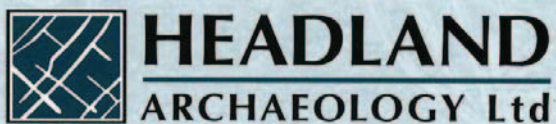


**Date:** March 2008  
**Client:** Offaly County Council  
**Project code:** NTB06

**N52 Tullamore Bypass:  
 Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2851, in  
 the townland of Clonminch, Co. Offaly**

By: John Twomey  
 Ministerial Direction No: A033/000  
 Director: Linda Hegarty  
 Chainage: 6935 - 6945  
 NGR: 34500/22600



**transport21**  
progress in motion

**NDP**  
National Development Plan 2007 - 2013



**Department of Transport**  
*An Roinn Iompair*



**NRA**  
National Roads Authority  
*An tÚdars um Bóithre Náisiúnta*

**Date:** March 2008

**Client:** Offaly County Council

**Project code:** NTB06

**N52 Tullamore Bypass:  
Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2851, in  
the townland of Clonminch, Co. Offaly**

By: John Twomey

Ministerial Direction No: A033/000

Director: Linda Hegarty

Chainage: 6935 - 6945

NGR: 34500/22600



**Date:** March 2007  
**Client:** Offaly County Council  
**Project code:** NTB06

**N52 Tullamore Bypass:  
Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2851, in the  
townland of Clonminch, Co. Offaly**

By: John Twomey  
Ministerial Direction No: A033/000  
Director: Linda Hegarty  
Chainage: 6935 - 6945  
NGR: 34500/22600

CONTENTS	PAGE
1 Executive summary	2
2 Introduction	2
3 Site description and location	2
4 Aims and methodology	3
5 Summary of excavation results	3
6 Archive quantities	3
7 Recommendations	5
8 Bibliography	5

#### **List of Figures**

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	RMP Extract
Figure 3	Site Plan

#### **List of Plates**

Plate 1	Mid excavation of Pit [4]
---------	---------------------------

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Context Register
Appendix 2	Sample Register
Appendix 3	Photographic Register
Appendix 4	Drawing Register
Appendix 5	Site Matrix

## **1 Executive summary**

This report presents the results of archaeological investigations carried out on behalf of Westmeath County Council as part of the Advance Archaeological Works Contract for the N52 Tullamore Bypass. The work was undertaken under E2851, in the Townland of Clonminch, Co. Offaly. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, following consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, directed that Linda Hegarty of Headland Archaeology Ltd should proceed with archaeological resolution.

Archaeological testing, E2493 carried out under Ministerial Direction Number A033/000 on this site in 2006 identified a spread of charcoal-rich silt and oxidised clay.

Full archaeological resolution was conducted on this site between December 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2006. This revealed one pit.

## **2 Introduction**

The scheme involves the proposed construction of the N52 Tullamore Bypass, between the townlands of Cloghanbane and Ardan in Co. Offaly. The proposed scheme will consist of the construction of a bypass around the town of Tullamore. It is to consist of 11.5 km of standard single carriageway and 2.5 km of wide single carriageway road. It will also involve the construction of seven at-grade roundabout junctions, priority junctions and seven new major structures, including four river crossings, one canal crossing and one railway crossing. The project is funded by the Irish Government and the European Union, through Offaly County Council/National Roads Authority and under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. Headland Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by Offaly County Council to undertake the works.

An Environmental Impact Statement was prepared in 2004, with the Cultural Heritage Assessment for the route contained within Section 3.8. The EIS was prepared by Babbie Pettit.

## **3 Site description and location (Figure 1)**

Site E2851 was located approximately 1.5 km south of Tullamore town in the townland of Clonminch at National Grid Reference 34550/22600. There are no recorded national monuments located within this townland. The surrounding land was gently undulating and under pasture at the time of excavation.

#### **4 Aims and methodology**

The objective of the work was the preservation by record of any archaeological features or deposits in advance of the proposed road's construction.

Topsoil stripping of the site was conducted using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a 1.9 m wide ditching (toothless) bucket under archaeological supervision. A total area of 100 m<sup>2</sup> was exposed. The resulting surface was cleaned and all potential features investigated by hand. Archaeological contexts were recorded by photograph and on *pro forma* record sheets. Plans and sections were drawn at an appropriate scale. Registers are provided in the Appendix. Ordnance Datum levels and feature locations were recorded using penmap and an EDM. Environmental samples were taken on any deposits suitable for analysis or dating.

