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*An tÚdaráis um Bóithre Náisiúnta*

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

**N52 Tullamore Bypass:  
Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2493, in  
the townland of Puttaghan, Co. Offaly**

By: Grace Corbett  
Ministerial Direction No: A033/000  
Director: Tom Janes  
Chainage: 502  
NGR: 33800/26600



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ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd

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CONTENTS	PAGE
1 Executive summary	3
2 Introduction	3
3 Site description and location	3
4 Aims and methodology	3
5 Summary of excavation results	4
6 Archive quantities	4
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	Pre-ex(004)
Plate 2	Mid-ex (004)

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Context Register
Appendix 2	Finds Register
Appendix 3	Sample Register
Appendix 4	Photographic Register
Appendix 5	Drawing Register

## **1 Executive summary**

This report presents the results of archaeological investigations carried out on behalf of Offaly County Council as part of the Advance Archaeological Works Contract for the N52 Tullamore Bypass. The work was undertaken under E2493, in the Townland of Puttaghan, Co. Offaly. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, following consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, directed that Tom Janes 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 one feature of archaeological significance. This was fully resolved during the testing phase, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006. This site will hereby be referred to under centreline testing E number E2493.

## **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**

Site E2493, Puttaghan 1, was located approximately 0.25 km north of Tullamore at National Grid Reference 33800/26600 on land formerly owned by Andrew Brazil. The land comprised gently undulating farmland which was under pasture at the time of testing. The site was fully excavated during Phase 1 Testing, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

## **4 Aims and methodology**

The objective of the work was to preserve by record 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 29.1 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 GPS. Environmental samples were taken on any deposits suitable for analysis or dating.

## 5 Summary of excavation results

One archaeological feature was identified on site E2493, Puttaghan 1. It consisted of a spread of charcoal-rich sandy silt (003).

The spread was a sub-rectangular in plan, of moderately compact charcoal-rich sandy silt with frequent inclusions of ash. It was 0.1 m deep, 3.5 m north- south and 3 m east- west. T14 was widened to 5 m at its northern end in order to determine the limits of the feature. The surface of the underlying natural geology (002) showed evidence of *in situ* burning. A heavily rusted ferrous object, probably a nail, was recovered from (003).

No other archaeological deposits were identified in the extended area around the feature, or in neighbouring test trenches.

### Conclusions

This feature, given its shallow nature and lack of related features may indicate that it is related to modern agricultural activities. The ferrous object may indicate a modern date for this feature.

## 6 Archive

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Context Sheets	3
Plans	1
Sections	0
Photographs	6
Registers	5
Notebooks	0

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.

