

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
PROPOSED RECYCLING PLANT AT
BALLYBEG, LITTLETON, THURLES,
CO. TIPPERARY.**

Archaeologist:

Mary Henry

*For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.*

ARCHAEOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Acorn Recycling, who propose to build a recycling plant at Bally Beg, Littleton, Co. Tipperary, have commissioned an Archaeological Impact Assessment. This report describes the findings from the Archaeological Impact Assessment undertaken in July/August 2006.

1.2 Receiving Environment

The proposed recycling plant will be located in the townland of Bally Beg, which is located in the parish of Twomileborris and within the barony of Eliogarty. This townland is in a rural setting and comprises an area covering 1,691 acres.

This proposed recycling plant site fronts a minor road leading from Killenaule to the National Primary Route (N8) at Littleton and is located within a rural, flat landscape of inferior agricultural land. The soil in this area comprises basin peat, reflected in the fact much of the surrounding countryside is given over to peat harvesting. A Bord na Mona peat plant is located *circa* 2km to the southeast.

Where field boundaries are present, they consist hedgerows of natural vegetation as well as a series of machine cut drains, which originally were created to drain the land but have more recently been utilised as land divisions.

1.3 Method

The field-walking survey entailed a walkover of the proposed development site for known and potential archaeological sites, features and surface anomalies. This was to gain an overall understanding of the terrain, archaeological environment, land-use and topographical patterns.

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

The desk study entailed an examination of documentary, cartographic and archival sources. Sources examined were as follows:

- Record of Monuments and Places of North Tipperary
- Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), North Tipperary
- Archaeological Inventory of Co. Tipperary, Vol. I – North Tipperary
- Ordnance Survey series of published maps
- Soil Maps (*An Foras Talúntais*)
- Geology of Tipperary (Geological Survey of Ireland)
- Documentary Sources. Primary and Secondary Sources
- Local and National Archaeological Journals

1.4 Local History and Archaeological Heritage

This development extends over part of the townland of Bally Beg, which is situated in the parish of Twomileborris and within the barony of Eliogarty. Twomileborris derives its name from the Irish *Burghéis* or *Da Mhíle*. It is suggested in the Ordnance Survey Letters its name is not of Irish origin but rather of Anglo-Norman, deriving from the word burgage¹. Antiquities noted in the Ordnance Survey Letters included the parish church with an attached graveyard. Located in Twomileborris townland, it survives in a ruinous state. Also in the same townland, close to the ruined church, is a square castle². Located two miles to the east of the castle in the townland of Leigh, is another ruined church. A pair of ruined castles survived in Ballydavid and Coolcrew townlands.

There are references in the Ordnance Survey Letters to a ruined square castle in Bally Beg townland. Measuring 35 feet (E/W) x 31 feet and walls of 6 feet thick, it was four stories high with the third floor resting on a stone arch, whilst the others were of wood. Bally Beg or in Irish *Baile Beag*, which translates as Little town, is a large townland in the southwest corner of the parish³. Comprising more than one third bog

¹ Rev. M. O'Flanagan (ed.), Letters Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of Co. Tipperary. Vol. 1. 1930.

² *Ibid.*

³ J. O'Donovan, Ordnance Survey Namebooks. 1840.

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

with the remainder ornamental woodland and arable land, it contained one church (C of D) and graveyard, a Danish fort and an old castle in ruins⁴. The townland is mentioned in the mid 1650s Down Survey where it spelt Ballibeg.

An examination of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps (Surveyed 1843) did not reveal anything of exceptional note. The enclosure (TN048-030) to the northwest of the PDS is marked on this edition, whilst the front site of the site, along the public road, was dominated by a dense row of trees with a further row of trees extended along the boundary separating the two fields within the study area (*Pl.1*).



Pl. 1 View of 1st Ed OS Map (1843).

