

**N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme:
Waterford to Knocktopher – Phase 2
Archaeological Resolution
Dunkitt to Knocktopher townlands, Co. Kilkenny**

**FINAL REPORT
Scheme Reference Number: A032/000
Excavation Reference Number: E2512
Site Name: AR037
Townland: Knockmoylan,
Co. Kilkenny**

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SUMMARY

This report comprises the preliminary results of the archaeological excavation of AR037 in the townland of Knockmoylan, Co. Kilkenny. This excavation was undertaken as part of the archaeological programme for the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Waterford to Knocktopher section. The excavation was conducted by John Channing under Ministerial Direction for Valerie J Keeley Ltd, from 29 May to 2 June 2006.

Excavations at this site revealed two conjoined linear ditches, an L-shaped ditch, a shallow pit and a likely post-hole and represents a medieval field system. Three ceramic artefacts representing two vessels dating broadly to the 13-14th centuries A.D were identified. One of these three pieces was retrieved from a boundary ditch. The two forms represent a domestic pot, Leinster Ware, possibly used in cooking and a glazed jug.

All archaeological work is now complete for this site and this report constitutes the final report on this excavation. A digital copy of the archive is available at the post excavation offices of Valerie J Keeley Ltd., Brehon House, Kilkenny Road, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. The original paper archive for this excavation will rest with the Road Design Offices of Kilkenny County Council.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The proposed N9/N10 which consists of a high quality dual-carriageway/ motorway extends from Dunkitt townland on the outskirts of Waterford city to Kilcullen in Co. Kildare. Phase 2 of this development consists of the construction of 24 km of high quality dual carriageway, which will link into the proposed Waterford bypass road at Dunkitt, County Kilkenny, and to the R699 at Sheepstown, near Knocktopher in County Kilkenny. This phase of the development will run through a rural greenfield landscape. Construction work commenced in May 2007, following the completion of archaeological excavations.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the development was carried out in February 2005 by Valerie J Keeley Ltd. The studies confirmed the presence of a number of potential archaeological features along the route. Following this desk-based study archaeological test excavations were carried out by Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd in 2006 under licence issued by the authorities. The testing took the form of archaeologically directed centre-line testing along the entire route of the development. This testing determined the extent and nature of archaeological remains in areas highlighted as having archaeological potential in the EIS, and areas where no known archaeological features were present. A total of 53 areas of archaeological potential were highlighted by the testing as requiring further archaeological investigation.

Full excavation of the sites began in May 2006, and was carried out by Valerie J Keeley Ltd on behalf of Kilkenny County Council.

1.2 Aims & Objectives

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd. was appointed by Kilkenny County Council to excavate archaeological sites first identified during a programme of centreline testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006).

The scope of the archaeological measures was:

- To strip the topsoil from an area measuring approx 1250m² along the road corridor and locate the previously identified archaeological features and any other archaeological features that may be present in this area.
- Photograph and plan any archaeological features or potential archaeological features.
- Excavate all archaeological features identified, record their contexts and sections; retaining samples where necessary, in order to resolve them by means of preservation by record.
- Reinstatement of excavated areas where required.

The proposed excavation was carried out following the initial archaeological assessment by Valerie J Keeley Ltd (2005) and completion of the subsequent centreline testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006). The goal of this

project being to preserve by record the archaeological site/s exposed within the take of the proposed route, and to further assess areas previously unavailable for testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006).

These works took place in accordance with the Directions issued by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Section 14A(2) of the National Monuments Acts (1930 – 2004), in accordance with the terms of the Contract between Kilkenny County Council and Valerie J Keeley Ltd and according to the terms of the Code of Practice agreed between the National Roads Authority and the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The excavations also complied with the Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (Govt of Ireland 1999) and were overseen by the Project Archaeologist.

The development consists of the construction of one section of a realigned N9/N10 road between Kilcullen and Waterford.

1.3 Site Location & Access

The site was located along the line of the proposed N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Road Improvement Scheme. This part of the development consists of the construction of 24 km of high quality dual carriageway, which will link into the proposed Waterford bypass road at Dunkitt, County Kilkenny, and to the R699 at Knocktopher County Kilkenny.

The site, (A032/000, E2512, AR37), was located some 1.5km northwest of the village of Lukewell in County Kilkenny. The field containing the site was in mature pasture and sloped gently down to the southwest. The site was located in the townland of Knockmoylan, Co. Kilkenny (NGR 254664E 128507N, Ordnance Survey 6" series Co. Kilkenny sheet No. 36, Chainage: 15,240, 129.5m OD (See Figures 1 – 5; Plates 1 – 6). The site was accessed from existing fields.

1.4 Project Timescale

Topsoil was stripped from this site on 29th May 2006. Excavation was completed on the 2nd June 2006. The site was made safe and backfilled by machine shortly after the work was carried out and the ground reinstated.

1.5 Summary of Archaeological Significance

Excavation of this site revealed two conjoined boundary ditches, an L-shaped drain, a shallow pit and a likely post-hole. No further work is recommended on this site.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The background draws upon existing research within Valerie J Keeley Ltd.

2.1 Geology & Topography

The site was located in townland of Knockmoylan, on gentle sloping ground on the west side of a mature boundary, circa .5km northwest of the village of Lukewell, Co. Kilkenny.

Townland	County	Barony	Civil Parish	Poor Law Union
Knockmoylan	Kilkenny	Knocktopher	Kilkeasy	Thomastown

Table 1: Site location details

County Kilkenny comprises three distinct topographical zones (Smyth 1990, 127-8): the upland area to the north, with the Slieveardagh hills and the Castlecomer plateau, the central limestone plain, and the southern upland area, where the Black Water valley cuts through the Walsh Mountains, hills which never rise higher than 294m (970 feet). These form part of the Slievenaman ridge. This zone may be subdivided further, as there is a second lowland area between the Walsh mountains and the Suir. To the east are the deeper valleys of the Nore and the Barrow, which drain the central limestone plain. To the west is the Lingaun, a smaller river, which rises on the slopes of Slievenaman. The lower reaches of the Lingaun form the boundary between Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary.

The principal geological feature in South Kilkenny is the meeting of the Caledonian and Armorican structural elements. The Black Water valley and the hills on either side are still Armorican – the east-west trend of the geology of south Munster. To the west of this are the slates, shale and granites continuing down from the north-east (Whittow 1974, 239, 255).

The EIS carried out for the scheme notes that the glacial drift deposits consist of ‘sandy gravelly clays with cobbles and boulders. These deposits have between 50% and 70% sand and gravel sized particles with index properties that class them as clays of low plasticity’¹. Old Red Sandstone from the ‘Carrigmaclea formation [is] encountered, and forms much of the higher ground around Mullinavat’² to the south of the site.

The majority of land use in the vicinity of the site is dairy farming pasture with some tillage. The site lay on the northwest slope of Carrickmerlin hill (132m OD) close to the source of the Arrigal River.

¹ EIS N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Section 13 Soils, geology and hydrology. P373

² Ibid. P372

2.2 Historical Background

The scheme as a whole comprises an essentially artificial geographic unit, defined by N9/N10 road corridor. However, the townlands of the northern section of the road can be placed in a historical / geographic context as they lie within the pre – Norman territory of MacBraoin, the medieval manor of Knocktopher.