#### **5 Summary of excavation results**

An area of 10 m x 10 m (100 m<sup>2</sup>) was stripped in preparation for excavation of the feature revealed in testing and any other adjacent features. One pit was uncovered.

##### **Pit (Plate 1)**

Located near the centre of the site was an irregular shaped Pit [4]. This had a length of 1.6 m east – west, a width of 1 m north – south, and a depth of .15 m. Its sides were gently sloping and its base was irregular. This contained a basal fill (5) of dark brown, moderately compacted silty clay with inclusions of sub-angular stones, pebbles, and a moderate amount of charcoal. This had a length of 1.16 m east – west, a width of 1 m north – south, and a depth of 0.15 m. Above this was two similar sized patches of (6) a reddish-brown, firm clay with occasional sub-angular stone inclusions. These were irregular in plan with lengths of 0.25 m and 0.3 m and were 0.04 m deep. No diagnostic finds were recovered from Pit [4]. Samples were taken of both deposits (5) and (6).

##### **Conclusion**

The function and use of the single feature on site E2851 is unclear. The feature is likely to be post mediaeval/ modern in date. Initially it was felt the charcoal in the deposit (5) may have indicated the presence of a hearth but this theory was discarded upon excavation. Rather the feature may represent a spread of modern building refuse.

## 6 Archive

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Context Sheets	3
Plans	3
Sections	1
Photographs	6
Registers	4
Notebooks	-

The archive material is contained within 1 box.

Storage of the archive in a suitable format and location is required in order to provide for any future archaeological research. It is proposed that in addition to the paper archive a digital copy is prepared. The archive is currently stored in the offices of Headland Archaeology, Unit 1, IDA Industrial Estate, Wallingstown, Little Island, Co. Cork.

## 7 Recommendations

No recommendations for further archaeological work to this site are proposed.

## 8 Bibliography

Adkins, L. and Adkins, R.A. 1982, *The Handbook of British Archaeology*, Constable, London.

Bennett, I. 2003, *Excavations 2003*, Wordwell, Wicklow.

Bennett, I. 2002, *Excavations 2002*, Wordwell, Wicklow.

Bennett, I. 2001, *Excavations 2001*, Wordwell, Wicklow.

Edwards, N. 1990, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*, Routledge, London.