Equally an examination of the 2nd Edition (1905) revealed little variation from the 1st Edition. An examination of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for North Tipperary (Sheet 48) confirmed the absence of any recorded monuments in or within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site (*Fig. 2*). The nearest monuments to the site, are located *circa* 500m to its north; one to its northeast; and one to the northwest, 625m and 750m respectively. They are as follows:

⁴ J. O'Donovan, Ordnance Survey Namebooks. 1840.

RMP No.	Townland	Parish	N.G.R.	Classification
TN048-030	Bally Beg	Twomileborris	21843/15276	Enclosure Possible

Description:

This site is situated on a west-facing slope of a low N/S ridge in undulating countryside. It is marked on the 1st Edition OS map as a circular enclosure. All that now survives is its eastern half, which comprises a raised area (dia. 39m N/S x 14m E/W) enclosed by an earth and stone bank. The bank measures 2m in width and its height ranges from 650mm to 1.5m, whilst its outer fosse has a width of up to 4.2m and 1.2m deep. This site was altered in the nineteenth century as part of a drainage scheme (Archaeological Inventory of Co. Tipperary, Vol. I – North Tipperary, 2002).

RMP No.	Townland	Parish	N.G.R.	Classification
TN048-054	Bally Beg	Twomileborris	21955/15288	Archaeological Complex

Description

This site is situated in flat bog. A number of toghers, worked wood and post row (s) were found in the course of field walking. They extend over an area measuring 165m (N/S) x 202m (E/W). These toghers were vulnerable to peat milling in the area (Archaeological Inventory of Co. Tipperary, Vol. I – North Tipperary, 2002)

RMP No.	Townland	Parish	N.G.R.	Classification
TN048-055	Bally Beg	Twomileborris	21986/15238	Post Row

Description:

This site is situated in flat bog and in common with TN048-054 was vulnerable to peat milling.

1.5 Findings of the Archaeological Walk-over Survey

In addition to undertaking a desktop study of the known archaeological sites and the history of the area, cartographic, historical and archival sources were consulted. The (SMR) and (RMP) for North Tipperary and other sources were consulted. On

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

completion of the desktop study an archaeologist and heritage conservationist carried out a walkover survey on the week of 28th July 2006. Weather conditions and visibility were reasonably good during the field survey.



Pl. 2 Looking North Along Existing Trackway.

The PDS is located on the southwest side of a minor road and is presently approached via an existing trackway (*P1.2*) extending almost 200m to the northeast. It is proposed it will be improved and widened to accommodate access into the site, which will be located in a field to the south (*P1.3*). This field measures 230m (N/S) x 90m-160m in width (E/W). All boundaries surrounding the field, as well as the eastern side of the existing trackway, comprise man made drains (*P1s.4&5*). These drains have helped to alleviate flooding and improve the fields.

Through examining the stratigraphy visible in the drain sections, it is noticeable the soil profile comprises a top layer of very slightly loamy, slightly silty peat. Underlying the top layer is a deposit of black peat, which itself overlies greyish brown podzols. The lowest deposit visible is a layer of natural gravels and small stones. A number of furrows are visible in the trackway drain section. Equally distanced, they

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

are all uniform with straight sides and relatively level base. These are consistent with modern ploughing patterns and do not appear to be more than thirty fifty years old.

