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**IAC** Irish Archaeological  
Consultancy



**N6 KINNEGAD – ATHLONE SCHEME  
PHASE 2: KILBEGGAN TO ATHLONE  
DUAL CARRIAGEWAY**

**SITE A016/034 Williamstown 4:  
Chainage 8350;  
NGR: 213513/238252; 76m OD.**

**FINAL REPORT**

**ON BEHALF OF  
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL and the  
NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY**

**MINISTERIAL DIRECTION NUMBER: A016/034  
NMS REGISTRATION NUMBER: E2662**

**DIRECTOR: FINTAN WALSH**

**26 AUGUST 2008**

**IRISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY LTD**

## ABSTRACT

This site is located in the townland of Williamstown, c. 4km W of Moate town, Co. Westmeath. The archaeological excavation was carried out by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Westmeath County Council and the National Roads Authority in advance of the construction of the N6 Phase 2: Kilbeggan to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme.

An excavation area measuring 10m x 10m (100m<sup>2</sup>) was opened at Williamstown 4.

The site at Williamstown 4 consisted of a single pit; measuring 2.25m long, 1.10m wide and c. 0.52m deep, the pit contained four fills. The function of this feature is unknown, particularly as it occurs in isolation and there were no diagnostic finds from the site. This pit may be modern and is of little or no archaeological significance.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The archaeological excavation at Williamstown 4, Co. Westmeath was carried out on behalf of Westmeath County Council and the National Roads Authority in advance of the construction of the N6 Phase 2: Kilbeggan to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme.

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### **Report Production Contributions by**

Mary Liz–McCarthy

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This preliminary stratigraphic report provides comment and analysis on the excavation carried out in the townland of Williamstown, Co. Westmeath (Figure 1 and 2) as part of an archaeological mitigation program associated with the N6 Phase 2: Kilbeggan to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme. Archaeological fieldwork was directed by Fintan Walsh of Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. (IAC Ltd.) and was funded by Westmeath County Council and the National Roads Authority under the National Development Plan 2000–2006, 2007–2013 and the EU Structural fund.

## 1.1 Site location

Williamstown 4 is located in Williamstown townland, to the N of the existing N6, c. 4 km W of Moate (Westmeath OS sheet 30). The site is:

- Site Williamstown 4: Ministerial Licence A016/034; NMS Registration Number E2662; Route Chainage (Ch) 8350; NGR 213513/238252; 76m OD.

The site was identified as a result of a test trenching exercise undertaken by IAC Ltd. in August 2005 (Ministerial Direction No A016/034, Yvonne Whitty). The site is located in flat boggy/pasture land.

The site is located to the NE of a recorded ringfort – WM030:093.

## 1.2 The scope of the project

The proposed N6 Kinnegad – Athlone Scheme is to be constructed in two phases. The Phase 2 Kilbeggan–Athlone scheme will consist of a dual carriageway that will run for a distance of approximately 29km. The location of the route is predominantly to the S of the existing N6 and there will be access to the local road network through the seven grade separated junctions located at Athlone, Farnagh, Moate and Kilbeggan. The cross-section of the mainline consists of 2 m wide verges, 2.5 m wide hard shoulders, 7m wide two-lane carriageways and a 3m wide central reserve. This central reserve will accommodate 1m hard strips and a safety barrier. In addition to the mainline dual carriageway there is a further 0.3km of standard dual carriageway to the S of Athlone Interchange to connect to the existing N6 and 1.2 km to the S of Kilbeggan Interchange to connect to the existing N52.

The archaeological requirements for the N6 Kilbeggan to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme, are outlined in the Archaeological Directions issued to Westmeath County Council by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Section 14A (2) of the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 and in the terms of the contract between Westmeath County Council and Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. These instructions form the basis of all archaeological works undertaken for this development. The archaeological excavation works under this contract are located between the townlands of Kilbeggan South, Co. Westmeath and Creggan Lower, Co. Westmeath.

The proposed N6 was subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment, the archaeology and cultural history section of which was carried out by Sheila Lane and Associates and presented in 2003. The Record of Monuments and Places, the Sites and Monuments Record, Topographical files, aerial photography, the Westmeath Archaeological Urban Survey and literary sources were all consulted. One phase of geophysical survey was also conducted at selected sites along the proposed route by Target Archaeological Geophysics. As a result of the paper survey, field inspections and geophysical survey, a number of potential sites were recorded in proximity to this section of the overall route alignment.

