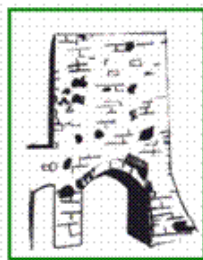


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
OF A PROPOSED NEW BURIAL GROUND  
IN ANNAGHDOWN,  
COUNTY GALWAY**

**February 2025**

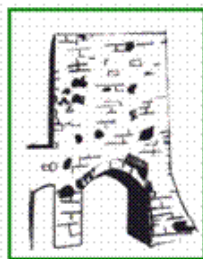


***Through Time Ltd.***

***Professional Archaeological Services  
Old church Street, Athenry, Co. Galway  
[www.throughtimeltd.com](http://www.throughtimeltd.com)***

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**Martin Fitzpatrick M.A.**



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## II ABBREVIATIONS ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**GA** - This number is the number of the site on the SMR/RMP map. It begins with the county code, here GA for Galway, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological site.

**M** Meters, all dimensions are given in meters or part of a meter.

**NIAH** National Inventory of Architectural Heritage<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>

**NMI** National Museum of Ireland<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>

**NMS** National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

**OS** Ordnance Survey<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>

**OSI** Ordnance Survey of Ireland<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>RMP

**RMP** Record of Monuments and Places. A record on which all known archaeological sites are marked and listed in an accompanying inventory. This resource is based on all publicly available material and cartographic sources and is read in conjunction with constraint maps. The RMP records known recorded monuments and the sites of such monuments (if the monument no longer survives).

**RPS** Record of Protected Structures<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>

**SMR** Sites and Monuments Record

## INTRODUCTION

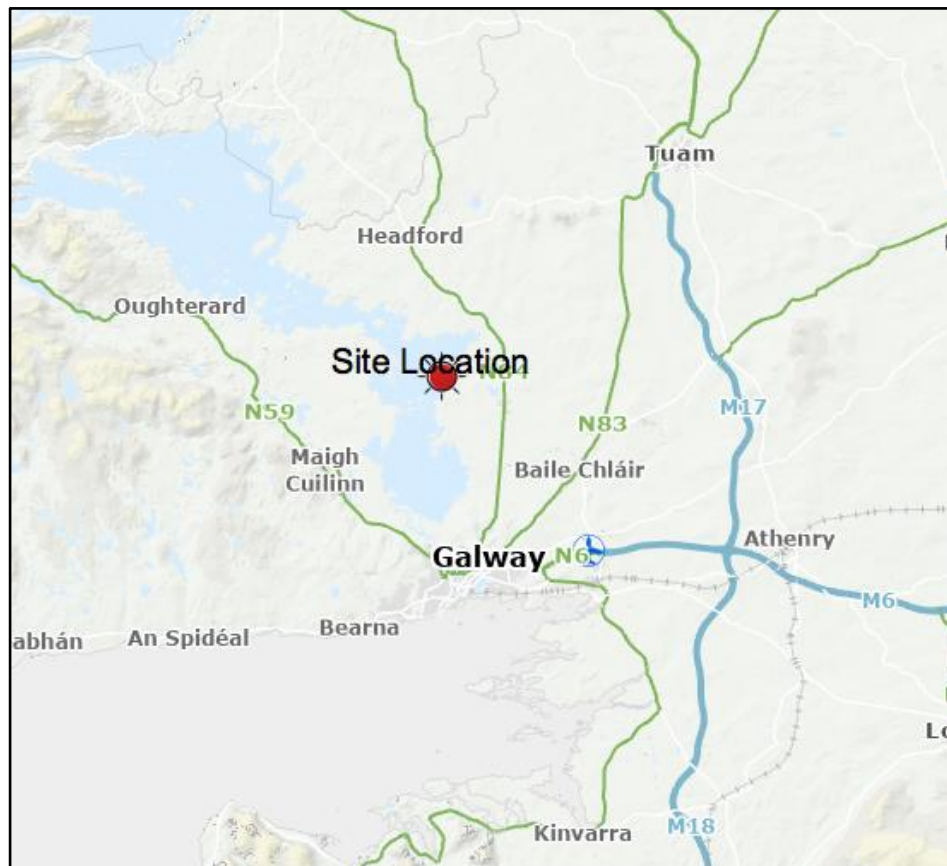
The following archaeological report was compiled at the request of Mike Melody, Senior Executive Engineer with Galway County Council. It concerns an Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment of a proposed new burial ground in the townland of Annaghdown in Co. Galway. An initial archaeological assessment of the proposed development was completed by the author in October 2024. This assessment recommended that a geophysical survey of the proposed development site be undertaken. This updated report included the results of the geophysical survey undertaken in February 2025.

### Site Location

The proposed burial ground is located in the townland of Annaghdown, situated on the eastern shore of Lough Corrib and c.11km north of Galway city.

**Townland:** Annaghdown

**ITM:** 528569 738511



**Fig. 1:** General site Location Map.



Fig. 2: Site Location Map.

### Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the provision of a new burial ground (Area- 0.811 Ac.) for the local community and includes the allocation of the burial ground, access roads and 16 parking spaces. The development is located in a green field location to the north of the existing burial ground and archaeological complex in Annaghdow, County Galway.

### LEGISLATION

Archaeological monuments are protected through national and international policy designed to secure the protection of the cultural heritage resource. This is facilitated in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta Convention), which was ratified by Ireland in 1997.

The *Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023* ("the Act") was enacted on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and partially entered into force on

the 31st of May 2024. Pending the commencement of the provisions of the Act which will repeal *the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014* and related legislation, those Acts and related legislation remain fully in force as they stood on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

The National Monuments Act 1930 to 2004 and relevant provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological remains, which includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. A National Monument is described as:

*“a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto”* (National Monuments Act 1930 Section 2).

