

**N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment:
Archaeological Resolution**

**FINAL REPORT
04E0324**

**Site 6 Coolamurray Townland
Co. Wexford**

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Job No.:	1042-04
Client:	Wexford County Council
Date:	December 2009

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd

SUMMARY

This report comprises the final results of the archaeological excavation of Site 6, in the townland of Coolamurray, Co. Wexford. Work was undertaken as part of the archaeological programme for the N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-Alignment Scheme. The excavation was conducted by Dr. D. McCullough, under Excavation Licence No. 04E0324, for Valerie J Keeley Ltd, from 31st March to 2nd April 2004.

Site 6 was composed of potential pits, a possible ephemeral hearth of unknown date, a spread of grey soil assumed to be ash; but proven to be gleyed soil, post-medieval agricultural furrows and a modern pipe trench. Dating these features was not possible by either relative or absolute dating. This report furnishes the final results of the investigation. It includes an interpretation of the features excavated and recorded on the site, as well as details of the materials recovered from the site. No significant archaeology was discovered within the limits of this site area.

All archaeological work is now complete for this site and this report constitutes the final report on this excavation. A digital copy of the archive is available at the post excavation offices of Valerie J Keeley Ltd., Brehon House, Kilkenny Road, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims & Objectives

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd. was appointed by Wexford County Council to excavate archaeological sites first identified during a programme of additional centreline testing carried out by Archaeological Development Services Ltd. (Stafford 2001) (Licence Number 01E1050 & 01E1051). The scope of the archaeological measures was:

- To strip the topsoil from a potential site area measuring approx. 100m² within the lands acquired for construction of the realignment of the N30 and identify the previously discovered archaeological features and any other features that may be present in this area.
- Photograph and plan any archaeological features or possible features.
- Excavate any features identified and record their contexts and sections, retaining samples where necessary, to resolve them with preservation by record.
- Reinststate all excavated areas

The goal of this project being to preserve by record the archaeological site/s exposed within the take of the proposed route, and to further assess areas previously unavailable for testing.

These works took place in accordance with the licence (04E0324) issued by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government under the National Monuments Acts (1930 – 2004), in accordance with the terms of the Contract between Wexford 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. This project was funded by the Government of Ireland under the National Development Plan, 2000-2006.

1.2 Summary of Archaeological Significance

The site represents an assemblage of simple features characterized by the ephemeral episodes of past activity and the impacts of modern activities. The main features identified on Site 6 (04E0324) along the proposed re-alignment of the N30 roadway, in the townland of Coolamurray, Co. Wexford included small stone lined hearths, some of which contained small amounts of charcoal. An area identified in the testing as an ash spread was found to be a deposit of silty clay. In addition to the archaeological features investigated, 2 furrows (evidence of modern agricultural use) and a modern pipe trench were

located within the site area. All features were planned, photographed, sectioned and recorded. Sections were also excavated across the grey silty clay (possible ash spread) at numerous locations to determine its extent and composition. Highly disturbed upper levels, the lack of datable material; and the dating of some features by superposition, leads to the conclusion that none of the features were found to be of significant archaeological merit.

1.3 Timescale

Topsoil was stripped from the site on 1st March 2004. Excavation commenced on the 31st March 2004 with the site being resolved on 2nd April 2004. The site was backfilled by machine shortly after the work was carried out and the ground reinstated.

1.4 Site Location & Access

The site was located along the line of the proposed N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment Road Improvement Scheme. The site was located along the central section of the Scheme, within Coolamurray townland, in the civil parish of Templescoby and Barony of Bantry, County Wexford at approximate ch. 9785 (NGR 29227E, 13795N,. See Figures 1-4; Plate 1).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Scheme

The N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown scheme consists of an approximately 6km re-routing from its original course and is located approximately 8km west of Enniscorthy town. The N30 road links Enniscorthy and New Ross in Co. Wexford. The project represents one element of a larger project to re-align the N30 from New Ross to Enniscorthy where it is envisaged the scheme will tie into the proposed Western By-Pass of the town. Planning for this road was undertaken in accordance with the Operational Programme for Transport 1994 – 1999. The objectives of the National Roads Authority and Wexford County Council in constructing this new section of road can be summarised as being:

- To reduce transport costs
- To reduce journey times and journey time variance

The scheme also accorded with a policy of the Wexford County Development Plan (1993) to improve the capacity of all roads in the County, in particular the National Primary routes.

Archaeological investigation took place following the agreement of the Code of Practice between the National Roads Authority and the Minister for Arts, Heritage Gaeltacht and the Islands (whose responsibilities have now passed to the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

A two-stage approach was adopted. Archaeological Development Services Ltd. was appointed to carry out an archaeological assessment of the impact of the proposed road. Test excavations were undertaken in November 2001. A total of 7,270 linear metres of test trenches were excavated. Trenches were excavated using a tracked excavator with a 2m wide smooth-bladed bucket. The methodology for test excavation required a test trench to be excavated along the centreline of the proposed road with offset trenches excavated on alternate sides every 20m. Where necessary the test trenching pattern was altered to investigate specific anomalies noted or to investigate junctions and minor road re-alignments. It is estimated that the test trenches excavated equal 13,100m² representing a 4.8% sample of the lands acquired for the scheme.

The result of the archaeological assessment phase was the identification of 10 areas where archaeological excavation was recommended in order to investigate and preserve by record features identified in the assessment (Stafford 2001).

2.2 Archaeological Background

2.2.1 Prehistoric Archaeology

Prior to the current scheme of archaeological works undertaken by Valerie J Keeley Ltd.; there were no known prehistoric sites identified along corridor of the N30 Re-alignment. During this investigation, a Bronze Age site was identified to the west along the N30 Re-alignment (Site 5; Hardy: 2009).

2.2.2 Historical Archaeology

Six different route options were examined in the preliminary design phase of this project, and the chosen route was found to have a low impact on known archaeological remains. The only identified impact being on the vicinity of the medieval church site at Moneytucker which is listed in the Record of Monuments & Places for Co. Wexford and described in the Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford (WX025-011011, NGR 290473E 136551N) (Figure 5). Moving west along the N30 Re-alignment, an early medieval/medieval iron smithing site was identified and thoroughly investigated, the results of which are contained with the Final Report for Site 7 on this same scheme (McCullough 2009). Additionally, a Norman moated site was investigated to the west, the results of which are furnished in the Final Report for Site 4 (Hardy: 2009)

2.3 Coolamurray Townland

Coolamurray townland falls within the modern parish of Templescoby and the barony of Bantry, Co. Wexford. It is adjacent to the townlands of Moneytucker and Clohass to the west and east respectively; both of which are traversed in the re-alignment of the N30.

