

T V A S
I R E L A N D
L T D

Crovraghan Pier, Kildyasrt, Co. Clare

Archaeological Assessment Report

for

Kildyasrt Village Renewal CLG

Licence No.: 18E0503

Graham Hull and Margaret McNamara

TVAS (Ireland) Ltd

J18/34

February 2019

ITM 527770 660187

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Co. Clare**

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Summary

Site name: Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, Co. Clare

Townland: Crovraghan

Parish: Kildysart

Barony: Clonderlaw

County: Clare

Planning Ref. No: P18/252

Client: Kildysart Village Renewal CLG, c/o PND Building Consultancy Ltd, Kilrush House, Frances Street, Kilrush, Co. Clare

Landowner: Bridget Hartnet, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

National Grid Reference: ITM 527770 660187

Naturally occurring geology: Shale

TVAS Ireland Job No: J18/34

Licence No: 18E0503

Licence Holder: Graham Hull

Recorded Monument: CL060-022

Fieldwork: Graham Hull

Site activity: Testing

Date of fieldwork: 6th September 2018

Date of report: February 2019

Report authors: Graham Hull and Margaret McNamara

Summary of results: Archaeological testing of a single test trench associated with proposed improvement works to the slipway at Crovraghan, Kildysart, Co. Clare did not reveal any archaeological features, deposits or finds.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The primary records (written, drawn and photographic) are currently held at TVAS Ireland Ltd, Ahish, Ballinruan, Crusheen, Co. Clare.

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Report edited/checked by: Kate Taylor February 2019

Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, Co. Clare
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Report J18/34a

Introduction

This report documents the results of archaeological testing undertaken in advance of improvement works to the existing slipway at Crovraghan, Kildysart, Co. Clare (ITM 527770 660187) (Figs 1 and 2).

The following Government publications set out many of the procedures relating to planning/development and archaeology:

Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (DAHGI 1999a)

Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (DAHGI 1999b)

Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS 2000)

Review of Archaeological Assessment and Monitoring Procedures in Ireland (Lambrick and Doyle 2000).

The planning background

Kildysart Village Renewal CLG, c/o PND Building Consultancy Ltd, Kilrush House, Frances Street, Kilrush, Co. Clare has applied for and been granted permission by Clare County Council (P18/252) to carry out improvement works to the existing slipway, these works include the construction of a reinforced concrete slipway and retaining wall along with all associated works at Crovraghan, Killadysert, Co. Clare (Figs 1- 2 and 5-6).

The Current slipway consists of natural shale bedrock covered with gravel chips, that slopes down from north-west to south-east to the low water mark. The slipway lies adjacent to the south side of Crovraghan Pier, which is a stone and concrete-built block with a sloping element on its southern side.

The proposed slipway, which will overlie the existing bedrock slope, will be 32m long and 6m wide and the formation level will be 0.70m beneath the modern ground surface (Figs 5 and 6). The engineering process is relatively simple and will take place above low water line. The test trenching described below examined the full extent of the works to the low water line. The tasks for construction are:

Excavate out shale slipway and replace with concrete and construct concrete retaining wall

Excavate for the wall and fit steel

Pour foundation

Set up shuttering for the wall

Pour concrete

Level top of wall, remove shuttering

Dig out excess chip shale slipway and stage on site

Install re bar to agreed spec

*Fit shuttering and secure
Pour concrete and level to agreed texture*

The grant of permission includes a condition relating to archaeology:

Prior to the commencement of the development the applicant shall employ a qualified archaeologist to carry out an archaeological impact assessment of the site. The assessment shall include terrestrial trial trenching of the area to be disturbed by the proposed development and an underwater investigation of the marine area to be impacted on. The extent and location of the investigations shall be licensed and agreed in writing with the National Monuments Service and a report on the findings submitted to the Planning Authority.

The site was inspected by the applicant and, following discussion with the developer and examination of plans, it is clear that no underwater construction activity will take place. All works will take place above the low water line and terrestrial trial trenching will achieve the aims of archaeological impact assessment. The proposed works will have no impact on the existing pier.

Location, topography and geology

The proposed development site is located in the townland of Crovraghan, in the parish of Kildysart, barony of Clonderlaw, Co. Clare (ITM 527770 660187).

The slipway is located east of the regional road R473, approximately 2.6km north-east of Kildysart village. The proposal site is a shale chip slipway that slopes steeply down into the River Fergus and is at the north end of a minor road. The adjacent land use is pasture. O'Donnell's Island (Illaunbeg) lies approximately 100m east of the proposal site. The works lie between approximately 0m and 10m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological and historical background

A search of documentary and cartographic sources was made. Information was gathered from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the *Excavations* database and publications (Bennett 1987-2010), and from holdings of the Clare County Library, Co. Clare.

The site is located in Crovraghan townland, the Irish name of which is *Croth Bhreacháin* (www.logainm.ie). Ua Cróinín and Breen (1994) provide a possible translation 'the brewing shed'.

