/A	oval cut (0.19m x 0.11m x 0.01m) with a sharp break of slope (gradual in southeast), moderately steep sides and a sharp break of slope leading to a southwest-inclined base	stakehole excavated during testing			
25	fill	12	4, 12	21	loose, mid-brown, silty clay with frequent small stones and occasional redbrick and shell inclusions	bonding material in trench 12			
26	fill	27	27	31	Cut into 08, 16. 0.15m width x 0.45m depth	fill of stakehole 27			#3 wood fragments
27	cut	26	8	26	cut (0.15m width x 0.45m depth) with a sharp break of slope at the top, vertical sides and a sharp break of slope leading to tapered, rounded base. Cuts 016	stakehole			
28	fill	14	29	6	stony material. Details missing	fill of pit 14			
29	fill	14	30	28	loose, dark-grey-brown, clayey silt with occasional small stones and charcoal flecks and oxidised clay. 0.55m x 0.21m x 0.06m. Same as 006	fill of pit 14			
30	fill	14	14	29	loose, dark-brown, clayey silt with moderate charcoal flecks. 0.74m x 0.39m x 0.04m	carbon-rich lining of pit 14			
31	topsoil	N/A	32	N/A	loose, mid-dark-brown, clayey silt. 0.20m depth	topsoil	pottery, metal		
32	subsoil	N/A	N/A	21, 31	compact, orange-brown, sandy clay with moderate small and medium sized limestone inclusions	subsoil			
33	fill	11	11	21, 31	red-black, clayey silt with stones, rubble and limestone inclusions. 4.80m east-west x 0.95m north-south	stone-filled feature			

APPENDIX 2 Finds List

Find No	Description
A008/003:6:1-3	nails
A008:003:31:1	white glazed modern pottery with blue detail
A008:003:31:2	metal button
A008:003:31:3	metal plate fragment

APPENDIX 3 Sample List

Sample No	Context No	Results
1	6	nothing
2	30	5g charred grain and <1g charcoal
3	33	nothing
4	8	nothing
5	10	nothing

APPENDIX 4 Topsoil Assessment: Maria Lear & Stuart Rathbone

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Metal Detection: M3 Clonee to North of Kells, Contract 2

Archaeologists Maria Lear & Stuart Rathbone

Project Start 13 June 2005 Report Date June 2005

List of Figures

Figure 1 Metal Detection (Phase 1) Distribution Map
Figure 2 Metal Detection (Phase 2) Distribution Map

Figure 3 Field Walking Distribution Map

1 INTRODUCTION

The proposals for archaeological resolution included an assessment of the potential for finds retrieval from topsoil at archaeological sites. This assessment was achieved by a program of metal detecting at ploughed and pasture fields. As per the *Method Statement for Topsoil Assessment Including Metal Detection*, metal detection of the topsoil began within Contract 2 on June 13, 2005. This report details the results of the two phases of metal detection, the field walking survey and the test pits of Cooksland 1.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

2.1 Metal Detection Methodology

- 1. A grid was established as follows a baseline was marked on one side of each site along the long axis. Perpendicular offset lines were marked at 10m intervals along the baseline to form stints and these were subdivided along the offset line to form parallel transects 2m wide.
- 2. The metal detection commenced at one end of the baseline and provided for a 2m 'sweep' along each transect, thus providing for 100% coverage of topsoil deposits at each site.
- 3. The location of all metal 'hits' was marked on the ground with tags.
- 4. All metal 'hits' in the sod or topsoil were tested by careful hand excavation of the sod/topsoil. Stratified artifacts were left *in situ*.
- 5. All artifacts were bagged and numbered citing DOE record number, context and individual number. Their location was also recorded.

2.2 Field Walking Survey – Methodology

- 1. A grid was established as follows a baseline was marked on one side of each site along the long axis. Perpendicular offset lines were marked at 10m intervals along the baseline to form stints and these were subdivided along the offset line to form parallel transects 4m wide.
- 2. Each transect was assigned a letter and each stint a number so that each stint would have a unique reference.
- 3. The field walking took place along each transect and provided for 2m coverage (i.e.: 1m either side of the walker's path), thus providing 50% coverage of the site.
- 4. The location of all artefacts was marked on the ground with tags.
- 5. All artifacts were bagged and numbered citing DOE record number, context and individual number. Their location was also recorded.

