

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
FOR  
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AT  
RAILPARK WEST, MAYNOOTH  
COUNTY KILDARE



On Behalf Of

Montane Developments Ltd

LRD Submission

Excavation Licence No. 25E0176

November 2025

### Abstract

Icon Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Maynooth Montane Limited to complete an Archaeological Impact Assessment as part of a LRD planning submission for a residential development located at Railpark West, Maynooth, County Kildare (ITM 53.377033, -6.575160). The proposed residential development is not located within or close to any known cultural assets. The nearest known cultural asset (lime kiln) is located 460m to the east of the subject site. The test excavation found no features or finds of archaeological interest. The assessment recommended archaeological monitoring, a standard condition for residential developments of this scale.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Icon Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Maynooth Montane Limited to complete Archaeological Impact Assessment as part of a LRD Planning Submission for a residential development located at Railpark West, Maynooth, County Kildare (ITM 53.377033, -6.575160).

The proposed residential development is not located within or close to any known cultural assets. The nearest known cultural asset (lime kiln) is located 460m to the east of the subject site and the nearest recorded monument (KD005-023: Field Boundary) is located 980km to the west of the subject site.

This report has been prepared by John Kavanagh, MA MSc. Project Director with Icon Archaeology Ltd since 2005.

### 1.1 Methodology

A primary cartographic source and base-line data for the archaeological assessment was the consultation of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for County Kildare. All known recorded archaeological monuments are indicated on 6-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and are listed in aforementioned records. The following sources were consulted for the Archaeological Impact Assessment Report:

- Historical background
- Placename evidence
- The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)
- Site and Monuments Record (SMR)
- Database of Previous Excavations
- Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland
- Record of Protected Structures
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
- 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Editions Ordnance Survey maps
- Aerial photography & Satellite Imagery
- Site Inspection
- Test Excavation