Advance archaeological testing was completed by IAC Ltd and excavation of the sites identified during testing was conducted by IAC Ltd on behalf of Westmeath County Council and the NRA.

### **Specific**

- Site A016/034, Williamstown 4 site lies at Ch 8350.

The excavation covered an area approximately 10m x 10m which therefore totalled approximately 100m<sup>2</sup>. Williamstown 4 had not been previously identified and was not a Recorded Monument.

### **1.3 Circumstances and dates of fieldwork**

The excavations were undertaken to offset the adverse impact of road construction on known and potential subsoil archaeological remains in order to preserve these sites by record.

Topsoil stripping of the area was completed in March 2006. This was followed by hand cleaning and archaeological resolution of the site. The order and date of the excavation is as follows:

- Site commenced on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006 with a team of 1 field director, 1 Supervisor, and 3 assistant archaeologists.
- Excavation and recording of all features were completed by the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

It was agreed in advance that adequate funds to cover excavation, post-excavation, conservation and dating analysis would be made available by Westmeath County Council. Typically, dating would involve pottery analysis through typological study and radiocarbon analysis. The site archive, and any finds, samples *et cetera* will be kept in safe storage by IAC Ltd. during the post-excavation stage.

## 2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 General

#### *Williamstown Townland*

Williamstown lies in the parish of Ballyloughloe within the barony of Clonlonan. It was in the ownership of the Magawlys, the chief family of Calree. They resided in their castle known as the Manor House in the east of the townland. In 1613 it was owned by William Mor Magawly and later in 1632 was held by his son Murtagh as a tenancy from the King by military service. This is recorded in an inquisition taken at Ballymore 19<sup>th</sup> April 1633. W. Trench Esq. was the landlord in 1837. A ringfort (WM30:092) and an Architectural fragment (WM30:119) were recorded within the townland.

Recent archaeological excavations in the townland have uncovered four previously unrecorded sites. These include two fulacht fiadh sites and two pits. They were discovered during work on the gas pipeline to the west carried out by Margaret Gowan and Co. (02E0622 NGR 213448/238794, 02E0623 NGR 213004/238794, 02E0361 NGR 212936/238785, 02E0362 NGR 212738/238792 Bernice Molloy 2002). Two burnt mounds were also excavated in close proximity to this site as part of the N6 Kilbeggan–Athlone resolution works: A016/086 Williamstown 2 c. 200m to the W and A016/035 Boyanaghcalry 1 c. 400m to the E. A site excavated immediately to the W at Williamstown 3 consisted of a small cluster of medieval pits (Figure 3).

Historical Background *after Orlaith Egan 2004*

### 2.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

Site A016/034 was not noted in the EIS. However, the EIS did note a CHS, CHS 14, c. 250m SW of the site. CHS 14 is a recorded ringfort (RMP WM030-093). There was no Dúchas file available for this site, but it is clearly defined as a large circular enclosure overgrown with vegetation on the NRA aerial photos.

### 2.3 Results of Archaeological Testing

Archaeological testing along the route of the road exposed an area measuring 2.5m x 4.5m containing a feature identified as an isolated charcoal rich pit cut by a possible furrow. The pit measured 1.2m N-S x 1.42m E-W and had a depth of 0.2m. There were very frequent charcoal chunks in the fill. There was no evidence of *in situ* burning.

### 2.4 Aerial Survey Analysis

Site A016/034 was not identified in the aerial survey.



### 3 SUMMARY OF EXCAVATION METHOD

#### 3.1 On-site methodology

The topsoil was reduced to the interface between natural and topsoil using a 20 tonne excavator machine equipped with a flat toothless bucket under strict archaeological supervision. The remaining topsoil was removed by the archaeological team with the use of shovels, hoes and trowels in order to expose and identify the archaeological remains. A site grid was set up at 10m intervals and was subsequently calibrated to the national grid using GPS survey equipment.

The site was divided into two areas for the purpose of excavation – Area A and Area B.

All features were subsequently fully excavated by hand and recorded using the single context recording system with plans and sections being produced at a scale of 1:50, 1:20 or 1:10 as appropriate.

A complete photographic record was maintained throughout the excavation. Digital photographs were taken of all features and of work in progress.

An environmental strategy was devised at the beginning of the excavation. Features exhibiting large amounts of carbonised material were the primary targets.