2.3 Test Pit Methodology

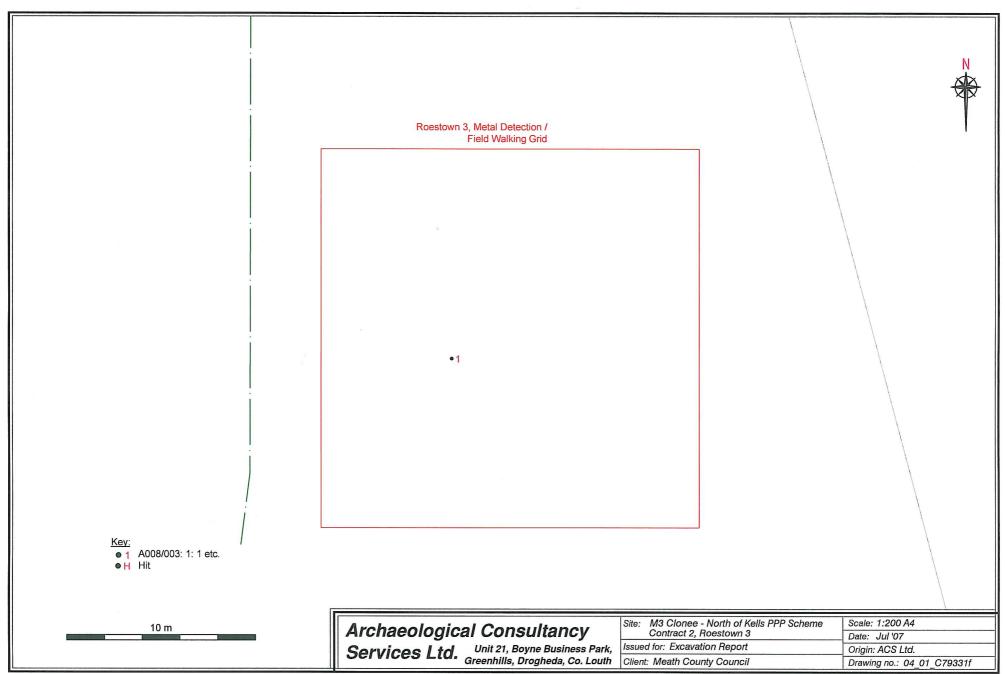
When deemed necessary, a number of pre-designated test pits were dug at various locations within the site. The test pits measured 1m² and their precise position will be surveyed. Each test pit will be dug by hand to the depth of subsoil with the resulting loose topsoil sifted on site for the recovery of finds. All finds were bagged and numbered citing DOE record number, context and individual number. Their location was recorded with reference to the specific test pit from where it was collected.

