

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING REPORT**  
**FOR A PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**  
**AT CARROWBUNAUN, STRANDHILL,**  
**CO. SLIGO**  
**ON BEHALF OF**  
**SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL**



**Licence number: 23E0683**

**Planning Reference Number: Pre-Planning**

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<b>Issued by</b>	Tamlyn McHugh
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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 an archaeological testing carried out by Fadó Archaeology at Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Co. Sligo on behalf of Sligo County Council.

The following archaeological assessment report documents the project. The proposed development entails the construction of 50 social housing units, along with associated site roads and all associated site development works at Carrowbunnaun Co. Sligo. The overall size of the proposed development area is 1.9 hectares.

An Archaeological Impact Assessment was completed by Gahan and Long in June 2023. No finds or features of archaeological significance were noted in the report within the proposed development area during the site inspection or a review of the available desktop sources for the proposed development area.

The development is 1.9 hectares in size; therefore, it was recommended in the AIA that the proposed development should be subject to further assessment in the form of a programme of archaeological test trenching.

Archaeological testing took place under licence 23E0683 in August & September 2023, during which 18 trenches were mechanically excavated across the PDA. Archaeological material in the form of two

shell middens was uncovered in Trench 14 & 16. Following the recording of the middens the area was covered in terram, and backfilled pending further investigation and discussion with the NMS with regards any proposals for preservation *in situ* or full excavation should this be deemed necessary.

Due to the location of the presence of archaeological material directly within the proposed development area, it is recommended that the archaeological features in the form of two shell middens should be preserved in situ and a zone of constraints/exclusion should be maintained during any future groundworks in the vicinity of these sites.

The remainder of the site should be subject to archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping and 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.

**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.**

# 1 SCOPE OF WORKS

## 1.1 Introduction

Fadó Archaeology were commissioned to carry out an archaeological testing at Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, 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 test trenching.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Project

The proposed development entails the construction of 50 social housing units and all associated roads, footpaths and site services on our site at Carrowbunnaun, Co. Sligo. The overall size of the proposed development area is approximately 1.9 hectares.



Figure 1: Proposed development plan.



### 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 area and a programme of test trenching across the entire 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 **013** 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. 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 site being considered within this report consists of an area of c 1.9 hectares of land on the Cuil Irra peninsula in the townland of Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Co. Sligo. The site is located to the east off Golf Course Road, and to west of The Waves and Atlantic View housing developments. The site is accessed through a farm gate directly adjacent to Strandhill primary school, the site is covered in low grass and is presently in use as grazing land.

### 2.2 Site Layout/Locational details

The proposed development site is in a coastal location close to Sligo Bay and directly south of the core area of the town of Strandhill. It is approximately 8.6km west of Sligo town centre along the R292. The sub-rectangular shaped development area comprises two large agricultural field in use as grazing. The eastern field is bounded by the housing estate of Atlantic View, which is located on a steep rise to the east. The western field overlooks Strandhill National School which bounded the western area of the site. There is no watercourse in proximity to the site. The approximate overall size of the proposed development area is 1.9 hectares.

Study area	OS Sheet number	Central ITM	Townland
Strandhill, Co. Sligo	013	560846/835449	Carrowbunnaun



Figure 2: ASI Map of the proposed development area (courtesy of Gahan and Long Ltd).

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 Solid Geology and Soil Type

The geology of the Sligo region consists of carboniferous limestone, boulder clay and grey, brown podzolics. The principal soil in the area is made up of degraded grey, brown podzolics (50%), associated soils consist of peat, brown earth, gleys and podzols. The parent material in the vicinity

of the subject site is predominantly a predominantly limestone glacial till. The soil varies from well drained to hill or low-level peat.