#### 3.2 Report production methodology

##### *Groups and subgroups*

For the purpose of this report the archaeological remains are described by way of sub-groups (stratigraphically connected contexts, generally derived from a defined and stratigraphically independent archaeological action or sequence of actions). Groups define related sub-groups. Phasing of the site is based on the grouping of the groups, and this is described in the discussion (Section 6).

In the following text, the author has used three types of brackets:

- { } = These enclose Subgroup numbers.
- ( ) = These enclose Deposit/Fill numbers.
- [ ] = These enclose Cut numbers.

The author has allocated Subgroup numbers starting from {1000} to avoid confusion with existing context numbers.

Example:

- Subgroup {1400} consists of Cut [x] and fills (y) and (z)
- Subgroup {1456} consists of Cut [a] and fill (b), Cut [c] and fill (d), Cut [e] and fill (f). Cuts [a], [c], and [e] have been shown to be related and can therefore be placed in one collective Subgroup.

## 4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

### 4.1 Phase 1: Group 1: Natural Drift Geology

#### {1001} Natural Drift Geology

##### Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled by	Depth (m)	Length (m)	Width (m)	Description	Interpretation	Area
2	Deposit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yellow/orange and green/grey gravels.	Natural subsoil	Site

**Finds:** N/A

##### Interpretation:

This is the natural subsoil. At Williamstown 4 the natural was a combination of yellow/orange and green/grey gravels.

### 4.2 Phase 2: Group 2: Possible Archaeological Activity – Isolated Pit

#### {1002} Pit [C3]

##### Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled by	Depth (m)	Length (m)	Width (m)	Description	Interpretation	Area
3	Cut	N/A	C4, C5, C6, C7.	0.52	2.25	1.10 (max) 0.90 (min)	Oval cut in plan. NE-SW orientation. Sharp break of slope at top. Concave slope at SW and gradual at NE. Gradual break of slope onto a concave base.	Cut of pit.	N/A
4	Fill	C3	N/A	0.52 (max) 0.20 (min)	1.53	1.10	Very soft compaction, black silty sand, >90% charcoal.	Black organic fill of pit. Primary fill.	N/A
5	Fill	C3	N/A	0.18 (max) 0.15 (min)	0.53	0.50	Soft compaction, brown, sandy clay.	Fill of pit. Upper fill.	N/A
6	Fill	C3	N/A	0.39 (max) 0.29 (min)	1.20	0.88	Soft compaction, dark grey clayey sand, low quantity of charcoal inclusions.	Fill of pit. Secondary fill.	N/A
7	Fill/layer	C3	N/A	0.12	1.09	0.87	Soft compaction, light brown/yellow clayey sand.	Upper intrusive deposit.	N/A

**Finds:** None

##### Interpretation:

Pit [C3] was the sole feature of significance identified at Williamstown 4. It comprised a roughly oval cut, containing four fills (Figures 4, 5, 6; Plates 1, 2). Three of the fills (C5), (C6) and (C7) were very similar in composition, containing little charcoal. However, the primary fill of the feature (C4) comprised an organic layer, mostly made up of charcoal. This primary fill was overlain by fills (C6) and finally upper fill (C5). Deposit (C7) is probably the result of intrusive soils or disturbance in the upper level of the pit rather than a separate cut/feature.

The pit comprised two sections – the main outer cut which was relatively shallow and a central area which was significantly deeper. The function of this feature is unknown, particularly as it occurs in isolation and there were no diagnostic finds from the site. However, a potential function may be assigned to the feature based on results of the processing of a sample taken of the primary fill. There was no evidence for *in situ* burning around the feature.

### 4.3 Phase 3: Group 3: Topsoil

#### {1003} Topsoil

##### Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled by	Depth (m)	Length (m)	Width (m)	Description	Interpretation	Area
1	Site	N/A	N/A	0.30	N/A	N/A	Mid brown sandy clay.	Topsoil.	N/A

**Finds:** None

##### Interpretation:

Topsoil sealed all the archaeological deposits and features at Williamstown 4.

## **5 THE ASSEMBLAGE**

### **5.1 Summary of artefacts**

There were no finds recovered during the excavation.

### **5.2 Summary of samples**

One soil sample was taken from the pit, no other sample types (animal bone, nuts, etc) were found on this site. The single sample was taken from the bottom layer (**4**) which also contained a lot of charcoal.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Phase 1 (Group 1): Natural deposits**

This represents the natural geology that was exposed across the site following the removal of the topsoil layer. It comprised a firm yellow/orange brown sandy clay. This Group is non-archaeological and pre-dates all subsequent archaeological activity on the site.

