



N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriageway

Advance Archaeological Investigation

Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan

Kilbeggan South 2.1

Ministerial Direction A1
Site Identification A1-054
Site Registration E2755

**Conor McDermott
David J O'Connor**

Final Report

March 2008

**Westmeath
County
Council**



**Offaly
County
Council**



**Meath
County
Council**



Project Details

Project	Archaeological Excavation
Ministerial Direction	A1
Site Identification	A001-054
Registration No.	E2755
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Consultant	Cultural Resource Development Services (CRDS) Ltd Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Unit 4a, Dundrum Business Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14
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NRA Project Number	A001
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Site	Kilbeggan South 1.2
Townlands	Kilbeggan South
Parish	Kilbeggan
County	Westmeath
Nat. Grid Ref.	233600, 234200
Chainage	N52 / Local Road intersection
OD.	67.6m
RMP No.	N/A
Project Duration	18 th October 2004 to 21 st January 2005
Excavation Start Date	9 th December 2004
Excavation Finish Date	14 th December 2004
Report Date	Draft: February 2005 Issue: March 2005 Final: March 2008

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Kilbeggan South 1.2 Site Team

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Project Team

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Executive Summary

At the request of Westmeath County Council, CRDS Ltd. have undertaken a programme of archaeological excavations for part of the proposed N6 Kinnegad to Kilbeggan Dual Carriageway. In total 64 archaeological sites were identified during centreline testing as part of the Advance Archaeological Investigation, Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan (conducted by CRDS Ltd. under licence 04E0579). This report refers to the excavation of a site located in Kilbeggan South townland in the parish of Kilbeggan and barony of Moycashel, Co. Westmeath. Within the road scheme it is located on a portion of the N52 and a local road leading to the new N6-N52 intersection south of Kilbeggan. The programme of excavation was undertaken between 9th – 14th December 2004 as part of Ministerial Direction A1 (Site Identification **A001-054** - registration **E2755**). The following report contains the final results of the excavations.

At Kilbeggan South 1.2 two pits containing frequent brick fragments and charcoal along with associated features were uncovered. It is suspected that they represent the remains of two brick firing pits. A radiocarbon date of one of the fills has yielded a date of **556±47BP (1310-1440AD)** putting it in the **Medieval** Period. This date may be an intrusion and not a true age for the site. However if it is taken as true then it would represent an early example of brick production in Ireland.

Each of the excavated sites was archaeologically resolved within the footprint of the proposed road scheme under terms established by the Project Archaeologist, Westmeath County Council.

1. Introduction

1.1 Excavation Background

Kilbeggan South 1.2 is one of nine archaeological sites located in the townlands of Demesne or Mearsparkfarm, Kilbeggan South and Stonehousefarm, which are located in Kilbeggan parish in the barony of Moycashel, 1.2–1.5km south and southeast of the village of Kilbeggan, and to the east of the current N52 (Fig. 1).

Number	Site	National Grid	Chainage
A001-010	Stonehousefarm 1	233910, 234065	Local Road
A001-011	Stonehousefarm 2.1 & 2.2	233930, 234340	29925-29975
A001-012	Stonehousefarm 3	233880, 234270	29895
A001-013	Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2	234270, 234320	30240-3032
A001-054	Kilbeggan South 1.2	233600, 234200	N52
A001-076	Stonehousefarm 4	233800, 234240	29831
A001-077	Stonehousefarm 5.1	234080, 234360	30090
A001-078	Stonehousefarm 6.1	234160, 234340	30165
A001-079	Stonehousefarm 6.2	234160, 234340	30185

1.2 The Scope of the Project

Westmeath County Council is improving the N6 by realigning the existing road between Kinnegad and Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. The route extends from the western end of the M4 from Kilcock to Kinnegad and a further portion of the N6 is planned between Kilbeggan and the existing Athlone Relief Road. The entire scheme between Kinnegad and Athlone consists of 57.4km of dual carriageway construction replacing the existing N6.

The location of the route is predominantly to the south 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, Kilbeggan, Tyrrellspass, Rochfortbridge and Kinnegad. The cross-section of the mainline consists of 2m wide verges, 2.5m 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 south of Athlone Interchange to connect to the existing N6 and 1.2km to the south of Kilbeggan Interchange to connect to the existing N52.

Of the 34 existing public roads crossed by the dual carriageway it is proposed to sever two (with pedestrian usage being re-provided for one of these locations), divert three and bridge the remainder, either over or under the new dual carriageway. Incorporated into the scheme are eight underbridges, of which two are accommodation access underpasses and one is for pedestrian use only. There are 32 overbridges, varying in length between 54m and 105m, of which three are accommodation access bridges. Relief from existing traffic severance will occur in the communities of Moate, Kilbeggan, Tyrrellspass, Horseleap, Rochfortbridge and Milltownpass, benefiting residents that currently live there.

Archaeological investigation of the scheme was undertaken in line with an Environmental Impact Statement (Riada Consult, Westmeath County Council 2004), in fulfilment of the requirements of the Roads Act 1993, the Roads (Amendment) Act 1998, the Roads Regulations 1994 and E.C. Directive 85/337/EC 1985.

1.3 Circumstances and Dates of Fieldwork

Topsoil was removed from the area of archaeological interest and a surrounding buffer area by a tracked mechanical digger equipped with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. All mechanical excavation of undisturbed ground was conducted under archaeological supervision. The archaeological excavation identified and recorded the full extent of archaeological deposits within the road take. All archaeologically significant features were excavated by open area excavation techniques, which have resulted in the preservation by record of the site. All works were done following consultation with the Project Archaeologist.

Excavation was undertaken between 9th - 14th December 2004. The excavation team consisted of an archaeological director, supervisor and an average of two site assistants supported by the site surveyor.

2. Solid Geology and Topography

2.1 Solid Geology and Soils

The site is located in an area of Carboniferous Age rocks. The bedrock under the site consists of Lower Carboniferous Age Limestone, a fine-grained grey/blue calcareous fossiliferous rock. These rocks, which make up much of the Midlands of Ireland, represent the northward return of the sea at the end of the Devonian, *c.* 360 million years ago, owing to the opening of a new ocean to the south called the Palaeo-Tethys in what is now central Europe.

Inliers (areas of older rocks surrounded by younger rocks) of older (Upper) Carboniferous sandstones and shales and Devonian Old Red Sandstone occur to the west of Kilbeggan, as close as 1km away. The Upper Carboniferous rocks represent periods of shallower and deeper water deposition respectively. The Old Red Sandstone (a coarse to very coarse quartz iron rich sandstone very common in the southwest of Ireland) represents the erosion and (mainly riverine) deposition of the mountains uplifted during the Caledonian Orogeny (see below). To the south in the Slieve Bloom Mountains occur older Silurian Age greywackes and quartzites. Greywacke is a type of sandstone, deposited as a result of tectonic activity of the Caledonian Orogeny, each bed representing a separate earthquake event. In this case these rocks relate to the closure of the Iapetus Ocean, a major ocean, which at its widest was probably greater than 3000km across.

Bedrock is not exposed at the site, instead it is covered by boulder clay, which are the result of glacial action during the last glaciation. Eskers - elongated ridges of stratified gravel, probably formed by streams flowing beneath or on a glacier - are common in the area. The soils of the area consist of grey/brown podzols, and are generally very fertile.

2.2 Topography and Landscape

The region south of the existing N6 Kilbeggan in County Westmeath and Tullamore in County Offaly is generally low-lying pastoral plains not exceeding 80m above sea level. It is characterised by undulating hills with intervening basins and valleys. The flatter ground is punctuated by a number of east-west running eskers with a range of smaller subglacial, fluvio-glacial and moronic deposits.

Narrow, tree lined farm tracks and peat boglands also cut across the landscape and arable farming within the area is extremely limited in extent. Particularly low-lying and neglected areas are prone to rushes and drainage ditches are frequently used to alleviate water logging. The route is off-line, largely crossing the low-lying plains south of the existing N6.

The sites are situated on the eastern side of the River Brosna catchment, 10.5km south of Lough Ennell. Lewis noted that Kilbeggan parish “comprises 2975 statute acres ... the land is generally of good quality, and the system of agriculture greatly improved; a considerable extent of exhausted bog has been reclaimed, affording excellent pasture, and a small quantity still remains for fuel; there is no waste land” (1837, 51).

In general the topography of the area descends from over 70m OD on the eastern side to 60–70m OD on the western side as it enters the low-lying valley of the River Brosna, south of Kilbeggan. This is an extensive area of alluvial soils, bog and callow land once subject to seasonal flooding. It continues southward and eastward, crossing to the east of the current N52 road on the southern side of Hallsfarm townland. An extensive basin of low-lying peatlands in Kilbeggan South and Skeahanagh townlands extends east-west from the existing N52 to the Kilbeggan branch of the Grand Canal. This is generally located over 500m north of the excavated sites on the route of the proposed road, although it crosses the development to the east of the canal in Skeahanagh townland.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Baseline Survey

As part of the baseline survey for Kilbeggan South 1.2 the Record of Historic Sites and Monuments (RMP) for Co. Westmeath was consulted for the relevant parts of Co. Westmeath Ordnance Survey 6" Sheet 38. All monuments within a radius of *c.* 3km of the site were identified. The relevant files for these sites, which contain details from aerial photographs, early maps, OS memoirs, Archaeological Survey of Ireland notes and other relevant publications were then studied in the Sites and Monuments Records Office. These monuments are listed in Appendix 1.

The excavations bulletin website (www.excavations.ie) was consulted to identify any previous excavations that may have been carried out in the vicinity of this site. This database contains summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland from 1985 to 2000. The published editions of Excavations 2001 and 2002 (Bennett 2003; 2004) were also consulted in addition to the centreline testing report for the area (CRDS 2004). Details of these excavations are listed in Appendix 2.

The topographical files in the National Museum of Ireland were consulted to determine if any archaeological artefacts had been recorded from the area. Other published catalogues of prehistoric material were also studied: Raftery (1983 - Iron Age antiquities), Eogan (1965; 1983; 1994 - bronze swords, Bronze Age hoards and goldwork), Harbison (1968; 1969a; 1969b - bronze axes, halberds and daggers) and the Irish Stone Axe Project Database (School of Archaeology, UCD). No artefacts were identified from these sources, however a range of finds were recovered during the centreline testing in the area and these are listed in Appendix 3.

Aerial photographs of the area of the development were examined in the Geological Survey of Ireland in addition to 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6" maps and 1" Geological Survey maps.

3.2 Previous Archaeological Work

The site outlined in this report was discovered following licensed predevelopment archaeological testing. The centreline archaeological testing of the section of the route N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriageway, Advance Archaeological Investigations Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan was carried out by CRDS Ltd under licence 04E0879.

The testing resulted in the identification of 64 previously unidentified archaeological sites (CRDS 2004). There were no previous records of the sites and no surface indications prior to the test excavations.

As part of the final component of Contract 2, CRDS Ltd. were requested to undertake the archaeological resolution of nine of these sites located in Demesne or Mearsparkfarm, Stonehousefarm and Kilbeggan South townlands, south of the village of Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. The excavations of these sites were subsequently undertaken by CRDS Ltd. (A001-010, 011, 012, 013, 054, 076, 077, 078 & 079). These excavations revealed a range of site types dating from the prehistoric period to recent centuries and are outlined in other reports.

A number of archaeological studies have been carried out on the proposed route including:

- N6 Athlone – Kinnegad Archaeology & Cultural Heritage, Markus Casey, September 2002
- N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriageway Scheme. Draft Archaeological & Historical Background Phase 1, Kinnegad to Kilbeggan, Orlaith Egan, Westmeath County Council
- N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriageway Environmental Impact Statement, Riada Consult, Westmeath County Council, 2004
- N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriage, Advance Archaeological Investigation, Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan, CRDS Ltd., October 2004

3.3 Prehistory (c. 7000 BC–AD 500)

Prehistory in Ireland equates to all human activity within the country prior to the start of a written record c. AD 500. It encompasses four basic discursive divisions of the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The Mesolithic (or Middle Stone Age) applies broadly to the first settlers in the country in c. 7,000-4,500 BC. The period is distinguished by its lithic technology and hunter/fisher-gatherer society. The Neolithic (New Stone Age) and Mesolithic are considered to have considerably overlapped but the Neolithic is generally considered to have started c. 4,500 BC and continued to 2,500 BC. The period is classified by the advent of agriculture and changes in artefacts technologies. The start of metallurgy c. 2,500 BC signified the start of the Bronze Age which continued to c. 500 BC when metallurgic industries evolved to use iron. This period is known as the Iron Age and continued until the Early Medieval period beginning around AD 500.

Little prehistoric evidence is known from the vicinity of the excavations with only a small corpus of prehistoric sites documented from Westmeath as a whole. As yet no inventory has been prepared for the county but, for the purposes of this project, an area around the site approximately 5km north-south by 8km east-west was examined from the SMR records. This revealed only four known prehistoric monuments, namely barrows WM028:087 and WM028:089 (both in Cumminstown), WM028:092 in Garryduff and WM029:07 in Rahugh townlands.

Archaeological finds from the area dating to the prehistoric period are also rare. Two fragments of a bronze horse trapping (NMI 1935:405 and NMI 1935:406) and three axe heads (NMI 1935:406, NMI 1935:407 and NMI 1935:408) are known from the townland of Kilbeggan. These may indicate exploitation of the area around Kilbeggan in the Bronze and Iron Ages respectively. Activity around Kilbeggan in the Iron Age is likely as there is documented settlement and activity in the area through the succeeding Early Medieval period (see below). Two flint fragments were also recovered from Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2 during archaeological test excavations for the present road scheme. Lithics can belong from Mesolithic to the Bronze Age but in this case are most likely to indicate later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age activity.

As stated, Westmeath does not possess a large corpus of upstanding pre-historic monuments. However, recent infrastructural schemes have identified abundant sub-surface prehistoric remains. Monitoring of excavations involved in sections of the Gas Pipeline to the West in 2002 revealed 31 possible sites in Co. Westmeath (02E0262; Bennett 2002, 499). With the exception of a probable medieval iron working site and a number of isolated pits, when excavated all of these sites proved to be prehistoric in date.

They consisted of eight burnt mounds, six fulachta fiadh, a trough, a Bronze Age round house and a prehistoric round house, (examples of these sites are included in Appendix 7). With the exception of the prehistoric roundhouse (which is likely although not confirmed to be Bronze Age) all the sites were Bronze Age in date. The mounds, fulachta fiadh and trough are features thought to be associated with cooking throughout the Bronze Age. Similarly archaeological testing for the present road scheme revealed a total of 77, sites many of which are likely to be prehistoric in date. Therefore, despite the low number of upstanding prehistoric monuments/remains in Westmeath, the prehistoric landscape is still extensively preserved as sub-surface remains. The corpus of pre-historic sites within the county will expand as infrastructural schemes continue.

3.4 Early Medieval Period (c. AD 500–1170)

The Early Medieval period, also known as the Early Christian period, is associated with the advent of Christianity and churches into Ireland as well the beginning of recorded Irish history. The early annals record people, places and events from c. AD 500. They record detail from Gaelic life such as the social ranking system and the extent of settlement and land enclosure. They also record the gradual population of the country by churches. The earliest churches were isolated structures, but by the end of the first millennium AD, religious centres become proto-urban centres, with evidence for settlement and industry.