## 3.2 Landscape

The landscape in this part of Sligo is situated at the western end of the drumlin belt and is characterised by flat to undulating lowlands. The development area is in a slightly elevated site in use as a green field site for grazing. Access is along the golf course road, to the rear of Strandhill National School. The site is located on the Coolera Peninsula, an area dominated by Knocknarea Mountain to the east and Sligo Bay to the west. The fields in the direct vicinity of the subject site are well drained undulating pastureland. There is no major river or tributary river in proximity to 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 Cliffoey 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.

## 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. 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 Carrowhubbock 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 also 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. Fechin's church northwest of Ballisodare and Drumcliffe round tower and high cross. There are also numerous holy wells including Tober 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. 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. Protestant settlers from Scotland, England, and elsewhere in Ireland, settled in the County in the early 17th century.

#### 4.7 The Coolera Peninsula:

The Coolera or Cuíl Irra Peninsula is the half-promontory known as Leath Ros. The area is bounded naturally by the sea in the west, Sligo harbour and the Garavogue river further north, Lough Gill in the east and Ballysadare Bay to the south. Dominating the peninsula is Knocknarea Mountain topped with a large cairn known as Meascán Méadhbha – Meave’s Cairn. The large, chambered cairn on top of Knocknarea is nearly two hundred feet long and forty feet high and is It is the largest unopened cairn in Ireland that is thought to conceal a neolithic passage tomb. The majestic Meascán Méadhbha is only one of several monuments on top of Knocknarea. At nearby Culleenamore Strand remains of prehistoric kitchen middens, or refuse heaps, where shells were deposited. The marine life found around the Cuil Irra Peninsula served as an important source of food for the Mesolithic man and subsequent settlers. The area's remains are extensive, with some of the middens stretching 100m long. The Carrowmore area is archaeologically rich in prehistoric sites and monuments. Dating to the Neolithic (3700-2900 BC) Carrowmore (An Cheathrú Mhór, meaning Great Quarter) is one of the four major passage tomb complexes in Ireland. Thirty monuments survive in Carrowmore today. There may have been more monuments in the complex originally, but some fell victim to quarrying and field clearance during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century. Carrowmore is the focal point of a prehistoric ritual landscape which is dominated by the mountain of Knocknarea to the west with the great cairn of Miosgán Médhbh on top and to the east is Carns Hill with two large cairns. Knocknashammer or Cloverhill lies in the drumlin plains between Carrowmore and Carns Hill. Recent excavations by the National Roads Authority for the Inner Relief Road route in Magheraboy near Sligo - three kilometres from Carrowmore - have shown that a causewayed enclosure existed at the same time as Carrowmore.

## 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. The townland of Carrowbunnaun is in the Barony of *Cairbre/Carbury* and in the Civil Parish of *Cill Easpaig Bhróin/*

Killaspugbrone. Finisklin translates in Irish as *Ceathrú Bhuinneáin* (genitive: *Cheathrú Bhuinneáin*) meaning a 'quarterland of the bunnauns or bitterns'.

### 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 in the subject area of Carrowbunnaun townland and environs:

2002:1679. Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Sligo

Author: Mary Henry, 24 Queen Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Site type: No archaeological significance

License number: 01E0307

2002:1680. Carrowbunnaun/Carrowdough, Strandhill, Sligo

Author: Christopher Read, North West Archaeological Services Ltd, Cloonfad Cottage, Cloonfad, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

Site type: No archaeological significance

License number: 02E1682

2003:1686. Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Sligo

Author: Mary Henry, Mary Henry Archaeological Services Ltd, 17 Staunton Row, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Site type: No archaeological significance

License number: 01E0307 ext.

2013:336. Knocknarea Cave K, Carrowbunnaun, Sligo

Author: Marion Dowd

Site type: Cave

License number: 13E0427

2016:152. Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Sligo

Author: Angela Wallace, Atlantic Archaeology

Site type: No archaeological significance

License number: 16E0011

2017:000. Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Sligo

Author: Angela Wallace

Site type: None

License number: 16E0666

## 5.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

A review of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage produced no results for the subject area of Carrowbunnaun townland and environs.