A number of mechanisms under the National Monuments Act are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the Register of Historic Monuments, the Record of Monuments and Places and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

The minister may acquire National Monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The State or the Local Authority may assume guardianship of any National Monument (other than dwellings). The owners of National Monuments may also appoint the Minister or the local Authority of that monument if the State or Local Authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the State, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

Section 5 of the 1987 Act requires the Minister to establish and maintain a Register of Historic Monuments. Historic monuments and archaeological areas present on the Register are afforded statutory protection under the 1987 Act. Any interference with sites recorded on the Register is illegal without the permission of the Minister. Two months notice in writing is required prior to any work being undertaken on or in the vicinity of a Registered Monument. The Register also includes sites under preservation orders and temporary preservation orders with the written consent, and at the discretion of the Minister.

Section 12 (1) of the 1994 Act requires the Minister to establish and maintain a Record of Monuments and Places where the Minister believes that such monuments exist. The Record comprises a list of monuments and relevant places and a map/s

showing each monument and relevant place in respect of each county in the state. All sites recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994.

Section 12 (3) of the 1994 Act provides that:

*“Where the owner or occupier (other than the Minister) of a monument or place included in the Record, or any other person, proposed to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such a monument or place, he or she shall give notice to the Minister to carry out work and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Minister, commence the works until two months after the giving of notice”.*

The Architectural Heritage and Historic Properties Act 1999 and the Planning and Development Act of 2000 are the main built heritage legislation. The Architectural Heritage Act requires the Minister to establish a survey to identify, record and assess the architectural heritage of the country. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) records all built heritage structures within specific counties in Ireland. The document is used to advise local Authorities on the register of a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as required by the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Act of 2000 requires Local Authorities to establish a Record of Protected Structures to be included in the County Development Plan (CDP). Buildings recorded in the RPS can include Recorded Monuments, structures listed in the NIAH or buildings deemed to of architectural, archaeological or artistic importance by the Minister. Once listed in the RPS the sites/areas receive statutory protection from injury or demolition under the 2000 Act. Damage to or demolition of a site registered in the RPS is an offence. The detail of the list varies from County to County. If the Local Authority considers a building to be in need of a repair it can order conservation and/or restoration works. The owner or developer must make a written application/request to the local authority to carry out any works on a protected structure and its environs.

Where a National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey has been carried out, those structures which have been attributed a rating value of international, national or regional importance in the inventory are recommended by the Minister of the EHLG to the relevant planning authority for inclusion on the RPS. In accordance with Section 53 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, if a planning authority, after considering a recommendation made to it under this section, decides not to

comply with the recommendation, it shall inform the Minister in writing of the reason for its decision.

### **Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028**

Galway County Council has written policies on the preservation of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage remains in relation to permitted development in the Galway County Development Plan. The principal aim is to *“Conserve, enhance, manage and protect the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage as key social, economic and cultural assets which are an integral part of the county and safeguard these valuable resources through proper management, sensitive enhancement and appropriate development. Recognise the important role that the arts and cultural can play in making a place as attractive area to live, work and enjoy”*.

These policies relate to archaeological features and objects, built structures, views, cultural heritage and scenic routes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was divided into four main components:

1. Desk-based assessment, including gathering and analysing baseline data; [L]  
[SEP]
2. A site inspection of the proposed development.
3. A geophysical survey of the proposed development site.
4. Report writing. [L]  
[SEP]

### **Desk Study**

The desk-based assessment involved examination of the following databases and available documentary sources.

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) – the statutory list of protected places and monuments, with accompanying constraints maps, published for County Galway; [L]  
[SEP]

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) – the archive of current information on sites and monuments, including whether or not sites are to be included on the next RMP revision; available online at

<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment>; [L]  
[SEP]

Lists of National Monuments in State Care: Ownership and Guardianship, published for County Galway; [L]  
[SEP]

The list of Preservation Orders held by the National Monuments Service (published

2010); [L]  
[SEP]

Excavations Bulletins ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)); [L]  
[SEP]

Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland; [L]  
[SEP]

Cartographic sources, including the first-edition six-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map, the 25-inch OS map along with other available maps; [L]  
[SEP]

Historical photographs viewed online via the National Library of Ireland website (<http://www.nli.ie/digital-photographs.aspx>); and Aerial photography (Google Earth, and Digital Globe via the Historic Environment Viewer).

### Site Inspection [L] [SEP]

A site inspection was carried out in October 2024. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a visual examination of the site and to assess the potential effects on known and unknown archaeological and architectural and cultural heritage assets.

### Geophysical Survey

A geophysical survey report of the proposed development site was completed by Minerix Geophysics Ltd. in February 2025. The survey concluded that “the results of the magnetic gradient survey do not indicate the presence of archaeological feature or deposits such as foundations, wall remnants, building or ditches”. [L]  
[SEP] A number of linear features were identified throughout the site and are likely to represent cultivation ridges.

## DESK STUDY

### Recorded Archaeological Monuments

Twenty recorded monuments are located within 1km radius of the proposed burial ground. All of the monuments are located to the south of the proposed burial ground in the area of the tower house, religious houses, churches and graveyards. The closest recorded monument to the proposed burial ground is the ecclesiastical enclosure (GA069-001020) located c. 300m south of the proposed access road and c. 350m south of the proposed burial ground. The following table details the recorded monuments located with 1km of the proposed burial ground.

| No. | RMP Ref.      | Townland | Monument  | Distance to Causeway |
|-----|---------------|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1.  | GA069-003---- | Ballylee | Holy Well | 930m                 |