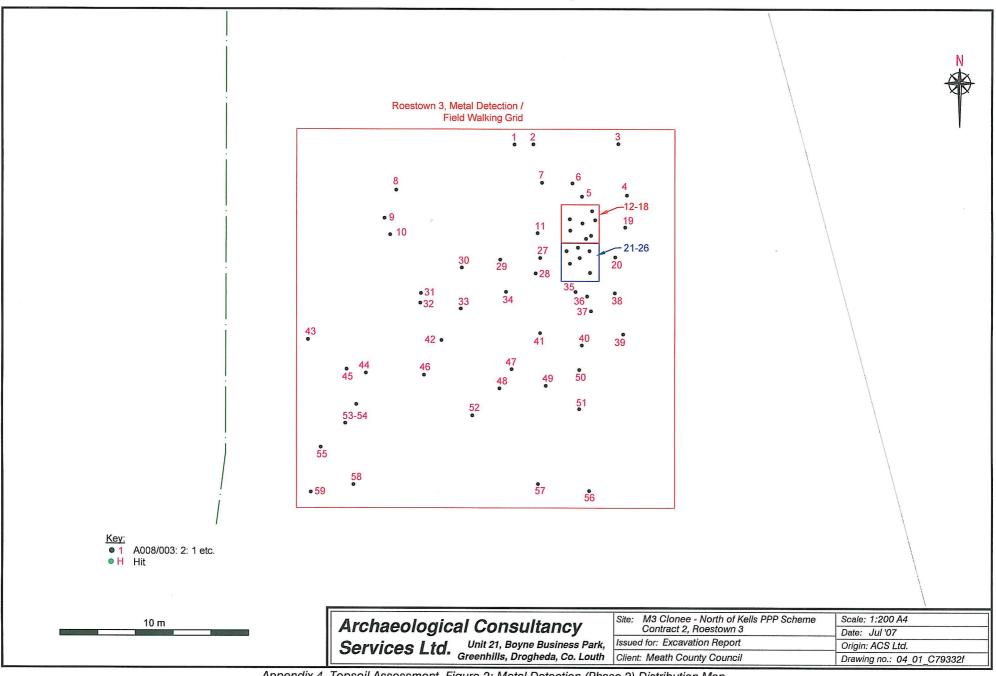
2.4 Results

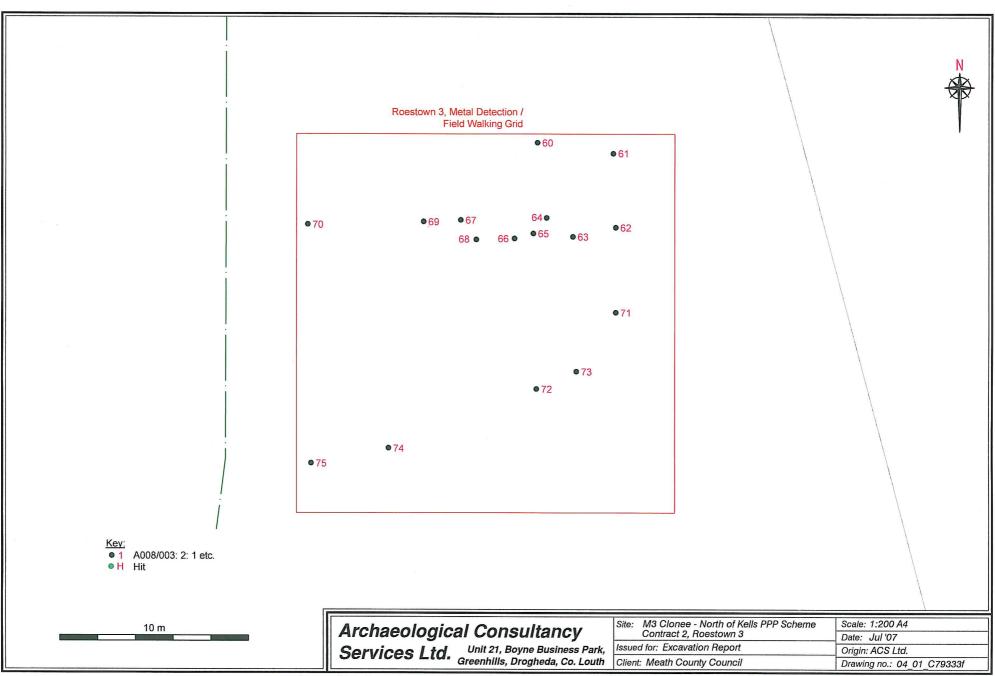
The first phase of metal detection dealt with the sod layer only and finds recovered were labelled as being from context 1. Initial metal detection of the Roestown 3 site produced only 1 'hit' recorded and 1 find recovered. The second phase of metal detection was completed after the sod was removed and dealt with the topsoil layer only. These topsoil finds were recorded under context number 2. This second phase also produced a total of 59 'hits' with 59 finds recovered. Fieldwalking of the Roestown 3 site produced the additional collection of 16 modern finds. All of the finds recovered were of modern date and consisted of items associated with a modern timeframe (hook, machine parts and modern pottery).

