

LICENCE NO. 19E0620

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT ON
PREDEVELOPMENT TESTING
AT ROOGHAUN TOWNLAND,
CARNACON, CO. MAYO

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SECTION ÁRAS AN CHONTAE
CASTLEBAR

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1. Summary of Archaeological Testing

Pre-development archaeological testing, under licence number 19E0638, took place in Rooghaun townland (E519461/N776033), in the village of Carnacon, north of Ballinrobe, in County Mayo (Fig 1). The testing took place over five days, between 25th and the 29th November 2019. The work was part of an archaeological assessment on foot of Part VIII planning conditions and was carried out prior to the construction of social housing units by Mayo County Council (Zajac, 2019, 1-12).

Seven test trenches were mechanically excavated in a greenfield site and nothing of archaeological significance was recovered (www.excavations.ie 2019:249-Rooghaun Mayo).

2. The Development Site

The development site is a sub-rectangular area located on the southern outskirts of Carnacon village (Fig 2). Previously used for grazing, it covers 0.75 Ha. of good quality grassland. The development site slopes quite steeply from west to lower ground at east where the site borders a regional road leading south to Moore Hall and Ballinrobe (Fig 2). Mature trees grow along all boundaries except at east. The parish church and parocial house are adjacent to the site at north and north-east respectively. An archaeological assessment carried out prior to predevelopment testing concluded that one designated archaeological site is located in Rooghaun townland, this is a univallate ringfort (MAO100-053). This is visible from the development site, in the distance to the south-west (Zajac, 2019, 6).



Fig 1 Location of development site north of Ballinrobe and north-east of Lough Carra.

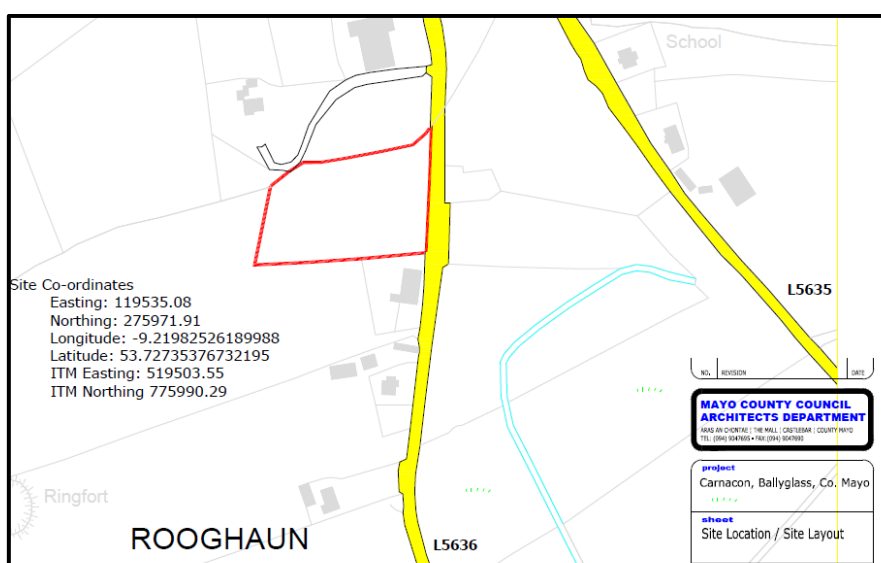


Fig. 2. Development site outlined in red.

3. Proposed Development

The proposed development is the construction, by Mayo County Council, of eight social and affordable housing units, as well as all auxiliary works. A second area marked 'A' below is also in Council ownership but is not being developed at this time (Fig 3).