The annals record the foundation of Cill Becain 'Becans Church', by St. Beacan at the end of the 6th or early 7th century AD (Lewis 1837, 51). It is from this foundation that the town and townland of Kilbeggan received its name. Little is recorded of the original monasteries size or holdings but this may be indicated by the low density of ringfort distribution around Kilbeggan.

Settlement during the Early Medieval period (AD 500–1200) was predominantly in ringforts or raths. These are represented in the landscape by circular or sub-circular enclosures and are generally accepted to be the defended homesteads of Early Medieval farmers (Stout 1997, 59). With the exception of SMR site WM038:028 in Stonehousefarm townland (see below) the only other ringfort close to the excavation is WH038:027 in the townland of Skehanagh. It is possible that the Stonehousefarm ringfort was constructed deliberately outside the boundaries of the ecclesiastical land held by the monastery of St Becain, as both were broadly contemporary. The ringfort may therefore indicate the south-eastern extent of the monastery's lands.

The Stonehousefarm ringfort (Appendix 2) is a bivallette enclosure consisting of a low inner bank and slightly higher outer bank separated by a fosse. The fort has a diameter of 20m with a dished interior and a frequently water logged exterior in a field which presently serves as pasture. The monument stands in a prominent position on a slight hill with heavy tree coverage. It represents the only upstanding evidence for the Early Medieval period in the vicinity of the excavations.

Throughout the Early Medieval period the wider political landscape around the study area was controlled by the *Cíneal Fhiachach* or Kinelagh (race of fiacha). This family traced their lineage back to Fiacha, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and brother of Laoighre who met St Patrick at Tara. In 507 the annals record a victory by Fiacha over Foilghe Berraidhe at the battle of Druim Deargaidhe,

securing lands from Cluain in Dibhair to Uisneach. Fiacha is recorded as dying at Carne Fiagha early in the 6th century giving rise to the family name Carne Fiagha, later Kinaliagh.

Little mention is made again of the Kinelagh until the 12th century when the family had split into three sept. The largest branch was the McEoghagans or Mageogehgans, with two rival families the Ua Braonain (O Brennan) and the Ua Maoil Mhuaidh (Molloy). The Ua Braonain were the chief family of Cenel Enna/ Kinel Enda (Walsh 1985, 26). The Ua Maoil Mhuaidh and the Ua Braonain came to consolidate holdings from Durrow to Birr, which later became the baronies of Ballyboy and Ballygowan in Co. Offaly. The McEoghagans continued to hold lands across the modern counties of Offaly and Westmeath up to Athlone with the lands still bearing the original family name of Kenaliaghe.

Historically little else is referenced on Kilbeggan or the surrounding townland. Lewis (1837, 51) citing the annals refers to a sanguinary battle between the Irish and the Danes in 972 at a ford presumably on the river Brosna. The location of this ford is not clear although it is said to be close to the present bridge which was constructed in the 19th century. The site of the battle was renamed 'Aghnacchan' or 'Ford of Heads', after the battles slain. The reference implies a possible Viking presence around Kilbeggan in the Early Medieval period, however this is not borne out in the archaeological record.

3.5 Late Medieval Period (c. AD 1170–1540)

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in c. 1170 substantially changed the social and political structures of the country. The most obvious aspect of the Norman invasion was the redistribution, division and reconstruction of Irish landholding and field systems. This was most pronounced in Leinster with the imposition of an arable field system on what had been a principally pastoral society. The changes in the landscape were reflected in new monument types, the most common of which were the Motte and Bailey. These consisted of an artificially constructed mound of earth usually with a wooden tower on top. The monument is typical of the later 12th century and was considered an aggressive castle being cheap and quick to construct and used to consolidate new holdings. The Bailey was an enclosed settlement around the base of the mound but is not a feature on most mottes.

The Normans enjoyed initial success across Leinster in the late 12th century. Norman power reached a hiatus in the mid 13th century when most of Leinster (with the exception of isolated regions such as the Wicklow mountains or large areas of bog), large tracts of Munster and Ulster and even portions of Connacht were under Norman control. From the mid 13th century, and especially in the 14th century, the

colony went into decline. This is partially attributed to lack of interest and support by the English crown in the colony and the Gaelicisation of the original colonists. However a series of historical events such as the Bruce invasion in 1317 confounded the problems of the Anglo-Norman society.

A similar pattern is evident in Westmeath where the Normans were unable to exert control over the whole county which then occupied part of the 'Kingdom' of Breifne, (Westmeath was not created until a 1542 Act of Parliament). Norman presence is attested to in the remains of monuments over the landscape where large families such as the Nugents, Tyrells, Petits, Tuites, Delamars and Daltons constructed mottes in locations such as Mullingar, Rathwire, Rathconrath and Castletown (Walsh 1985, 10). However, a strong and independent Gaelic presence was centred and maintained by the Mageoghegan lordship based around the barony of Moycashel, created in 1573 (ibid. 7). The Mageoghegan lordship did not submit until well into the Elizabethan era (late 16th century), when chieftain Conly's territory became the barony of Moycashel on condition that his son be appointed as sheriff and the securing of 'the extensive lands of the monastery of Kilbeggan' as a bribe (ibid.). This area would certainly have been open to Norman influence especially in the later 12th and early 13th centuries but probably remained Gaelic in custom and outlook under the leadership of the Mageoghegan family.

The Normans were also largely responsible for the foundation and sponsorship of a series of new religious houses. This was already common in Gaelic society but the opening of Ireland to the Norman influence lead to an influx of new European traditions and religious houses. One such order was the Cistercians who were founded in 1098 in Burgundy, France (de Paor 1969, 112). The first Cistercian house in Ireland was Mellifont, founded in 1142 just prior to the Norman invasion (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 139). Prince John confirmed the grant of lands to the abbot and convent in the later 12th century (Conway 1953, 39). Following Mellifont the order flourished with foundations in Bective, Co. Meath, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow, Boyle, Co. Roscommon, Monasteranenagh, Co. Limerick, Inishlounaght, Co. Tipperary and Odourne, Co. Kerry (de Paor 1969, 115).

In 1150, also shortly prior to the coming of the Normans, Kilbeggan's Cistercian house was founded as a daughter house to Mellifont (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 137). The sponsors of the monastery are contested but the McGloghlan family most likely founded it (ibid.). Woods and Walsh (1907; 1957) citing the Annals of the Four Masters refer to the monastery as 'The River of God' founded by an Anglo-Norman family called the Daltons under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. Lewis (1837, 51) however states that the monastery had simply fallen into decay at this stage and was rebuilt by the

Dalton family. Kilbeggan's links with Mellifont are reasserted at this time as a company of monks was sent from Mellifont to 're-found' Kilbeggan (ibid.).

The confusion over the original sponsors seems to stem from a regrant by the Daltons in the late 12th century. The Daltons are known to have been a prominent Norman family in Westmeath at this time and their presence does indicate that it was to some degree a contested landscape. In the early 13th century the abbey was again linked with prominent Gaelic families with Melaghlin McGloughlan recorded as dying on pilgrimage there in 1213. The deaths of his sons Roderick and Maelsechlainn at the abbey are also recorded in monastery records in 1218, confirming the abbey's links with the Gaelic dynasty. These are two of a series of references in Annals of Loch Cé and the Annals of the Four Masters from 1196-1401, recording abbots and prominent pilgrims to the site.

3.6 Post - Medieval Period (c. AD 1540–1900)

There is no definitive date for the conclusion of the Medieval period in Ireland; for the purpose of this report it is taken as 1540, the year the monasteries of Ireland were suppressed (White 1943). This is a convenient date for illustrating the increasing influences the centralised state, in this case the Tudor administration of King Henry VIII, was playing in Irish affairs. This process came to a head by the middle of the 17th century with rebellion, the Confederacy and the arrival of Cromwell, between 1641 and 1652. Following the final victory of Cromwell's New Model Army in 1652 a number of surveys were undertaken for the purposes of redistributing land. Inadvertently these surveys also recorded much of the patterns of society and settlement, which had survived from the Medieval period. These include the Civil Survey (Simington 1940), the cartographic Down Survey of 1656 and the Census of 1659 (Pender 1939).

The Down Survey of 1655-1662 shows the cartographic results of the Civil Survey, a major land survey which was the precursor to the land satisfactions made in the Acts of Settlement and Explanation of 1662 and 1665. At this time a large area east of the Brosna around Kilbeggan was known as 'English Land'. It is possible that a large portion of these lands were created from the former holdings associated with Kilbeggan Abbey. This was just one of the wholesale land redistributions that occurred in Westmeath during this period.

Lewis (1837, 51) recorded the abbey, previously a focal point for Kilbeggan's development, as 'inconsiderable remains'. The Abbey had slowly diminished following dissolution. Reference is made on

30th November 1539 that Abbot Maurice O'Shanahan was seized of his house, c. 820 acres, several granges, messuages and cottages, val. £13 19s. 4d (Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 137). In 1570 (post dissolution) the remains of the abbey contained a church and the usual cloistral buildings, not valued, while the gardens, mill, two eel-weirs, several messuages and cottages, two granges, 63 acres and the rectory of Kilbeggan were valued at over £6 (*ibid.*). The house (previously the abbey) was granted to the Lambart family in the 17th century (see above).

Geophysics was conducted on the site of the abbey in 2003, revealing extensive sub-surface remains and associated field boundaries and access routes. With the exception of the survey, only three archaeological assessments have been made within the town. These relate to monitoring and test-excavation carried out under archaeological licence (licence 99E0062 and 01E0787), which revealed no archaeological remains.

In 1542 the county of Westmeath was created out of a portion of Meath, effectively splitting the medieval kingdom of Breifne. It was intended to incorporate into the county new administrative units to facilitate a systematic re-plantation of 'crown lands' with loyal subjects. Despite the initial land revisions, the McEoghagan dynasty (previously the 'race of fiacha') still held extensive lands in Westmeath in the mid 16th century. An account of their territory in 1567 stated:

McEoghagan country called Kenaliaghte containeth in length XII (12) miles, and in breadth 7 miles. It lyeth midway between the fort of Faly (Philipstown) and Athlone, five mile distant from either of them and five mile distant from Mollingare, which lyeth northward of it. (Irish Archaeological Miscellany, 183).

In 1573, however, the barony of Moycashel was created principally out of what had been Kenaliaghte and was incorporated into the county of Westmeath. The barony was granted to Wm. Browne in 1595 (Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 137).

Two different accounts are given of the submission of the Mageoghegan dynasty. Walsh implies Conley, chief of the Mageoghegan family, accepted submission (1985, 7). This was in return for a bribe of lands around the dissolved monastery of Kilbeggan and to secure his eldest son Ross a position as sheriff of the newly created barony. The Calendar of State Papers (495) state Ross was appointed seneschal and sheriff of Westmeath in 1571. In an ambitious attempt to usurp his father he entered into an alliance with the crown forcing his father Conley to surrender to the English in 1574. In return

Conley received the position of Seneschal of Kinaleagh in 1574, which he hoped to use to overthrow his son, who was subsequently murdered in 1580.

The Magheoghegan submission removed the last vestiges of Gaelic free holding in the county. However, the family still held extensive lands into the 17th century. At this time the holdings are estimated at 15,530 acres but following the plantations this had decreased to 3,838. In total 29,580 acres were seized and replanted during the plantations in the Barony of Moycashel alone, most coming from the Magheoghegan dynasty or similar Gaelic families (Sheehan 1978).

The treatment of the Mageoghegans was typical of the trend nationally. From 1534–1609 the English government attempted to regain control in the colony through a military based administration in Dublin Castle. Following a failed rebellion in Munster against the English administration, the Earl of Desmond and his followers were seized of 230,000 hectares. This area was to be resettled by loyal Scottish and English settlers in a series of large landlord based estates. The Ulster conquest followed at the end of the 16th century where the emphasis was placed on the re-division of land and forest clearance. Extensive land confiscations followed in the 17th century and were mapped by projects such as the Down Survey. A definitive defeat of Catholic forces in the Williamite Wars (1689–91) ensured a prolonged period of relative stability both socially and economically, after a century of unrest. New ideas concerning rationalised field systems, land improvements, enclosed fields, demesne landscapes and small rural towns were initiated from this period (Stout and Stout 1997).

Around Kilbeggan it is likely that the area called 'English Land' in the Down Survey formed part of the Mageoghegan lands seized in plantations. These may have been the lands granted to the family from Kilbeggan Abbey during the submission of Conley. Kilbeggan was contained within the Mageoghegan family's mainstay and their holdings formed over 39% of all lands seized in Westmeath during the plantations.

It is probably in the mid-late 17th century that the landscape around Kilbeggan started to resemble that which is evident today. Following the plantations large estates would have been created and these are still indicated in the townland names. Demesne or Mearsparkfarm and Stonehousefarm are two obvious examples directly relevant to the excavation. Large houses such as Bellmount also have their origins in the 17th/18th century. The estates generated new middle and upper classes that in turn invested in the agricultural development of the lands they held. Obvious examples from the area around Demesne or Mearsparkfarm and Stonehousefarm consist of the digging of large

drainage/boundary ditches, the amalgamation of field systems, and the clearance of forestry. All of these changes in land-holding and farm practices were intricately linked with the development of Kilbeggan town as a rural centre in the 17th and 18th centuries. Kilbeggan was founded in the 17th century as a market town and parish following the successful application for a weekly market and annual fair by Sir Oliver Lambert. In 1612 the town received a charter and in 1620 Charles, son of Oliver Lambert, procured a grant of two additional fairs (Lewis 1837, 51). These formed the basis of a flourishing economy up to the last quarter of the 18th century.

Sir Henry Piers in 1682, while visiting Kilbeggan during a tour of Westmeath, described the county as 'rude and barbarous' referring principally to the lack of urbanisation. He described the principle commodities as corn, hides, tallows, flax, hemp, cheese, butter and wool. It was on the basis of these that Kilbeggan town grew as a trading post. During the first three-quarters of the 18th century agriculture and trade continued to flourish despite Acts of Parliament protecting English markets from Irish producers.

Land usage surrounding the town started to diversify with a large amount of land devoted to flax and grain. In the early 19th century a figure of 1809 acres in Westmeath was under flax and this would have been much greater in the 18th century prior to the decline of the weaving trade in 1773 (Flynn & McCormack 1998, 30). Kilbeggan, Moate, Clara and Tullamore were the centres of weaving in Westmeath and Offaly. Flax for weaving was grown in abundance around Kilbeggan from Coola to Moycashel, and a bleach yard to facilitate this process is known to have existed close to the distillery (*ibid.*, 31). The distillery is said to have been built in 1757 and this would have stimulated an increase in the growth of barley on the emerging estates around Kilbeggan (*ibid.*). Although grain may have been imported from a wider area, it is probable the majority of barley was received from Kilbeggan's immediate hinterland. By 1782 three distilleries and a small mill on the River Brosna were in operation in Kilbeggan (*ibid.*).

Kilbeggan also fulfilled an important function as a mail coach centre. The town was built on the main route to Galway and in the 18th century road improvements increased the volume of traffic on the route. Prior to the 1760's the trustees and then the Grand Jurys initiated a number of road improvement schemes around the town. The built environment of Kilbeggan also reflected this function. In the 18th century the town possessed two hotels, a livery stable, a coachstop, coach agents and a carmans stage (*ibid.*, 31).