2.5 List of Finds

Find Number	Description
A008/003:1:1	Metal hook
A008/003:2: 1	Nail
A008/003:2:2-4	3 Modern iron objects
A008/003:2:5-6	2 Nails
A008/003:2:7	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:8	Nail
A008/003:2:9-10	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:11-13	3 Nails
A008/003:2:14	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:15-17	3 Nails
A008/003:2:18	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:19	Nail
A008/003:2:20	Nail
A008/003:2:21-25	5 Nails
A008/003:2:26	Hook
A008/003:2:27	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:28-31	4 Nails
A008/003:2:32	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:33	Nail
A008/003:2:34	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:35	Rod
A008/003:2:36-38	3 Nails
A008/003:2:39	Modern iron object
A008/003:2:40-50	11 Nails
A008/003:2:51	Machine part
A008/003:2:52	Iron bar
A008/003:2:53-54	2 Modern iron objects
A008/003:2:55	Nail
A008/003:2:56-57	2 Modern iron objects
A008/003:2:58-59	2 Nails
A008/003:2:60	Modern pottery
A008/003:2:61	Modern glass
A008/003:2:62-65	4 sherds of modern pottery
A008/003:2:66	Modern glass
A008/003:2:67	Modern pottery
A008/003:2:68	Modern glass
A008/003:2:69-75	7 sherds of Modern pottery







APPENDIX 5 Radiocarbon Dates

Context	Sample No	Material	Species id/	Lab	Lab code	Date Type	Date	Conventional Date (BP)	13C/12C Ratio ‰
30, fill of pit 14	1	Charcoal	Unknown at present	Beta	241304	AMS (std)	AD 1680–1740 and 1810–1930 and 1950–1960 one sigma AD 1670–1780 and 1800–1950 and 1950–1960 two sigma	110±40	-23.7

APPENDIX 6 Wood Report: Lorna O'Donnell

Analysis of the wood Roestown 3 Co. Meath

Licence No. A008/003

By Lorna O' Donnell Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd. Job No. 06289-R6

For Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.

6th February 2007

Illustrations

Tables

Table 1 Analysis of the wood

Introduction

1.1 Fragments of wood were submitted from Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd for identification. These were Sample 2, Feature 7 and Sample 3, Feature 26, both from Roestown 3.

2 Methods

2.1 Each wood piece was identified by a first selection under a binocular microscope at a magnification of 10x-40x. This was used to discern features such as ring growth or insect channels. Samples one cell thick was taken with a razor blade from the transverse, radial and tangential planes of the wood. Analysis of thin sections was completed under a transmitted light microscope, at magnifications of 100x, 200x and 400x. The anatomical structure of the wood samples was compared to a reference collection supplied by the National Botanic Gardens and keys (Schweingruber 1978; Hather 2000). Unfortunately due to the fragmentary nature of the wood, it was not possible to identify them.

3 Summary

3.1 Two fragments were submitted for identification from Roestown 3. Due to the degraded nature of the wood, it was not possible to identify the fragments.

Lorna O'Donnell

January 2007

References

Hather, J., 2000. The Identification of the North European Woods A guide for archaeologists and conservators. London: Archetype Publications Ltd.

Schweingruber, F.H., 1978. *Microscopic wood anatomy*. Birmensdorf: Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research.

Table 1 - Analysis of the wood

Cut	Fill	Sample	Find no	Identification	Notes
	26	3		too degraded	fragment
	7	2		too degraded	fragment

