

# Archaeological Impact Assessment for a Housing Development at Longford Road, Duleek



Prepared for DSPL Limited  
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## Disclaimer

The results, conclusions and recommendations contained within this report are based on information available at the time of its preparation. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that all relevant data has been collated, the author and AMS accept no responsibility for omissions and/or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available subsequent to the report's completion.

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## Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of geophysical and archaeological testing of lands on Longford Rd, Duleek, Co. Meath, carried out in advance of a proposed housing development. It also assesses the likely archaeological impact of an updated project design and makes recommendations for mitigation of predicted archaeological impacts.

All lands associated with the proposed development have been the subject of comprehensive geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching. Substantial early medieval remains, likely associated with the monastic foundation of Duleek, were identified in the survey and test trenches. These are located in the eastern and southern portions of the site.

The finalised design of the proposed development indicates that it would impact on the identified archaeological remains. It would therefore be necessary to, following consultation with the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland, archaeologically excavate and preserve these remains by record in advance of any development. Should it be decided to archaeologically excavate these remains, it is recommended, as per the original testing reports, that two areas (90x35m and 145x60m) be the subjects of full archaeological excavation and that the remainder of the site be archaeologically monitored during groundworks.

All recommendations are subject to the approval of NMS and Meath County Council.

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## Abbreviations and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
<b>ADS</b>	Archaeological Development Services Ltd
<b>AMS</b>	Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd
<b>NMI</b>	National Museum of Ireland
<b>NMS</b>	National Monuments Service
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>RMP</b>	Record of Monuments and Places

## Introduction

### Project Background

Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd (AMS) has been commissioned by DSPL Ltd to summarise archaeological works carried out in advance of a proposed housing estate at Longford Road, Duleek, Co. Meath, and to make recommendations for mitigation based upon an updated project design. The lands were the subject of geophysical survey (Leigh 2008a & b) and archaeological testing (Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b) by Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS) in 2008. ADS are no longer trading. The project was assigned a pre-planning ref. ABP-305722-19 by An Bord Pleanála.

### Site Location

The site comprises 4.88 hectares of green-field lands centred on 704238E, 768550N. It is in the townland of Commons or *An Coimín* on Longford Rd, Duleek village, County Meath (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the southeast by the old village of Duleek and abuts the *vallum* of the ecclesiastical enclosure (ME027-038019), which is still visible in the modern street layout to the southeast. In all other directions (i.e. to the north, west and south), the site is now surrounded by relatively modern housing developments.

### Proposed Works

DSPL Limited, intends to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development on a site area of 4.8ha located at Longford Road / The Steeples Road, Duleek, Co. Meath in the townland of Commons. To the northwest of the site is the Stoneyford Green residential estate, to the west, on the opposite side of Longford Road / The Steeples Road, is The Steeples residential estate, with Larrix Mews / Kennel Lane to the east-southeast.

The proposed development will consist of 141 no. dwellings and a 2 storey creche (415sq.m). The residential dwellings will be comprised of 131 no. 2 storey houses and 10 no. 1 bed apartments accommodated 4 no. 2 storey buildings. The proposed houses consist of 4 no. 4 bed detached houses, 18 no. 3 & 4 bed semi-detached houses, 102 no. 3 & 4 bed terraced houses and 7 no. 2 bed terraced houses.

The proposed development provides for all associated site development works, including the provision of a roadside footpath and cyclepath along Longford Road / The Steeples Road, sub-stations, car parking, bin & bicycle storage, public and communal open spaces, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatments and public lighting. Access to the development will be via one new vehicular entrance off Longford Road / The Steeples Road, with pedestrian / cyclist access provided along the northern & eastern boundaries (Figure 2).

## **Purpose and Scope of this Assessment**

This assessment summarises all previous archaeological works and assesses the potential archaeological impacts of the updated project design. It also makes further recommendations for possible mitigation measures.

## **Methodology**

The assessment involved the compilation and summary of all previous reports and the overlay of the updated proposed design on archaeological areas identified. It includes an archaeological background survey previously compiled by the author under the auspices of Archaeological Service Providers Ltd for the client, DSPL Ltd.

## Archaeological and Historical Background

The town name 'Duleek' is derived from the old Irish word *damliac*, meaning stone church. Mentions of Duleek in the early Irish annals suggest that Duleek was the site of the first stone-built church in Ireland and an important early Christian ecclesiastical site. The following section reviews known activity within the vicinity by period, and previous excavations and finds from the vicinity.

### Mesolithic

There is archaeological evidence for human activity in County Meath from the Mesolithic period onwards. Two lakeside platforms have been excavated at Moynagh Lough and at Clowanstown. Stray finds of microliths and Bann flakes indicate an early presence in the county. However, to date there is no evidence for Mesolithic activity near the proposed development.

### Neolithic

The most common upstanding monuments, dating to the Neolithic period, are megalithic tombs. These tombs are divided into four classes: court tombs, portal tombs, passage tombs and wedge tombs (wedge tombs are early Bronze Age). The three former classes are represented in County Meath.

A typical portal tomb, such as the one at Ervey, consists of two large door stones or portals, a back stone and often side stones. A large capstone, often of enormous proportions, is placed on the stones, providing a small chamber. Passage tombs are by far the most numerous megalithic tombs in County Meath, with a large passage tomb cemetery located in the Boyne Valley. Passage tombs get their name from the large orthostats (upright stones), occasionally decorated with megalithic art, used to construct a passage usually leading into a burial chamber. Some passage tombs may have multiple chambers and are generally covered by a cairn or mound. Wedge tombs are so named by the distinctive way the roof slopes down towards the back of the tomb and are taller and wider at the entrance.

Some Neolithic house sites and evidence for temporary dwellings have been found in County Meath. At Duleek Quarry, archaeological trial-trenching (02E0444) uncovered an area of burning associated with an elongated stone setting and some post holes. Sherds of Neolithic pottery were recovered from the area and indicate a Neolithic date for the site.

### Bronze Age

Bronze Age activity is represented by a range of monuments including tumuli, cairns and barrows. Tumuli are mounds of earth often used to cover or contain burial deposits. Cairns are stone mounds used for the same purpose. Barrows are burial monuments dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

There are several different classes of barrows but in general they consist of a circular enclosing element of ditches and sometimes banks. The interior, where burials are usually found, may be flat or have a mound of varying height. Bronze Age burials are often found in flat cemeteries in stone cists or earth-cut pits. These cemeteries are generally not evidenced above ground. Located within the vicinity of the proposed development, the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) records a single barrow site (ME027-025).

A few stone circles and ceremonial enclosures are known in County Meath. Stone circles consist of a circular area delineated by a ring of, often large, boulders. Occasionally burials are associated with them, but it is generally accepted that they had a ceremonial or ritual purpose. Similar ceremonial enclosures include pit circles, timber circles and embanked enclosures, all of which are found in County Meath, especially near the Boyne Valley passage tomb cemetery.

Bronze Age domestic sites are generally not evident above ground and are normally uncovered through excavation. Structures are generally circular in plan and 7–15m in diameter. Several sites have been identified in County Meath, but none are known near the proposed development.

One of the key cultural indicators of the Bronze Age is burnt mounds, comprised of heat-shattered stones. It is traditionally held that hot stones were placed in a trough of water, thus heating the water for a variety of possible purposes such as cooking or bathing (such sites are referred to as *fulachta fiadh*). A *fulacht fiadh*, along with large amounts of Bronze Age pottery and struck lithics, was identified to the east of the town in Prioryland townland during construction of the wastewater collection system in 2008 (08E0929).

## Iron Age

The evidence for human activity during the Iron Age is not as forthcoming as in other periods. Several royal sites have been dated to this period, the most famous one being on the Hill of Tara, 20km west of Duleek. Relatively few settlement sites have been identified. However, the boom in construction during the 'Celtic Tiger' years to some degree filled in that picture (see Becker et al. 2017). Late Bronze Age hilltop enclosures and hillforts may also have continued in use into the Iron Age. Similarly, burial monuments are not as common but there is a significant body of evidence to suggest that barrows continued to be built and used into the Iron Age.

## Early Medieval

In the fifth century, Christianity was introduced to Ireland and one of the early churches founded in Ireland, possibly the first stone church, was built in Duleek. As mentioned above, the place name Duleek comes from the old Irish word for stone church, *damliaic* (Manning 2000). It began as an early

Christian monastic settlement. St Patrick established a bishopric here about AD450, which on 24 November 489 he placed in the care of St Cianán. St Cianán is believed to have given his name to the local tribe, the *Ciannachta* (Byrne 2000). Today, the outline of the ecclesiastical enclosure (or *vallum*) is preserved in the street pattern. At least three churches are known to have stood within the enclosure in early Christian times: St. Cianán's, St Patrick's and St Carban's. Within the enclosure two high crosses are still preserved. Between the ninth and twelfth centuries, the monastic site was plundered nine times by both the Irish and the Vikings, indicating that this was a sizeable and important settlement. In the early twelfth century, during the Church reforms, Duleek was designated the see of a bishopric (Halpin and Newman 2006, 288). Just prior to the coming of the Anglo-Normans, an Augustinian Priory dedicated to St Mary was founded at Duleek.

During the early medieval period, a new type of settlement enclosure became common. Ringforts consist of a circular area enclosed by a bank and an external ditch; sometimes there can be up to three sets of such defences. Some enclosure sites may represent less well-preserved ringforts. Occasionally, souterrains are associated with ringforts, but are also found in isolation. A souterrain is an underground chamber probably used as a place of refuge during attack or as a storage place in more peaceful times.

Duleek town centre is a Recorded Monument (ME027-038) and contains several early medieval sites. An ecclesiastical enclosure (ME027-038019) encompasses the old town and contains the fragmentary remains of an early medieval church (ME027-038001), two high crosses (ME027-038004 and ME027-038005), grave slabs (ME027-038002 and ME027-038008), a Romanesque architectural fragment (ME027-038007) and a round tower (ME027-038009). Two enclosures (ME027-021 and ME027-026) and two souterrains (ME027-024 and ME027-038018) are also recorded.

## Medieval and Onwards

In 1171, Duleek was attacked and burned by Anglo-Normans and an earthen motte appears to have been constructed on the north side of the town. The motte was burned in 1175 but was repaired and became the centre of a manor belonging to Hugh de Lacy. A grange of the Augustinian house of Llanthony Secunda (Gloucesheshire) and dedicated to St Michael was established by Hugh de Lacy c.1180. However, by 1541 the grange was granted to Sir Gerald Moore during Dissolution of the Monasteries (Bradley 1985). A hospital (leper house) dedicated to St Mary Magdalen was established by the early thirteenth century. The town was granted an annual fair in 1284 and was listed as one of the market towns of Meath in 1598. Subsequently it seems to have lost its prominence and mention of Duleek in the literary sources becomes less frequent. The Civil Survey of 1654 records 51 houses, St

Kenan's church, a priory, a stone house called the 'colledge', a mill and two stone bridges. In 1690, the Jacobite army retreated over the bridge of Duleek after the Battle of the Boyne (Murtagh 2006, 64).

The Record of Monuments and Places lists several medieval and post medieval sites at Duleek. A motte site (ME027-038017) is recorded on the northern part of the town. Several sites are associated with the Augustinian grange (ME027-038011); these include two gatehouses (ME027-038012 and ME027-038014), a church (ME027-038013), a building (ME027-038015) and a field system (ME027-038016). Several medieval buildings and associated boundaries with evidence for metal working were excavated and are now recorded sites (ME027-038020, ME027-038021, ME027-038022, ME027-038023, ME027-038024, ME027-038025 and ME027-038027). A medieval church (ME027-038001) and tomb chest (ME027-038006) are also recorded. Two wayside crosses are situated in the town (ME027-023 and ME027-038010). Two medieval bridges are recorded in Duleek (ME027-019 and ME027-020).