3.0 THE EXCAVATION

3.1 Site Description & Topography

Site 6 (04E0324) is in the township of Moneytucker, located in a gently sloping field to the south of the current N30 alignment. The field slopes down from the north and south to a flattish area, which sloped gently towards the east, forming a near basin shape. The site was on the western edge of the flat area. It was identified during testing as two small charcoal rich features and a shallow ashy deposit. The usage of this land until its CPO could be defined as tillage.

3.2 Previous Archaeological Assessment

The proposed excavation was carried out following the completion of archaeological assessment by Archaeological Development Services Ltd. (Stafford 2001) (Licence Number 01E1050 & 01E01051), for the N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown N30 Realignment Scheme. Its aim to preserve *by-record* the archaeological site/s exposed within the take of the proposed route.

The centre-line testing identified two small isolated, subsoil cut features that were uncovered at the centre of the roadline at ch. 9780. The material filling these features contained a high proportion of angular stones in a charcoal rich matrix. A shallow ashy deposit, which may be associated with these features, was identified 5m directly to their east (Stafford 2001).

3.3 Method

The topsoil at this site was removed from an area measuring 100m² utilising a 25 tonne 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 identify any new features which may have been exposed. At this stage it was possible to identify the exact locations of the centreline testing and its associated perpendicular test trenches (Plates 1 & 2) (Figure 6).

Upon identification all potential 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. Well-defined pits and postholes were half sectioned and recorded and then fully excavated. Sections were excavated through any linear features to obtain profiles and to expose the stratigraphic sequence.

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, micromorphology, 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. In cases of a simple feature matrix (cut and one fill) a single context number was assigned to both the cut and the fill.

3.4 Stratigraphic Summary

The Site Matrix (Appendix D) shows the relationship between all of the features and contexts identified during this programme of investigation. Below is a brief description of the features and associated contexts. A brief discussion of the various feature types and groupings is presented below. For the purpose of this report archaeological features have been divided into groups for ease of discussion. These groupings are based on the feature types and their location rather than any suggested phasing.

3.4.1 Natural Soil Horizon

The natural subsoil on the site [c1] was an orange-yellow slightly clayey sand with small stones and small pieces of slate throughout. The subsoil on the eastern half of the site [c5 & c15] appeared to display evidence of gleying, a chemical reaction which can occur as a result of water logging (Carter: 2004). This is suggested by the light blueish-grey colour of the subsoil in the lower half of the site.

3.4.2 Linear Features

Two extremely shallow furrows [c2 & c7] were located in the north-eastern corner of the site. The furrows were orientated in a northeast-southwest direction and were no more than 0.1m apart in places. [c2] was 3m in length, and was 0.2m wide. [c7] was 1.6m long and was 0.2m wide. Both furrows were very shallow, no more than 0.02m deep; a small circular feature [c6] was cut into [c2] (Figure 6).

3.4.3 Non-linear Features

A shallow circular feature [c6], 0.45m in diameter and 0.65m deep, the upper fill was a densely packed stone filled context (Plate 3, Figure 7)), and the basal fill being a highly compacted greyish-yellow clay [c10] that appeared to be lining the cut. There were very occasional flecks of charcoal in the upper extent of the upper context, and a moderate amount of charcoal within the clay lining. This feature truncated a linear furrow [c2] which has been interpreted as evidence of post-medieval agricultural practices. A modern corn husk and leaf were also found in the upper fill of the feature, providing evidence of disturbance. There was no evidence of in-situ burning (Figure 6).

A small area of heat-affected subsoil [c3], roughly oval in plan was identified near the centre of the site. It measured 0.75m x 0.35m and 0.11m deep. On top of the heat-affected subsoil there was a pocket of black charcoal rich material [c9]. The compositional matrix of this material was moderately compact silty clay with small stones throughout the context. It measured 0.5m x 0.4m and was 0.22m deep. The charcoal from this context measured between 2-10mm in size, and was spread evenly throughout the context.

A concentration of heat-affected and fire-cracked stones in a small oval area [c4] was identified in the western area of the site. This was identified as C48 during the testing; small features cut into the subsoil containing angular stones with a charcoal rich matrix (Stafford 2001). It measured roughly 0.8m x 0.6m in plan. The stones ranged in size between roughly 0.05m in diameter, up to 0.15m x 0.1m x 0.05m. Mixed between and below the heat-affected stones was grey brown sandy clay with small fragments of charcoal, decayed stone and mica throughout (Plate 4, Figure 8). The soil became slightly more yellow and coarse towards the base of the feature due to the degradation of several pieces of sandstone and granite. The subsoil cut for the feature was a gentle concave bowl, 0.15m deep. The slightly concaved base of the cut appeared to be lined with small sub-rounded stones, less than 0.05m in diameter that had been compressed into the subsoil. It may be suggested that this feature was a small hearth although no sign of in-situ burning was evident.

A small bowl-shaped feature [c12] oval in plan and cut into the subsoil measuring 0.38m x 0.3m x 0.12m deep was also identified. The feature was characterised by its fill of dark brown sandy clay with a few small stones and pieces of charcoal throughout (Plate 5, Figure 9).

The most recent feature on site was a modern field drain [c8]. Orientated roughly east-west, it was cut through the subsoil gley area in south-eastern corner of the site. The drain was 0.5m wide and 0.8m

deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. There was a clay drain pipe at the base of the cut. The cut was filled with a mixed context containing re-deposited subsoil and topsoil.

Following investigation, three contexts were interpreted as being as a result of bioturbation; these were [c11], [c13] and [c14].

3.4.4 Topsoil

Topsoil was mid brown clayey silt; heavily disturbed by agricultural activity.

3.5 Condition Post Excavation

The site was backfilled by machine after the work was carried out and the ground reinstated in April 2004. The contractor took possession of the site in June 2004; for the construction of the N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment Road Scheme. The site formed part of the mainline for the new road.

