

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
FOR PROPOSED RECREATIONAL TRAIL  
AT MULLAGH GARVE, CO. LEITRIM  
ON BEHALF OF  
LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL**



**Planning Reference Number: Part 8 Planning**

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#### ABBREVIATIONS

NMI	NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND
NMS	NATIONAL MONUMENTS SERVICE
DHLGH	DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE
VIA	VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
AIA	ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
SMR	SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD
RMP	RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES
RPS	RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES
NIAH	NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
PDA	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA
ZAN	ZONE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTIFICATION

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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This report describes the results of an archaeological impact assessment carried out by Fadó Archaeology at Mullaghgarve, Co. Leitrim on behalf of Leitrim County Council. The proposed works entails development of trail at Mullaghgarve Mass Rock Co. Leitrim.

The proposed scheme entails the following: Leitrim County Council propose to upgrade an existing trail and construction of new car park at Mullaghgarve Mass Rock. The trail is approx. 1km in total length. Works involved include construction of a public car park consisting of 13 no. spaces to facilitate visitors to Mass Rock. Upgrade of 975m of existing trail with CL804 stone. Construction of 150m of sheep's wool pathway. Installation of 20m timber boardwalk and all necessary ancillary works. The proposed development is not in the vicinity of a recorded archaeological site or monument; however, it is the vicinity of a Mass Rock.

The site inspection took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. The proposed development is in a rural upland location along a steep trail on the south-eastern slopes of Sliabh an Iarainn. The proposed works involve a new extension to the trail, the upgrading of the existing trail and the provision of new carparking facilities.

No additional finds or features of archaeological significance were noted during the site inspection along the existing

trail, or in the proposed trail extension. Within the proposed new carparking area two raised mounds were noted which may be archaeological in nature. There is a possibility of subsurface archaeological remains surviving in the location of the proposed carpark, these works could impact negatively on archaeological artefacts, features, or deposits. It is therefore recommended that any groundworks that involve topsoil removal including subsurface drainage works associated with development of the trail carpark should be subject to archaeological monitoring during construction phase. It is recommended that periodic monitoring of the section of the extension of the trail in proximity to the Mass Rock. Archaeological monitoring should be conducted by a suitably qualified archaeologist, under license to the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the with provision being made for full recording and excavation of any archaeological features or deposits which may be exposed.

**Please note that all recommendations in this report are subject to approval by the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the National Museum of Ireland.**

## 1 SCOPE OF WORKS

### 1.1 Introduction

Fadó Archaeology were commissioned to carry out an archaeological impact assessment in Mullaghgarve townland, Co. Leitrim on behalf of Leitrim County Council. The following assessment report documents the project, the existing environment at the site and assesses the potential impact the proposed development may have had on any above ground or subsurface archaeological remains.

### 1.2 Purpose of the Project

The proposed scheme entails the following: Leitrim County Council propose to upgrade an existing trail and construction of new car park at Mullaghgarve Mass Rock. The trail is approx. 1km in total length. Works involved include construction of a public car park consisting of 13 no. spaces to facilitate visitors to Mass Rock. Upgrade of 975m of existing trail with CL804 stone. Construction of 150m of sheep's wool pathway. Installation of 20m timber boardwalk and all necessary ancillary works.