During the construction for the wastewater collection system various medieval remains were uncovered within the town, especially within Abbeylands. These included walls, cobbled surfaces, medieval tiles and an ogee-headed window (08E025).

## Receiving Environment

### Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under *the National Monuments Acts (1930–94)* and is the statutory list of protected places and monuments. It is based upon the older non-statutory Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and information from county archaeological inventories. It records known upstanding archaeological monuments, the original location of destroyed monuments and the location of possible sites identified through documentary, cartographic and photographic research and field inspections. The RMP consists of a numbered list, organised by county and subdivided by six-inch Ordnance Survey map sheets showing the location of each site. The RMP data is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey, which combines cartographic sources and all published and publicly available documentary sources including periodicals, the records of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the aerial photographs of the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI).

Prior to the geophysical survey and archaeological test-trenching (discussed below), there were no known monuments within the bounds of the proposed development site. However, the outline of the ecclesiastical enclosure (ME027-038019) runs along the southeastern extent of the site.

The RMP sites neighbouring the proposed development site are listed in Appendix 1. As outlined above, there are a range of recorded monuments including a barrow, an ecclesiastical enclosure, two souterrains and two unclassified enclosures. An early medieval church is associated with two high crosses, grave slabs and a round tower. An Augustinian Grange containing two gatehouses, a church and a building are also recorded. Excavations revealed the remains of several twelfth- to fourteenth-century house foundations and associated metal working. In the town two wayside crosses and two medieval bridges are known. This evidence suggests continued human occupation and settlement in the area from prehistory to the present day.

### Previous Excavations

The Excavations Bulletin and its online database contains summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland – North and South – from 1970. It has been compiled from the published Excavations Bulletins from those years, with a similar format. The website database can be browsed or searched using multiple fields, including Year, County, Site Type, Grid Reference, Licence No., Sites and Monuments Record No. and Author.

The excavations carried out near the proposed development site are listed in Appendix 2. Several sites had no archaeological significance. Neolithic activity was identified at one site. Some sections of the

ecclesiastical enclosure and a souterrain have been excavated. Several twelfth- to fourteenth-century houses were also excavated.

In 2008–09, test trenching and excavations connected with the wastewater collection system were carried out in Duleek. Various remains were found in and around the town. These included significant Bronze Age remains in Prioryland townland (08E0929) and medieval remains in Abbeylands (08E025).

The test excavations and geophysical surveys carried out on the lands in question are discussed separately below.

### Topographic Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) identify all recorded stray finds held in the NMI archive that have been acquired by the State in accordance with National Monuments legislation. The files sometimes include correspondence and reports on excavations undertaken by NMI archaeologists in the early twentieth century. The amount and the usefulness of the information on each stray find vary considerably. The finds are listed by county and townland and/or street name.

The Topographic Files were inspected in 2008 at the Irish Antiquities Department, National Museum of Ireland, for the following townlands near Duleek: Commons, Bellewstown, Knockisland, Prioryland, Abbeyland, Balsaran, Garballagh, Downestown, Longford, Newtown and Blackditch. The findings are listed below in Table 1 and more details are provided in Appendix 3.

**Table 1: Stray finds from the vicinity of the proposed development site**

NMI Register No.	Townland	Find	Notes
IA/41/1976	Commons	Medieval potsherd	Medieval potsherd recovered from St Mary's graveyard
1973:9	Abbeyland	Human bones	The remains of four individuals from the Grange of Llanthony Secunda
1973:10a-g	Abbeyland	Human bones	The remains of eight individuals from the Grange of Llanthony Secunda
2006:84 IA/156/2006	Downestown	Iron Blade	Iron blade
L1934:7-8	Newtown	Battle axe and stone hammer	Battle axe and stone hammer found in 'White Rock' field
IA/26/81	Commons	Pottery fragments	Sherds of medieval pottery recovered from site of motte

### Cartographic Sources

The following cartographic references were consulted online at [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie) and [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie):

- Ordnance Survey six-inch Sheet 27, Co. Meath, 1st edition (1837)

- Cassini six-inch map (1940s)

### **First-Edition Ordnance Survey Six-Inch Map, Co. Meath Sheet 27 (1837)**

The Ordnance Survey, undertaken in the nineteenth century, was part of a countrywide effort to enable the accurate valuation of all property and assess liability for taxes and rates. The Ordnance Survey (OS) maps illustrated the Irish landscape with a level of detail not attempted before that time.

The first-edition OS map depicting the proposed development area was published in 1837. Comparison of the 1837 map with recent OS mapping indicates that there has been little change to the field layout in the proposed development during the intervening years. The 1837 map depicts the fields where the site is located as a single field, which has since being divided into three separate fields. At the east of the field, the line of the ecclesiastical enclosure is preserved in a disused lane and field boundary running from Larrix Street towards Main Street.

### **Cassini Six-Inch Map, Co. Meath Sheet 27 (1940s)**

The Cassini six-inch map (1940s) shows little appreciable difference when compared with the first-edition map (1837). However, by this stage the field had been subdivided into smaller fields. These divisions are still visible today. Several fields surrounding Duleek have been divided in a similar manner.

## Geophysical Survey and Archaeological Test-trenching

The area of the proposed development was comprehensively surveyed and archaeologically tested in two phases, I and II (Leigh 2008a & b; Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b).

The geophysical survey identified a series of linear and curvilinear responses in the southeast and along the southern boundary of the site (Figure 4). These were interpreted as suggestive of an archaeological complex and possibly associated with the recorded ecclesiastical enclosure ME027-038019. Linear trending, potentially representing ridge and furrow cultivation, was noted elsewhere (Leigh 2008a & b).

Forty-eight archaeological test-trenches between 15m and 43m long and 2m wide were mechanically excavated (Figure 5). Six of these were placed to target the geophysical anomalies noted along the south and southeast of the site and the other 42 were placed to test the remainder of the area of the development.

The test-trenching confirmed the presence of archaeological remains in those areas where geophysical anomalies were noted and suggests that the areas void of geophysical anomalies are also largely void of archaeological remains. In all, archaeological remains were encountered within seven, possibly eight, trenches, all within the south and southeast of the site (Figure 6).

The archaeological remains encountered included ditches, one of which forms a substantial enclosure likely appended to the ecclesiastical enclosure ME027-038019, postholes, stakeholes, pits and roughly-cobbled or tempered work surfaces. Artefactual evidence included medieval pottery, butchered animal bone and one sherd of possible prehistoric pottery. These remains constitute a significant archaeological resource that should either be preserved *in situ* or be the subject of full archaeological excavation in advance of the proposed project's construction stage (Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b).

## Predicted Impact of the Development

The updated project design impacts upon the known archaeological remains identified in the geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching (Figure 7).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Significant archaeological remains were identified within the southeastern and southern portions of the proposed development. These are likely to be mostly of early and later medieval date and be associated with the ecclesiastical/monastic origins of Duleek village but may also include a prehistoric element.

It was recommended in the original testing reports (Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b) that should development go ahead, two areas c.145x60m and 90x35m should be the subject of full excavation in advance of any construction works. It was further recommended that all subsequent topsoil stripping and/or invasive groundworks should be archaeologically monitored.

The updated project design still impacts upon the southeast and south of the development area, and therefore the recommendations made in 2008 (Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b) remain. Should the development progress in its current form, the two areas (Figure 8) should be fully archaeologically excavated under licence prior to the groundworks following consultation with the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and the National Museum of Ireland. The remainder of the development should be subject to a licensed monitoring/watching brief during all topsoil stripping or invasive groundworks outside of those areas.

All recommendations are subject to the approval of NMS and Meath County Council.