## 5.5 County Development Plan

The Sligo County Development Plan (2017-2023) was consulted for the townland of Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Co. Sligo. There is no listing in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for the vicinity of the proposed development area.

## 5.6 Record of Monuments and Places

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

SMR No.	Class	Townland	ITM Easting	ITM Northing
SL013-033----	Earthwork	CARROWBUNNAUN	560791	835639
SL013-034001-	Ringfort - rath	CARROWBUNNAUN	561029	835093
SL013-034002-	Souterrain	CARROWBUNNAUN	561029	835095
SL013-109----	Redundant record	CARROWBUNNAUN	560837	835770
SL013-125----	Habitation site	CARROWDOUGH	560788	834862



Figure 3: ASI map showing the archaeological sites and monuments in the area (courtesy of Gahan and Long Ltd).

## 5.7 The National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files

The topographical survey for the townland of Carrowbunnaun and the environs of the proposed development area was consulted and produced the following result:

Stone saddle quern (NMI Register no. 2020:36)

## 5.8 Aerial Photography

Aerial photography of the development area was consulted. The main source was the website [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie), 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. No features of an archaeological nature were noted in the proposed development area when the aerial imagery was consulted.



Figure 4: Aerial photograph of the Proposed Development Area indicated in red.

## 5.9 Cartographic Evidence

The following section considers major maps of County Sligo with reference to the townland of Carrowbunnaun including the subject site.

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

The proposed development site at Carrowbunnaun can be seen on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of County Sligo dated to the late 1830's. The site comprises two fields west of the R292. The access roads are in the same location as they are now, with the Golf Course Road to the

west. No buildings or features are visible with the fields that comprise the PDA. No features of an archaeological nature were noted on this map within the PDA.

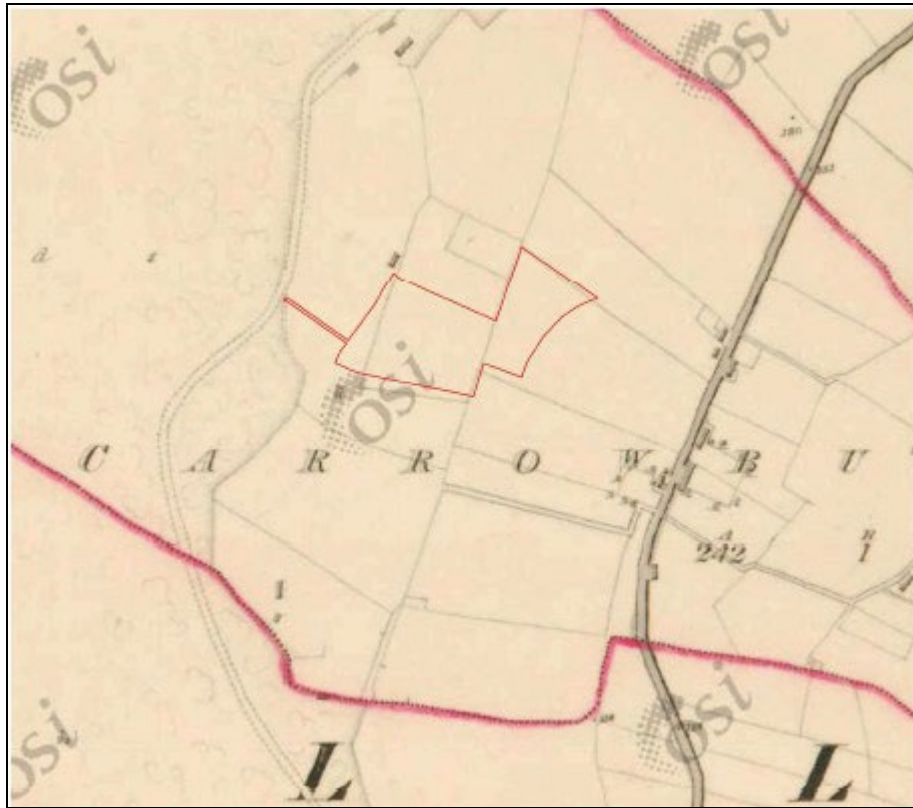


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey Map c. 1838 of the Proposed Development Area.

