

# *Archaeological Report*

*On a programme of Archaeological Testing in advance of a development of social housing in Kiltimagh, County Mayo.*



*Archaeological Licence 18E0010*

**Bernard Guinan**  
Archaeologist  
Mayo County Council

**June 2018**

## Archaeological Summary

A programme of pre-development archaeological testing in advance of a proposed development of social housing units was undertaken on a greenfield site (ITM E505075, N840751) in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, in April 2018. The proposed development was designed by the architectural section of Mayo County Council and an archaeological testing programme was undertaken on foot of Part VIII planning conditions. To adequately test the development zone, a total of fourteen test trenches were mechanically excavated across the 1.09-hectare green field site. The soil stratigraphy was remarkably consistent across the entire area and testing did not uncover any finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. No further archaeological mitigation is required before development is permitted to proceed at the site.

## Topographical and Site Description

The green field site selected for development is located in Kiltimagh Town (Fig. 1) at Cloonkedagh road, situated on the north-west outskirts of the main urban area of Kiltimagh town (Fig. 2) in the townland of Kiltamagh (*note - the spelling of the townland name Kiltamagh differs from the conventional spelling of the town name Kiltimagh*), in the civil parish of Killedan (Barony of Gallen). The site (Fig. 3) is located at the rear of a line of houses which front onto the Cloonkedagh road. The north-eastern corner of the proposed development site is occupied by an existing house with a garden front and rear, leading to pasture land to the south-west. Topographically the land is pastoral, sloping from south-east to north-west. The land (c. 55-65m OD), is quite marginal in places with a high concentration of rushes in the section of the north-west of the site (Plate 2).

Cartographic analysis, a literary survey and an extensive walkover field survey, were undertaken at the site prior to the commencement of testing. Part of the eastern boundary of the development site, encroached on the zone of archaeological constraints of Recorded Monument MA 080:30 – Ringfort (Fig 4, Plate 3). A second earthwork MA 080:32 (not impacted by the development) was situated c. 300m to the east (Fig 2).

The first ed. OS map (c. 1838) clearly shows the presence of an extant earthwork (MA 080:30), (Fig. 5). On the second edition OS map (c. 1919), (Fig 4), this ringfort (MA 080:30) is still

largely intact although part of the north-eastern bank has been removed by the Cloonkedagh road, constructed between 1838 and 1919. No visible surface trace of the monument survives today with OPW field notes recording its condition of preservation in 1984, by which time a bungalow had destroyed the south-eastern half of the interior -

*The rath, which was truncated at N-NE by a road, consisted of a slightly raised area (diam. c. 40m) enclosed by an earthen bank, sections of which survived at S-NW only. The E-SE half of the interior now underlies a modern house. A bungalow probably built in the 1970s/80s now occupies its' site. The adjoining Clonkedagh road runs over part of its' bank. No surface trace of this enclosure survives, there is no record of it in the RMP files (OPW Field Notes- 1984).*

Some archaeological testing was undertaken at the rear of the monument in 2002 at which time the site was described as having been levelled years ago (Morahan, 2004), (Licence No. 02E0796). This testing failed to uncover any remains of the monument.

*A proposed house would come within 10m of the north-west edge of an univallate ringfort. The ringfort survives as a low scarp, having been almost levelled years ago. The ground level slopes down to the north-west, away from this scarp, and the proposed house site is 1.6m lower than the top of the scarp. Six trenches tested the site, but nothing of note was found (Morahan, 2004).*

Further archaeological investigations were undertaken in 2006 when another programme of pre-planning archaeological testing was undertaken (Crumlish, 2006 and 2009), (Licence No. 06E0687), within the archaeological constraint zones of the ringfort (MA080:30). This testing took place on lands corresponding with the known location of the north-western half of the ringfort. No surface trace of the monument was uncovered and according to the landowner the monument was levelled by bulldozer in the late 1980s. While no traces of the ringfort were found, the testing program did uncover the remains of a collapsed souterrain (Fig.6). The 2006 testing programme was followed up by archaeological monitoring of ground works in 2008, undertaken in advance of the construction of two semi-detached dwellings (Crumlish, 2008).

