



ARCHAEOLOGICAL

CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT



Report on the Archaeological Assessment (Test Trenching) at Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow

Licence No.: 23E0068

ITM: 671980, 677100

RMP No.: N/A

Linda Clarke

15th March 2023

ACSU Ref.: 22132

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PROJECT DETAILS

Project	Archaeological Assessment (Test Trenching) at Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow
Report Type	Archaeological Assessment (Test Trenching)
Licence No.	23E0068
Site	Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow
Townland	Carlow
RMP	N/A
ITM	671980, 677100
Consultant	Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit,
	21 Boyne Business Park,
	Greenhills, Drogheda, County Louth
Excavation Director	Linda Clarke
Report Author	Linda Clarke
Report status	Final
Report Date	15 th March 2023
ACSU Ref.	22132



Revision	Date	Description	Status	Author	Reviewed	Approved
0	15/03/23	Archaeological Testing Report	Final	L.C	M.L	D.M

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report details the results of an archaeological assessment (test trenching) carried out at Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow (ITM 671980, 677100)

The site is located in the townland of Carlow on the southwest side of Main Street. The site is located to the west of Athy Road, at the rear of the buildings facing the street. It is irregular in shape, and consists of an existing carpark within the southern portion of the site. The northeast portion consists of a green area.

There are no monuments within the site listed in the Record of Monuments and Places or Sites and Monuments Record. The zone of archaeological potential associated with Carlow Historic town CW007-018----including the line of town defences CW007-018006- is located 64m to the south of the site.

The site contains no Protected Structures as listed in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028. However, it is adjacent to the rear of three Protected Structures. These include Greenville (RPS No. CT33), Presbyterian Church (CT32) and Carlow VEC (RPS No. CT35).

No archaeological investigations have been previously carried out on this site. The nearest excavations to the site were carried out to the southeast on Dublin Street (07E0061; 08E0734). Test trenching (04E1716, 03E0307) and monitoring (03E1124, 03E0307 ext) were carried out further south. These failed to expose any features of archaeological significance.

Archaeological test trenching was carried out by Linda Clarke of Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACSU) under licence 23E0068 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Two test trenches were excavated and each trench measured 1.8m in width, and in total 88 linear meters were excavated. The test trenches were excavated down to the natural subsoil which consisted of a light yellow to light brown silty sand. Both trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.7m to 1.1m. A post-medieval, hand cut, shallow U shaped land drain was located at the eastern end of Trench 2. The drain measured 7m in length, 1m in width and 0.35m in depth. It was not seen in Trench 1. It was filled by a mid-orange/brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of rounded stones (up to 0.12m), particularly at the base. A pottery sherd of blue-printed white ware was found at the base of the drain. Trench 3 was not excavated due to the location of services. This was an area of modern made-up ground, recently reinstated, approximately 1m above the ground level of the cemetery. The modern nature of the graveyard suggests a very limited risk for burials located outside the walls and at the carpark level.

No archaeological features were identified. The work is now complete, and no further mitigation is recommended.



NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION



An Roinn Cultúir, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Site Owner:	Carlow County Council		
Address:	County Buildings, Athy Rd., Carlow		
Planning Authority:	Carlow County Council		
Planning Reg. No.:	N/A		
Excavation Type:	Test Trenching.		
Contractor/Developer:	As above		
Site	Athy Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow		

Description of Proposed Development

It is proposed to develop a new carpark layout to include 96 number car parking spaces in total (19 public; 4 wheelchair; 4 electrical vehicles charging, 60 staff and 9 reserved) and will include public lighting, CCTV cameras, 225mm surface water pipe, ESB ducting and drainage kerbs.

Archaeological Condition

The test trenching was carried out at the request of the client.

Impact Statement and recommendations

This site at Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow (ITM 671980, 677100) was archaeologically assessed by means of test trenching. Two test trenches were excavated. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed, and no finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

Consequently, as the site has no archaeological potential, no further archaeological work is recommended



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1. INTRODUCTION

This final report details the results of archaeological test trenching carried out at Athy Rd., Carlow, Co. Carlow (ITM 671980, 677100 Figures 1-2).