In 1835–1837 the Kilbeggan Grand Canal branch was opened which increased the speed and scale at which industry and population were expanding in the town. A larger distillery, a brewery, two flourmills and an oat mill opened after the canal. The parish is recorded at this time as containing 6085 acres with a population around the town of 1,800 (ibid. 31) with the economy split between agriculture and industry. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1844 described the town as containing squalid cabins and new slate built houses, probably a reflection of the growing industrialisation and mixed economies of the time. The industries around the town employed 184 families while 149 were employed by agriculture. The town expanded to include a police barracks, post office, market house, two hotels, a parish church and a fair green (ibid., 32).

3.7 Recent Landscape History

Comparisons were made between the Ordnance Survey first edition 6" maps dating to the middle of the 19th century (c. 1837) and the 1914 revision. These were compared against field walking observations and notes made during testing and excavation (CRDS 2004) to give a recent landscape history of the immediate area around the excavation in Stonehousefarm.

General observations between the two OS editions note that a large number of field boundaries were created between 1837 and 1914. In general these are concentrated at the southern limits of Stonehousefarm townland. These boundaries seem consistent either with the division of larger fields for modern pasture and grazing purposes and, in some cases, the allocation of small plots for residential use.

Bellmount estate has remained intact since 1914 with very minor exceptions, however all planting around its field boundaries has been removed with only some dispersed woodland surviving towards its southern limit. This is a feature throughout the townland generally where field planting around field boundaries or lane margins has been consistently removed.

A small field is located in the low-lying peat basin to the northeast of Stonehousefarm 2 and the 1938 edition indicates small rectangular plantation set within the field. The nature of this feature is not clear but it is not present on the 1914 edition. The boundary between the fields in which Stonehousefarm 2 and Stonehousefarm 5.1 & 6 are located is indicated as an unenclosed track in 1837, but has been formalised into a boundary along the eastern side of the track by 1914. This track serviced a small

village/farm complex in the north-western corner of the field in which Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2 is located and is indicated on both map editions.

The 1837 map shows a small rectangular enclosure on the southern side of the boundary between Stonehousefarm 6 and Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2, which is not indicated on the 1914 edition and was not identified in testing or excavation. Along the townland boundary itself a double-bank and hedgerow has been removed and replaced by a modern post and wire fence along the line of the original boundary. These works were undertaken in the 1970s when the field in which Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2 is located was added to the farm in Stonehousefarm by the Land Commission. The land was formerly in a farm/estate called Keating's and the clearance was part of the land redistribution. At the same time the small village or farm complex in Demesne or Mearsparkfarm was cleared from the northwest corner of the same field.

4. Archaeological Excavations

4.1 Methodology

In advance of the excavations the proposed excavation cuttings were enclosed within post and wire fencing with gated entrances. This was designed to protect the excavations from trespass and prevent injury to farm animals. The sites in close proximity from Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2 to Stonehousefarm 3 were enclosed in a corridor of fencing with access left to facilitate the movement of livestock. Except where necessary, the fencing often did not extend to the limit of the road-take footprint in order to minimise the impact on landowners.

Prior to the commencement of the excavations areas of topsoil were stripped from above each of the archaeological sites and from a 5m buffer area around the features. The extent of the buffer for each site was agreed in advance with the Westmeath County Council Project Archaeologist. This stripping process involved re-establishing the location of sites identified during the Centreline Testing using GPS. The areas to be stripped were then demarcated on the ground and mechanically stripped using 2m wide toothless ditching buckets under archaeological supervision. Topsoil was stripped to the surface of archaeological deposits. In a number of cases the initial stripping indicated that the archaeological deposits were more extensive than indicated by the Centreline Testing or that additional features were present. In total an area of c. 11,250m² was mechanically stripped and assessed between the nine excavations and the Testing Areas (see below). The area of stripping for each site is indicated on the individual site plans and listed below:

Number	Site	National Grid	Area
A001/010	Stonehousefarm 1	233910, 234065	223m ²
A001/011	Stonehousefarm 2.1 & 2.2	233930, 234340	861m ²
A001-012	Stonehousefarm 3	233880, 234270	360m ²
A001-013	Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2	234270, 234320	2,413m ²
A001-054	Kilbeggan South 1.2	233600, 234200	203m ²
A001-076	Stonehousefarm 4	233800, 234240	121m ²
A001-077	Stonehousefarm 5.1	234080, 234360	156m ²
A001-078 & 079	Stonehousefarm 6.1 & 6.2	234160, 234340	2,261m ²

The spoil generated from stripping and excavations was stockpiled in archaeologically sterile areas within the road-take footprint.

The site survey was carried out using a Topcon FC-1000 GPS to an accuracy of +/- 5cm. Sites were set out using the national grid at 10m or 5m intervals, however, some of the smaller sites were recorded using a local grid which were later converted to national grid in the post excavation phase. A topographical survey was also carried out on certain sites to produce contour lines.

Once exposed, features of archaeological potential were cleaned and cleared by hand of any remaining topsoil and subsoil. At this stage some features within a site such as root disturbance were dismissed as non-archaeological and excluded from further work. The remaining features were numbered and excavated, with half-sections excavated through deposits and fills as appropriate. To avoid confusion with excavations running concurrently, separate blocks of feature numbers were allocated to each site to avoid duplication. Features were drawn to scale in plan and section, and photographs and samples were taken.

Features were fully exposed within the excavation cuttings and, in general, one hundred percent excavated. Narrow baulks were retained through the fills of some cut features to facilitate the drawing and recording of sections.

Features were recorded on standardised CRDS Ltd. recording sheets for cuts, fills, walls, skeletal remains etc. Registers of features, finds, samples, photographs and drawings were also maintained, supported by site diaries. These records form the written site archive ensuring preservation by record of the sites. The resulting data was transferred to a computerised record system to facilitate the preparation of the current report.

On completion of the excavations the sites were secured for Health and Safety purposes. This involved mechanically backfilling deep pits, ditches and sumps and grading vertical faces and baulks over 0.5m in depth. Fencing erected to facilitate the excavations remained in place as the excavation cuttings were not backfilled and the spoil heaps remained in place.

4.2 Results of Archaeological Excavation

This site was identified during centreline testing in XT48 (extra trench), 64m west of chainage 1110 on the N52 south centreline and 74m east of the current N52. The field was in use for grazing prior to archaeological excavation and an area enclosing the site was fenced to facilitate the excavation and placement of a spoil heap.

The site was situated towards the northern limit of testing field 217, which borders the N52 (south). The field is gently undulating with the land rising in the fields to both the north and south of the site. A small industrial yard is located to the south of the site with immediate access from the N52. A large drainage ditch and field boundary is situated *c.* 8m to the north of the feature and may indicate 20th century land improvements. Kilbeggan South 1.2 was located in close proximity to Kilbeggan South 1.1 and also within the same field as Kilbeggan South 1.3. Both of these features displayed indications of burning and were resolved during Centreline Testing. The nearest other archaeological sites were identified in Hallsfarm townland to the south and in Stonehousefarm/Demesne or Mearsparkfarm townlands to the east-northeast. The northernmost archaeological site identified at Hallsfarm (Hallsfarm 3) was positioned *c.* 300m to the south of Kilbeggan South 1.2. Significant archaeological activity in Stonehousefarm and Demesne or Mearsparkfarm townlands began *c.* 600m to the east-northeast of this site. The site was classified during Centreline Testing as a possible furnace (see Appendix 8). Excavation revealed that it consisted of two pits with an associated curvilinear feature (see below).

An area of 203m² was stripped around the feature identified during testing to expose the full extent of the archaeological site. Stripping was undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 2m toothless ditching bucket. The cutting was rectangular in shape and measured 13m north-south and 14.5m east-west. Two smaller extensions were excavated at the north-eastern side of the cutting to facilitate access to the site while a further ramp was opened on the south-western side. The features were covered by an average depth of 0.31m of topsoil and 0.06m of subsoil. Each of these features were excavated and recorded, the results of which are outlined below.

The stripping of this site exposed a large rectangular firing pit (Southern pit), and smaller rectangular firing pit (Northern pit) both identified during testing and revealed a linear feature (Curvilinear feature) that was connected to the Southern pit by a narrow flue. A full register of the features from this site is included in Appendix 4 and on the site matrix.

Natural

There were two variations of natural in the area of this site. **F702** was a plastic, yellow-grey silty-clay with moderate amounts of pebbles and stones while **F703** was a loose, mottled grey-white silty-gravel with frequent pebbles and stones and occasional sand.

Southern firing pit

Figs. 6-8. Plates 1-3

F704 was a rectangular cut 2.32m long, 1.56m wide and 0.34m in depth. It had a sharp break of slope at the top and concave sides. The base was unevenly flat and had an imperceptible break of slope. There was evidence of *in situ* burning along the northern and eastern edges of the cut. A shallow flue-like cut connected **F704** with Curvilinear feature **F705**. It is located directly to the south of Northern firing pit **F709** but the relationship between the two was obscured during testing. The basal fill **F714** was a friable, dark grey-black clayey-silt with frequent amounts of charcoal and some sand and brick fragments. It was 1.98m long, 1.36m wide and 0.07m in depth. **F713**, which lay directly above this on the southern edge, was a friable yellow-grey sandy-clay with sand, pebbles and some brick fragments and charcoal. It was 0.52m long, 0.28m wide and 0.06m in depth. This was visible on the surface at the southern edge and was the same as fill **F707** in the curvilinear feature **F705**. The upper part of the Northern pit cut and the Curvilinear feature shared fills **F711** and **F712**. **F711** was a loose, red-grey sandy-clay with frequent brick fragments, moderate amounts of sand and occasional pebbles, cobbles and stones. It was 1.18m long, 0.92m wide and 0.12m in depth. **F712** was a firm, dark-grey sandy-clay with sand and some pebbles, charcoal, brick fragments and cobbles. Radiocarbon dating of **F712** has yielded a date of $556 \pm 47\text{BP}$ (1310-1440AD) putting it firmly in the Medieval Period.

Northern firing pit

Figs. 6-8. Plate 2

F709 was 2.75m long, 1.25m wide and 0.12m in depth. It had the appearance of a rounded kiln but it was very square at the southern end. There was a very definitive shoulder in the cut where there was a change in shape in the middle of the feature. It became very straight and linear at the southern end forming a flue like feature. There was evidence of *in situ* burning on the base and sides. It had a sharp break of slope at the top and the base, vertical sides and a flat base. It abutted the larger Southern firing pit (**F704**) but a relationship could not be established. The basal fill **F710** was a friable, dark-brown/grey clayey-silt with moderate amounts of brick fragments and charcoal and occasional pebbles and stones. It was 2.54m long, 1.25m wide and 0.12m in depth. **F715** was located only at the northern edge and in a very small quantity. It was a friable, mottled light brown-orange clayey-silt with occasional brick fragments and charcoal.

Curvilinear feature

Figs. 6-8. Plate 1-3

F705 was a curvilinear cut that was 7.4m long, 1.09m wide and 0.20m in depth. It had a sharp break of slope at the top with concave sides and a flat base. It was connected to the Southern firing pit by a flue like cut located at the south-western edge. A basal fill (**F708**) was present only in the western area of the cut. It was a firm, dark grey-black silty-clay with occasional stones and burnt bone and frequent amounts of charcoal. **F707** was above **F708** in the western area and was the basal fill for the remainder off the cut. It was also present within the flue-like cut that connected **F705** with the Southern firing pit **F704**. **F707** was the same fill as **F713**, which was only present in the southern edge of the Southern firing pit. It was a firm, mottled yellow-grey sandy-clay with moderate amounts of charcoal and occasional stones. It was 7.4m long, 1.2m wide and 0.12m in depth within **F705**. **F706** was the upper fill throughout the cut. It was a friable, brown-grey clayey-silt with frequent amounts of charcoal, occasional pebbles and brick fragments and a natural chert nodule. It was 7.4m long, 1.29m wide and 0.13m in depth.

Topsoil and Subsoil

The topsoil that overlay the features at the site (**F701**) was a thin horizon (0.06m) of a friable, light-brown silty-clay with some stones. Above this the topsoil (**F700**) was 0.31m in depth and composed a friable, mid-brown silty-clay with occasional stones.

4.3 Archaeological Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered from this site.

4.4 Archaeological Samples

In total 11 samples were taken during the course of the excavation and a complete listing is included in Appendix 6. All the samples with the exception of brick, chert and bone were sent for flotation. Following the results of flotation a decision was made to send one sample for dating and not to analyse the remainder. The sample produced a date of **556±47BP (1310-1440AD)**.

Sample Number	Material	Feature Type	Feature Group	Sampled %	Comments	Analysis
A001/054:F711:S708	Other	Rectangular burnt pit.	Southern brick firing pit.	<5%	Brick for identification	Specialist identification

5. Conclusions

The archaeological excavation revealed two pits containing frequent brick fragments and charcoal. It was initially suspected that they represent the remains of two brick firing pits. No stratigraphic link could be made between the two, however. A curvilinear feature was also exposed that was connected to the Southern firing pit by a flue-like cut. Fills F707/F713 were present in both the curvilinear feature and the Southern firing pit indicating their contemporaneity. During testing, evidence for brick manufacture in the area was noted (CRDS 2004) and small fragments of broken and waste brick were regularly encountered in the soils including deposits in the adjoining townland of Hallsfarm, 550–600m south of Kilbeggan South 1.2. These were located within an area c. 70 by 70m. Four particularly large mounds of broken brick were recorded, in addition to a large water filled depression c. 10m in diameter. This feature proved impossible to test due to water logging but it was thought this depression represents an area of clay extraction used for brick manufacture. This is supported by the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 6" maps which indicate a 'brick field' in the same field as the site. It is located c. 650m south of Kilbeggan South 1.2 and is depicted on the 1st edition OS map as a small rectangular feature containing rows of smaller rectangles, which may represent footings for stacks of bricks, air drying in advance of clamp firing, or stacks of finished bricks ready for export. This is one of a number of old brick fields known to be located along the canal between Tullamore and Kilbeggan, stimulated by the improved infrastructural links provided by the canal for import and export in the 19th century (Pavía & Bolton 2000, 181). Canals are also thought to be a good indication of clays suitable for clay production as they require tight water impermeable clays for their construction. Around this time an increase was seen in the production of brick using kilns. This allowed slower heating methods and the maintenance of higher temperatures. Despite this clamp firing still prevailed and was used in areas of the country (particularly rural) into the late 19th/early 20th century (ibid., 197). Clamp firing is the oldest method of firing in the country and required no permanent kiln structure. It involved the stacking of 'green'/raw bricks which were interspersed with a fuel such as straw, wood, coal, charcoal, turf or ashes. The heap was then covered with a layer of burnt brick (ibid., 195). Clamp firing operated on varying scales, but usually took 2–3 weeks to burn through with larger examples often taking 10–12 weeks (Brunskill 1990). Varying investment in clamp manufacture and the varying temperatures during the firing process often produced bricks of different colours, textures, appearances and most importantly quality. The firing process often involved considerable wastage loss. Boate (1652) reports:

There is great loss, and that in two manner of ways. For sometimes great part of the bricks is found not to be sufficiently or uniformly burnt; on the other side it

falleth out sometimes, that great quantities are reduced into one, being burnt, or half-burnt into great unshapely masses or lumps which are good for nothing.

