

## 1 Introduction

The construction of social housing units is proposed for a site on the eastern outskirts of Mallaranny Village, Co. Mayo (ITM 483986/796754). Because of the size of the proposed development, above 0.5 hectares, an archaeological assessment was recommended.

A desk top study and site visit concluded that, development could proceed at the site, without further archaeological mitigation. The following report summarises the outcome of the site visit and is prepared for planning purposes on behalf of the Architects Section, Áras an Chontae, Castlebar.

## 2 Description of Development Site

The proposed development site is irregular in shape (Fig 1). It is in the townland of Mureevagh, Parish and Barony of Burrishoole and found on Mayo OS six-inch Sheet 66. The N59, National Primary Route, between Mallaranny and Newport, borders the site along its south-western boundary. The long axis, from south-west through west to north-west, is bounded by the Murrevagh River (Fig 2). This is also the townland boundary between Murrevagh and Mallaranny townlands. A residential development, known as St Brendan's, is located on the adjacent bank of the river (Plate 1). The ground climbs steeply from south to north forming the lower slopes of Claggan Mountain (OD 0-50 m). A trackway running up the mountain side borders the eastern edge of the development site (Fig 2). Claggan Mountain is part of the westerly extent of the Nephin Beg Range and can be seen rising steeply in the distance to north (Fig 3; Plate 1).

The ground falls steeply along the western extent of the development site to the Murrevagh River (Plate 2). There are other deep ravines, across the site which probably represent the remains of dried up stream beds. These ravines are covered by shrubs and trees and are inaccessible (Plate 3). The stream beds would have previously joined with the Mureevagh River which drains into Clew Bay. In other areas of the development site there is substantial areas of rock outcrop (Plate 4). Some of the rock has been used to construct low walls which formerly divided the area into irregular sized fields. The ground cover is poor quality grass, with extensive covering of furze, rhododendrons, trees and shrubs.