Archaeological test trenching was carried out by Linda Clarke of Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACSU) under licence 23E0068 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

2. NATURAL & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

2.1 Natural landscape

The site of the proposed development is located in the townland of Carlow and consists of an existing carpark within the southern portion of the site. The northeast portion consists of a green area. The site is located west of and to the rear of buildings facing the street. The underlying geology consists of crinoidal wackestone/packstone limestone and is part of the Ballyadams Formation (Geological Survey of Ireland).

2.2 Cultural landscape

A cartographical examination of the site was carried out prior to the archaeological assessment. Aerial photography was also reviewed prior to the archaeological assessment. A review of available historic mapping for the area was carried out and included the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, including the 6-inch (1838) and 25-inch (1907) maps. Potential archaeological or cultural heritage features are marked on such maps and provide a useful resource in identifying sites, particularly if they no longer have any above-ground remains. It appears that on the 1838 map, the eastern extent of the site was a part of the rear gardens of houses facing Athy Street, and the western extent of the site was a part of an agricultural field. By the 1907 map, Greenville, Presbyterian Church and Presbytery were depicted. No monuments of archaeological significance were identified during the examination of cartographical sources.

Aerial photographs dating between 1995 and 2013 from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland and Google Earth imagery dating between 2005 and 2022 were assessed. Unrecorded archaeological sites can often be identified in aerial photographs as cropmarks or differential growth in a field. The southern portion of the site was an established carpark since 1995, and the northern portion consists of rear gardens of buildings fronting onto Athy Street. Sometime in 1999-2003 the county offices were extended westwards, with a stand-alone rectangular building added to the south of the extension. By 2005 another building was constructed just to the west of it, and the carpark was extended northwards. The malthouse to the west of the site was demolished by the 2009 aerial photograph. By 2013, Andy Murphy Road was constructed and it bounds the site to the north. The site has remained unchanged since. No monuments of archaeological significance were identified during the examination of aerial imagery.

2.3 Archaeological background

The site is located within the townland of Carlow (Ceatharlach), and is lies in the barony and the civil parish of the same name. The name Ceithiorlach is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters-meaning 'the quadruple lough' and referring to the overflowing confluence of the Barrow and Burrin Rivers. According to O'Donovan, the name Carlow is derived from the antecedents of the Modern Irish ceathair, 'four' and loch (lach), 'a lake', however more recently, it is believed to signify 'place of cattle (or) herds'(logaimn.ie). In 1100 an area called (boróma) ón Chetharlocht was mentioned, thereafter it was referenced frequently, with castle mentioned in 1592, a bawn in 1614 and as Carlow.

The site is located outside of and to the north of the zone of potential for Carlow Town (CW007-018), which incorporates the site of Carlow Castle, 14th Century mill sites, bridges recorded on the 17th century Down Survey, 14th Century town defences and the site of the 18th Century Parish Church of St. Mary. In the prehistoric and early historic period, Carlow was located in the ancient district of Ui Feilmeada Tuaidh; a subdistrict of the Hy Kinsellagh belonging to the MacMurrough sept. In the 6th century A.D. Diarmaid Mac Murrough's son Cormac relinquished his inherited title to lead a religious life and presented himself and three forts of his territory; one of which was Catherlagh. His contemporary, St.Congalof Bangor, subsequently founded a monastery in Carlow, on a site that was granted by Cormac (Murphy 2007). As the site was located in a strategic position at the confluence of the rivers Barrow and Burrin from which it derived its name (meaning four lakes), Carlow became an important Anglo-Norman town following the 12th century invasion and continued to remain an English stronghold throughout the Middle Ages (Bradley and King 1990). Carlow castle was built in c.1180 in order to control the river crossing; it was divided from the town by marshland until the 18th century when the town began to expand beyond its medieval limits. In the 13th century, the town had 160 burgages under the controlling eye of William Marshall, son-in-law of Strongbow. Carlow was an important grain-producing area in the medieval period and was subject to numerous attacks; one by Edward Bruce in the 14th century and on numerous occasions by the MacMurroughs. A large sum of money was spent on constructing defensive town walls; however, the native Irish continued to attack and burn the town. Carlow was granted a charter of incorporation in 1613, by King James, thus granting the right to send two members to parliament. The town began to expand, Burrin Street was probably built during the 16th century after the construction of a bridge across the river; this was depicted on the 17th Century Down Survey map. Lewis (1837) describes Carlow as an incorporated borough, market, and post-town, a parish in the barony and county of the same name and province of Leinster. He mentions the castle that was greatly injured in 1650. The town was assaulted by the insurgents in 1798.