|     |               |                     |                             |      |
|-----|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| 2.  | GA069-001018- | Ballylee            | Ecclesiastical<br>Residence | 920m |
| 3.  | GA069-002---- | Ballylee            | Tower House                 | 740m |
| 4.  | GA069-002001- | Ballylee            | Bawn                        | 740m |
| 5.  | GA069-001017- | Ballylee/Annaghdown | Holy Well                   | 745m |
| 6.  | GA069-001003- | Annaghdown          | Causeway                    | 610m |
| 7.  | GA069-001015- | Annaghdown          | Cross slab                  | 475m |
| 8.  | GA069-001021- | Annaghdown          | Graveslab                   | 475m |
| 9.  | GA069-001014- | Annaghdown          | Graveyard                   | 480m |
| 10. | GA069-001013- | Annaghdown          | Religious House             | 480m |
| 11. | GA069-001012- | Annaghdown          | Graveyard                   | 430m |
| 12. | GA069-001011- | Annaghdown          | Church                      | 450m |
| 13. | GA069-001009- | Annaghdown          | Cross inscribed<br>pillar   | 450m |
| 14. | GA069-001016- | Annaghdown          | Round Tower                 | 450m |
| 15. | GA069-001006- | Annaghdown          | Graveyard                   | 330m |
| 16. | GA069-001005- | Annaghdown          | Religious House             | 365m |
| 17. | GA069-001004- | Annaghdown          | Religious House             | 365m |
| 18. | GA069-001007- | Annaghdown          | Church                      | 380m |
| 19. | GA069-001008- | Annaghdown          | Graveslab                   | 380m |
| 20. | GA069-001020- | Annaghdown          | Ecclesiastical<br>Enclosure | 300m |

**Table 1:** Recorded monuments within 1km of the proposed burial ground.



**Fig. 3:** Monuments within 1km radius of the proposed development.



**Fig. 4:** Detail of monuments within 1km radius of the proposed development.

## Archaeological and Historical Background

The proposed new burial ground is located in the barony of Clare, parish of Annaghdown and townland of Annaghdown. Today this is a quiet rural destination on the south-eastern shore of Lough Corrib however the quantity and quality of recorded monuments concentrated around the monastery highlight the significance of the area in the medieval period.

The monastery was founded by St. Brendan c. 550 AD in an area of territory known as Magh Seolra that was taken over by the Ui Briuin Seola around the mid eight century who chose Annaghdown for their main church. The French orders of the Augustinians of Arrouaise and the premonstratsesians were established at the location in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Annaghdown became one of the five dioceses of Connacht and retained the bishopric until the monastery was dissolved in 1570.

The medieval landscape is particularly well preserved with two abbeys, the remains of a monastic enclosure, oratory and parish church. The remains of a 12<sup>th</sup> century bishop's palace, a 15<sup>th</sup> century tower house and a number of holy wells confirm the importance of this historic landscape.

The following descriptions of the monuments as provided by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland are derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Galway Vol. II - North Galway'. Compiled by Olive Alcock, Kathy de hÓra and Paul Gosling (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1999).

### **Tower House GA069-002001**

On S shore of a small bay on E side of Lough Corrib. Nolan (1901a, 42), quoting from Parker, notes that 'the existence of a castle [GA069-002----] at this spot seems to have sprung from the desire of the Archbishops of Tuam to suppress the bishopric of Annaghdown'. The last bishop was appointed here in 1421 and 'it is to him that the erection of the present castle is probably due' (ibid). In 1574 'Anaghocyne' was in the possession of 'Nicholas Lynch' (Nolan 1901b, 118). An almost square tower (L 11m, Wth 10.3m), in fair condition, it is five storeys high. A pointed arch doorway in SE wall opens into a lobby with a murder-hole above. The guardroom is to S, while a passage to N leads to an intramural stairs which accesses the 1st floor, from where the spiral stairs rises. A stone vault exists between 2nd/3rd floors. A possible

fireplace, partly destroyed, is visible on 1st floor in SW gable and there is an inaccessible passage in SE wall. Windows consist of simple rectangular slits and robbed-out two lights. Corbels which supported angled bartizans and visible on top of the walls on N, E and S corners, and slop-stones survive on all walls, except NE gable. Chimney stacks crown both gables. The garderobe exit chute is visible near the base of NW wall. Traces of a bawn wall (GA069-002001-)(H < 2m, Wth 0.85m) extend S from E and W corners. A slit window and gun loop are visible in E section. (Parker 1860, 168-9; O'Flanagan 1927, Vol. 1, 265-70.

#### **Ecclesiastical Enclosure GA069-001020**

Text excavation under Ministerial Consent (No. C627/Excavation No. 4557) in the field immediately to the N of the existing graveyard (GA069-001006-) at Annaghdown revealed a section of what appears to be the fosse of the ecclesiastical enclosure (Wth 4.2m; D 1.55-1.8m) associated with the monastic complex. The fill of the fosse, which was orientated ENE-WSW, contained a large amount of animal bone, one human bone, some charcoal and pieces of iron slag, and a fragment of the upper stone of a rotary quern with a cross decoration. The animal bone has been radiocarbon dated to the 11th/12th century AD (Crumlish 2017, 216-32.

#### **Ecclesiastical Residence GA069-001018**

Cochrane (1901, 319) mentions the 'remains of the Bishop's residence' placing it 'near' the castle (GA069-002----). This structure is also referred to by Fahey (1904, 135) as 'a ruin with no particular features referred to by some writers as the Bishop's house'. Not located.

#### **Causeway GA069-001003**

The W end of this causeway terminates at the pier only 100m E of the Augustinian abbey (GA069-001013-). It traverses an area of marshy grassland along the lakeshore and is traceable for 240m. From E side of the pier, the causeway follows an ENE axis for 90m before turning slightly S to run ESE for a further 150m. It may well turn S towards Annaghdown Castle (GA069-002----) after this but its line is difficult of trace due to overgrowth and spoil heaps. It consists of two parallel lines of large limestone boulders set on edge (Wth 2-2.3m), though no trace of internal fill is visible.

#### **Religious House GA069-001004**

The initial monastery established at Annaghdown is traditionally attributed to St

Brendan of Clonfert (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 60-61, 203, 276, 312, 359). It adopted the rule of the Canons Regular of St Augustine in the 12th century (*ibid.*, 156-7) when a convent of Arroasian Augustinian nuns was also established. The latter appears to have failed at the end of the century but may have been revived as a house of Premonstratensian Canons (GA069-001005-) before 1224 (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 56-7). No visible surface trace of this nunnery survives.

