

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING REPORT**  
**FOR A PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**  
**AT CAMROSS & CARROWNANTY, CO. SLIGO**  
**ON BEHALF OF**  
**SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL**



**Excavation Licence Number: 23E1030**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

NMI	NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND
NMS	NATIONAL MONUMENTS SERVICE
DHLGH	DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE
VIA	VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
AIA	ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
SMR	SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD
RMP	RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES
RPS	RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES
NIAH	NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
PDA	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA
ZAN	ZONE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTIFICATION

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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This report describes the results of archaeological testing carried out by Fadó Archaeology at Camross & Carrownanty, Ballymote, Co. Sligo on behalf of Sligo County Council. The following archaeological testing report documents the project, the receiving environment, the results of the testing and recommendations for archaeological mitigation. The proposed development entails the construction of a new 30-unit social housing development, access road, footpaths and all associated site development works at Camross and Carrownanty, Co. Sligo. The area of the site measures approximately 2.50 hectares or 6.18 acres. The proposed phase 1 site area is 1.0 hectares. The proposed development is not in proximity to any recorded monument.

For an AIA report a site inspection took place on the 18th of August 2023. No features of an archaeological nature were noted during the site inspection. The proposed development is not in proximity to, or within, the Zone of Archaeological Notification for a recorded monument. Due to the scale of the proposed development area (Plot 1 of this current phase) being over 1 hectare in the overall size, it was recommended that the proposed development should be subject to a programme of pre-development archaeological test trenching. It was also recommended that should conditions be deemed suitable a geophysical survey should

be undertaken across the entire proposed development area.

Guided by the geophysical survey, which was conducted by Dr James Bonsall, testing took place over the course of two days on the 6th and 7th of December 2023. During the test trenching no archaeological objects, features or deposits were encountered. Due to the lack of archaeological material within the test trenches it is recommended that the development proceed without any further need for archaeological mitigation.

It is recommended that the future proposed development of Plot 2 for Phase 2 should be subject to a programme of pre-development archaeological test trenching. Archaeological testing should be conducted by a suitably qualified archaeologist, under license to the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the with provision being made for full recording and excavation of any archaeological features or deposits which may be exposed. The site should also be subject to geophysical survey, to be conducted in advance of, and to inform the programme of testing.

**All recommendations in this report are subject to approval by the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Museum of Ireland.**

# 1 SCOPE OF WORKS

## 1.1 Introduction

Fadó Archaeology were commissioned to carry out an archaeological testing at Camross and Carrownanty, Co. Sligo on behalf of Sligo County Council. The following testing report documents the project, the existing environment at the site and the results of the programme of archaeological test trenching.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Project

The proposed development entails the construction of a new 30-unit social housing development, access road, footpaths and all associated site development works at Camross and Carrownanty, Co. Sligo. The area of the site measures approximately 2.50ha or 6.18 acres (overall site highlighted yellow below). The proposed phase 1 site area is 1.0 Ha (highlighted red).



Figure 1: Plan of the site outline.

### 1.3 Archaeological Testing

Archaeological testing has been described as "that form of archaeological excavation where the purpose is to establish the nature and extent of archaeological deposits and features present in a location which it is proposed to develop. ... and allow an assessment to be made of the archaeological impact of the proposed development" (DAHGI, 1999).

### 1.4 Legal Background

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, The Heritage Act 1995, The Architectural Heritage and Historic Properties Act 1999 and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000 (as amended), are the main legal mechanisms by which the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage resource is protected today in Ireland.

### 1.5 Methodology

The assessment of the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage was based on a desktop study of published and unpublished documentary and cartographic sources, as well as a comprehensive site inspection of the proposed development site.

### 1.6 Desk Study

This desktop study comprised a paper study of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources. These sources are described below:

#### **National Monuments**

Under the National Monuments Acts (1930 to 2014) sites in '*The Ownership Or Guardianship Of The Minister Or A Local Authority Or National Monuments Which Are Subject To A Preservation Order*' are offered the highest level of protection. For any construction or excavation works to take place either on or in the vicinity of these sites permission must first be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH) in the form of a Ministerial Consent.

#### **Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023**

The Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 was consulted. It contained the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Sligo.

#### **Record of Monuments and Places**

The RMP of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, was established under the 1994 Amendment to the National Monuments Acts (1930-14). It is based on the



pre-existing Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and information from completed county archaeological inventories. As such, it records known upstanding archaeological monuments, their original location (in cases of destroyed monuments) and the position of possible sites identified as cropmarks on vertical aerial photographs. The RMP information is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey, which combines cartographic sources, published and publicly available documentary sources, including periodicals, the records of the NMI, Geological Survey of Ireland 1:30,000 vertical aerial photographs and inspections of sites in the field. The information is read in conjunction with constraint maps, published at reduced six-inch scale, on which recorded sites are clearly marked. The RMP is constantly updated and is the first stage in the preparation of a national census of archaeological sites, with inventories also published at an interim stage. The RMP sheet relevant to the project is sheet **033** of the O.S six-inch series for Sligo (which is based on the OS revision of 1913-14).

#### **Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland**

The discovery of artefacts can be an important indicator of past levels of activity in an area and therefore a useful guide to the archaeological potential of a site. The Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) archive identify recorded stray finds that have been donated to the state in accordance with National Monuments legislation between 1928 and 2014. In most cases, files include details on the location of and nature of the find, or where applicable, reports of excavations undertaken by NMI archaeologists in the early twentieth century.

#### **Aerial Photographs**

Aerial photographs are an invaluable resource in archaeology for the recognition of new sites and contributing to the understanding of known sites. Features can be recognised from the air as earthworks in relief or as vegetation marks where a buried feature such as a wall or ditch affects the growth of the surrounding flora. The Geological Survey of Ireland Aerial Photograph Collection, based in Dublin, holds a comprehensive archive of high-level vertical photographs available for consultation by the public and researchers but may not be copied.

#### **Sligo County Library**

The Local Studies section of Sligo County Library is housed in Stephen Street, Sligo. Several local histories and general historical/archaeological texts were consulted (see bibliography for details).