Cartographic sources

Crovraghan is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (1840) at 6 inch to the mile as an irregular-shaped townland with similarly-shaped fields (Fig. 3). Small settlements and the occasional settlement cluster are scattered throughout. A road (modern-day R473) cuts through the western edge of the townland. Two roads branch off, one to the north-west and the other leading east through the centre of the townland. The road leading east provides access to *Crovraghan House* and appearing to cut through an enclosure (now Recorded Monument CL060-006) en route. Features south of this road include *Crovraghan Well* (CL060-003) and a sub-circular feature (CL060-004). A third road branches off to the north-east. The road that leads to Crovraghan House continues past the house and veers northwards providing access to two elongated buildings and a quay depicted as a sub-square enclosure. The location of the proposal site is shown within an irregular shaped plot along the estuary bank. The quay is located within the proposal site. The buildings are located further south, outside of

the proposal area. *O'Donnell's Island* or *Illaubeg* is located within the estuary opposite the proposal site.

The 2nd edition OS map (1913-18) at 25 inch to the mile shows changes to field boundaries (Fig. 4). *Killadysert Union Workhouse* has been constructed in the south-west corner of the townland to the west of Crovraghan Well. The workhouse is a substantial complex of buildings with a school, chapel and two pumps annotated. Another pump and well are located north of the workhouse and quarries (disused) are located north and west. Enclosures CL060-006 and CL060-004 are still visible. Another quarry, also disused, is shown north of CL060-004. The Crovraghan House complex has increased in size. The location of the proposal site has changed, in that the plot has increased in size and the quay is no longer marked on the map. A well is located west of the estuary bank just outside the proposal site area.

Later OS mapping shows little change to the landscape or site location. Modern mapping shows an increase in residential development, particularly along the R473. There have been more changes to the layout of Crovraghan House. The workhouse has been demolished and residential development constructed on the site. The proposal site location appears relatively unchanged.

Record of Monuments and Places / Sites and Monuments Record

A total of two monuments or sub-monuments are listed on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and/or Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) within 500m of the proposed works and as shown on the departmental website (www.archaeology.ie). These monuments are all listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Sites and Monuments Record / Record of Monuments and Places monuments in the vicinity of the scheme

SMR No.	Townland	Type	ITM
CL060-006	Crovraghan	Ringfort	527360 660179
CL060-022	Crovraghan	Castle - unclassified	527756 660190

These monuments likely represent early medieval settlement (ringfort) and medieval or post-medieval settlement (castle).

The proposal site is located within the area thought to once contain Crovraghan Castle. It is believed that the castle (Recorded Monument CL060-022) was standing in the later 16th century, ruinous by the end of the 18th century and levelled to its foundations by 1839. The foundations were reportedly built over and incorporated into the present pier in the 1960s. Some massive stonework is visible on the east-facing side of the pier. It is said that the castle was demolished to provide building material for nearby Crovraghan House, outbuildings and walls. A single-light 16th century window was found in the farmyard of the house (Ua Croinin and Breen 1994, www.archaeology.ie).

National Monuments Service Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database

No wrecks are known within 5km of the proposal site.

National Museum of Ireland Topographic Files

Two prehistoric stone axeheads have been discovered in the townland of Crovraghan, The precise findspot(s) are not recorded. These are listed as:

Townland: Crovraghan, Head of Inlet,
Parish: Killadysert

Barony: Clonderlaw
Find: Axehead, stone
Reg: P1954.24

Description: stone axe like tool of a pale green light-weight stone. Smoothly polished surfaces except at the butt-end which is chipped into shape and has a striking platform. The cutting-edge is injured but is narrow and rather pointed and suggest a pick.

L: 10.5cm
Central T: 2.5cm
W across middle: 4.5cm
W across platform butt: 1.5 cm

Townland: Crovraghan, Head of Inlet,
Parish: Killadysert
Barony: Clonderlaw
Find: Axehead, stone (Riverford type)
Reg: P954:25

Description: stone axe, riverford type, shale or limestone pebble roughly shaped and ground smooth on the surface towards the cutting-edge which is perfectly shaped and preserved. Irregular pointed butt. Section thick and flattish.

L: 24 cm
Average T: 4.45 cm
W Across cutting edge: 8 cm

Previous excavations

The results of archaeological investigations in Ireland are published in summary form in *Excavations* (Bennett 1987-2010) and online at www.excavations.ie. A search of both sources was made for the townland of Crovraghan. No licensed archaeological work was recorded.

Documentary Sources

Samuel Lewis, writing in the mid-19th century, describes Kildysert/Killadysert parish and post-town as located on the old mail road between Ennis and Kilrush at the point where the Shannon and Fergus rivers meet. A lot of the land is under tillage, there is bogland, and good quality building stone suitable for flags. Six islands are named in the Fergus estuary within the bounds of the parish; Corcory, Ennistubret, Inniserk, Low and Horse. Lewis tells us that the town has developed in an irregular pattern with some 60 houses, a market, fairs and a substantial barracks. Petty sessions are held every two weeks. Lewis remarks that a court is held ‘...for the manor of Crovrehan by Lord Egremont’s seneschal...’ A steam boat passes daily on route to or from Limerick. Boats (up to approx.100 tons) carry pigs, corn, butter etc. from Kildysert pier to Limerick and carry building materials and groceries back to Kildysert. There are plans to erect a pier at ‘Carriginriree’ and improve the pier ‘near Kiladysert’. Gentlemen’s seats include Ballyartney, Ross Hill, Shore Park, Lanesborough, Crowhan, Ballylane Lodge, Tonaglee and a portion of the large demesne of Cahircon. There is a vicarage with an early 19th century church and a glebe house. There are RC chapels at Kildysert, Coulmeen (Rockmount) and Cranny bridge. There are two private schools and one public. There are ruins of an older church in the burial ground near the shore and there are ‘Danish forts and tumuli’. Lewis also notes that St Senan and St Moronoc are associated with Low Island (Lewis 1837).