### **Religious House GA069-001005**

This church stands on a gently S-facing slope at N end of the modern graveyard and is the northernmost of the monuments at Annaghdown. Known locally as the 'Nunnery', these ruins have been equated with the monastery of 'St. John the Baptist, de Cella Parva', a Premonstratensian abbey established at Annaghdown before 1224, perhaps on the site of an earlier nunnery (GA069-001004-) (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 56-7; Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 203). The standing remains consist of a conserved nave and chancel church, aligned E-W. Of the nave (L 15.25m, Wth 6.1m), only N and S walls still stand to full height, the W gable and chancel arch being reduced to foundations. However, the nave appears to be earlier than the chancel (L 9.8m, Wth 5.5m). Only the foundations of the latter survive except at NE corner where part of E gable survives to full height preserving N embrasure of E window. In the nave, there are traces of an internal dividing wall towards W end, immediately to E of which is a late medieval pointed arch doorway in N wall. The subdivision was lit by two small rectangular windows in N wall, ranged one above the other. These features are probably part of the residential quarters at W end of the church. There are also two other opes, possibly doorways; one in N wall of nave near the junction of the nave and chancel, the other centrally placed in S wall. Immediately W of the latter are possible traces of another window. (Cochrane 1901, 319; Fahey 1904, 135; O' Flanagan 1927, Vol. 1, 268; Killanin and Duignan 1967, 56; Harbison 1975, 81).

### **Graveyard GA069-001006**

Associated with the monastic complex at Annaghdown and immediately to the N of the church (GA069-001005-). This graveyard is depicted by a broken line on the 1838 edition of the OS 6-inch map as a roughly rectangular unenclosed area (c. 50m N-S; c. 40m E-W). It is now part of a modern graveyard (NE-SW c. 69m; c. 67m NW-SE) that has been extended southwards (c. 61m NW-SE; c. 48m NE-SW) to the E of the church. It is bounded by a plastered concrete wall, interspersed with piers, on the E side and access to it is gained via an iron gateway in this wall with a stile

immediately to its S. The enclosing walls on the N, W and S sides are of mass concrete. All the headstones, which are mainly of marble, date to the 20th century. This graveyard now merges with another graveyard (GA069-0010012-) immediately to its S.

#### **Church GA069-001007**

Situated 10m S of the 'Nunnery' (GA069-001005-). A poorly preserved and much-conserved rectangular building, now a Nat. Mon. According to Harbison (1975, 81), it represents 'the foundations of an early Church which is the oldest on the site, and may be of 11th or 12th century date'. Standing remains consist of a featureless rectangular structure (E-W; L 10m, Wth 3.55m) with two doorways: (a) centrally placed in W gable, and (b) near W end of S wall. The latter leads to a featureless rectangular annexe (L 7.35m, Wth 2.75m) with a rectangular tower-like feature (E-W; L 1.55, Wth 2.75m) at W end; possibly a latrine. This annexe is probably a later addition as suggested by Harbison (*ibid.*), as it is not bonded into the main wall of the church. Within it there is a medieval graveslab (GA069-001008-). Two cross-slabs (GA069-001009- and GA069-001010-) are also associated. The monument was taken into Ownership under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 - National Monument 49.

#### **Graveslab GA069-001008**

In the NE corner of an annexe off the S side of what is regarded as the earliest church (GA069-001007-) at Annaghdown (Harbison 1975, 81). This graveslab (L 1.87m; T 0.1m), which is broken into three pieces, tapers slightly from the E end (Wth 0.5m) to the W end (Wth 0.57m). Two incised lines running down the centre of the fragments open into a trefoil at the tip of the E fragment. A small incised triskele within a circle is visible to the S of the trefoil. The graveslab probably dates to between the late 15th and 16th centuries (pers. comm. J. Higgins, August 1988).

#### **Cross inscribed pillar GA069-001009**

When this cross-slab was recorded by Higgins (1987, part ii, 321, no. 38, Fig. 38) it stood to the E of what is regarded as the earliest church (GA069-001007-) at Annaghdown (Harbison 1975, 81) but it was not firmly set into the ground. It came to light during works in this area, by the Office of Public Works (OPW), in the 1950s when it was subsequently set upright (pers. comm. J. Higgins, 23 October 2014). A lost slab (GA069-001010-) used to lie beneath it (Higgins 1987, part ii, 312). By the early 1980s the cross-slab had been moved to the interior of the church (GA069-

001011-), which lies c. 55m to the SE (SMR file 1983). It was moved again and when inspected in October 2014 it was standing against the external face of the E gable of this church. In April 2015 it was temporarily removed to the OPW depot for safe-keeping. The cross-slab consists of a small round-topped limestone pillar (H 0.63m; Wth 0.16m; T 0.09-0.1m) decorated on both faces with a cross. The cross on the front face is a simple one-line Latin cross, which occupies the upper third of the slab. The cross on the reverse face is more complex in design and it occupies the upper half of the slab. It consists of a cross with two arms with two additional vertical lines running midway between the arms (Higgins 1987, part ii, Fig. 38).

### **Church GA069-001011**

At S end of the modern graveyard, 75m SSE of the 'Nunnery' (GA069-001005-). Named variously in older accounts as the 'Protestant' or 'Church of England' church (Cochrane 1901, 320; Fahey 1904, 134), indicating that it was in use until the 18th C. It is now a conserved Nat. Mon. comprising an intact rectangular church (E-W; L 15.8m, Wth 6.05m) possibly of the medieval date, though the heavy rendering makes dating difficult: an enigmatic vertical line is visible in the masonry of N wall towards E end. There is a pointed arch doorway in N wall, towards W end, for which Harbison (1975, 81) suggests a date 'about 1200'. The E gable incorporates a magnificent late Romanesque window (Cochrane 1901, 319-20; Leask 1977, 157-9). Opinions as to the original location of these two elements differ; Killanin and Duignan (1967, 56-7) suggest that the present structure 'may well occupy the site of an earlier church', but the view more commonly advocated is that the window came from the abbey (GA069-001013-). There are two pointed arch windows in S wall, a robbed window in N wall and a bell tower on the apex of W gable, and of which probably date to the 17th C or later. Within the interior are numerous cut-stone fragments, some of which may be 12th-13th C in date. (O'Flanagan 1927, Vol. 1, 268; Killanin 1951, 117) The monument was taken into Ownership under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 - National Monument 49.