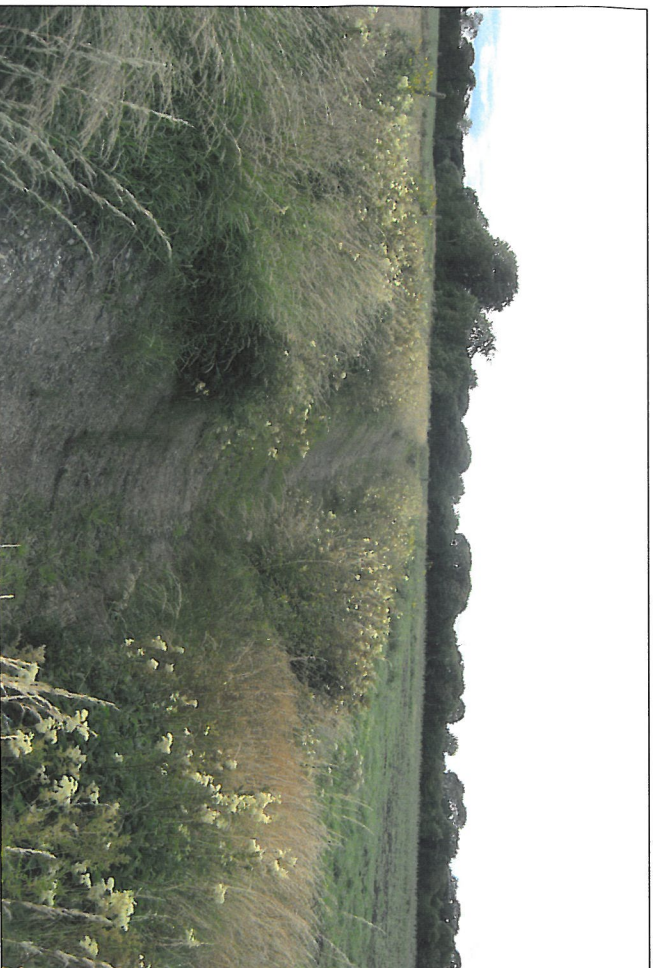


Pl. 3 Looking Southwest Across the Field (Site of Proposed Plant)

For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.



Pl.4 Looking at Man-made Drain Along South Boundary of Site



Pl.5 Looking at Man-made Drain Along West Boundary of Site

Consisting a large, flat, level, featureless expanse, the field where the plant will be located is presently grass covered with extensive rushes, which had been cut at the time of the walkover survey (Pl.6). Fields to its north and east are used for willow cultivation (Pl.7). The only feature of note within the field is a small area clearance material piled near the southern boundary, probably the result of up-cast associated with the earlier drainage works (Pl.8).



Pl. 6 Internal View of the Field Where the Plant will be Sited.



Pl.7 Looking at One of the Fields Under Willow Cultivation.

*For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.*



Pl. 8 View of Dumped Material.

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

1.6 Discussion.

Surprisingly there is very little, if any, evidence of turbary within the immediate vicinity of this proposed scheme, even though the *Bord na Mona* power station is relatively near. Associated peat milling appears to be confined to the opposite side of the road. There is little evidence of much archaeological activity within this area, as stated above, although it is possible the deposition of bog may well be sheltering sites and features pertaining to a far earlier period. If any do exist within the vicinity it is considered they may well be in the form of small settlements possibly with associated wooden trackways. Although, when assessing the topography of this particular environment, it is highly likely any substantial settlement evidence would be located on the higher ground to the south, with this flatter land used for pasture and animal husbandry.

1.7 Impact Assessment.

It is considered this proposed development would have no impact on known/recorded archaeological monuments. The closest archaeological monuments to the development site are sufficient distance away not to be impacted upon in any way.

1.8 Mitigation Measures

Given the terrain of the site, peat and low-lying bog, and that archaeological sites have been previously uncovered in similar topographical conditions, the presence of unrecorded archaeological monuments surviving in the sub-surface peat cannot be discounted. Accordingly should planning permission be granted for this proposed development to proceed, it will be necessary to make a condition for the archaeological monitoring of ground works.


Mary Henry

Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd.

28th August 2006.

For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.