### 5.9.2 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 largely the same as they were on the earlier map, but with additional field boundaries indicated on the earlier map. No features of an archaeological nature were noted on this map within the proposed development area.

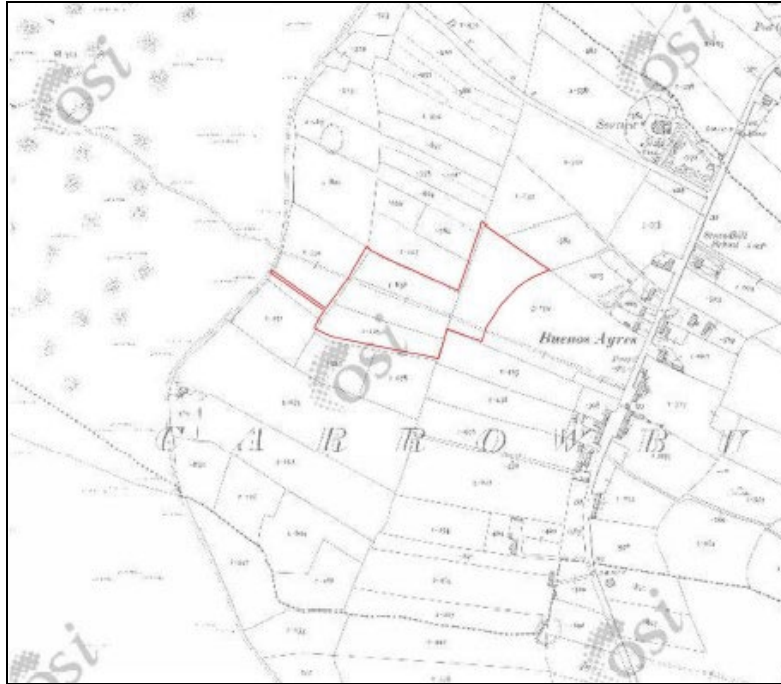


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map c. 1910 of the Proposed Development Area.

## 6 RESULTS OF THE SITE INSPECTION

The site inspection took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2023. The site conditions were good during the inspection and the ground conditions was wet. The site consists of two large fields of pasture lands overlooking Sligo Bay and the sand dunes of Strandhill. The entire area encompasses approximately 1.9 hectares and is in a lowland, undulating and coastal landscape.

Access to the site is via a partially tarred single-track road. The site boundaries hedgerows and fences wall. The site comprises two large expansive fields of grass, with what appears to be a former allotment located in the southern portion of the PDA. For the purposes of this report the PDA will be referred to as Field 1 and Field 2.

A walk over was conducted of the accessible areas and a visual inspection was conducted of each field and along the boundaries. Field 1 is the easternmost field and has a steep western sloping topography. No archaeological material was visible during the site inspection of the proposed development area. A walkover was undertaken of Field 2 of the proposed development area. This field is relatively flat and is located to the rear of the school. There are good views in all directions from Field 2 and clear views east towards Knocknarea mountain. The site was covered in low grass and had been recently grazed by cattle and the land somewhat poached from this grazing. The inspection of Field 2 did not reveal material, features, or deposits of an archaeological nature.

## 7 RESULTS OF THE TESTING

### 7.1 Methodology

The testing scheme took place over the course of three days, 30-31 of August and the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2023. All trenches were excavated to the top of the natural substrate, under strict archaeological supervision to determine whether subsurface archaeological material was present. The trenches were excavated using a 12-tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a graded bucket 2m wide. The proposed development area comprises two large agricultural fields (Field 1 & Field 2). There has been no previous development on the property with the exception of the foul sewer, and it contains no structures.