### **Graveyard GA069-001012**

Associated with the monastic complex at Annaghdown and surrounding the church (GA069-001011-) and round tower (GA069-001016-). This graveyard (c. 78m NW-SE; c. 63m NE-SW) now merges with another graveyard (GA069-001006-) immediately to its N. It is defined along its E side by a continuation of the E wall of N graveyard: a plastered concrete wall interspersed with piers. Access is gained by a series of steps at its N end. The S and W walls are of mortared construction and the S wall is almost

completely overgrown with ivy. The N end opens onto a clear grassy area. Burials are marked by mainly upright headstones dating to the 19th and 20th centuries but a number of 18th-century recumbent inscribed graveslabs are also visible to the N of the church. A much-collapsed vault is visible to its SW.

**Round Tower GA069-001016**

The overgrown ruins of a round tower, thought to be located close to the church, are referred to in the annals for 1238 (AC, AFM, ALC).

**Holy Well GA069-001017**

On the td. boundary close to lakeshore, 300m SE of the Augustinian abbey (GA069-001013-). It consists of a natural overgrown oval spring (E-W 2m, N-S 1.5m) bounded by a field wall composed of roughly built limestone blocks. (Cochrane 1901, 319; Fahey 1904, 135; O'Flanagan 1927, Vol. 1, 266; Killanin and Duignan 1967, 57).

**Holy Well GA069-003**

On the lakeshore, 450m S of the Augustinian abbey (GA069-001013-). Marked on 3rd ed. of OS 6-inch map (1934) but mentioned previously by Fahey (1904, 135). Not located: however, an old estate well has collapsed in the area and its rubble may obscure it. (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 57).

**Graveslab GA069-001021**

This graveslab, which was brought to our attention by Dr Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer, Galway City Council, is one of 'two remarkable tombstones' (see also GA069-001022-) recorded by Wilde (1867, 69) that were discovered in the rubbish that had accumulated under the site of the chancel arch of the church (GA069-001013-). It consists of the roughly hewn upper fragment (L 0.74m; Wth 0.52m; T 0.007m) of the slab, which is now embedded in the ground in the NE corner of the nave. The face is decorated with a large fleur-de-lis motif with traces of a smaller decorative feature below this on the N side of the slab. The detail is very difficult to make out. Wilde's (ibid.) illustration indicates that there was also a corresponding decorative feature on the S side of the slab.

**Crossslab GA069-001015**

This cross-slab is in the nave of the abbey (GA069-001013-). It was recorded by Higgins (1987, ii, 336, no. 62, Fig. 58) who described it as a fragmentary recumbent

limestone slab (max. L 1.28m; max. Wth 0.27m; T 0.2m) with traces of a multi-line cross. The cross design is irregular – on three of the limbs it consists of four lines, while on the fourth it is of two lines. Near the widest end of the slab there is a semicircular feature or boss. The cross-slab probably dates to the 13th century (pers. comm. Dr J. Higgins, 23 October 2014).

#### **Religious House GA069-001013**

On the lakeshore 150m SSW of the 'Nunnery' (GA069-001005-). Founded sometime after 1195 when it was granted to the Canons Regular of St Augustine (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 156-7). A Nat. Mon., the present remains consist of a restored nave (E-W; L 26.5m) chancel (L 5.6m, Wth 4.5m) church 'of at least three periods' (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 57). The earliest section is the chancel which is of Transitional-date. It contains two finely cut opposing round-headed windows in its side-walls, the S example having Romanesque decoration on its arch terminals. Its E gable contains a robbed window which some authorities believe to be the original location of the Romanesque window presently in the 'cathedral' (GA069-001011-). Later architectural features include a pointed arch doorway in N wall of nave, to W of which is a trefoil-headed window, and a rectangular window in W gable. The cloister and domestic buildings lie to S but only the foundations of the former and fragmentary remains of the latter survive. The E range was two storeys high with the ground floor divided into five rooms, two of which have doorways leading to the cloister. The first floor is lit by series of opposing rectangular windows. The S range comprises a large featureless structure, in SW corner of which, set into a recess, are fragments of a fine Romanesque chancel arch. A single fortress-like wall with a number of small rectangular windows is all that survives of W range. A cross-slab is associated (Higgins 1987, 336, no. 62).

#### **Graveyard GA069-001014**

This graveyard occupies the almost square grass-covered cloister area (c. 26m3m NW-SE; c. 25.8m NE-SW) of the abbey (GA069-001013-). There are two burials along the W wall and two rows of burials in its E half. All date to the 20th century and the majority are marked by upright headstones. Two recumbent slabs were noted but these were almost totally grass covered. No inscriptions were visible on them but the exposed surfaces were rough suggesting that the inscribed side of the slab was face down.

#### **Recorded artefacts in Area**

The find spots of artefacts are important contributors to the knowledge of the archaeological landscape. Location information relating to finds is an important indicator of human activity. No finds are recorded from the area of the proposed burial ground. A number of artefacts are recorded from archaeological test excavation at the monastic enclosure (GA069001-020) and are detailed below in the section 'Previous Archaeological Work in Area'.

### **Previous Archaeological Work in Area**

Archaeological testing of the area immediately north of the graveyard GA069-001006 was undertaken by Richard Crumlsh under Ministerial consent C627/E004557 in 2014 and described as follows..

'A test excavation was carried out over a two-week period from 8 to 19 December 2014 at a site in Eanach Dhúin townland, County Galway. An extension to the graveyard for Annaghdown was proposed for the site, which was located adjacent to the north-north-west side of the existing graveyard. Testing was necessary as the site was located within the constraint for the Annaghdown Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Site (GA069-001), which is a National Monument (Reg. No. 49).