## **The Testing Programme 2018**

The proposed development site was large (c 1.09-hectare) and as discussed encroached on the archaeological constraints zone of the Recorded Monument MA 080:30. In order to adequately test this large development area, fourteen test trenches were laid out at regular intervals across the site. The test trenches were spaced at c. 10m intervals running north-west/south-east across the site, with two cross trenches running north-east/south-west (Fig. 6, Plate 1). Each trench was mechanically excavated (using a toothless bucket) in a stratigraphic manner, through topsoil and subsoil to an undisturbed natural horizon.

An existing house fronting onto the road, at the north-eastern corner of the site, is due to be demolished to allow access to the new development (Plate 1). Test trenches 1 and 2 were excavated through the front and rear garden of this house (Fig 6). Each of these trenches (1 and 2) measured c. 20 metres (north-west/south-east) by c. 1m wide. Trenches 3-12 were designed to adequately test the main body of the site and were spread out at regular (c. 10 metre) intervals running north-west/south-east (Fig. 6). Test trenches 3-12 measured c. 100m by c. 1m wide. Finally, two cross test trenches were excavated perpendicular to the main test trench group. Trench 13 measured c. 120 m long by 1m wide, while trench 14 measured 60m long by 1m wide (north-east/south-west), (Fig. 6).

The stratigraphic profile of each trench was remarkably consistent across the entire test area. Test trenches 1-14 contained a sterile a mid-brown, friable well drained topsoil, resting above an orange-brown mottled boulder clay with occasional small stones (Plates 6-8). Topsoil in each of these test trenches ranged in depth from 0.2-0.4m. Occasional modern features such as stone lined field drains (Plate 5) were noted. Modern service infrastructure elements were also encountered (sewer pipe and electrical ducting). Trenches 1 and 2 were located to the rear and front of the house at the north-eastern part of the site (Plates 9-11). The stratigraphic profile of these two trenches consisted of a brown/black topsoil and mixed clay/peat (Plate 11). This material was essentially garden fill brought in when the house was built. Trench 1 the mixed garden fill horizon was c. 1m deep above a grey/gley boulder clay. (Plate 11)

## **Conclusion**

A programme of pre-development archaeological testing in advance of a social housing scheme in Kiltimagh Co. Mayo was completed in April 2018. Fourteen test trenches were excavated across a 1.09-hectare green of field site. A simple and consistent stratigraphy was evident across the site, largely consisting of topsoil resting directly on boulder clay. Some evidence of modern disturbance was evident (land drains and modern service). No archaeological deposits were encountered during testing. No further archaeological work is required at this proposed development site.