A total of 18 test trenches of varying lengths and depths were excavated across the entire proposed development area in an east to west direction. The trenches were excavated parallel with one another and spaced 10m apart. The total area excavated comprised 1125m of open test trenches. The subject area had a gently undulating topography, which was very steep in the eastern area of the site. All trenches were excavated to 2m width, which is the width of the graded machine bucket. All trenches were excavated to the underlying natural sandy substrate which in most of the trenches comprised a yellowish orange boulder clay with moderate occurrences of small to medium sized stones.

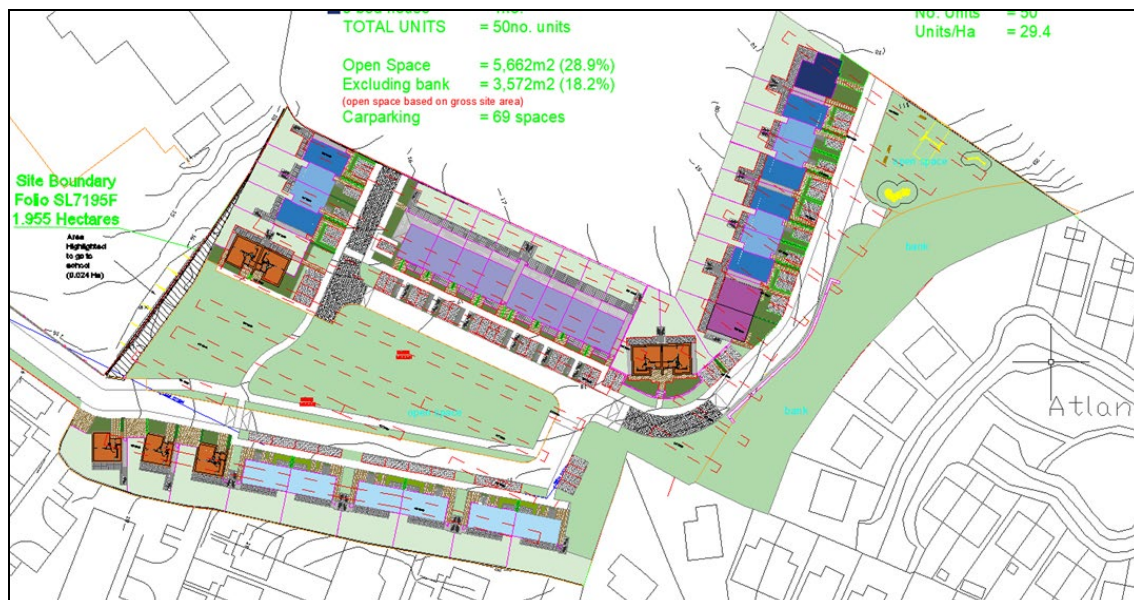


Figure 7: Survey of the Test Trenches 1-18 shown overlaying the proposed development plan.





**Plate 1: North facing view of Field 1 showing Test Trenches 1-10.**



**Plate 2: North facing view of Field 2 showing Test Trenches 11-18.**

## 7.2 Constraints

There were a number of constraints encountered during the test trenching work. The eastern area of the site is bounded by existing housing developments which are situated on a steep west facing slope overlooking the site. This steep gradient of the slope meant that the trenches could not be excavated safely in this location. There is a retaining wall for the neighbouring housing estate and no trenches could be excavated in close proximity to this wall. There was an area of knotweed in the NE area of the site in Field 1, but mainly within the adjacent field and no work were undertaken within 10m of this knotweed. A foul sewer traverses the site in an east to west direction from the

neighbouring development across Field 2 towards the road along the access road. Several manholes were encountered, and the trenching scheme was planned to avoid disturbing this foul sewer.

## 8 Description of the Test Trenches

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### 8.1 Test Trench 1

Test Trench 1 measured 65m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction beginning at the NE corner of the Field 1 at the closest point to northern boundary of the PDA. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 3: East facing view of Test Trench 1.