2.2.1 Early Origins

The historic period in Ireland begins with the arrival of writing in the early medieval period, concurrent with the spread of Christianity. Little can be definitively stated about the internal geographic boundaries and political structures of Ireland prior to this time and indeed until about the 8th century AD, although we can project known early medieval divisions back to the near proto – historic period. The earliest traditional division of the country was into two halves along a boundary that ran roughly from Dublin to Galway (Byrne 2001, 168). The north was Leth Cuinn (Conn's Half) and the south was Leth Moga (Mugs Half). Conn was the progenitor of the Connachta, a tribal grouping from whom the later rulers of Connaught and Ulster claimed descent, while Mug was believed to be the first of the Eoganachta, from whom the kings of Munster and Leinster claimed descent. The two Halves of Ireland were more cultural than they were political, but it is from them that the very real polities of the Fifts of Tara (Mide), Ulster, Connaught, Leinster and Munster emerge. Munster itself was subdivided into Fifts; Aurmumu (Ormond) east Munster, Taudmumu (Thomond) north Munster, Medón Muman mid Munster, Desmumu (Desmond) south Munster, and Iarmumu west Munster (ibid, 165). Each Fifth was a conglomeration of sub-provincial kingdoms under the suzerainty of a provincial over-king. The sub-provincial kingship of Aurmumu was centred on the rock of Cashel, as was the kingship of Munster itself, and was held exclusively between the fifth and tenth centuries by various septs of the Eoganachta. In the proto-historic period and for the majority of the early medieval period, the site fell under the hegemony of the Fifth of Aurmumu, in the Tricha Cet (an area that could nominally muster 3000 fighting men) of Osraighe (whose boundaries are preserved within the modern Catholic Diocese of Ossory in counties Kilkenny and Offaly). The territory of Osraighe was subdivided into seven plains (Magha); the site lay within Magh Sedna (The Plain of Sedna; northwest Co. Kilkenny, southwest Co. Offaly) under the kingship of the O' Broithe (O' Brophy), of whom Sedna – great grandson of Aengus Osrithe, progenitor of the Osrighe – was the traditional ancestor (Dowling 1980, 16-17).

2.2.2 Early Medieval

The County of Kilkenny is based on the Kingdom of Ossory, and originally was coterminous with it, as was the diocese of Ossory. The northernmost part of the county, known as Upper Ossory, was lost when Queen's County was founded in 1556. A number of parishes west of the river Barrow were transferred from Carlow to Kilkenny. The southern half of the county, however, retains its original boundaries, apart from the small area of Tibbraghny in the south-west.

The name Ossory is derived from the Osraige, who were the earliest recorded inhabitants. The territory of the Osraige originally extended further to the south-west, into what is now County Tipperary, but in the 5th century AD they were driven out of this area by the Deisi. It is said that the Osraige 'fled like wild deer, and they were followed till they reached a place called Luininn, where the close of the day put an end to the pursuit; 'and this place became the boundary ever after between Munster and Leinster'. (Carrigan 1905, I, 29) This is not entirely true, because although the Lingaun river became the boundary of Ossory and remains the boundary of County Kilkenny, Ossory did not become unambiguously a part of Leinster until some centuries later.

The mention of wild deer is probably an attempt to explain the name of the Osraige, which means 'deer-people'. The more usual explanation among the Osraige themselves, however, was that they were called after one Aengus Osraithe, said to have been their ancestor and the first King of Ossory, living in the second century AD. Osraithe or Osfrithe meant 'the deer-found', and it was said that he had been found among the wild deer, although Carrigan interprets it more prosaically as meaning that he was 'born or brought up in a place where deer abounded' (Carrigan 1905, II, 27).

The 'deer-found' explanation seems to be an explanation of a Christian society familiar with the Biblical tale of Moses and the classical story of Romulus and Remus. This would have been more palatable than what we now realise is the more likely explanation. Some of the earliest peoples mentioned in the Irish written sources had similar names – Artraige 'bear people', Dartraige 'calf people'. These names are likely to be totemic, the animal representing a divinity worshipped by the people in question (MacNiocall 1972, 3).

Despite their defeat and their subjugation by the Corco Loígde, the Osraige were one of the few early population groups to retain their identity and importance in later times when dynastic identity became more important. This was because of the position of their territory.

In ancient times, Munster was largely cut off from the rest of Ireland by natural barriers such as the Slieve Blooms and the midland bogs, and indeed the Shannon, until the Vikings showed the military advantages of water transport. To the east, rivers and hills separated Munster from Leinster, with Ossory as a buffer zone. It was through Ossory that a northern army had to pass to invade Munster, across by Belach Gabhráin at Gowran through the central plain of the county (Byrne 1973, 169).

An attempt to map the road network of Ireland at that time was made by O Lochlainn in 1940. He did this by first mapping all placenames incorporating relevant words such as droichead (bridge) and bealach (passage) and, more importantly, by mapping journeys described in ancient accounts such as saints' lives. He also mapped the Five Great Roads or Slíte which were said to radiate from Tara. The former suggested that a route led south-westwards from Castledermot via Sleaty to Dind Rig, a royal residence near the present Leighlinbridge, and from

there via Gowran to Kilkenny. However, he shows the Sli Chualann, one of the Five Great Roads, running alongside the Barrow as far south as the site of New Ross, where it crosses the Barrow to follow what would be the line of the present R704 to Mullinavat, and turning southwards down the Black Water valley to Waterford (O Lochlainn 1940).

By the 11th century the Kings of Ossory had shaken off the overlordship of the Kings of Cashel (i.e. Munster) and associated themselves with Leinster. (Byrne 1973 131). They had ambitions to rule Leinster, and had their genealogists concoct a Leinster pedigree (ibid 163).

The most powerful of the kings of Ossory was Cerball Mac Dúnlainge, who reigned from 847 until 888. By now there was a new force in Irish politics: the Vikings. He played off rival bands of Vikings against one another and took some into his own service. Furthermore, his daughters married Norsemen, and he is recorded in Icelandic pedigrees as Kjarvalr Irakonung – Kjarval the Irish king (Byrne 1973, 162). Cerball failed to gain recognition as ruler of Leinster by the High King. His successors continued to contest the kingship of Leinster over the next one and a half centuries, but the first to succeed, Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic in 1036, was also the last. Nonetheless, Ossory remained a powerful kingdom within Leinster. It was now ruled by the Mac Gilla Pátraic family, who were to remain kings of Ossory until the late 12th century, and remained powerful in Upper Ossory until the sixteenth century.

When territorial dioceses were set up at the Synod of Rath Bressail in 1111, the Bishop of Ossory was granted the territory lying between the Slieve Blooms and the meeting of the three rivers, and between Grane Hill, in the parish of Urlingford, and Slieve Mairge.

Meanwhile in 1103, after the death in battle of Gillapattrick Ruadh, King of Ossory, the kingdom was broken up into three divisions. Deisceart Osraighe was the southern part. It probably consisted of the baronies of Ida and Iverk and the southern extremity of the Barony of Knocktopher. By the middle of the century there was considerable friction between Ossory and Leinster. In the 1140s Dermot McMurrough, King of Leinster, deposed Cearbhall King of South Ossory and gave his kingdom to Donnchadh, King of Tuaisceart Osraighe. In 1151, however, he imprisoned Donnchadh and reinstated Cearbhall as king over almost all of Ossory until Donnchadh's release, when the two were restored to their original kingdoms. Subsequently, however, Dermot McMurrough expelled Cearbhall and extended Donnchadh's rule over most of Ossory.

From the start, King Aengus Osríthe c.150AD, the kingdom of Osraighe appears to have been squeezed by neighbouring territories. The kingdom has been equated with Ptolemy's Usdai, but this is not certain. (Claudius Ptolemy, Greek astronomer and geographer, c.85-165AD, Map of Ireland within his 8 book Geography, only

copies survive, the area is marked on Hibernia map as approx location of Usdai). International contact is evidenced by Roman remains at Freestone Hill and Stonyford. Some unusual events are recorded in Osraighe, The annals of the four masters records that “a shower of wheat was rained in Osraighe” in 1021AD. (O’Donovan J. ed. The annals of kingdom of Ireland by the four masters, i-vii. reprinted by De Burca rare books 1990).

2.2.3 Anglo – Norman Era

The 12th century saw a dramatic change to Gaelic Ireland, following the arrival of Anglo-Norman armies and the submission of Irish kings to Henry II, making Ireland a lordship of England. While daily life for the majority of the population continued much as it had before, a new population group became established across the country bringing with them a new material culture and a new system of civil and ecclesiastic administration. In areas under Anglo-Norman control the various strata of provincial, sub-provincial and local kingships were replaced with a manorial system under lordships and earldoms. The idiosyncratic organisation and practices of the Irish church were adapted to fit the European norm with the introduction of a parochial system following the submission of the Irish Bishops to Henry II at Cashel in 1172 (Scott & Martin eds. 1978, 99). New geographic units such as cantreds, baronies, counties and palatinate counties were created to facilitate the Anglo-Norman colonisation. The manorial system and new geographic units by and large followed pre-existing boundaries, although their precise definition and function remained in a state of flux throughout the medieval period.