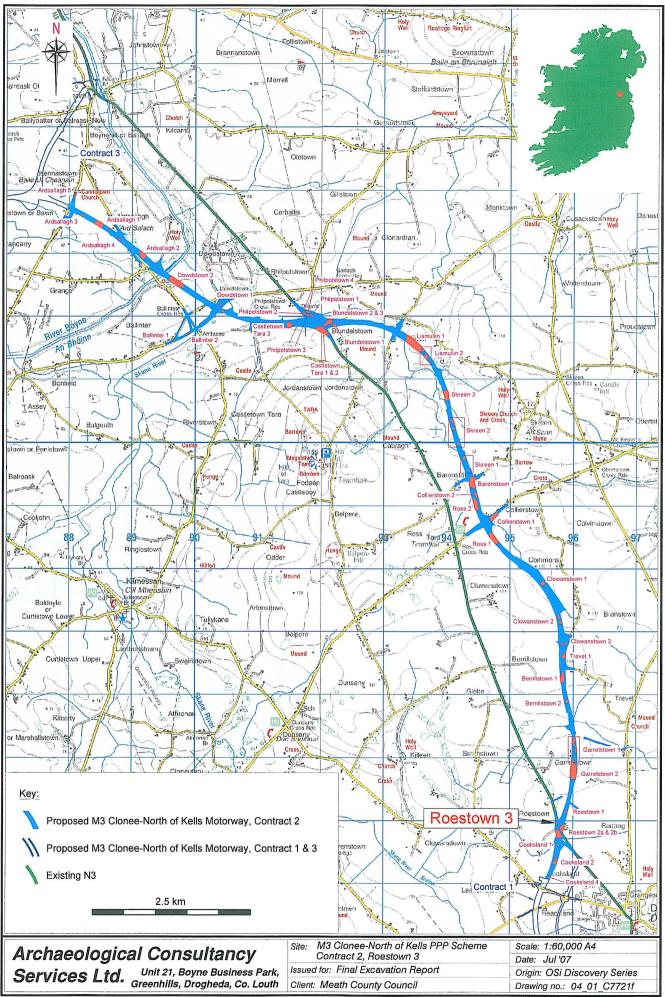


Figure 1: Location of Roestown 3

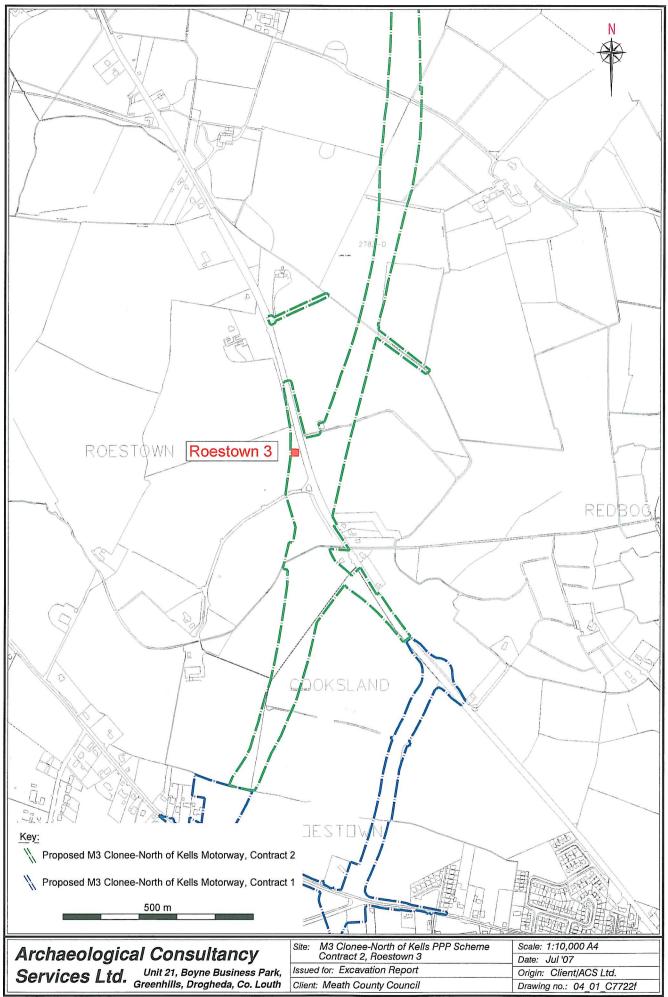


Figure 2: Location of Roestown 3 on current OS background

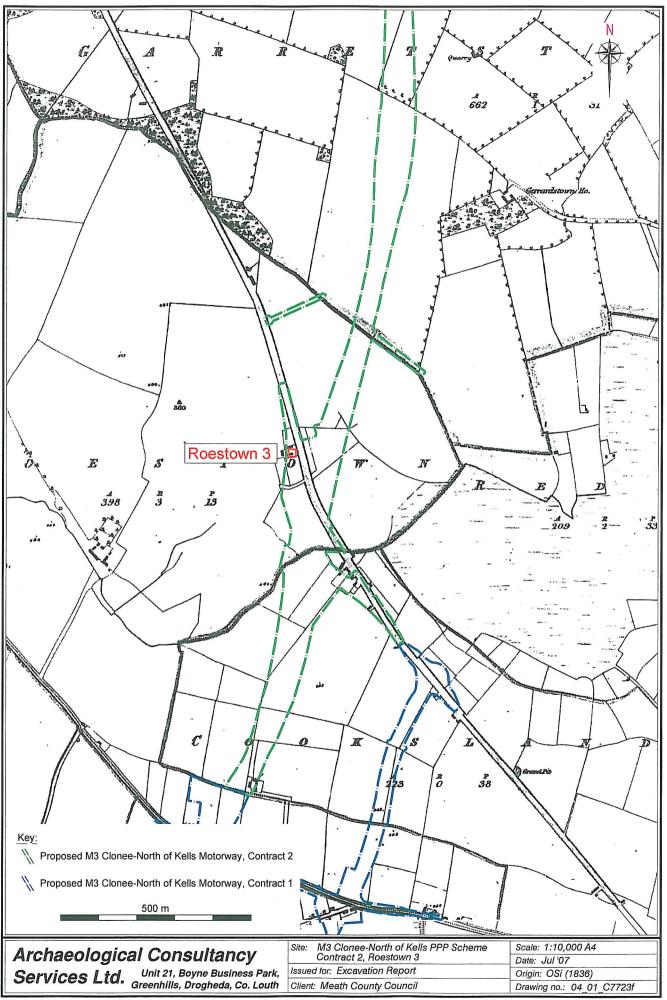