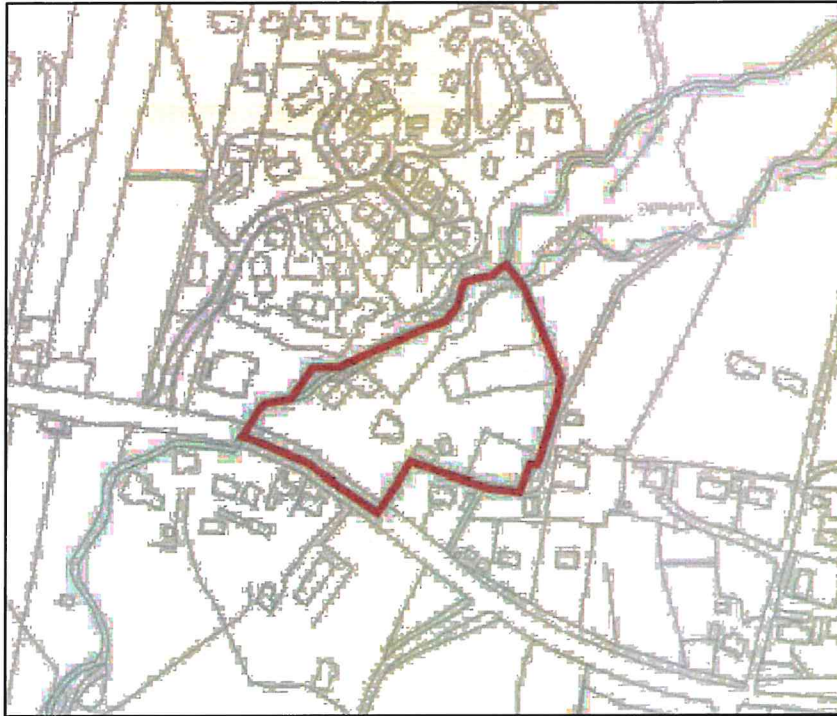


Fig 1 Development site for housing outlined in red

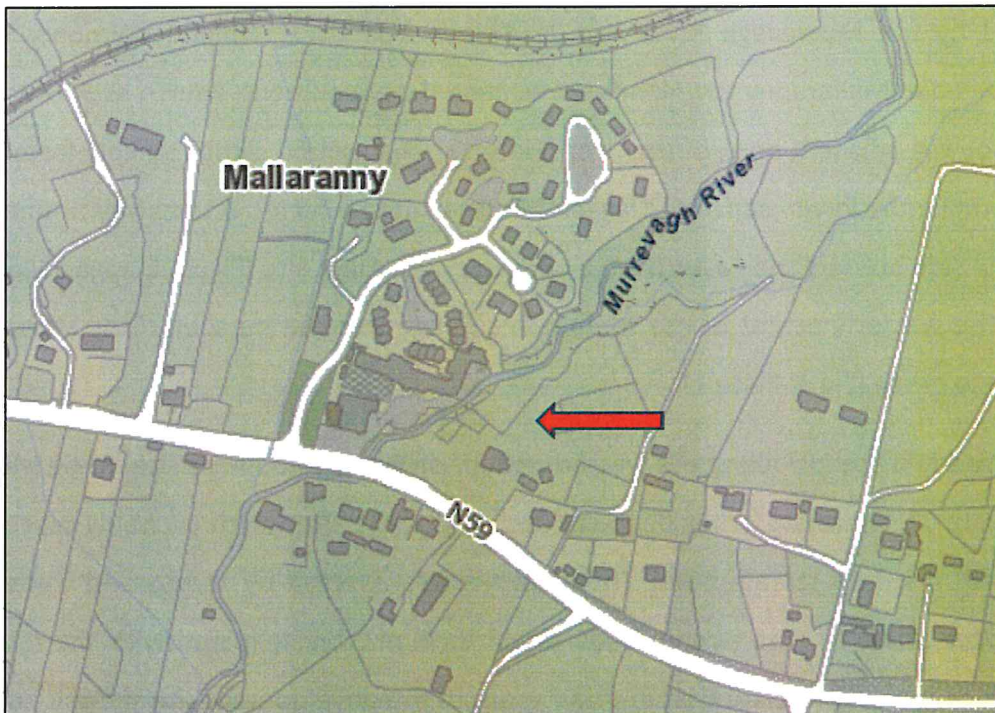


Fig 2 Centre of development site for housing shown by red arrow



Plate 1 Claggan Mountain in the distance to north of development site and St Brendan's to west.

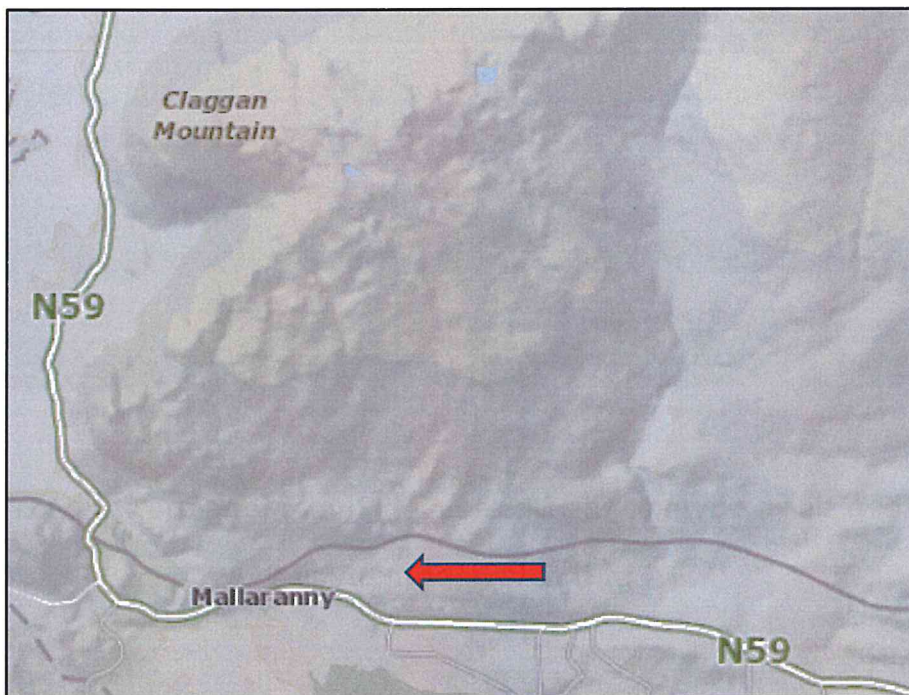


Fig 3 Approximate location of development site on the lower extent of Claggan Mountain