#### **Irish Excavations Database**

'Excavations' is an annual bulletin, now funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, which contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out in Ireland – North and South. The bulletins can now be accessed on the Internet at [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie). Compiled from the published excavation bulletins, the database contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out from 1970 to 2023. Both the

bulletins and database were consulted to establish whether excavations have been previously carried out in the vicinity of the proposed development.

#### **The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage**

The NIAH is a section within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The work of the NIAH involves identifying and recording the architectural heritage of Ireland, from 1700 to the present day, in a systematic and consistent manner.

#### **Cartographic Sources**

Cartographic sources consulted include the first edition map of the Ordnance Survey (O.S) six-inch series published in 1838 and the twenty-five-inch c. 1900 O.S map were also consulted. All maps were sourced online at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie).

## 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

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### 2.1 Description of the Site

The development site is in Camross and Carrownanty townlands, in south County Sligo. The landscape is rolling lowlands and is gently undulating. The site is flat to the east and with a slight rise from east to west. The subject site is west of the centre of Ballymote town. There is a railway line to the east, agricultural fields to the north and west, while to the southwest and south there are residential properties centred on Mountain View housing estate.

### 2.2 Site Layout/Locational details

The proposed development site is a short distance northwest from Ballymote town in south County Sligo. It is approximately 24km south of Sligo town centre and accessed from the R293. The sub-rectangular shaped development area is located directly north of Mountain View housing estate through which access is provided via a farm gate. From the higher ground to the west there are clear views towards the town and the surrounding countryside. The site is covered in low grass and is presently in use as grazing land. The overall size of the proposed development area is 2.50ha or 6.18 acres. The proposed phase 1 site area is 1.0 ha.

<b>Study area</b>	<b>OS Sheet number</b>	<b>Central ITM</b>	<b>Townland</b>
Ballymote Co. Sligo	033	565689/816142	Camross & Carrownanty

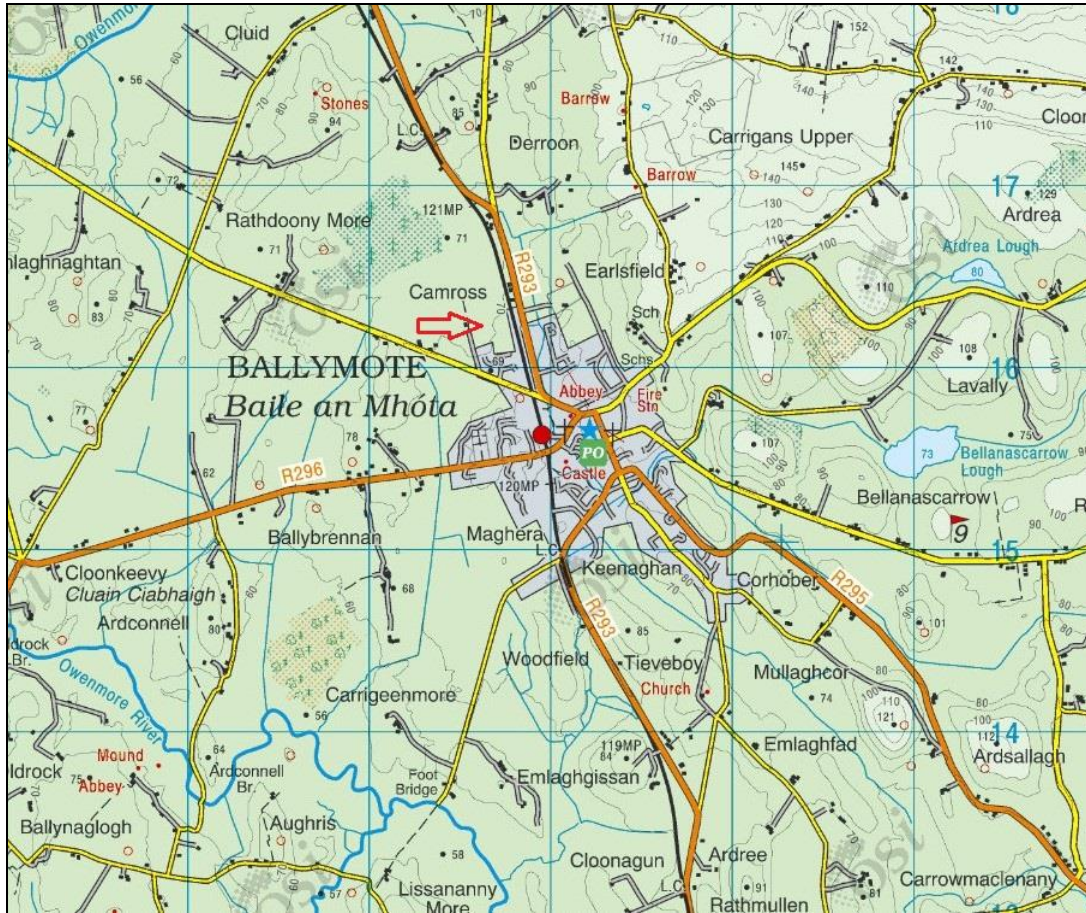


Figure 2: OSI Discovery Series Map of the proposed development area (source: [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie))

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 Solid Geology and Soil Type

The broad physiographic division of the region is drumlin of drier mineral and organic soils. The principal soil in the area is made up of 60% grey brown podzolics with associated soils 20% gleys, 20% interdrumlin peat and peaty gleys. The substrate type in the vicinity of the subject site is mostly limestone glacial till.

### 3.2 Landscape

The proposed development site is in Camross and Carrownanty townlands, north of the core of Ballymote, the main town in this area of south County Sligo. The landscape character in this part of Sligo is characterised of drumlin. The site is characterised by flat to undulating land with broad views towards Kesh Corann Mountain which rises to the southeast of the site. There are no major rivers or watercourses within the vicinity of the proposed development area.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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Research was undertaken in two phases. It comprised of a paper study of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources and a site walkover. The following is based on a document search and paper study.