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## Figures

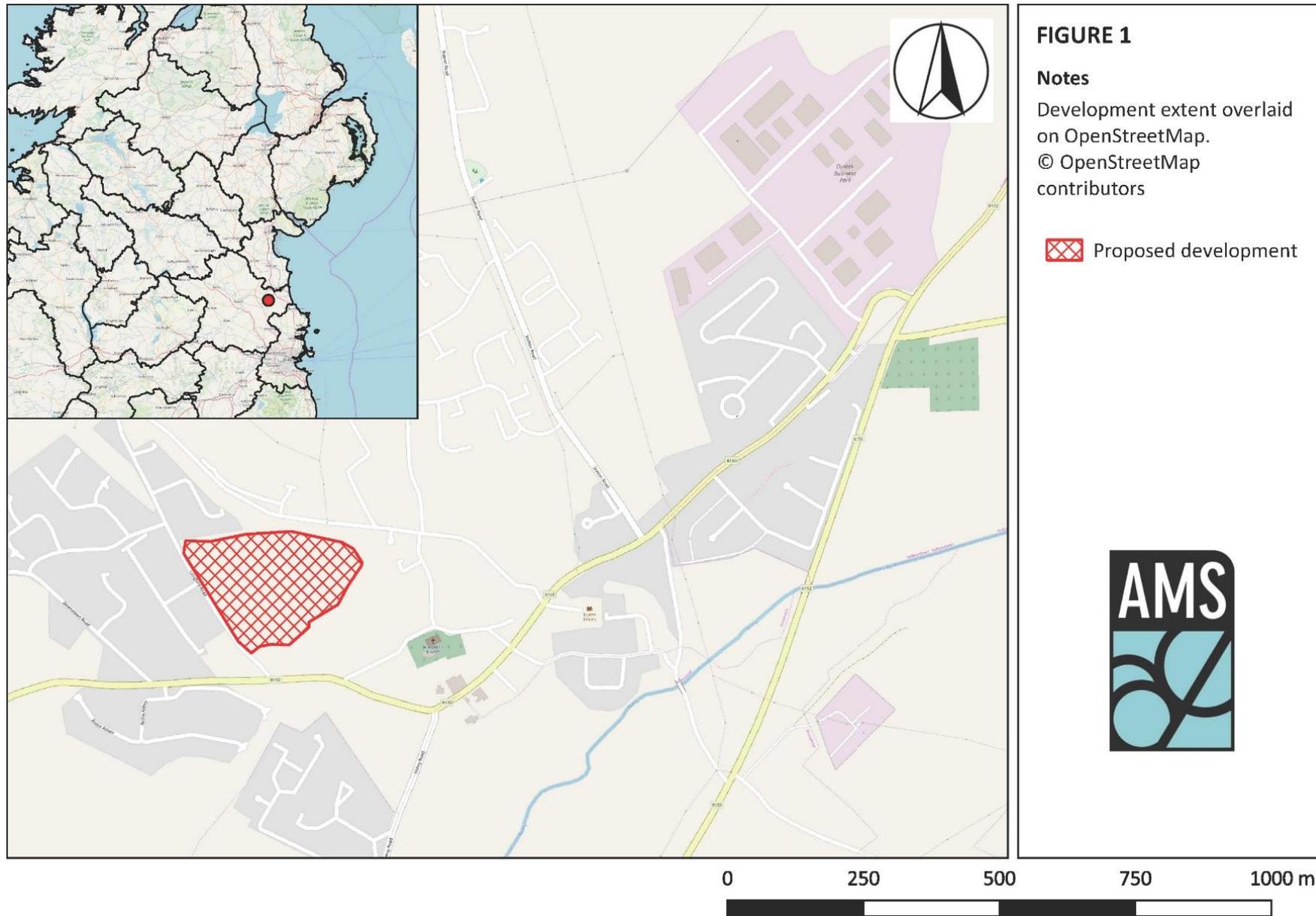


Figure 1: Site Location



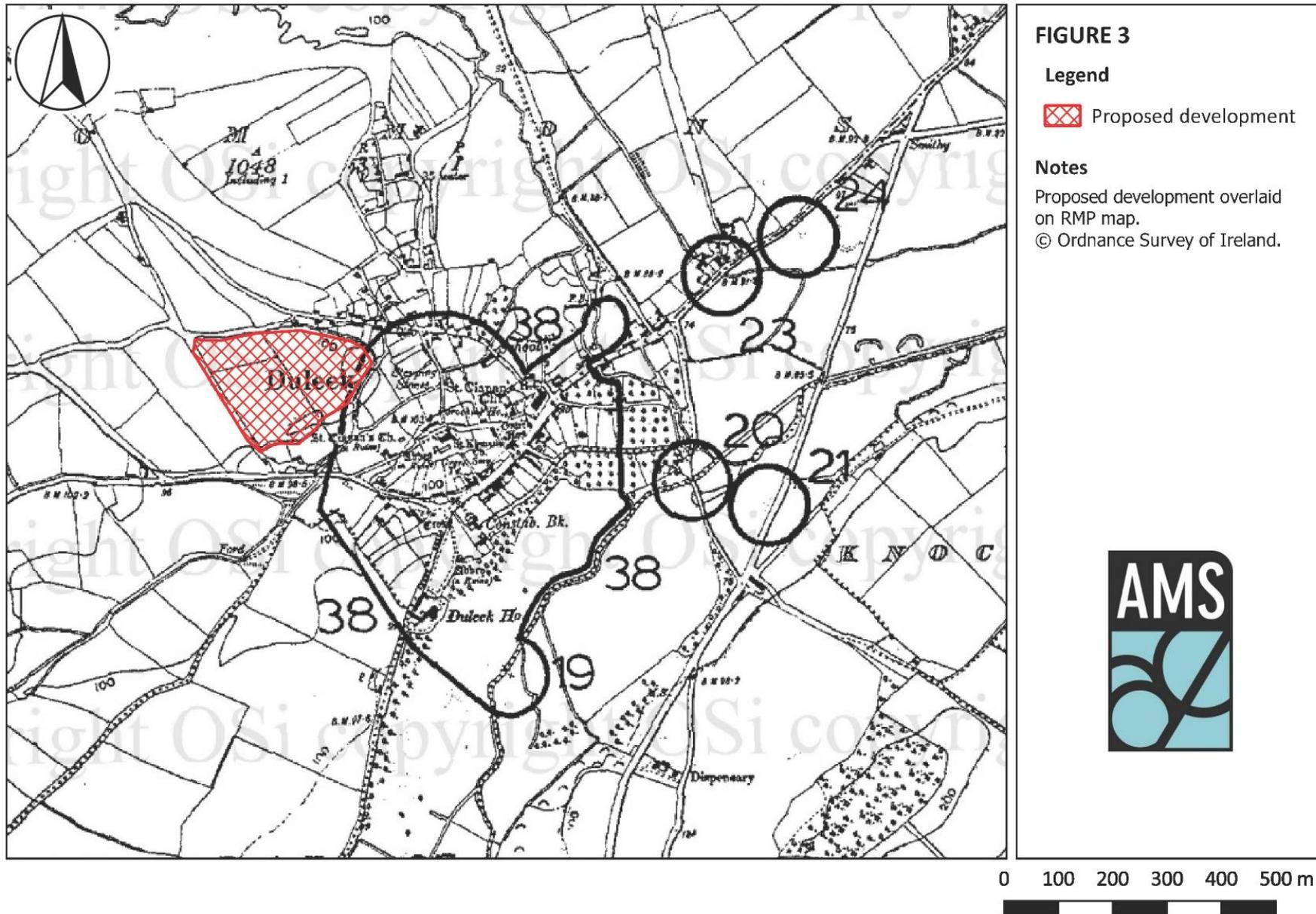


Figure 3: Proposed development in relation to the Record of Monuments and Places

**FIGURE 4****Notes**

Geophysical survey by J.M. Leigh for ADS (2008).



Figure 4: Combined geophysical surveys from phase I and II (Leigh 2008a & b)

**FIGURE 5****Notes**

Test trenches overlaid on geophysical survey by J.M. Leigh for ADS (2008).



Figure 5: Location of the test-trenches from phase I and II (Ó Maoldúin 2008a & b)



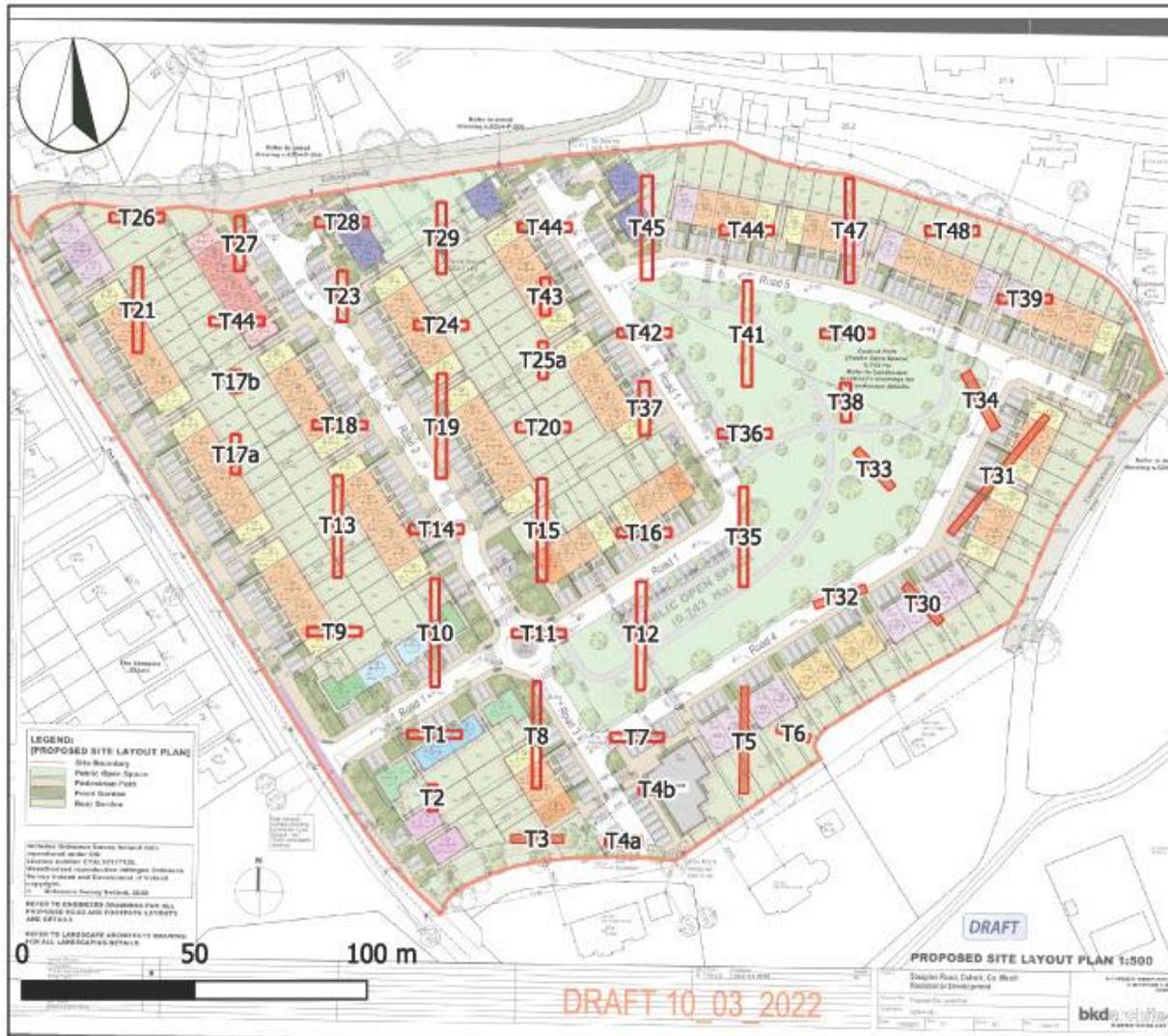
**FIGURE 6**

**Notes**

Test trenches overlaid on geophysical survey by J.M. Leigh for ADS (2008). Test trenches with archaeological remains highlighted in red.



Figure 6: Highlighted trenches within which archaeological remains were discovered



**FIGURE 7**

**Notes**

Projected impact of development. Map of development overlaid on geophysical survey by J.M. Leigh for ADS (2008) with test trenches containing archaeological features highlighted.



Figure 7: Archaeological geophysical survey and test trenching with the updated project design

**FIGURE 8****Notes**

Area recommended for archaeological excavation outlined in red and overlaid on interpretative geophysical map by J.M Leigh for ADS (2008).



Figure 8: Areas recommended for archaeological excavation in advance of construction

## Appendix 1: Recorded Archaeological Sites and Monuments in the Vicinity of the Proposed Development

### RMP: ME027-019

Townland: Prioryland

NGR: 304711/297998

Class: Bridge

Description: The bridge is marked on the Down Survey, but the river has changed course since then. It still serves as a bridge across the dry old river bed which is up to 7m wide. The bridge is badly destroyed and is between 1.35m and 2.8m wide. It has two arches which are now almost completely buried. Each arch is about 2m wide and round.

### RMP: ME027-020

Townland: Prioryland

NGR: 30504/26835

Class: Bridge

Description: This bridge consists of three long arches and a causeway with two smaller arches. It was built in two sections, the west being the earlier. The west section of the most southerly arch has wickerwork cementing. It is built of both cut and uncut stone. A plaque with an inscription claims it was built by William Bathe and his wife Jenet Dowdall in 1587. However, it is more likely that it was repaired, and the causeway built in this year, as a 1459 statute mentions a Maudelin bridge (indicating association with a medieval hospital of St Mary Magdalen, often for lepers) in Duleek and is thought to be in the same location (O' Keefe and Simington 1991).

### RMP: ME027-021

Townland: Prioryland

NGR: 30518/26821

Class: Enclosure

Description: This enclosure is truncated by the Drogheda-Ashbourne road but no trace of it can be found to the east of the road. The scarp is 1.2m high and defines an oval area. A 4.5m gap in the northern part may indicate an entrance. The enclosure measures 137m in diameter. To the north of the enclosure there is a bank and ditch running towards the old river bank. The bank is 7.5m wide and 1.8m high.

### RMP: ME027-023

Townland: Commons

NGR: 30510/26868

Class: Cross

Description: Rectangular-sectioned Latin cross of limestone with splayed ends on the arms and upper shaft. Inscription on the north face commemorates Thomassina Ber(d)ford who died in 1635. Originally a wayside cross on the Downstown Road this subsequently functioned as the gable cross of Duleek Catholic church before being placed in its present position, east of the town.

### RMP: ME027-024

Townland: Bellewstown

NGR: 30526/26879

Class: Souterrain

Description: This souterrain was discovered in 1962 during bulldozer field clearance operations. It consisted of a beehive chamber approximately 2m high with two lintelled passages leading from the east and west of the chamber. The western passage could be traced for 8–9m and ran westwards,

then swung N and turned westwards again. The sidewalls of the passages were formed of dry-stone walling and measured approximately 150cm high and 100cm wide. No artefacts or bones were noticed in any part of the interior.

**RMP: ME027-025**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 30446/26755

Class: Barrow

Description: The site consists of a circular area enclosed by a fosse (12m in diameter) and an external bank (25m in diameter). In the centre of the interior is a small raised circular platform (10m in diameter) with a slight depression in the centre. A slight depression at the perimeter of the centre circle at WSW could possibly be an entrance though it is very poorly defined. There are seven small mounds in the bank which gives a beaded appearance to the bank.

**RMP: ME027-026**

Townland: Prioryland

NGR: 30549/26738

Class: Enclosure

Description: Drawn as a circular mound on 2nd edition OS map and marked fort. This site consists of a circular area defined by a small earthen bank (18m in diameter) and external ditch. A ring of trees is growing on the inner side of the bank indicating it may be a landscape feature.