2.4 Previous archaeological investigations

No archaeological investigations were previously carried out on this site. The nearest excavations to the site were carried out to the southeast on Dublin Street (07E0061; 08E0734). Test trenching (04E1716, 03E0307)

and monitoring (03E1124, 03E307 ext) were carried out further south. These failed to expose any features of archaeological significance.

The details of these investigations are derived from the Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland (<u>www.excavations.ie</u>).

Table 1: Previous archaeological investigations in the environs of the site

Excavation.ie reference	Licence	Site Type	Investigation
	No		Туре
2007:96 - 28 Dublin Street,	07E0061	Urban. The site was located within the original	Test trenching
Carlow, Co. Carlow		town wall boundaries. However, nothing of	
		archaeological significance was uncovered.	
2008:071 – 35 Dublin Street,	08E0734	Urban – 19 th century coach-house. No	Test trenching
Carlow, Co. Carlow		archaeological deposits were identified.	
2005:080 – Cox's Lane,	04E1716	Urban – non-archaeological.	Test trenching
Carlow, Co. Carlow			
2003:0040 - Centaur Street,	03E1124	Urban monitoring of demolition of 19th	Monitoring
Carlow, Co. Carlow		century industrial buildings and groundworks.	
		Non-archaeological.	
2003:0038 – Centuar Street	03E0307	Urban post medieval. Three features were	Testing
		uncovered. These included a stone-lined	
		culvert and two foundation walls. All	
		appeared to be post-medieval/19th-century in	
		date.	
2003:0039 – Centuar Street	03E0307	Urban – non- archaeological	Monitoring
	ext		

2.5 Protected Structures and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

The site contains no Protected Structures as listed in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028. However, it is adjacent to the rear of three Protected Structures. These include Greenville (RPS No. CT33), Presbyterian Church (CT32) and Carlow VEC (RPS No. CT35).

2.6 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

The site does not contain any Recorded Monuments listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The zone of archaeological potential associated with Carlow Historic

town CW007-018----including the line of town defences CW007-018006-is located 64m to the south of the site. The following is a list of the nearest Recorded Monuments located within the surrounding area (Figure 2). These descriptions are derived from the National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey Database (https://maps.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/).

RMP/SMR	Class/Site	Description		
No	Туре			
CW007-	Historic	Sited at the confluence of the rivers Burren and Barrow. Earliest charter dates		
018	town	to c. 1223. Its main elements include the castle (CW007-018002-) founded by		
		William Marshall and town defences (CW007-018006-), although no traces of		
		the latter survive. (see CW007-018001-to CW007-018008-)		
CW007-	Town	Documentary evidence indicates town was fortified in mid-fourteenth		
018006-	defences	century(Otway-Ruthven 1968,287). No visible trace. Precise location and extent		
		unknown. (Bradley 1989, 8.		
		Parish church of St Mary, situated to NE of castle (CW007-018002-).Recorded		
		as having two graveyards (CW007-018009-; CW007-018010-) in the		
CW007-	Church	seventeenth century. Present church built c. 1731 (Bradley 1989, 9-10). An		
018007-	Church	effigial tomb (CW007-018016-) reputedly from the church was broken up and		
		some of the side panels were brought to Oak Park (CW002-013)while the top		
		with the effigial figure is now in Portarlington, Co. Laois (LA005-032)		
CW007-	Graveyard	Sub-rectangular shaped (map dims. c. 60m N-S; c. 57m E-W) with St. Mary's		
018010-		church (CW007-018007-) at E		
CW007-	Burial	Enclosed strip of land along E side of River Barrow with no visible evidence of		
001	ground	structure. Large number of headstones of eighteenth and later centuries.		

2.7 Finds listed within the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland for the townland of Carlow were consulted. These list 161 finds. The majority (150) listed were found during field walking. These include clay pipes (the great majority), flakes, debitage and pottery (2019C1:42; 56; 60-102; 107, 108; 120-146; 160-168; 189-253; 275; 197). The remaining finds are listed below in Table 3.