The frequent occurrence of brick fragments throughout the fills of **F704** and **F709** suggest that they were involved in a process similar to clamp firing. The proximity to the canal and brickfields, coupled with observations made during testing, certainly indicates that brick production was undertaken in the area in the post-medieval period. However radiocarbon dating of Kilbeggan South 1.2 has yielded a date of **556±47BP (1310-1440AD)** putting the feature in the **Medieval** Period. It is possible that this date may represent an intrusion and may not be a true reflection of the antiquity of the site. Unfortunately brick manufacture can leave little archaeological evidence. Most frequently with clamp firing, the only remaining end product is a small mound of brick debris. Similarly, as the bulk of produce is transported off site, little material evidence remains. This would have been especially true in urban areas and those located on good infrastructural links (Pavía & Bolton 2000, 181). Archaeological understanding of these sites is also in its infancy as few excavated examples have been documented. In 1971 'brick pits' were excavated in Newferry Co. Antrim (see Appendix 7) as they intersected a multi-period site which was principally Mesolithic/Neolithic in date. Testing for the Youghal Bypass also produced brick waste thought to be from brickworks, although no further excavation was undertaken. No other archaeological excavations listed on www.excavations.ie encountered brick works.

The relationship to the brickfields is not known but they demonstrate that suitable clays were available in the area. The excavation of the Curvilinear feature (**F705**) around the oxidised features may have been an aborted attempt to source clay or alternatively may have been an extraction source to cap the clamp and thus manage the airflow. It may also have operated to some extent as a flue, as **F705** is connected to **F704** by a small hollow with a charcoal rich fill (**F708**). Deliberate excavation of holes to manage temperature in clamp firing is documented (ibid., 195). The charcoal fills within **F704** and **F709** are likely to represent the packing placed around the green bricks.

The lack of previous documented excavations makes interpretation of Kilbeggan South 1.2 difficult but it is thought to represent clamp firing on a limited scale or of an early date. If the 14th / 15th century radiocarbon date is taken as true, then it would represent an early example of brick production in Ireland. However, the possibility exists that the date represents an earlier intrusion. Kilbeggan South 1.2 can be thought of as a rural, local industry possibly representing brick manufacture on a limited scale.

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Appendix 1

Recorded Archaeological Sites and Monuments

The recorded archaeological sites from the Sites and Monuments Records for Co. Westmeath in the vicinity of the excavated sites are listed below. The area examined covers a radius of approximately 2.5km from the excavated sites. The townlands examined were Aghuldred, Ballinderry Big, Brownscurragh, Cappalahy, Demesne or Mearsparkfarm, Hallsfarm, Kilbeggan, Kilbeggan South, Skeahanagh, Stonehousefarm, Tonaphort. All monuments are listed in a standard format as follows:

List of Sites and Monuments:

Townland	SMR No.	Classification	NGR Easting	NGR Northing
Description				
Kilbeggan	WM038-017---	Town	233360	235370
Description				
Kilbeggan	WM038-01702-	Abbey (site)		
Description				
Kilbeggan	WM038-01701-	Graveyard	233140	235250
Description				
Skeanhagh	WM038-027---	Earthwork (site)	235530	234520
In pasture, at the top of a rise. Good views in all directions. A levelled circular enclosure, delimited by a very low profile trace of an earthen bank. A NNW to SSE field boundary possibly truncated the western side of this site.				
Stonehousefarm	WM038-028---	Ringfort	234250	234110
Diameter of site NE-SW is 21m. This is a roughly circular site enclosed by 2 banks, the inner one being wider. The inner bank seems original. There is a possible entrance to the south. The interior of the site is saucer shaped but with a general slope down from N to S. There is no evidence of structures. The site is on poor pasture land and the land around is boggy, especially to the South. There are scarps outside the site marking the edge of this boggy land. There is a large limestone boulder just outside the site which shows signs of water erosion. (B.R 23/8/77) The earthwork consists of a low outer bank, inside this is a fairly wide shallow fosse. This is a very wide low bank inside the fosse. This inner area encloses an area approx. 19m in diameter N-S. The site is partly overgrown with trees and bushes. The earthwork is situated in rather low lying rushy pasture land. (J. Reynolds 24/10/73)				

Appendix 2

Previous Archaeological Investigations from the area

A search was conducted of the online Excavations Database (www.excavations.ie) to identify previously excavated archaeological sites in the area surrounding the current excavations. More recently published sources such as Excavations 2001 and Excavations 2002 (Bennett 2003; 2004), N6 Athlone – Kinnegad Archaeology & Cultural Heritage (Casey 2002) and the report on the N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriage, Advance Archaeological Investigation, Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan (CRDS 2004) were also consulted. A small number of insubstantial sites were resolved during the testing. The excavations are listed in a standard format as follows:

Townland/Site Number	Year: Excavation No.
Site type	National Grid
Author	Source
Description	

Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 3	2004: 04E0879
Pit/post pit	234564, 234340
CRDS	CRDS 2004
Deep narrow linear shaped pit (L 1.1m, Wth 0.52m, D 0.3m) containing decayed and burnt stone, charcoal and a silt fill with inclusions of burnt clay and a mid-grey colour. Partially covered by redeposited natural that contained the same inclusions but to a lesser extent. Undercut at western end, and the axis of the undercut means that any post or stake would have been placed in the feature at an approximately 45 degree angle. Fill similar to burnt mound material, and so may be cast-in from a mound. Located in cornfield, on a level plateau.	

Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 4	2004: 04E0879
Burnt mound	234693, 234394
CRDS	CRDS 2004
A thin oval shaped spread of burnt mound material (L 10.75m, Wth 6.7m, D 0.15m), containing frequent charcoal and heat-shattered stones overlying a natural of orangey brown sandy silt. The spread is intermittent and no evidence for a trough or hearth was recorded. Located towards the base of a slope adjacent to bog. A horse skeleton was uncovered in the fill of a field boundary 9m to the south.	

Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 5	2004: 04E0879
Cruciform pit	234815, 234354
CRDS	CRDS 2004
Cruciform shaped pit (L 5.35m, Wth 4.1m, D 0.51m) containing three fills with the middle layer rich in charcoal. The sides of the cut are slightly irregular, the base is deep and concave and the side 'arms' are shallow. Located on the side of a moderately sized hill overlooking an area of wetland.	

Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 6.1 Burnt mound material CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234950, 234387 CRDS 2004
<p>A small, shallow roughly circular spread of burnt mound material (L 3.8m, Wth 2.5m, D 0.15m), containing frequent amounts of charcoal and heat shattered stones. Located up slope from a boggy area two transects from F27. Two adjacent areas of brown, silty clay appear unrelated and may represent disturbance.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 6.2 Shallow pit CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234917, 234391 CRDS 2004
<p>A shallow irregularly shaped pit (L 1.54m, Wth 0.92m, D 0.2m) containing a fill of grey clay with some charcoal and burnt stone similar to a burnt mound. It has an irregular-concave profile that is deeper to the south and gradually shallower to the north. It varies from 0.06-0.20m in depth. It is located up slope from a boggy area two transects from F26.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 6.3 Burnt mound material CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234982, 234374 CRDS 2004
<p>A small, shallow, crescent shaped deposit of burnt mound material (L 4.45m, Wth 3.05m, D 0.15m), containing frequent amounts of charcoal and heat shattered stones. It is located up slope from a boggy area, 5m north and down slope of a possible hearth F29 which may be related. F30 is located at a similar level on the slope one transect to the east.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 6.4 Possible hearth CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234982, 234368 CRDS 2004
<p>A hearth (L 1.65m, Wth 1.15m) defined on one side by oxidised clay with large stones around the edges. Contains charcoal and stones. It is located up slope from a boggy area, 5m south and upslope of a spread of burnt mound material F28 that may be related. F30 is located at a similar level on the slope one transect to the east.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 6.5 Burnt mound CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234996, 234372 CRDS 2004
<p>A large deposit of burnt mound material (L 11.5m, Wth 7.4m, D 0.2m) containing frequent charcoal and heat-shattered stones, which appears to be deeper up slope. It is located on a hill of moderate size at the edge of a boggy area. F28 & F29 are located at a similar level on the slope one transect to the west.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 7.1 Possible trough CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235018, 234425 CRDS 2004
<p>Partially exposed oval pit (L 0.59m, Wth 0.33m, D 0.12m) with a burnt timber at the base and filled with grey clay beneath a thin horizon of peat. Possibly a trough though no obviously associated burnt mound was found in the immediate vicinity. A small burnt mound (F42) is located in an adjacent transect and there is burnt mound activity in field 239 and the field immediately to the west. Located on ground overlooking an area of bog.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 7.2 Burnt mound CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235032, 234436 CRDS 2004
<p>A small, shallow deposit of burnt mound material (L 7.4m, Wth 3.85m, D 0.15m), containing charcoal and heat shattered stones. Some of the limits are poorly defined and the spread is not uniform across the area. Located on a steep slope overlooking an area of bog at the end of the transect. A possible trough (F41) is located in the adjacent centreline trench.</p>	

Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 8.1 Three deposits of charcoal CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235077, 234438 CRDS 2004
<p>Three small, thin deposits of charcoal and ash like material (L 3.6m, With 1.9m, D 0.06m) located at the topsoil/subsoil boundary. F43 is was 1.2m from F43b and 2.6m from F43c with a distance of 1.6m from F43b to F43c. It is likely that these deposits represent peripheral or disturbed material from the spreads of burnt mound material c. 20m to the south in the opposing transect. Further less well contexted occurrences of charcoal noted in adjacent transects. This feature was resolved with no finds recovered and it was not possible to recover a securely contexted dating sample.</p> <p>F43a: A slight sub-circular depression (0.6x0.2x0.01m) with uneven sides and a fill of grey clay and charcoal.</p> <p>F43b: A slight sub-circular depression (0.4x0.22x0.02m) with uneven sides and a fill of dark-brown silty sand topsoil with charcoal and ash like material.</p> <p>F43c: A narrow depression (0.46x0.08x0.06m) with steep sides and a pronounced concave base and a fill of grey clay, charcoal and ash like material.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 8.2 Shallow pit containing burnt mound material CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235082, 234398 CRDS 2004
<p>A small circular depression (L 1.16m, With 0.67m, D 0.11m) with an uneven, concave base of orange oxidised clay indicating burning. It contained a dark fill of clay, charcoal and stone similar to burnt mound material. It is likely that this feature was a hearth related to the spreads of burnt mound material (F45) 8.4m to the north in the same transect. The feature was resolved with no finds and no dating sample due to its proximity to a substantial site.</p>	
Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 8.3 Spreads of burnt mound material CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235075, 234410 & 235080, 234412 & 235084, 234410 CRDS 2004
<p>Up to eight exposures of burnt mound material (L 14.2m, With 13.1m, D 0.1m) located in the transect and two parallel extra trenches. The material consisted of frequent charcoal and heat shattered sandstone, though these elements were less frequent in places, and the colour of the deposits varied. It was not possible to determine which of the exposures formed single features without further disturbance to the site and the area as a whole was recorded as a single zone. The spreads cover c. 40% of the area exposed with intervals of up to 2m between the deposits. Situated up slope from bog to the north and 8.4m from a shallow burnt pit with burnt mound material (F44) to the south. Three localised areas of burning (F43) were resolved in the opposing transect to the north.</p>	
Hallsfarm 1 Spreads of burnt mound material CRDS	2004: 04E0879 233554, 233681, 233562, 233697, 233566, 233701 & 233568, 233710 CRDS 2004
<p>A large spread of burnt mound material (L 22.03m, With 13.09m, D 0.05m) identified in two transects and two extension trenches in Field 222 and in a transect on the opposite side of the roadway in Field 223. Both fields are under arable cultivation and the site is extensively eroded by modern ploughing.</p> <p>Transect N52.5-585-E in Field 223 contained two small deposits of burnt mound material (L 0.85-0.9m, W 0.52-0.85m) 5m apart and a shallow depression with an organic fill 12.3m further to the north. All of these contexts are the edge of the trench adjacent to the field boundary and extensions were not possible. A linear cut with a fill of blue clay (W 0.7m) ran the length of the transect on the south side and appears to relate to drainage or the former brickworks in the area.</p> <p>The transects and extensions in Field 222 contain ploughed out burnt mound/s. The greatest concentrations of burnt stone and charcoal towards are at the centre of the spreads and there are occasional stones and charcoal in the surrounding area. Recent plough marks cut through the material in transect N52.S-T600-E. No evidence for a trough/s was apparent in the areas exposed.</p>	
Hallsfarm 2.1 Burnt pits CRDS	2004: 04E0879 233591, 233780 & 233592, 233779 CRDS 2004
<p>Two burnt pits 1.95m apart, a patch of burnt clay and small concentrations of charcoal in the vicinity. F96a is located at the junction of the centreline and N52.S-T590-W and F96b at the start of N52.S-590-E. The pits are similar to F111 in Field 221. Located on the lower slopes of a hill with a burnt mound (F97) located 8.2m to the west.</p>	

F96a: An oval pit (3.4x2.45x0.2+m) with a rim of oxidised clay c. 0.03m wide with charcoal concentrated at some points around the edge. The base curves and there is a rich horizon of charcoal at a depth of 0.13m below a fill of mottled grey/orange clayey-silt with frequent charcoal. 1.95m to the southeast of the pit is a small area of charcoal with burnt clay around the edges (0.64x0.33x0.02m).

F96b: A sub-circular pit (1.35x1.14m) with oxidised clay around the edges similar in size and fill to F96a. Three shallow linear features with charcoal rich fills run from the edge of the pit to the northwest and southeast.

Hallsfarm 2.2	2004: 04E0879
Burnt mound and pit	233579, 233781, 233581, 233784 & 233585, 233789
CRDS	CRDS 2004

A partially ploughed out burnt mound and a three possible pits/post-holes (L 16.8m, Wth 10.9m, D 0.1m) in the transect and two paralleled extension trenches. The mound is rich in charcoal and burnt stone but only survives to a shallow depth. It is most concentrated in two areas in the transect and northern extension with thin spreads over the remaining areas. Two possible pits/post-holes (diam 0.3-0.65m) are located 0.15m apart between the concentrations in the transect. A third possible pit is located in the southern extension trench defined by oxidised clay and charcoal (0.6x0.2m). No evidence for a trough was apparent in the areas exposed. Two large burnt pits (F96) are located 8.2m to the east.

Hallsfarm 2.3	2004: 04E0879
Burnt clay and charcoal deposits	233580, 233830
CRDS	CRDS 2004

An area of oxidised clay and charcoal, a deposit of charcoal and small spreads of charcoal in the area (L 4m, Wth 1.75m, D 0.1m). The oxidised clay is 'T'-shaped (1.3x1.0x0.03m) outlining an area of charcoal. This is adjacent to an irregular, patchy charcoal deposit (2.0x1.0x0.03m). There are a number of smaller charcoal spreads in the immediate area and charcoal flecking in the surrounding soil. Located on the lower slopes of a hill, 39m from F111 in the opposing transect.