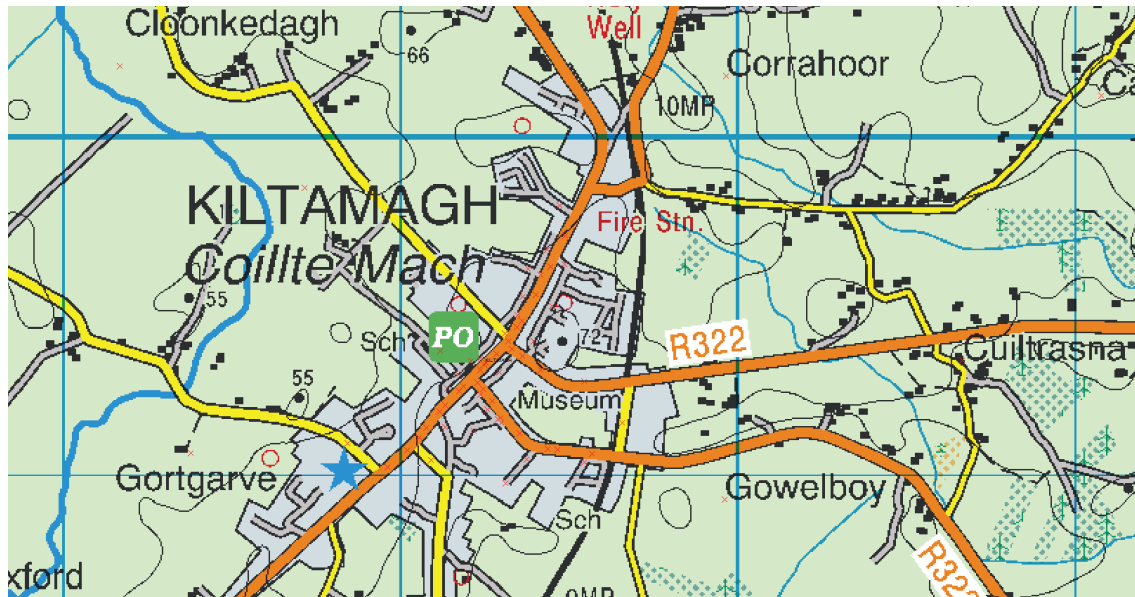
## **References**

**Morahan, L. 2004** Kiltimagh Co. Mayo Licence 02E0796, *Excavations* 2002

**Crumlish, R. 2006** Report on pre-development testing at Cloonkedagh Road, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo. Excavation Licence No 06E0687. July 2006

**Crumlish, R. 2008** Report on the monitoring of Groundworks at Cloonkedagh Road, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo. Planning Ref. P07/208. Unpublished Report, March 2008.

**Crumlish, R. 2009** Possible souterrain, Cloonkedagh Road, Kiltimagh, Licence 06E0687 *Excavations* 2004,



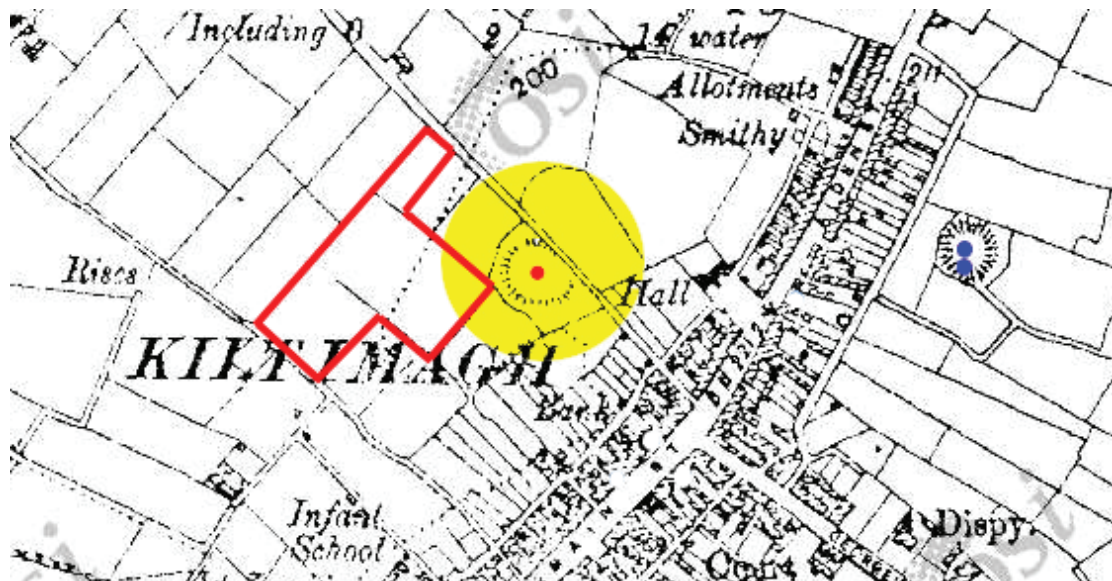
**Fig. 1. Kiltimagh County Mayo. OS Discovery Map 1:50,000**