### 4.1 Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age):

The first people who came to Ireland – mainly to coastal areas as the interior was heavily forested – arrived during the Middle Stone Age, eleven thousand years ago. They were nomadic hunter gatherers. They made weapons and tools from stone such as flint or chert. Some artefacts are distinctive of this period, such as microliths from the early part of the Mesolithic to the larger Bann Flakes in the later Mesolithic. The Mesolithic ranged from c.7000-4000BC. Artefacts of hunter/gatherers are sometimes found in middens, rubbish pits around hearths where people would have rested and cooked over large open fires. Once cliffs erode, midden remains become exposed as blackened areas containing charred stones, bones, and shells. Antiquarians of the 19th and early 20th centuries believed a stone flake found in Co. Sligo was evidence of Palaeolithic settlement in the county. However, this item is now believed to be natural in origin and the earliest artefacts are in fact worked chert from the excavations at Lough Gara, which date to the Mesolithic. Some of the dates received from the archaeological excavations at Carrowmore have led to speculation over a transitional Mesolithic/Neolithic 'culture' involving semi-permanent dwellings and seasonal harvesting of wild food.

### 4.2 Neolithic (New Stone Age):

This period saw the first farming communities in Ireland. Weapons and tools were made from stone such as flint or chert. The Neolithic ranged from c.4000-2400BC. Sligo is well represented by megalithic monuments of the Neolithic, having examples of all four types, which accounts for 15% of the national total. Carrowmore and Carrowkeel are two of the most important passage tomb cemeteries in Ireland with the former yielding the earliest C14 dates. These Sligo cemeteries account for 39% of the national total. There are also many court tombs in Sligo including a typical example of a full court tomb at Creevykeel near Cliffoney and a central court tomb at Deerpark. There are 38 wedge tombs in County Sligo including examples at Cabragh on the southern slopes of the Ox Mountains and at Culdaly near Aclare in the south of the county. Portal tombs in the county include the Labby rock at Carrickglass, which is topped by a 70-tonne capstone and a collapsed example at Clogher. Excavations at Waste Gardens in Sligo town uncovered Neolithic chert.

Recent archaeological work carried out at Caltragh uncovered a 'prehistoric' field system and Neolithic settlement site. There have also been Neolithic field systems discovered on Benbulbin.

### 4.3 Bronze Age:

The period when metal working was first introduced to Ireland. People began to use bronze to make weapons and tools. Gold working also appeared during this time, with objects such as gold torcs being produced. The Bronze Age ranged from c.2400-500BC. Megalithic tomb building continued into the Bronze Age when metal began to be worked for tools alongside the stone tools. The design of the tombs changed to more being of the wedge tomb type and cist burials. Archaeological remains from this period include stone alignments, stone circles and fulachta fiadh (early cooking sites). Beaker pottery and funerary remains were found in the Moyturra wedge tomb at the end of the 19th Century. There have also been over 100 'barrow' or mound burials found in Sligo. The most common field monuments of the Bronze Age however are fulacht fiadh. These are mounds of burnt stone usually associated with troughs (often wood lined) and ancillary pits or 'pot boilers'. While the usual explanation of their use involves the cooking of meat this is by no means conclusive. Other theories have included ritual bathing, felt making and brewing. It may be more helpful to view these monuments in terms of a then current technology for the heating of water rather than focussing on the search for an exclusive employment of that water. Regional and cultural differences may have occurred. These could certainly be reflected in the variety of troughs found. Several of these monuments have been excavated in County Sligo at Carrowgobbadaw and Caltragh.

### 4.4 Iron Age:

The Iron Age ranged in date from c.400BC-400AD. It is the period in which iron is first produced and used to make tools and weapons. This is thought to have coincided with the arrival of Celtic speaking peoples and the introduction of the ancestor of Irish. Towards the end of this period, the Roman Empire was at its height in Britain, but it is not thought that the Roman Empire extended into Ireland to any large degree. Remains from this period, which lasted until the Early Christian period began about 325AD (with the arrival of St. Patrick into Ireland, as a slave) include crannógs (Lake dwellings), promontory forts, ringforts and souterrains of which there are numerous examples across the county. The Iron Age was a time of tribal warfare with kingships, each fighting neighbouring kings, vying for control of territories, and taking slaves. Territories were marked by tall stone markers, Ogham stones, using the first written down words using the Ogham alphabet. The Iron Age is the time in which the tales of the Ulster Cycle and sagas took place.

In the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age distinctive settlement sites known as Hillforts arose. These are large defensive enclosures situated on elevated or hilltop locations. There are several examples in Sligo including a 700m x 320m site on Knocknashee near Lavagh. The defensive element of this site is composed of two bank and ditch enclosures incorporating earthen and stone ramparts. The enclosed area covers a total of 53 acres. Promontory forts situated on cliff edges are a monument associated with the Iron Age and an example of these can be found at Knocklane in the north of the county. This is situated on a narrow peninsula defended on its eastern side by a double bank and ditch linked by a causeway and a third bank and ditch further on. There is a cliff edge fort at Carrowhubcock North near Enniscrone which consists of three outer banks and an inner ditch with a maximum diameter of 70m.

Cashels and Rathes are a feature of the Early Historic or Early Christian period in Ireland. These are circular enclosures consisting usually of an earthen bank and ditch in the case of Rathes or stone walling in Cashels. There is a gap in the enclosure for access and egress and there is often a causeway to facilitate this. These sites are often associated with souterrains, stone lined underground passages which probably acted as storage areas and, when the need arose, places of refuge. Examples in the county include Rathmullagh ringfort south of Enniscrone which is a 66m bank and ditch enclosure containing a multi chambered souterrain and Clogher cashel near Monasteraden which has a 2m surviving stone wall 26m in diameter enclosing three souterrains. Cashelore, is referred to in the Annals of the Four Masters wherein, "O'Rourke invaded County Sligo but was encountered at Cashelore by the cavalry of the O'Healys. The latter were defeated, and their territory pillaged."

