

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
A PROPOSED SITE AT BALLYNAGUN WEST,
CO. CLARE.**

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AUTHOR: ANNETTE QUINN

PLANNING STATUS: PRE-PLANNING

CLIENT: CLEAN (IRELAND) REFUSE AND
RECYCLING LTD.,
C/O BORD NA MONA ENVIRONMENTAL
LTD.,
MAIN STREET,
NEWBRIDGE,
CO. KILDARE



TOBAR
archaeological services

15 Willowfields, Ladysbridge, Castlemartyr, Cork
Tel/Fax 021-4667074
Mob: 087-4188992 / 087-4188994

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological impact assessment of a proposed development to allow for an extension of an existing refuse and recycling unit at Ballynagun West, Co. Clare. The report amalgamates desk-based research and the results of a site inspection to identify areas of archaeological significance or potential likely to be impacted by the proposed development. A number of mitigating measures will also be recommended in order to minimise any such impact.

2. METHODOLOGY

A desk-based study of the proposed development was undertaken in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area and to identify the impacts of the proposed development on this landscape.

Cartographic Sources

A primary cartographic source and base-line data for the assessment was the consultation of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for County Clare. All known recorded archaeological monuments are indicated on 6 inch Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and are listed in this record. The 1st (1841) edition OS maps for the area were also consulted.

Documentary Sources

A number of local journals such as *The Other Clare* were consulted as part of the desk-based research.

Field inspection

The area of the proposed development and existing plant were inspected to assess the likely impact, if any, on the recorded monuments in this area and also to determine if previously unrecorded archaeological monuments existed on or near to the site. A photographic and descriptive record was made of the proposed development site.

3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposed development area consists of an extension to an existing refuse and recycling unit owned by Clean (Ireland) Refuse and Recycling Ltd. There are a number of existing buildings on the site, used primarily to collect waste from domestic dwellings using a two-bin system. This system allows general domestic waste to be collected one week and dry recyclable material (such as plastics, papers, glass etc.) to be collected during the alternative weeks. The proposed development is to allow for an extension of the two-bin system, and to provide adequate storage for segregated waste prior to disposal off site. The three areas consists of (1) Wet waste processing area, (2) Dry recyclables processing area and (3) baling of material (Fig. 2).

4. RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed development area is located in the townland of Ballynagun West, c. 1-2km to the south-west of the village of Creegh, near Kilrush, Co. Clare. The topography of this area consists of relatively flat terrain and is mainly comprised pasture land. The site itself presently consists of an existing refuse and recycling depot containing a number of buildings including site offices and buildings associated with the waste disposal and recycling unit. Topsoil and subsoil have previously been removed from the site and the present ground surface consists of hardcore/gravel (Plates 1, 2, 5 and 6). The ground level at the south-east side of the site in the area of a proposed skip storage building has also been reduced by 1m-2m (Plate 3). The site is bound to the south, east (Plate 4) and west by green fields and to the north by a public roadway orientated in an east-west direction. An existing car park is also incorporated into the development area to the north of the public roadway. A private dwelling is located just outside the development site to the north-west (Plate 9).

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE WITHIN THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

► *Recorded Monuments within Proposed Development Area*

No recorded archaeological monuments are located on the proposed development site as defined by the Record of Monuments and Places for County Clare (RMP) (Fig. 1).

► *Previously Unrecorded Monuments within Proposed Development Area*

No unrecorded archaeological monuments were detected during the site inspection.

► *Recorded Monuments in Vicinity of Proposed Development Area*

The nearest recorded monument (RMPCLO47-050) is located to the west of the proposed site in the townland of Ballynagun West (Fig. 1, Plates 10 and 11). The monument consists of a substantial earthen enclosure which is situated immediately south of the existing public roadway. The enclosure is a circular area defined by a large bank and external fosse.

The term enclosure is often used to describe monuments which cannot be classified into a particular site type, such as a ringfort, but whose shape, size and morphology suggests that it is archaeological in nature. Enclosures may represent destroyed or partially destroyed ringforts and are generally comprised of circular or sub-circular areas enclosed by an earthen bank or a wall or drystone construction. Ringforts are the most numerous archaeological monuments in the Irish landscape. They consist of a circular or roughly circular area enclosed by an earthen bank formed of material thrown up from the digging of a concentric ditch on its outside. Ringforts are usually enclosed by a single bank (univallate); bivallate or trivallate ringforts i.e. those enclosed by double or triple rings of banks are less common. The number of banks and ditches enclosing these monuments are considered to reflect the status of the site, rather than the strengthening of its defences. Archaeological excavation has shown that the majority of ringforts functioned as enclosed farmsteads, built during the early medieval period (5th – 9th Century AD). Excavation within the interior of the monuments has traced the remains of circular and rectangular dwelling houses as well as smaller huts probably used to stall animals. The enclosing earthworks would also have protected domestic livestock from natural predators such as wolves and foxes.

At present the enclosure is not visible from the proposed development area. The western boundary of the development site consists of a large earthen berm which minimises any potential visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding archaeological landscape (Plate 7).