The kingdom of Osraighe lay in a strategic position between Munster and Anglo-Norman forces in Leinster. Both the Mac Gilla Pátraic kings of northern and southern Osraighe initially resisted, and whereas the southern Osraighe were defeated in battle between 1169 and 1170 and their lands effectively seized, the undefeated northern Osraighe submitted to Strongbow in 1171 and managed to maintain their lands (O’ Byrne 2003, 41). The arrangement was short-lived as northern Osraighe continued to be a disputed frontier zone between the Irish of Munster and English of Leinster. In order to protect Leinster, the Mac Gilla Pátraic’s tenure of their lands was revoked in 1191/1192 and were displaced to the Slieve Bloom mountains in Offaly to the north, the same year as the construction of Kilkenny castle (ibid).

The king of Ossory ‘advanced with 3000 men to oppose them, near the eastern confines of Ossory, where he made deep cuttings and trenches, and plashed the pass’ (the latter evidently means ‘pleached’, i.e. interwove the branches of trees and bushes to form a barrier). After a day’s fighting, the Leinster army succeeded in breaking through, and wasted Ossory. This, and other subsequent incursions, seem to have been in the northern half of Ossory, entering via Old Leighlin (Carrigan 1905, 60-62).

After Dermot's death, Domhnall acknowledged Strongbow as his feudal lord and submitted to Henry II. He was left in possession of Tuaisceart Osraige, the more important northern part, while South Ossory (Deisceart Osraighe) was granted to Milo FitzDavid. It became known as 'Overk in Ossory'

The territories of the Osraighi now fell under the Lordship of Leinster and were broken up into various baronies. The Liberty of Kilkenny, as Ossory now became (Dudley Edwards 1973, 84-5), was divided into manors. Those in south and central Kilkenny were unusually large compared to other areas, comprising an entire cantred or barony, such as Iverk and Knocktopher. These were subdivided into dependent fiefs. (Empey 1990, 75).

A major setback for the colonists was the worst recorded famine in medieval Ireland in 1314-1318 coupled with the wide spread devastation caused by de Bruce's invasion in 1315-1318 (Marnane 2003, 193). The spread of bubonic plague throughout the urban centres of Ireland in the 1350's had a major impact on the English colony as a whole, but a minor one on the dispersed populations of the Gaelic lordships. The weakening civil administration of the colony fuelled continuing conflict throughout the fifteenth century between Desmond, Ormond and Thomond and factional conflict between the various lords within these earldoms and lordships defined the political background for the region in this period.

The Walsh family acquired extensive territories across the southern half of County Kilkenny, giving their names to the rough upland area known as the Walsh mountains. They held this land, with an 'interweaving of Gaelic and feudal strategies of land management and social control' (Smyth 1990, 139) until the seventeenth century.

Their feudal overlords were the Butler families who, from the middle of the 14th century, came to dominate counties Kilkenny and Tipperary (Smyth 1990, 137).

2.2.4 Late Medieval

The ongoing nature of low-scale warfare throughout north Munster in the late medieval period created a political and militarily unstable society for Anglo-Irish and Gaelic areas alike. A physical manifestation of this was the proliferation of tower houses constructed in the 15th and 16th century, with multiple strongholds built in each lordship. The scale of conflict between Ormond and Desmond can be seen in the largest densities of tower houses in the country in counties Limerick (Desmond), Kilkenny and Tipperary (Ormond) (Marnane 2003, 220). The comparatively large number of such strongholds in the area may also be due to the fact that Ormond and Desmond escaped the Elizabethan plantations of the early 16th century.

The second half of the 16th century saw the most dramatic political change in Ireland since the submission of the Irish kings to Henry II. In the 1540's Henry VIII instituted wide scale administrative and ecclesiastic reforms in Ireland including the Reformation of the church, and a new Irish policy of Surrender and Regrant; through which

the Gaelic lordship of Thomond became the earldom of Thomond (Lennon 2005, 145-166). The definitive symbol of this period of transformation was the change in title of Irish crown territory from the Lordship of Ireland to the Kingdom of Ireland in 1541. The new found English interest in Ireland also meant the projection of direct influence on what for centuries had been semi-autonomous Anglo-Irish earldoms and a diminution of the independence of Gaelic lords. This interference in feudal Irish society, in addition to forced Anglicisation and opposition to the Reformation caused simmering resentment against the crown that spilled over into the unsuccessful Desmond Rebellions of 1569-73 and 1579-83. The result of the rebellions was the creation of the Presidency of Munster in 1576 and the crown confiscation of Desmond land in Munster in 1586 (Marnane 2003, 247-266, Lennon 2005, 210-231).

The brief window of peace following defeat of the second Geraldine rebellion in the south of Ireland at the close of the 16th century was closed by another major rebellion led from the north of the country - The Nine Years War, during which Ormond lands in Kilkenny and Tipperary were attacked by the Earl of Tyrone's forces, as were most pro-crown settlements in Munster and west Leinster. The ultimate failure of the Desmond and O'Neill rebellions and the subsequent Flight of the Earls were followed by a period of relative peace and increased English settlement on confiscated lands. Ormond loyalty to the crown was to prove disastrous when it and The Confederacy of Kilkenny allied itself with Charles I in the 1640's English Civil War.

Unlike the relatively organised military Desmond Rebellions that preceded it, 1641 was more typified by sectarian conflict and the brutal activities of the Roundhead army. The ruthless suppression of this rebellion by Oliver Cromwell led to a massive confiscation of rebel Catholic property and the ethnic cleansing of their former owners (To Hell or to Connaught). The unparalleled land seizures, larger in scope than the first Anglo-Norman period of settlement, were facilitated by the commissioning of the Civil and Down Surveys, which mapped out lands to be divided up amongst a new wave of English settlers.

The Williamite War of 1689-1691 was the last formal war in Ireland. Its conclusion following the Treaty of Limerick in 1691 was marked by a mass exodus of Irish soldiers and commanders to the continent and with them left the last vestiges of autonomous Irish military strength (Murphy 1994, 23). The following centuries saw the demise of Gaelic Ireland and the firm establishment of English law and governance across the country. The 18th century saw the economic development of territories seized as a result of the 17th century wars; in particular large scale drainage works, the development of an integrated road network and a renewed investment in urban centres.

2.3 Archaeological Background

Please refer to the Environmental assessment for details of known sites along the development corridor. The table below lists known sites in the vicinity of site AR37. None of these are directly impacted by the works at site AR37.

R.M.P.#	Townland	Type	Distance from site m.	Bearing
KK036-028	Knockmoylan	Castle	250m	Southwest
KK036-022	Crowbally	Castle	1400m	West
KK036-031	Crowbally	Ringfort	1125m	West-southwest
KK036-029	Killeen	Earthwork	1000m	South
KK035-062	Killeen	Ringfort	1000m	Southwest
KK035-107	Knockmoylan	Souterrain pos.	1000m	West
KK035-050	Knockmoylan	Ringfort	1250m	West

Table 2: Nearby RMP (Record of Monuments and Places) sites:

2.3.1 Prehistoric Archaeology

Prior to this scheme and associated archaeological works, there were few known prehistoric sites identified in the vicinity. While the majority of visible archaeology dates from the early medieval and later periods it is likely that some of these sites occupy the locations of earlier prehistoric sites.

2.3.2 Historical Archaeology

In contrast to the few upstanding prehistoric sites and monuments in this section of the scheme, there is a wealth of surviving medieval settlement evidence. There are ecclesiastic remains at Sheepstown including an enclosure, church and graveyard. Dense early Anglo-Norman settlement can be seen in the manorial centre of Knocktopher. The Butlers owned the castles of Knocktopher, Gowran, Dunfert, Poolestown, Nehorn, Callan, Ballycallan, Damagh, Kilmanagh, and Urlingford.

3.0 THE EXCAVATION

3.1 Setting

The site AR 37 was situated gentle sloping ground used for pasture, in Knockmoylan townland, Co. Kilkenny (See Figures 1 – 5; Plates 1 & 2). Prior to excavation a slight ridge was apparent on the topsoil surface, resembling a faint agricultural furrow. This mirrored the line of [c8].

3.2 Previous Archaeological Assessment

The site of AR 37 was not subject to a Geophysical survey. The site was identified through archaeological centreline testing which is reported separately, (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, 2006). The features uncovered during previous testing were uncovered and archaeologically resolved.

