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 **Department of Transport**
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NRA
An tÚdóras um Bóithre Náisiúnta
National Roads Authority
Archaeology



Date: March 2010

Client: Kildare County Council

Project code: KCK06

**N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow.
Archaeological Services Contract No. 6 – Resolution, Moone to
Prumplestown.**

**Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2959, in the
townland of Woodlands East, Co. Kildare.**

By: John Twomey

National Monuments Section Registration Number: E2959

Director: Tom Janes

NGR: 276412/185113

Report Status: Final



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ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd



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CONTENTS	PAGE
Executive Summary	2
1 Introduction	3
2 Site description and location	4
3 Aims and methodology	4
4 Excavation results	5
5 Discussion	5
6 Archive quantities	6
References	7
Acknowledgements	9

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Extract from RMP
Figure 3	Site layout

List of Plates

Plate 1	Quarried stone, facing north
Plate 2	Drill bit marks on quarried stone
Plate 3	Pre-excavation view of spread (003), facing west
Plate 4	Mid-excavation view of spread (003), facing north-northwest

Appendices

Appendix 1	Context Register
Appendix 2	Finds Register
Appendix 3	Photo Register
Appendix 4	Site Matrix

Executive Summary

This final report presents the results of the archaeological resolution works carried out on behalf of Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority as part of the Archaeological Services Contract No. 6 - Resolution, Moone to Prumplestown. The works were undertaken prior to the commencement of construction of the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. The Minister of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, following consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, issued Directions to Kildare County Council on 8 March 2007 for archaeological resolution works relating to the road development. The National Monuments Section Registration Number, E2959, was allocated by the Department for the excavation of the present site in Woodlands East townland under the directorship of Tom Janes of Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.

An Environmental Impact Assessment was published in 2003 for the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme, with Valerie J Keeley Ltd preparing the Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment. This formed Chapter 10 of the EIS produced by the Roughan and O'Donovan - Faber Maunsell Alliance. Geophysical prospection was carried out on certain areas of high archaeological potential by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, on behalf of Valerie J. Keeley Ltd/Kildare County Council.

Aerial photography was undertaken along the entire route selection as part of the non-invasive assessment after the EIA stage. This work was carried out in April 2004 by Markus Casey.

Archaeological testing carried out by CRDS Ltd for Archaeological Services Contract No. 2 – Test Excavations, Mullamast to Prumplestown and Athy Link Road under Ministerial Direction Number A021/154 on this site on 26 May 2006 identified a 'charcoal sandy spread' and a quarried stone.

Full archaeological resolution was conducted on this site between 15 and 17 October 2007. The spread and quarried stone found in testing were re-identified but no other features were located on site. Investigation of the spread indicated that it was non-archaeological in nature. The charcoal noted during the testing phase was likely to be the result of intrusive windblown charcoal flecks from either of the adjacent burnt mounds E2955 or E2956. A Preliminary Report of works on the site was completed by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd in May 2009.

1 Introduction

The N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Road Scheme, of which the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme forms part, was proposed as a High Quality Dual Carriageway/Motorway, forming the Major Inter Urban route between Dublin and Waterford. The Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme was advanced as a single entity up to the Compulsory Purchase Order/Environmental Impact Statement and was subsequently divided into two separate construction contracts: the Carlow By-pass (Phase 1) and the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme (Phase 3). Kildare County Council, National Roads Design Office, has responsibility for overseeing the project management of these two schemes. The entire road scheme from Kilcullen to Waterford has now been designated as Motorway.

An Environmental Impact Assessment was published in 2003 for the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme, with Valerie J Keeley Ltd preparing the Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment. This formed Chapter 10 of the EIS produced by the Roughan and O'Donovan - Faber Maunsell Alliance. Geophysical prospection was carried out on certain areas of high archaeological potential by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, on behalf of Valerie J. Keeley Ltd/Kildare County Council.

Aerial photography was undertaken along the entire route selection as part of the non-invasive assessment after the EIA stage. This work was carried out in April 2004 by Markus Casey.