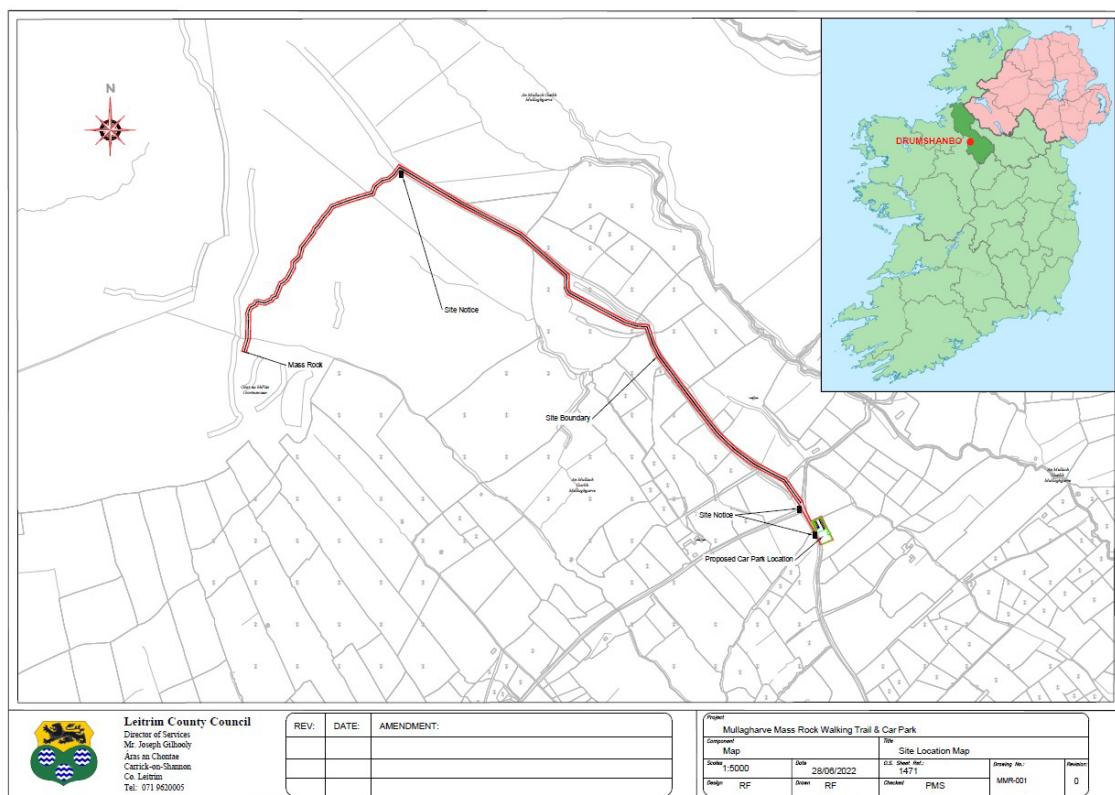


Figure 1: Site map of the proposed trail and carparking facilities at Mullaghgarve, Co. Leitrim.