#### 4.5 Early Christian or Early Medieval:

Christianity came to Ireland around the start of the 5th century AD. It brought many changes including the introduction of writing and recording events. The tribal 'tuatha' and the new religious settlements existed side by side. Sometimes it suited the chieftains to become part of the early Churches, other times they remained as separate entities. From the middle of the 6th century hundreds of small monastic settlements were established around the county. Early Christian monuments in Co. Sligo include the monastic settlement on Inishmurray Island, which consists of a cashel enclosing two churches, a beehive cell, and a later medieval building. There is another church outside the main enclosure and a sweathouse and graveyard. There are also over 50 engraved stone slabs on the island. It is recorded that the Vikings raided the island in the year 807. Other ecclesiastical sites include: Kilaspugbrone in Strandhill reputed to have been founded in the 5th Century by Bishop Bronus, a disciple of St. Patrick; Carrowntemple south of Gurteen; Kiltura in the same area; St. Fecin's church northwest of Ballisodare and Drumcliffe round tower and high

cross. There are also numerous holy wells including Tober Na nAlt holy well on the shore of Lough Gill.

#### 4.6 Later Historic Period:

The Medieval period includes the arrival of the Anglo Normans in the 12th century. The Late Medieval Period may be running up to the 17th century. From 1169 AD when one of the warring kings (Dermot MacMurrough) in the east of Ireland appealed to the King of England for help in his fight with a neighbouring king, the response of which was the arrival of the Anglo-Norman colonisation of Ireland. Norman control meant the eclipse of many Gaelic lords and chieftains, chiefly the O'Connor's of Connacht. Following the collapse of the lordship in the 1330s, all these families became estranged from the Anglo-Irish administration based in Dublin and assimilated with the Gaelic-Irish, adopting their language, religion, dress, laws, customs and culture and marrying into Irish families. They "became more Irish than the Irish themselves".

The Anglo Normans encouraged and established many religious orders from continental Europe to settle in Ireland. Mendicant orders—Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans began new settlements across Ireland and built large churches, many under the patronage of prominent Gaelic families. During the 15th and 16th centuries, despite regular conflicts between them as England chopped and changed between religious beliefs, the Irish usually regarded the King of England as their King. When Queen Elizabeth 1 came to the throne in the mid-16th century, the English people, as was customary at that time, followed the religious practices of the reigning Monarch and became Protestant. Many Irish people had close relationships with the English monarchy and the English kings and queens were welcome visitors to Irish shores. The Irish however, generally held onto their Catholic religious practices and beliefs. The early plantations of settlers in Ireland began during the reign of Queen Mary in the mid-16th century and continued throughout the long reign of Queen Elizabeth I until 1603. In September of 1588 the galleons of the Spanish Armada were wrecked by storms along the west coast of Ireland at Streedagh, Co. Sligo. Some of the hapless Spaniards came ashore, only to be robbed and imprisoned, and in many cases slaughtered. Almost all the religious foundations set up by the Anglo Normans were suppressed in the wake of the Reformation in the 16th century.

#### 4.7 The Ballymote Area

Lewis Topographical Dictionary 1837 ([www.libraryireland.com](http://www.libraryireland.com)) for Ballymote Co. Sligo contained the following listing: Ballymote, a market town and post-town, in the parish of Emlyfad, barony of Corran, county of Sligo, and province of Connaught, 11 miles (S. by W.) from Sligo, and 94 ½ miles (W. N. W.) from Dublin; containing 875 inhabitants. This place appears to have derived its origin

from a castle built in 1300 by Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, which, after its seizure by the native Irish during the insurrection of 1641, was found to be of such strength as to offer a serious obstacle to the complete subjugation of Connaught; it was at length taken, in 1652, by the united forces of Ireton and Sir Charles Coote. A small monastery for Franciscan friars of the third order was founded here by the sept of Mac Donogh, and at the suppression was granted to Sir H. Broncard, who assigned it to Sir William Taafe, Knt.: an inquisition of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Elizabeth records that it belonged to that castle, and had been totally destroyed by the insurgents. The town is situated at the junction of six roads, but has not one principal road passing through it: it consists of one main street, contains 140 houses. The surrounding country is well cultivated, its surface agreeably undulates; and there is a good view from an obelisk erected by Lady Arabella Denny on a small hill near the town.

## 5 DESKTOP DATA

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### 5.1 National Monuments

No national monuments listed in state care are in the immediate vicinity of the subject site.

### 5.2 Toponymy

Toponymy is the study of place names (toponyms), their origins, meanings, use, and typology. Place names can provide information on the previous history and heritage of a location.

Camross townland is in the Barony of *An Corann/Corran* and in the Civil Parish of *Imleach Fhada/Emlaghfad*. The townland of Camross translates as *Camros* (genitive: *Chamrois*) in Irish, meaning 'a crooked point'. Carrownanty translates in Irish as *Ceathrú na Neanta* (genitive: *Cheathrú na Neanta*), meaning 'quarterland of the nettles'.

### 5.3 Previous Archaeological Work

A search of the database [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) indicated that the following archaeological investigations have been carried out close to the subject area of Camross and Carrownanty townland and environs:

#### **2001:1131 - Abbey Terrace, Stoneparks, Ballymote, Sligo**

County: Sligo Site name: Abbey Terrace, Stoneparks, Ballymote

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 33:163 Licence number: 01E0322

Author: Martin A. Timoney, Bóthar an Chorainn, Keash, Co. Sligo.



Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 566164m, N 815760m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 54.089829, -8.517183

The area for the extension to and services for a dwelling-house was devoid of any indications of surface archaeology. Because the location is across the road from the Ballymote Third Order Franciscan Priory, Dúchas required monitoring of the works. This was carried out in two phases.

The first phase was monitoring of the groundworks for the new extension. Some clay pipes were found at the north of the house in a black layer that extends westwards, possibly under the existing house. The area to the east of the house was riddled with modern rubbish-pits. The second phase was the monitoring of the sewage pipeline. The opening of the line revealed undisturbed soils below the deposits of modern rubbish and garden soil. The pipeline extended for 2m out into the street. The anticipated extension of the graveyard from the medieval Franciscan Abbey on the other side of the road was not encountered, nor was there any indication of a post-medieval street. There were no archaeological discoveries, other than the clay pipes.