The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns for the reign of Elizabeth I states that Crovraghan Castle, along with several others, was granted to Conor O’Brien, Earl of Thomond, in 1560 (Burke 1994). Castle lists of 1570 and 1574 list Teige, son of Conor O’Brien, as the owner of *Corubirighane* castle (Twigge 1910; Breen 1995). The Books of Forfeiture and Distribution of 1641 state that the Earl of Thomond was the proprietor of Crovraghan and was disposed of to Teige McMahon (Frost 1893).

Thomas Dyneley, travelling through Ireland in the 1680s, provides a rough sketch of the castle, showing it situated at the waters' edge overlooking the islands (Shirely et al. 1867, 84-85). Thomas Moland's survey of 1703 provides the following description, '...it is a well improved farm having a good stone house joining to a castle with garden, orchard and parks about the said house and five or six cabins' (Moland 1703). The castle was leased to a Samuel Weakly circa 1712 (Frost 1893). A late 18th century map depicts the castle as ruined (Taylor and Skinner 1778). The Ordnance Survey Letters of 1839 tell us that the castle is levelled to its foundations (O'Donovan and Curry reproduced 1997).

The *Connaught and Munster Landed Estates* database is a comprehensive resource guide to landed estates and historic houses in those provinces for the years c. 1700-1914. According to this resource Crovraghan House formed part of the Wyndham Estate, the largest estate in County Clare, owned by Colonel George Wyndham. By the 1870s Wyndham owned almost 40,000 acres in Clare along with some 6,000 acres in Limerick and a few hundred in Tipperary. Crovraghan House was occupied by Tatlow in 1814 and J O'Donnell in 1837. At the time of O'Donnell the house was valued at approximately £10. The Cannon family occupied the house in later times, up to the 1970s (www.landedestates.ie).

O'Connor (1995) describes Kildysart workhouse; designed by the architect George Wilkinson to hold 500 inmates, it cost approx. £6.500 to build.

The front of the site at the south had a central entrance, flanked by two-storey blocks. To the rear, the main buildings had a T-shaped layout. The wing to the south probably contained the dining-hall and kitchens. The two main accommodation wings, one for men and one for women, were three stories high. The workhouse buildings no longer exist and the site is now occupied by housing.

The Griffith Valuations of 1855 list the immediate lessors in Crovraghan as Col. George Wyndham, James O'Donnell and Patrick McNamara. Twenty occupiers are listed; with surnames Burke, Brown, Carmody, Cloghessy, Forde, Fox, Garry, Hallinan, Kinnane, McInerny, McNamara, Meehan, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donnell, Sheehan and the Poor Law Guardians of the Killadysert Union (workhouse). The area of the proposal site is listed under the lessor Col. George Wyndham and occupier James O'Donnell (www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation). The 1901 census lists 154 people in the townland. The most dominant surnames are Murphy and O'Dea. Shannon, Fodge, Garry, Hallinan are also common. There are also a number of unnamed (only initials provided) individuals, presumably inhabitants of the workhouse. 130 individuals are listed in 1911; O'Dea and Murphy are still dominant as is a new surname - Russell. Again, There are again a number of unnamed individuals (www.census.nationalarchives.ie).

Meaney and Elger (2013) provide some interesting information about the islands in the Fergus estuary. Illaunbeg (also known as O'Donnell's Island/Cannons Island), located directly opposite Crovraghan Pier, is one of the smaller islands in the estuary. Illaunbeg was unpopulated but may have been used for seaweed harvesting. Inishmacowney is located south of Illaunbeg and Shore Island to the south. Inishmacowney (also known as Horse Island) is one of the larger islands and was occupied up to the mid-late 20th century when the islanders gradually moved to villages on the mainland (such as Kildysert and Ballynacally). Inishmacowney (also known as Horse Island) had a population of 142 in 184, falling to 22 by the early 1950s and was depopulated in 1970. Two ringforts and a castle (owned in the late 16th century by the same Teige MacConor O'Brien who owned Crovraghan Castle) are located on the island. Similarly to Crovraghan Castle, it is said that stone from the castle on Inishmacowney was re-used for a pier (at Kildysert). Most of the inhabitants were farmers. The island had a rowing team and was one of ten teams that took part in the All-Ireland Currach Racing Championships in Galway in the late 1950s. A talented currach maker resided on the island. Shore Island (also known as Inisharke/Inishirk/Innisherke) is one of the smaller islands and was home to a single household in the 19th century owned by Colonel Wyndham and farmed by a McNamara. A later proprietor, Edward McNamara of Woodlawn, drowned at Crovraghan. The island was depopulated by

the early 20th century. Crovraghan is mentioned as an access point to the islands along with Kildysart, Rosscliff, Lackashannagh. Meaney and Elger also describe the typical boat used on the estuary, the gandalow ‘...flat-bottomed crafts designed to navigate the large mud banks of the river...’ (2013,150). A 2008 survey of these craft carried out in 2008 identified six of this boat type moored at Crovraghan (Tully 2008). Thomas Rice Henn of Paradise House, Ballynacally, refers to gandalows used to ferry animals across the estuary. The 2008 survey also notes that when the islands were populated most of the boats were worked out of Kildysert, but following depopulation, work moved to the piers and landing places closest to the islands, including presumably Crovraghan. Walsh (2004) provides a description of the nature of Crovraghan pier;