**RMP: ME027-038**

Townland: Abbeyland/Commons/Balsaran

NGR: 30464/26833

Class: Town

Description: The town of Duleek is located to the north of the river Nanny. The town developed on the site of an Early Christian church said to have been founded by St Cianan and allegedly the first stone church to be built in Ireland, hence the name *Damh liac*, meaning stone building. The early annals record several names of abbots of Duleek and accounts of the monastery being plundered, on several occasions, suggesting that it was a rather large and important centre. By the 12th century Duleek was a sizeable nucleated settlement with over 80 houses being burnt down in an attack by the Gailenga on Murchad O Maelsechlainn, King of Tara in 1123. An Augustinian Priory dedicated to St. Mary was founded at Duleek prior to the coming of the Anglo-Normans. In 1171 Duleek was attacked and burned by the Anglo-Normans and an earthen Motte was constructed soon after. From at least the 13th century a hospital (leper house) dedicated to St Mary Magdalen was located near the Mauldin Bridge. During the later medieval period the town had lost its influence and is only mentioned incidentally in the records. The 1654 Civil Survey records 51 houses, St Kenan's church, a priory, a stone house called the 'colledge', a mill and two stone bridges in the town.

**RMP: ME027-038001**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304515/268427

Class: Church

Description: Known as St. Patrick's Church but was marked as St Cianan's on the OS map. The present building occupies the site of an early Christian church which functioned in the late medieval period and is described as having a graveyard attached to it. A drop to the north and west and running into a modern field boundary indicates that it may have been set within a small enclosure. Only the foundations survive (12m x 6.3m) with an entrance in the south wall. An early Christian cross slab is incorporated into the wall. Foundations of an earlier building are visible at the base of the north and east walls.

**RMP: ME027-038002**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304515/268427

Class: Grave slab

Description: An early Christian cross slab is incorporated into the wall of St. Patrick's Church.

**RMP: ME027-038004**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304588/268435

Class: High cross

Description: North cross at St. Cianan's parish church well; preserved except the capstone is missing. The cross and shaft are formed from a single piece of sandstone. A tenon projects from the top of the shaft and would have held the missing capstone in place. The cross is ornamented in false relief with figured scenes and interlaced patterns set in panels. It probably dates to the early 10th century.

**RMP: ME027-038005**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304598/268398

Class: South Cross

Description: The south cross at St. Cianan's parish church is quite fragmentary with only the head and the base surviving. There is a flat cross panel on the head with four flat bosses at the end of each arm. It probably dates to the early 10th century.

**RMP: ME027-038006**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304601/268411

Class: Tomb

Description: In the south aisle of St Cianan's church there is a tomb chest of the Preston/Plunkett family dating to 1450-1500.

**RMP: ME027-038007**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304583/268401

Class: Architectural fragment

Description: A twelfth century Romanesque architectural fragment lies in the grounds of St Cianan's Church.

**RMP: ME027-038008**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304575/268390

Class: Grave-slabs

Description: In the grounds of the church of St Cianan a pre-Norman cross slab lies on the Preston/Plunkett chest. An inscription on the slab states that the chest had been repaired by the wife of John Bellews, who died from a gunshot wound he received in the Battle of Aughrim.

**RMP: ME027-038009**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304574/268411

Class: Round tower (possible)

Description: On the exterior of the north face of the 16th century tower at St Cianan's church there is a tall elongated recess, roughly circular in plan and tapering in width to a point 14.3m above the level of the nave. Leask and Barrow both suggest that this is the remains of a former round tower, about 5.5m in diameter, which was in existence when the west tower was built and has since been destroyed.

**RMP: ME027-038010**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304569/268286

Class: Wayside Cross

Description: Located in the market green is a wayside cross erected in 1601 by Jennet Dowdall for her husband William, who was created Justice of Her Majesty's Court of Common Pleas in 1581 and died in 1599.

**RMP: ME027-038011**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304646/268193

Class: Augustinian Grange of St Michael

Description: Marked on OS map. This Augustinian house of Llanthony Secunda and dedicated to St. Michael was established by Hugh de Lacy c.1180. A number of 13th-14th century descriptions make it clear it stood on the southwest of the town between the river Nanny and the main road. The grange survived until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1541 when it was granted to Sir Gerald Moore.

**RMP: ME027-038012**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304626/268202

Class: Gatehouse

Description: The west gatehouse of the Augustinian Grange of St Michael is badly damaged and only the ground floor plan may be determined. It is rectangular in plan with a centrally placed entrance. It has a vaulted entrance with two doors on the south side of the vault. One door has a granite lintel and leads to a spiral stair case; the other leads into a small room, which is now destroyed and may have been for the gatekeeper. A slot to hold the draw bar of the gate is present on north side of the archway suggesting that the gate was located at the junction between the two arches.

**RMP: ME027-038013**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304637/268206

Class: Remains of church

Description: Remains of the church of the Augustinian Grange of St Michael are located inside the west gate. Only the east and part of the north wall survive. The surviving window in the east wall has a pointed arch and sufficient tracery fragments to determine it was originally a four-light mullioned window with swithback tracery.

**RMP: ME027-038014**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304670/268195

Class: Gatehouse

Description: The east gatehouse of the Augustinian Grange of St Michael is located southeast of the church. The east gate has a gate arch and a barrel vault similar to the west gate but the plan is different. A mural stairs in the north wall provided access to the upper level where there are the remains of a flue in the southeast corner. There is no evidence of chambers at ground level.

**RMP: ME027-038015**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304662/268203

Class: Building (part of the Augustinian Grange of St Michael)

Description: Immediately north of the east gate house is a projecting corner of masonry and running westwards from it is a ridge indicating the former presence of a building.

**RMP: ME027-038016**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 304651/268167

Class: Field System (associated with the Augustinian Grange of St Michael)

Description: In the fields to the northeast and southwest of the Abbey are earthworks measuring 23m east-west and 34m north-south and possibly represent an old field system. A scarp along the river bank may represent the old course of the river. Two parallel ditches lead to the east gatehouse and may be an old routeway.

**RMP: ME027-038017**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304909/268606

Class: Motte Site

Description: In 1783 Austin Cooper illustrated and described the motte and noted that it was on the north side of the town and was in the process of being removed by gravel quarrying. No traces of it are visible now and its location has been a matter of discussion. Orpen (1907) placed it near the River Nanny while Simms (1979) placed it on the southeast side of Main Street. But the most likely location is to the north of the town, immediately east of the stream running into the Nanny from the north, a spot locally known as 'the moat'. Excavation by Kieran Campbell in 1981 showed this field had been quarried and levelled in the eighteenth century and a handful of medieval pottery sherds were recovered.

**RMP: ME027-038018**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 30455/26834

Class: Souterrain

Description: Clay cut souterrain discovered in 1982. It has a Y-shaped passage (9m in length) with a small alcove in the bend of the passage.

**RMP: ME027-038019**

Townland: Commons

NGR: 304512/268602

Class: Ecclesiastic enclosure

Description: On the south side of Larrix Street four test trenches were excavated as part of an archaeological assessment. A ditch running in a southwest-northeast direction was exposed in two trenches and appears to follow the line of the Early Christian enclosure. All the finds were modern in date but this may have been a result of the disturbance of part of the ditch in the early 20th century. A second ditch, running northwest-southeast was excavated in a third trench and may relate to the Early Christian enclosure or it could be an old field drain.

**RMP: ME027-038020**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305043/268548

Class: Medieval buildings

Description: Excavations along the banks of the River Nanny revealed the remains of at least one stone-footed building and a number of huts. Two phases of activity are represented, with the earthfast huts dating to the 12th–13th century and the stone-footed building to the 13th–14th century. There was evidence of a boundary ditch to the northwest of the buildings which in the late medieval period was replaced in places by a wall. Large amounts of medieval pottery were found. A considerable amount of slag, ash and crucible fragments indicate that the buildings may have been industrial in nature.

**RMP: ME027-038021**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305042/268542

Class: Hut site (Medieval)

Description: Excavations along the banks of the River Nanny revealed the remains of at least one stone-footed building and a number of huts. Two phases of activity are represented, with the earthfast huts dating to the 12th–13th century and the stone-footed building to the 13th–14th century. There was evidence of a boundary ditch to the northwest of the buildings which in the late medieval period was replaced in places by a wall. Large amounts of medieval pottery were found. A considerable amount of slag, ash and crucible fragments indicate that the buildings may have been industrial in nature.

**RMP: ME027-038022**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305044/268536

Class: Boundary ditch

Description: A boundary ditch was excavated along the banks of the river Nanny. It was located to the northwest of a number of 12th–14th century buildings. In the late medieval period it was replaced in places by a wall.

**RMP: ME027-038023**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305044/268536

Class: Boundary Wall

Description: A boundary ditch was excavated along the banks of the river Nanny. It was located to the northwest of a number of 12th–14th century buildings. In the late medieval period it was replaced in places by a wall.

**RMP: ME027-038024**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305043/268548

Class: Metal working

Description: A considerable amount of slag, ash and crucible fragments were recovered during the excavation of a number of 12th–14th century buildings located on the banks of the River Nanny. Several metal artefacts were recovered and include iron nails and knives, lead drops and a model lead axehead.

**RMP: ME027-038025**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305051/268489

Class: Hut Sites

Description: Excavations along the banks of the River Nanny revealed the remains of at least one stone-footed building and a number of huts. Two phases of activity are represented, with the earthfast huts dating to the 12th–13th century and the stone-footed building to the 13th–14th century. There was evidence of a boundary ditch to the northwest of the buildings which in the late medieval period was replaced in places by a wall. Large amounts of medieval pottery were found. A considerable amount of slag, ash and crucible fragments indicate that the buildings may have been industrial in nature.

**RMP: ME027-038027**

Townland: Abbeyland

NGR: 305054/268483

Class: Boundary wall

Description: A boundary ditch was excavated along the banks of the river Nanny. It was located to the northwest of a number of 12th–14th century buildings. In the late medieval period it was replaced in places by a wall.

## Appendix 2: Previous Excavations in the Vicinity of the Proposed Development

Previously published archaeological excavations in the area from 1970 to 2017 are summarised in chronological order below based on the Database of Irish Excavation Reports ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

### 1980-84:0148

Duleek (Commons td.)

Site of motte

O049686

A two-week excavation was carried out on the probable site of the Norman motte. The antiquarian, Austin Cooper, had observed the mound in the course of removal in 1783. The stratigraphy was consistent with quarrying in the 18th century. Finds consisted of 31 sherds of medieval pottery, 12 sherds of post-medieval pottery and a medieval horseshoe.

K. Campbell

### 1993:180

Navan Road, Duleek

Urban Early Christian/medieval

O027208 93E0105

A two-day test excavation was carried out in August in advance of development of a site between Saint Cianan's Church and the Navan Rd., Duleek. Five machine trenches were excavated. Few archaeological features were recovered although traces of a ditch cut into subsoil may indicate the line of the southern boundary of the Early Christian enclosure. No artefacts were recovered from the ditch but a green glazed medieval potsherd was recovered from the top of the subsoil.

Caroline Donaghy

### 1996:306

Main Street, Duleek

Medieval urban/site of motte?

O049733 96E056

A 1733 sketch by Austin Cooper showed a motte beside a stream running through Duleek. A large development of houses is planned for the vicinity of the site of the motte, which had been destroyed by the time of the first-edition OS map. A condition of planning permission required the developer to have an archaeological report prepared prior to commencement of development. In the southernmost portion of the site, which fronts on to Main Street, a layer of redeposited boulder clay was exposed which produced one sherd of medieval pottery and one animal bone. This layer underlay the topsoil and was 300-400mm deep. Its function could not be determined. The major part of the development lay behind Main Street, backing onto the stream beside which the motte lay. Five test-trenches and four test-pits were excavated here. There were extensive layers of gravel here, overlain in most cases by topsoil. In certain locations there was evidence for redeposited layers of clay, but it was not possible to define their limits or interpret their functions. The testing bore out K. Campbell's findings of 1981 (pers. comm.) that the site had been quarried in the past, probably in the thirteenth century at the time when the motte was reduced, and that there was a mixed stratigraphy of medieval and post-medieval layers.