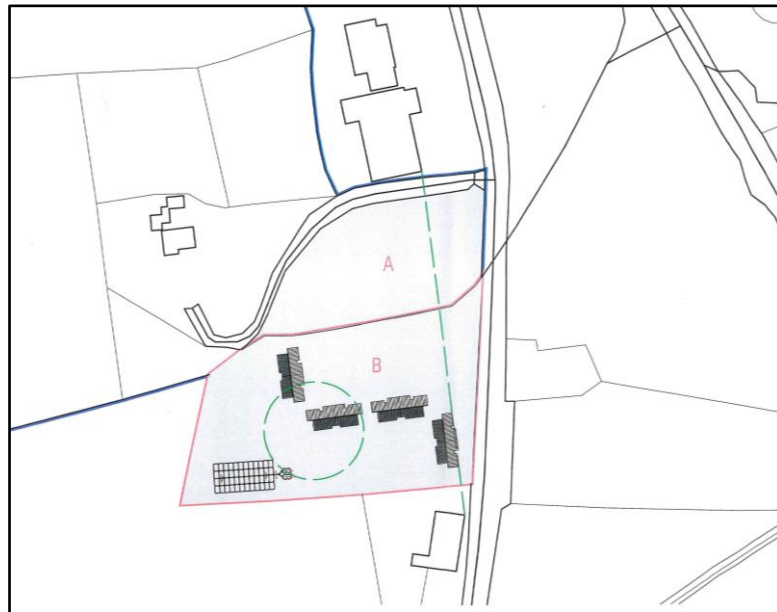


Fig 3 Schematic drawing of housing units in the development site in Carrownacon, with Parish Church and Parochial House to north and north-west respectively.

3 The Predevelopment Testing

Seven test trenches were mechanically excavated using a toothless grading bucket. All trenches ran on a north x south axis for a maximum distance of 72m and a minimum distance of 54m and were spaced at a distance of 15m (Fig 4).

Two contexts were recorded across the seven test trenches (Appendix 1). These were a shallow layer of silty, brown clay (Context 1), overlying natural limestone gravel (Context 2).

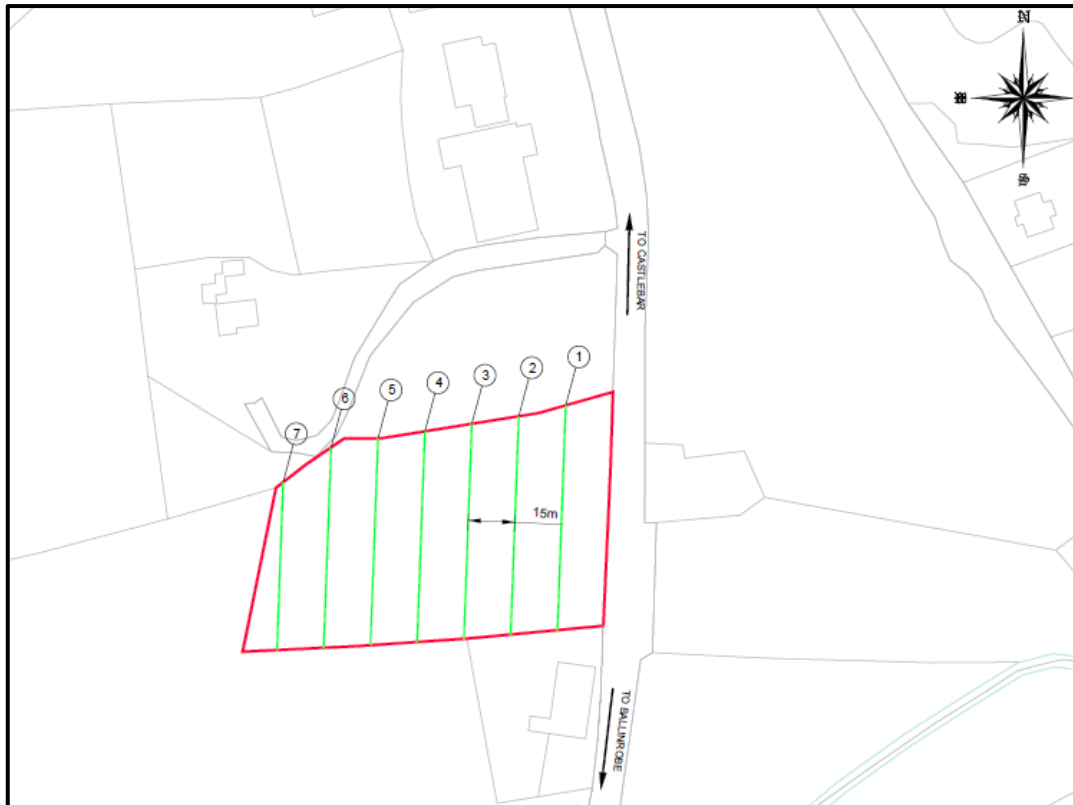


Fig 4 Location of Test Trenches 1-7 in Rooghaun Townland.