Hallsfarm 2.4	2004: 04E0879
Burnt pit with flue	233620, 233816
CRDS	CRDS 2004

A burnt pit (1.5x0.95x0.15+m) defined by oxidised soil and charcoal around the edges and with a possible flue (0.85x0.5m) at the north-western end. Fill of mid-brown sandy silty with frequent charcoal and some large stones. Similar to burnt pits (F96a&b) in Field 222. Located on the lower slopes of a hill, 39m from F99 in the opposing transect.

Hallsfarm 3	2004: 04E0879
Small burnt pit or hearth	233614, 233896
CRDS	CRDS 2004

A small oblong burnt pit or hearth (1.5x0.7x0.07+m) similar to F96a&b in Field 222 but on a smaller scale. It is orientated northwest-southeast and defined by a rim of oxidised clay with a fill of mid-brown silty-sand but with no charcoal. Situated on the side of a hill rising to a crest in Field 220 and upslope from other burnt features in Field 221.

Kilbeggan, Main St	1992
No archaeological significance	2332, 2351
Frank Ryan, 41 Parnell Road, Harolds Cross, Dublin 12.	excavations.ie

The site was monitored prior to construction of premises in accordance with a condition of the notification of decision to grant planning permission.

Foundation trenches were dug with a J.C.B. to natural subsoil. Nothing of archaeological interest was present.

Kilbeggan, Old Graveyard	2003:03E1503
Abbey (site) (SMR 038-01702)	
Alan Hayden	Egan 2004

Recent archaeological work was carried out to the south of the town in the vicinity of the old graveyard at Reilig field, which, revealed various medieval deposits. Test excavations and an extensive geophysical survey (Hayden A. Licence 03E1503, McCarthy M, GeoArc Ltd. 2003) of the area revealed the location of the Cistercian abbey to the west of the graveyard, which, included a church, cloister, chapter house and other buildings. To the east and south of the graveyard two fulachta fiadh, a grain drying kiln and associated hearth, numerous drainage features, infilled gullies and ditches and a possible medieval field system were revealed. The archaeological assessment of the area also concluded that the early medieval ecclesiastical site

may extend into the area west of the graveyard but the majority of the site probably lies beneath the graveyard. The grain drying kiln is thought to be of early medieval date and therefore associated with the early medieval ecclesiastical site.

Kilbeggan, Tullamore Road Town (SMR 038:017) Dominic Delany, 31 Ashbrook, Oranmore, Co. Galway.	1999: 99E0062 23336, 23537
Test excavation was undertaken before the construction of two proposed dwellings at Tullamore Road, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath, on 6 February 1999. The site is adjacent to a recorded monument. Five test-trenches (average length 40m) were excavated, and two stone-lined drains, a pit and a circular, stone-lined well, all modern, were encountered. No archaeological deposits or features were found.	

Kilbeggan, Main St No archaeological significance (SMR 038:017) Sebastien Joubert, Horge house, Camp, Co. Kerry.	2001: 01E0787 23336, 23537
Pre-construction testing was carried out at Main street, Kilbeggan, in August 2001, prior to the construction of a residential extension to the rear of the Ramble Inn Pub. The site was in the zone of archaeological potential associated with the town. Three test-trenches were mechanically opened. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered. All deposits recorded were of recent date and it was supposed that the site had been disturbed in recent times. Plastic objects were found in the third test-trench on top of the boulder clay, 0.9m below ground level.	

Kilbeggan South 1.1 Burnt pit CRDS	2004: 04E0879 233591, 234202 CRDS 2004
A small, oblong/oval burnt feature (measuring 1.7m by .75m) located c. 6.5m west of F101. A slot section excavated through it revealed a depth of 5-6cm. The cut has sloping sides and a gradual break of slope at the top and base which is very slightly concave. The feature contained a single fill consisting of a grey sandy clay mixed with burnt clay and charcoal. It contained a concentration of sub-rounded stones with maximum dimensions of 6cm. The fill contained slightly more charcoal towards the base and was slightly more mottled yellow in colour. This has been interpreted as the fill getting mixed with the subsoil rather than a separate filling action. The feature does not display a large amount of vitrified clay or burning along the base of the feature. As such it is more likely to be associated with a period of isolated burning, although it may have some related function to the pit furnace F101.	

Kilbeggan South 1.3 Charcoal spread CRDS	2004: 04E0879 233558, 234190 CRDS 2004
A charcoal spread located to the west of F100 and F101, which measured 1.8m x 0.8m x 0.01m. The spread consisted of a damp charcoal lens with occasional fire reddened clay. The charcoal was quite organic and woody. The date or function of this feature could not be ascertained.	

Skeahanagh 3 Pit burial (animal) CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235392, 234433 CRDS 2004
Oval pit containing an articulated sheep burial located east of a vernacular house and outbuildings (in ruins) in Field 242. The pit measures 1.26m x 0.69m and is 28cm in depth. The cut is orientated NW-SE and appears to consist of two separate cutting actions which are almost certainly contemporary. The main cut has almost vertical sides and a flat base, this was deepened, however, with a second more rounded cut that has a concave base and sloping sides. This second cut was probably intended to accommodate the animal. The fill was a mid-brown clayey silt mixed with a large amount of brown, compact, slightly sandy silt. This was yellow in colour with frequent grit inclusions and was consistent with the subsoil in the area. It probably represents the backfilling and immediate redeposition of the subsoil after the 'grave' was cut. Four vertebrae were retained (04E0879:4-7) and were subsequently identified as sheep (M. McQuade, pers. comm.). The date of the feature could not be ascertained.	

Skeahanagh 4 Burnt mound CRDS	2004: 04E0879 235223, 234496 CRDS 2004
<p>A deep burnt mound (L 6.1m, With 4.85m, D 0.4m) immediately below the sod which appears to survive to full depth. The mound is composed of heat shattered stone and charcoal in a matrix of dark sand and silt. The highest part of the mound is a crest on the southern side before it falls away steeply to the underlying mineral soil. Much of the stone in the mound is sandstone. It is located on the margin of the bog sitting on the subsoil on the southern side and in the peat on the northern side. Outwash from the mound occurs on the surrounding soils to the south and in the peats. The mineral soil beneath the mound slopes downward rapidly and the peat is over 1.2m in depth immediately to the north of the site. A natural timber, roots and small wood fragments were noted in the peat none of which had indications of woodworking. No evidence for a trough or hearth was noted although the full surface of the site was not exposed.</p>	
Stonehousefarm 5.2 Localised burning CRDS	2004: 04E0879 234064, 234335 CRDS 2004
<p>Oval shaped area of oxidised natural (L 0.64m, With 0.36m, D 0.02m) indicating localised burning. Located below a topsoil of mid-brown sandy-silt (D 0.17m) and a subsoil of light brown sandy-silt (D 0.07m). The natural is an orangey-brown sandy clay and the feature was identified by a marked reddening of the clay. Located close to the field boundary between Fields 231/232 upslope from deep peats in Field 231. No further archaeological features or finds in the immediate area and no samples could be taken for dating purposes. This feature is resolved.</p>	

Appendix 3

Archaeological Finds from the area

A search was undertaken of the files of the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 and of a range of published catalogues of prehistoric material: Raftery (1983), Eogan (1965; 1983; 1994), Harbison (1968; 1969a; 1969b) and the Irish Stone Axe Project Database. The townlands examined were Aghuldred, Ballinderry Big, Brownscurragh, Cappalahy, Demesne or Mearsparkfarm, Hallsfarm, Kilbeggan, Kilbeggan South, Skeahanagh, Stonehousefarm, Tonaphort. No archaeological finds were identified from these sources. A number of artefacts were recovered from the area during the completion of the N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriage, Advance Archaeological Investigation, Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan (CRDS 2004) and these are summarised below in a standard format as follows:

Museum No. / Reg-No.	Townland/Site Number
Classification Notes	
04E0579:01	Stonehousefarm 1
Brown Ware sherd Ceramic sherd with brown glaze (5.5x5.2x1.1cm). Recovered <i>ex situ</i> at C18th (?) house.	
04E0579:02	Stonehousefarm 1
Brown Ware sherd Ceramic sherd with brown glaze (3.0x2.3x0.6cm). Recovered <i>ex situ</i> at C18th (?) house.	
04E0579:03	Stonehousefarm 1
Crockery Ceramic sherd (4.9x2.9x0.3cm). Recovered <i>ex situ</i> at C18th (?) house.	
04E0579:04-07	Skeahanagh 3
Sheep vertebrae Four vertebrae samples from a sheep burial in a pit.	
04E0579:08	Ardnaglew 3
Retouched flint flake Flint flake with retouched edge (4.3x3.9x0.3cm). Possible scraper. Recovered during testing of a burnt mound.	
04E0579:09	Kilbeggan
Poss. Medieval iron knife Iron knife (11.2x2.1x0.3cm) with broken straight-backed blade (L 5.6cm) and width increasing to break (1.6-2.1cm). Pronounced rounding and thickening (L 0.9, diam. 1.1-1.4cm) between blade and tang (L 5.2cm). Recovered from topsoil. Possibly Medieval.	

04E0579:14-15	Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2
<p>Flint scraper/broken bland and a misc. flint fragment This site was excavated as part of the current project (A001-013) and these objects have been included in the catalogue of finds from the site. See Appendix 5.</p>	
04E0579:16	Demesne or Mearsparkfarm
<p>Saddle quern Sub-rectangular sandstone saddle quern (34.4x15.2x8.4cm; Weight <i>c.</i> 7kg) with large quartz pebble inclusions. Entire upper surface is ground and is longitudinally concave and transversely convex. Recovered from among stone fill in a field drain.</p>	

Appendix 4

Feature Registers

Feature numbers have been taken out consecutively as needed starting from number F1. Each site was given an allocation of 100 feature numbers with these been allocated on order of excavation. The first 100 were given to Stonehousefarm 6. In the case that more than 100 contexts were encountered on a single site a second block of 100 numbers was taken out. This happened only in the case of Stonehousefarm 6 and Demesne or Mearsparkfarm 2 with the smaller sites been contained comfortably within a block of 100. The register contains as brief description of the feature, giving dimensions, shape, composition and texture. A number of feature numbers were given to features that were revealed as resulting from natural processes. These numbers have been retained in the record but are denoted as 'non-archaeological features (N.A.F).

A001-054 Kilbeggan South Feature Register				
Feature	Feature Group	Feature Type	Dimensions	Level
F700	<i>Topsoil</i>	Natural	L ---m, Wth ---m, D 0.31m	OD ---m
Description: A friable, mid-brown silty clay with some stones and brick. A sherd of modern pottery was observed but not retained.				
F701	<i>Subsoil</i>	Natural	L ---m, Wth ---m, D 0.06m	OD ---m
Description: A friable, light-brown silty-clay with some stones.				
F702	<i>Natural</i>	Natural	L ---m, Wth ---m, D ---m	OD ---m
Description: A plastic, yellow-grey silty-clay with pebbles and stones. Interpretation: Lay above grey gritty natural F703 in places.				
F703	<i>Natural</i>	Natural	L ---m, Wth ---m, D ---m	OD ---m
Description: A loose, mottled grey-white silty-gravel with large amounts of pebbles and stones and some sand. Interpretation: Lay below yellow clay natural F702 in places.				
F704	<i>Southern brick furnace</i>	Cut	L 2.32m, Wth 1.56m, D 0.34m	OD 67.601m
Description: A rectangular cut with a sharp break of slope at the top, a concave side profile, imperceptible break of slope at base and an unevenly flat profile at the base. It was filled by F711, F712, F713, F714. Interpretation: A large rectangular pit which may have been used for the production of brick. There was a pronounced area of oxidised natural on the southern and western edges of the cut. There was a shallow 'flue-like' cut connecting F704 and curvilinear feature F705. This was located on the southern edge of F704. The area of oxidization could possibly be explained if F705 had acted as an 'air chamber', driving air into F704 through the narrow flue.				

F705	<i>Curvilinear feature</i>	Cut	L 7.4m, With 1m, D 0.2m	OD 67.544m
<p>Description: A curvilinear cut with a sharp break of slope at the top, concave side profile and a gradual break of slope at the base and flat base profile. It was filled by F706, F707, F708.</p> <p>Interpretation: A curvilinear feature which was connected to the large brick furnace, F704, by a narrow 'flue-like' cut at its south-western edge. The basal layer of rich charcoal, F708, was only located in the western terminus of the feature beside the flue like cut. This curvilinear feature could have acted as an 'air chamber', driving air into F704 through the narrow flue. Any backdraft of air from F704 through the flue would have certainly deposited charcoal in the western most part of F705.</p>				
F706	<i>Curvilinear feature</i>	Fill	L 7.4m, With 1.29m, D 0.13m	OD 67.544m
<p>Description: A friable, brown-grey clayey-silt with charcoal, some brick fragments, pebbles and a single natural chert nodule. Upper fill of F705.</p>				
F707	<i>Curvilinear feature</i>	Fill	L 7.4m, With 1.24m, D 0.12m	OD 67.541m
<p>Description: A firm, mottled yellow-grey sandy-clay with charcoal and some stones. Fill of F705.</p> <p>Interpretation: Very similar in colour and compaction to grey natural F702. This was the basal fill in the western area of the cut. In the eastern area F707 lay above charcoal rich fill F708. It was the same fill as F713 which lay in F704. It was also the main fill within the flue-like cut that connected F704 and F705. When the production process ceased F707 would have backfilled the airchamber, the flue and the southern end of F704.</p>				
F708	<i>Curvilinear feature</i>	Fill	L 2.1m, With 0.76m, D 0.07m	OD 67.53m
<p>Description: A firm, dark grey-black silty-clay with some stones and burnt bone and large amounts of charcoal. Lower fill of F705.</p> <p>Interpretation: A charcoal rich fill which was only located in the eastern area of the curvilinear cut F705. If F705 was an 'air chamber' for the brick furnace, F704, then this charcoal layer could have been created by a backdraft from F704 through the 'flue' that connected the two cuts. It lay below, thus pre-dating, the fill (F707) which back-filled the flue and the air chamber (F705).</p>				
F709	<i>Northern brick furnace</i>	Cut	L 2.75m, With 1.25m, D 0.12m	OD 67.624m
<p>Description: A sub-rectangular cut with a sharp break of slope at the top and the base, a vertical side profile and a flat base profile. It was filled by F710 and F715.</p> <p>Interpretation: Possibly a smaller brick furnace than F704. It lay very close to F704 but any relationship that was there has been lost in testing. There was the slight possibility that F709 truncated F704. There was an area of oxidization on the base and sides in the south western part of the feature. The shape in plan of the feature resembled that of a kiln but the shallow depth and lack of in-situ burning within the wider (northern) part of the cut reduces the likelihood of that having been the case.</p>				
F710	<i>Northern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 2.54m, With 1.25m, D 0.12m	OD 67.624m
<p>Description: A friable, dark brown-grey clayey-silt with large amounts of brick and some pebbles, stones and charcoal. Fill of F709.</p>				
F711	<i>Southern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 1.18m, With 0.92m, D 0.12m	OD 67.601m
<p>Description: A loose, red-grey sandy-clay with large amounts of brick and some sand, pebbles, cobbles and stones. Fill of F704.</p> <p>Interpretation: Fill located within the central area of brick furnace F704. Possibly made up of badly fired bricks discarded after production had ceased. It could also have been the remains of a structure that was truncated during land clearance as frequent amounts of brick were found in the topsoil.</p>				
F712	<i>Southern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 0.93m, With 0.31m, D 0.11m	OD 67.601m
<p>Description: A firm, dark-grey sandy-clay with pebbles, cobbles, brick and charcoal. Fill of F704.</p> <p>Interpretation: This fill covered nearly all of the northern and western edge of F704. It was lying on the rich charcoal deposit F714. Its dark grey colour was likely the result of the surrounding clays being leached by large amounts of charcoal. It developed most likely after production had ceased during land clearance.</p>				

F713	<i>Southern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 0.52m, Wth 0.28m, D 0.06m	OD 67.517m
<p>Description: A friable, yellow-grey sandy-clay with pebbles, cobbles, brick and charcoal. Fill of F704. Interpretation: This fill was contained within the southern edge of F704. It was the same as fill F707 which was in F705 and the interconnecting flue. When the production process ceased F713/F707 would have backfilled the airchamber, the flue-like cut and the southern end of F704. It was very similar in colour and composition to F712 but it lacked the charcoal enrichment of the latter.</p>				
F714	<i>Southern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 2.29m, Wth 1.36m, D 0.07m	OD 67.595m
<p>Description: A friable dark grey-black clayey-silt with large amounts of charcoal and some sand and brick. Fill of F704. Interpretation: Charcoal rich fill from the base of F704. It was probably a result of the final brick production phase of the site.</p>				
F715	<i>Northern brick furnace</i>	Fill	L 0.82m, Wth 0.7m, D 0.06m	OD 67.613m
<p>Description: A friable, mottled orange-brown clayey-silt with some brick and charcoal. Fill of F709. Interpretation: It was only present at the north eastern edge of F709.</p>				

Appendix 5

Finds Registers

A find is numbered with a unique find number, which includes the excavation licence number, the feature number and an individual find number. Finds are numbered according to the feature they were found in. Therefore the find accession number must be read as a combination of licence number, feature number and individual find number. The register below is presented on a site by site basis in order of the excavation number.