3.3 Excavation Methodology

Topsoil from one cutting measuring approx 1250m² was removed utilising a hydraulic excavator under the direction, supervision and monitoring of a qualified archaeologist. Once the topsoil had been removed, the entirety of the site area was cleaned back to reveal the features identified during the previous testing (*ibid*) and to try to identify any new features which may have been exposed.

Upon location all archaeological materials were cleaned and excavated by hand using methods appropriate to their composition, nature and date. All archaeological contexts were photographed and planned (in relation to the site grid) prior to excavation. Sections were excavated through all features to obtain profiles and to expose the stratigraphic sequences and then pit/posthole features were fully excavated and a percentage of the linear features were excavated. All sections and cut features were photographed and drawn. The position of all finds and samples were recorded in three-dimensions (where appropriate) in relation to the site-grid. The composition, stratigraphic position and interpretation of all contexts were recorded on a context sheet prior to excavation. Contexts have been sampled for palaeobotanical material, radiocarbon dating, micromorphology, petrology and wood identification, where appropriate. Features that proved to be of modern origin were not fully excavated.

3.4 Stratigraphic Summary

3.4.1 Natural

The site overlay and cut into natural light brown boulder clay [c2]. A non-archaeological area of root disturbance, [c6], was located close to the post-hole [c7].

3.4.2 Linear Features

A pattern of linear features was uncovered across the site. Two joined linear features were present at the northeast extent of the site. The first linear [c8], with a roughly V-shaped profile, was orientated in a northwest - southeast direction, (figure 6 & 7). It measured 22m long, 1.25m wide and 0.50m deep. The single fill, [c14], consisting of dark-reddish brown, soft silty clay, contained small-medium sized stones and a fragment of pottery (E2515:8:1).

The second linear, [c4], was orientated in a northeast-southwest direction and was 15.50m long, 1.25m wide and 0.45m deep, (figure 6 & 7, plate 4). This ditch profile was also V-shaped and it was filled with mid-reddish brown silty sand and small pebbles [c11].

Both [c4] and [c8] appeared contemporary and sections excavated at the junction between the two did not indicate any stratigraphic sequence. A similar linear extended eastward from the junction representing a continuation of the system outside the excavation area.

The northwest area of the site contained an L-shaped linear, [c3], measuring 18m long, 0.75m wide and 0.41m deep. The linear ran along two lines, northeast-southwest and a northwest-southeast. The base was filled with yellowish brown silty sand and large angular stones [c9]. The upper fill consisted of greyish brown sandy clay containing flecks of charcoal and small stones [c10].

3.4.3 Pits

A shallow oval pit [c5], was located toward the centre of the site, east of linear [c3] and west of linear [c8], (figure 6 & 7, plate 5). It measured 2.40m long, 0.74m wide and 0.08m deep. This pit contained a single fill of mid-grey brown sandy silt containing occasional stone and fleck of charcoal [c12]. The pit contents did not suggest an apparent function and it is uncertain if the feature retained water as it was excavated under dry conditions.

3.4.4 Posthole

Post-hole [c7] was located north of and close to linear [c8], (figure 6 & 7, plate 6). It was sub-circular in plan, concave in profile. It measured 0.40m long, 0.33m wide and 0.19m deep and was filled with dark brown coarse sand containing flecks of charcoal.

3.4.5 Topsoil: Topsoil [c1], with a depth of 0.45m, was a moderately compact mid brown silty clay with pebble and stone inclusions. A faint linear ridge was noted prior to excavation on the topsoil surface. This ran along the line of [c8] and represents the remains of a low bank associated with the linear.

3.5 Condition Post Excavation

The site was backfilled by machine after the work was carried out and the ground reinstated. The contractor Ascon Ltd took possession of the site in August 2006 for the construction of the N9N10 Waterford to Sheepstown Road Scheme. The site formed part of the mainline for the new road.

4.0 THE FINDS

4.1 Overview

Three ceramic artefacts were recovered from this site. The ceramics (3 sherds) were analysed by Clare McCutcheon MA MIAI, (report appended). The artefacts represent two vessels dating broadly to the 13-14th centuries A.D. The two forms represent a domestic pot, Leinster Ware, possibly used in cooking and a glazed jug resembling similar from Kilkenny city.

4.2 Medieval Pottery by Clare McCutcheon MA MIAI

4.2.1 Introduction

A total of three medieval sherds were presented for study. The site is described as two conjoined boundary ditches, an L-shaped drain, a shallow pit and a likely post-hole. Two of the sherds were recovered from the topsoil (C1) and the third from the cut of a boundary ditch (C8).

4.2.2 Leinster Cooking Ware:

The first of the sherds (C1:1) is a rim from a Leinster Cooking Ware jar, used for cooking as evidenced by the sooting beneath the everted rim. The rim of this jar does not appear to have been decorated in any way. 'Leinster Cooking Ware is the single most widespread medieval pottery type in Leinster' (Ó Floinn 1988, 340). The ware is distinguished by the presence of large flakes of mica and much quartz but the most distinctive characteristic of the Leinster Cooking Ware is the sand marked base, which 'suggests that unfired vessels were deliberately placed on a bed of sand to dry before firing' (*ibid*, 327). The dating of Leinster Cooking Ware from the late twelfth century is based on extensive excavations in Waterford with an excellent dendrochronological sequence (Gahan & McCutcheon 1997, 327).

4.2.3 Kilkenny-type wares:

The other two sherds in this assemblage were found to fit together (C1:2+C8:1) and are a body sherd from a glazed jug, identified as Kilkenny-type ware. The vessel was wheel-thrown and the fabric also contains mica. The sherd is from the shoulder of a decorated jug with a distinctive horizontal ridging still evident. The jug was further decorated with a vertically applied strip. As with the glazed sherds from Coolmore (E2314) and Ballykillaboy (E2502) (McCutcheon forthcoming (a & b)) the sherd from Knockmoylan is also very weathered, with traces of glaze only remaining on the exterior and with both mica and quartz clearly visible.

The use of the suffix *-type* is recommended in pottery studies to indicate that while a fabric has been found regularly in a particular area, as yet no production site has been located (Blake & Davey 1983, 39-40). In the excavations at Kells Priory, the thin-section report describes a number of different medieval fabrics (McCorry 2007) and these were described as Kells-type A-G (McCutcheon 2007, 327-37) although the consistency in manufacture, form and decoration make these a closely linked group. 'In areas where the underlying geology is

bland, pottery from widely separated sources can have a very similar appearance, while excavations at kilns sites of all dates have shown that a wide variation in colour, texture and inclusions can be expected within the products of a single source' (Vince 1987, 203).

Similar material, also described as Kilkenny-type ware, has been recovered at excavations at 29-33 Patrick Street and at Pudding Lane (McCutcheon forthcoming (c & d)). The fabrics range from lightly micaceous, hard fired finish to a more calcareous, softer finished fabric. The recent excavation of a kiln at MacDonagh Station, Kilkenny may make it possible to identify particular fabrics and firings against the prototypes from the kiln (McCutcheon in prep). With the last firing of this kiln in the mid- to later fourteenth century, however, it is likely that only one or two 'types' found in the area can be identified as coming from this specific kiln.

4.2.4 Bibliography:

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- McCutcheon, C. forthcoming (c) 'The medieval pottery', in J. Carroll, *Excavations at 29-33 Patrick Street, Kilkenny*.
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5.0 DISCUSSION

The alignment of ditches [c4] and [c8] reflect the pattern of the surrounding field boundaries. The shape and size of the field containing the site suggests that it has been opened up, with the removal of internal boundaries. A comparison with the field boundaries recorded by the first Ordnance Survey, particularly to the north of site supports this. The presence of medieval glazed jug fragment within [c8] together with the faint remains of an associated bank, suggests a field system dating to the medieval period.

The excavated linears, outlined a trapezoidal area containing the shallow pit [c5]. This shallow pit was uncovered during archaeological assessment testing (Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd 2006) and was not directly related to any of the surrounding features. The post-hole [c7] appeared to be modern but did not contain any dateable evidence within its fill. The L-shaped linear [c3] probably joined with the ditch [c8] beyond the limit of excavation.

5.1 Environmental Evidence

No samples deemed suitable for processing.

5.2 Animal Bone

This site produced no faunal evidence.