Table 3: Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland.

NMI Register No	Simple Name	Component	Townland
1933:1258	Axehead	Stone	River Barrow



1941:342	Spearhead	Bronze	Probably Carlow
1944:413	Spear	Iron	River Barrow at Carlow
1944:414	Spear	Iron	River Barrow at Carlow
2000:32:00	Ring	Bronze	? Carlow
2000:33:00	Axehead	Stone	Barrack Street
2012:226	Axehead	Stone	East bank of River Barrow
2014:200	Human remains	Bone	
C569	Finger ring	Copper alloy	Ruin in Carlow
SA1913:134	TOKEN		N/A
X3715	Spoon	Copper alloy	near Carlow town

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Site description

The site is located to the west of Athy Road, at the rear of the buildings facing the street. It is irregular in shape and consists of an existing carpark within the southern portion and a green area (former garden of Greenville House) in the northeastern extent. There is a small structure with an arched doorway that connects the garden with the neighbouring property in the south-east corner of the area tested. Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated within the garden. The structure is made up of a mix of stone and red brick and abutts the inside corner of the southeastern and eastern wall of the garden. This feature is to be retained for the car park development. Due to the location of previously unknown services, Trench 3 (as proposed in the approved method statement) could not be excavated. The area is beside the entrance to the current car park with the graveyard to the north (Plate 4). It has modern made-up ground, which has recently been reinstated.

3.2 Methodology

Test excavation was carried out in accordance with the *IAI Code of Conduct for Archaeological Excavation (IAI 2006)*. The test trenches were excavated to the natural subsoil. No archaeological deposits or features of archaeological significance were exposed; subsequently, no samples were taken, and no archaeological finds were recovered.

All excavated trenches were recorded using digital photography. Digital photography images were taken using a high-resolution digital camera with a minimum resolution of 10 Megapixels.



3.3 Results

Archaeological test trenching was carried out on the site at Athy Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow. Two test trenches were excavated within the available area (Figures 5-6, Plates 1-6). Both trenches measured 1.8m in width, and in total 88m of linear trenches were excavated. The test trenches were excavated to the natural subsoil consisting of a light yellow to light brown silty sand. Trenches were excavated to a depth of between 0.7m and 1.1m. The proposed Trench 3 could not be excavated due to the presence of services. Furthermore, this area was of made-up ground that is approximately 1m above the ground level of the cemetery to the north. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed or identified.

Trench Number	Length (m)	Trench depth (m)	Description	
1	44	0.7 – 1.1	Roughly east to west aligned test trench located in the green area in the northern portion of the site. (Figures 5-6; Plates 1). No archaeological features were exposed, and no finds were	
			recovered.	
2	44	0.7 – 1.1	Roughly east to west aligned test trench located in the green area in the northern portion of the site, parallel to and south of Trench 1 (Figures 5-6; Plates 2-4).	
			A linear feature, representing a land drain (C4), was recorded at the eastern end of the trench.	
			No archaeological features were exposed.	

Table 3: Trench descriptions

Context Descriptions:

Table 4: Context Descriptions

Context	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Basic Description
C1	-	-	0.3	Sod. A rich, humic soil.
C2	-	-	0.4 - 0.8	Topsoil consisting of a silty, sand, orange/brown in colour and lay under the humic sod. It had inclusions of animal bone and shell.
C3	-	-	-	Natural subsoil. A light yellow to light brown silty sand.
C4	7	1	0.35	Cut of land drain filled by C5. The drain was exposed at the eastern end of Trench 2. Continues in the western direction, not seen in Trench 1. It appeared to be hand cut. It has a shallow "U" shape cut where sectioned.



Context	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Basic Description
C5	7	1	0.35	Fill of land drain C4. C5 consisted of a mid-orange/brown silty sand with rounded stones up to 0.12m in diameter. There were frequent stones throughout, particularly at the base.A sherd of blue printed white ware was found at the base of the fill (23E0068:05:1)

4. MATERIAL CULTURE

One sherd of post-medieval pottery (23E0068:05:1) was retrieved from C5, the fill of the land drain C4 in Trench 2. No samples were taken.