A001-054 Kilbeggan South Finds Register
No archaeological objects were recovered during this excavation.

Appendix 6

Register of Samples

Detailed below are the samples from this site which, subject to approval, will be processed. The method of analysis is also outlined. Details on the information it is anticipated will be gained from this analysis are outlined individual excavation reports.

A001-054 Kilbeggan South 1.2 Sample Register						
Sample Number	Material	Feature Type	Feature Group	Sampled %	Comments	Analysis
A001/054:F706:S700	Soil, Charcoal	Curvilinear feature.	Curvilinear feature.	<5%	Upper fill of cut F705.	---
A001/054:F708:S701	Charcoal	Curvilinear feature.	Curvilinear feature.	<5%	Base fill of cut F705	---
A001/054:F708:S702	Animal bone	Curvilinear feature.	Curvilinear feature.	<5%	Burnt bone from basal fill of cut F705.	---
A001/054:F710:S703	Soil, Charcoal	Rectangular burnt pit.	Northern brick firing pit.	5-25%	Fill also contains brick, which requires identification.	---
A001/054:F715:S704	Soil, Charcoal	Rectangular burnt pit.	Northern brick firing pit.	<5%	Fill also contains brick, which requires identification.	---
A001/054:F712:S705	Soil, Charcoal	Rectangular burnt pit.	Southern brick firing pit.	<5%	Fill (F712) of southern burnt pit.	C14; C14 Charcoal ID
A001/054:F713:S706	Soil, Charcoal	Rectangular burnt pit.	Southern brick firing pit.	<5%	Fill of southern burnt pit.	---
A001/054:S707 Kilbeggan South 1.1	Soil, Charcoal	Shallow pit with burning.	Resolved site.	<5%	Sample from primary fill of shallow burnt pit. This sample was taken despite the fact that it is a resolved site for the purpose of finding a tangible relationship between it and the large burnt pits on site	---
A001/054:F711:S708	Other	Rectangular burnt pit.	Southern brick firing pit.	<5%	Brick for identification.	Brick
A001/054:F711:S709	Soil, Charcoal	Rectangular burnt pit.	Southern brick firing pit.	<5%	Primary fill (F710) of Northern burnt pit. Fill also contains brick, which requires identification.	---
A001/054:F706:S710	Flint nodules	Curvilinear feature.	Curvilinear feature.	100%	Chert nodules from upper fill of cut F705.	---

Appendix 7

Excavations of Comparable Sites

This appendix contains summary accounts of previously excavated sites comparable to those addressed in this report. These have been extracted from the online website www.excavations.ie for sites excavated up to 2000 and Excavations 2001 and Excavations 2002 (Bennett 2003; 2004) for subsequent excavations. The entries are listed in geographical order by county and subsequently by townland under the following themes:

Brick pits

Antrim

1971:05

NEWFERRY

Mesolithic/Neolithic Occupation site

H991 981

Excavations at Newferry were jointly financed by the Ulster Museum and the Ministry of Finance. They were a continuation of the study of the complex of river deposits and occupation layers which were excavated in 1970. These deposits began to accumulate probably sometime after 7,000 B.C. and continued to accumulate until about 2,000 B.C. In these deposits is a series of occupation layers, which have been dated with aid of several Radiocarbon Dates. The occupation deposits can be divided up as follows:-

- 1) Orange sand. Contains possible remains of a structure, water, rolled charcoal, and two struck flakes. Probably earlier than 6,000 B.C. (Sited on the edge of an old course of the Bann) This is the earliest dated evidence of man's presence in Ireland.
- 2) Complex of occupation layers resting in and on top of a peat deposit. This complex is dated approximately to between 5,500 B.C. and 5,000 B.C. It is the oldest series of occupation layers proper in Ireland. One layer contains occasional traces of structures. These layers were archaeologically very rich. They contained at least 8 stone axes, a scraper, borers, knives, tanged knives, microliths and many other implement forms. Several implement forms are so rare that they are not even represented in the Museum collections.
- 3) Wash-off material from an occupation layer, which has been destroyed. Basically the same form of industry but with changes in the type of tang.
- 4) Sand bank in which there are several occupation layers and soil horizons. These are, with the exception of the upper-most layer, rather sterile.

The lower part of the sand bank does contain, however several interesting pen-knife-forms and tanged knives. The uppermost layer of the sand bank contains many blades, heavily worked pointed implements and the occasional stone axe. It also contains a large quantity of the bone material, which was found last year.
- 5) Upper diatomite complex. So much of the upper layers were eroded by (6) that very little from this complex was found *in situ* this year. This complex would appear to date from around 4,000 B.C. to 3,000 B.C. Last year pottery and a leaf shaped arrowhead were found in the uppermost of these occupation layers. Many stone axes including minatures were found in this complex. The heavy retouched element would appear to be diminishing in importance towards the top of this complex.
- 6) An erosion level which cut into (5) over nearly half the area excavated and in fact at one point cut into the very top of (4). This layer contained very large quantities of pottery, stone axes and flint implements, unfortunately out of context.
- 7) Diatomite. Nearly sterile; only the occasional undiagnostic flake.
- 8) Modern disturbance. The River Bann has eroded large area of the site particularly the earlier layers. Brick pits, one containing two sherds of Post-Medieval pottery, were cut into (7).

The excavation team worked in conjunction with a group from the Palaeo-ecology Laboratory, Queen's University, who took several monoliths in order to undertake an extensive Pollen Analysis study of this site.

Mr. Peter Woodman, Department of Antiquities, Ulster Museum

Cork

2000:0157

YOUGHAL BRICKWORKS, YOUGHAL

Brickworks

W2087108008

SMR 67:12

00E0659

Testing was carried out at this site in advance of the proposed Youghal bypass. Two test-trenches were opened by mechanical digger on 4 September 2000. Both ran north-east/south-west along the length of the road route from the river westwards for a distance of c. 280m. There was a large quantity of brick rubble in the trenches, suggesting that brick waste from the brickworks was used either to stabilise the ground between the brickworks and the river or to fill in areas where the estuarine clay had been removed for brick-making.

No archaeological finds or features were noted.

Sheila Lane, 1 Charlemont Heights, Coach Hill, Rochestown, Co. Cork

Appendix 8

Testing Report extracts for the excavated and associated sites

The following extracts from the Advance Archaeological Investigation, Contract 2: Tyrrellspass to Kilbeggan report (CRDS 2004) indicating the known status, extents and classifications of the features as identified during the centreline testing.

SITE NUMBER	FEATURE	TYPE
Kilbeggan South 1.2	F101	Pit furnace
FIELD	OWNER	STATUS
217	Teresa and Jerome O'Rourke	Tested
TRENCHES	CHAINAGE	OFFSET
217-XT48	---	---
NGR	OD	DEPTH BELOW SURFACE
233598/234198	68.86	0.29
ASSOCIATED FEATURES	PLATES	FIGURE
F100	Plate 5.15	Fig. 5.46
FINDS	ARCHIVE PHOTOS	ARCHIVE DRAWINGS
---	Pending archiving	MS:Dwg 12, sheet 5
LENGTH	WIDTH	DEPTH
See description	See description	0.16m
DIRECTOR	RECOMMENDATION	
MS	Resolution	
<p>A pit furnace consisting of two distinct but associated features: F101a and F101b. F101a is rectangular/oval pit measuring 2.35m x 1.4m . A slot section excavated across its east-west axis revealed a depth of c. 15cm. The cut has sloping sides with the eastern side sloping noticeably more gradually. The break of slope at the base is gentle on the east with a sharper break on the west. The break of slope at the top is sharp on both sides and the base is straight. The cut contains two fills, the upper fill is a grey clay which is loose and friable. It is composed of coarse grained sediments with frequent grit inclusions and moderate amounts of sub-rounded and sub-angular stone. Some of these stones display heat-fracturing and moderate amounts of very vitrified clay are also evident. The lower fill is only 1cm in depth and consists of a pure charcoal lens which is very organic in nature. F101b is c. 2.35m x 0.8m and joined with F101a, although a clear relationship was not established between the two. The feature consists of a grey silty clay with a slight yellow hue. The fill is coarse grained and contains burnt clay, stone and charcoal. The fill is contained within a cut that is 6-8cm deep. The base of the cut was not fully exposed as a large mudstone partially covered it. The cut has straight/slightly sloping sides with a sharp break of slope at the top and a fairly sharp break of slope at the base, which is straight. Although possibly representing different periods of burning, F101a and F101b are probably broadly contemporary. Their function or date could not be ascertained but it is possible that they were used in the firing either of cereals or for brick manufacture. The organic nature of the charcoal lens suggests cereals, however, good clays are located in close proximity to the feature as are known old brickfields.</p>		

Appendix 9

Wood Identification of Charcoal Samples at Kilbeggan South 1.2

Ellen O'Carroll MA Dip EIA Mgt

Site	Licence	Sample No	Feature No	Sample type	Identification	Weight	AMS/Standard/Comment
Kilbeggan South 1.2	A001-054	S705	F712	Charred wood	Oak (8g) & Ash (5g)	13g	AMS, Ash bagged seperately for dating