4.0 THE FINDS

4.1 Overview

No archaeological artefacts were discovered during the excavation of Site 6.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation

This site was characterised by several charcoal containing features cut into the sub-soil (Plate 6). However, none of these features contained sufficient charcoal within their compositional matrix to allow for radio-carbon dating. There was very little evidence of in-situ burning on the site although there may have been a small hearth [c4], as it appeared to have a rough stone lining. [c10] also appeared to have been lined with clay, although again there was no evidence of in-situ burning. There was no stratigraphic relationship between the majority of the features on the site, and no artefacts with which to date them. The furrows identified on the site relate to post-medieval agricultural activity. This would therefore allow, due to [c6] being cut into a shallow furrow [c2], to attribute a post-medieval date for this feature.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This site can be characterized as a post medieval agricultural landscape containing evidence of ephemeral burning episodes; some possibly earlier than the agricultural activity, but others most definitely after. As not enough carbonised material was recovered to allow for absolute dating and no artefacts were recovered enabling relative dating, it is not possible to ascribe dates to the various occurrences on this site. It is evident that there was no activity on this site that contributed to the formulation of a multi-component or multi-phase occupation or usage. The thorough investigation of the site has resulted in the identification of minor archaeological activity, geological processes, bio-turbation and modern agricultural use. Excavations at the site are complete and no further work is recommended. All post excavation archaeological work is now complete for this site and this report constitutes the final report on this excavation. A digital copy of the archive is available at the post excavation offices of Valerie J Keeley Ltd., Brehon House, Kilkenny Road, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the following people for their involvement in this site: James Eogan and Freya Smith of the Tramore House Regional Design Office. David McCullough, on behalf of Valerie J Keeley Ltd., directed the site. Site work was executed by Maeve Grant, Peter Larsson, Paddy Clinton and Patrick McCafferty; supervised by Graeme Laidlaw. David McCullough compiled this report with illustrations by Oscar Ryan. The scheme was project managed by John Channing on behalf of Valerie J Keeley Ltd. for Wexford County Council.

8.0 REFERENCES

- Carter, Stephen, 2004. *N30 Jamestown to Moneytucker Re-alignment: Notes from a Site Visit on 8 April 2004*. Unpublished Notes. Headland Archaeology. Edinburgh.
- Hardy, C., 2009. *N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment, Co Wexford: Archaeological Resolution FINAL REPORT Excavation Licence No.: 04E0326 Site 4, Coolamurray Townland, Co. Wexford*. Unpublished Report. Valerie J. Keeley Ltd. Castlecomer.
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9.0 EXCAVATION RECORD

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT REGISTER

C #	Type	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	Natural Subsoil	n/a	Circular	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	Cut/Fill	Furrow	Linear	n/a	n/a	0.02 m
3	Cut	Modern burnt material	Irregular oval	0.75 m	0.35 m	0.11 m
4	Cut/Fill	In-situ hearth	Irregular oval	0.8 m	0.60 m	0.2 m
5	Fill	Bioturbated Subsoil	Irregular	7.0 m	10.0 m	0.25 m
6	Fill	n/a	Irregular	n/a	n/a	0.2 m
7	Cut/Fill	Furrow	Linear	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	Cut/ Fill	Modern drain pipe	Linear	4.0 m	3.0 m	0.8 m
9	Fill	Modern burnt material	Circular	0.4 m	0.5 m	0.22 m
10	Fill	Modern burnt material	Irregular	n/a	n/a	n/a
11	n/a	Bioturbation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	Cut/Fill	Possible hearth?	Semicircular	n/a	n/a	n/a
13	Cut/Fill	Bioturbation	Linear	3.5 m	0.7 m	n/a
14	Cut/Fill	Bioturbation	Linear	3.5 m	0.7 m	n/a
15	Fill	Subsoil deposit	Linear	8.0 m	4.0 m	0.22 m

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE REGISTER

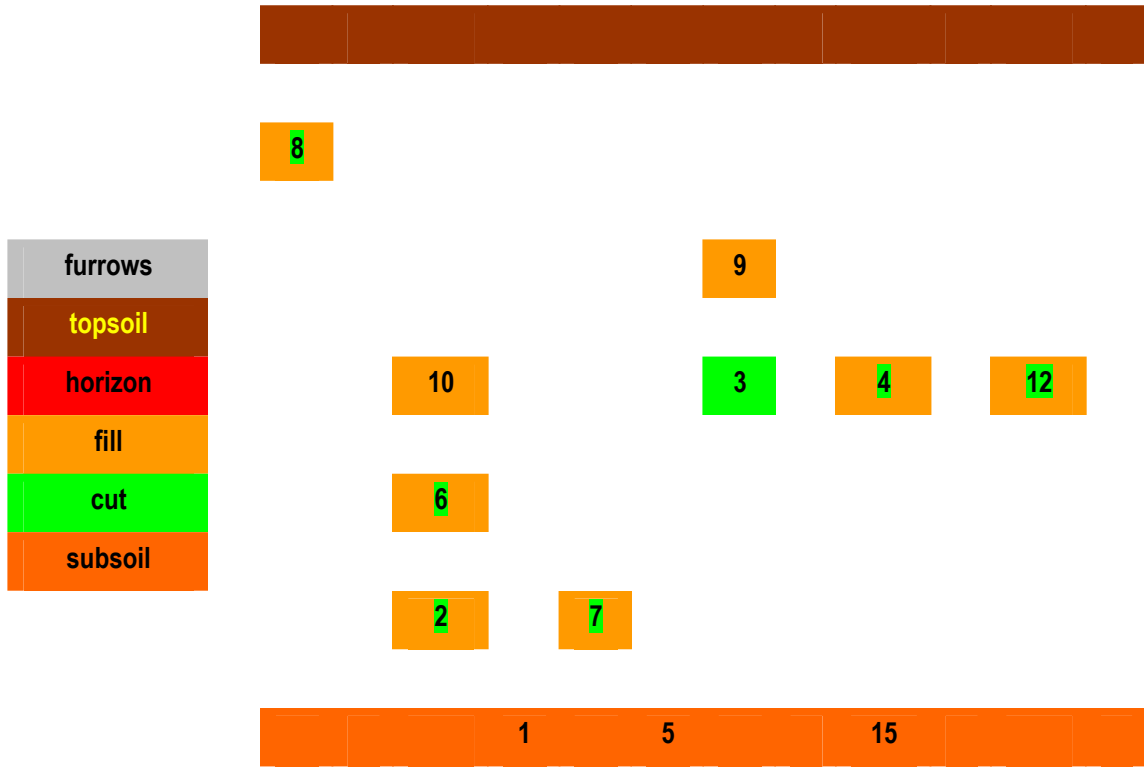
Sample	Context	Type/purpose	Specialist Analysis	Weight (Kg)	Feature Type	Cut
1	[c12]	Dark brown sandy soil with charcoal flecks	Soil analysis if appropriate: C14 if Appropriate	5	Possible hearth material	same

ALL SAMPLES WERE DISCARDED DURING POST EXCAVATION ANALYSIS

APPENDIX C: LIST OF QUANTITIES

Context Sheets	Drawings	Samples	Finds	Photos	Registers	Notebooks
15	9	0 (1 discarded)	0	50	4	1

APPENDIX D: STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



PLATES



Plate 1: View of Site 6 immediately after the topsoil stripping. Looking East-north-east.