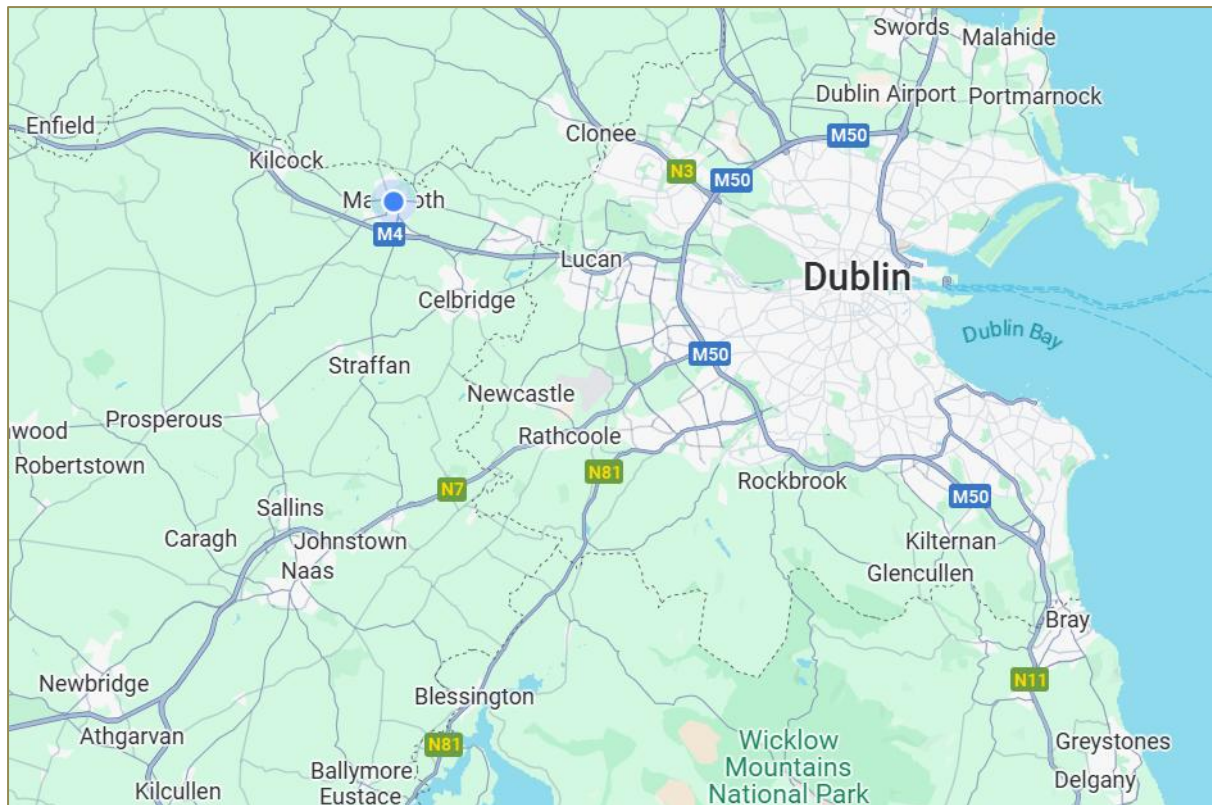


Figure 1 Area Location Map, Maynooth, County Kildare

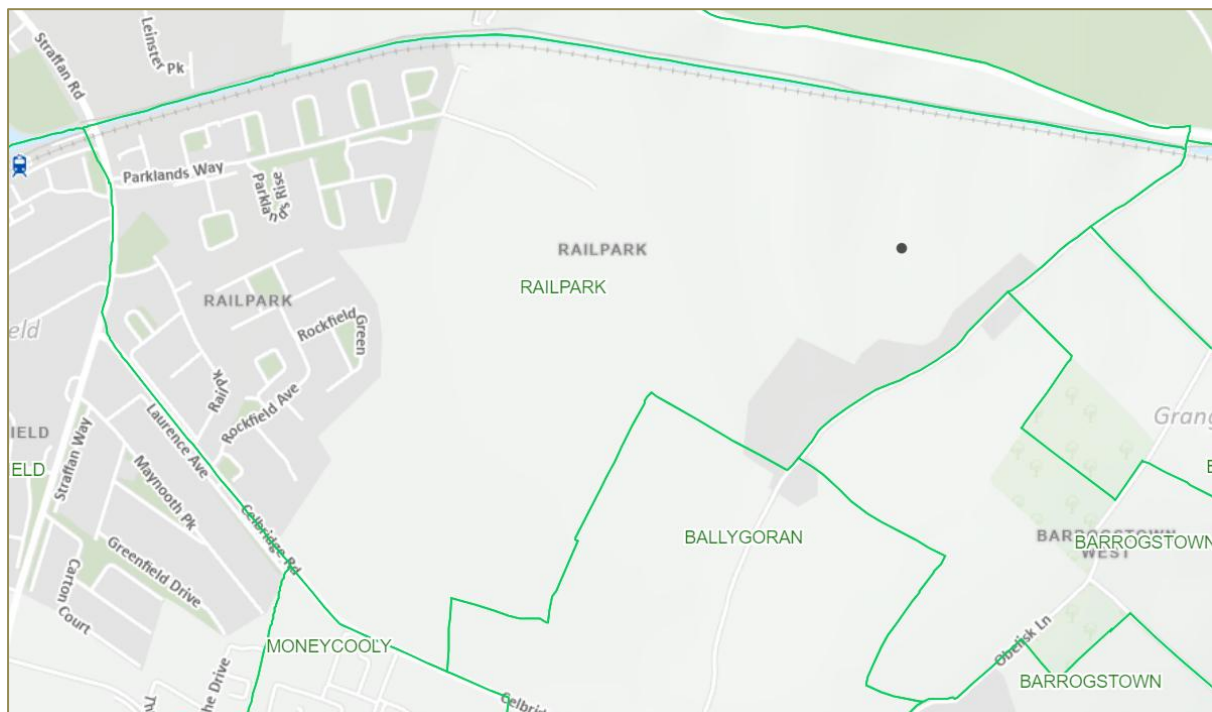


Figure 2 Townland of Railpark, Maynooth, County Kildare



## 2. PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The development will comprise a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) on a site at “Railpark West”, in the townland of Railpark, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. The proposed development is for 139 no. units comprising 36 no. houses (ranging in heights up to 3 storeys), 95 no. apartments (5 no. blocks ranging in heights up to 5 storeys partially over podium parking) and 08 no. duplexes (1 no. 3/4 storey Block).