The medieval monastic complex at Annaghdown is traditionally attributed to St Brendan of Clonfert and became the see of a diocese for a time from c. 1188-9. Its many buildings include a nunnery, an abbey comprising a late medieval church with incorporated chancel, a cloister and associated buildings, and the 'cathedral' which dates to the 15th century and contains a fine 12th-century Romanesque window which may have originally come from the abbey.

A geophysical survey of the proposed site of the graveyard extension was carried out by Roseanne Schot in August 2013 (Licence No. 13R86). The survey revealed a number of anomalies which required further investigation, hence the testing. Testing by Ros Ó Maoldúin of a site across the road to the north-east, in January 2014 (Consent No. 627/E4530), revealed a large 4m-wide ditch. The proposed site of the graveyard extension was located within a relatively flat field of pasture and measured 65m east-west by 20m. The southern site boundary was the northern boundary wall of the adjacent graveyard (GA069-001006). No archaeological features were visible on the surface within the site. Three trenches (B, C and E) were excavated by hand. These measured 12m, 10m and 12m long respectively, 2m wide and 0.15-2.0m deep. A possible pit feature (F1), measuring 3.2m north-north-west/south-south-east,

up to 0.4m deep and extending 1.5m into the west-south-west side of the trench was uncovered in Trench B. The excavation of Trench C uncovered an east-north-east/west-south-west orientated ditch (F2), which extended across the trench and measured 4.2m wide and 1.55-1.8m deep. The upper fill (C10) of the ditch (F2) contained a large amount of animal bone, one human bone (left humerus) and occasional charcoal. The fill (C12) below contained an equally large amount of animal bone, occasional flecks of charcoal and four pieces of iron slag. The basal fill (C17) of the ditch contained a larger amount of animal bone than the two upper fills (C10 and C12). It also contained occasional charcoal and three pieces of iron slag. A pegtile sherd, a small human skull fragment and a rotary quern fragment were found in the topsoil of the same trench (C). The quernstone fragment was from the well-executed upper stone of a disc quern with the upper surface showing part of a cross motif. A second pegtile sherd was recovered from the topsoil in the third trench (E). The two pegtile sherds were of post-medieval date. The bone assemblage of 848 fragments yielded 186 countable fragments of cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse, dog and cat bones and teeth, as well as the two human bones. Animal bone samples taken from the basal fill (C17) of the ditch (F2) yielded radiocarbon dates from the 11th and 12th century AD. The ditch feature (F2) and the possible pit feature (F1) correlated with anomalies identified in the Geophysical Survey. The ditch (F2) was of a similar dimension to that uncovered by Ó Maoldúin with iron slag also found in Ó Maoldúin's ditch. Given the 11th- and 12th-century dates from the basal fill (C17) of the ditch (F2), the iron slag found in the lower fills (C12 and C17) and the human humerus found in the upper fill (C10), the feature (F2) is undoubtedly associated with the adjacent medieval site and would appear to be a section of the ecclesiastical enclosure. The rotary quern fragment and human skull fragment found in the topsoil are further archaeological evidence of the early medieval ecclesiastical site ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

Archaeological testing at the site of a dwelling house was completed by Richard Crumlsh in 2009 (License 09E0318) and described as follows

Pre-development testing was carried out on 6 July 2009 at a site at Annaghdown, Co. Galway. The proposed development consisted of the construction of a dwelling-house, domestic garage, wastewater-treatment system and all ancillary site works and services. Testing was required as the proposed development was partially located within the constraint for an archaeological complex. The southeastern half of the site, where the proposed development was located, was outside the constraint

circle for the monument, the nearest element of which was a holy well (Tobar Brendan) 20m to the north-west, part of the ecclesiastical remains. There were no archaeological features visible within the proposed development site, which consisted of a field of pasture. A large modern two-storey dwelling with associated grounds was visible adjacent to the north-east of the proposed development, with the parapet of a recently restored tower-house, Annaghdown Castle (GA069-00102), just visible above the trees to the south-west. Testing consisted of the excavation (by machine) of four trenches located to best cover the area of the site. The trenches measured 19.2m, 40.2m, 39.8m and 41.1m long respectively, 1–1.5m wide and 0.1–0.55m deep. Below the topsoil was orange/grey/brown loose sand and gravel, orange/brown plastic clay and bedrock. The topsoil contained three modern pottery sherds. Testing revealed nothing of archaeological significance. The stratigraphy was natural and undisturbed, consisting of topsoil above natural subsoil and bedrock ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

Archaeological testing at the site of a dwelling house was completed by Richard Crumlish in 2012 (License 12E234) and described as follows

Pre-development testing was carried out on 31 July 2012 at a single house development in Annaghdown townland in County Galway. The testing was required due to the location of the proposed development within the constraint for an archaeological complex (GA069-001), principally ecclesiastical remains (GA069-00101) which are a National Monument (No. 49), including a possible enclosure (GA069-001002), a causeway (GA069-001003), a number of religious houses (GA069-001004, 005, 013), three graveyards (GA069-001006, 012, 014), two churches (GA069-001007, 011), a graveslab (GA069-001008), three cross-slabs (GA069-001009, 010, 015), a round tower (GA069-001016), two holy wells (GA069-001017, 019) and an ecclesiastical residence (GA069-001018). The proposed development was 180m away from the nearest visible element of the ecclesiastical remains ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

Archaeological testing at the site of a dwelling house was completed by Richard Crumlish in 2018 (License 18E0285) and described as follows

Pre-development testing of a site in advance of its development at Eanach Dhuin townland, close to the shore of Lough Corrib in County Galway, was carried out on 24 May 2018. The proposed development, which was in the pre-planning phase, consisted of the construction of a dwelling house, garage/shed and private

wastewater treatment system. The testing was necessary as the proposed development was located within the constraint for an archaeological complex (RMP No. GA069-001), now a redundant record, which included the medieval ecclesiastical site at Annaghdown. The proposed development site was located in a field of pasture, to the west of which were two recently constructed dwellings, the groundworks for which were monitored by the author (under Excavation Licence Numbers 16E0512 and 17E0560). Nothing of archaeological significance was in evidence at either site ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

Archaeological monitoring at the site of a dwelling house was completed by Richard Crumlish in 2017 (License 17E0560) and described as follows

Monitoring of groundworks at a development in Eanach Dhúin townland in County Galway took place on 10 November 2017. The development consisted of the construction of a dwelling house, garage/shed and private wastewater treatment system. The monitoring was a condition of planning and was necessary as the site was located just outside of and adjacent to the constraint for the Annaghdown Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Site, which is a National Monument.