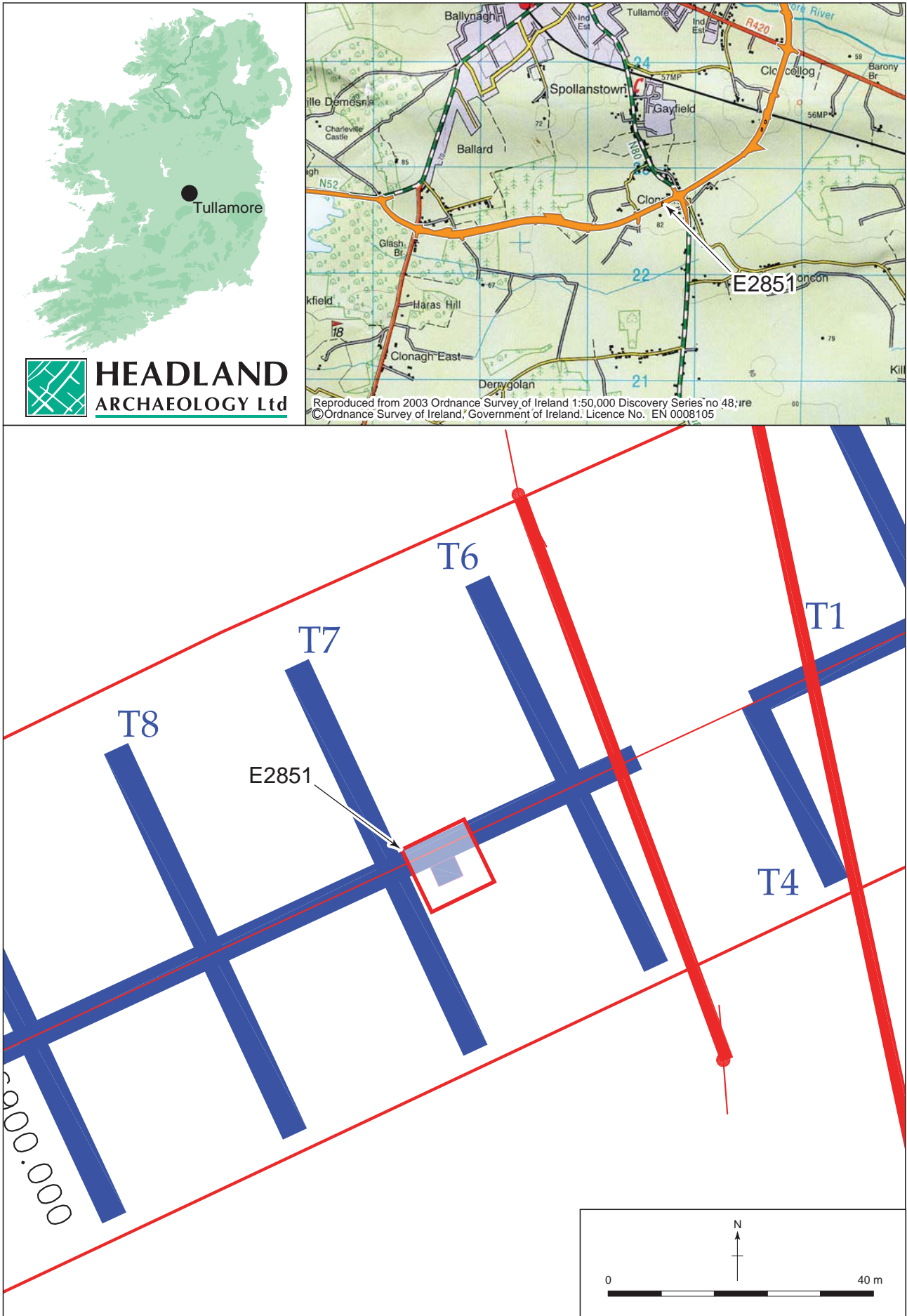


Figure 1 - N52 Tullamore Bypass: E2851 Clonminch 1, Site location





Reproduced from '1912 Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Second Edition, Six Inch to One Mile map (not to scale), Orlay Sheets 8, 9, 16, 17, 24 and 25. ©Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Licence No. EN 0008105

Bypass route is shown broken due to warp of scanned RMP's, this represents a best-fit.