### **6.2 Phase 2 (Group 2): Possible archaeological activity – unknown date**

The archaeological activity at Williamstown 4 comprised a single pit [C3] (2.25m x 1.10m x 0.52m deep) containing four fills. The function of this feature is unknown, particularly as it occurs in isolation and there were no diagnostic finds from the site. There was no evidence for *in situ* burning around the feature. It may be a modern feature and is of little or no archaeological significance.

This pit may be related to the archaeological activity at Williamstown 3 (A016/033) located c. 140m to the W.

### **6.3 Phase 3 (Group 3): Topsoil (modern date)**

This phase of activity represents the post-medieval/modern agricultural horizon that sealed the Phase 2 feature.

## **7 METHODOLOGY FOR POST EXCAVATION ANALYSIS AND FINAL REPORT PRODUCTION**

### **7.1 Finds**

There were no finds recovered during the excavation.

### **7.2 Samples**

There was one bulk soil sample taken during the course of the excavation of Williamstown 4. No further work is proposed.

### **7.3 Digital archive and research**

#### **7.3.1 Photographic archive method statement**

All digital photographs will be indexed and saved on the IAC mainframe server.

#### **7.3.2 Paper archive (inc plans and sections) method statement**

All drawings will be checked and cross referenced with the paper archive. The paper archive will be imputed to template digital record sheets and saved on the IAC mainframe server. The drawings will be scanned and saved on the IAC mainframe server.

#### **7.3.3 Research method statement**

To be decided in correspondence with project archaeologist.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

Context	Type	Fill of	Filled by	Definition	Group	Subgroup	Subgroup Summary
1	Deposit	N/A	N/A	Topsoil	3	1003	Topsoil and ploughsoil
2	Deposit	N/A	N/A	Natural drift geology	1	1001	Natural
3	Cut	N/A	C4,C5, C6,C7.	Pit	2	1002	Pit C3
4	Fill	C3	N/A	Fill of Pit	2	1002	Pit C3
5	Fill	C3	N/A	Fill of Pit	2	1002	Pit C3
6	Fill	C3	N/A	Fill of Pit	2	1002	Pit C3
7	Fill	C3	N/A	Fill of Pit	2	1002	Pit C3



## **APPENDIX 2: DETAILED CATALOGUE OF FINDS**

There were no finds recovered from the excavation of Williamstown 4.

## APPENDIX 3: ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIALS INDEX/ SAMPLE INDEX


### Appendix 3.1 Bulk soil Samples

Williamstown 4 soil sample summary:

Sample #	Context #	Feature type i.e. Structure A, hearth C45	Sample type	Comments i.e. suitable for C14, occupation deposit, disturbed etc	% of total context volume	Sample volume (l)
1	4	Pit C3	Soil	N/A	N/A	3l

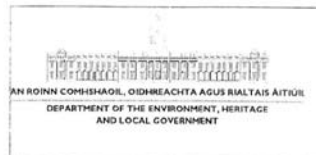
No other environmental remains were uncovered during the excavation of A016/034.

## APPENDIX 4: ARCHIVE INDEX

<b>Project: N6 Phase 2: Kilbeggan to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme</b>		<b>Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd</b>	
<b>Site Name: A016/034 Williamstown 4</b>			
<b>NMS Registration Number: E2662</b>			
<b>Site director: Fintan Walsh</b>			
<b>Date: 25 August 2008</b>			
	<b>Items (quantity)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>Field Records</b>			
Site drawings (plans)	1		
Site sections, profiles, elevations	1		
Other plans, sketches, etc.	0		
Timber drawings	0		
Stone structural drawings	0		
Site diary/note books	0		
Site registers (folders)	1		
Survey/levels data (origin information)	4		
Context sheets	7		
Wood Sheets	0		
Skeleton Sheets	0		
Worked stone sheets	0		
Digital photographs	10		
Photographs (print)	0		
Photographs (slide)	0		
<b>Finds and Environ. Archive</b>			
Flint/chert	0		
Stone artefacts	0		
Pottery (specify periods/typology)	0		
Ceramic Building Material (specify types eg daub, tile)	0		
Metal artefacts (specify types - bronze, iron)	0		
Glass	0		
Other find types or special finds (specify)	0		
Human bone (specify type eg cremated, skeleton, disarticulated)	0		
Animal bone	0		
Metallurgical waste	0		
Enviro bulk soil (specify no. of samples)	1		
Enviro monolith (specify number of samples and number of tins per sample)	0		
Security copy of archive	-	To be created	

## APPENDIX 5: NMS REGISTRATION DOCUMENT

National Monuments  
Acts (1930-2004)  
Ministerial Directions  
Record Number for  
archaeological activity



File: Direction No. A16

**Registration Number: E2662**

Directions have been issued to Murty Hanly on behalf of Westmeath County Council in order to regulate archaeological activities carried out on N6 Kilbeggan to Athlone (Phase 2).