Plate 2: Site 6 prior to feature excavation. Looking East-north-east.



Plate 3: Context 6 as viewed looking south during its excavation and recording.



Plate 4: Context 4 as viewed looking north during its excavation and recording.

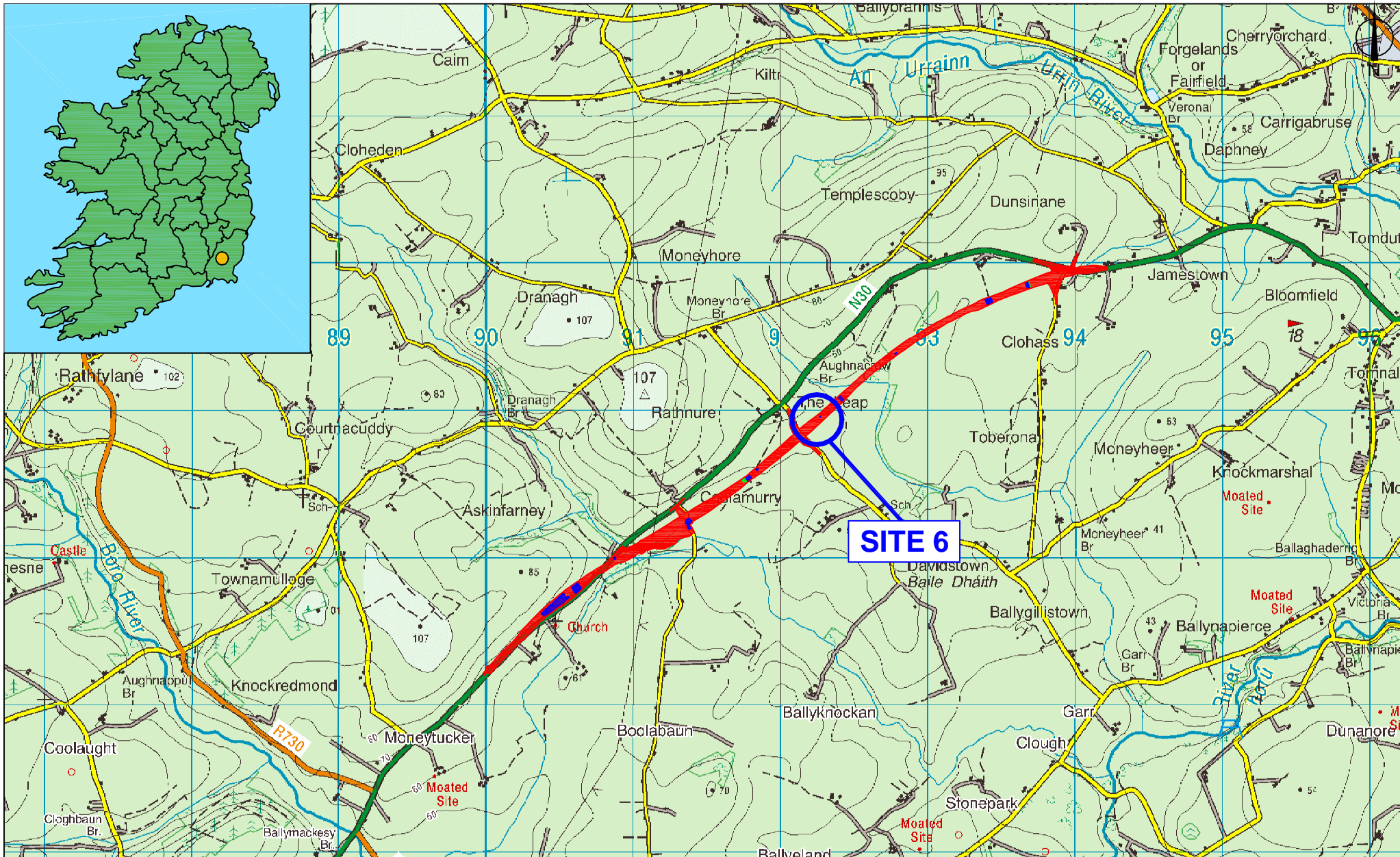



Plate 5: Context 12 as viewed looking north during its excavation and recording.