Plate 1: General site shot post-excitation



Plate 2: Burnt pits (F704 & F709) pre-excitation



Plate 3: F705 post-excavation facing south



Plate 4: F705 mid-excavation facing east



Plate 5: F704, F711, F712 & F714 Mid Excavation Facing North



Plate 6: F704, F705 Post Excavation Facing East

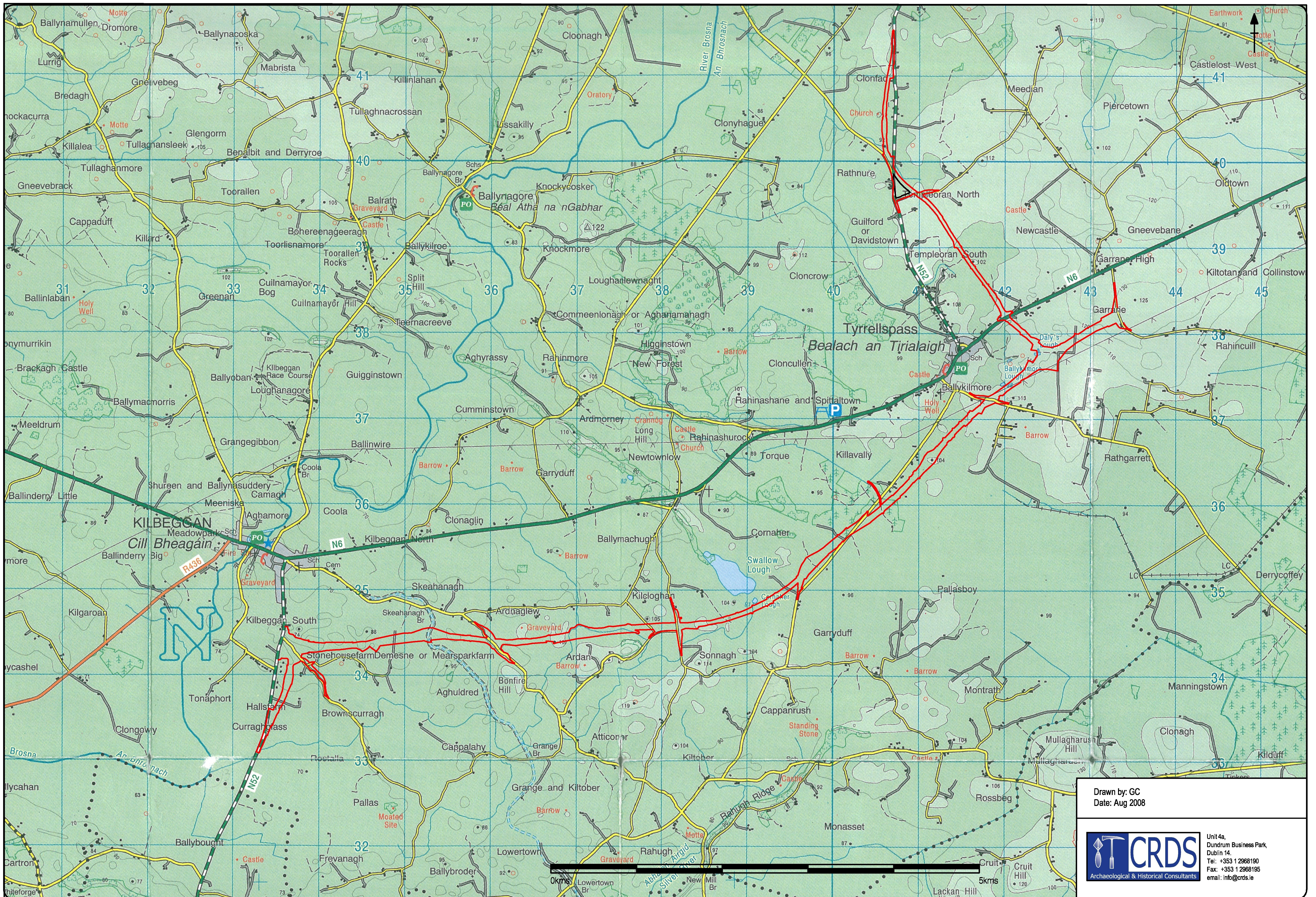


Figure 1 : Extract from EIS showing extent of the road scheme



ORIGINAL SIZE A3



WESTMIDLEIGH COUNTY COUNCIL

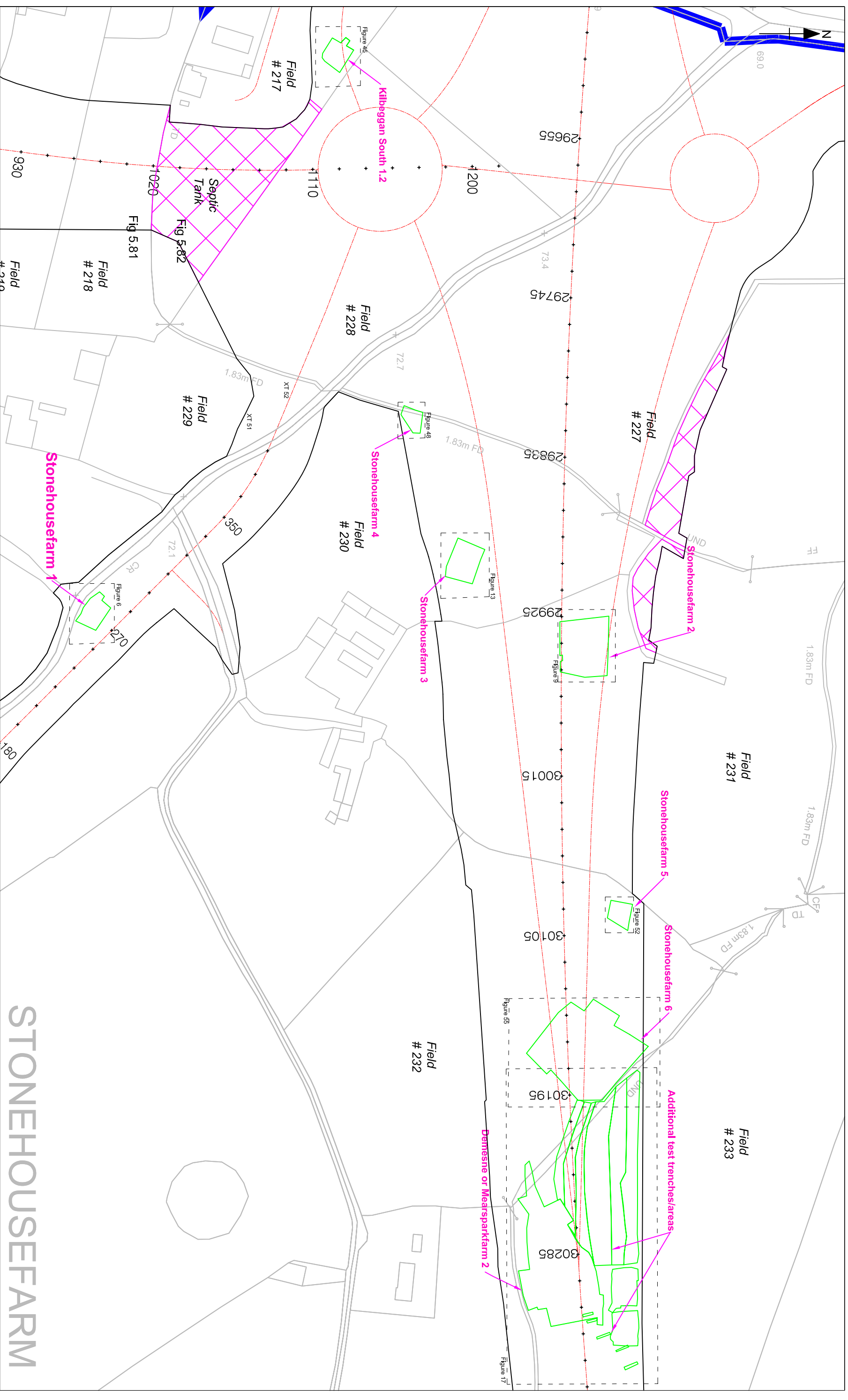
National Roads Design Office
 1st Floor, 1st Floor
 Cl. Westmeath, Westmeath
 Tel: 044-9300000 Fax: 044-9300000
 John Ahern
 Chartered Engineer MCEI
 Project Engineer

Riada Consult
Kinnegad to Athlone

18-19 Cumberland St. Durlough, Co. Wick, Ireland
 Tel: (+353) 01 236 4488 Fax: (+353) 01 236 4488

Rev	By	Date	Description
D	AR	Jul '03	Final Environmental Impact Statement Issue

Project:	N6 Athlone - Kinnegad		
Component:	Proposed Route		
Title:	Location on Aerial Background		
Designed:	Riada	File Name:	21812
Drawn:	PJG	Original Scale:	1 : 10000
Checked:	MOS	Date:	May 2003
			Drawing No:
			Figure 2

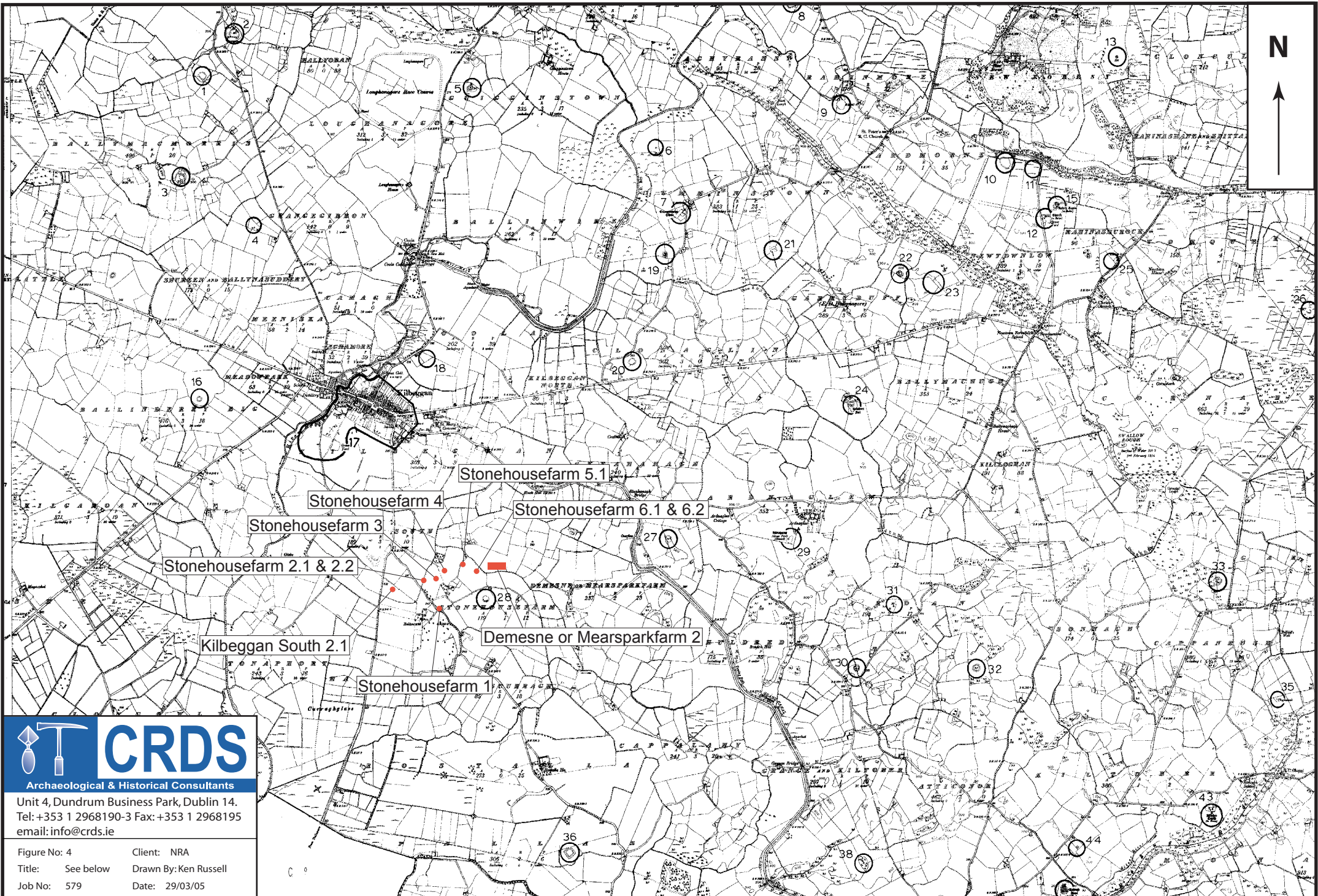


N6 Kinnegad to Athlone Dual Carriageway
Advance Archaeological Investigations
Contract 2: Kilbeggan to Tyrellspass

Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd.
Archaeological & Historical Consultants

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Dundrum Business Park,
Dublin 14.
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email: info@crds.ie

CRDS
Archaeological & Historical Consultants









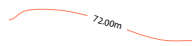










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Figure No: 4	Client: NRA
Title: See below	Drawn By: Ken Russell
Job No: 579	Date: 29/03/05

Figure 4: 1st edition OS RMP Map showing Site Location

Key:

CPO Line	
Limit of excavation	
Grid Point	
Section line	
Section Point	
Feature edge	
Contour Line	
Context cut by another	
Unclear edge	
Fill	
Cut	
Hachure	
Stone	
Charcoal	
Oxidized Natural	
Section Number	
Scale bar	


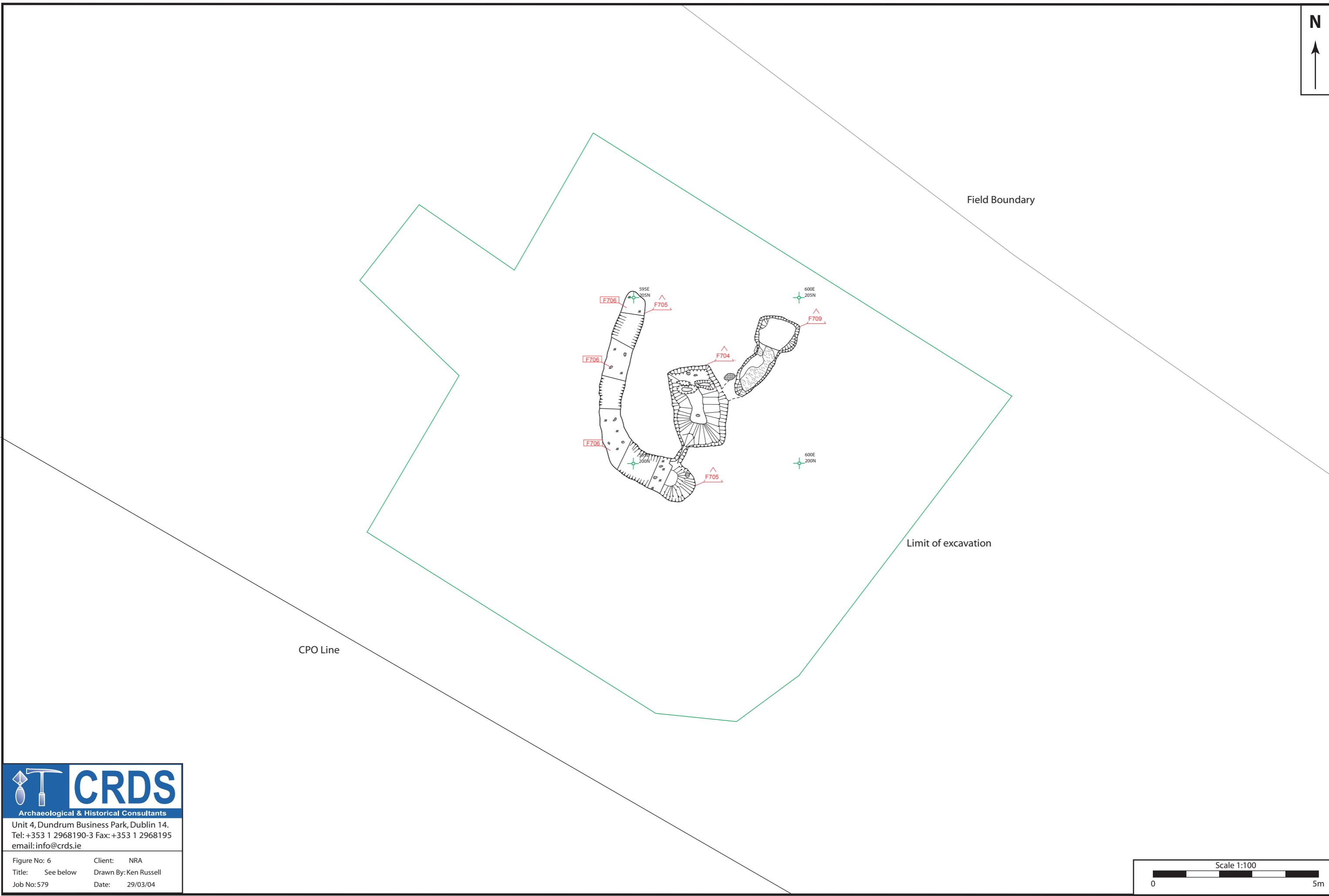
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Figure No: 5	Client: NRA
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Figure 5: Key