► *Place Name Evidence*

According to Joyce (1870, 9) the place name Cree or Creegh is derived from the Irish 'Cricioch' which means end or boundary. Creegh East townland forms the boundary of three baronies. Ballynagun comes from two Irish words, *Baile na gCon*. It translates as the meeting place of the deer hounds.

6. IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON THE CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

Visual Impact

No recorded archaeological monuments are located on the proposed development site at Ballynagun West. One recorded monument (RMP CL047-050 enclosure), however, is located to the west of the development area. At present the monument is screened from the development site by a high earthen berm located on the western side of the existing Waste and Recycling Unit (Plate 7). The enclosure itself is located on the side of the existing public roadway and is heavily covered on trees both within and around the monument. Although this enclosure is of a substantial size such monuments by their very nature may be described as low-visibility monuments. The enclosure is not visible from the development site, nor is the development site visible from the enclosure. These factors together with the distance of the monument from the proposed site will significantly minimise the visual impact of the development on the ringfort.

Archaeological Impact

The nearest recorded monument is located in excess of 100m to the west of the proposed development site. The groundworks associated with the development will not therefore have any direct or indirect impact on the monument. Topsoil and subsoil have been removed from the site as part of the original development. The ground level at the rear of the site, in the location of a proposed bonded skip storage building, has been reduced to boulder clay. Consequently it is unlikely that ground disturbance associated with the proposed development will have any archaeological impact.

7. MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The proposed development is not located within the constraint zones for any recorded archaeological monuments. No unrecorded archaeological monuments were detected during the site inspection. There will be no visual impact on the surrounding archaeological landscape.

- ▶ It is recommended that no further archaeological input is required for this development.

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8. REFERENCES

- *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*, 1999, Department of the Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.
- Frost, J. 1978, *The History and Topography of The County of Clare*, Mercier Press, Dublin – Cork.
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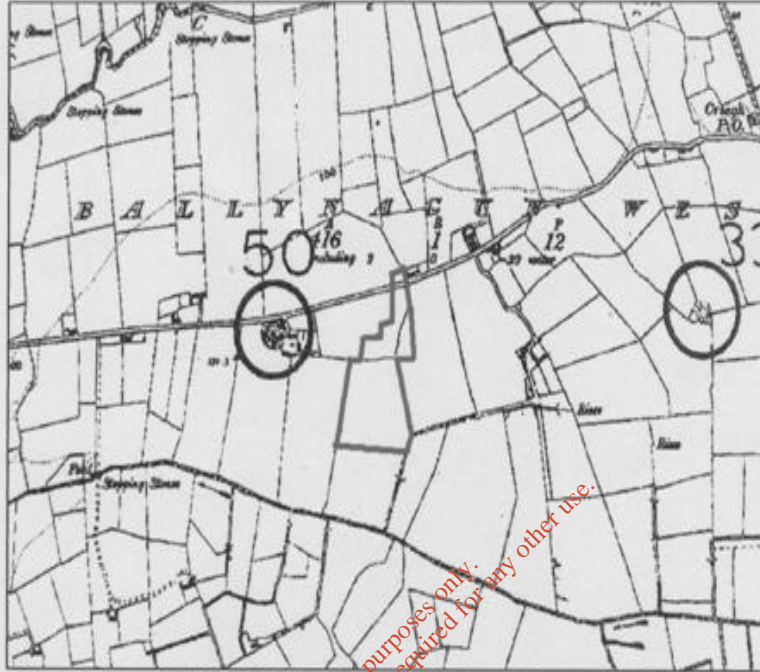


Figure 1: Extract from RMP CL047 showing enclosure 050 to west of proposed development area outlined in red.

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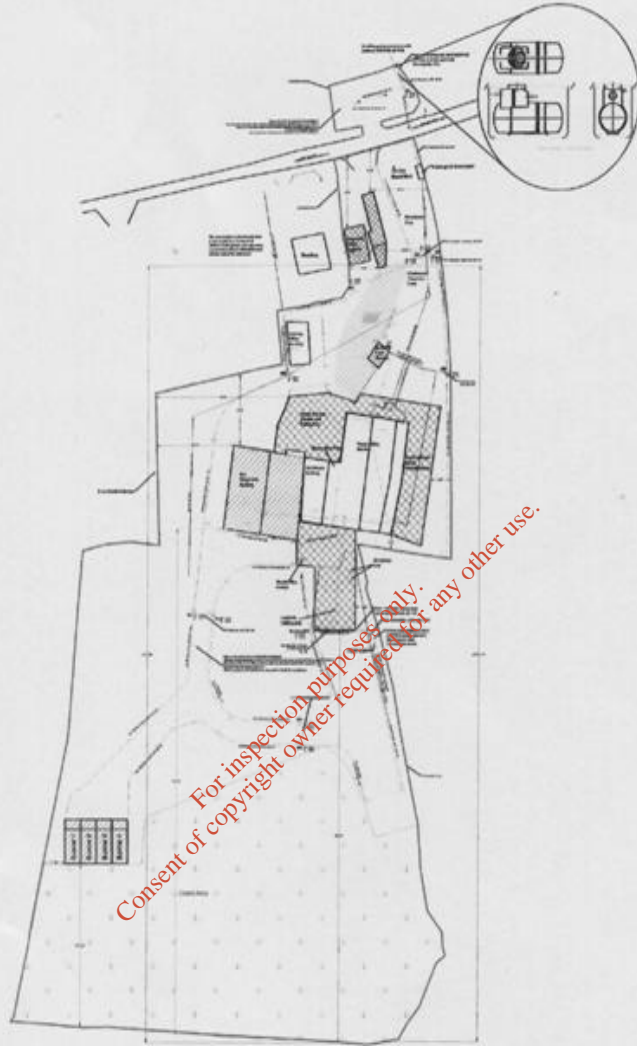