Figure 3: Roestown 3, extract from 1st edition OS map, Meath sheets 38 & 44

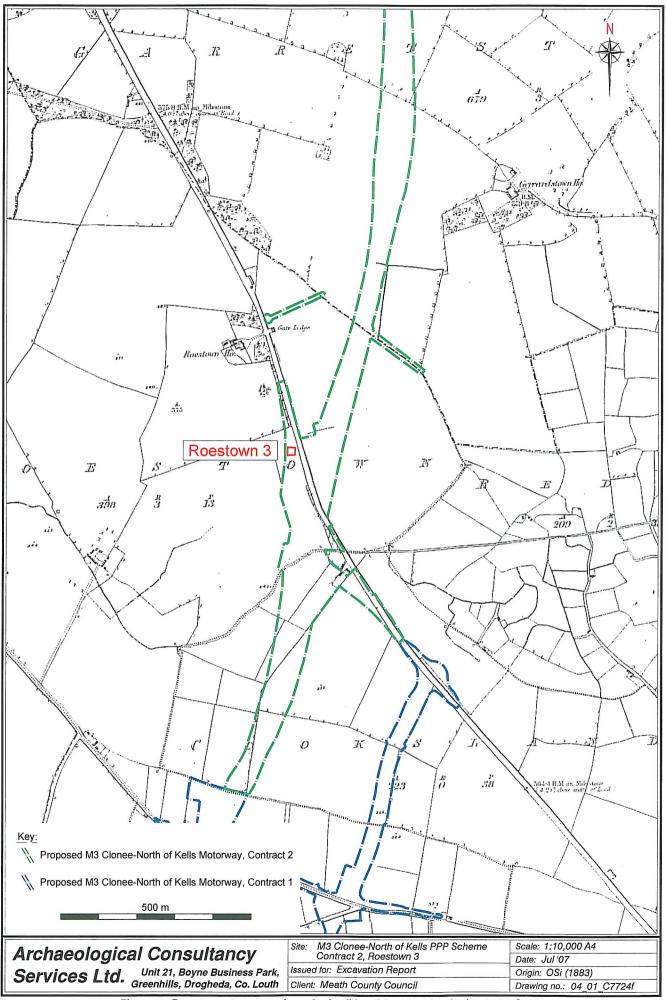


Figure 4: Roestown 3, extract from 2nd edition OS map, Meath sheets 38 & 44

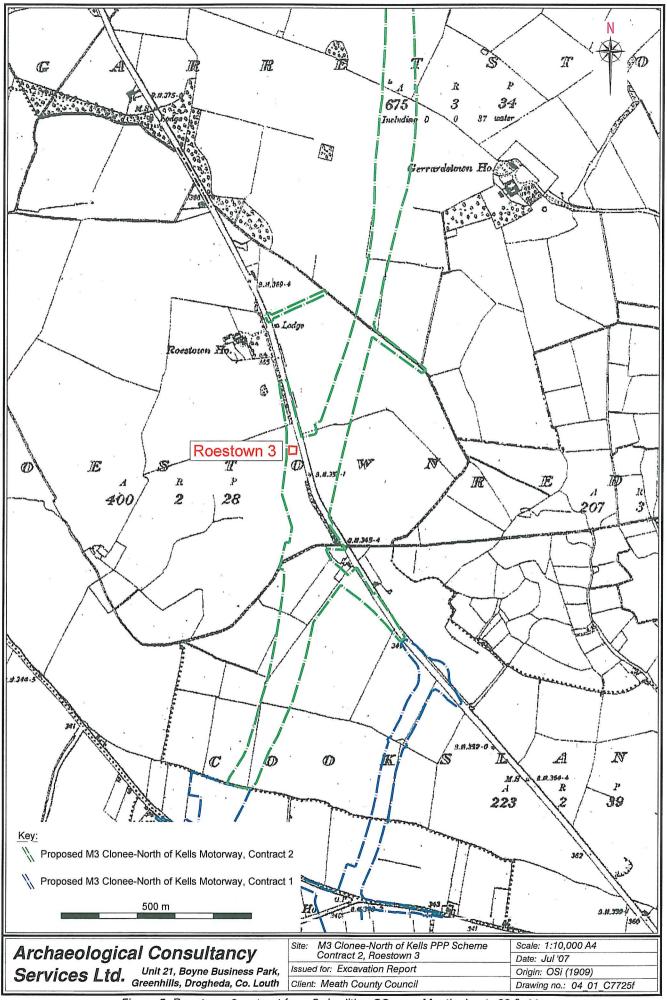


Figure 5: Roestown 3, extract from 3rd edition OS map, Meath sheets 38 & 44