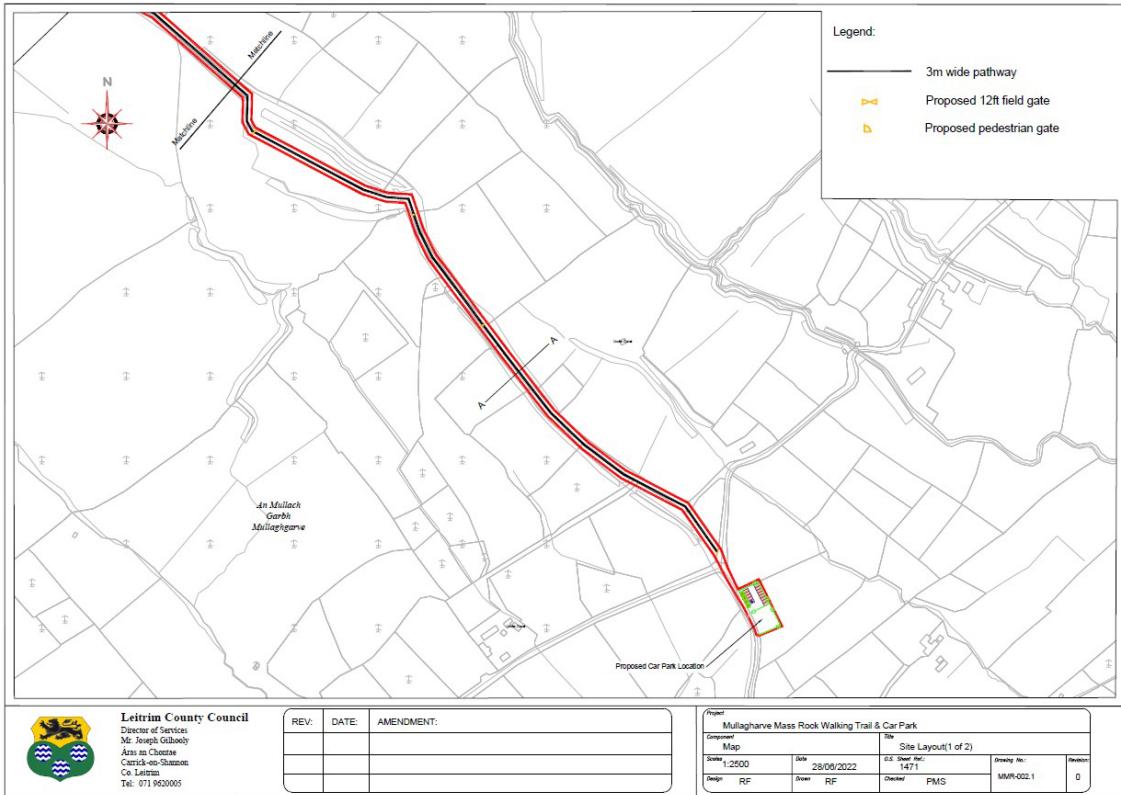


Figure 2: Detailed development plan of the proposed carpark and southern end of the trail.

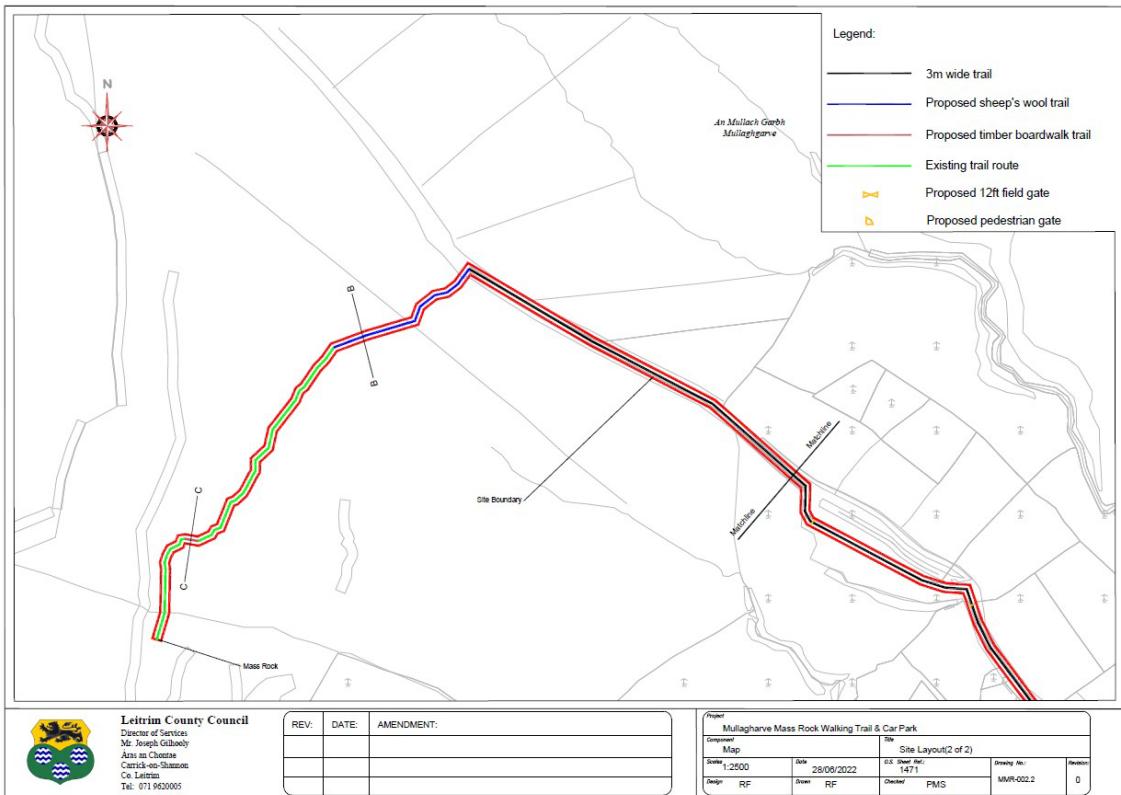


Figure 3: Detailed development plan of the northern end of the proposed trail.