Construction commenced on Phase 1, the Carlow By-pass, in January 2006 and the road was completed and opened in May 2008. Construction of Phase 3, the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme, which also includes a new single carriage link road to Athy town, commenced in January 2008.

Archaeological test-trenching was undertaken in advance of Phase 1, the Carlow By-pass, by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between June and August 2005 (Archaeological Services Contract No. 3). This work identified 64 archaeological sites, which required archaeological excavation in advance of road construction. The resolution works for these sites were undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between January and August 2006 (Archaeological Services Contract No. 4).

Archaeological test-trenching was undertaken in advance of the construction of Phase 3, the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme, by IAC Ltd and CRDS Ltd, between October to November 2005 and May to August 2006 (Archaeological Services Contracts No. 1 and No. 2, respectively). This work resulted in the identification of 102 archaeological sites, which required resolution in advance of construction. The resolution works for these sites were undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between March and December 2007 (Archaeological Services Contracts No. 5 and No. 6). This report details the results of one of those excavations, undertaken under NMSR Number E2959.

The project was funded by the Irish Government and the European Union through Kildare County Council/National Roads Authority, under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and 2007-2013.

Construction Phases 2 and 4 relate to the section of road between Powerstown, Co. Carlow and the Waterford city By-pass and are project managed by Waterford County Council, National Roads Design Office.

2 Site description and location

Site E2959 was situated in the townland of Woodlands East, parish of Castledermot, barony of Kilkea and Moone and was located 1.8 km east of Castledermot, Co. Kildare at National Grid Reference: 276412/185113 (Figure 1). The site was located in a boggy area as highlighted on the 1st Edition 6" Ordnance Survey map no. KE-037 of 1839.

A number of known archaeological sites were present in the vicinity of E2959 in advance of the current road scheme. Within the townland of Woodlands East two ringforts (RMP KD038-042) and (RMP KD038-043) were located 450 m and 350 m respectively to the northeast, while a possible earthwork (RMP KD038-044) was located 920 m to the northeast. A further ringfort (RMP KD040-001) was located 200 m due south in Woodlands West townland. Prehistoric burial practices were evident 950 m to the northwest in Hallahoise townland where a ringbarrow (RMP KD037-051) was located, and 950 m to the southeast where a cist burial (RMP KD040-003) was identified (Figure 2).

Archaeological investigations undertaken as part of Archaeological Services Contract No. 6 on the road scheme identified a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of site E2993. Site E2941 was located 1.7 km to the north and revealed a medieval cereal drying kiln and later agricultural ditches (Doyle, T. 2009a). Site E2942 was located 1.5 km to the north and revealed three Early Bronze Age burnt mounds with associated features along with later evidence for settlement in the form of three wells, a metallised surface, pits, and 14 ditches (Doyle, T. 2009b). Continuing southwards, Site E2943 was located 1.2 km to the north and revealed an Early Bronze Age burnt mound with associated features, and a well (Doyle, T. 2009c). Site E2948 was located 900 m to the north and revealed a number of pits and ditches (Doyle, L. 2009a). Site E2949 was located 600 m to the north and revealed evidence for a medieval settlement in the form of a rectangular enclosure (Doyle, L. 2009b). Site E2951 was adjacent to E2949 and located 400 m north of Site E2959. It revealed evidence of extensive medieval activity in the form of charcoal production pits, pits, postholes, stakeholes, hearths, linear features, and ditches (Doyle, L. 2009 c). Site E2954 was located 200 m to the north and also revealed evidence for medieval activity in the form of charcoal production pits, troughs, and pits (Janes *et al.* 2009a). Two burnt mounds site were located situated in the immediate environs of Site E2959, Site E2955 to the northeast (Hackett 2009a), and Site 2956 to the southeast which contained two burnt mounds (Hackett 2009b). A further 150 m to the south Site 2960 revealed a medieval ring fort (RMP KD040-001) and associated features (Janes *et al.* 2009b). Site E2966 was located 1.3 km to the south and revealed a prehistoric ritual complex containing three ringditches with associated cremations, a horseshoe shaped ditch, and evidence of later metal working (Long *et al.* 2009a). Finally, Site E2967 was located 1.7 km to the south and revealed an array of features including: a Mesolithic pit, a ring-ditch, a pit circle, two cremation burials, three burnt mounds, one trough, several wooden trackways, a Bronze Age house, a possible prehistoric network of linear gullies, an early medieval curvilinear ditch, and four medieval inhumation burials (Long *et al.* 2009b).