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# Puttaghan 1

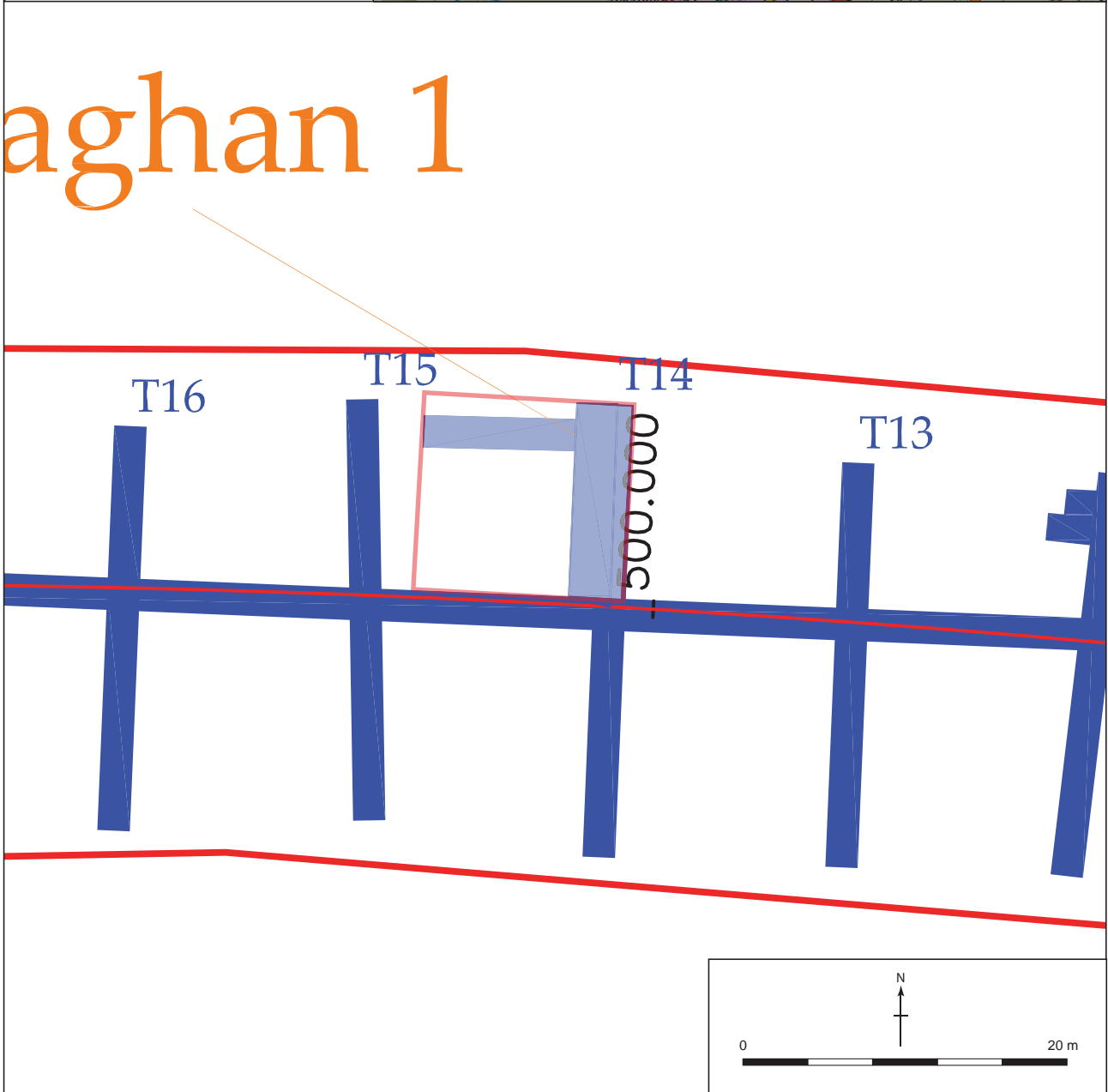


Figure 1 - N52 Tullamore Bypass: E2493 Puttaghan 1, Site location



Figure 2 - N52 Tullamore Bypass: E2493, Puttaghan 1, RMP extract showing site location