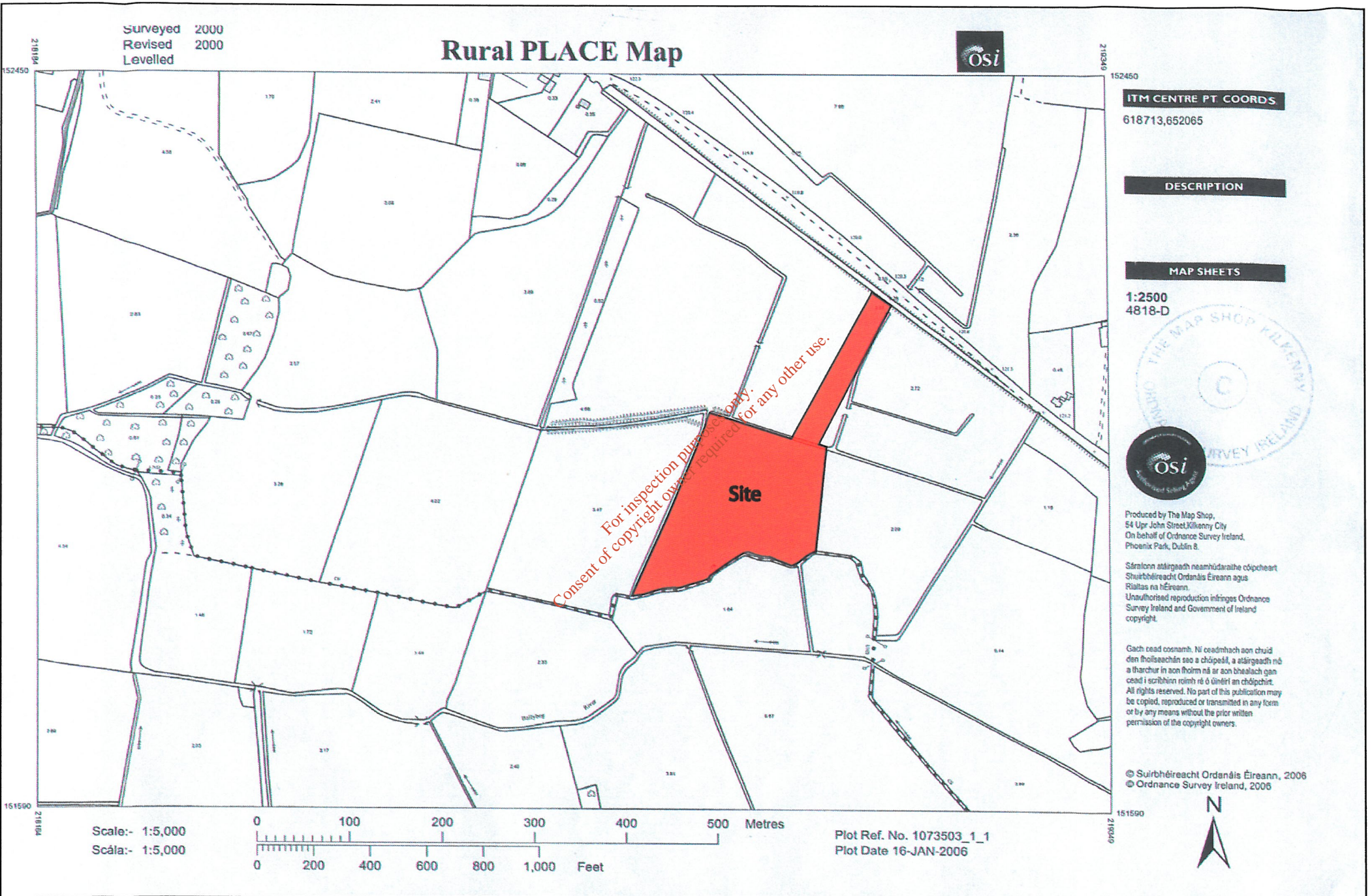


Fig.1: Site Location

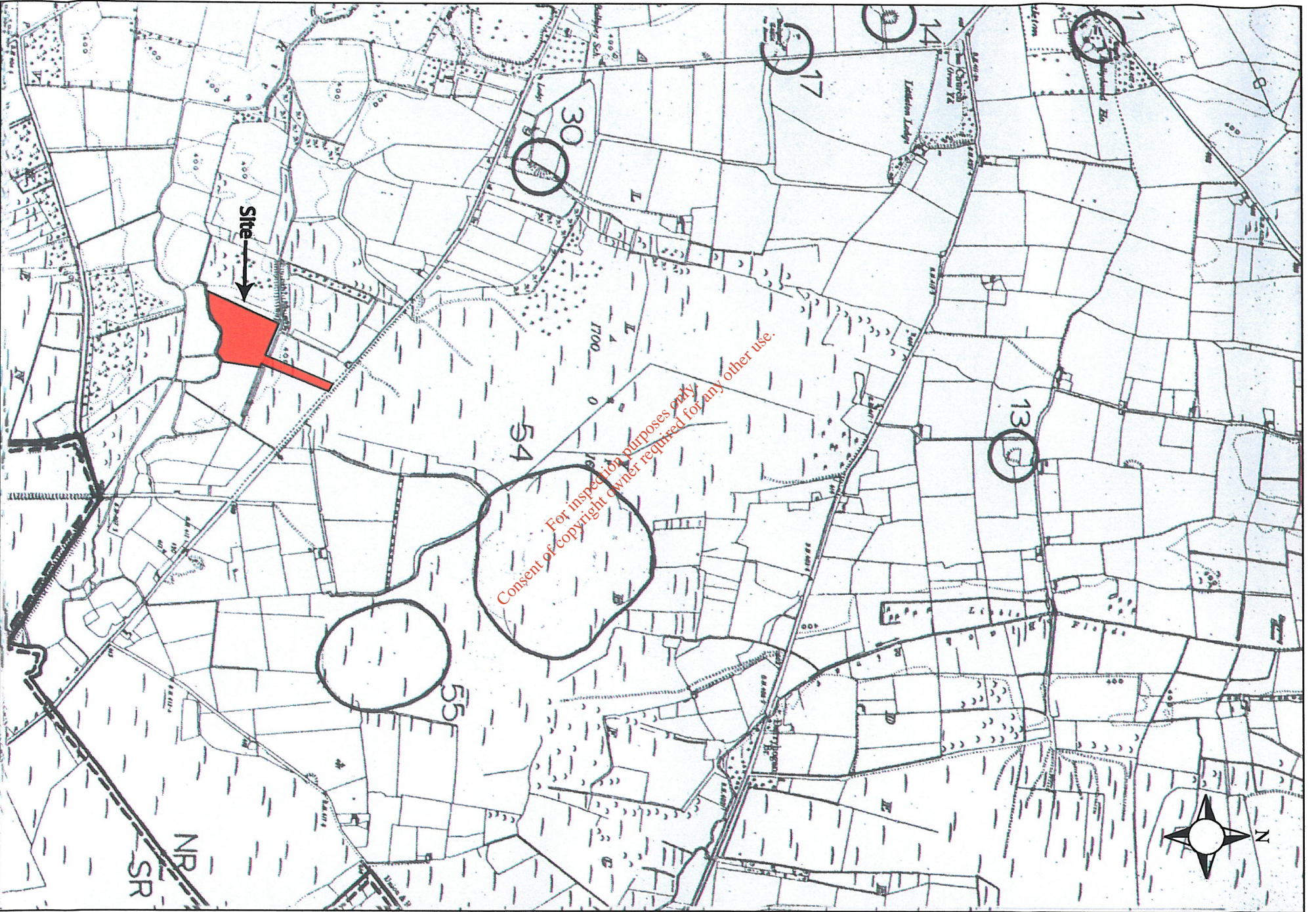