## 1.3 Archaeological Requirements

The National Monuments Service required the developer to engage the services of an Archaeologist to carry out an Archaeological Assessment of the proposed trail development at Mullaghgarve, Co. Leitrim. The Archaeologist is required to carry out any documentary research of the area, visit the site, preparation of a report and submission to National Monuments Services.

## 1.4 Archaeological Assessment

In the present context archaeological assessment means investigations aimed at any of the following: (i) gaining a better understanding of a known or suspected archaeological site or monument with particular reference to considering the implications of proposed development for such a site or monument, (ii) locating previously unidentified site or monuments (or possible ones) prior to the commencement of development works with particular reference to considering the implications of proposed development for such sites or monuments, (iii) considering the potential that proposed development works or longer term effects of a development may have on elements of the archaeological heritage not identified prior to the commencement of development works.

Archaeological assessment may, as appropriate, include documentary research, fieldwalking, examination of upstanding or visible features or structures, examination of existing or new aerial photographs or satellite or other remote sensing imagery, geophysical survey, topographical assessment, general consideration of the archaeological potential of the area or areas affected by a development based on their environmental characteristics, or archaeological testing. In all cases an archaeological assessment should consider both direct and indirect effects of proposed development. It is always essential that the report on archaeological assessment contain an archaeological impact statement describing the possible direct or indirect effects of the proposed development on elements of the archaeological heritage.

## 1.5 Legal Background

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, The Heritage Act 1995, The Architectural Heritage and Historic Properties Act 1999 and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000, are the main legal mechanisms by which the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage resource is protected today in Ireland.

## 1.6 Methodology

The assessment of the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage was based on a desktop study of published and unpublished documentary and cartographic sources, as well as a comprehensive site inspection of the proposed development works.

## 1.7 Desk Study

This desktop study comprised a paper study of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources. These sources are described below:

### **National Monuments**

Under the National Monuments Acts (1930 to 2014) sites in '*The Ownership Or Guardianship Of The Minister Or A Local Authority Or National Monuments Which Are Subject To A Preservation Order*' are offered the highest level of protection. For any construction or excavation works to take place either on or in the vicinity of these sites permission must first be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in the form of a Ministerial Consent.

### **Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021**

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021 was consulted. It contained the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Leitrim.

### **Record of Monuments and Places**

The RMP of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, was established under the 1994 Amendment to the National Monuments Acts (1930-14). It is based on the pre-existing Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and information from completed county archaeological inventories. As such, it records known upstanding archaeological monuments, their original location (in cases of destroyed monuments) and the position of possible sites identified as cropmarks on vertical aerial photographs. The RMP information is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey, which combines cartographic sources, published and publicly available documentary sources, including periodicals, the records of the NMI, Geological Survey of Ireland 1:30,000 vertical aerial photographs and inspections of sites in the field. The information is read in conjunction with constraint maps, published at reduced six-inch scale, on which recorded sites are clearly marked. The RMP is constantly updated and is the first stage in the preparation of a national census of archaeological sites, with inventories also published at an interim stage. The RMP sheet relevant to the project is sheet 021 of the O.S six-inch series for Leitrim (which is based on the OS revision of 1913-14).

### **Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland**

The discovery of artefacts can be an important indicator of past levels of activity in an area and therefore a useful guide to the archaeological potential of a site. The Topographical

Files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) archive identify recorded stray finds that have been donated to the state in accordance with National Monuments legislation between 1928 and 1995. In most cases, files include details on the location of and nature of the find, or where applicable, reports of excavations undertaken by NMI archaeologists in the early twentieth century.