Rosanne Meenan

### 1997:420

ABBAYLANDS, DULEEK

Medieval settlement

O046 686 97E0165

An excavation was carried out on behalf of the Office of Public Works prior to the construction of flood-banks along the River Nanny at Ashbourne Road. Initial supervision of topsoil-stripping had shown a concentration of medieval pottery to the north of Sampson's Field and also stone settings. Excavations revealed the remains of at least one stone-footed building and a number of huts. There was evidence of a boundary ditch to the north-west of the buildings which in the late medieval period was replaced in places by a wall. Large amounts of medieval pottery were found, including much North Leinster coarseware and Trim Ware. There appear to have been two main phases of activity on the site: an early phase, late 12th- or early 13th-century, of earthfast huts, which was associated with more coarse pottery and fewer wheel-thrown vessels, and a later phase, later 13th- or early 14th-century, of one or more stonefooted buildings, with wheel-thrown pottery being more common than coarseware. A considerable amount of ash, slag and crucible fragments were found, suggesting that some of the buildings may have been industrial in nature. In addition, a large number of iron artefacts were found, including nails and knives. Several pieces of lead/lead alloy were found, including one model axehead of lead alloy, and some irregularly shaped drops of lead, which may indicate manufacture of lead/lead-alloy artefacts.

Cormac Mc Sparron

#### **1997:421**

MAIN STREET, DULEEK

No archaeological significance

O0463 6841 97E0136

Archaeological testing of a proposed commercial development at Main Street, Duleek, Co. Meath, took place in May 1997. The site was located within the area of Anglo-Norman settlement. Six trenches were excavated, covering the site. Trench 1, excavated in a north-east to south-west direction parallel to the road, revealed subsoil at a depth of 1.1m. However, at the north-east end of the trench the subsoil was visible at 1.75m, suggesting a ditched feature. The fill was sterile and the feature was up to 2m in width. Trench 4, excavated parallel to Trench 1, revealed the same feature, this time up to 2.3m in width and 1.8m in depth. The fill was of sterile coarse gravel and sand. No further archaeological features were uncovered and the ditch may be natural.

Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

#### **1998:507**

MAIN STREET, DULEEK

Medieval borough

O04686842 98E0208

Archaeological assessment took place at a proposed commercial site at Main Street, Duleek, Co. Meath. The site lies within the area of archaeological importance attached to this early monastic settlement and medieval borough. Two trenches were excavated along the lines of the foundations. Trench 1 was 7m long and 1m wide and was orientated east-west. The top 0.6m was a brown loam with stone and gravel, under which boulder clay was exposed. In Trench 2, which was 25m long and 1m wide running north-south, a brown, sandy clay some 0.9m thick overlay a thin layer of charcoal 0.2m thick. A layer of brown loam containing red brick fragments underlay this. At 1.6m below the surface boulder clay was visible.

Donald Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

#### **1999:681**

LARRIX STREET, DULEEK

Early Christian monastic site

30452 26859

SMR 27:15 99E0464

An assessment was carried out on the site of eight proposed dwelling-houses, associated services and an access road. The site is on the south side of Larrix Street, Duleek, Co. Meath, within an area of archaeological potential as identified in the Urban Archaeological Survey of County Meath, and is a recorded monument. An Early Christian monastic site and enclosure are evident in the present street pattern around Duleek. Four test-trenches were excavated by machine. Trenches 1-3 were excavated within the area of the proposed houses, and Trench 4 was excavated parallel to Larrix Street, crossing the line of the earlier ditch. Trench 1 was excavated north-south to the west of the site and measured 19m by 0.7m. The sod and topsoil extended to a depth of 0.2m and lay above a post-medieval, light brown, dauby clay, which in turn lay above the natural boulder clay at a depth of 0.36m. At the south end of the trench a section of ditch was exposed extending in a south-west to north-east direction; it was at least 3m wide but extended southwards beyond the trench. The ditch was 1m deep and was visible at a depth of 0.3m below the surface. A small dump of loose stone was exposed at the north side of the ditch, which may have formed part of a collapsed drystone wall. Two sherds of 19th-20th century pottery were recovered from the sticky, brown clay fill. Trench 2 was excavated in the south-west corner of the site, measured 20m by 0.7m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m. A layer of light brown, sticky, moist clay was exposed at a depth of 0.3m below the sod and topsoil. This contained a single clay pipe stem, extended to a depth of 0.4m at the east end of the trench and 0.9m at the west end and lay directly above the natural boulder clay. No features were evident, and no other finds were recovered.

Trench 3 was excavated to the south of the site, measured 34m by 0.7m and was excavated to an average depth of 0.65m, with one section excavated to a depth of 2.2m. The sod extended to a depth of 0.14m and overlay a layer of fine, brown, sandy clay that contained three fragments of post-medieval pottery and a single rimsherd of unglazed medieval ware. This layer extended to the top of the natural boulder clay at a depth of 0.4m. A section of ditch was exposed c. 6m from the east end of the trench, extending in a north-west/south-east direction. It was visible below the fine, brown, sandy clay and had been cut into the natural boulder clay. It was 1.8m deep, 2.7m wide at the top and 1m at the base. The fill was a grey, boulder-clay-like, wet clay, and no finds were recovered.

Trench 4 was excavated in a roughly east-west direction close to the existing entrance to the site, measured 20m by 0.7m and was excavated to a depth of 0.6m except where the ditch crossed the trench, where it was excavated to a depth of 1.6m. The sod extended to a depth of 0.2m and overlay a layer of fine, light brown clay. This in turn overlay the natural boulder clay at a depth of 0.3m. A section of ditch was exposed c. 5m from the east end of the trench. This appeared to extend in a south-west/north-east direction and was presumably part of the ditch that was uncovered in Trench 1. The ditch was cut into the natural boulder clay and was exposed directly below the light brown clay. It was 1.3m deep and 5m wide. All the finds recovered from the dark grey, heavy clay fill were modern in date.

Trenches 2 and 3 failed to reveal any archaeological stratigraphy, and the natural boulder clay was exposed at an average depth of 0.4m. The ground above appears to have been heavily ploughed, thereby obliterating any features that may have existed. All the finds recovered were relatively modern in date, with the exception of a single sherd of medieval ware. However, this came from a disturbed context. The ditch exposed at the end of Trench 3 may relate to the Early Christian enclosure but in all likelihood is not an enclosing ditch but an old field drain. The ditch exposed in Trenches 1 and 4 would appear to follow the line of the Early Christian enclosure. However, this ditch appears to have been interfered with in the north-east corner of the site towards Larrix Street. Human memory records the presence of a drain in this area of the site, and the ditch was probably backfilled early in the early 20th century, as indicated by the relatively modern finds that were recovered. It is clear, therefore, that, while the ditch follows the line of the Early Christian enclosure, it has been altered in the north-east corner, where it was probably used as a drain. The proposed development will impinge slightly on the enclosing ditch, and it was recommended that the sections of the ditches that will be disturbed by the proposed house foundations be excavated and that all ground disturbance works associated with the development be monitored.

Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

**1999:707**

PILLTOWN/PAINESTOWN/KILTROUGH/BEY BEG/BEY  
MORE/PLATIN/CAULSTOWN/CARRANSTOWN/COMMONS  
(DULEEK)/NEWTOWN/LONGFORD/DOWNESTOWN/GILLINSTOWN/GARBALLAGH/THOM

AS

Monitoring

99E0356

The laying of a new gas pipeline from south of Drogheda to the outskirts of Navan necessitated the stripping of a 15m-wide corridor and the subsequent digging of a trench that varied in width from 0.65m to 2.3m (at top) and 0.7m to 0.75m (at bottom); the average depth of the trench was 2m. No features of a proven archaeological nature were uncovered during the operation. Indeed, the corridor, when taken as random-sample survey, can be seen to have reaffirmed the perceived archaeological profile of the traversed terrain and its general environs. Of the 27 townlands crossed by the pipeline corridor, seventeen, to date, are totally bereft of archaeological remains of any description. A further eight townlands contain a mere one to three known sites. Only the early historic archaeological complex centred on Duleek indicates any proven significant activity in the general area. Evidence for a Neolithic presence is almost negligible. Similarly, the Bronze Age and Iron Age are poorly represented.

Given the size and land quality of the area under discussion, the sum total of remains does not help to establish the existence of intensive activity during practically all of the recognised epochs.

Mark Clinton for Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd

**2001:963**

Newtown, Duleek

No archaeological significance

30400 27000 01E0257

Following an environmental impact assessment carried out in December 2000, seven features of unknown or potential archaeological interest were identified. These were subsequently archaeologically assessed to determine their significance. Seven trenches were excavated by machine within the area of the proposed development. The trenches all varied in length and depth and for the most part were located near the centre of the proposed development site. Boulder clay was exposed at depths varying between 0.2m and 0.7m below the surface. Two outcrops of rock were identified close to the western boundary of the development site and some of the trenches revealed that parts of the site had been ploughed. No features of archaeological significance were identified in any of the excavated trenches and, with the exception of some sherds of 19th–20th century pottery, no finds were recovered.

Deirdre Murphy

**2002:1448**

Abbeylands, Duleek

No archaeological significance

304762 268352 02E1611(SMR 27:15)

It is proposed to construct a single dwelling-house with associated services at Abbeylands, Duleek, Co. Meath. Two test-trenches were excavated, but no archaeological features or deposits were exposed.

Eoin Corcoran, ACS Ltd

**2002:1449**

Colgan's Lane, Duleek

Urban medieval

30486 26843 02E0844(SMR 27:38)

Test-trenches were excavated as part of an assessment of a proposed development site at Colgan's Lane, which runs east from Main Street at the centre of the village of Duleek (Commons townland). The site measured 32m east-west by 28m and was on two levels, separated by a scarp, 1.8m high, caused by previous building work. The development comprised the construction of a two-storey semi-detached block, the lower floor situated at basement level, with an area surrounded by a retaining wall.

Six trenches, 1.52m wide, were excavated by machine, four on the higher level and two on the lower level by the lane front. Testing uncovered deposits ranging in date from the 13th century to recent times. The deposits of archaeological interest were confined to the southern half of the site, above the scarp that divides the site into two levels. Most of the northern part of the site, extending for c. 12m from the lane, was found to be reduced to subsoil level and below by previous disturbance.

In the southern half of the site, deposits were exposed under cultivation soil up to 0.7m thick. The deposits were broadly datable to two periods, the medieval (13th–15th centuries) and the modern (19th–20th centuries). The more recent deposits were probably a result of the insertion of service pipes for houses to the south of the site. The pottery finds, mostly of 19th–20th-century date, were likely to have derived from the topsoil that was backfilled into the trenches. It is also possible that some of the disturbance was due to small-scale quarry working for the extraction of gravel. Medieval deposits were encountered across the central and eastern areas of the site. None of the deposits was excavated, but finds were recovered from the machined surface and when the features were cleaned down for recording. The deposits occurred as layers on the surface of the gravel and clay subsoil or as the fills of cuts, i.e. pits, gullies or ditches, excavated into the subsoil. Some of the deposits appeared to be shallow (<0.2m deep), and others may have been the fills of large pits or ditches of greater depth. The circular outline or curving edges of several deposits suggest small pits. None of the archaeological features uncovered appeared to represent a building. However, the presence of domestic artefacts, i.e. pottery, bones and an iron knife, suggests that there were dwellings nearby, probably fronting onto the lane. The features are most likely to be domestic rubbish pits, with drains and ditches possibly related to agricultural activity. Further interpretation must await excavation of the deposits.