Most central is Crovraghan Pier R278-601, a small working pier, busy during the working day. When the tide is suitable, there will be many cars left at the pier by farmers commuting to their islands. It is well sheltered by Illaunbeg 100m offshore, fast deep water filling the channel...The slipway being steep, the amount of mud to struggle past at LW is limited. Certainly it is always open at neaps, and possibly springs. The channel is then always open to N/S. The flow is very fast.

Architectural heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage of Ireland (NIAHI) describes structures of architectural heritage value across Ireland (www.buildingsofireland.ie). Buildings gain protection by being listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within development plans for any given planning authority. There are no National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) sites located within the general vicinity of the scheme.

Discussion of archaeological and historical background

The proposal site is located within a moderately rich archaeological environment, with recorded monuments dating from the medieval to post-medieval periods. The history of Crovraghan townland and pier is influenced by its location on the Fergus estuary and proximity to the islands therein. A quay is first shown on the 1840 OS map. The current pier is later in date although may incorporate earlier elements. Crovraghan Castle (CL060-022) once stood in this general area and dates to the later medieval period (at least 16th century). It appears that the castle foundations were incorporated into the present pier and stone from the demolished building was also used in the construction of Crovraghan House. There is potential for the survival of features associated with the castle, quay/pier and/or maritime activity. This potential was not fulfilled by the test trenching (see below).

Test Trenching – objectives

Test excavation took place at the proposed development site in order to supplement the documentary research for this assessment and, specifically, to establish the nature and extent of any archaeological deposits and features.

A licence to excavate was granted to Graham Hull by the National Monuments Section of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland. The licence number is 18E0503.

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 provide the legislative framework within which archaeological excavation can take place.

Test Trenching – methodology

Test trenching should be sufficient in scale to be able to characterise the deposits within them without significantly compromising the effectiveness of any subsequent excavation (Lambrick and Doyle 2000).

The development site is approximately rectangular and has an area of approximately 2,590m². The area impacted by the development is smaller (approximately 192m² and measures approximately 6m by 32m). A single test trench 38.7m long and 1.2m wide was opened giving an area of investigation of approximately 46.4m², giving a 24% coverage of the total area.

The test trenching was undertaken using a 360 degree 6 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a 1.2m toothless grading bucket. Modern overburden (shale chippings) was removed under direct and continuous archaeological supervision and the spoil was visually scanned for artefacts. Where necessary the bases and sides of the trenches were cleaned using hand tools and a written, drawn and photographic record was made according to the TVAS (Ireland) Ltd Field Recording Manual (First Edition 2003).

The test trenching was undertaken by Graham Hull on September 6th 2018.

Test Trenching – Results (Fig. 5 and Plates 1-6)

The single test trench was 38.7m long, 1.2m wide and had a depth of 0.20m with a stratigraphy of natural river-muddied shale pieces overlying unmuddied naturally deposited shale pieces and more substantial shale bedrock.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

The test trenching was conducted to the full extent of the works – in particular it should be noted that this was to the low water line. No works below this point will be made.

It was noted that there are large stone blocks incorporated into the pier that may have derived from or be part of Crovraghan Castle. Neither these stones, nor any part of the pier, will be impacted by the proposed development.

Finds

No archaeological artefacts were observed.

Samples

No samples were taken.

Test Trenching – Discussion

The proposal site is located within a moderately rich archaeological environment, with recorded monuments dating from the medieval to post-medieval periods. There was potential for the discovery of features associated with Crovraghan Castle, quay/pier or any other maritime activity. Despite this proximity to known monuments, no archaeology was encountered during test trenching.

Archaeological Impact Statement

In accordance with *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (DAHGI 1999b), an archaeological impact statement is to be made. The impact statement should describe the following:

...possible direct or indirect effects of the proposed development on archaeological deposits, features or objects. The archaeological impact statement must be based on the results of the overall archaeological assessment as well as the results of the test excavation. (DAHGI 1999b, 21)

The documentary research has demonstrated that the proposal site is within an area of moderately high archaeological potential and is located within the area of a recorded monument. However, as no archaeological features or deposits were observed during testing, it can be stated with a high degree of certainty that no archaeological monuments will be directly impacted by the proposed upgrading of the slipway. The indirect impact is very low as the works are not substantial and the monument (castle) does not present as a recognisable historic structure.

The test trenching assessed the full extent of the works to the low water line. No works will take place below this level.

It is recommended that no further archaeological input is required for this project.