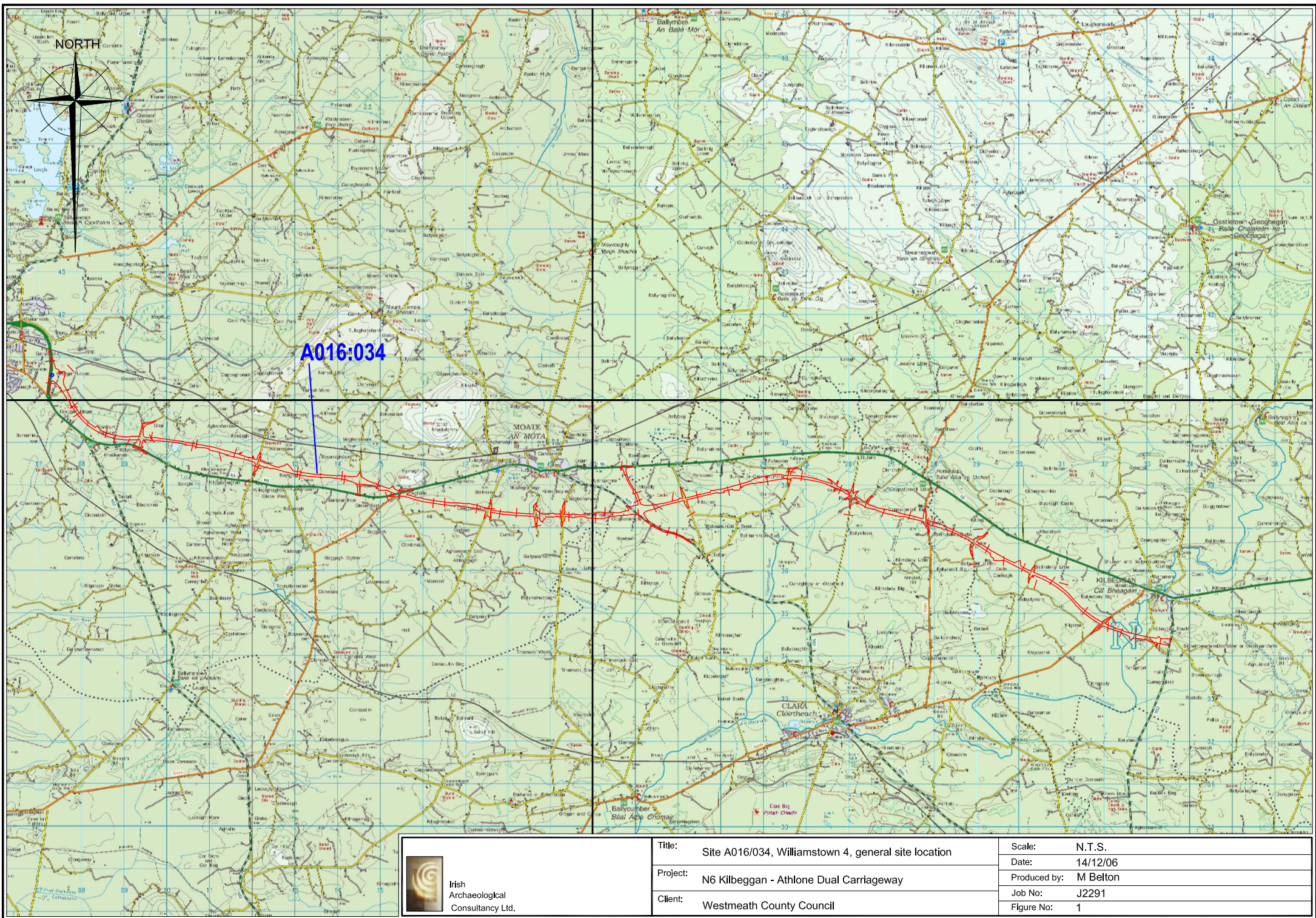
Application having been duly made to me by Ed Lyne of 28 Whitethorn Walk, Lusk Village, Co. Dublin.