The development site was located in a field of pasture close to the shore of Lough Corrib. No features of archaeological significance were evident within the field. The writer had monitored groundworks at the adjacent site to the west in 2016 under Licence 16E0512 when nothing of archaeological significance was found ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

Archaeological monitoring at the site of a dwelling house was completed by Richard Crumlish in 2016 (License 16E0512) and described as follows

Monitoring of groundworks at a development in Eanach Dhúin townland, on the shore of Lough Corrib in County Galway, was carried out on 21 and 22 November 2016. The development consisted of the construction of a dwelling house, garage/shed and waste-water treatment system. The monitoring was necessary as a portion of the development site was located within the constraint for an archaeological complex (GA069-001), now a redundant record, much of which consists of the Annaghdown Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Site which is National Monument (No. 49). The monitoring was a condition of planning permission. The writer had carried out pre-development testing on an adjacent site to the east in 2012, under Licence 12E0234. Nothing of archaeological significance was in evidence at that time.

The development site was located across two fields of pasture. The groundworks which took place were the reduction in levels for the access road/driveway, dwelling, garage/shed and waste-water treatment system. Below the topsoil were natural subsoils and a small area of fill. The topsoil contained a yellow brick fragment and one sherd of modern pottery. The fill consisted of small-medium sized rocks and contained red brick fragments and one modern pottery sherd. The area of fill coincided with the highest part of the site where the landowner had informed the writer previously of a hill of sand and gravel having been removed for use in the construction of a nearby dwelling. The fill was probably field/land clearance used to backfill the small quarry. Nothing of archaeological significance was in evidence([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)).

A geophysical survey (License 25R0004) of the proposed development site was completed by Minerix Geophysics Ltd. in January 2025 (copy attached). The survey concluded that “the results of the magnetic gradient survey do not indicate the presence of archaeological feature or deposits such as foundations, wall remnants, building or ditches”. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> A number of linear features were identified throughout the site and are likely to represent cultivation ridges.

### **Aerial Photography**

The Ordnance survey of Ireland aerial photographs ([www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)) were consulted to identify any archaeological features in the landscape which may not have been previously recorded. There was no evidence of additional archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage features recorded on the aerial photographs within the area of the proposed development.

### **Galway County Development Plan**

The County Development plan was consulted for the schedule of buildings (Record of Protected Structures) and items of cultural, historical or archaeological interest that may be affected by the proposed development. No monuments or protected structures are located in the area of the proposed burial ground.

### **National Monuments in State care**

The Department of Culture, Heritage and Local Government maintains a database on a county basis of National Monuments in State Care. The term National

Monument is defined in Section 2 of the National Monuments Act (1930) as a monument or the remains of a monument...

“The preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto”.

The Churches (GA069-001007) and (GA069-001011) were taken into Ownership under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 - National Monument 49. These monuments will not be impacted by the proposed development.

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

The NIAH maintains a non-statutory register of buildings and structures recorded on a county basis. No structures are recorded in the area of the development.

### **Cartographic Analysis**

Analysis of the Ordnance Survey Maps dating from the 1830's to the present day facilitated a further assessment of the Archaeological and Architectural Heritage of the site.

The site formed part of three fields in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century where a trackway/roadway is indicated to the immediate north. The 25-inch map and Cassini edition of the 6-inch map depicts a changed landscape with the area of the proposed development now contained within a single field. A semi-circular area, not depicted on the first edition map, is depicted to the immediate north of the proposed development site.



**Fig. 5:** Extract from 1<sup>st</sup> edition map 1837 overlaid on aerial photo.



**Fig. 6:** Extract from historical 25-inch map overlaid on aerial photo.



**Fig. 7:** Extract Cassini edition of OS 6-inch Map overlaid on aerial photo..

### Townland Names

Townlands are the smallest land divisions in the Irish landscape and many may preserve early Gaelic territorial boundaries that pre-date the Anglo-Norman conquest. The layout of Irish townlands was recorded and standardised by the work of the Ordnance Survey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Irish translation of townland names often refer to natural topographical features, but name elements may also give an indication of the presence of past human activities within the townland. The following table provides the possible translation of the Irish origin of the townland names within or adjacent to the Application Site.

| Name       | Derivation      | Possible Meaning                      | Barony | Civil Parish |
|------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| Annaghdown | Eanach Dhúin    | Dun- Fort<br>Eanach- marsh            | Clare  | Annaghdown   |
| Ballylee   | Baile Uí Laoigh | Baile-<br>Townland,town,<br>homestead | Clare  | Annaghdown   |

|          |               |                        |       |            |
|----------|---------------|------------------------|-------|------------|
| Coteeny  | Na Coitiantaí | Commons?               | Clare | Annaghdown |
| Tonamace | Tóin an Mhása | Toin/ton-bottom (land) | Clare | Annaghdown |