The opinions given in this archaeological assessment report are made subject to approval by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Further Work

An accessible archive of primary records will be prepared for long term storage and will be deposited with the National Monuments Service's Archive Unit in Swords in accordance with their guidelines (Barrett 2012).

A summary of the findings of the excavation will be submitted to *Excavations 2018*.



Graham Hull
TVAS Ireland Ltd
February 2019

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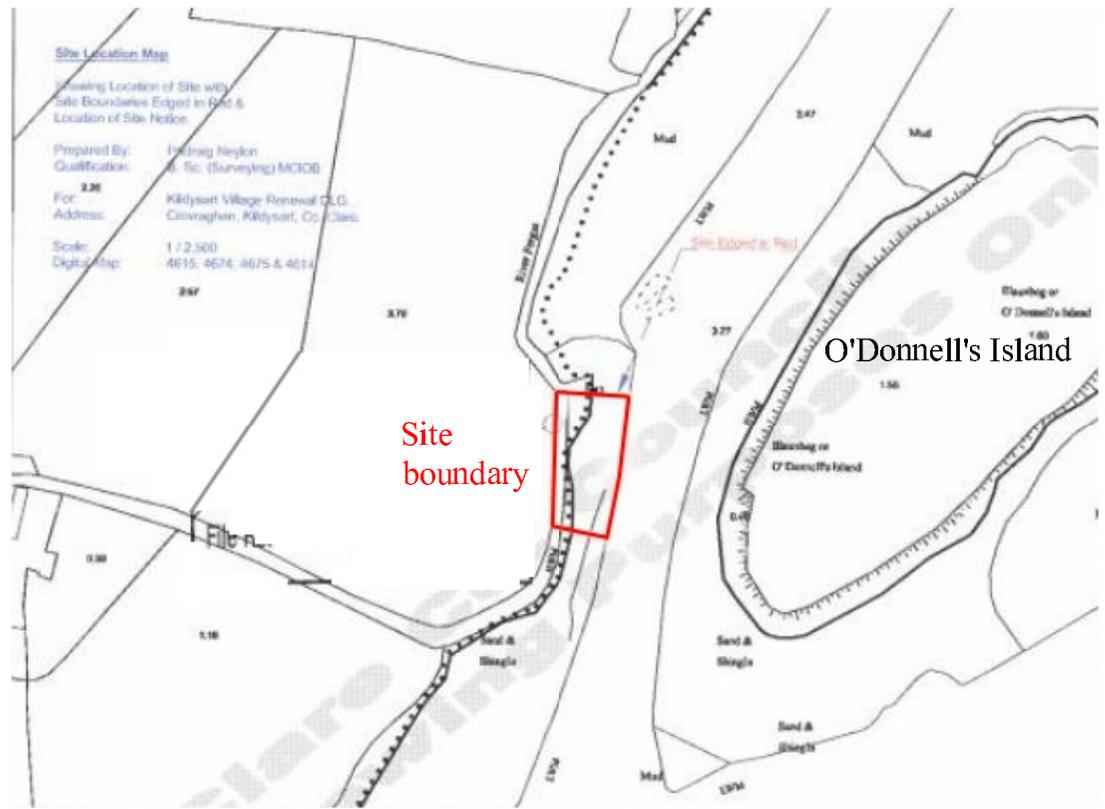
Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, Co. Clare 18E0503

Figure 1: Site location

Scale 1:50,000 @ A4. Grid NGR

Based on Ordnance Survey Discovery Series 1:50,000
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R. Fergus