5.3 Chronology & Dating

The site produced no samples suitable for dating. The artefact assemblage indicates a 13-14th century A.D. date.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The linear features appear to represent a portion of a medieval field system that partially survives in the present boundary layout. Specialist identification of the pottery within linear [c8] suggests a 13-14th century date. Despite the different terminology used to describe the linear features in the preliminary report, (ditch/drain) it is likely that they formed a coherent, contemporary, pattern of shallow boundaries used to demarcate fields and assist in drainage. The site has been archaeologically resolved and no further analysis is required.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the following people for their involvement in this site: Joe Gannon (Kilkenny Co Co), James Eogan & Bernice Kelly (NRA). The site was directed by John Channing, on behalf of Valerie J Keeley Ltd. This report was compiled by John Channing, with contributions by Gerry O'Neil. The scheme was project managed by Medb Grant with final report managed by Colum Hardy, on behalf of Valerie J Keeley Ltd. for Kilkenny County Council.

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9.0 EXCAVATION RECORD

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT REGISTER

C #	Type	Interpretation	Description	Dimensions
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown sandy clay	
2	Natural	Subsoil	Light-mid brown sandy clay	
3	Cut	Drain	L-shaped with steep-gradual sloping sides and uneven base	L=18.00m D=0.41m W=0.75m
4	Cut	Field boundary	Linear ditch with v-shaped profile and slightly rounded base	L=15.50m D=0.45m W=1.25m
5	Cut	Pit	Oval in plan with flat base	L=2.40m D=0.08m W=0.74m
6	void	void	void	void
7	Cut	Post-hole	Sub-circular in plan, concave in profile	L=0.40m D=0.19m W=0.33m
8	Cut	Boundary	Linear ditch with v-shaped profile and slightly rounded base	L=22.00m D=0.50m W=1.25m
9	Fill	Base fill of drain [c3]	Yellow-brown silty sand, stones	D=0.30m
10	Fill	Upper fill of drain [c3]	Grey brown sandy clay containing flecks of charcoal and small stones	D=0.11m
11	Fill	Fill of boundary [c4]	Mid-reddish brown silty sand and small pebbles	D=0.45m
12	Fill	Fill of pit [c5]	Mid-greyish brown stony, silty sand containing charcoal	D=0.08m
13	Fill	Fill of post-hole [c7]	Dark- brown coarse sand containing charcoal	D=0.19m
14	Fill	Fill of boundary [c8]	Dark- reddish brown soft silty clay, small-medium sized stones	Fill

APPENDIX B: FINDS REGISTER

Artefact No	Museum No.	Area	Context	Cut No.	Material	Type	Description
1	E2512:1:1		1		Ceramic	Pottery	Sherd
2	E2512:1:2		1		Ceramic	Pottery	Sherd
3	E2512:8:1			8	Ceramic	Pottery	Sherd

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE REGISTER

Sample	Context	Type/purpose	Specialist Analysis	No. of Bags	Feature Type	Cut
N/A						

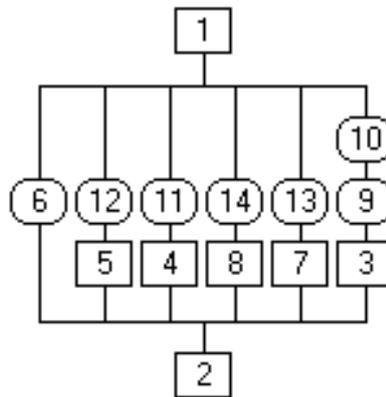
**No samples were recovered from this site.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF QUANTITIES

Context Sheets	Drawings	Samples	Finds	Photos	Registers	Notebooks
14	14 on 6 sheets	0	3	30	1	0

**Archive is located at the offices of Valerie J Keeley Ltd., Brehon House, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny

APPENDIX E: PHASED STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



PLATES



Plate 1: General view of Area 37. Facing north.



Plate 2: East facing section through Linear [c3].



Plate 3: Linear feature [c3]. Facing west.



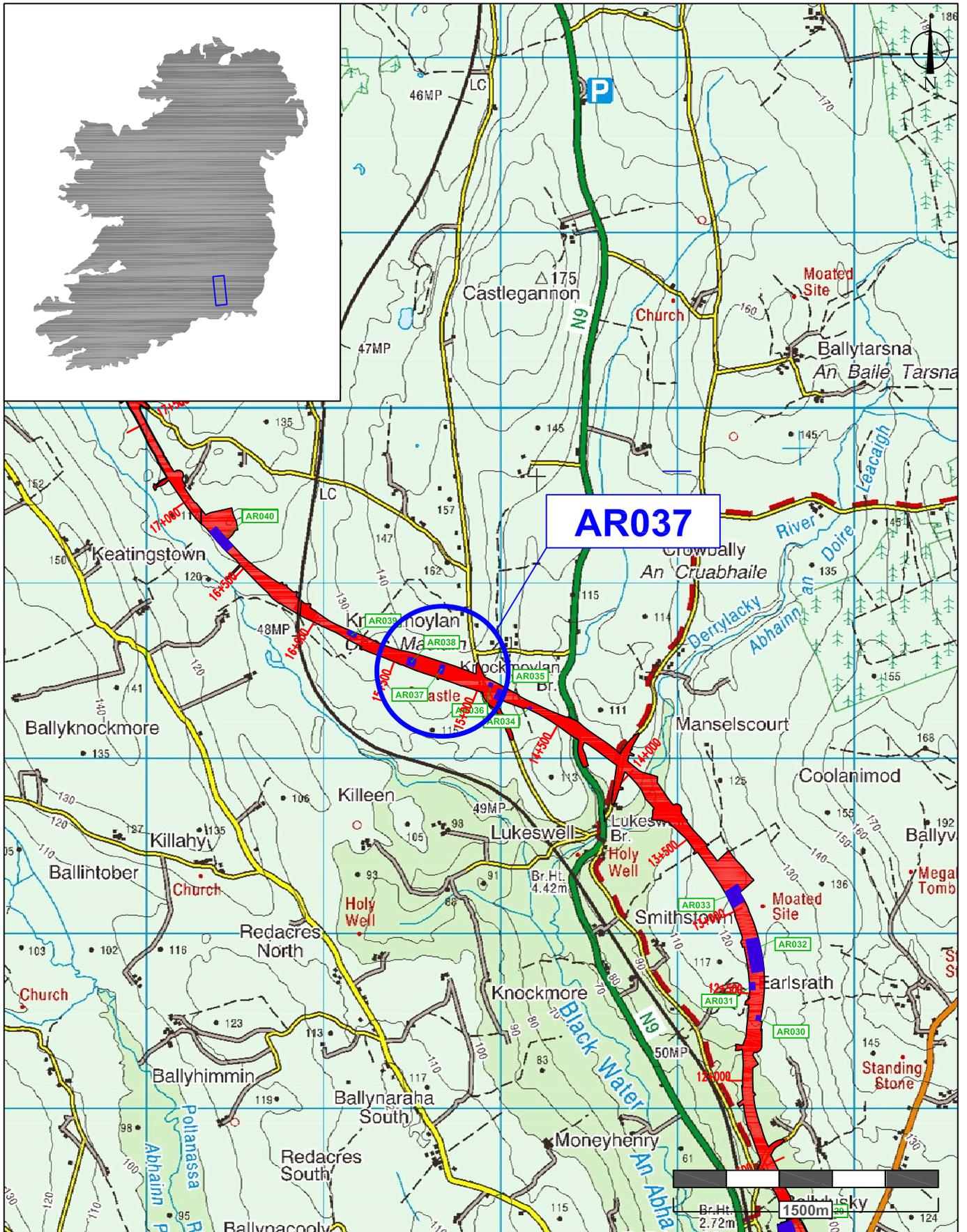
Plate 4: Linear feature [c4]. Facing northwest.