### 8.2 Test Trench 2

Test Trench 2 measured 52m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 1. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 4: East facing view of Test Trench 2.

### 8.3 Test Trench 3

Test Trench 3 measured 36m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 2. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 5: East facing view of Test Trench 3.

## 8.4 Test Trench 4

Test Trench 4 measured 34m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 3. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 6: East facing view of Test Trench 4.

## 8.5 Test Trench 5

Test Trench 5 measured 36m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 4. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 7: East facing view of Test Trench 5.**

## 8.6 Test Trench 6

Test Trench 6 measured 29m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 5. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 8: East facing view Test Trench 6.**

## 8.7 Test Trench 7

Test Trench 7 measured 27m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 6. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay orange boulder clay with moderate decayed limestone and moderate small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 9: East facing view of Test Trench 7.

## 8.8 Test Trench 8

Test Trench 8 measured 25m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.4m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 7. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay a heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill from the neighbouring housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



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

## 8.9 Test Trench 9

Test Trench 9 measured 25m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.25m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 8. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay a heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill from the neighbouring housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



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

## 8.10 Test Trench 10

Test Trench 10 measured 27m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.25m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, 10m from, and parallel with Test Trench 9. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty clay subsoil which overlay a heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill from the neighbouring housing development. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 12: East facing view of Test Trench 10.**

## 8.11 Test Trench 11

Test Trench 11 was excavated in Field 2 along the northern boundary and measured 102m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 1m at the western of the trench. It was orientated in an E-W direction. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark reddish brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions. The western end of the trench was almost totally sand below the shallow sod cover. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.





**Plate 13: East facing view of Test Trench 11.**

## 8.12 Test Trench 12

Test Trench 12 measured 102m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 1m at the western end of the trench. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 11. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark reddish brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 14: East facing view of Test Trench 12.**

### 8.13 Test Trench 13

Test Trench 13 measured 110m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 12. The eastern area of the trench was located close to neighbouring housing development and contained heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill associated with the adjacent development. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 15: East facing view of Test Trench 13.

### 8.14 Test Trench 14

Test Trench 14 measured 102m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 13. The eastern area of the trench was located close to neighbouring housing development and contained heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill associated with the adjacent development. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions.

During excavation of Test Trench 14 a feature of an archaeological nature was noted at ITM 565779/844355. A shell midden (Midden 1) was uncovered below 0.65m of topsoil and measures 1.5m (N-S) and 0.6m (E-W). The midden appears to extend under the southern edge of the test trench. The midden comprises frequent oyster shells with occasional limpets in a dark brown sandy clay. An animal tooth was also observed. No further material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 16: East facing view of Test Trench 14.**



**Plate 17: West facing view of Midden 1 in Test Trench 14.**

### 8.15 Test Trench 15

Test Trench 15 measured 98m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 14. The eastern area of the trench was located close to neighbouring housing development and contained heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill associated with the adjacent development, as well as several manholes for a foul sewer which traverses the southern area of Field 2 in an E-W direction. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder

clay with occasional small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 18: East facing view of Test Trench 15

### 8.16 Test Trench 16

Test Trench 16 measured 93m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 15. The eastern area of the trench was located close to neighbouring housing development and contained heavily compacted redeposited stoney fill associated with the adjacent development, as well as several manholes for a foul sewer which traverses the southern area of Field 2 in an E-W direction. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions.