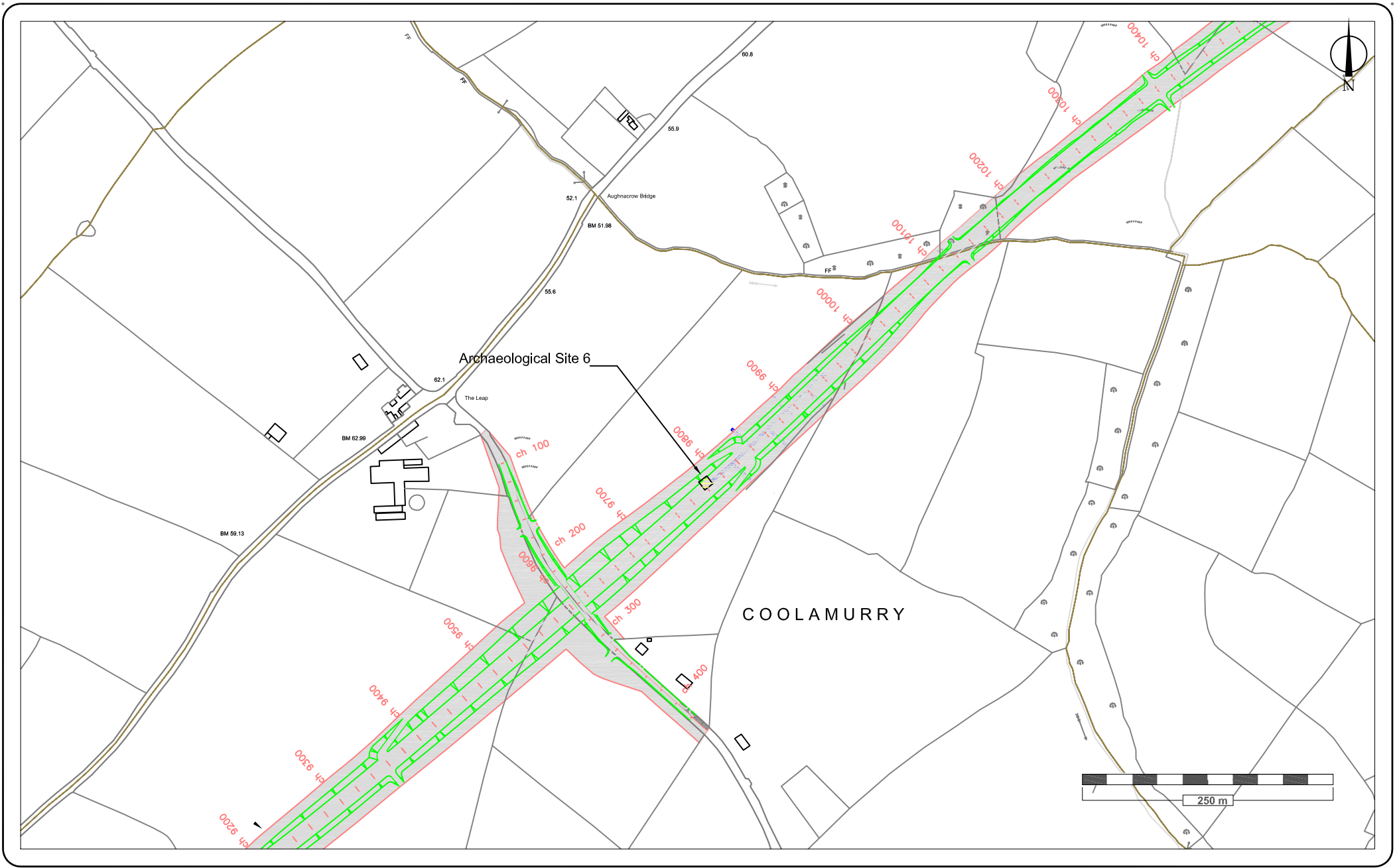


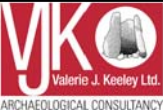
Plate 6: Post-Excavation view of Site 6 looking East-north-east.

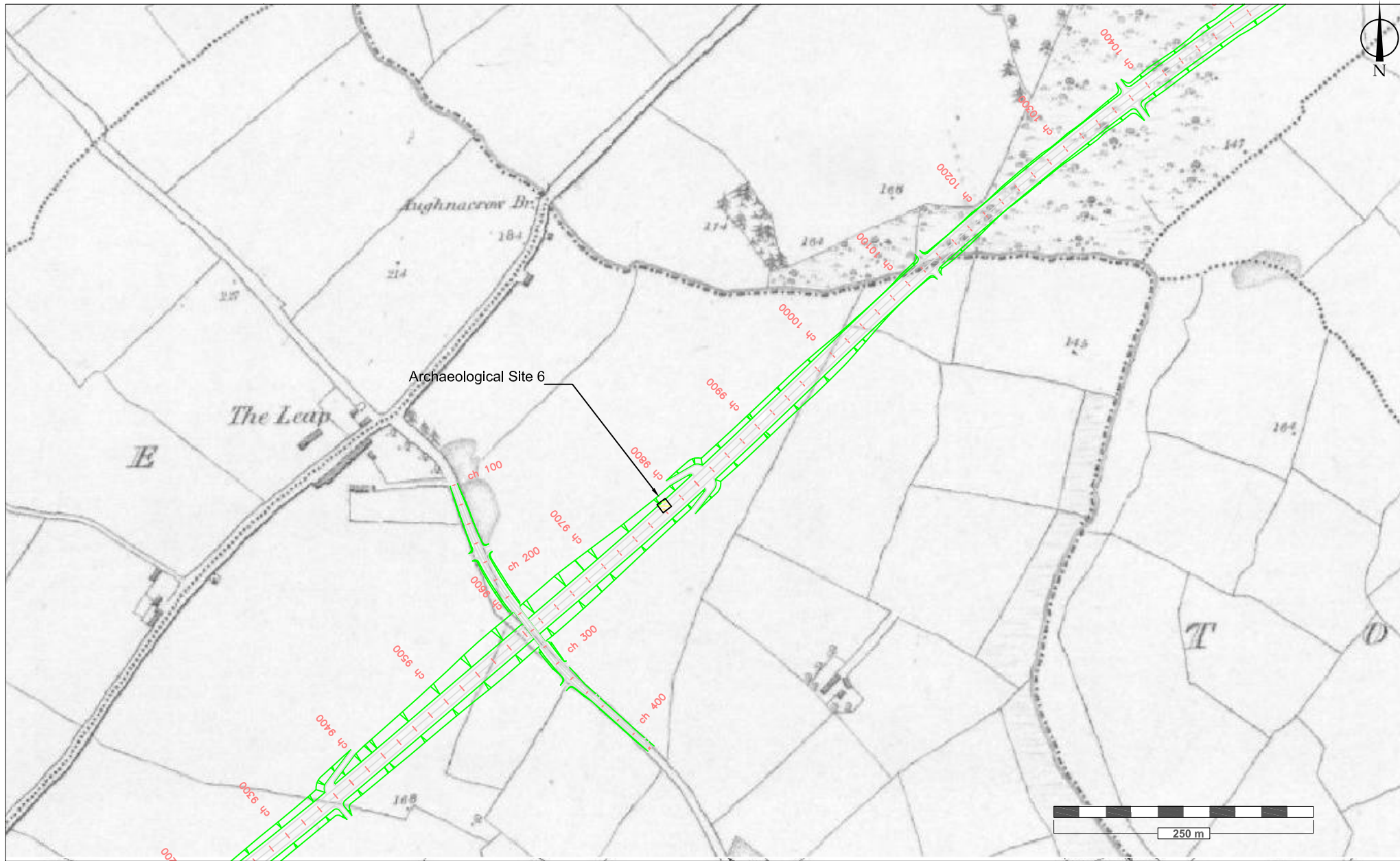
FIGURES



Title Location Map of Scheme on OS Discovery Series Mapping	Notes	Job/Exc No. 04E0324	Compiled by OR	CAD reference 1042-04-400/Tera3	Client NRA / Wexford County Council	 Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 444023 Fax: (+353) 056 444023 Email: vjk@vjk. Website: www.vjk.
		Date Nov 09	Scale 1:30000	Drawing No. Figure 1	Project N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment	