3 Aims and methodology

The objective of the work was the preservation by record of any archaeological features that would be impacted by the proposed development, in advance of the road construction programme.

Topsoil stripping of the site was conducted using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a 1.9 m wide ditching (toothless) bucket under constant archaeological supervision. A total area of 682 m² 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. Registers are

provided in the appendices (Appendices 1-3). Ordnance Datum levels and feature locations were recorded using Penmap and a total station theodolite.

Full archaeological resolution was conducted on this site between 15 and 17 October 2007. The crew on site E2959 consisted of 1 director, 1 deputy site manager and 4 site assistants.

4 Excavation results

A 'charcoal sandy spread' and a 'quarried stone' were identified during the testing phase (Ó Drisceoil and Jennings 2006). Both features were subsequently relocated during the excavation phase.

A single spread of light grey silty sand with occasional charcoal flecking was identified on the southwestern edge of the site (Figure 3; Plates 3 and 4). This measured approximately 12 m northwest/southeast by 10 m northeast/southwest and had a maximum depth of 0.20 m.

Approximately 5 m north of the spread was a large boulder protruding from the natural subsoil (Figure 3; Plates 1 and 2). The portion of the stone visible above ground was semi-circular in elevation and measured 1.58 m east/west by 1.42 m north/south, and 1.32 m high. The southern side, the 'face', of the stone was flat and irregular; it was not possible to determine whether this was as a result of natural weathering, or a result of having been crudely dressed. The northern side, the 'back', of the stone displayed no evidence of having been worked. The stone could not be fully exposed as the area in which it was located was waterlogged due to the presence of a spring.

The top crest of the southern face of the stone displayed a rough scallop-edged pattern, with a number of semi-circular cut-marks evident along the edge. These marks measured between 0.06 m and 0.09 m wide and were intermittently present along the entire edge of the southern face of the stone. No other evidence of working was noted.

The only artefact recovered from site was a piece of modern glass from the topsoil (001).

5 Discussion

The results of the excavation at Woodlands East are discussed here following stratigraphic, environmental, dating and artefactual analysis. The site is then discussed on a local level and related to other sites known in the vicinity (including those discovered on the current scheme). Finally the site is discussed on a national level in an attempt to place it in context and assess how it contributes to the archaeological record in general.

Following excavation the spread identified in testing was determined to be non-archaeological in its origins. The silty nature of the deposit suggests it was deposited within a shallow depression while the site was waterlogged, possibly a regular occurrence given the boggy surroundings. Its charcoal content is likely to be the result of intrusive windblown charcoal flecks from either of the adjacent burnt mounds E2955 or E2956, both located within 50 m of the spread (Figures 1 and 2).

No related activity was identified in association with the quarried stone. The stone was composed of limestone and displayed a pattern of vertical notches along its crest on the face of the stone. These have been interpreted as the tool marks from drill bits used in the plug and feather quarrying process, a technique of stone cutting used from prehistoric times up to the modern era. The 'feathers' refer to two tapered bars inserted into a hole drilled into the stone, the 'plug' to a narrow wedge which is

hammered between them to force them apart. Pavía and Bolton have noted that ‘the methods and tools used to quarry and carve stone in Pharaonic Egypt, Classical Greece and the Roman Empire are very similar to those used by masons in Ireland and throughout Europe up to the end of the nineteenth century’ (2000, 79). Having studied the stratigraphy of the rock and any seams present, in order to deduce the most efficient way of cutting the stone, a line of holes would have been drilled along the grain of the stone until they were deep enough to accommodate the plug and feathers, or the stone broke away as required. The plugs and feathers would have continued to be added to additional holes along the line until the stone was split. As a sedimentary rock limestone has natural beds within the rock ‘that provide an easy direction in which the stone can be split’ with the same method used regardless of the size of the stone (*ibid.*, 80-1). Even in a large stone like this, a series of holes drilled 0.10 m deep into the stone by a skilled stonemason would have been sufficient to split it. Otherwise wooden wedges, often of oak, would have been inserted into the holes and surrounded with water, and left for a few days until they had swelled, resulting in the necessary split occurring in the stone. Ropes and levers may have been used to hoist the quarried stone onto a cart for transportation from this site, leaving no sub-surface evidence for this activity. Any dressing of the stone would have been undertaken at its final destination so to limit any damage occurring to the stone in transit, again removing the possibility for any additional stone working debitage.