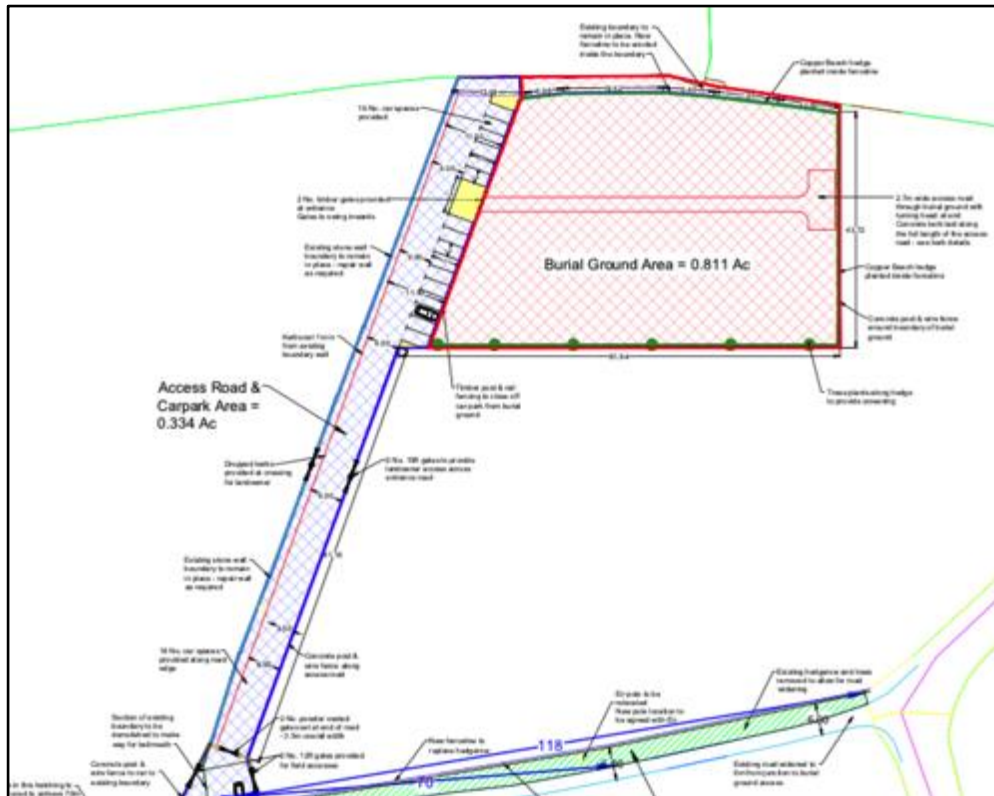
**Table 2:** Townland names in the area of the proposed development.

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & SITE INSPECTION**

The development of a burial ground access road and carparking facility is proposed at a green field site immediately north of a road junction to the north of the ecclesiastical complex in Annaghdown, County Galway. The site, which comprises of part of a field of pasture, will be accessed via the existing entrance in the SW. A roadway will run along the western boundary of the field and provide an access to the burial ground and the 16 parking spaces. A walk over survey of the area of the proposed development revealed no features of archaeological significance surviving above ground.



**Plate 1:** Aerial view of site.



**Fig. 8:** Plan of the proposed development.

A publication entitled 'The Monastery and Medieval Landscape of Annaghdown, County Galway' by Jessica Cooke (2017) records The Dún of Annaghdown in the area of the proposed burial ground. An accompanying plan of the Annaghdown medieval landscape indicates the monument, as a semicircular area that would appear to be immediately north of the proposed burial ground. This depiction is the same as that represented on the 25-inch ordnance survey map (Fig. 6). No trace of this semi-circular area survives on the ground today and it is not indicated on the earlier first edition ordnance survey map (Fig. 5).

The 'Annaghdown Heritage Trail' and the accompanying 'map tour of Annaghdown' record 'The Dún' or fort in the field of the proposed development and includes the following description

“In the Royal Irish Academy is a letter that Sir William Wilde wrote in 1866 to the artist William Wakeman. Concerning Annaghdown, Wilde asked: ‘Did you find any remains of a Dun or Fort near the ruins?’ Sixty-four years later, in 1930, Harold Leask, head of the Office of Public Works, asked his colleague Williams concerning ‘the old dun to the north...Does this appear to be of importance? What is height of

wall and condition?.

The Dún is a sizeable stone ringfort with more than one encircling ditch and an eastern entrance. It is not included in the Archaeological Inventory for County Galway, has never been studied and is overgrown with bushes and trees. A straight road from the east end of the monastic complex leads to the fort and points to a relationship between them. While its date is unknown, it may possibly predate the Uí Briúin Seóla, and might first have been occupied by the people there when St Brendan came, the Delbna Cuil Fabhair. Subsequently, it may have become the stronghold of the Uí Briúin Seóla, mentioned in the obit of Aedh Ua Flaithbertaig, king of West Connacht who died at Annaghdown in 1178". The monument is similarly described".

A photograph of the Dún that accompanies the Annaghdown Heritage Trail depicts a large overgrown raised area or mound of stones. This feature does not exist in the area of the proposed development. An E-W orientated overgrown area of raised ground is located in the field to the west of the proposed development however there are no indications that it represents a fort. An N-S orientated raised area is located in the field to the north of the proposed development.



**Plate 2:** View of site from the SW.



**Plate 3:** raised area to west of site.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development of a burial ground in Annaghdown found that it is located in an area of agricultural land devoted to pasture. A walk over survey revealed no features of archaeological significance surviving above ground.

The various editions of the ordnance survey maps indicate that the landscape changed considerable since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the enlarging of holdings. These maps also indicate large areas of rough ground and vegetation to the west of the proposed development site.

The archaeological survey of Ireland records no monuments in the area of the proposed development with the closest monument an ecclesiastical enclosure (GA069-001020) located c. 300m south of the proposed access road and c. 350m south of the proposed burial ground.

A publication entitled *The Monastery and Medieval Landscape of Annaghdown* (Cooke, 2017) suggests that a Dún or fort is located in the general area of the proposed development. A walk over survey revealed no evidence for any archaeological monument in the area of the development. There are raised overgrown areas to the west and northwest however they do not appear to be remnants of archaeological monuments.

A geophysical survey of the proposed development was completed in January 2025 and identified no features of archaeological significance within the area of the proposed development. A number of anomalies highlighted are thought to represent agricultural activity and in particular cultivation ridges.

The proposed development at the site would not appear to impact on any archaeological layers or features.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**These conclusions and recommendations are subject to the approval of the National Monuments, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage who may issue additional or alternative requirements.**

**REFERENCES**

**Primary Sources**

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

Constraint maps and Catalogue

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SMR archival files in National Monuments Service

Topographical Files in National Museum of Ireland

Finds Registers in National Museum of Ireland

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" Map

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 6" Map

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