On the basis of the pottery found, most of the deposits are datable to the later medieval period, i.e. the later 14th–15th century. All of the pottery recovered was of local manufacture, and no imported wares were present.

Kieran Campbell

### **2002:1450**

Duleek Quarry, Duleek

Prehistoric

02E0444

At Duleek Quarry a pottery scatter identified during a previous archaeological impact assessment had indicated an area of possible medieval settlement. Trial-trenching and a geophysical survey were carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the assessment. The geophysical survey revealed no archaeological features; it was the opinion of the geophysicist that the background geology was masking any archaeology. Trial-trenching was carried out on nine areas of interest. No archaeological finds were uncovered in eight of the trenches. In one trench, however, an area of burning associated with an elongated stone setting and some post-holes was found. A number of fragments of Neolithic pottery and a hammerstone were found in the soil immediately above this archaeology. The site was reburied, but its location was noted for future work before proposed development in the area.

Cormac McSparron, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University, Belfast

### **2002:1500**

Duleek Quarry, Newtown

No archaeological significance

27000 30400 02E0528

Monitoring of topsoil-stripping was carried out on an extension to a quarry at Newtown, Duleek, Co. Meath. The topsoil was a brown clay loam and directly overlay the natural, orange, sandy boulder clay. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed, and no finds were recovered.

Deirdre Murphy, ACS Ltd

### **2003:1386**

St Cianan's Church, Church Lane, Duleek

Medieval

265471 261228 03E0216

An assessment was carried out at St Cianan's Church, Church Lane, Duleek, on a site north of SMR 27:15, an abbey in ruins. The 19th-century church is undergoing re-development and hand testing was carried out in the area of two proposed service trenches to the east of the newly built extension along a pathway through the cemetery. Two trenches were excavated and medieval deposits were exposed in both. Trench A measured 12m by 0.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.17m. It was located north of, and almost parallel to, Trench B. The upper deposit of this trench represented the existing pathway into the cemetery. This deposit was removed to expose F102, very compact brown/black silty clay containing small-medium angular and subangular stones. This deposit contained disarticulated human bone and sherds of medieval pottery.

Trench B measured 11.6m by 0.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.14m. The upper deposit represented the existing pathway. A post-medieval cobbled stone gutter was exposed in the western extent of this trench. This was originally associated with a downpipe connected to the church. Beneath the cobbled gutter and eastwards for a length of 5.1m was a compact brown black silty clay containing small to medium angular and subangular stones and disarticulated human bone. This deposit measured the width of the trench and ended suddenly towards the eastern extent of the trench, where a moderately compact mid-brown clay containing occasional flecks of charcoal and occasional small to medium-sized angular stones was exposed. This deposit was 0.5m in width and 1.6m in length. It contained fragments of disarticulated human bone and sherds of medieval pottery. These deposits must be archaeologically resolved if the proposed service trenches are to be installed as planned.

Tara O'Neill, Archaeological Consultancy Services

### **2003:1387**

Daw's Lane, Duleek

Urban

0046 686 03E0698

The development site lies to the north of the concentration of monuments that survive in Duleek village, although it lies within the outline of the monastic enclosure and south of Larrix Street, which follows part of the line of the monastic enclosure on the north side of the town. The closest recorded monuments are St Cianan's Church (SMR 27:14) and the complex of monuments marked as 'Abbey' (SMR 27:15), comprising high crosses, the remains of a round tower and the remains of a medieval church. Planning permission was granted to construct three blocks of two semidetached houses.

Monitoring was carried out during soil-stripping and excavation of wall footings for three blocks of six houses. Topsoil was 1.2m deep. The footings for the blocks at the west end of the site cut through pure brown clay. The footing for the block at the east end of the site cut through very mixed layers of sand, gravel and clay. Five sherds of green-glazed medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil. Nothing of archaeological significance was exposed during excavation of foundations through subsoil.

Rosanne Meenan

### **2003:1388**

Navan Road, Duleek

No archaeological significance

034683 03E1895

Pre-development testing was carried out at Navan Road, Duleek, Co. Meath. The development included 74 houses on a greenfield site and the erection of a Bord na Móna waste treatment plant. Testing was required, as the development site is near Duleek town (SMR 27:38), and because of its relatively large size (ten acres). Eleven long trenches were excavated throughout the site, mainly along the footprint of the proposed housing. The upper 0.5m of stratigraphy in all trenches comprised light-brown silty clay with some small stones. The silty clay lay on mottled yellow/grey stony boulder clay. There were no archaeological deposits recorded during the testing.

Ellen O Carroll, The Archaeology Company

#### **2004:1226**

THE COMMONS, DULEEK

Post-medieval, agricultural

304650 269590 04E0174

Monitoring of topsoil-stripping was undertaken in advance of a housing development. The site was located c. 1km to the north of the historically important town of Duleek. At the time of excavation the site consisted of open grassland with a small cottage fronting onto the adjacent lane. The topsoil was stripped using a JCB equipped with a toothless grading bucket and was on average c. 0.3m deep. Over the majority of the site no features or deposits of archaeological significance were noted, but to the rear of the cottage below a layer of olive coloured clay were the remains of a farm outbuilding. The remains were subsequently cleaned and recorded. The building had a cobbled floor, limestone wall footings (the superstructure may have been of earthen construction) and traces of internal partitions. Potsherds dated the building to the late 18th or early 19th century and, because of its recent date, the record made was considered adequate and no further excavation work was undertaken.

Stephen J. Linnane, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

#### **2004:1227**

MAIN STREET, DULEEK

Testing

004686842 04E0654

Test-trenching was carried out on the site of a 2.2ha greenfield site adjacent to Main Street, Duleek, Co. Meath, between 5 and 12 May 2004. The investigations were the final part of a predevelopment assessment of the site. Twenty-one trenches were excavated throughout the development area, their location primarily dictated by the results of the previous programme of geophysical investigation. Eleven trenches contained archaeological material. The main areas of archaeological interest appear to be based in the south-east of the development area, with particular concentrations being based in Field 1 and the eastern section of Field 2. Here, a large amount of medieval pottery and articulated animal bones were found within deposits in this area. Enigmatically there was no indication as to the presence of structural remains in the area. In light of this paucity and considering the non-structure-like form of these deposits, it is conceivable that this area was a former dumping ground. An area of high ground in the southern portion of the development area was also of archaeological importance. This was almost to be expected, given its proximity to the medieval town of Duleek and its strategically advantageous location. The material in this area primarily appeared to take the form of subsoil-cut ditches, both curvilinear and straight, and subsoil-cut pits. It is more probable that this area was one of settlement or industry. Field 3 did not appear to contain any traces of archaeological material. This is understandable, given that the area has been subject to intensive modern interference, with the deposition of significant amounts of rubbish and topsoil.

Eoghan Kieran for Judith Carroll and Co. Ltd.

**1998:520**

## PRIORYLAND

Site of enclosure

O05496738 98E0083(SMR 27:21)

A section of the Kilmoon-Drogheda road east of Duleek runs beside a site marked as 'Enclosure'. The enclosure comprises a raised platform 140m north-south by c. 50m, with the long axis running parallel to the road. It is not clear whether the feature is man-made or was created by natural processes associated with the river Nanny. Meath County Council intends to raise the level of the road and remove the field fence between the road and the field that contains the enclosure, thus encroaching on the site. It was felt that testing was required before the works commenced, and three trenches were excavated by mechanical digger.

Two gullies were exposed in the northernmost trench. They were exposed at c. 0.9m below the present sod layer. They were 0.8-1m wide, and the gully, which was excavated by hand, was 0.2m deep. Their function was not known, but it is possible that they had some kind of drainage purpose as the ground here is very low-lying and prone to flooding. The other trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

Rosanne Meenan

**2003:1383**

Downestown

Various

269500 303400 03E1658

A number of features of archaeological potential were identified during testing of a proposed extension to a Roadstone quarry at Downestown, Duleek, Co. Meath. The excavation of an area measuring 60m (north-south) by 50m was subsequently undertaken over a three-week period. The excavated features consisted of several large but shallow linear trenches, pits and a possible wall foundation. The linear trenches were aligned both north-south and east-west across the site and are likely to represent levelled field divisions or boundaries. Specialist analysis of the pottery recovered from the site is currently under way.

Miriam Carroll, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd

**2004:1181**

BELLEWSTOWN

Souterrain

Unlicensed monitoring

Monitoring of soil-stripping on the route of the proposed realignment of the existing R150, east of Duleek, was carried out intermittently between 28 June and 2 September 2004 in an area of pasture and cultivated land. A souterrain had been discovered in cultivated land in the townland of Bellewstown in 1964; the structural remains had been back-filled almost immediately and no record of its form or content had been made. In the course of soil-stripping in a cultivated field in this townland, the site of a souterrain was located, as evidenced by the presence of darkened soil combined with superimposed structural stones and bone fragments. Excavation was recommended (04E1089, David McCullough - report not received).

Breandain O' Ríordáin for Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

**2006:1553**

Main Street, Duleek, Meath

Urban, medieval

ITM E704752, N768583

04E0654

The site lies just outside the north-east corner of the curvilinear line of the enclosure which identifies medieval Duleek. The site, which comprises 2.2ha, is situated directly to the east of the probable outer boundary of the early medieval monastic enclosure of Duleek, by the River Nanny. The site was fully excavated in September–November 2006 and various features, such as a stone structure, cobbled surfaces and pits, came to light. Most of the site was covered in a black silty layer containing a large amount of medieval pottery and animal bone. This would suggest that the area was possibly used as a dump in the medieval period. A number of bronze pins of 12th–13th-century date were also found, as well as an Anglo-Norman-type arrowhead.

Judith Carroll, Judith Carroll & Co. Ltd

### **2007:1309**

Balsaran, Commons, Duleek, Knockisland and Prioryland, Duleek Town

Early medieval to modern urban

ME027–019, 027–020, 027–023, 027–024, 027–038

07E0927

The bundled wastewater collection system for County Meath, being undertaken by Meath County Council, is to be carried out in eight towns: Athboy, Donore, Duleek, Kilmainham Wood, Moynalty, Rathcairn, Rathmoylan and Summerhill. This project is expected to continue until 2009. Monitoring took place of groundworks in Duleek for the network pipe trench (6204 linear metres). The network pipe route extends in and around Duleek town's zone of archaeological potential (954 linear metres) on Larrix Street, Main Street and the Navan Road, an early medieval monastic centre and medieval town. A ground-penetrating radar survey, carried out by BMA Services (07R208), identified a large number of services but no definite subsurface archaeological features. The remaining 5250 linear metres of network pipes are along country roads or the outlying suburbs of Duleek. Separate assessments of the development's impact on the river crossing and water courses have been carried out by Aisling Collins (07D50). Sixty linear metres of network pipe trench will be excavated beside Duleek Cross, a late 16th-century wayside cross and a national monument. Archaeological works commenced with the monitoring of trial holes in November 2007; nothing of archaeological significance was discovered. Works will continue in 2008 and will also include monitoring groundworks for the extension of the existing pump station, wastewater treatment plant, an outflow pipe and a temporary wayleave across the flood-plain of the River Nanny.

Richard Clutterbuck, Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd

### **2008:954a**

Abbeyland and Prioryland, Duleek

Road surface

08E0536

An excavation was carried out between 23 June and 18 July 2008 in the townlands of Abbeyland and Prioryland, Duleek, Co. Meath, in advance of the Meath bundled wastewater collection system rising main. The site was identified beside the eastern side of the R152 road, in a construction wayleave extending south-east from Duleek village, across the River Nanny, towards the wastewater treatment plant. Monitoring by Richard Clutterbuck of CRDS (see No. 952 above, 07E0927) identified two archaeologically significant areas: Area 1 (Prioryland, 305132 268191) and Area 2 (Abbeyland, 305061 268384).