5. DATING

No features of archaeological significance were exposed. The land drain C4 recorded is most likely 19th/20th-century in date.

6. **DISCUSSION**

Archaeological test trenching was carried out by Linda Clarke of Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACSU) under licence 23E0068 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Two test trenches were excavated, each trench measured 1.8m in width, and in total 88 linear metres were excavated. The test trenches were excavated down to the natural subsoil that consisted of a light yellow to light brown silty sand. Both trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.7m to 1.1m. A post-medieval, hand cut, shallow U shape land drain was located at the eastern end of Trench 2. The drain measured 7m in length, 1m in width and 0.35m in depth. It was not seen in Trench 1. It was filled by a mid-orange/brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of rounded stones (up to 0.12m), particularly at the base. A pottery sherd of blue-printed white ware was found at the base of the drain. Trench 3 (as proposed in the approved method statement) was not excavated due to the location of services. This was an area of modern made-up ground, recently reinstated, approximately 1m above the ground level of the cemetery. Furthermore, the modern nature of the graveyard suggests a very limited risk for burials located outside the walls and at the carpark level.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Test trenching was carried out on this site under licence 23E0068. The investigation did not expose any features of archaeological significance. The work is now complete. No further archaeological work is recommended.



8. POST-EXCAVATION PROGRAMME

No post-excavation work is necessary.

9. EXCAVATION BULLETIN

Athy Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow 23E0068 ITM. 671980, 677100 RMP No. N/A No archaeological significance

Archaeological test trenching was carried out on a site at Athy Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow. Two test trenches were excavated, each trench measured 1.8m in width, and in total 88 linear meters were excavated. The test trenches were excavated down to the natural subsoil that consisted of a light yellow to light brown silty sand. Both trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.7m to 1.1m. A post-medieval, hand cut, shallow U shape land drain was located at the eastern end of Trench 2. The drain measured 7m in length, 1m in width and 0.35m in depth. It was not seen in Trench 1. It was filled by a mid-orange/brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of rounded stones (up to 0.12m), particularly at the base. A pottery sherd of blue-printed white ware was found at the base of the drain. Trench 3 was not excavated due to the location of services. This was an area of modern made-up ground, recently reinstated, approximately 1m above the ground level of the cemetery. The modern nature of the graveyard suggests a very limited risk for burials located outside of the walls and at the carpark level.

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10. PUBLICATION PLAN

An account of this licenced test trenching assessment and its results will be published online as an excavation bulletin at <u>www.excavations.ie</u> (see Section 9).



11. REFERENCES

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National Museum of Ireland (NMI) 2010 Advice Notes for Excavators. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

National Museum of Ireland (NMI) 2022 Standards for the care and treatment of archaeological objects from excavations

Other Sources:

Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/).

National Library of Ireland, 7–8 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Placenames Database of Ireland, developed by Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge (DCU) and The Placenames Branch, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (www.logainm.ie).

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the Heritage Service, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2 (www.maps.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/).



Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland (<u>www.excavations.ie</u>).