For a registration number to record excavation at the site of Williamstown site 034 being part of the townland of WILLIAMSTOWN in the County of Westmeath.

This registration is not an archaeological licence or consent but it is issued solely for archive purposes and to allow for the material from the activity to be registered with the National Monuments Service and the National Museum.

Signed .....  .....

31 October 2006



**A016/034**



Irish  
Archaeological  
Consultancy Ltd.

Title: Site A016/034, Williamstown 4, general site location

Project: N6 Kilbeggan - Athlone Dual Carriageway

Client: Westmeath County Council

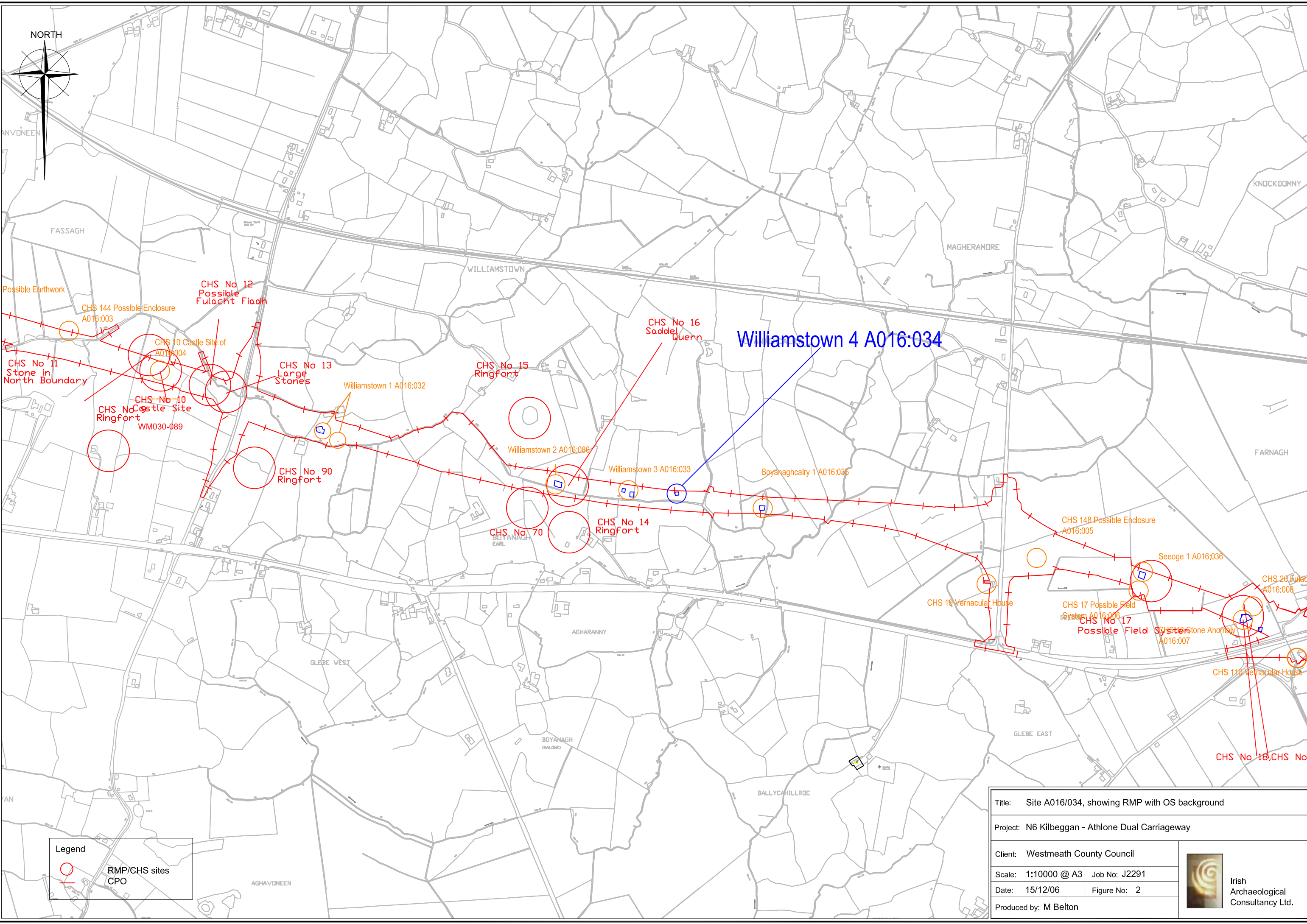
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Date: 14/12/06