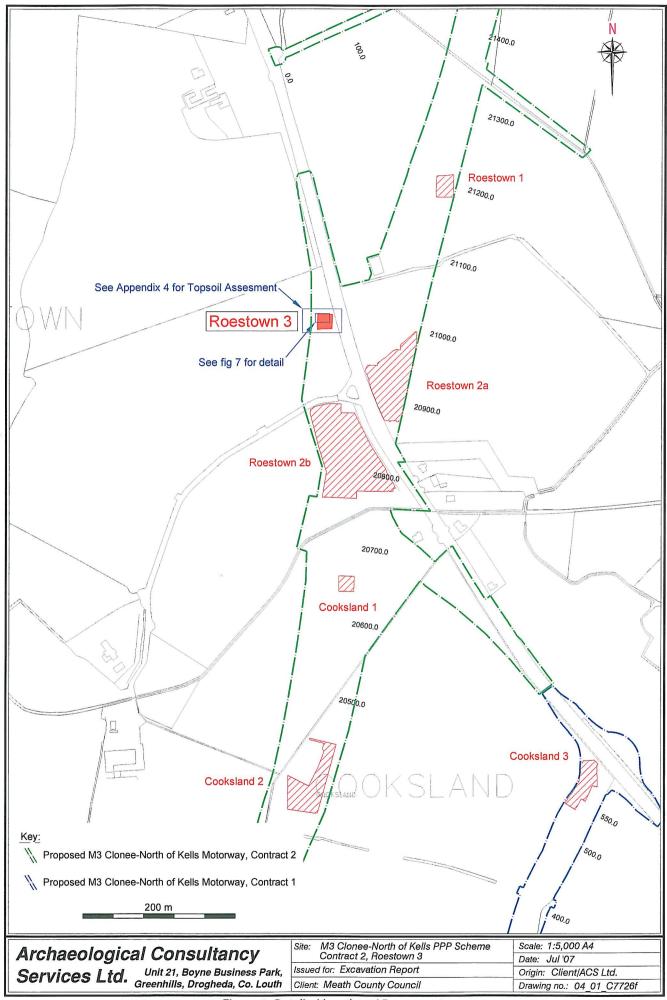


Figure 6: Detailed location of Roestown 3

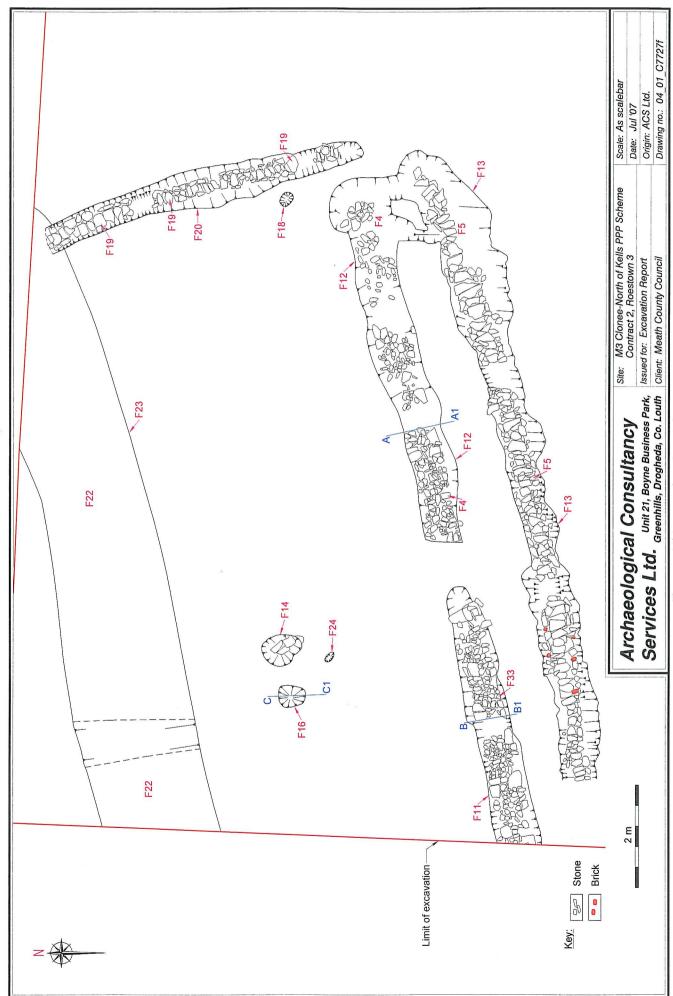


Figure 7: Mid-excavation plan of site

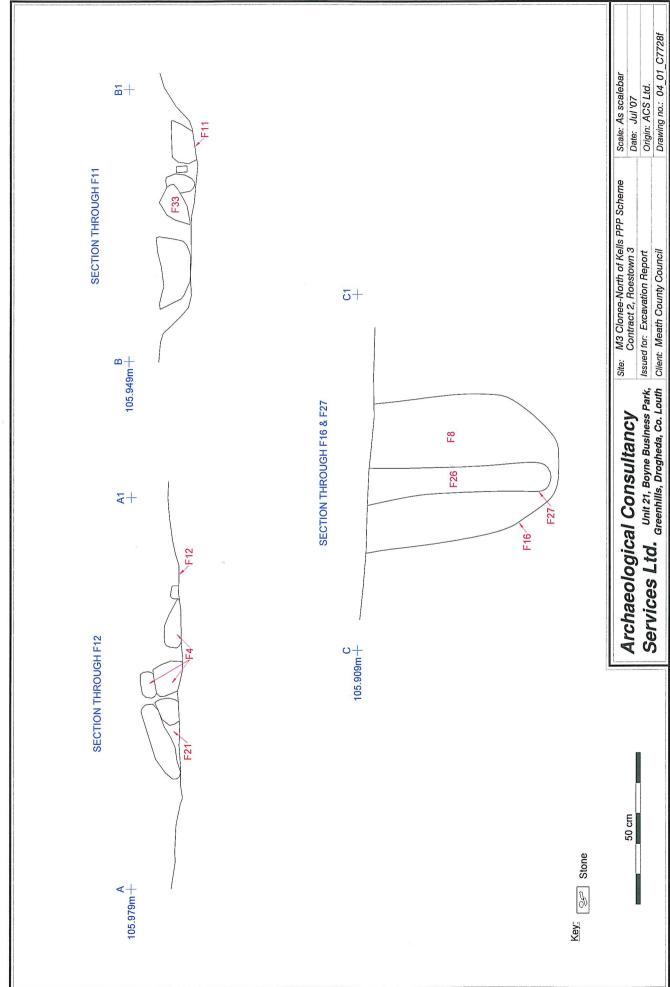


Figure 8: Sections of site



Plate 1: Post-excavation of site. (04_01_Roestown 3_CP02_13)



Plate 2: Post-excavation of site, possible wall F11 and drain F13. (04_01_Roestown 3_CP02_21)



Plate 3: East-facing section of possible wall F11. (04_01_Roestown 3_CP02_06)