The proposal includes for a new vehicular/pedestrian/cyclist access from the permitted Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (MERR) to the east and the adjoining development to the South, and pedestrian/cyclist access (and vehicular access for one of the proposed houses) to Parklands Grove/Old Railpark to the north of the site. The development also includes all car and bicycle parking at surface and podium underdeck level, new streets and footpaths, bin stores, residential private open spaces, public & communal open spaces, boundary treatments, waste management areas, landscaping and all associated site development works.



Figure 3 Plan of Proposed Development, Railpark West, Maynooth

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Historical Background

The placename 'Maynooth' derives from Mag Nuadat, the plain of Nuadha, a legendary Leinster figure. The townland of Railpark is in the Electoral Division of Maynooth, in Civil Parish of Laraghbryan, in the Barony of North Salt. The townland name is recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS from c.1838 and comprised 366 acres.

There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity in the immediate area before several early churches were established in this border territory between the north of Leinster and the ancient kingdom of Meath. A possible prehistoric enclosure site is located 420m to the east of the townland with a standing stone 800m further to the east.

The early medieval period is represented by 'Donaghmort' church and graveyard 330m to the east, thought to be on the site of an earlier ecclesiastical settlement. An early medieval burial ground is located close to the southern boundary with several ringfort sites scattered across the general landscape.

When the Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland, Strongbow (the earl of Pembroke) granted north-eastern Kildare to Maurice FitzGerald, who built a castle at a strategic location at the confluence of two streams. The castle provided shelter for a growing settlement and soon there was a weekly market and an annual fair. Grain from the hinterland was ground at a watermill on the River Lyreen.

In 1316 the Fitzgerald's became earls of Kildare and they rose to become the most important family in Ireland by the sixteenth century – the 'Great Earl' (Garret Mór) and his son (Garret Óg) both served long periods as king's lord deputy in Ireland. Maynooth was a key site, and its castle was crucial to the defence of the beleaguered English colony centred 25km away at Dublin. A college was founded in 1518, but the Dissolution and the failed rebellion of Silken Thomas dealt a double blow to Maynooth in the 1530s and 40s.

#### 3.2 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP & SMR)

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 (1) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and consists of a list of known archaeological monuments and accompanying maps. The Record of Monuments and Places affords some protection to the monuments entered therein. Section 12 (3) of the 1994 Amendment Act states that any person proposing to carry out work at or in relation to a recorded monument must give notice in writing to the Minister (Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and shall not commence the work for a period of two months after having given the notice. All works, therefore, within or around any archaeological monument are subject to statutory protection and legislation (National Monuments Acts 1930-2004).

A review of the Record of Monuments and Places identified one monument within 1km of the proposed development. The nearest recorded monument is KD005-023 (field boundary) located 980m to the west of the subject site.



Figure 4 Record of Monuments & Places, Railpark, Maynooth

### 3.3 Previous Excavations

The Excavations Database is an annual account of all excavations carried out under license. The database is available online at [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) and includes excavations from 1985 to 2023. This database was consulted as part of the desktop research for this assessment to establish if any archaeological excavations had been carried out within or near to the proposed project. The database of previous excavations contained no entries for the townland of Railpark, Maynooth, County Kildare.

An excavation was carried out in the adjacent townland of Greenfield 1.3km to the south of the proposed development site to the south-east of the town of Maynooth, in close proximity to three recorded monuments: KD010-040 (burial ground), KD010-008 (field system) and KD011-061 (furnace).

A geophysical survey (17R0009) was previously carried out by Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit Ltd at the site. Testing of the proposed development was carried out in 2019. A total of 17 test trenches were excavated in the areas to be disturbed by the proposed development. The sod and topsoil (C01) measured an average of 0.55m in thickness and lay above the natural orange sandy clay and gravel (C02). A portion of the site was, however, stripped for a proposed new road and one oval ring-ditch (C03) and two inhumation burials (C04 & C05) were identified within this area. Consequently, it was proposed to strip the site under strict archaeological supervision.

The features uncovered appear to represent a Bronze Age funerary landscape consisting of a barrow (C3), a partially truncated Bronze Age burial urn (19E0235:25:1) and eight possible cremation pits (C29, C31, C34, C37, C40, C42, C45 & C49) identified c.150m to the west.

### 3.4 Topographical Files NMI

Details relating to finds of archaeological material and monuments in numerous townlands in the country are contained in the topographical files held in the National Museum of Ireland. In order to establish if any new or previously unrecorded finds had been recovered from the study area these files were consulted for every townland within and adjacent to the same. Heritage Maps ([www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)) also contains locational detail for Museum find spots.