#### **Aerial Photographs**

Aerial photographs are an invaluable resource in archaeology for the recognition of new sites and contributing to the understanding of known sites. Features can be recognised from the air as earthworks in relief or as vegetation marks where a buried feature such as a wall or ditch affects the growth of the surrounding flora. The Geological Survey of Ireland Aerial Photograph Collection, based in Dublin, holds a comprehensive archive of high-level vertical photographs available for consultation by the public and researchers but may not be copied.

#### **Leitrim County Library**

The Local Studies section of Leitrim County Library is housed in Leitrim County Library in Ballinamore. Several local histories and general historical/archaeological texts were consulted (see bibliography for details).

#### **Irish Excavations Database**

'Excavations' is an annual bulletin, now funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, which contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out in Ireland – North and South. The bulletins can now be accessed on the Internet at [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie). Compiled from the published excavation bulletins, the database contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out from 1970 to 2022. Both the bulletins and database were consulted to establish whether excavations have been previously carried out in the vicinity of the proposed development.

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

The NIAH is a section within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The work of the NIAH involves identifying and recording the architectural heritage of Ireland, from 1700 to the present day, in a systematic and consistent manner.

#### **Lewis Topographical Dictionary 1837**

Samuel Lewis first published his two volumes of The Topographical Dictionary of Ireland in 1837. His main aim, along with his previous topographical dictionaries and maps of the United Kingdom, was to give in 'a condensed form', a reliable and unbiased description of each place. Arranged alphabetically by place (village, parish, town, etc.), it provides a comprehensive description of all Irish localities as they existed at the time of publication. Lewis gives details about every parish, town, and village in Ireland, including numbers of inhabitants, the economy, history, topography, religion and parish structures, administration and courts, schools, and much more. He also gives the names of the

principal inhabitants (generally landlords, merchants, and professionals). Lewis's dictionary is the first detailed study of its kind for Ireland, and since it was published just prior to the Irish Potato Famine (1845-49) it is a valuable resource used widely by historians and genealogists alike. There is no reference to the Mullaghgarve or wider area in the dictionary.

#### Cartographic Sources

Cartographic sources consulted include the first edition map of the Ordnance Survey (O.S) six-inch series published in 1838 and the twenty-five-inch c. 1900 O.S map were also consulted. All maps were sourced online at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie).

## 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

### 2.1 Site locational details

The existing recreational trail and the proposed extension/new carpark to the scheme are in the townland of Mullaghgarve, in Co. Leitrim. The trail is located along single-track rural roads approximately 8.5km northeast of Drumshambo, a regional town in north Co. Leitrim. The recreational trail is located along a steep existing trail, through marginal land and forestry plantation, in an upland area on the southeast slopes of Sliabh an larainn.

Study area	OS Sheet numbers	Central ITM	Townland
Leitrim	LE021	602840/815066	Mullaghgarve



Figure 4: OSI Discovery series map of the Mullaghgarve area (source: [heritagemaps.ie](http://heritagemaps.ie)).

## 2.2 Description of the Site

Access to the site is via a minor rural road northeast of the town of Drumshambo. The proposed scheme will involve the maintenance upgrading of the existing trail, new extension to the north end of the trail and a proposed carpark at the trail head to the south. The existing trail is a moderate gradient with some steep drops from the trail to a small river to the west.

The proposed new extension crosses an even boggy terrain rising upwards toward the rocky cleft where the mass rock is located. The trail car park will be located in an undulating grass and rushes covered field used for grazing. Much of the area for the proposed trail is upland marginal land used for grazing sheep, with plantation forestry along the existing trail. The area is of high scenic value and offers expansive views to the south and east across counties Leitrim and Roscommon.

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

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### 3.1 Solid Geology and Soil Type

The geology of the region consists of broad physiographic Mountain and Hill. The principal soil in the area is made up of a high level of blanket peat with no associated soils. The substrate type in the vicinity of Sliabh an Iarainn is composed of Carboniferous shales, and sandstones blanketed by heather-covered moorland.