4 The Test Trenches

Test Trench One

Test Trench One was 72m long. A shallow, clay topsoil (Context 1), overlay gravel for a depth of between 0.2m and 0.3m deep. A small piece of red brick was found on top of the gravel but nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered (Plate 1).



Plate 1 Looking south to limestone gravel (Context 2) below clay (Context 1) in Test Trench One.

Test Trench Two

Located 15 m north-west of Test Trench One and parallel to it. Test Trench Two was 71m long. The stratigraphy was the same as in Test Trench One with a shallow layer of silty, clay (Context 1) overlying limestone gravel (Context 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered (Plate 2).



Plate 2 Gravel (Context 2) below clay (Context 2) in Test Trench Two.

Test Trench Three

Located 15m north-west of Test Trench Two and parallel to it. Test Trench Three was 70m long. The stratigraphy was the same as in Test Trench One and Two, with a shallow layer of silty, clay (Context 1) overlying limestone gravel (Context 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered (Plate 3).



Plate 3 Looking north along Test Trench Three showing sterile clay (Context 1) with Test Trenches Two and Three in background.

Test Trench Four

Located 15m north-west of Test Trench Three and parallel to it (Fig 3). Test Trench Four was 68m long. The stratigraphy was the same as in Test Trenches 1-3, with a shallow layer of silty, clay (Context 1) overlying limestone gravel (Context 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in Test Trench Four (Plate 4).



Plate 4 Looking south to clay (Context 1)
in Test Trench Four.

Test Trench Five

Located 15m west of Test Trench Four and parallel to it (Fig 3). Test Trench Five was 67m long. The stratigraphy was the same as in Test Trenches 1-4, with a shallow layer of silty, clay (Context 1) overlying limestone gravel (Context 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in Test Trench Five (Plate 5).



Plate 5 Looking east from Test Trench 5 across development site to clay topsoil, in Test Trenches 1-5.

Test Trench Six

Test Trench Six was 65m long and it had the same stratigraphy as Test Trench Five with clay (Context 1) occurring above limestone gravel (Context 2). The trench was located on the higher ground in the west sector of the site. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered within Test Trench Six.

Test Trench Seven

Test Trench Seven was 54m in length and it had the same stratigraphy as Test Trench Six with clay (Context 1), located above limestone gravel (Context 2). The trench was located on the higher ground in the west sector of the site. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered within Test Trench Seven.

5. Summary

Two contexts were recorded during the archaeological testing, in Rooghaun, townland. Clay made up the only context overlaying a natural limestone gravel. There was no intrusive material within this shallow layer of clay apart from a piece of red brick in Test Trench One. The underlying gravel was free draining and there was no evidence for land drains. In general it appeared as if the ground had not been disturbed prior to testing. The stratigraphy was consistent throughout all areas of the field even on the higher ground at west. No small finds, even of recent origin, were recovered and nothing of archaeological significance was found during the predevelopment testing.

6. Conclusion

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered during the predevelopment testing under license number 19E0638, in Rooghaun townland, prior to the construction of social housing by Mayo County Council. The testing concludes that no further archaeological mitigation is required for the planned development to proceed.

7. Bibliography

Zajac, S. Archaeological Method Statement and Licence Application Social Housing Scheme at Rooghaun, Carrownacon, County Mayo. Unpublished Report, August 2019, Architectural Section, Mayo County Council, The Mall, Castlebar.

www.excavations.ie 2019:249-Rooghaun Mayo

Appendix 1 Contexts

Context 1

A shallow layer of reasonably compact, silty, clay (5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown), deepest in the south-east sector of the site. Contains roots from the overlying sod and generally averages

between 0.2 and 0.3m in depth. Contained a worn piece of red brick in Test Trenches One but otherwise there were no recent finds or intrusive material in this layer.

Context 2

Compact, limestone gravel (5YR 5/2 reddish grey) with rolled and angular cobbles in a coarse pebble and sand matrix. Underlies Context 1.

Appendix 2 Finds

No small finds were recovered from the archaeological testing under license number 19E0638

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