

Appendix 9

Desk-based Archaeological Assessment

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**Desk-based Archaeological Assessment,
Wilkinstown,
Co. Meath.**

Meath County Council
Planning Ref: NA 40198

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Client:

RPS - MCOS.

By:

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September 2004

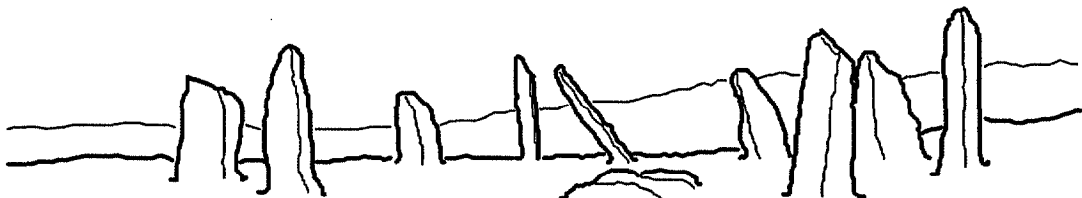


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1. Introduction

1. This report has been compiled at the request of the Heritage and Planning Division of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as part of an overall EIS concerning the acceptance of sludge, green waste, wood chip and other biowastes for composting at the Organic Gold (Marketing) Ltd. recovery facility located at Wilkinstown, Co. Meath (Fig.'s 1 & 2).
2. This report has been prepared to assess the cultural heritage and archaeological potential of the development site, and takes the form of a desk-based study based primarily on information held in the Record of Monuments and Places of the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
3. The files of the National Museum were also consulted as part of the assessment of the site. The museum maintains a topographically based record of archaeological artefacts recovered from individual townlands throughout the country. The first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps were also consulted. In addition to the documentary research carried out, the site was inspected by fieldwalking.

2. Historical and Archaeological Background

1. The subject site is situated in the townland of Wilkinstown in the village of the same name, 9 km north of the town of Navan in Co. Meath.
2. Wilkinstown is a village located at the intersection of the R162 and an unknown-numbered rural road (Fig. 2). All relevant records held with the statutory heritage authorities were consulted and Wilkinstown townland was found to contain no recorded archaeological monuments and only one record of a finding of archaeological significance (see section 4 below).

3. The Record of Monuments and Places

1. The Record of Monuments and Places combines the work of the Archaeological Survey conducted by the Office of Public Works, with cartographic sources, documentary information and aerial photography. Recorded archaeological monuments are referred to by county abbreviation, followed by ordnance survey 6" map sheet number, followed by monument number (e.g. MH18:6).
2. The development site at Wilkinstown is not situated in close proximity to a significant number of recorded monuments. Two monuments are recorded at 750m and 1km from the development site (Fig. 3).
3. *MH18:6 Souterrain site at Balsaw townland*
A souterrain was discovered in a field known as 'the blue field' in Balsaw townland 750m to the south-east of the development site in 1955. The souterrain is not marked on any ordnance survey maps and was backfilled before any investigation could take place.

4. *MH18:7 Ringfort site at Balsaw townland*

A circular ringfort with a possible entrance at the west is situated 1km to the south-south-east of the development site. It is marked as a 'fort' on the 1835 edition Ordnance Survey map and was seen in 1960 as a low bank with an entirely silted ditch.

4. The Topographical Files

1. The National Museum of Ireland maintains a topographically based record of archaeological artefacts recovered from individual townlands throughout the country. The files were searched for reference to Wilkinstown and the surrounding townlands. The files refer to only one recorded find made in the townland of Wilkinstown.
2. Two stone axeheads were recovered from Wilkinstown townland in 1929. Their exact findspot is unknown (National Museum ref: 1929.1703-4).
3. A perforated hone of siltstone measuring 9.70m long was found in a ploughed field in the townland of Fletcherstown in 1963. The exact findspot is unknown (National Museum ref: 1963.68).
4. A siltstone spindle whorl with a diameter of 4.70m and a central perforation of 0.90m was found in 1963 in the townland of Clongill (National Museum ref: 1963.67).
5. A find of a bronze Y-shaped object and five-partite horse bit was also made in Clongill townland in 1963. The decoration on these objects appears to be La Tene in origin, which dates to the early Iron Age (National Museum ref: 1963.101-2). The finds were uncovered c.1 foot deep in a tillage field c.100m to the north of Clongill Castle. Clongill Castle (recorded monument MH17:19) is a sixteenth century towerhouse with a seventeenth century attached fortified house located approximately 2.5 km southwest of the development site.