File Ref: 1A/153/87:

- Reported Find Spot - Object Type: Spindle Whorl; Flint; Pottery; Glass; Metal
- Located 1.45km to the south of the proposed development site.

### 3.5 Record of Protected Structures & NIAH

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is the key strategy document which structures the proper planning and sustainable development of land-use across County Kildare over the six-year statutory time period of the plan. Appendix 6 of the KCDP lists the protected structures in the county of Kildare.





The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The published surveys are a source of information on the selected structures for relevant planning authorities.

A review of the list of protected structures for Railpark, identified 4 protected structures, three of which are also listed in the National Inventory for Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The structures are of 'regional' significance.

RPS No.	NIAH Ref	Structure Name	Townland	Description	Distance
B05-34	11803109	202 Railpark	Railpark	House	780m
B05-60	11803103	Mullen Bridge	Railpark	Bridge	640m
B06-06	N/A	Lime Kiln	Railpark	Lime Kiln	460m
B05-13	11900601	Pike Bridge	Railpark	Bridge	1.2km



Figure 5 Location of Protected Structures, Railpark, Maynooth

RPS No.	Description	Photo
B05-34	Detached three-bay single-storey house, c.1860, with single-bay single-storey lean-to advanced porch to right. Renovated and Refenestrated, c.1990. Gable-ended roof (continuing into lean-to to porch) with slate (lean-to supported on timber brackets). Clay ridge tiles. Rendered chimney stacks. Exposed timber eaves. Cast-iron rainwater goods. Roughcast walls. Painted. Square-headed openings. Rendered sills. Replacement uPVC casement windows, c.1990. Replacement glazed uPVC door, c.1990. Set back from line of road in own grounds. Gravel forecourt to front.	
B05-60	Single-arch bridge over canal, built 1795. Bypassed, 1995. Now in alternative use. Repointed rubble stone walls between part creeper- or ivy-covered repointed rubble stone battered abutment walls with tooled cut-limestone rounded coping to parapets centred on weathered cut-limestone panel (east). Single elliptical or pseudo three-centred arch with repointed drag edged tooled limestone ashlar voussoirs. Sited spanning Royal Canal with flagged towpath to canal.	
B06-06	19 <sup>th</sup> century lime kiln, possibly depicted on the 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition OS but clearly labelled 'L.K' on the later 25 <sup>th</sup> Edition. Associated with ruined farmhouse immediately to the W. Heavily overgrown.	
B05-13	Two-arch rubble stone humpback road bridge over canal and railway line, dated 1793, with ashlar voussoirs and cut-stone date stone/plaque. Broken coursed squared rubble stone walls. Cut-stone date stone/plaque. Cut-stone coping to parapet walls. Two elliptical arches. Ashlar voussoirs. Squared rubble stone soffits with traces of render over. Sited spanning Royal Canal and Midland and Great Western Railway line. Grass banks to canal with tow path to north, and grass banks to railway line.	

### 3.6 Cartographic Sources

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition O.S. map (c.1838) shows that the townland of Railpark comprised 366 acres of medium sized enclosed fields. Mullen bridge is depicted in the NW corner with Whartan (Pike) Bridge to the NE crossing the canal. Several farm buildings close to the site of the Lime Kiln are depicted to the E.

By the time of the 25<sup>th</sup> Edition, little had changed in the townland. Several buildings have been added to the farm buildings to the E and the lime kiln is clearly labelled. No other features of archaeological or historical interest were noted.