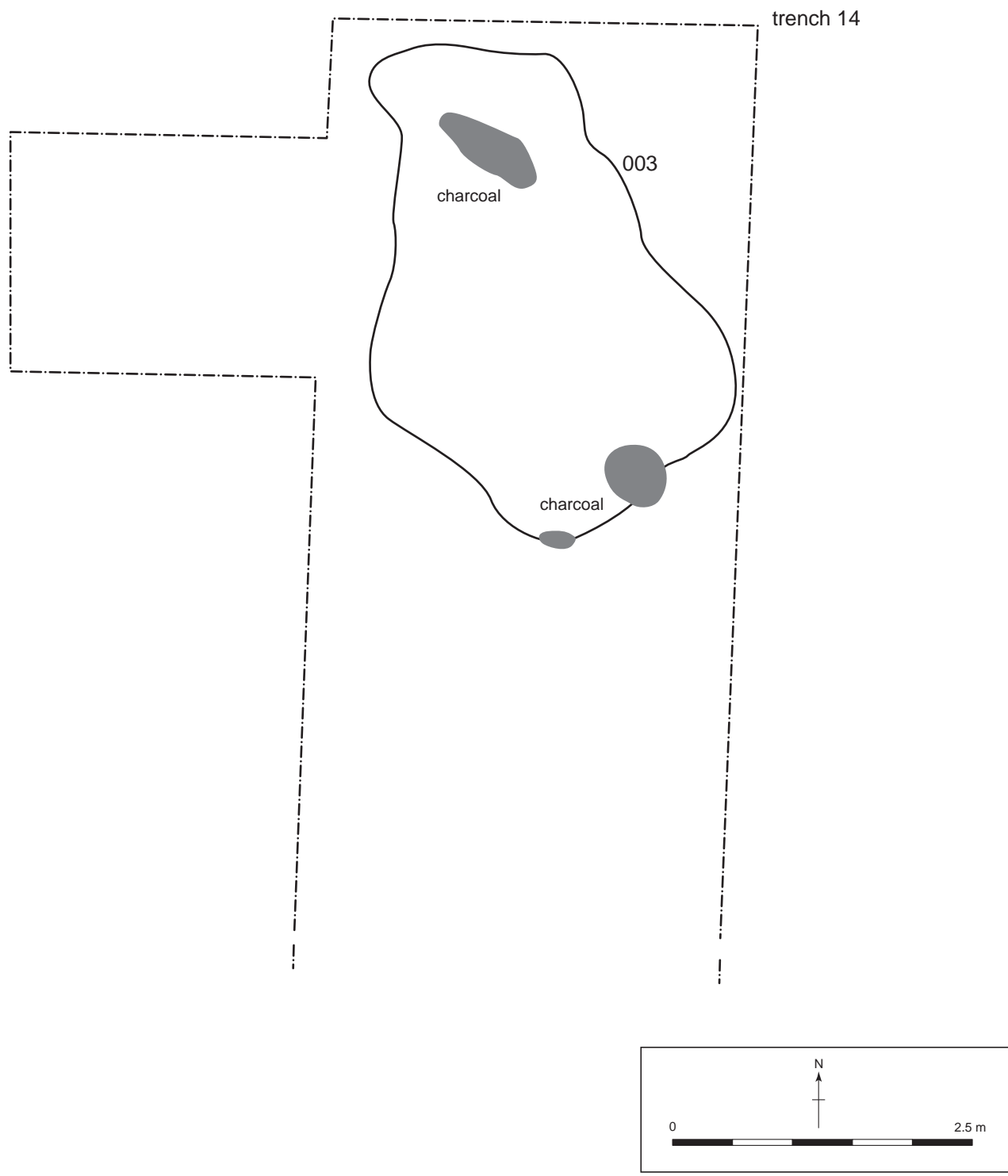


Figure 3 - N25 Tullamore Bypass: E2493 Puttaghan 1, burnt spread 003 after excavation



Plate 1 - Pre-excavation shot of [004]



Plate 2 - Mid-excavation shot of [004]

### 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	0.2	Site-wide	Site-wide	Mid-brown silty clay	Topsoil
2	Deposit		n/a	n/a	n/a	Site-wide	Site-wide	Grey gravel	Natural
3	Deposit		n/a	n/a	0.1	3	3.5	Sub-rectangular spread of burnt stones and charcoal patches. Heavily compacted, irregular in profile. Fe object recovered from top of deposit	Burnt spread

### Appendix 2 - Finds Register

Context	03			
Find No.	Material	NMI No.	Date	Description
1	FE	E2493:003:001	PM	Iron nail

### Appendix 3 – Sample Register

Sample	Context	Description
1	03	Charcoal rich deposit from burnt spread.

### Appendix 4 – Photographic Register

Shot	Type	Facing	Description
1	Pre-ex	W	Spread (003)
2	Pre-ex	N	Spread (003)
3	Pre-ex	W	Spread (003)
4	Pre-ex	N	Spread (003)
5	Mid-ex	E	Spread (003)
6	Mid-ex	E	Spread (003)

### Appendix 5 – Drawing Register

Dwg	Type	Area	Scale	Description
1	Plan			Burnt spread, pre-ex