No definitive use can be assigned to the quarried stone, though the dense but not hard consistency of limestone saw its use during the medieval and post-medieval periods limestone for ‘sills, jambs, quoins, steps, string courses, paving, moulded work and lime-making’ (*ibid.*, 59).

All the archaeology related to this site within the CPO has been resolved.

6 Archive quantities

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Context Sheets	3
Plans	0
Sections	0
Photographs	36
Registers	3
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 (Ireland) Ltd., Unit 1, Wallingstown Business Park, Little Island, Co. Cork. It is proposed that the archive is appropriately deposited in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland.

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- Noel Dunne, NRA Archaeologist, Kildare County Council, National Roads Design Office.
- Project and post-excavation managers, Colm Moloney, Damian Shiels, Åsa Carlsson and Patricia Long, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- Graphics department, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- Emma Skarstrand, Site Supervisor, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- The excavation team.

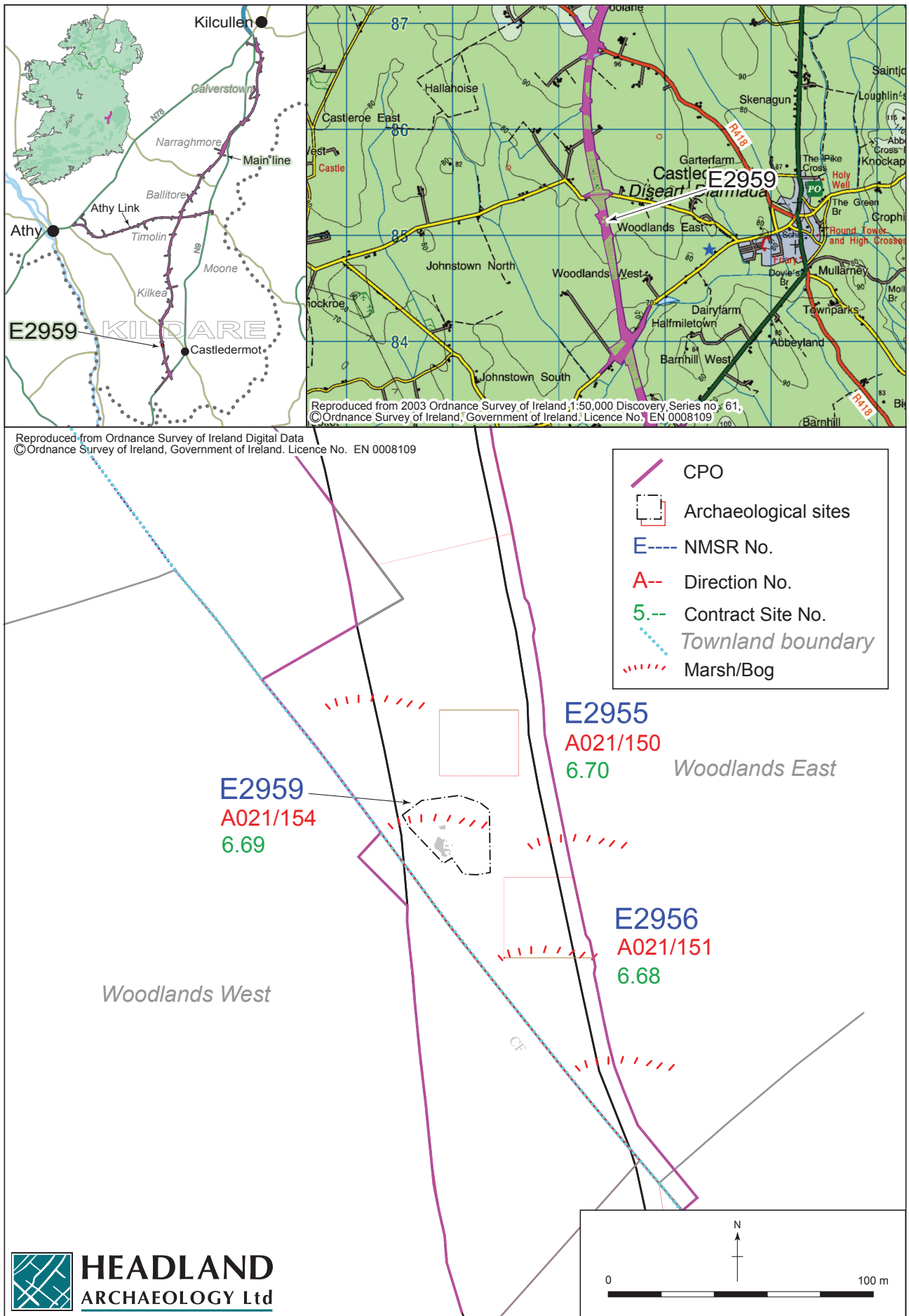


Figure 1 - N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 6 - Resolution, Moone to Prumplestown: E2959, site location.

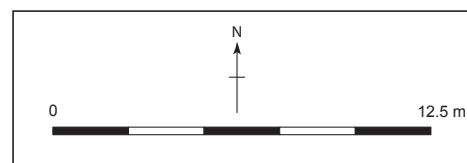
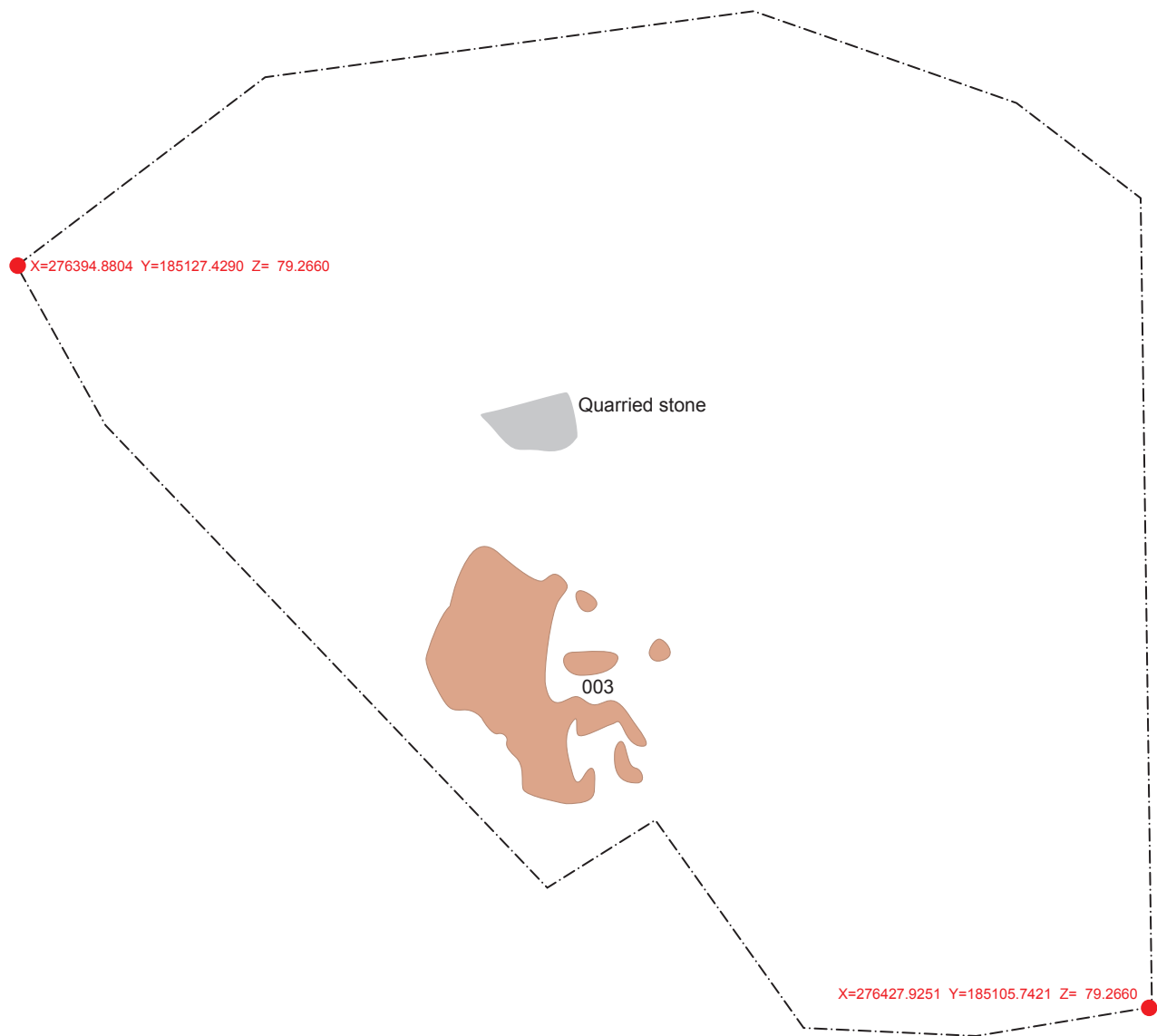