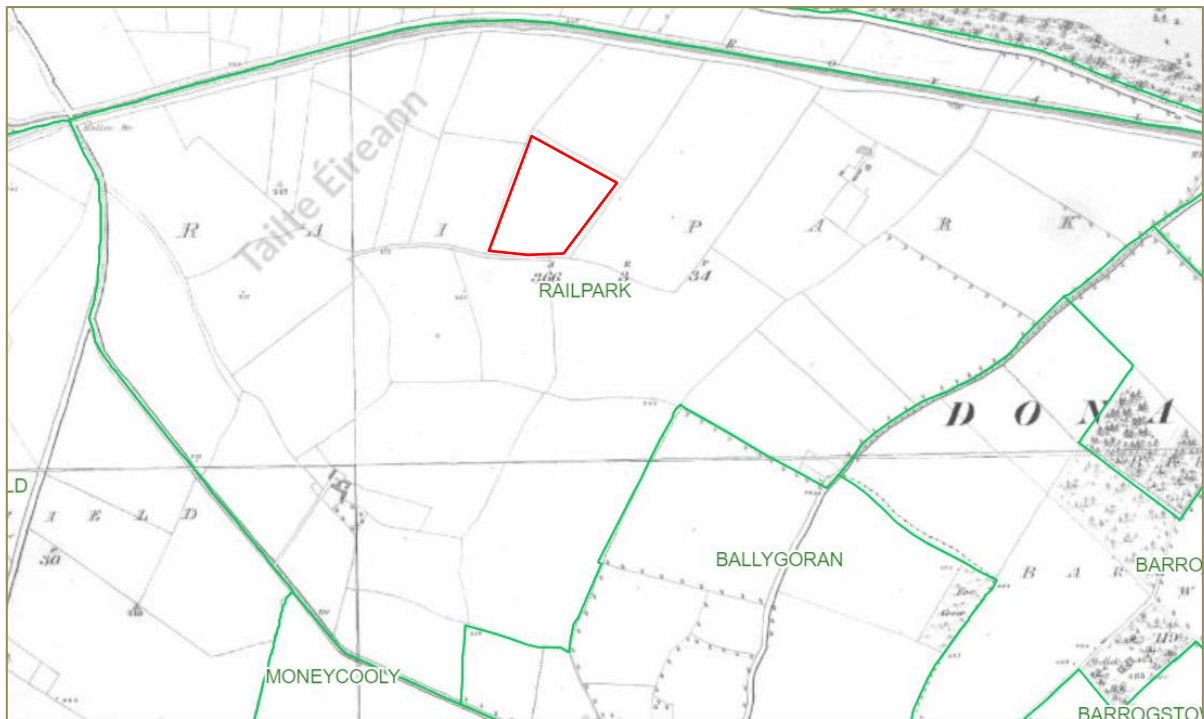


Figure 6 1st Edition OS, Railpark, Maynooth

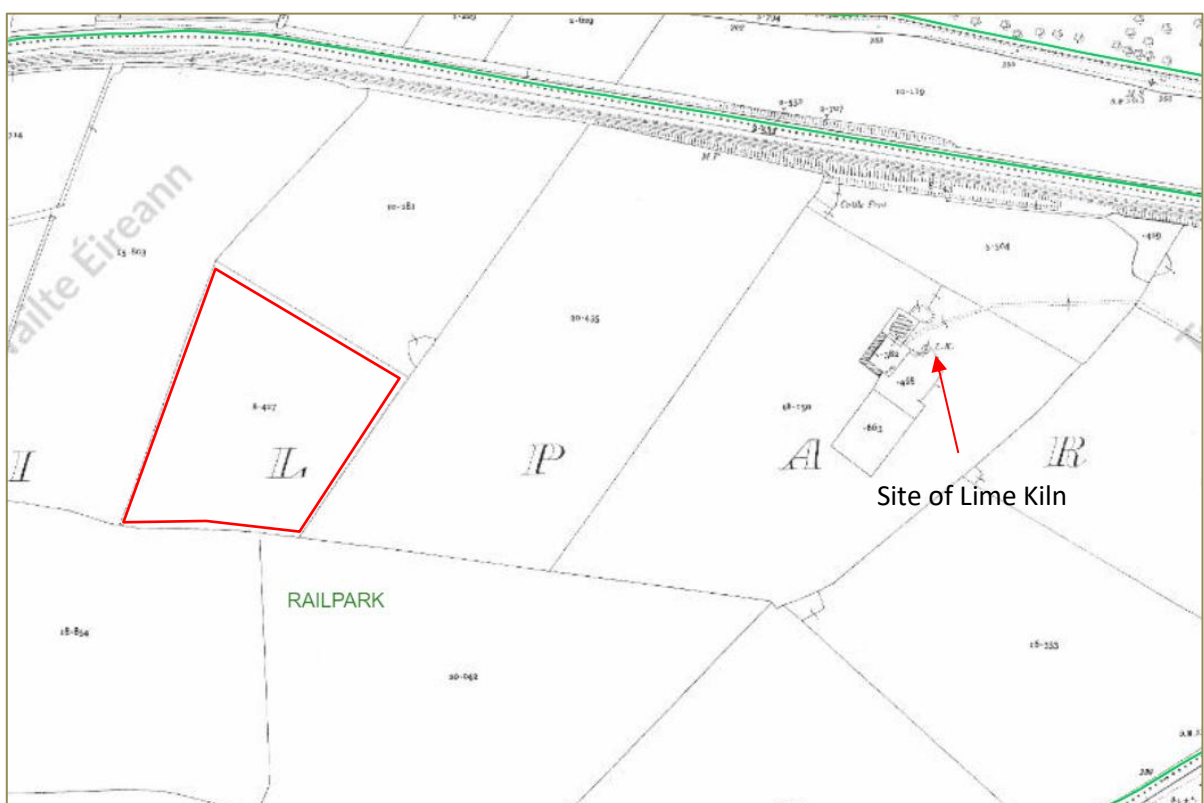


Figure 7 25" OS Map, Railpark, Maynooth



### 3.7 Satellite Imagery

Google Earth imagery from early 2025 shows the subject site divided into two fields surrounded by mature hedgerows on all sides with an existing dwelling to the north. No features of archaeological potential were noted.



Figure 8 Satellite Imagery from 2025 (source: Google Earth)




#### 4. TEST EXCAVATION

The site measures 160m by 150m and is roughly rectangular in shape with two dwellings at the north end. The test excavation consisted of four linear trenches excavated across the development site. Each trench was excavated using a machine fitted with a 1.6m grading bucket down to archaeological and/or natural undisturbed deposits. Once complete the trenches were backfilled for safety reasons.



Figure 9 Location of Excavated Test Trenches

Test Trench 1	Description
L: 150m, W:1.6m	<p>The test trench was aligned N/S and was excavated to a depth of 400mm exposing natural glacial clays. No features or finds of archaeological significance were found.</p> 



Test Trench 2	Description
L: 150m, W:1.6m	<p>The test trench was aligned N/S and was excavated to a depth of 400mm exposing natural glacial clays. No features or finds of archaeological significance were found.</p> 

Test Trench 3	Description
L: 80m, W:1.6m	<p>The test trench was aligned N/S and was excavated to a depth of 400mm exposing natural glacial clays. No features or finds of archaeological significance were found.</p> 

Test Trench 4	Description
L: 80m, W:1.6m	<p>The test trench was aligned N/S and was excavated to a depth of 400mm exposing natural glacial clays. No features or finds of archaeological significance were found.</p> 

## 5. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the desk-based assessment and archaeological testing identified no archaeological remains or features within or close to the proposed development site. A summary of the key results is presented below.

- A review of the Record of Monuments and Places identified one monument within 1km of the proposed development. The nearest recorded monument is KD005-023 (field boundary) located 980m to the west of the subject site.