Area 1 was exposed at the southern end of the development wayleave. A single cutting was opened with maximum dimensions of 39m north-west-south-east by 14m. Within this cutting a stone surface was exposed covering an area with maximum dimensions of c. 18m by 9m and with a depth of less than 0.2m. The surface was bounded by a linear ditch and bank to the north which extended beyond the southern and western limit of excavation. The surface was assumed to represent the remains of either a road or a yard surface, possibly of late medieval origin, but in continued use in modified form into the post-medieval period.

Area 2 was located on a small area of ground enclosed by the road to the west, the River Nanny to the south-east and a tributary of the river to the north-east; the area was located immediately north-east of Prioryland Bridge, a 16th-century bridge (ME027–020). The excavation area measured 35m north–south by 12m. A hearth of possible late medieval date, a series of linear gullies, an extensive metalled surface and a post-medieval field boundary wall were exposed within this area. The metalled surface may be part of an earlier road which predates the adjacent modern road. The finds recovered from the excavation included 360 sherds of pottery ranging in date from late medieval to 19th century, twelve coins requiring conservation before they can be identified, 138 metal objects, ten worked lithics, including four possible stone tools, an embossed clay-pipe bowl, four glass fragments and a single fragment of worked wood.

Brendan Fagan, for Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd

#### **2008:954b**

Commons, Lonford Road, Duleek

Testing

304316 268531

08E0914

The study area comprised three pasture fields, encompassing c. 12 acres. It was located just west-north-west of Duleek village and abutted the vallum of ecclesiastical enclosure ME027–038019, which is still visible in the village street layout. The work followed a geophysical survey (08R279) which revealed extensive remains in the southern portion of the eastern field, adjacent to the ecclesiastical enclosure. The testing comprised 48 trenches of between 15m and 43m long and 2m wide.

In the southern portion of the eastern field, five of the 48 trenches were targeted to test the geophysical anomalies. These trenches confirmed the survey and revealed the presence of densely concentrated features of medieval and probable Early Christian date. Remains included ditches forming substantial enclosures appended to the ecclesiastical enclosure, post-holes, stake-holes, pits and roughly cobbled tempered work surfaces. One sherd of medieval pottery, a worked bone point and large quantities of butchered animal bone were retrieved from the ditches. Elsewhere the test-trenches were mostly devoid of archaeological remains. The only additional features were found in two trenches along the southern side of the south-western field. These comprised two ditches, two post-holes and an area of scorching. One piece of pottery tentatively identified as prehistoric was recovered from one of the post-holes.

Ros Ó Maoldúin, ADS Ltd

#### **2008:955**

Main Street/Larrix Street, Duleek

Monastic precinct/medieval town

08E0592

A programme of trenching on the proposed route of the Meath bundled wastewater scheme, Duleek, was undertaken in 2008 following on from test-pitting by Richard Clutterbuck the previous year (Excavations 2007, No. 1309, 07E0927). Trenching of the route of the pipeline commenced on 30 June, from the junction of Larrix Street and Main Street, continuing northwards away from the town centre towards the river. Trenching westwards along Main Street towards the junction with Larrix Street commenced on 29 July.

Archaeological deposits, which included metalled surfaces, most likely former road surfaces, were found on Main Street, Larrix Street and Downestown Road. Significant archaeological features and deposits were found at several locations on Main Street and Larrix Street, and were excavated in their entirety within the confines of the trench. A trench in a field off Larrix Street contained a ditch and bank of potential medieval date, and other related features within the monastic enclosure around St Cianan's Church. On Main Street, a series of post-medieval pits were excavated. The full extent of archaeological features could not be ascertained; there was limited or no scope for

extending the investigation trenches on the roads and the depth of the trenches was limited for health and safety reasons.

Stuart D. Elder, for CRDS Ltd

**2008:956**

Paramadda River and other tributaries of the River Nanny, Duleek

No archaeology identified

07D50

E 704873m, N 768327m

At the request of Nicholas O'Dwyer Consulting Engineers, acting on behalf of Meath County Council, Archaeology Underwater Surveys (trading under CRDS Ltd) has undertaken an archaeological assessment of the five river crossings in Duleek in advance of the network pipe construction (Contract A) for the bundled wastewater collection system for County Meath. This consisted of visual survey, wade survey and metal-detection survey of three locations on the Paramadda River, and tributaries of the River Nanny, in Duleek. The survey was carried out 30m on either side of these crossings.

The development will consist of the construction of trenches across the five rivers crossings by cut-and-cover.

All crossings are located in areas of high archaeological potential with significant surrounding archaeological remains. River environments are also potentially archaeologically significant as places of deposition, disposal, boundaries, crossing-points either by bridges or fords, transport or as sources of energy for mills. River environments are also noted for the discovery of archaeological objects.

The surveys of the five river crossings in Duleek did not directly identify archaeological material. However, given the location of works and the potential for discovery of archaeological material, monitoring was recommended.

Aisling Collins, CRDS Ltd

**2008:957**

Prioryland, Duleek

Prehistoric

ITM: E 705258m, N 768474m

08E0929

Monitoring was carried out at Prioryland, Duleek, in October 2008 under a licence issued to Richard Clutterbuck (see No. 952 above, 07E0927). The work was carried out in connection with the Meath bundled wastewater collection system. It revealed a number of archaeological features in proximity to the River Nanny. As a result, a second licence was obtained to allow investigation of the archaeological features identified. The excavation was carried out between 24 November and 19 December 2008. A cutting was opened within the proposed wayleave, encompassing a total area of c. 430m<sup>2</sup>.

A series of archaeological features was identified, either within or adjacent to a palaeochannel which was also examined as part of the excavation. This palaeochannel is likely to have been a former course of the River Nanny. The most significant features identified included a cache of flint flakes (containing 171 pieces of worked flint) hidden in a basal fill of the palaeochannel and covered by a flat stone, and two hearths located on the southern bank of the palaeochannel. These hearths appeared to have been a focus for Bronze Age activity, with a range of struck flints, debitage and some scrapers recovered in their vicinity as well as a number of pieces of probable Bronze Age pottery and some fragments of burnt bone. The flint cache is also likely to date to the Bronze Age, although it is not yet known if it is contemporary with the two hearths.

Following the silting over of this phase of activity, the area along the southern bank of the palaeochannel later became the location for a brief phase of burnt-mound or burnt-spread-type activity. Apart from a spread of burnt stones and charcoal, no further features associated with this phase of activity were identified. At some point following the abandonment of the burnt mound

further episodes of alluvial activity saw the palaeochannel become completely silted up. Presumably the ground was often waterlogged following this clogging of the palaeochannel and this may help to explain the final phase of activity – the digging of two ditches, which appear to have been drainage related. It is likely that these ditches date to the late medieval or post-medieval period, although no proof of this was recovered.

The finds recovered from the excavation included 85 sherds of Bronze Age pottery (including a rim sherd of probable cordoned urn) and 226 worked lithics (flint and quartz). Samples were also retrieved of animal bone, burnt bone and preserved organic material: wood and hazelnut shells. A series of samples were also taken for pollen analysis from within the fills of the palaeochannel. Analysis of the samples and finds will allow for a more thorough interpretation of this site in the near future.

Ed Lyne, for Cultural Resources Development Services Ltd

**2008:952** - Abbeyland/Balsaran Commons/Duleek/Knockisland/Prioryland, Duleek, Meath

ME027-038

07E0927

ITM: E70451, N768469

CRDS Ltd has been retained by Meath County Council to act as the archaeological consultants on the bundled wastewater collection system for County Meath. This project started in 2007 and will continue into 2009. Meath County Council retained CRDS Ltd to monitor c. 6204 linear metres of network pipe trench excavated in and around Duleek town, through five townlands: Balsaran, Commons, Duleek, Knockisland and Prioryland. SIAC/EPS also retained CRDS Ltd to monitor construction works on the Design, Build and Operate (DBO) contract, including a new wastewater treatment plant in Prioryland townland (footprint measuring c. 156m by 101m), a new pump station on Abbeylands (footprint measuring c. 57m by 17.5m), a rising main pipeline from the pump station across two rivers, the Paramada and Nanny, c. 337m from the pump station to the wastewater treatment plant, and an outfall pipe from the wastewater treatment plant 175m to the Nanny River. The treatment plant's access road (171m) runs mainly along an existing track to the current wastewater treatment plant. Construction of the rising main pipe also took place in proximity to ME027-019, Prioryland Bridge.

Archaeological works on the network pipes in 2008 consisted of monitoring the pipe construction in the environs of Duleek town, test excavations within Duleek on Main Street, Larrix Street, Navan Road, Longford Road and Downestown Road, and in greenfield areas adjoining Larrix Street and Navan Road, and assessing and monitoring the river crossings of the Paramada River at Navan Road. The river crossing at Main Street was executed by tunnelling beneath the river. This work comprised the monitoring of 22 engineering trial pits and the excavation of six archaeological test-trenches: four on Main Street, Larrix Street, Navan Road, Downestown Road and Longford Road (Test Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5) and two in greenfield trenches beside Larrix Street (Test Trench 2) and Navan Road (Test Trench 6).

A ground-penetrating radar geophysical survey of the town centre of Duleek in 2007 identified a large number of services but failed to identify any specific subsurface archaeological features (07R208). With no specific features to target, the test-trenches and the engineers' route-approval trial pits provided an opportunity to investigate for the presence and general characteristics of the subsurface archaeological deposits. This strategy was limited by taking place on busy and narrow town streets: the extent of archaeological features could not be ascertained; there was limited or no scope for extending the investigation trenches on the roads and the depth of the trenches was limited for health and safety reasons. The test-trenches on the streets were a minimum of 1m wide, 2m long and were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil or archaeology, whichever was encountered first. The test-trenches in the fields were 2m wide and extended along the length of the area to be disturbed by the pipe-laying works.

Archaeological deposits, which included metallated surfaces, most likely former road surfaces, were found on Main Street, Larrix Street and Downestown Road. Significant archaeological features and

deposits were found at several locations on Main Street. At Test Trench 4, located near manhole C1, the road surface sealed a deposit which was similar in colour and composition to topsoil and which contained animal bone and brick. This deposit sealed a linear cut which extended across the north-west edge of the test-pit. This cut had a depth greater than 1.9m and 1.5m of its width was exposed within the trench. Its fill was a homogenous brown silt which contained no easily datable inclusions. A Test-Pit at manhole B4.2 measuring 2.1m by 2m; 0.95m depth sealed a possible subrectangular pit which was partially exposed within the test-trench. The fill of this feature contained animal bone and charcoal but no artefacts were recovered. This feature was cut into undisturbed boulder clay. At the Navan Road close to the Dowdall wayside cross a test-pit uncovered a deposit 0.38m deep, similar to topsoil, beneath the road surface; this contained medieval and post-medieval pottery, brick, animal bone and iron slag, and sealed undisturbed boulder clay beneath. The greenfield trench off Larrix Street contained a series of ditches and banks of potential medieval date within the monastic enclosure around St Cianan's Church. These archaeological features, and the pipe route on parts of Larrix Street and Main Street, were subsequently excavated by Stuart Elder (see No. 955 below, 08E0592).

Monitoring after this initial test-trenching revealed significant blue/grey silt deposits immediately east of the bridge on Main Street. It also uncovered a burnt feature in the trench in the roadway outside O'Neill's public house at the southern end of the town. This appeared to be the remains of a truncated cereal-drying kiln and samples were taken for analysis and 14C dating. The remains of a number of culverts were found on Mill Street, Main Street and on Station Road.