During excavation of Test Trench 16 a feature of an archaeological nature was noted at ITM 560836/835445. A shell midden (Midden 2) was uncovered below 0.4m of topsoil and measures 1.2m (N-S) and 2.1m (E-W). The midden appears to extend under the southern edge of the test trench. The midden comprises frequent small scallop shells with occasional periwinkles in a dark brown sandy clay. No further material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 19: East facing view of Test Trench 16 showing Midden 2.**



**Plate 20: Detailed view of the shell midden in Test Trench 16.**

### 8.17 Test Trench 17

Test Trench 17 measured 117m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.6m. It was orientated in an E-W direction in the former allotment garden, now heavily overgrown, that forms the southern area of the site. The stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



**Plate 21: East facing view of Test Trench 17.**

### 8.18 Test Trench 18

Test Trench 18 measured 45m in total length, 2m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was orientated in an E-W direction, and 10m from, and parallel with, Test Trench 16. The eastern area of the trench was left unexcavated due to the presence of several manholes and a foul sewer which traverses the southern area of Field 2 in an E-W direction. The trench was excavated in the western area of the field and the stratigraphy consisted of sod over topsoil over a dark brown silty sandy subsoil over orange boulder clay with occasional small stone inclusions. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in this trench.



Plate 22: West facing view of Test Trench 18.

## 9 CONCLUSION

During test trenching a total of 18 linear trenches were excavated at regular intervals across the entire development area at Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill, Co. Sligo. Material of an archaeological nature in the form of two shell middens were noted in two of the test trenches – Test Trench 14 & 16 in Field 2. No other features were observed and following recording of the middens they were covered in geotextile material and a layer of topsoil.

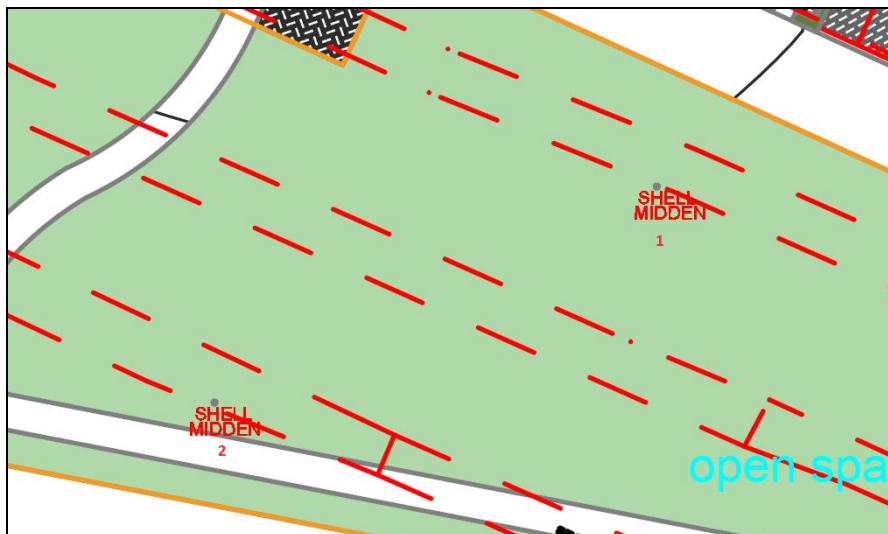


Figure 8: Extract from the trench survey showing the location of Middens 1-2 in the PDA.

## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

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Due to the location of the presence of archaeological material within the proposed development area, it is recommended that the archaeological features in the form of two shell middens should be preserved *in situ* and a zone of constraints/exclusion should be maintained during any future groundworks in the vicinity of these sites.

The extent of the constraints area should be established through consultation with the National Monuments Service and put in place for the duration of the proposed development to prevent access by site traffic or the storing of materials in this area.

Landscaping designs for the proposed housing development should consider preserving the monument within a green area with minimal landscaping, with no subsurface works and no planting of deep-rooted trees. All proposals for preservation *in situ* should be developed under guidance from a suitably qualified archaeologist, and in consultation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Should it be considered applicable to excavate (preservation by record) Midden 2 due to the close proximity of the feature to a proposed pedestrian path, all proposals for excavation should be discussed in advance with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Archaeological excavation 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.

Due to the occurrence of archaeological material at the development site, it is also recommended that archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping during the construction phase 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.

**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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