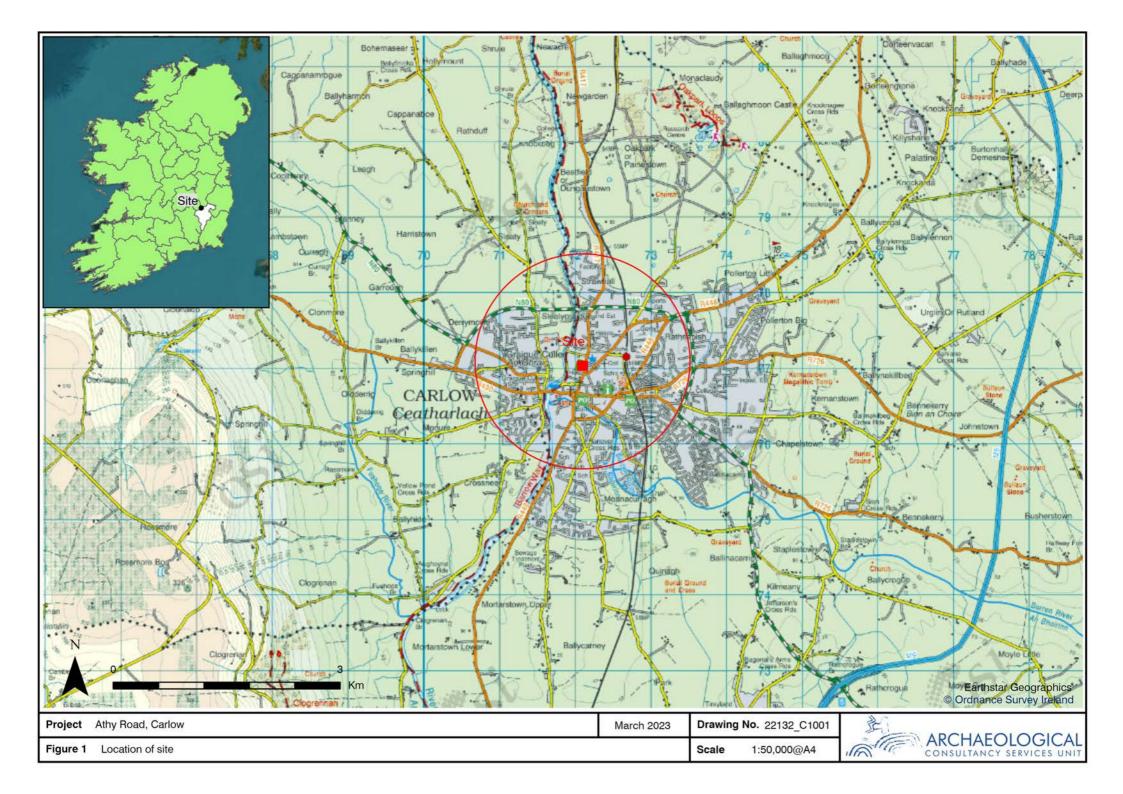
Cartographical sources

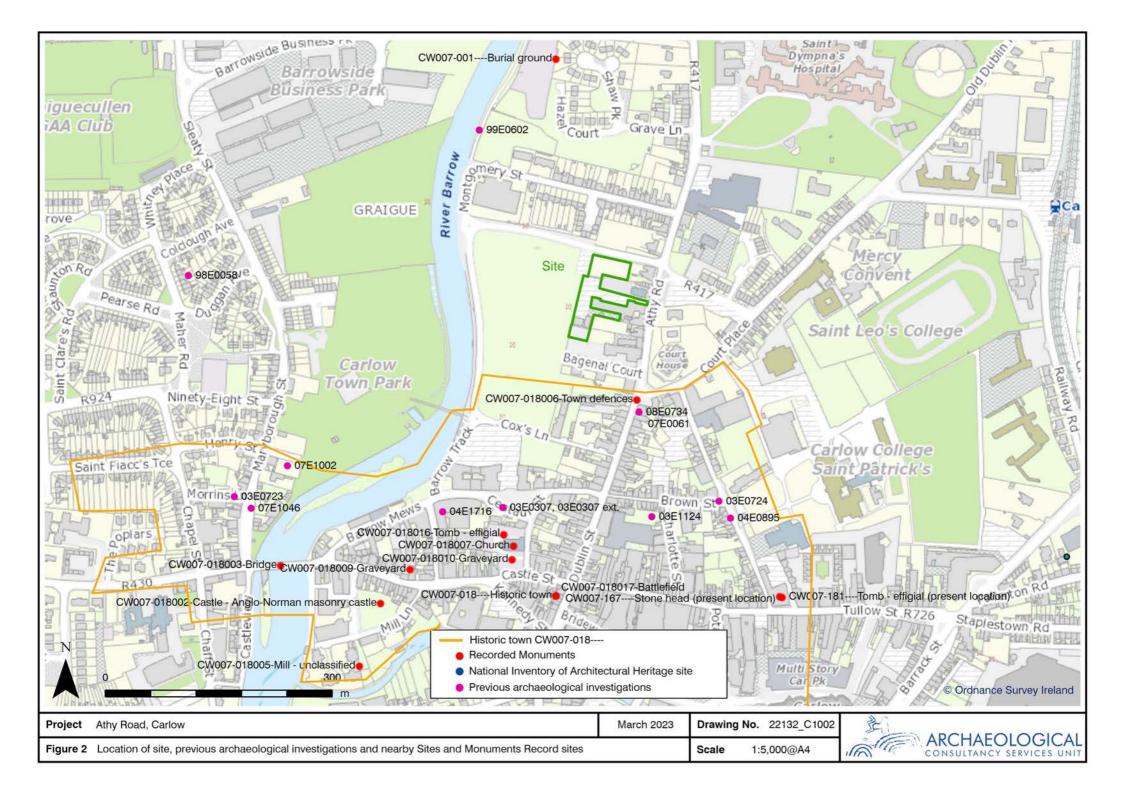
GeoHive by Ordnance Survey Ireland (<u>https://geohive.ie/</u>).