Title Scheme map with excavation area denoted	Notes	Job/Exc No. 04E0324	Compiled by SD	CAD reference 1042-04-400/Tera3	Client NRA / Wexford County Council	 Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny.	Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
		Date October 09	Scale 1:5000	Drawing No. Figure 2	Project N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment		



Title
Route Shown on 1st Edition OS mapping

Notes

Job/Exc No.
04E0324
Date
October 09

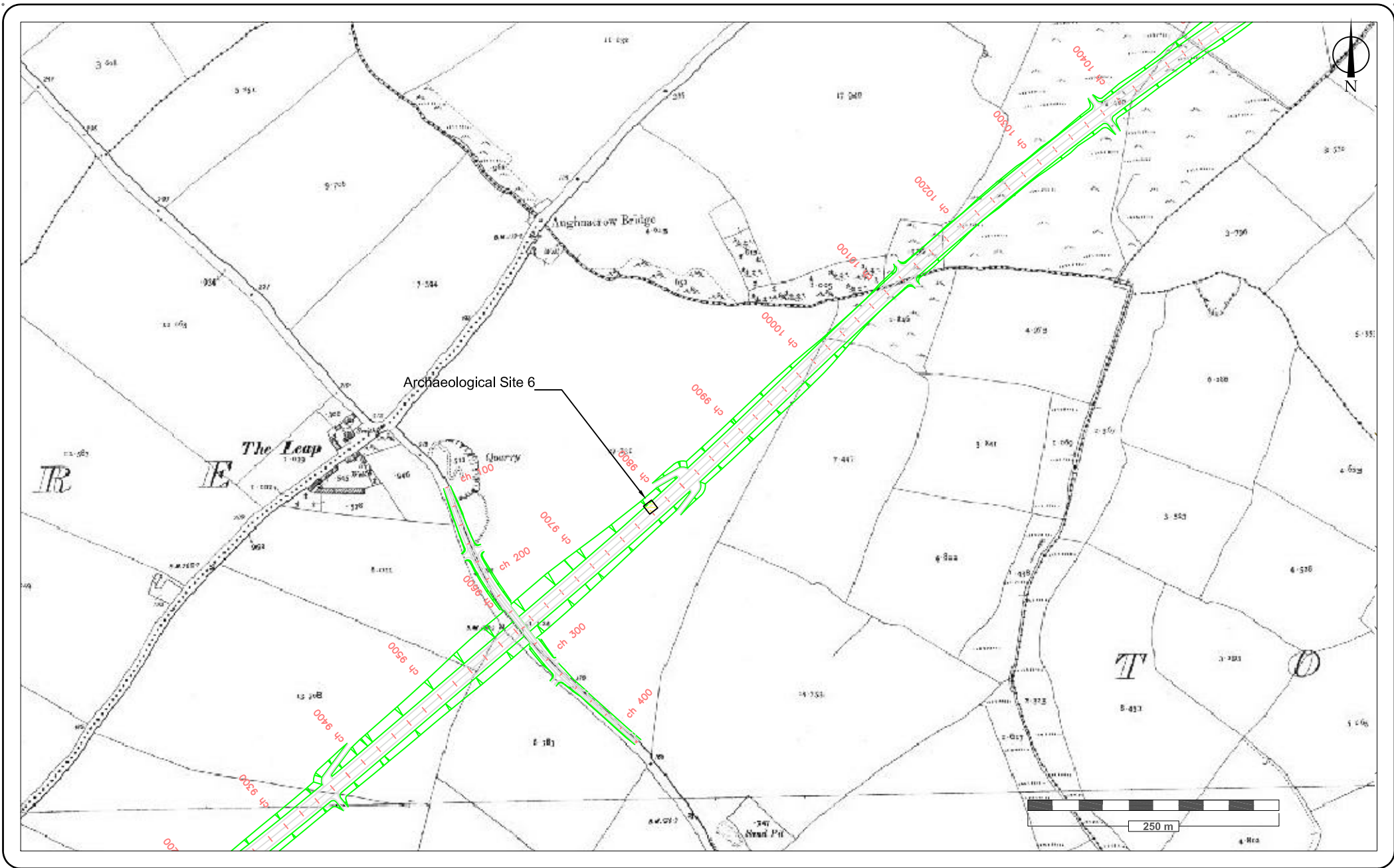
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CAD reference
1042-04-400/Tera3
Drawing No.
Figure 3

Client
NRA / Wexford County Council
Project
N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown
Re-alignment



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Title
Route Shown on 2nd Edition OS mapping