J18/34



Scale 1:4,000 @ A4

Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, Co. Clare 18E0503

Figure 2: Proposed development location plan

Based on OSI mapping supplied by client
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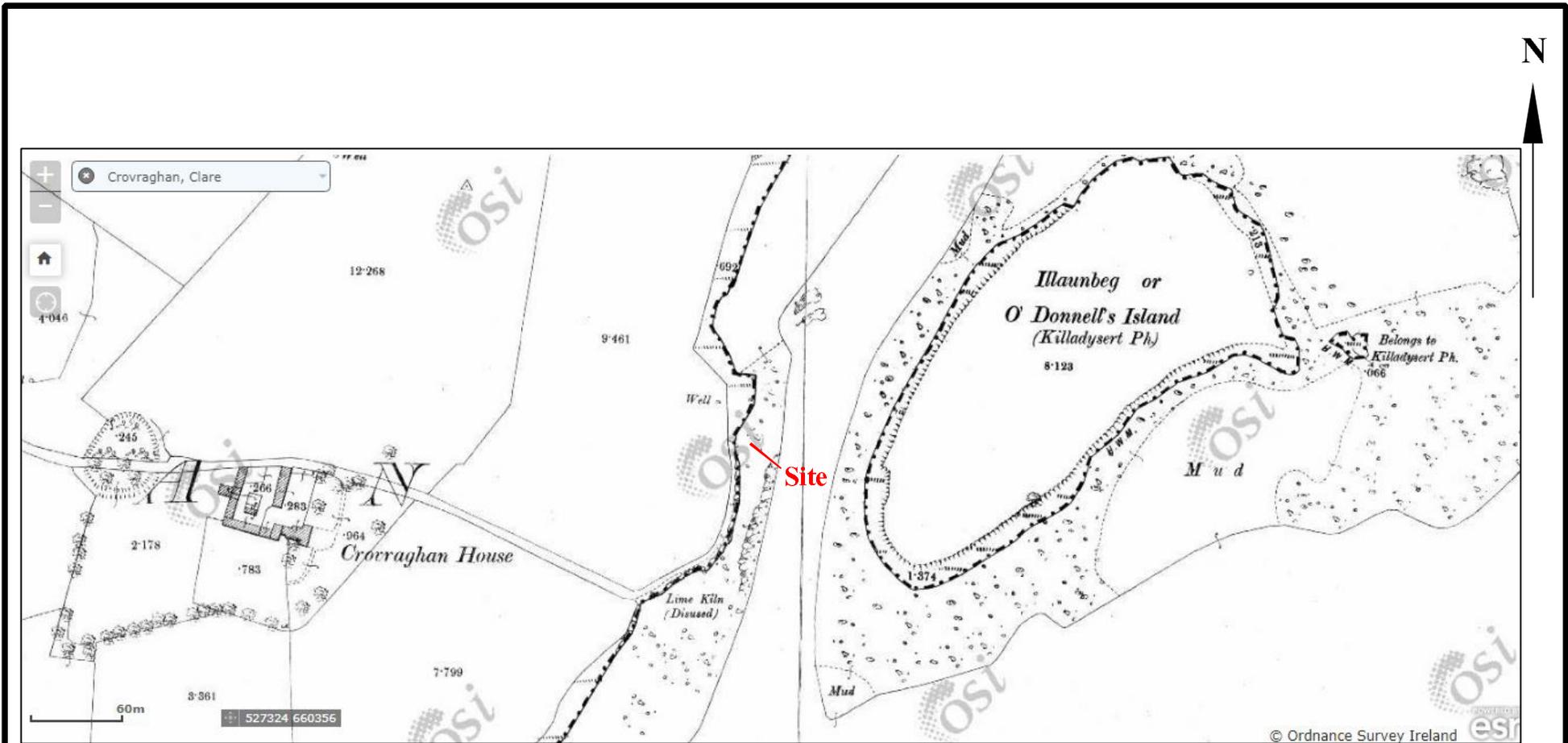
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Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, C. Clare 18E0503

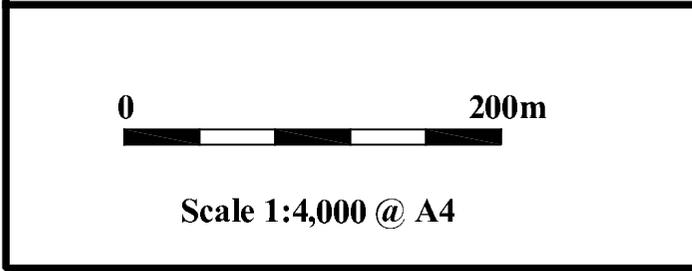
Figure 3: 1840 Ordnance Survey map

Based on OS 1st Edition 6" to mile (not reproduced to scale)
 Surveyed 1840, published 1842
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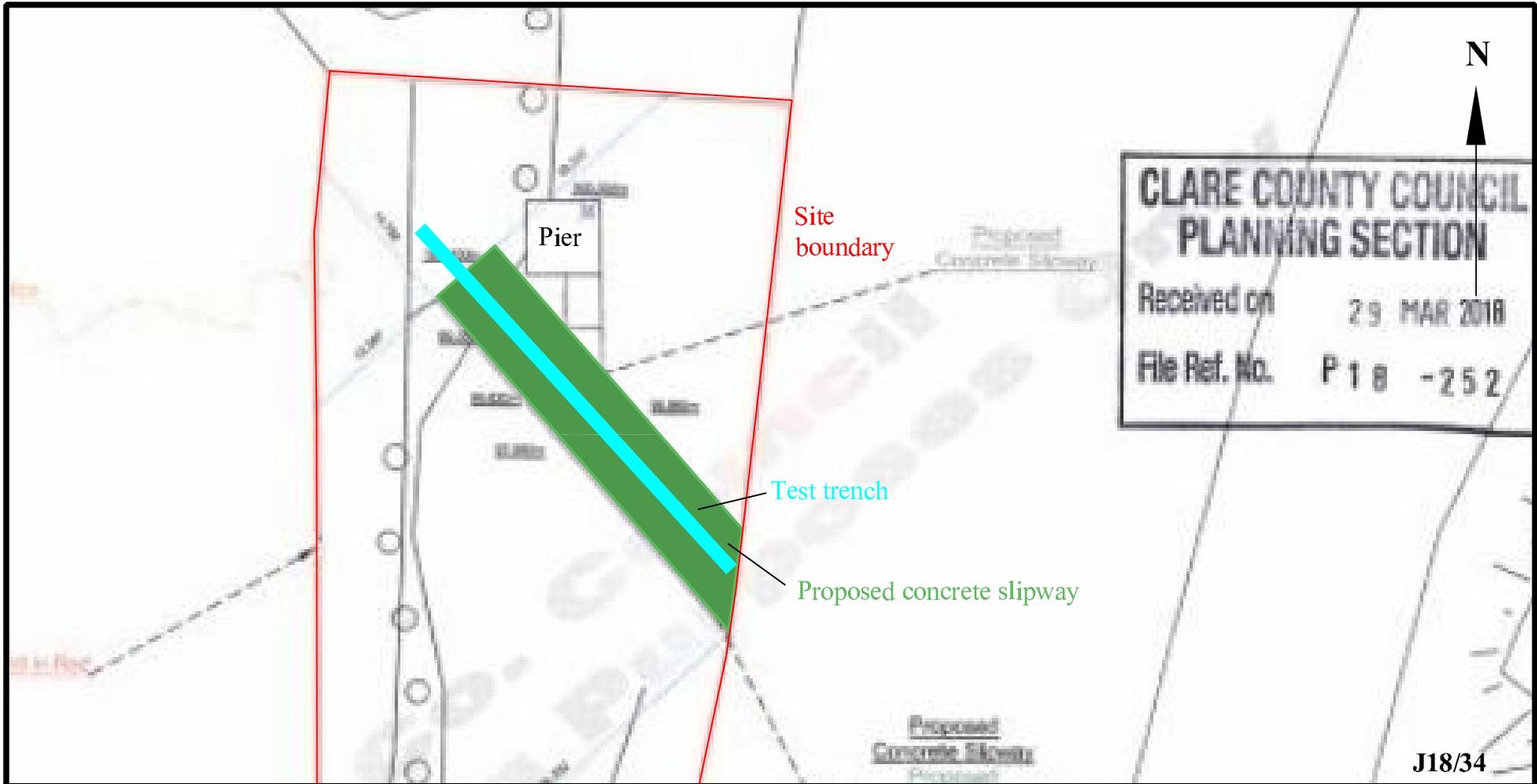


Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, C. Clare 18E0503

Figure 4: 1913-18 Ordnance Survey map

Based on OS 1st Edition 25" to mile (not reproduced to scale)
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0 25m

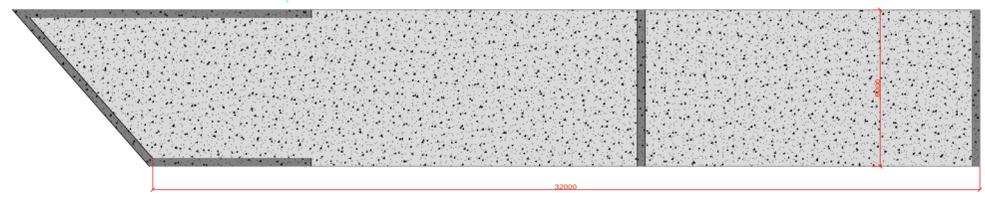
Scale 1:500 @ A4

Crovraghan Pier, Kildysart, Co. Clare 18E0503

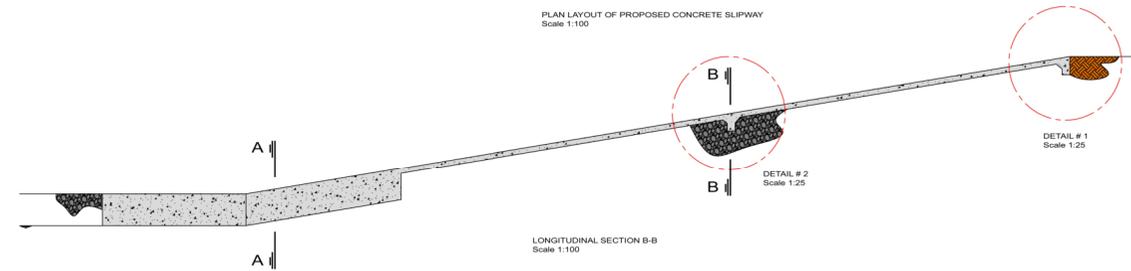
Figure 5: Proposed development and test trench

Based on OSI mapping supplied by client
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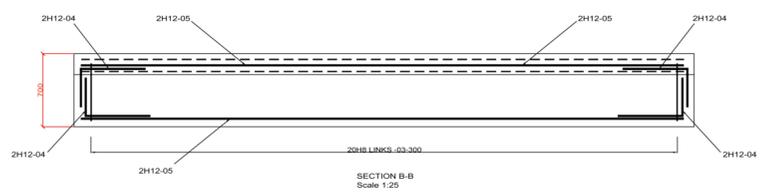
PLAN LAYOUT OF PROPOSED CONCRETE SLIPWAY
Scale 1:100