Figure 2: Ground plan showing existing and proposed buildings.

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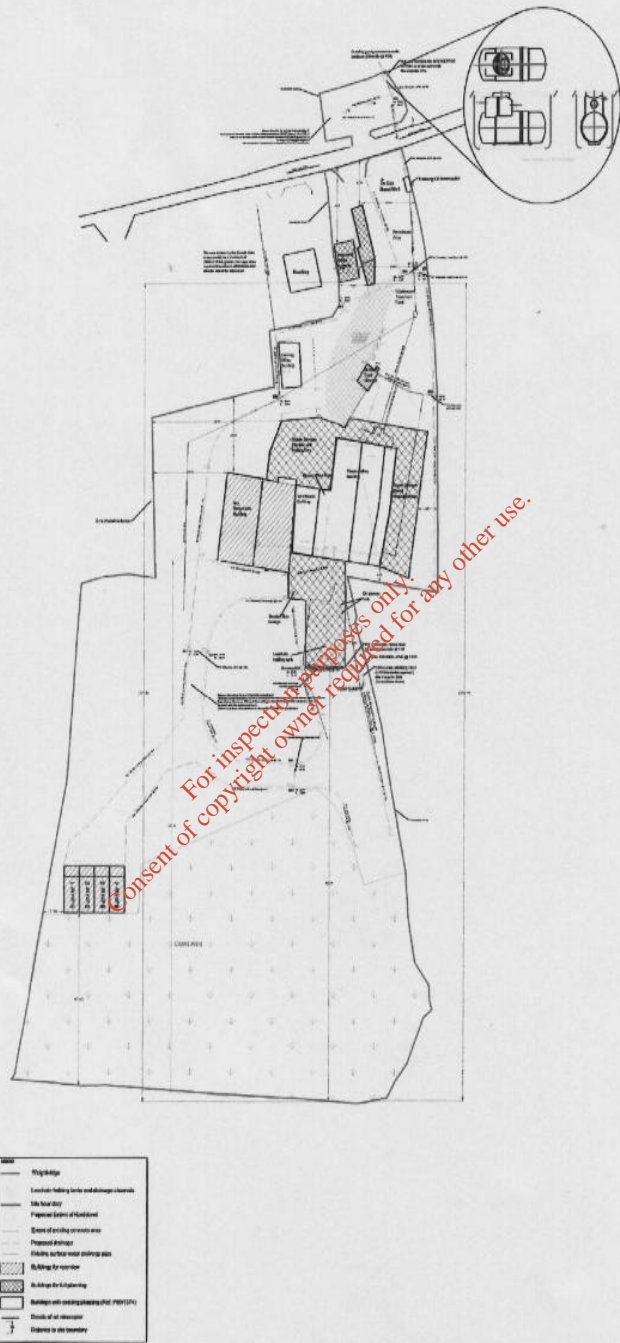


Figure 2: Ground plan showing existing and proposed buildings.



Plate 1: Area of proposed office and weighbridge looking SW, existing dwelling in background.



Plate 2: Area of proposed Waste Storage Unit to N of existing Dry Recycling Unit.



Plate 3: Area of proposed Skip Storage Unit to S of existing Waste Baling Building looking SSE.
Ground level reduced along this area (red arrow).



Plate 4: Greenfield to east of development area, looking E.



Plate 5: Storage glass bunkers at S end of site, looking S.



Plate 6: Area to S of existing and proposed buildings looking SW.



Plate 7: Existing berm at W side of site, looking W.

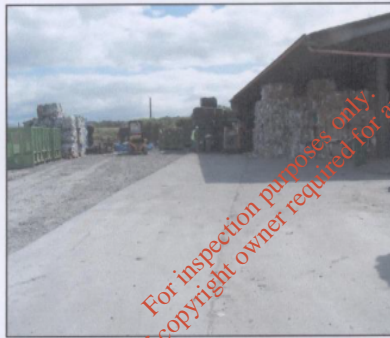


Plate 8: Area of proposed Baled Waste Storage Building on E side of site, looking S.



Plate 9: Existing entrance to development site looking N.

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Plate 10: Recorded archaeological monument (Enclosure RMPCL047-050) to W of development area, looking E.



Plate 11: Recorded archaeological monument (Enclosure RMPCL047-050) to W of development area, looking W. High bank visible (red arrow).