5. Cartographic Evidence

1. The first and second edition 6 inch ordnance survey maps were consulted as part of the assessment of the development site. The first edition dates to 1837 and the second edition to 1909.
2. The development site is situated within a roughly triangular shaped area bounded to the north-east by the R162 Navan to Kingscourt Road and to the south-west by a small public lane.
3. The first edition map (not depicted) records the development site and its environs as divided into three fields with a cluster of buildings situated within a small rectangular field at the south-east.
4. The second edition map (not depicted) records the development site as above apart from the removal of one of the field boundaries. There are no indications on either of the maps of any archaeological sites.

6. Previous Excavations

1. All archaeological investigations undertaken in Ireland are licenced under the National Monuments Acts (1930 and amendments). A summary of all the licenced investigations is published yearly in the 'Excavations Bulletins'. This facility has been searched with reference to Wilkinstown and the surrounding townlands.
2. No archaeological investigations had been undertaken in the townland of Wilkinstown up to the year 2001.

7. Visual Inspection of the Site

1. A visual inspection of the proposed development was carried out on the 3rd of September 2004. At the time of the inspection the weather was fine and dry, but slightly overcast. For ease of reference the development site has been divided into Areas 1, 2 and 3.
2. **Area 1**

Area 1 consists of a large roughly rectangular shaped yard situated in the location of the cluster of buildings depicted on the first and second edition ordnance survey maps. The yard contains two buildings, both commercial sheds of concrete block and steel construction (Pl. 1). The larger of the two sheds contains a concrete office extension. The sheds have been in existence for some time.
3. **Area 2**

Area 2 is a newly built large concrete composting yard which contains a large circular tank previously used for agricultural slurry containment (Pl. 3). Area 2 is connected to area 1 by means of a laneway along the western boundary of the site (Pl. 2). The composting slab is sloped so that the fall of the slab is towards two underground collection tanks where leachate is collected and stored. There is an embankment surrounding the perimeter of the slab which has been recently planted with tree saplings for screening purposes.
4. **Area 3**

Area 3 is a roughly triangular paddock situated to the east of Area 1 (Pl. 4). Presently horses graze on the grass within the paddock area and there is no proposal for future development in this area.
5. No archaeological features or deposits were noted during the visual inspection of the site.

8. Scope of the Proposed Works

1. It is currently proposed to retain the existing composting slab, offices and fertiliser production buildings at Wilkinstown. A waste reception area will be constructed where all waste will be mixed with the necessary amendments prior to composting. The existing access area will be improved and moved into the paddock area. It is also proposed to upgrade the internal access roads and to install additional security gates. Additional lightning and the installation of fire hydrants for safety purposes will also be installed at the site.

9. Summary and Recommendations

1. An investigation of archaeological and historical sources has confirmed that the development site at Wilkinstown, Co. Meath is situated within an area which contains archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period.
2. The development site itself does not however contain any recorded archaeological monuments and does not appear to have been the site of any recorded archaeological finds. The most significant artefacts recovered from the surrounding area date to the Iron Age and were recovered from a field over 2 km from the development site. Field inspection of the development site did not reveal any deposits or earthworks likely to be of archaeological significance.
3. It is recommended, given the absence of recorded archaeological monuments and finds from the immediate vicinity of the site, that the development proceed as proposed without any further archaeological restriction.¹

¹ All recommendations made subject to discussion with, and the agreement of, the relative statutory authorities.

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