#### **2004:1553 - STONEPARKS, Sligo**

County: Sligo Site name: STONEPARKS

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 04E0606

Author: Martin A. Timoney, B—thar an Chorainn, Keash, Co. Sligo.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 565861m, N 815910m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 54.091161, -8.521828

This application was for a development of 20 houses and associated works at Stoneparks, Ballymote, Co. Sligo. The site is on the east side of the Ballymote-Sligo road at the north edge of Ballymote. The ground consists of glacial deposits. It was wet, rough, badly drained grazing land and had been partly developed, in that the main access road and some drainage work had been done some years previously.

Three trenches were opened to test this land. A digger with a toothless bucket was used to remove the soil down as far as the undisturbed glacial deposits. Trench 1, 2m wide, was in the area closest to SMR 33:90, a ringfort or enclosure. It was 149m long and varied in depth from 0.2m to 1.7m. Trench 2, which was 3m wide, was 128m long and varied in depth from 0.3m to 1.2m. Trench 3, 2m wide, was 86m long and varied in depth from 0.55m to 1.1m. At the east end of the trench, 10m of

a stone-filled drain, 0.7m wide at the top and reaching to 1.16m below the grass level, was encountered. This was filled with angular stones, a maximum of 0.15m across, but there were no finds to date it. It may have been still working as a drain until recent times. The picture was consistent and there were no indications of archaeology.

**2005:1356 - CARROWNANTY, BALLYMOTE, Sligo**

County: Sligo Site name: CARROWNANTY, BALLYMOTE

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 05E1290

Author: David Sweetman, Roestown, Drumree, Co. Meath.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 565532m, N 815381m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 54.086382, -8.526797

Trial-trenching close to the railway station at Ballymote produced nothing of interest.

**2015:027 - Carrowcauly or Earlsfield, Marran Park, Ballymote, Sligo**

County: Sligo Site name: Carrowcauly or Earlsfield, Marran Park, Ballymote

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 15E0085

Author: David J. O'Connor

Site type: Rural

ITM: E 566225m, N 816293m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 54.094100, -8.515838

Archaeological Test Trench Investigation of the proposed site of a Primary Care Centre for Ballymote took place on Tuesday 21st April 2015, under excavation licence 15E0085. The investigation involved the excavation of c.605 linear metres of 2m-wide trenches across the site using a 13-ton tracked machine under direct archaeological supervision. The only features observed were a 19th century mortared stone drain and a 20th century demesne roadway. No features of archaeological significance were observed. No archaeological finds were observed or recovered during the investigations. No recommendations for further archaeological mitigation have been made.

## 5.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

A review of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage produced the following result for the subject area Camross and Carrownanty townlands and environs:

Name: Ballymote Railway Station

Town: Ballymote

Composition: Single-span road-over-railway limestone bridge, built c. 1875. Squared-and-snecked rubble limestone walling rising uninterrupted to parapets and battered to either side of arch, rock-faced copings to parapets. Squared-and-snecked rubble limestone abutment.

Appraisal: This fine unaltered bridge is unusual for its splayed spanning of the railway. The good quality stonework is a notable feature.

## 5.5 County Development Plan

The Sligo County Development Plan (2017-2023) was consulted for the townlands of Camross and Carrownanty Co. Sligo and contains the Record of Protected Structures. The following listings were in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for the townlands of Camross and Carrownanty in the vicinity of the proposed development area:

118 CDP Road over railway bridge Carrownanty, Ballymote 32314003

119 CDP Road over railway bridge Carrownanty, Ballymote 32314008

59 CDP Ballymote Railway Station and associated buildings and features Ballymote/Carrownanty, Ballymote 32314002/4/5/6/7

## 5.6 Record of Monuments and Places

The following sites are listed on the Record of Monuments and Places in the wider vicinity of the subject site:

SMR No	Townland	Monument Class	ITM E	ITM N
SL033-087001-	RATHDOONY MORE	Castle - motte	564691	816663
SL033-087002-	RATHDOONY MORE	Redundant record	564704	816664
SL033-088--- -	CAMROSS	Barrow - bowl-barrow	564998	816062
SL033-089---	CARROWNANTY	Ringfort - rath	565768	815844

-				
SL033-090---				
-	STONEPARKS	Ringfort - rath	566052	815922
SL033-091---				
-	STONEPARKS	Ringfort - rath	565994	816482
SL033-115---				
-	STONEPARKS	Architectural fragment	566014	815667
SL033-115001-	STONEPARKS	Font (present location)	566014	815667
SL033-163001-	STONEPARKS	Religious house - Franciscan Third Order Regular	566048	815754
SL033-163002-	STONEPARKS	Graveyard	566050	815725
SL033-168---				
-	DERROON	House - 16th/17th century	565855	816910