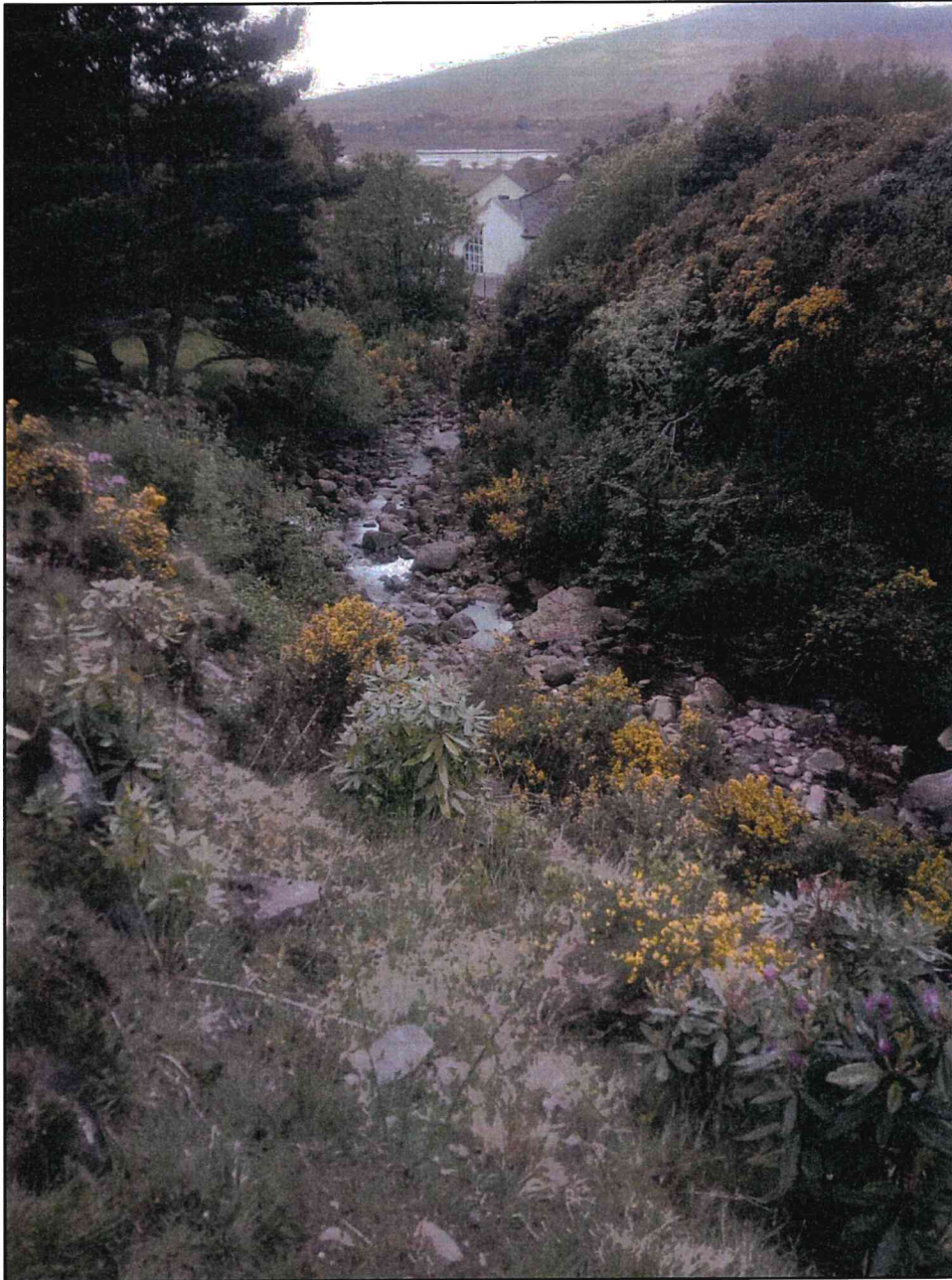


Plate 2 Steep slope down to the Mureevagh River along the western boundary of the development site



Plate 3 Inaccessible ravines cutting through development site, former stream beds



Plate 4 Rock outcrop and low walls across development site

## Desktop Study & Site Visit

There are no archaeological sites designated on the Register of Monuments and Places for County Mayo (RMP) on or near the proposed development site. The nearest archaeological site is a Midden (MAO66-002), in both Mallaranny and Murrevagh townlands, 1.4 km to the south-east of the development site, along the inner reaches of Clew Bay.

No archaeological sites were identified during the walk over survey, which was carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019. An exposed section face ran along the western extent of the development site, where the ground falls steeply to the Murrevagh River. This showed a very thin layer of peaty clay, overlying coarse gravel, with frequent inclusions of cobbles (Plate 5). Given the nature of the vegetation, together with the rock outcrop, it seems likely that this exposed section represents the stratigraphy of the development site in general. It indicates that the soil cover overlying the natural gravel is very shallow and not conducive to significant archaeological deposits.

## Summary

The development site in Mallaranny was earmarked for archaeological assessment because it is large-scale and above 0.5 hectares in size. Following a desk-top survey and site visit however it was decided that further archaeological mitigation was not required. This was due to the topography of the site which was inaccessible in places and partially covered by rock outcrop. The soil cover consisted of a very shallow layer of peaty clay overlying a natural gravel deposit. This deposit formed the lower extent of Claggan Mountain at the south-western end of the Nephin Beg Range. No archaeological remains are designated within the proposed development site and no previously unrecorded sites could be seen within the area during the site walk over survey. This coupled with the shallow soil cover suggested the area is not conducive to sub-surface archaeology. As such further mitigation in the form of archaeological testing at this site is not required.

Sue Zajac,

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Archaeologist, Mayo County Council,

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Plate 5 Exposed Section face along the western boundary of the development site