Figure 3 - N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 6 - Resolution, Moone to Prumplestown: E2959, site layout.



Plate 1 - Quarried stone, facing north.



Plate 2 - Drill bit marks on quarried stone.



Plate 3 - Pre-excavation view of spread (003), facing west.



Plate 4 - Mid-excavation view of spread (003), facing north-northwest.

Appendix 1 – Context Register for Site E2959

Context no.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
001	Deposit	-	-	Site-wide	Site-wide	-	Loose, mid-brown silty sand	Topsoil
002	Deposit	-	-	Site-wide	Site-wide	-	-	Natural
003	Deposit	-	-	12.00	10.00	0.20	Spread of loose, light grey silty sand with frequent inclusions of charcoal flecks and gravel	Non-archaeological

Appendix 2 – Finds Register for Site E2959

Find no.	Material	Type	Identification	Description
E2959:001:001	-	-	-	Void
E2959:001:002	-	-	-	Void
E2959:001:003	Glass	Glass	Modern	Modern glass

Appendix 3 – Photo Register for Site E2959

Photo Number	Direction facing	Description
E2959:001	South	Pre-excavation view of quarried stone
E2959:002	North	Pre-excavation view of quarried stone
E2959:003	South	Pre-excavation view of quarried stone
E2959:004	South-southeast	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:005	South-southeast	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:006	Northeast	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:007	South-southwest	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:008	South-southeast	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:009	South-southwest	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:010	North	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:011	West	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:012	South-southeast	Pre-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:013	North	Quarried stone exposed
E2959:014	North	Quarried stone exposed
E2959:015	West	Quarried stone exposed
E2959:016	East	Quarried stone exposed
E2959:017	South	Non-archaeological
E2959:018	South	Non-archaeological
E2959:019	South	Non-archaeological
E2959:020	West	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:021	West	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:022	East-northeast	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:023	East-northeast	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:024	North-northwest	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:025	North-northwest	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:026	North-northwest	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:027	Southeast	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:028	West	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:029	North-northeast	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:030	South	Mid-excavation view of spread (003)
E2959:031	East-northeast	E2959:001:001: Non-archaeological
E2959:032	East-northeast	E2959:001:001: Non-archaeological
E2959:033	East-northeast	E2959:001:001: Non-archaeological
E2959:034		Void: Non-archaeological
E2959:035		Void: Non-archaeological
E2959:036	South	Quarried stone
E2959:037	East	Quarried stone
E2959:038	East	Quarried stone

Appendix 4 – Site Matrix for Site E2959