Notes

Job/Exc No.
04E0324

Date
October 09

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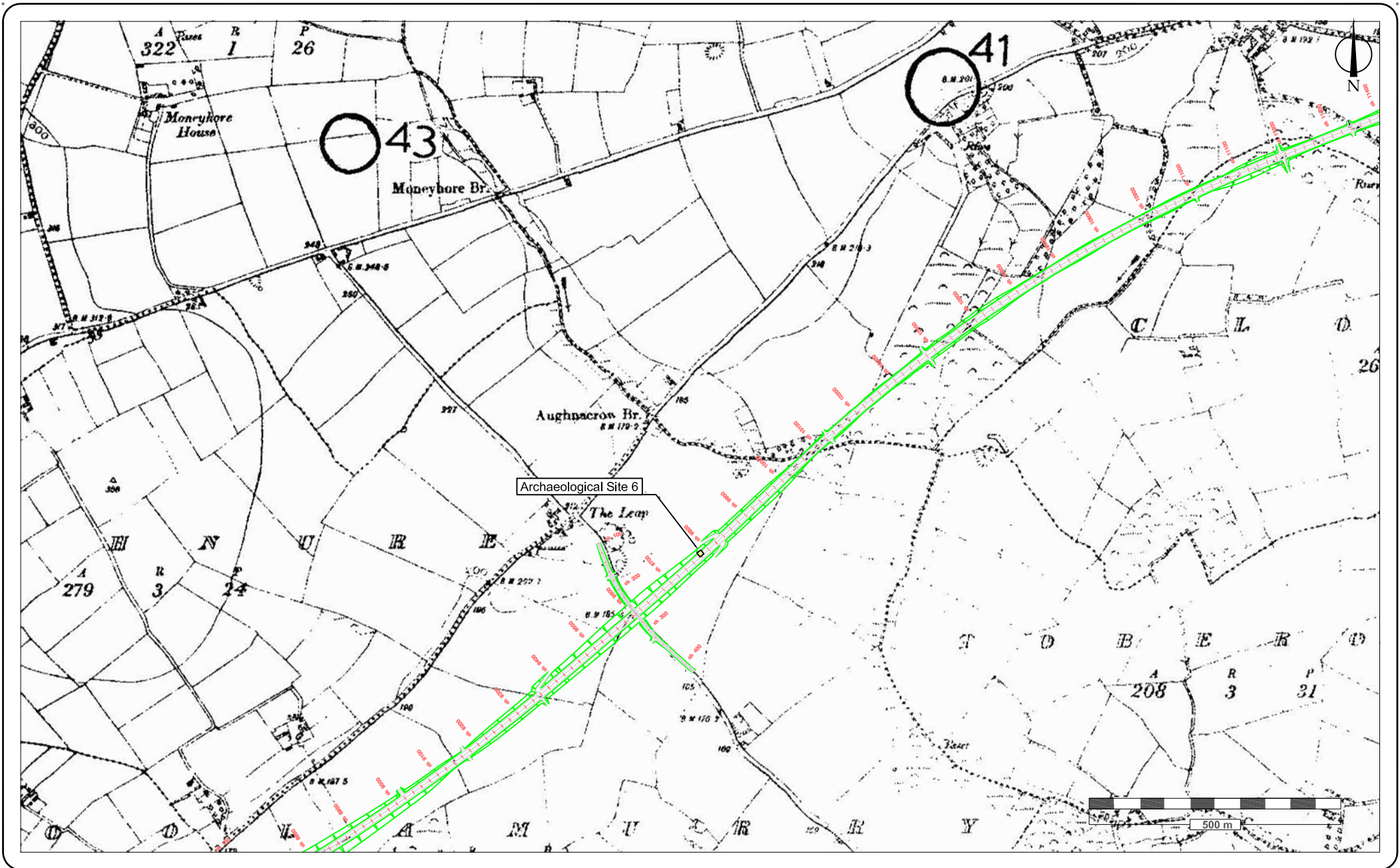
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Title
RMP map showing site location

Notes

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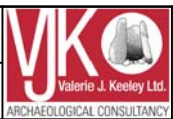
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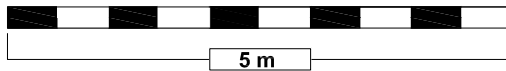
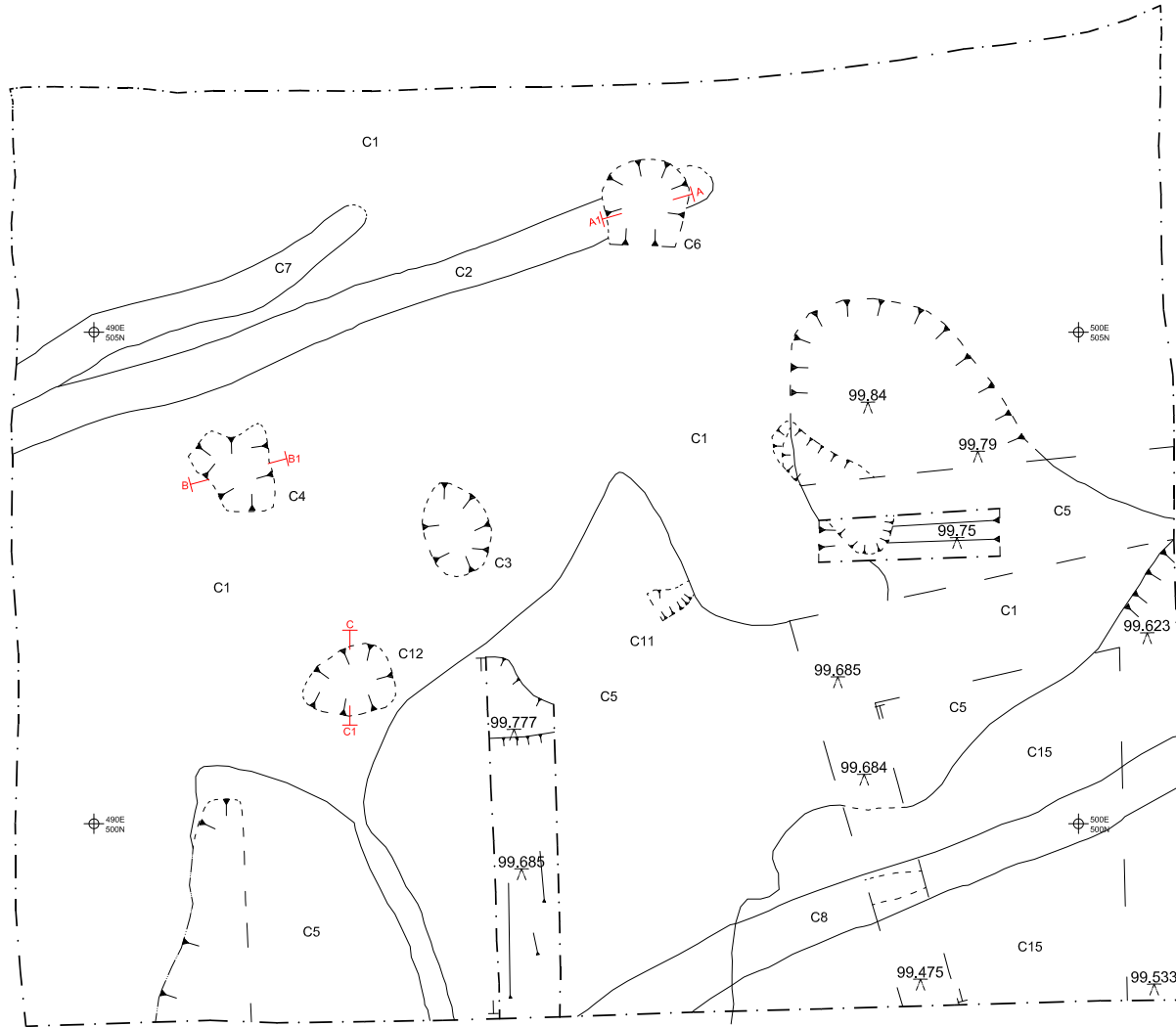
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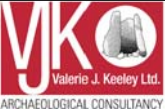
Project
N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment

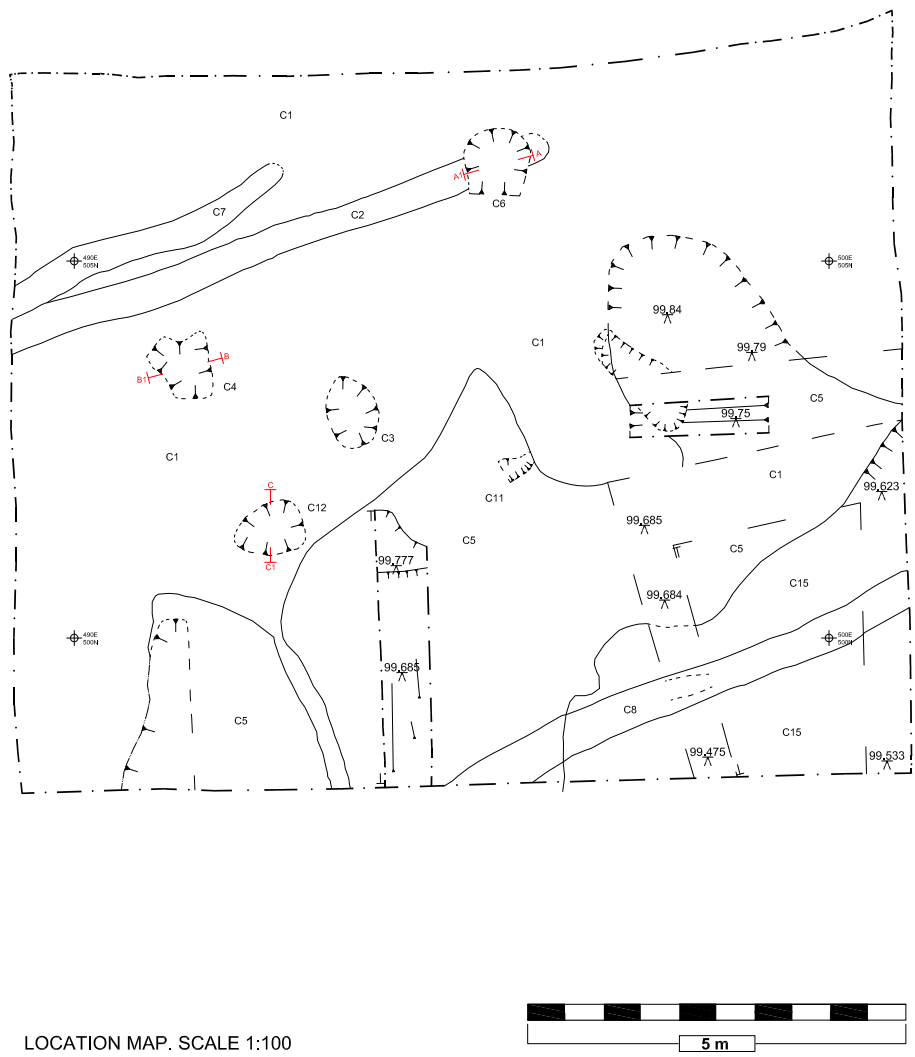
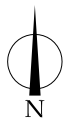


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Title Post Excavation Plan of the Site Area	Notes	Job/Exc No. 04E0324	Compiled by GW	CAD reference 1042-04-400/Tera3	Client NRA / Wexford County Council	 Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny.	Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
		Date October 09	Scale 1:75	Drawing No. Figure 6	Project N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown Re-alignment		



LOCATION MAP. SCALE 1:100

Figure 7

Northwest Facing Section

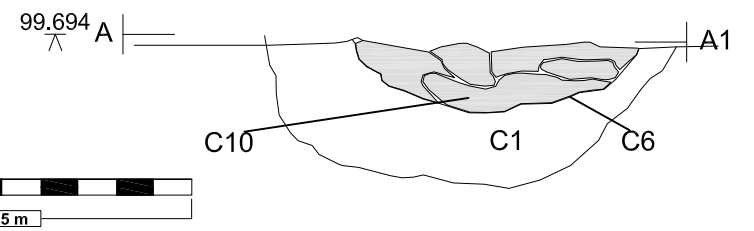


Figure 8

Northwest Facing Section

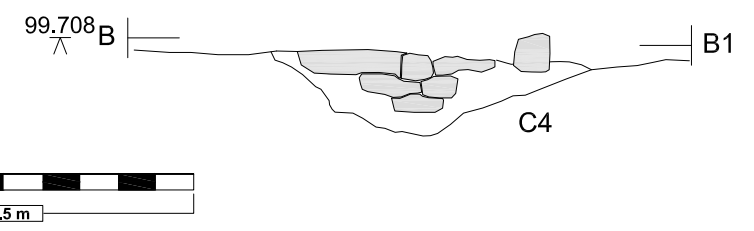
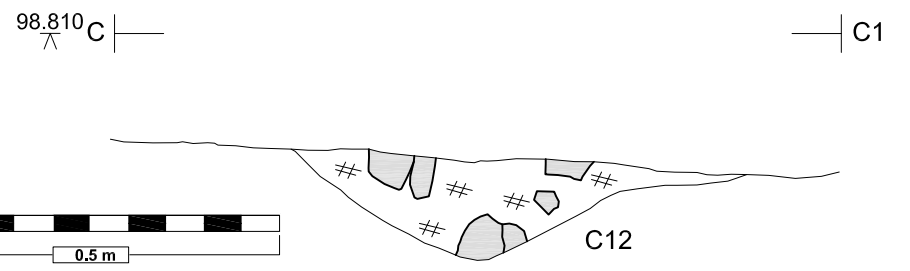


Figure 9

West Facing Section



SECTIONS. SCALE 1:100

Title
 Figure 7 Section drawing of C6
 Figure 8 Section drawing of C4
 Figure 9 Section drawing of C12

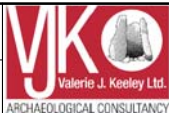
Notes
 Stone
 Charcoal

Job/Exc No.
 04E0324
Date
 October 09

Compiled by
 GW
Scale
 1:10 & 1:100

CAD reference
 1042-04-400/Tera3
Drawing No.
 Figures 7, 8 & 9

Client
 NRA / Wexford County Council
Project
 N30 Moneytucker to Jamestown
 Re-alignment



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