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Figure No: 6	Client: NRA
Title: See below	Drawn By: Ken Russell
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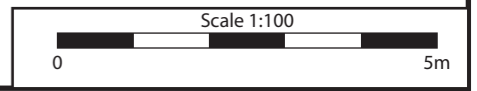
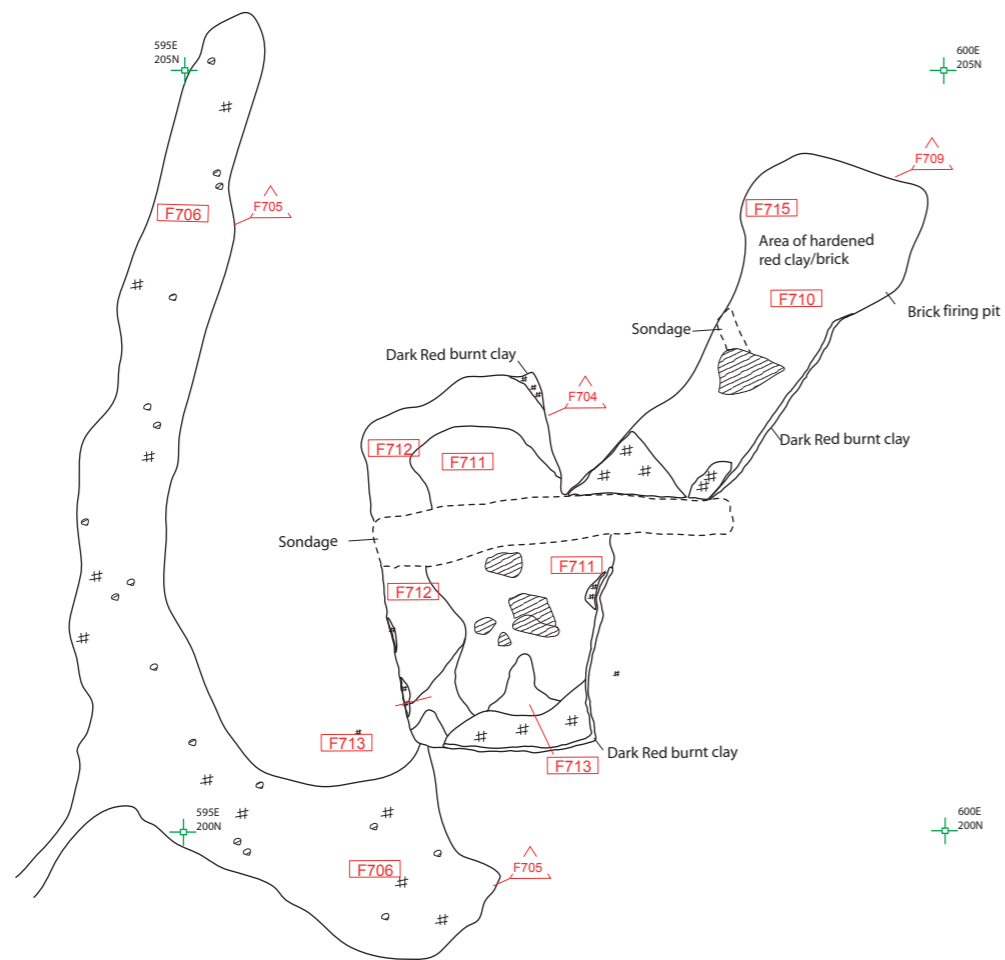
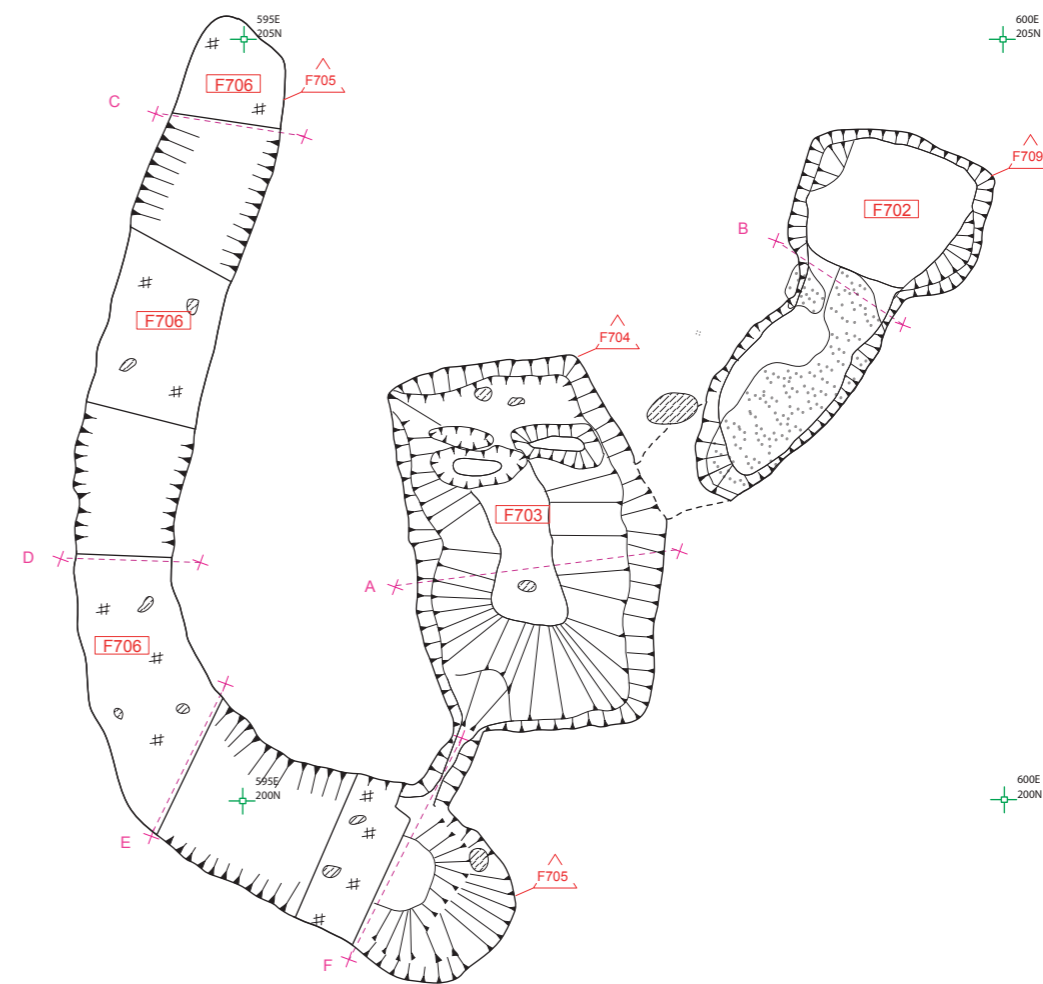


Figure 6: Killbeggan South - Overall view



Pre excavation plan



Post excavation plan



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Figure No: 7 Client: NRA
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Job No: 597 Date: 29/03/05

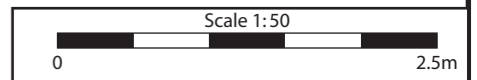
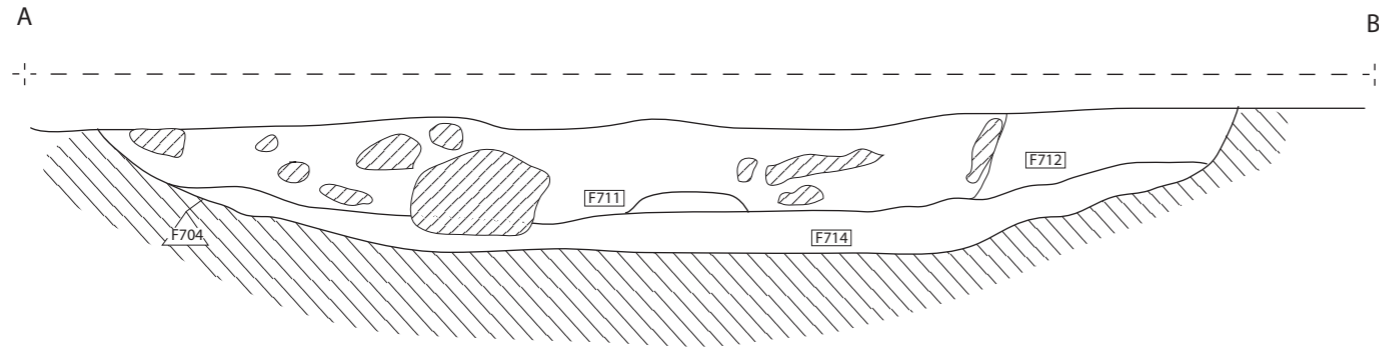
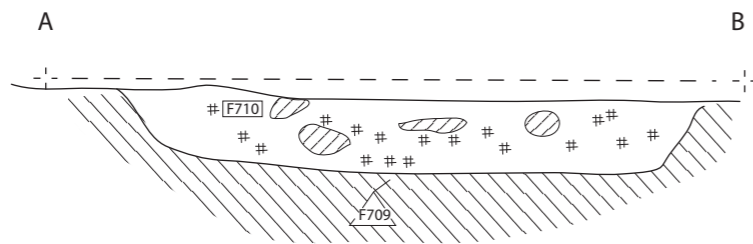


Figure 7: Kilbeggan South 1.2 - Pre and post excavation plan

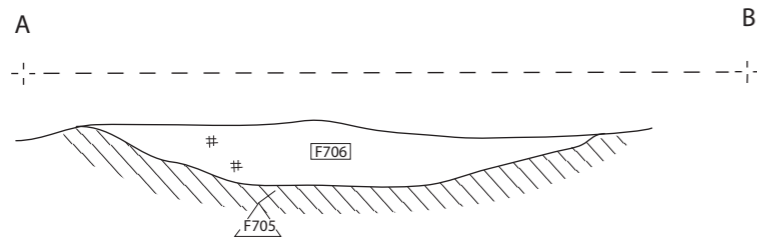
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Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
S Facing section
of F704
67.60m OD



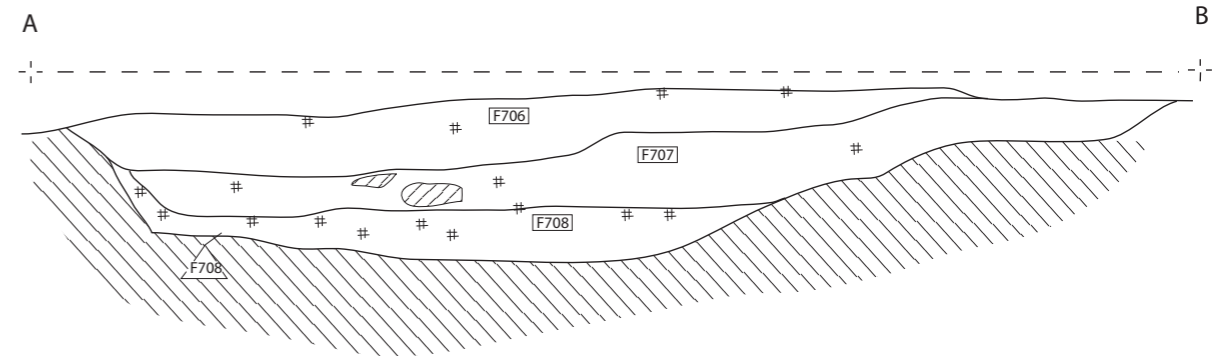
Section B
A001/010
Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
NW Facing section
of F709 & F710
67.63m OD



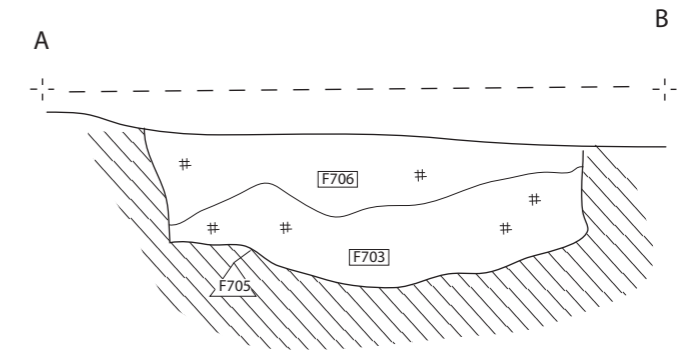
Section C
A001/054
Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
S Facing section
of F705 & F706
67.58m OD



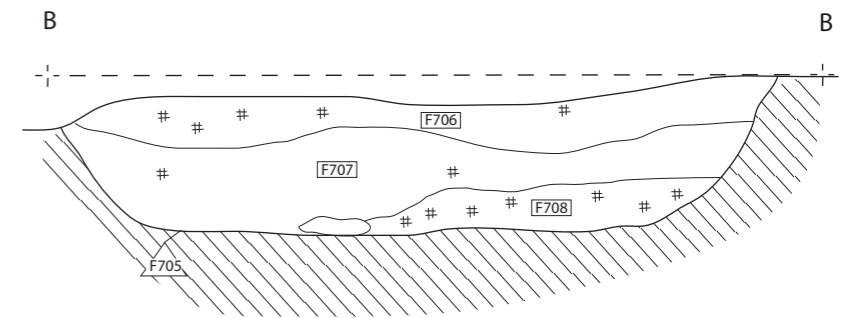
Section F
A001/054
Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
NW facing section
of F705
67.54m OD



Section D
A001/054
Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
S Facing section
of F705, F706 & 707
67.57m OD



Section E
A001/054
Kilbeggan South 1.2
Scale 1:10
NW facing
section F705
67.53 m OD



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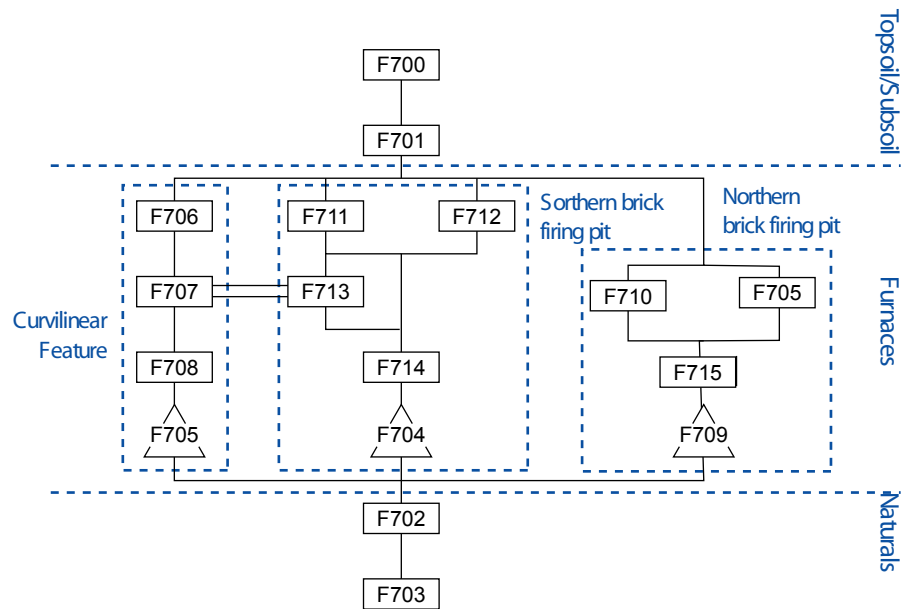
Figure No: 8 Client: NRA
Title: See below Drawn By: Ken Russell
Job No: 597 Date: 29/03/05



Figure 8: Kilbeggan South 1.2 - Sections

A001/054 Killbeggan South 1.2

Site Matrix



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Figure No: 9	Client: NRA
Title: See below	Drawn By: C. McD
Job No: 579	Date: 23/03/05

Figure 9: Site Matrix

The University of Waikato
Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory



Private Bag 3105
Hamilton,
New Zealand.
Fax +64 7 838 4192
Ph +64 7 838 4278
email c14@waikato.ac.nz
Head: Dr Alan Hogg

Report on Radiocarbon Age Determination for Wk-

17949

Submitter	MM Murray
Submitter's Code	A001/054.F712.705
Site & Location	Kilbeggan South 1.2, Co. Westmeath, Ireland
Sample Material	Charcoal
Physical Pretreatment	Possible contaminants were removed. Washed in ultrasonic bath.
Chemical Pretreatment	Sample washed in hot 10% HCl, rinsed and treated with hot 0.5% NaOH. The NaOH insoluble fraction was treated with hot 10% HCl, filtered, rinsed and dried.

$\delta^{14}\text{C}$	-70.4 ± 5.3	‰
$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	-26.9 ± 0.2	‰
D^{14}C	-66.9 ± 5.4	‰
% Modern	93.3 ± 0.5	%
Result	556 \pm 47 BP	

Comments

15/2/06

- Result is *Conventional Age or % Modern* as per Stuiver and Polach, 1977, Radiocarbon 19, 355-363. This is based on the Libby half-life of 5568 yr with correction for isotopic fractionation applied. This age is normally quoted in publications and must include the appropriate error term and Wk number.
- Quoted errors are 1 standard deviation due to counting statistics multiplied by an experimentally determined Laboratory Error Multiplier of 1.
- The isotopic fractionation, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, is expressed as ‰ wrt PDB.
- Results are reported as *% Modern* when the conventional age is younger than 200 yr BP.