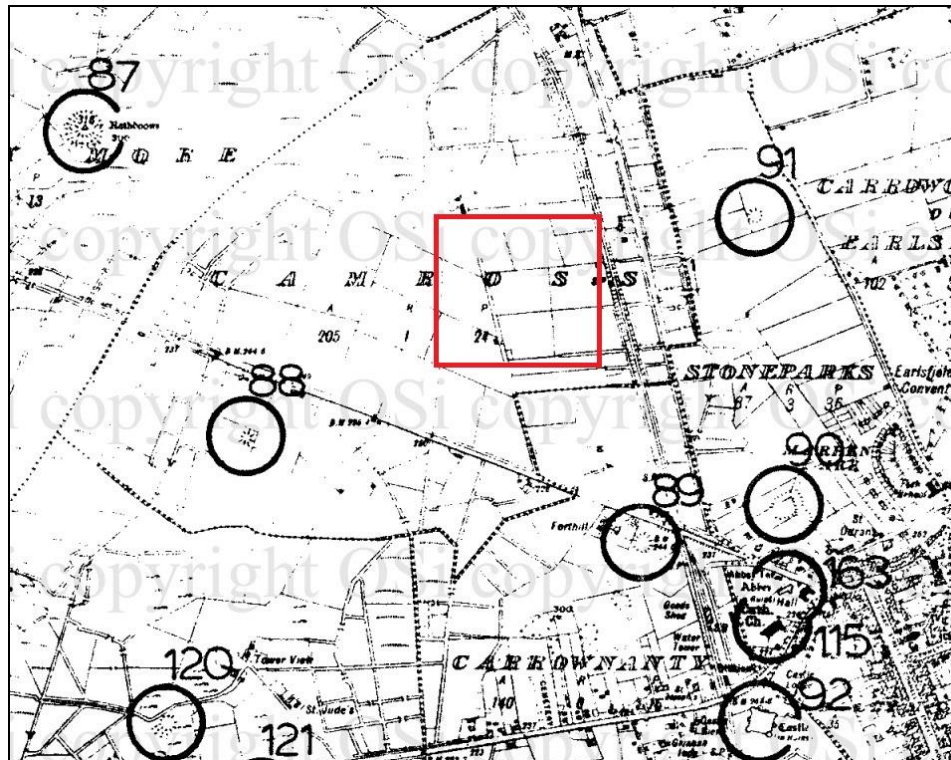


Figure 3: Record of Monuments and Places Map sheet number 033 (source: [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie))

## 5.7 The National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files

The topographical survey for the townland of Camross and Carrownanty was consulted and produced the following result in the wider vicinity of the site:

National Museum Point: Bronze Fish Hook

Name: 1950:3

Object Type: Bronze Fish Hook

Approx distance to the PDA: 400m S

## 5.8 Aerial Photography

Aerial photography of the development area was consulted. The main source was Google Earth and the Archaeological Survey of Ireland Historic Environment Viewer which clearly showed an aerial view of the proposed development site and the surrounding area. The site appears to be greenfield unaffected by development and in use as agricultural fields. There is indication that the field boundaries have been levelled in the past and it is possible that material may have been deposited in this field during the construction of the neighbouring estate.



Figure 4: Aerial photograph of the Proposed Development Area (source: [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie))

## 5.9 LiDAR Imagery

Another source consulted for imagery of the proposed development site is the LiDAR data available on the web-viewer on the Transport Infrastructure Ireland website. LiDAR (light detecting and ranging) its derived high-resolution topographic data are already widely recognised, with uses including highly detailed mapping of natural and man-made surface features. No features of an archaeological nature were noted in the proposed development area when the LiDAR imagery was consulted. There are indications of former field boundaries and as well as undulating features which may be material deposited in the fields.

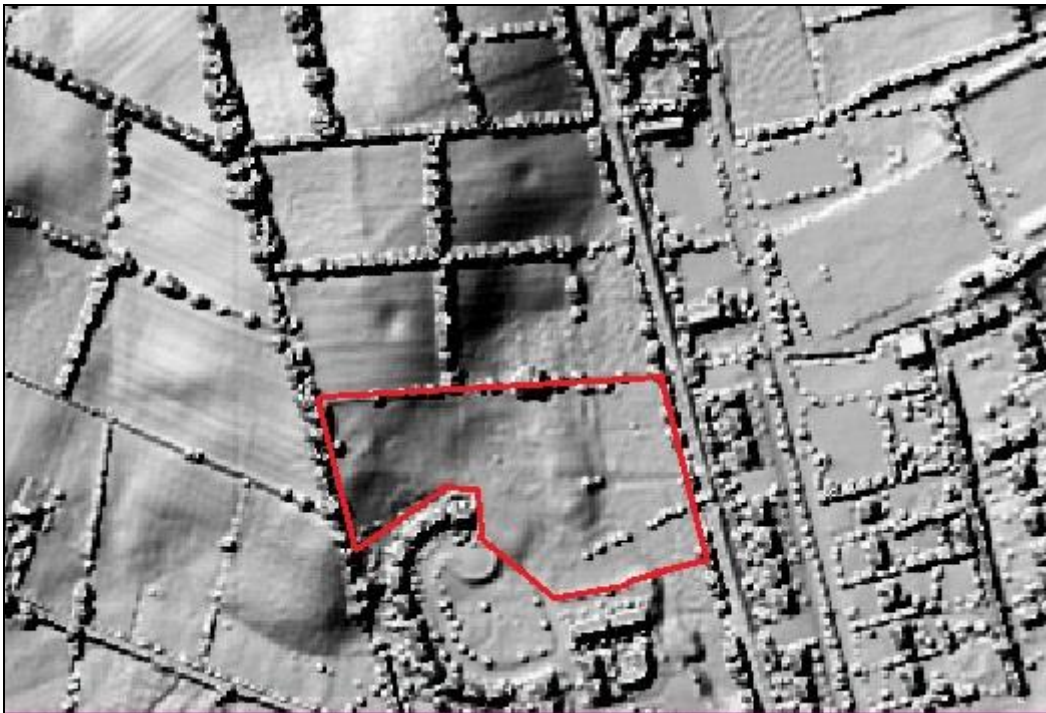


Figure 5: Lidar image of the proposed development area (source: <https://www.tii.ie/news/archaeology/tii-open-data/>)