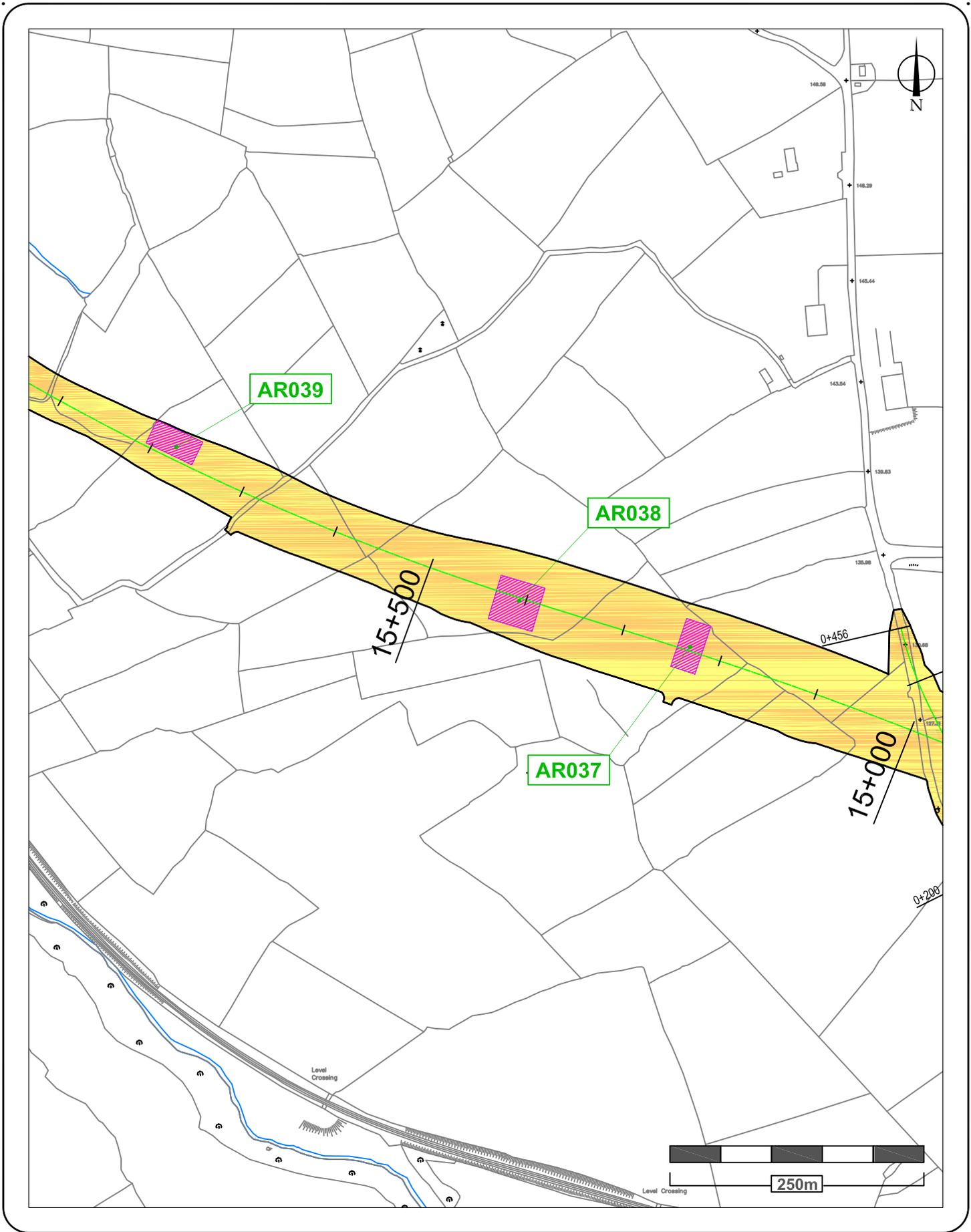
Plate 5: Section through fill [c12] of pit [c5]. Facing north.



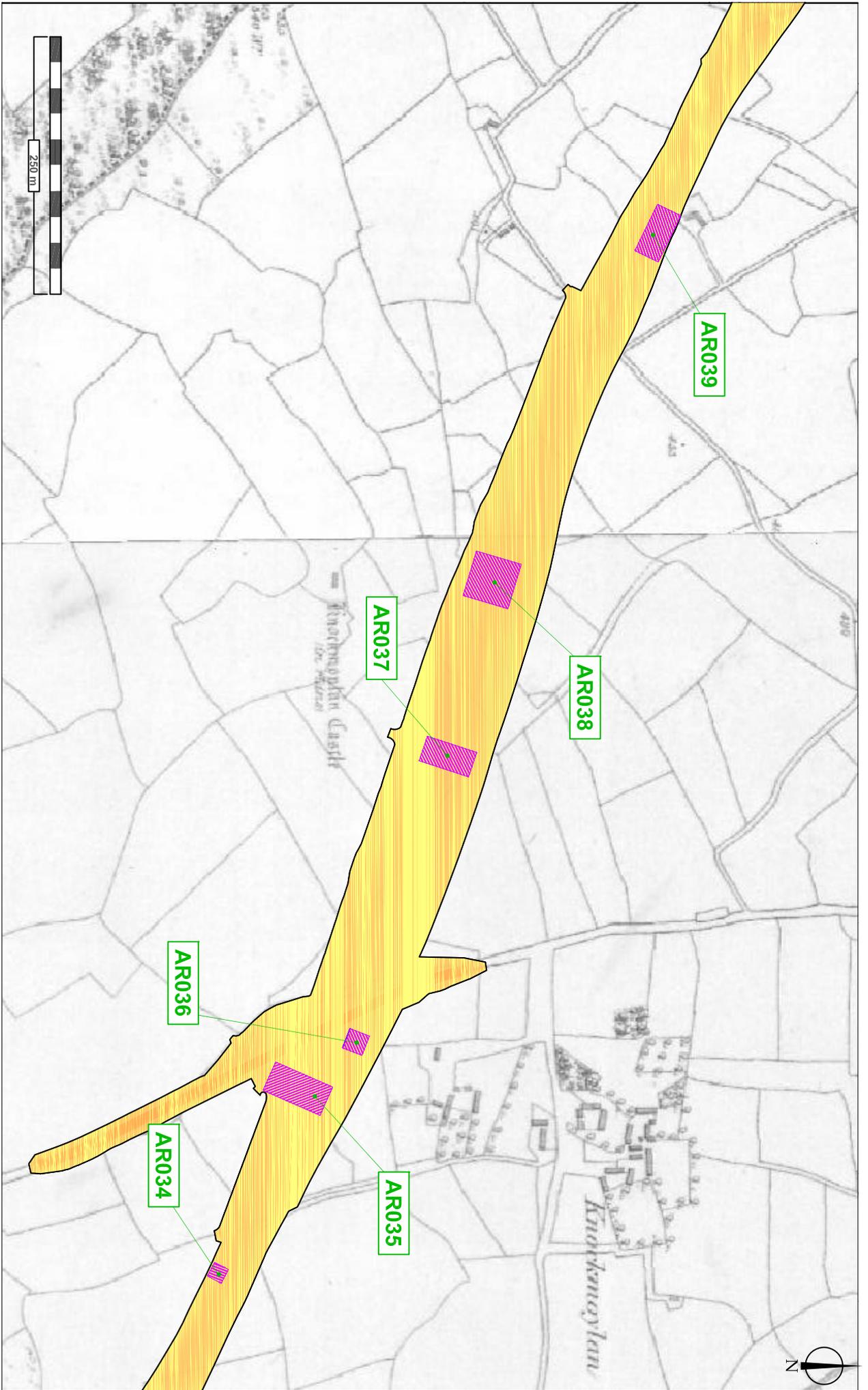
Plate 6: Section through fill [c13] of post-hole [c7]. Facing northwest.