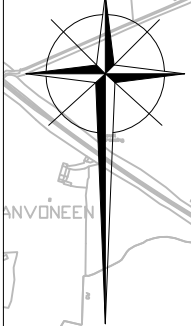
Produced by: M Belton

Job No: J2291

Figure No: 1



NORTH



FASSAGH

WILLIAMSTOWN

MAGHERAMORE

KNOCKDOMNY

Possible Earthwork

CHS 144 Possible Enclosure  
A016:003

CHS No 12  
Possible Fulacht Fiadh

CHS No 10 Castle Site of  
A016:004

CHS No 11  
Stone in North Boundary

CHS No 13  
Large Stones

CHS No 15  
Ringfort

CHS No 16  
Saddel Quern

Williamstown 4 A016:034

Williamstown 1 A016:032

CHS No 10  
Castle Site Ringfort  
WM030-089

Williamstown 2 A016:086

Williamstown 3 A016:033

Boyanagcalry 1 A016:035

CHS No 90  
Ringfort

CHS No 70

CHS No 14  
Ringfort

CHS 148 Possible Enclosure  
A016:005

Seeoge 1 A016:036

CHS 20 Fulacht  
A016:008

CHS 19 Vernacular House

CHS 17 Possible Field  
System A016:006

CHS No 17  
Possible Field System

CHS 18 Stone Anomaly  
A016:007

CHS 110 Vernacular House

CHS No 18, CHS No

GLEBE WEST

AGHARANNY


BOYANAGH  
OALOND


BALLYCAHILLRDE

GLEBE EAST

AGHAVDNEEN

**Legend**

 RMP/CHS sites

 CPO

**Title:** Site A016/034, showing RMP with OS background


**Project:** N6 Kilbeggan - Athlone Dual Carriageway

**Client:** Westmeath County Council

**Scale:** 1:10000 @ A3    **Job No:** J2291

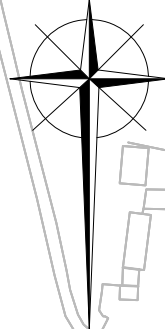
**Date:** 15/12/06    **Figure No:** 2

**Produced by:** M Belton



Irish  
Archaeological  
Consultancy Ltd.

NORTH



Pond

1.83m FD

Williamstown 3 A016:033

Williamstown 4 A016:034

Boyanaghcalry 1 A016:035

TD

TD

CS

1.83m FD

CS

CS

TD

TD

TD

1.83m FD

Legend

-  CPO
-  Limit of excavation

Title: Site A016/034, location of site within development

Project: N6 Kilbeggan - Athlone Dual Carriageway

Client: Westmeath County Council

Scale: 1:2000 @ A3 Job No: J2291

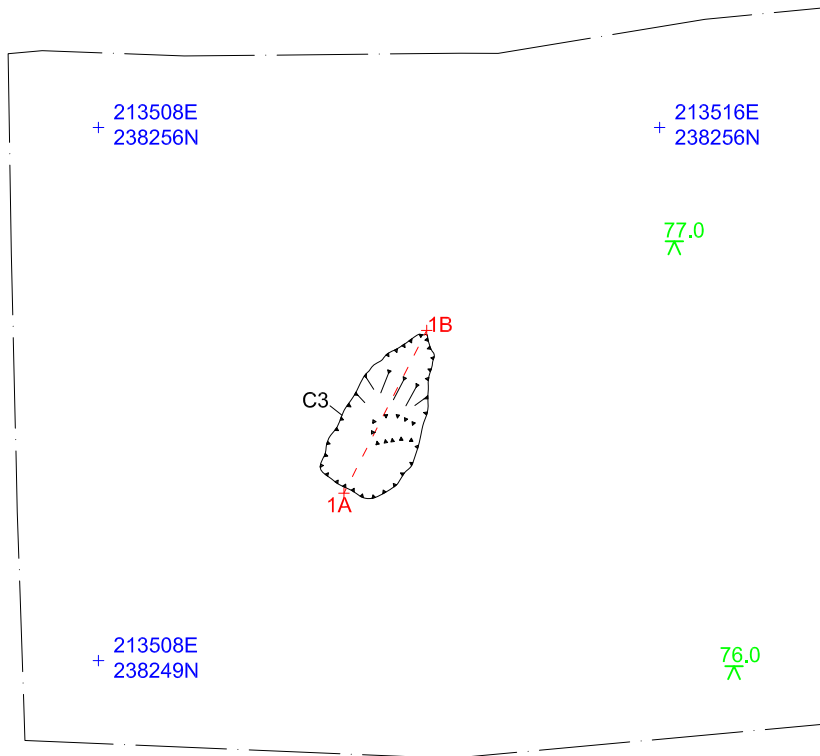
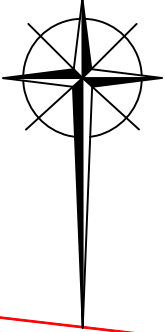
Date: 15/01/07 Figure No: 3