Google Earth Pro Imagery 2008–2022.

First edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map 1838

Third edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 25-inch map 1907







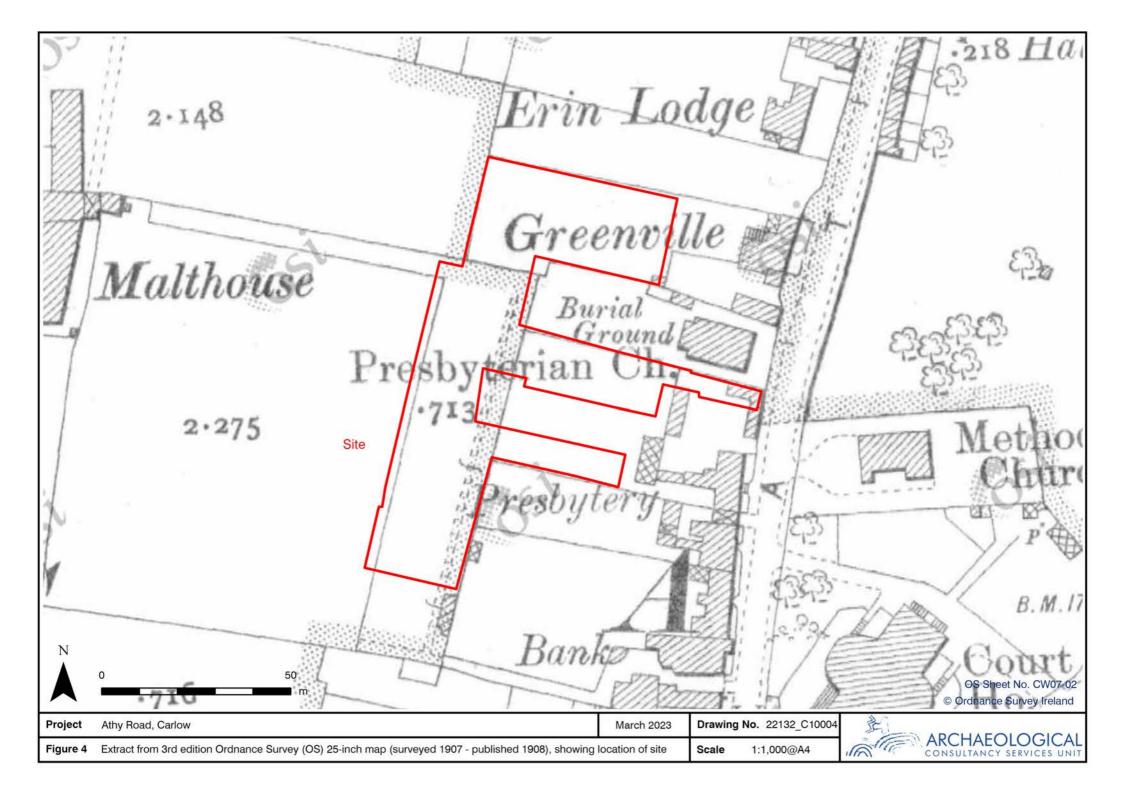








Plate 1: Trench 1 looking east



Plate 3: Linear land drain located at east end of Trench 2.





Plate 2: Trench 2 looking west



Plate 4: Southern wall of garden (exterior) facing east





Plate 5: A covered stone arch lining the courtyard to the garden area



Plate 6: Interior of small archway located at SE corner of garden