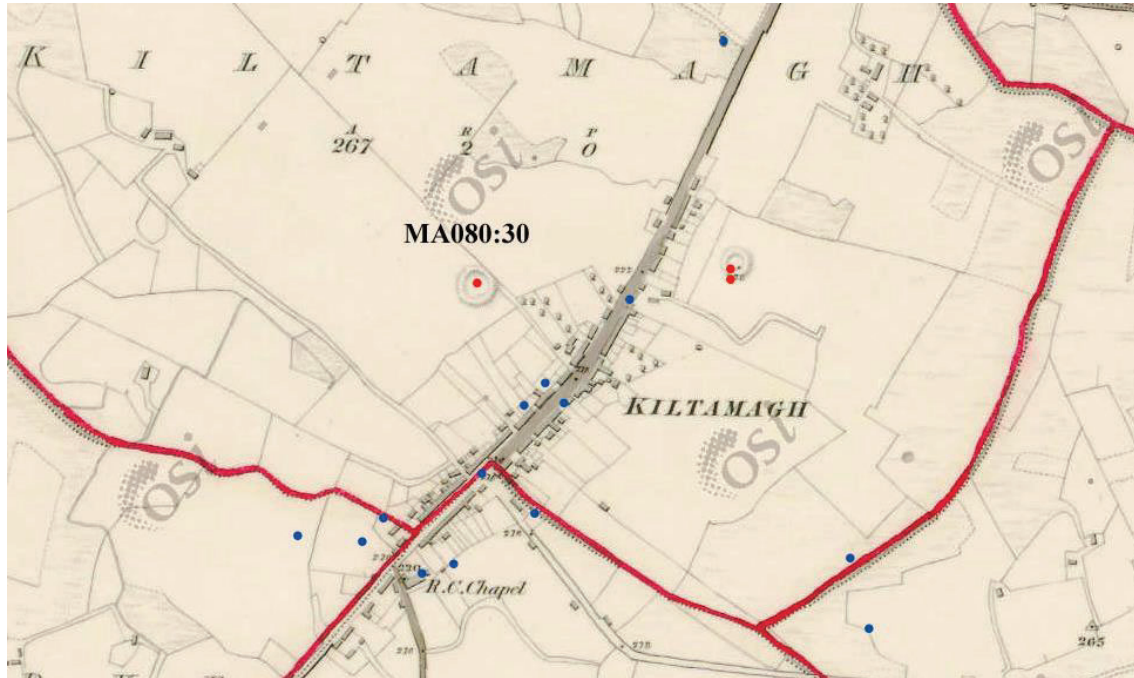
**Fig. 2. Aerial View of Kiltimagh Town Showing Ringfort (MA080:30) and Ringfort and Souterrain (MA080:31001 and 002)**



**Fig. 3. Proposed development site (outlined Red) at Cloonkedagh road, Kiltimagh, County Mayo.**



**Fig. 4. Second edition OS Map c. 1919 showing Ringfort (MA080:30) and zone of archaeological constraint (Yellow) relative to proposed development site (Red). Ringfort and Souterrain (MA080:31001 and 002) located to the east of the development site.**



**Fig. 5. First edition OS Map c. 1838 showing Ringfort (MA080:30).**



**Fig 6. Development Site (White) with proposed layout of test trenches (Red and Blue). Location of Ringfort MA 080:30 and Collapsed Souterrain discovered during pervious archaeological testing in 2006**





**Plate 1 - Existing House at north-eastern end of proposed development site**



**Plate 2 - View of rush covered land at north-western end of proposed development site**



**Plate 3 - Location of levelled Ringfort (MA080:30), Kiltimagh.**



**Plate 4 - View across the proposed development site during testing.**



**Plate 5 - Land drain in Test Trench 5**



**Plate 6 - Test Trench 10 – After excavation**



**Plate 7 - Test Trench 11 – After excavation**



**Plate 8 - Test Trench 13 – After excavation**



**Plate 9 - Test Trench 2 - at rear of existing house on proposed development site**



**Plate 10 -Test Trench 1 - in front garden of existing house on proposed development site**



**Plate 11 - Test Trench 1 - in front garden of existing house on development site – showing excavated trench (left) and section (right).**



**Plate 12 –Proposed development site after testing and reinstatement**