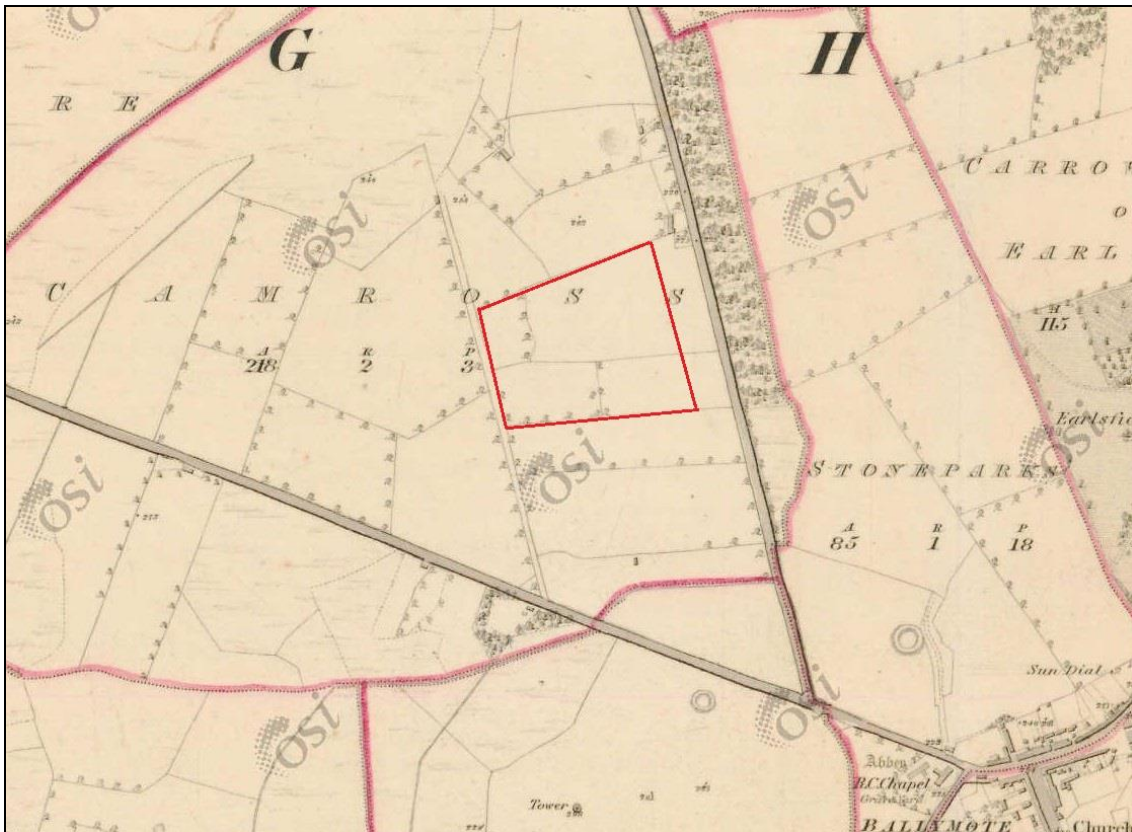
## 5.10 Cartographic Evidence

The following section considers major maps of County Sligo with reference to the townlands of Camross and Carrownanty including the subject site.

### 5.10.1 Ordnance Survey 1838 edition (6" map)

The proposed development site at Camross and Carrownanty, Co. Sligo can be seen on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of County Sligo dated to the late 1830's. The site appears as a series of small featureless fields to the north of the core of the town of Ballymote. The fields appear to be

tree lined with a small trackway bounding the site to the west. No features of an archaeological nature were noted on this map within the proposed development area.



**Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map c. 1838 of the Proposed Development Area (source: [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie))**

#### 5.10.2 Ordnance Survey c. 1910 edition (25" map)

The proposed development area can also be clearly seen on the second edition Ordnance Survey map dated to c. 1910. The field systems and boundaries are indicated on this version of the map and remain largely unchanged. The main difference between both maps is the addition of the railway line to the east of the site. No additional features of an archaeological nature were noted on this map within the proposed development area.

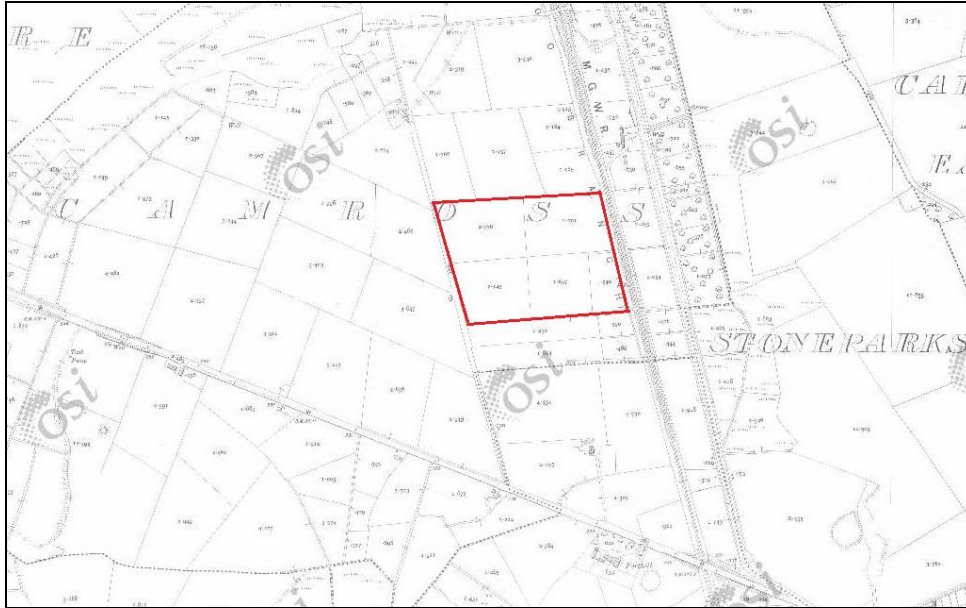


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey Map c. 1910 of the Proposed Development Area (source: [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie))

## 6 RESULTS OF THE SITE INSPECTION

The site inspection took place on Friday the 18th of August 2023. The site conditions were good during the inspection and all areas were accessible. The ground conditions were rough underfoot due to the undulating nature of the ground surface and from cattle accessing the field for grazing. The area of the overall site measures approximately 2.50ha or 6.18 acres. The site consists of two plots not divided by a physical boundary: Plot 1) The proposed phase 1 site area measuring 1.0 Ha to the west, which consists of a gently sloping sub-rectangular field of low grass cover and presently in use as grazing. Plot 2) the eastern part of the field which is more low lying and located west of the existing railway line and in use for grazing. The southwestern and southern area of the site comprises an existing housing development Mountain View and provides the access point to the PDA through a field gate. The boundaries to the site in the south comprise wooden garden fencing, post and wire fencing, and concrete block walls. The northern boundary to the site consists of an earthen ditch with tree and scrub growth. The northwestern boundary also comprises a ditch boundary along the eastern edge of an existing farm track. The eastern boundary is a tree and scrub lined boundary which separates the site from the railway line. The site is undulating sloping in a west to east direction and with several small hummocks and corresponding rises. The eastern and southeastern area of the site is low-lying and covered in wetland type vegetation. There is greater likelihood of uncovering monuments such as *fulacht fiadh* in this portion of the site,



because the area is wet and boggy underfoot. A comprehensive walk over was conducted of the site, with all areas fully accessible and a visual inspection of the site was undertaken of both plots, which form one large field, and along with the boundaries that enclose the site. No material of an archaeological nature was overserved, however there is potential of archaeological sites occurring in the low-lying area of Plot 2 and where the rises and hummocks were observed in Plot 1.