Four test-trenches were excavated by Matt Seaver, as an extension to the monitoring licence, in Abbeylands townland. These were all within the land held by St Michael's Grange, which belonged to the monks of Llanthony Prima, an order of Welsh Augustinian canons. The buildings of this grange are located immediately south-west of the County Council yard. Two trenches were dug in the Council yard. One revealed the remains of the RIC constabulary buildings overlying a cesspit of unknown date. Three trenches within a green field to the south of Duleek revealed high levels of dumped material up to 2m in depth. This field, to the east of the Council yard, contained a laneway leading from the constabulary barracks to Maudlin Bridge. No archaeological features were uncovered. Within the stone rubble a twin-light ogee-headed window from a late medieval building was found. In the Abbeylands housing estate two test-trenches were excavated. Trench 7 revealed part of a north-south ditch containing medieval pottery. Trench 9 contained riverine deposits of potential archaeological significance 2m under road deposits of gravel used to raise the level of the ground when the housing estate was built in the 1980s. Subsequent excavations, directed by Matthew Seaver, took place on this section of the route under a separate licence during 2009 (08E0825).

Archaeological works on the DBO contract consisted of monitoring the construction of the wastewater treatment plant, the rising main pipe and the outfall pipe. Nothing of archaeological significance was discovered at the wastewater treatment plant site. Two areas of archaeological interest were discovered on the flood-plain of the Nanny River on the rising main between the pump station and the new wastewater treatment plant. Area 1 was discovered at the south end of the wayleave next to the road R152 (NGR 305061 268384). This consisted of an area of cobbling measuring 18m by 9m, which formed a regularly laid surface of rounded and sub-rounded stones; this area extended from a ditch and wall in the east to the western limit of excavation. Area 2 was identified on a small piece of ground at the confluence of the Nanny and Paramada rivers, north-east of Prioryland Bridge (NGR 305132 268191). Here, monitoring identified a large metallised surface formed of closely laid and compacted stones and pebbles. This was investigated and found to be c. 0.05m deep and lying directly on natural subsoils. Both Areas 1 and 2 were subsequently excavated by Brendan Fagan (see No. 953 below, 08E0536). Monitoring of the construction of a new outfall pipe from the wastewater treatment plant south to the River Nanny in Prioryland townland discovered a c. 35m-wide palaeochannel of the River Nanny, the remains of a burnt mound on the edge of this channel and a cache of struck flints in this channel. This site was subsequently excavated by Ed Lyne (see No. 957 below, 08E0929).

Archaeological works in Duleek will continue in 2009. This monitoring licence has been transferred to Matthew Seaver, CRDS Ltd.

Richard Clutterbuck, Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd

**2009:644 - ABBEYLANDS, DULEEK, Meath**

ABBEYLANDS, DULEEK

ME027-038

08E0825

Urban, medieval

ITM: E 703934m, N 766998m

Excavations in advance of a pipe corridor took place in Abbeylands, a townland immediately south of Duleek bordered by the River Nanny and its wide floodplain. Duleek was an important settlement from early to late medieval period periods. The development corridor is located in close proximity to a number of sites, including the town of Duleek (ME027-038), the early medieval enclosure of Duleek (ME027-038019) and the Grange of St Michael (ME027-038:014-16, 11-12). This work followed test-trenching by Richard Clutterbuck (Excavations 2008, No. 952, 07E0927).

A 53m east-west trench, 1.2m in width, was dug from the County Council yard to the south of the Garda station in Duleek to the gate into the Abbeylands housing estate. The County Council yard is within 100m of Duleek Cross, known as the Dowdall Cross, in Market Green, and 50m from the medieval grange of St Michael. A number of 19<sup>th</sup> century walls associated with the RIC barracks were identified in the council yard. Excavations in the greenfield on the boundary between the field and the town revealed up to 3m-deep deposits of modern refuse and building rubble overlying a stone surface which could be identified as a laneway associated with the barracks. A large quantity of stone rubble was uncovered which included a medieval twin light ogee-headed window, indicating the demolition of an important medieval structure in the vicinity.

The trench continued along the existing road between Carey's Lane in the west and continuing east through Abbeylands housing estate towards the Paramadda River. A series of archaeological features were identified, described here from west to east. A significant north-east/south-west boundary ditch, 2m wide by 0.92m in depth, was identified cutting through the lowest deposit of ploughsoil. It was filled with compact silty clay, overlain by dark-brown sandy silt, with the upper deposit consisting of orange/brown loose sandy clay. Both second and tertiary deposits contained occasional animal bone and medieval pottery. This ditch is likely to be a burgage boundary ditch from plots fronting on to Colgan's Lane, where Kieran Campbell uncovered evidence for extensive 13th-to 15th-century activity that is likely to relate to street-fronting structures (Excavations 2002, No. 1449, 02E0844).

Some 18m further east a stone structure was identified within the pipe trench below the road in the centre of Abbeyland housing estate. The trench was widened to 3m for c. 7m (east-west). This revealed a circular stone structure with a south-facing entrance, of which 40% was exposed in the trench. The remainder of the building remained beyond the limits of excavation below the footpath and garden to the north. The internal diameter of the building was c. 3.4m, while the external diameter was c. 5.2m. The width of the extant wall was between 0.9m and 1m. The wall cut truncated an earlier medieval garden soil deposit. The interior of the structure was cut into natural boulder clay and consisted of four random courses of roughly hewn limestone blocks bonded with clay up to 0.8m in height. Only one course remained in situ on the external face of the wall. The entrance to the structure was splayed. It had an internal width of 0.9m and an external width of 1.2m. The interior of the building had a stone pebble floor/surface.

Two more walls were identified associated with this structure. One wall was located to the west of the entrance (0.7m by 0.42m by 0.2m) and one wall to the east (0.8m long by 0.46m wide by 0.1m high). Both walls were perpendicular to the main structure. Although these walls were not tied into the main structure, they were probably contemporary with each other. The building complex was interpreted as a possible dovecote. Two separate dovecotes are mentioned in medieval extents, one in part of the main grange complex and another which stood above the River Nanny. They are

mentioned in 1579 and a thatched dovecote is mentioned in the early 17th century (Nicholls 1994, 1579; Hardiman 1826, Pat. 3, Jac. 1, 69).

On abandonment, the primary deposit was a brownish-grey clayey silt 0.03m in depth. The second deposit within the building was a deliberate deposit of demolished mortared stone and clay with frequent animal-bone inclusions measuring 0.98m in depth. This was sealed by a deposit of smaller stones and silty clay 0.15m deep.

A shallow concave north–south gully identified 2m to the east of the stone tower measured 1m wide by 0.32m deep (F27). To the west of the gully a small bank could be seen in the section face. It was filled by loose dark-grey clayey silt containing fourteen sherds of medieval pottery and three corroded iron nails.

A cut scarp or ditch with a north-east/south-west orientation was identified 0.75m to the west of gully (F27). A total length of 3.35m of this scarp was identified within the trench cut. The orientation of this feature is not comparable to any of the other features on the site. The fill of this feature was dark-grey, clayey silt with orange and beige clay inclusions. A small irregular-shaped pit, 1.5m by 0.5m by 0.25m in depth, was identified on the northern edge of the trench. This contained charred cereal grain and weeds of cultivation.

An irregular-shaped hollow was uncovered, 3.5m by 0.25m deep, at the eastern end of the trench. It was filled by dark-grey silt with frequent charcoal inclusions. Four sherds of medieval pottery and a small fragment of two-colour floor tile dating from the 13th century, and previously unknown from Duleek, were also recovered. All the features to the east of the tower were covered by a badly denuded metal surface identified in the eastern part of the pipe trench excavated in Abbeylands. It measured at least the width of the trench and ran for 17m. It sealed the features mentioned above and was itself sealed by a ploughsoil/garden soil deposit.

Post-medieval features comprised a series of north-west to south-east furrows which were overlain by 1m of ploughsoil deposits and sealed by Carey's Lane. A copper-alloy stick-pin was retrieved from within. The southern edge of the trench encountered the estate wall, which stood until the construction of the current housing estate and cut through the walls associated with the stone tower. Specialist work including radiocarbon dates should provide better indications of the chronology of the stone tower and associated features.

#### Reference

Hardiman, J. 1826 *Inquisitionem cancellariae hibernicum repertorum*. K. Nicholls, 1994 *The Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, Dublin.

Matthew Seaver, for Cultural Resource Development Services

#### **2012:458**

Duleek, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Duleek

Monitoring

ITM: E 704493m, N 768464m

11E0228; C484; E4365

The works entailed Phase 2 of a Water Conservation Scheme within County Meath. Stage 1 of the project – Advanced Mains Rehabilitation Stage 1 – involves the replacement of c. 13.4km of existing water mains in various locations throughout the county. This report concerns works at Duleek. The monitoring programme involved full-time monitoring in areas that were identified as having archaeological potential and regular inspections elsewhere. Throughout the course of the works no finds or features of archaeological significance were identified.

Billy Quinn, Moore Group

#### **2013:425**

Balsaran, Duleek, Meath

13E0050

No archaeological significance

ITM: E 704131m, N 767421m

Testing took place of a proposed national school site at Abbey Road, Duleek, approximately 1km south of Duleek village. There were two existing schools on campus; the area tested was a green-field area north of the school complex used as playing pitches. The site is beyond the Zone of Archaeological Potential placed around the core of the medieval settlement for Duleek. The closest monument to the site is ME027-025, a ring barrow in Abbeyland Td c. 140m to the north-east. Five trenches with a total length of 515m were excavated. No archaeological features or archaeological artefacts were recorded.

Rob O'Hara

## Appendix 3: List of Stray Finds from the Vicinity of the Proposed Development

The following information is based on the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland.

### **NMI Register No. IA/41/1976**

Find(s) Medieval potsherd  
 Monument Graveyard of St. Mary's  
 Townland Duleek  
 Parish Duleek  
 Barony Lower Duleek  
 Vicinity of Meath  
 County Meath  
 OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27  
 Notes Medieval potsherd recovered from St. Mary's graveyard

### **NMI Register No. 1973:9**

Find(s) Human bones  
 Monument Grange of Llanthony Secunda  
 Townland Abbeyland  
 Parish Duleek  
 Barony Lower Duleek  
 Vicinity of Meath  
 County Meath  
 OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27  
 Notes The remains of at least four individuals representing two young adult males and two young adult females were reported during pipe laying

### **NMI Register No. 1973:10a-g**

Find(s) Human bones  
 Monument Grange of Llanthony Secunda  
 Townland Abbeyland  
 Parish Duleek  
 Barony Lower Duleek  
 Vicinity of Meath  
 County Meath  
 OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27  
 Notes The remains of at least eight individuals were uncovered by a JCB digging a trench for a sewage pipe. Two were intact burials. Six were orientated north to south and two were orientated east to west.

### **NMI Register No. 2006:84 IA/156/2006**

Find(s) Iron Blade  
 Monument ----  
 Townland Downestown  
 Parish Duleek  
 Barony Lower Duleek  
 Vicinity of Meath  
 County Meath  
 OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27

Notes Large tanged, single edged iron blade in very poor condition. Heavily corroded and disintegrated. Blade had straight back; cutting edge is almost entirely missing due to corrosion. Short, sloping shoulders lead to an unusually short, straight tang. 41.65mm long by 2.2mm wide and 1.28mm thick

**NMI Register No. L1934:7-8**

Find(s) Battle axe and stone hammer

Monument ----

Townland Newtown

Parish Duleek

Barony Lower Duleek

Vicinity of Meath

County Meath

OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27

Notes Found in 'White Rock' field. The axe is socketed and highly polished. It is ornamented with fillets and engraved lines along the fillets. The hammer stone is highly polished with a hole counter sunk on both sides.

**NMI Register No. IA/26/81**

Find(s) Pottery fragments

Monument Motte site

Townland Commons

Parish Duleek

Barony Lower Duleek

Vicinity of Meath

County Meath

OS Sheet Meath Sheet 27

Archaeological Development Services Ltd

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Method of Acquisition Excavated by Kieran Campbell

Notes Excavation on the supposed motte site led to the recovery of a number of sherds of medieval pottery including Saintonge ware and Ham Green Ware