Fig. 2: RMP Map, Sheet 48, Showing Site Location

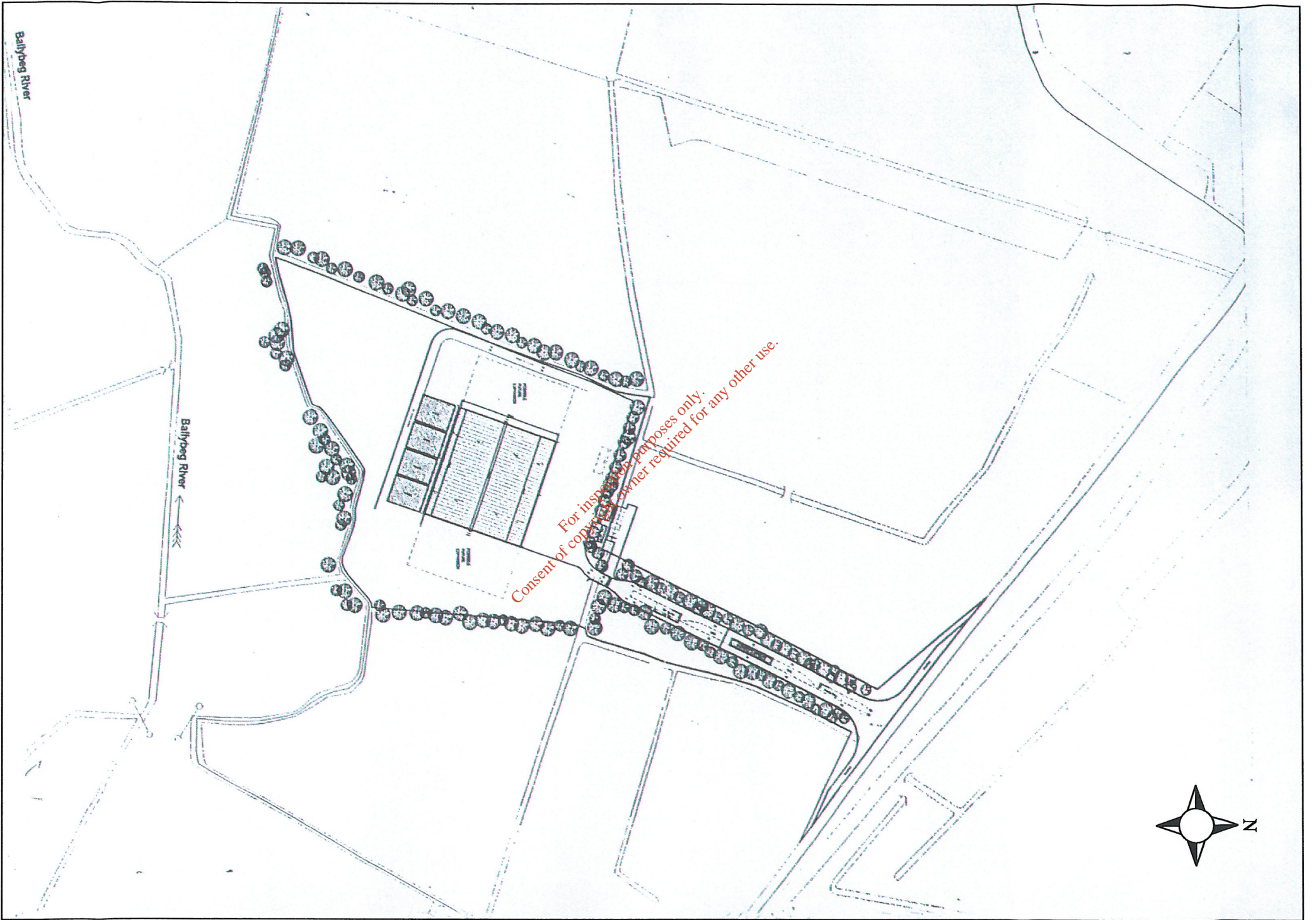