Figure 2 - N52 Tullamore Bypass: E2851, RMP extract showing site location



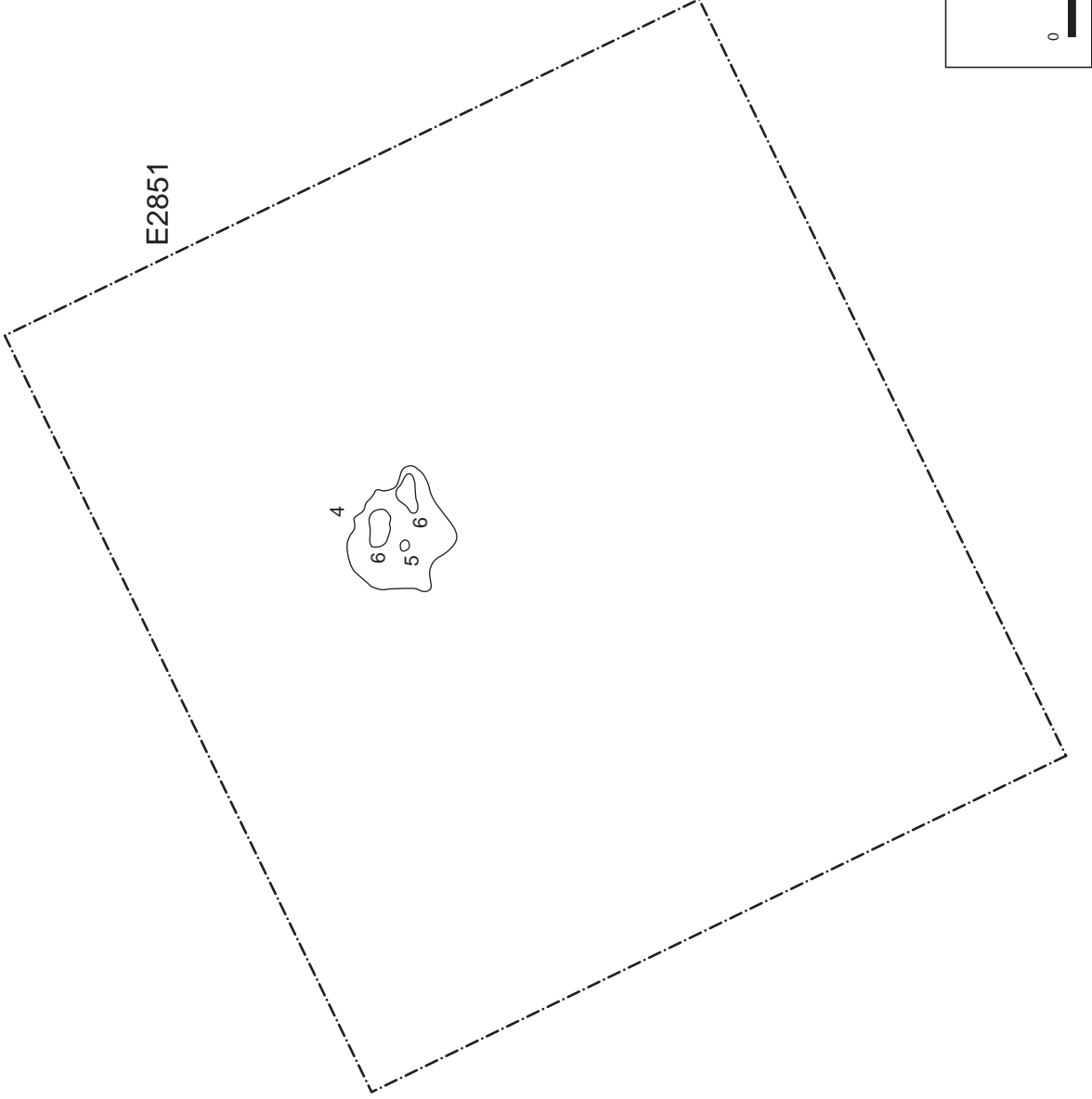


Figure 3 - N52 Tullamore Bypass: E2851, site plan



Plate 1 - Mid excavation of pit [4]

### Appendix 1: Context Register

C	Type	Area	Fill Of	Filled By	D (m)	W (m)	L (m)	Description	Interpretation
1	Deposit		n/a	n/a	0.1	Site-wide	Site-wide	Mid-brown, moderately compacted clayey silty with occasional to moderate angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Topsoil
2	Deposit		n/a	n/a	0.15	Site-wide	Site-wide	Mi-brown, moderately compacted sandy silty with occasional small stones.	Subsoil
3	Deposit		n/a	n/a	Unknown	Site-wide	Site-wide	Mottled orange clay with gravel pockets.	Natural
4	Cut		n/a	5, 6	0.15	1	1.6	Sub-oval pit with rounded corners and very gradual break of slope at top. Gently sloping sides and irregular base.	Cut of probable modern pit, possibly related to building refuse
5	Deposit		4	n/a	0.15	1	1.6	Dark brown, moderately compacted silty clay. Inclusions of sub-angular stones and pebbles with moderate amount of charcoal. Below (006).	Main fill of modern refuse pit [004] possibly associated with nearby building work.
6	Deposit		4	n/a	0.04	0.25	0.3	Reddish-brown, firm clay with occasional sub-angular stones.	Upper fill of modern refuse pit [004] possibly associated with nearby building work.

### Appendix 2: Sample Register

Sample	Context	Description
1	5	Dark brown, charcoal rich silty clay, main fill of [004]
2	6	Reddish-brown clay deposit associated with [004]

### Appendix 3: Photo Register

Shot	Type	Facing	Description
1	Pre-ex	V	Possible hearth [004] (005) (006), dwg 1, 2
2	Mid-ex	S	N-facing section of [004] (005) (006), dwg 3
3	Mid-ex	S	N-facing section of [004] (005) (006), dwg 3
4	Mid-ex	S	N-facing section of [004] (005) (006), dwg 3
5	Mid-ex	S	N-facing section of [004] (005) (006), dwg 3
6	Post-ex	V	Possible hearth [004], dwg 4

### Appendix 4: Drawing Register

Dwg	Type	Area	Scale	Description
1	Plan		1:50	Pre-ex site plan
2	Plan		1:20	Pre-ex [004] (005) (006)
3	Section		1:10	NE-facing section [004] (005) (006)
4	Plan		1:20	Post-ex of [004]

### Appendix 5: Site Matrix