Produced by: M Belton








Irish  
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NORTH



Legend

-  CPO
-  Sections
-  Limit of Excavation
-  Cut numbers
-  Reduced Levels



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Consultancy Ltd.

Title: Post excavation plan of A016/034

Project: N6 Kilbeggan - Athlone Dual Carriageway

Client: Westmeath County Council

Scale: 1:100 @ A4

Date: 04/01/07

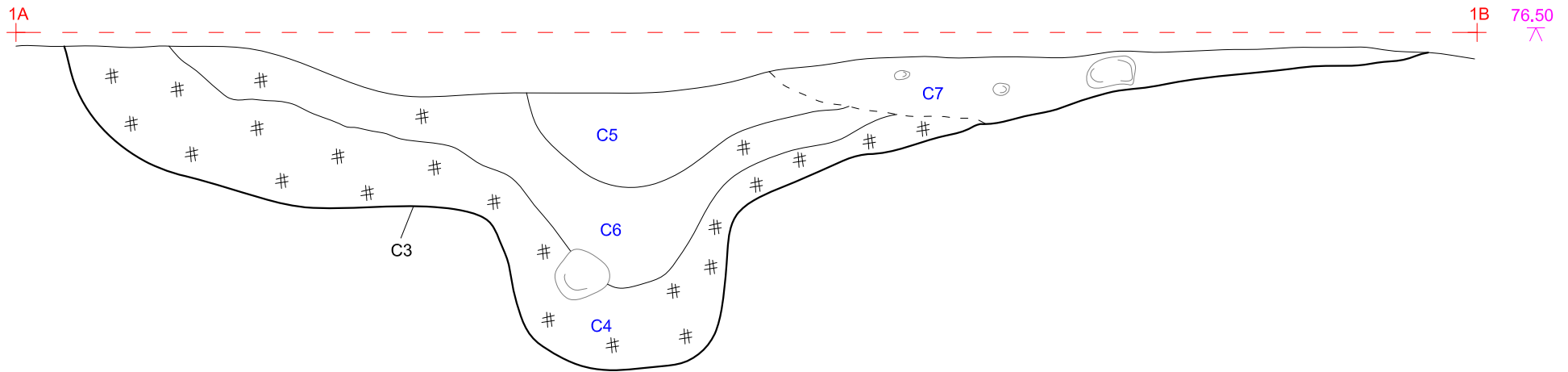
Produced by: M Belton

Job No: J2291

Figure No: 4



Williamstown 4 A016/034  
 South East Facing Section of C3



Legend	
C##	Cut numbers
C##	Fill Numbers
	Stone
#	Charcoal
###.##	Reduced Levels

<p>Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.</p>	Title:	Section drawing of Pit [3]	Scale:	1:10 @ A4
	Project:	N6 Kilbeggan - Athlone Dual Carriageway	Date:	04/01/07
	Client:	Westmeath County Council	Produced by:	M Belton
			Job No:	J2291
			Figure No:	5

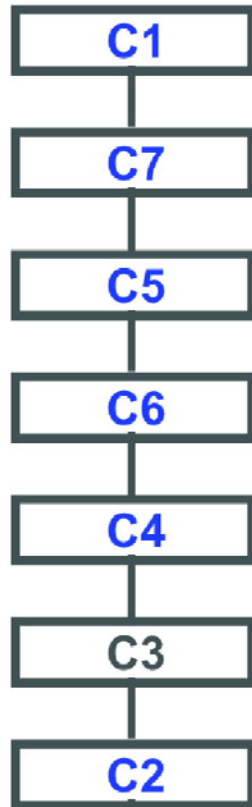




Plate 1: SE facing section through Pit [C3].



Plate 2: Site during excavation looking SW.