Fig. 3: Site Layout, Scale 1:2500

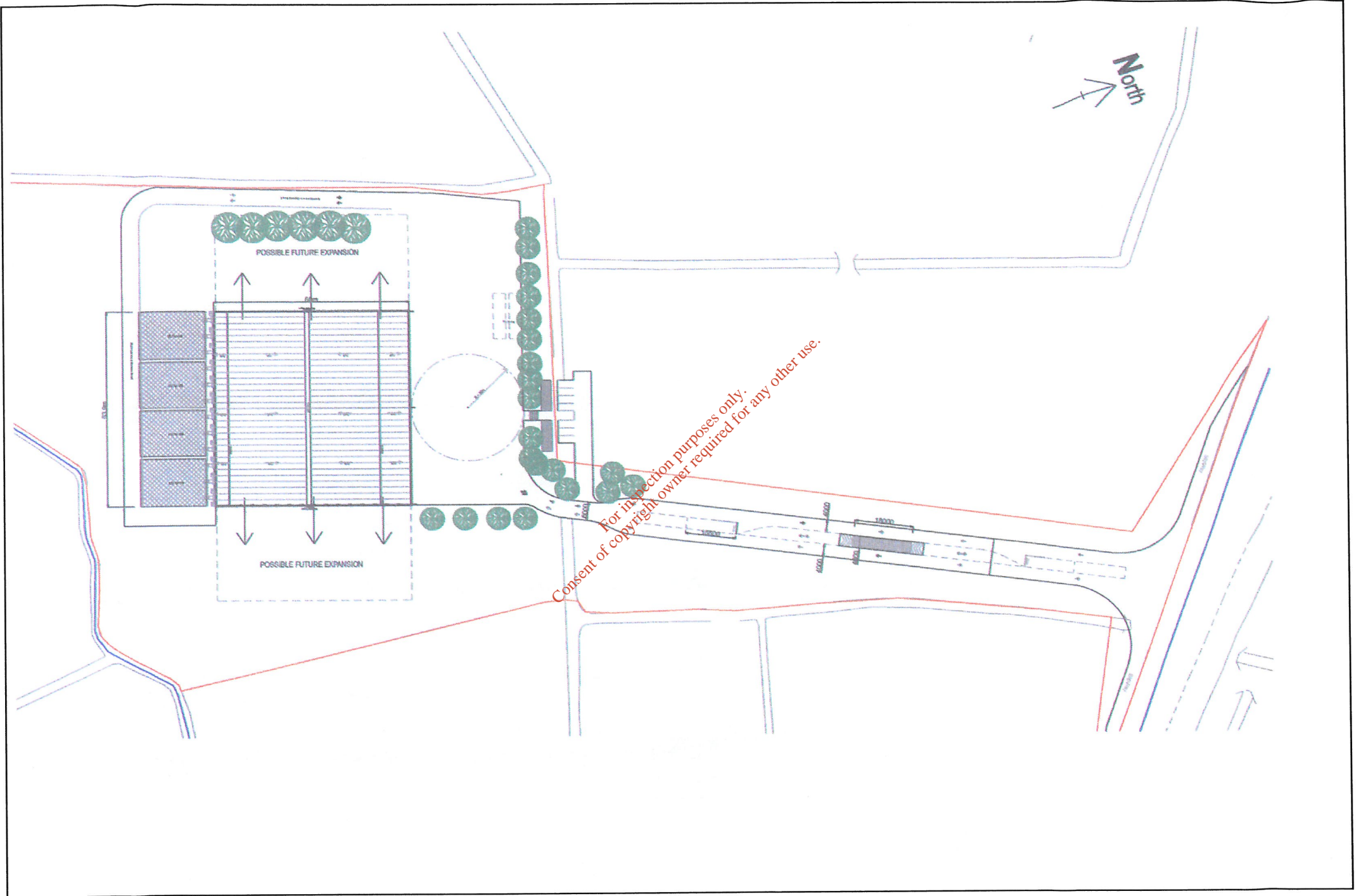


Fig. 4: Development Layout, Scale 1:500

For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.