Title Location of AR037 on Discovery Series mapping.		Notes				 Client Kilkenny County Council	Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
Works No. A032/023 E2512	Drawn by BOF	CAD reference 1265-06-400/TERA3	Date December 09	Scale 1:30000	Drawing No. Figure 1		



Title Scheme map with excavation area denoted			Notes  Site Extents			 Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
Works No. A032/023 E2512	Drawn by BOF	CAD reference 1265-06-400/TERA3	Date December 09	Scale 1:5000	Drawing No. Figure 2	
			Client Kilkenny County Council			Project N9 / N10 Dunkitt to Sheepstown Resolution Contract



Title
1st edition Ordnance Survey map

Notes
 Site Extents

Job/Esc No.
A032/023
Date
E2812
December 09

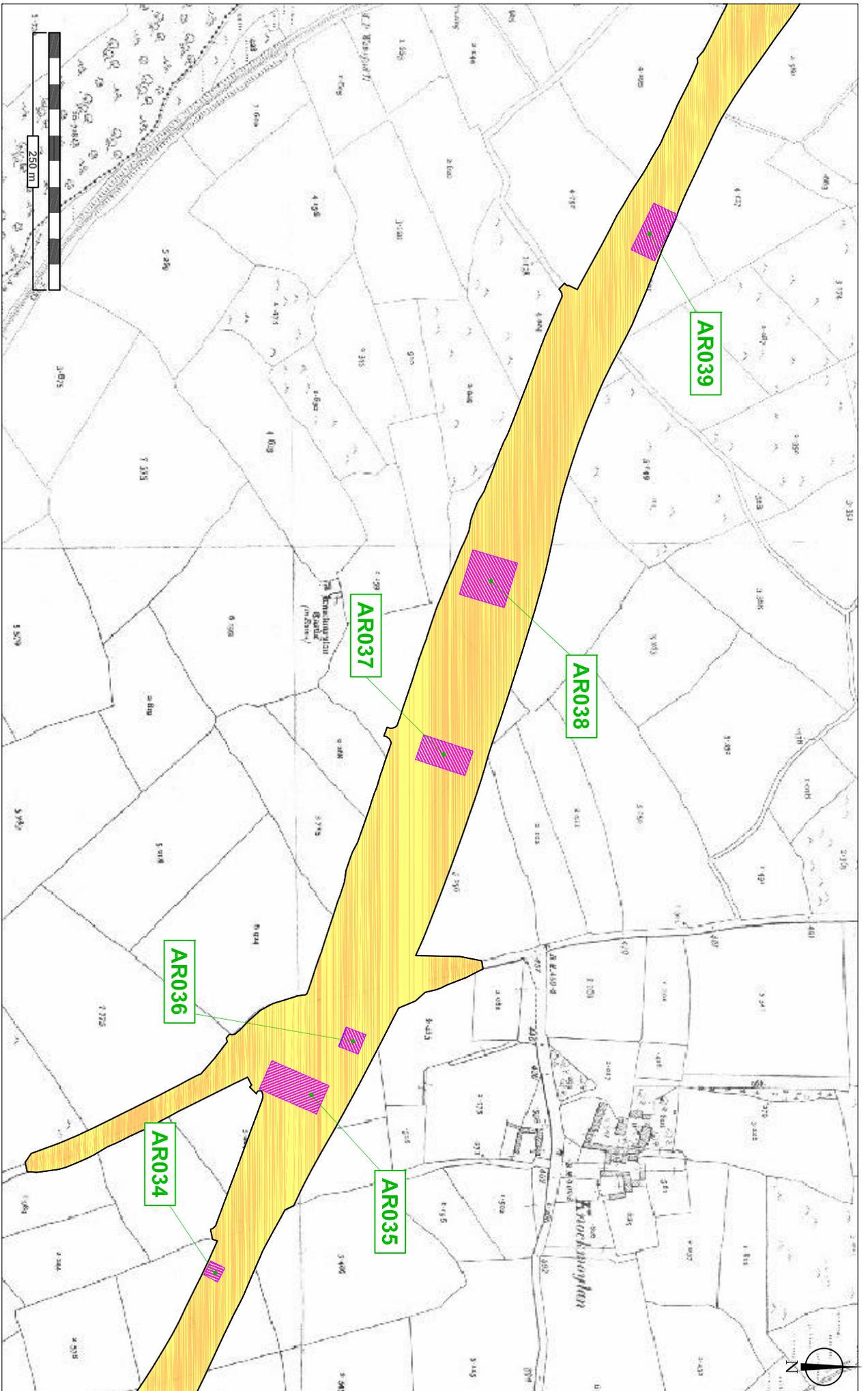
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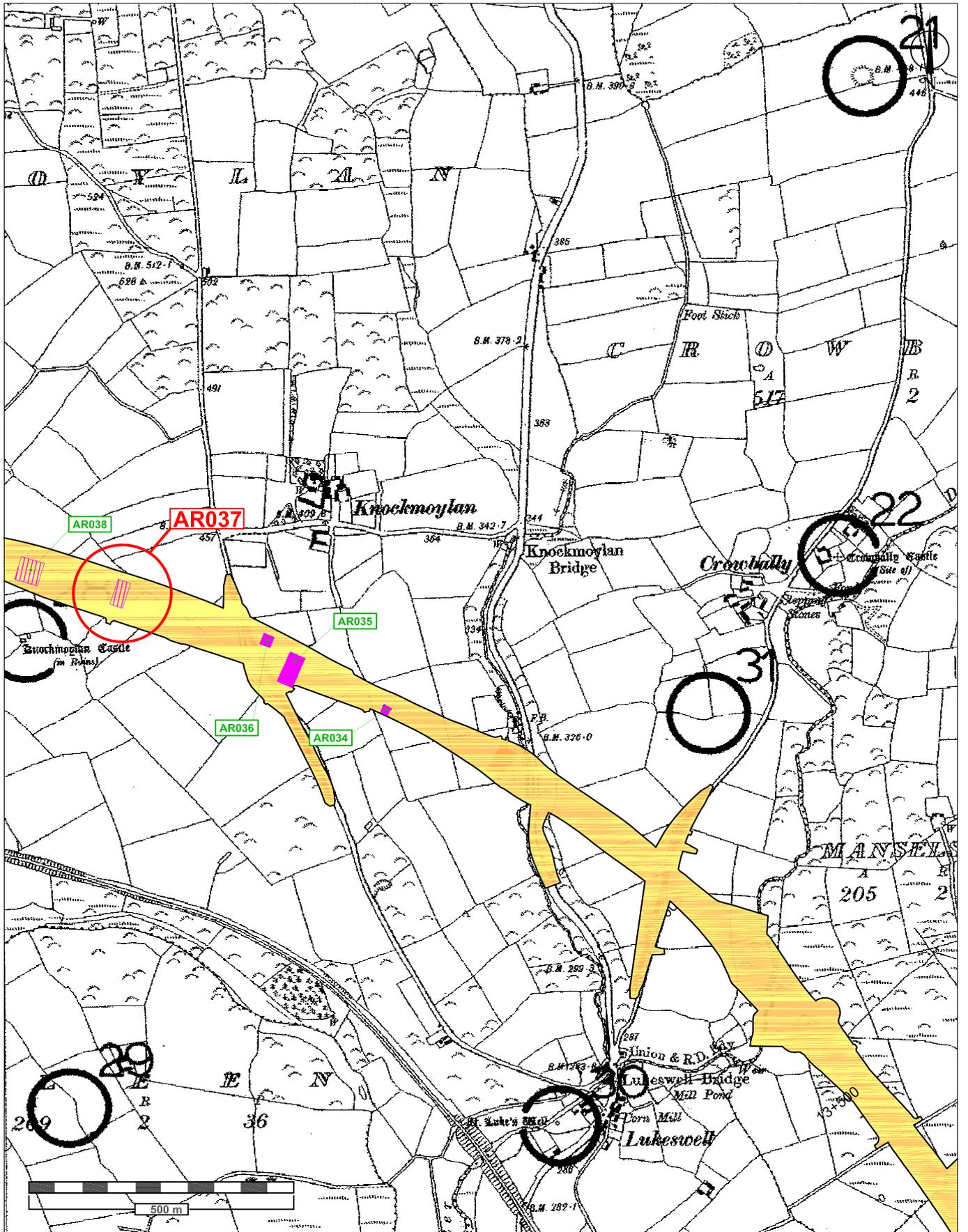
Client
Kilkenny County Council
Project
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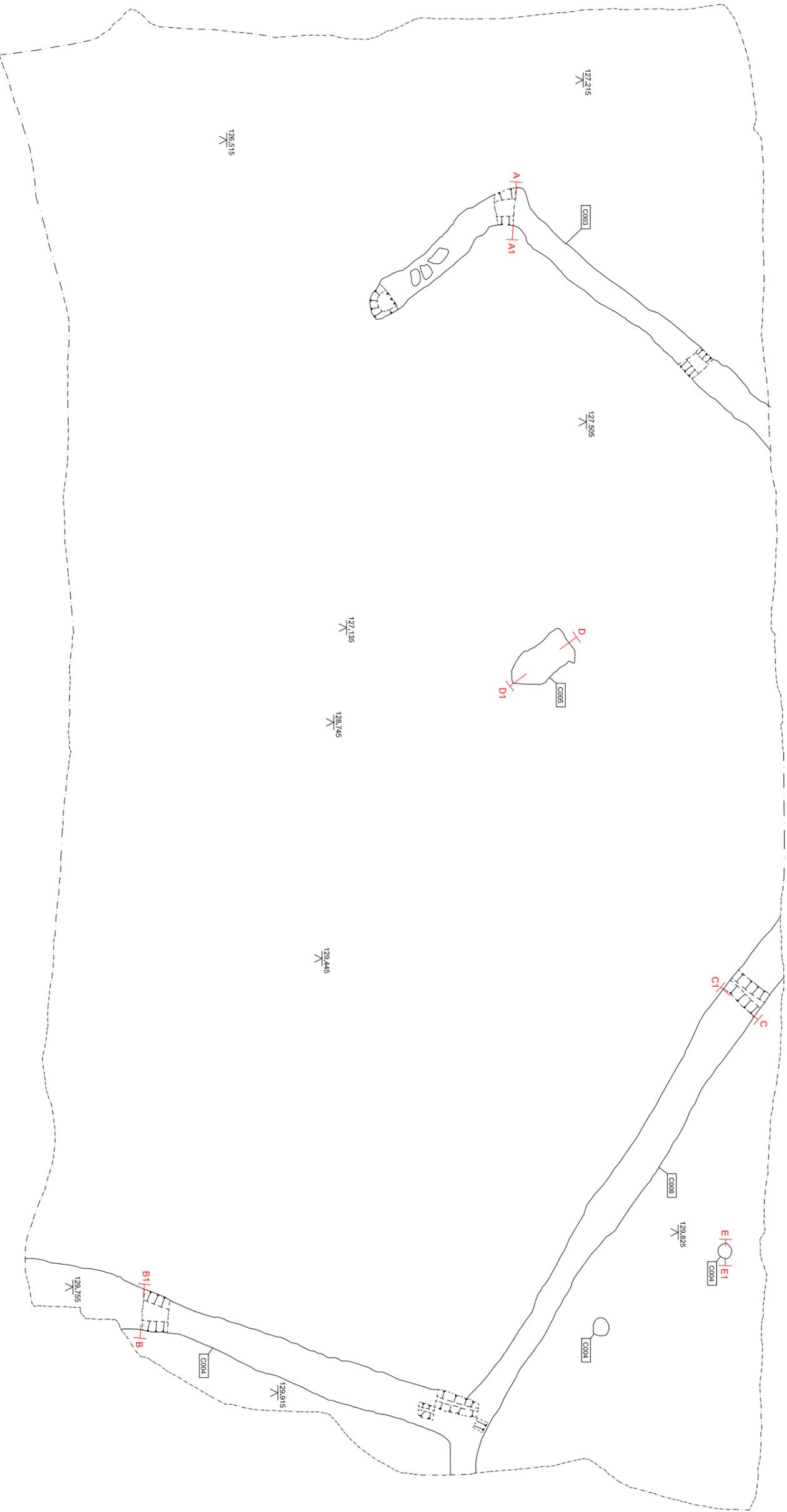
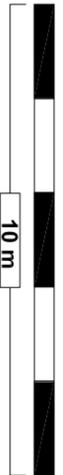
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Title 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map		Notes  Site Extents	
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 Valerie A. Keeney Ltd. ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS		Blanton House Kilkenny Road Castlesomer Co. Kilkenny.	
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Title RMP map showing site location		Notes  Site Extents				Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie	
Job No. A032/023 E2512	Drawn by GW	CAD reference 1265-06-400/TERA3	Date December 09	Scale 1:10000	Drawing No. Figure 5	Client Kilkenny County Council	
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Title
Area 37 features with section locations