- No previous excavations have been carried out on or near the subject site.
- No stray finds have been recovered from or near the subject site.
- A review of the list of protected structures for Railpark, identified 4 protected structures located between 460-1200m of the subject site. Three of which are also listed in the National Inventory for Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The structures are of 'regional' significance. The nearest protected structure is a lime kiln 460m to the east.
- A review of cartographic sources showed no features of archaeological or historical interest.
- A review a satellite imagery showed no features of archaeological or historical interest.
- A site inspection identified no features of archaeological or historical interest.
- The test excavation found no features or finds of archaeological interest.

### 5.1 Impact of Proposed Development

- The proposed development will have no direct impact on known archaeological remains. The nearest recorded monument is KD005-023 (field boundary) located 980m to the west of the subject site.
- The proposed development will have no indirect (visual) impact on known archaeological or architectural remains. The nearest protected structure is a lime kiln 460m to the east.
- Due to the scale of the proposed development, previously unknown sub-surface archaeological remains may be impacted by the development.
- It is recommended that all groundworks be subject to archaeological monitoring under licence from the National Monuments Service.

*The recommendations contained within this report are subject to the approval of the National Monuments Service and Local Authority who may issue additional or alternative recommendations.*



## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Database of Previous Excavations

Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

National Monuments Legislation

Ordnance Survey, County Kildare

Record of Monuments and Places, County Kildare

SMR files for Ballymany, County Kildare

Topographical Files, National Museum of Ireland