**Plate 1: North facing view of Plot 1.**



**Plate 2: SE facing view of the higher area of Plot 1.**

## 7 RESULTS OF THE TESTING

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### 7.1 Methodology

The testing scheme took place over the course of two days, 6-7<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. All trenches determine whether subsurface archaeological material was present. The trenches were excavated using a 13-tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a graded bucket 2m wide. The proposed development area comprises a large agricultural field, which has been divided in Plot 1 and Plot 2. Only Plot 1 was applicable to this planning application and was subject to testing. There has been no previous development on the property, and it contains no structures. Prior to testing a geophysical survey was completed by Dr James Bonsall in November 2023. The results of this survey informed the testing regime and any potential archaeological features identified in the survey were duly tested. A total of 9 test trenches of varying lengths and depths were excavated across the entire proposed development area in a north to south direction. The trenches were excavated parallel with one another and spaced 10m apart. The total area excavated comprised 768m of open test trenches. The subject area had a gently undulating topography, which was easy to access. All trenches were excavated to the underlying natural substrate which in most of the trenches comprised an orangey brown boulder clay with moderate occurrences of small to medium sized stones.



**Plate 3: North facing view of the test trenches.**



Figure 8: Magnetometry date from Dr James Bonsall geophysical survey of the PDA (source: AMS ltd)



Figure 9: Plan of the test trenches 1-9 on the magnetometry interpretation by Dr James Bonsall (source: AMS ltd)

## 7.2 Constraints

There were a small number of constraints encountered during the test trenching work. The areas in which the site investigation dynamic probes and trial holes were located were left undisturbed. There was an overhead cable along the south-eastern boundary of the Plot 1, for safety reasons no excavation took place under these cables.

## 7.3 Description of the Test Trenches

### 7.3.1 Test Trench 1

Test Trench 1 measured 80m in total length and had a maximum depth of 1m. It was orientated in an S-N direction beginning at the northwestern corner of the PDA and sloping gently to the south. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark blackish brown silty clay subsoil with frequent small stones in a gravel type mix and moderate decayed limestone. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

### 7.3.2 Test Trench 2

Test Trench 2 measured 73m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 1. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark blackish brown silty clay subsoil with frequent small stones and moderate decayed limestone. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

### 7.3.3 Test Trench 3

Test Trench 3 measured 67m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 2. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with no gravel inclusion. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

### 7.3.4 Test Trench 4

Test Trench 4 measured 62m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 3. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with no gravel inclusion. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

### 7.3.5 Test Trench 5

Test Trench 5 measured 62m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 4. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a

dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

#### 7.3.6 Test Trench 6

Test Trench 6 measured 63m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 5. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with occasional decayed limestone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

#### 7.3.7 Test Trench 7

Test Trench 7 measured 107m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 6 and extending towards the entrance to the PDA. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with occasional decayed limestone inclusions. Modern stone and waste material occur at the southern part of the trench which likely occurred during the building of the adjacent housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

#### 7.3.8 Test Trench 8

Test Trench 8 measured 130m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 7. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with occasional decayed limestone inclusions. Modern stone and waste material occur at the southern part of the trench which likely occurred during the building of the adjacent housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.

#### 7.3.9 Test Trench 9

Test Trench 9 measured 125m in total length and had a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was orientated in an S-N direction 10m east of Test Trench 8. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil over orangey brown boulder clay with occasional decayed limestone inclusions. Modern stone and waste material occur at the southern part of the trench which likely occurred during the building of the adjacent housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 4: North facing view of Test Trench 1.**



**Plate 5: North facing view of Test Trench 2.**



**Plate 6: North facing view of Test Trench 3.**



**Plate 7: North facing view of Test Trench 4.**



**Plate 8: North facing view of Test Trench 5.**



**Plate 9: South facing view of Test Trench 6.**





**Plate 10: Northwest facing view of Test Trench 8.**



**Plate 11: North facing view of Test Trench 9.**



Plate 12: Northwest facing view of Test Trench 9.

## 8 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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The area under archaeological assessment is located at Camross and Carrownanty Co. Sligo. The proposed development entails the construction of a housing scheme and all associated services. The proposed development is not in proximity to, and within, the Zone of Archaeological Notification for a recorded monument.

Due to the scale of the proposed development area (Plot 1 of this current phase) being over 1 hectare in the overall size, it was recommended that the proposed development should be subject to a programme of pre-development archaeological test trenching. It was also recommended that should conditions be deemed suitable a geophysical survey should be undertaken across the entire proposed development area.

Guided by the geophysical survey, which was conducted by Dr James Bonsall, testing took place over the course of two days on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 and any potential archaeological features noted in the survey were targeted with the testing regime. The work was carried out by a mechanical excavator under strict archaeological supervision.

During the programme of archaeological testing 9 linear test trenches were excavated across the entire development site, totally 768m. Each test trench was excavated through the overlying topsoil material to the natural substrate underlying the testing area. During the test trenching no archaeological objects, features or deposits were encountered. Due to the lack of archaeological material within the test trenches and the lack of archaeological sites and monuments within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area, it is recommended that the development proceed without any further need for archaeological mitigation.

It is recommended that the future proposed development of Plot 2 for Phase 2 should be subject to a programme of pre-development archaeological test trenching. Archaeological testing should be conducted by a suitably qualified archaeologist, under license to the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the with provision being made for full recording and excavation of any archaeological features or deposits which may be exposed. If the site conditions are deemed suitable the site should also be subject to geophysical survey, to be conducted in advance of, and to inform the programme of testing.

**Please note that all recommendations in this report are subject to approval by the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Museum of Ireland.**

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