Notes

Works No.
A032/023
E2512
Date
December 09

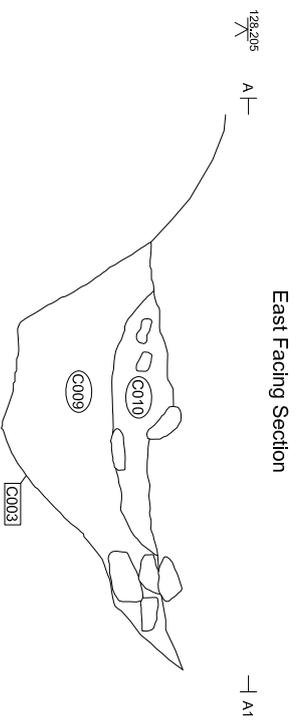
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Figure 6

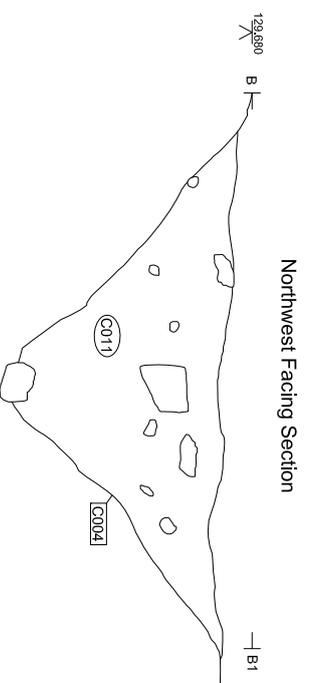
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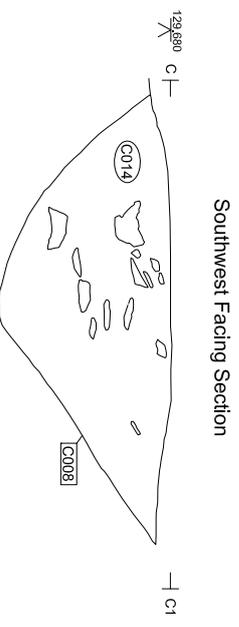
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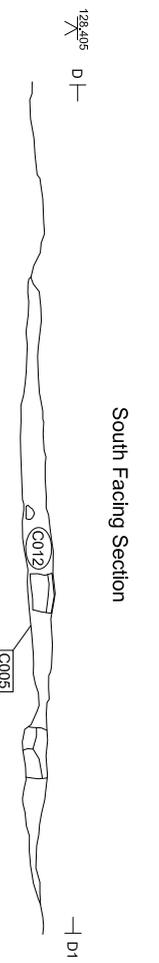
East Facing Section



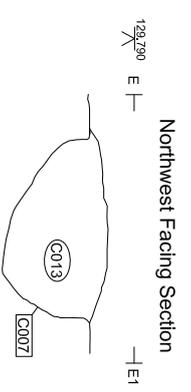
Northwest Facing Section



Southwest Facing Section

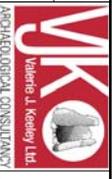


South Facing Section



Northwest Facing Section



Title Sections through AR37 features.	Notes	Works No. 1265-06-407ERA3	Client Kilkenny County Council		Brehon House Kilkenny Road Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny.	Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 Email: vjk@vjk.ie Website: www.vjk.ie
		Date December 09	Scale 1:25			

NRA DATABASE CONTENTS SHEET

Database entry	Comment
Excavation number	Ministerial Direction: A032/000 Registration No.: E2512
Townland	Knockmoylan
Site name	AR 37
County	Kilkenny
Project reference	N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Road Improvement Scheme: Waterford to Knocktopher – Phase 2
Year of excavation	2006
Grid reference (Easting)	254664E
Grid reference (Northing)	128507N
OD Height (m)	129.5m OD
Landscape setting	The site occupied one field, used for pasture.
Project Archaeologist	James Eogan
Site Director	J. Channing
Archaeological consultancy	Valerie J. Keeley Ltd
Identification technique	Test Trenching (MGL 2005)
Site type	Medieval field system
Site activity	Agricultural
Dating period	Medieval
Radiocarbon dates (2 Sigma Cal BC)	N/A
Dendro-chronological dates	N/A
Descriptions	Excavations at this site revealed two conjoined Linear ditches, an L-shaped ditch, a shallow pit and a likely post-hole and represents a medieval field system
Artefacts	Leinster cooking ware and glazed jug, Kilkenny-type ware (1 sherd)
Environmental evidence	N/A
Additional information	N/A
Publication	Excavations Bulletin 2006.