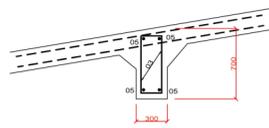
LONGITUDINAL SECTION B-B
Scale 1:100

DETAIL # 1
Scale 1:25

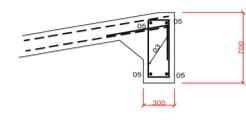
DETAIL # 2
Scale 1:25



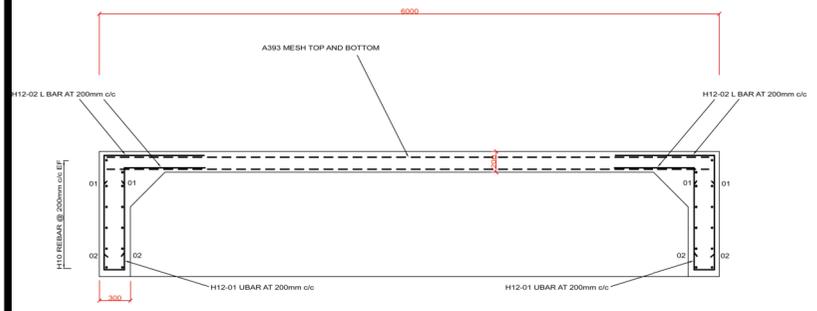
SECTION B-B
Scale 1:25



DETAIL # 2
Scale 1:25



DETAIL # 1
Scale 1:25



SECTION A-A
Scale 1:25

J18/34



Scale 1:500 @ A4

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Figure 6: Proposed development technical detail

Based on drawing provided by and copyright of Fergal Coughlan and Associates





Plate 1: Pier. Note large stone blocks in wall. Looking west. Scales 1m



Plate 2: Pier. Site of slipway beyond end of pier at left. Looking south-west. Scales 1m



Plate 3: Pier and top of slipway. Looking south-east



Plate 4: Test trench along route of new slipway surface. Looking south-east. Scales 1m



Plate 5: Test trench. Looking north-west. Pier at right. Scales 1m



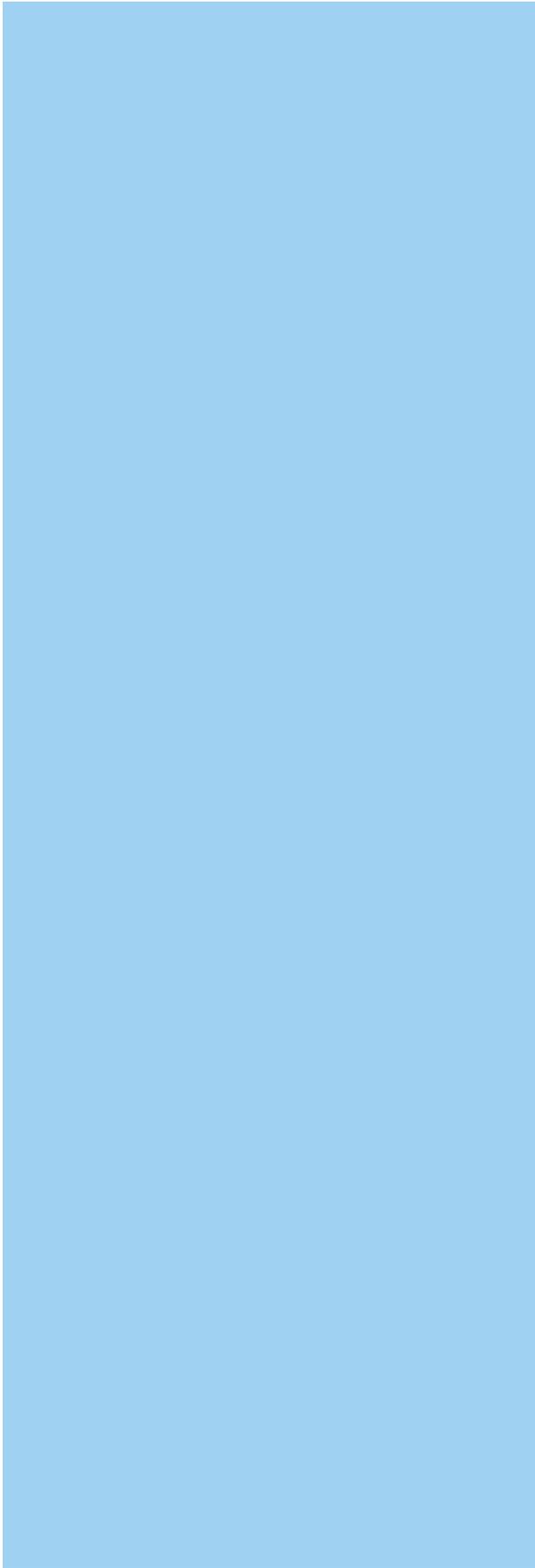
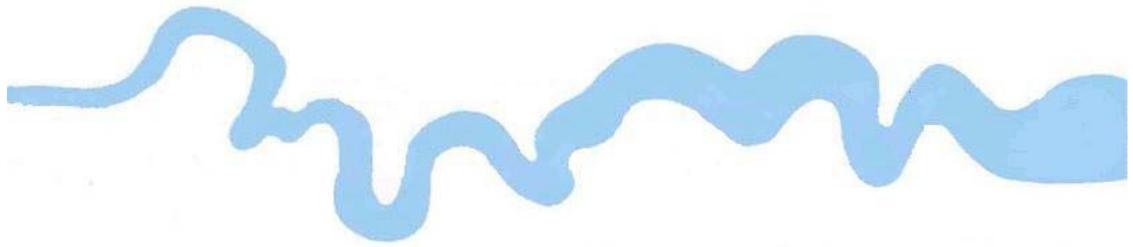
Plate 6: Test trench. Looking north-west. Scales 1m

J18/34

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Plates 1 - 6

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L T D



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