### 3.2 Landscape

The scheme is in uplands of Sliabh an Iarainn Mountain. It rises 585 metres above sea level and is located on the eastern shore of Lough Allen. Sliabh an Iarainn or “Mountain of Iron” derives its name from the iron deposits to be found in the rocks. Sliabh an Iarainn is east of Lough Allen, is a flat-topped mountain with steep escarpments, peat bog and glacial drift below the steep grit slope.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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Research was undertaken in two phases. It comprised of a paper study of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources and a site walkover. The following is based on a document search and paper study.

#### 4.1 Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age):

The first people who came to Ireland – mainly to coastal areas as the interior was heavily forested – arrived during the Middle Stone Age, if eleven thousand years ago. They were nomadic hunter gatherers. They made weapons and tools from stone such as flint or chert. Some artefacts are distinctive of this period, such as microliths from the early part of the Mesolithic to the larger Bann Flakes in the later Mesolithic. The Mesolithic ranged from c.7000-4000BC. Artefacts of hunter/gatherers are sometimes found in middens, rubbish pits around hearths where people would have rested and cooked over large open fires. Once cliffs erode, midden remains become exposed as blackened areas containing charred stones, bones, and shells.

Significant traces of Mesolithic inhabitation have been found around the lakeshore of Lough Allen Co. Leitrim, with hundreds of stone tools collected. Most of the stone tools are characteristic of the Later Mesolithic, with possible evidence for the Early Mesolithic.

#### 4.2 Neolithic (New Stone Age):

This period saw the first farming communities in Ireland. Weapons and tools were made from stone such as flint or chert. The Neolithic ranged from c.4000-2400BC. Leitrim is well represented by megalithic monuments of the Neolithic with several court tombs present most notable of which is Corracloona Court Tomb, commonly called Prince Connell's Grave. A pair of well-preserved court tombs can be found at Tullyskeherny close to Manorhamilton. This would certainly suggest both a vibrant population' and economy. It was in the Neolithic that the change from hunting and gathering to farming came about. The similarity of artefacts recovered from these tombs both locally and nationwide would indicate that there was a well-established communications network in this period. The position of these tombs would suggest that the surrounding land was fertile and so the peaty soils must not have been laid down yet. Pollen samples would seem to point to the fact that these monuments were built on open areas near to pasture areas.

#### 4.3 Bronze Age:

The period when metal working was first introduced to Ireland. People began to use bronze to make weapons and tools. Gold working also appeared during this time, with objects such as gold torcs being produced. The Bronze Age ranged from c.2400-500BC. Megalithic tomb building continued into the Bronze Age when metal began to be worked for tools alongside the stone tools. The design of the tombs changed to more being of the wedge tomb type and cist burials. Archaeological remains from this period include stone alignments, stone circles and *fulachta fiadh*

(early cooking sites). The most common field monuments of the Bronze Age however are *fulachta fiadh*. These are mounds of burnt stone usually associated with troughs (often wood lined) often associated with heating water for cooking. Several of these monuments have been excavated in County Leitrim.

#### 4.4 Iron Age:

The Iron Age ranged in date from c.400BC-400AD. It is the period in which iron is first produced and used to make tools and weapons. This is thought to have coincided with the arrival of Celtic speaking peoples and the introduction of the ancestor of Irish. Towards the end of this period, the Roman Empire was at its height in Britain, but it is not thought that the Roman Empire extended into Ireland to any large degree. Remains from this period, which lasted until the Early Christian period began about 325AD (with the arrival of St. Patrick into Ireland, as a slave) include crannogs (Lake dwellings), promontory forts, ringforts and souterrains of which there are numerous examples across the county. The Iron Age was a time of tribal warfare with kingships, each fighting neighbouring kings, vying for control of territories, and taking slaves. Territories were marked by tall stone markers, Ogham stones, using the first written down words using the Ogham alphabet. The Iron Age is the time in which the tales of the Ulster Cycle and sagas took place.

In the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age distinctive settlement sites known as Hillforts arose. These are large defensive enclosures situated on elevated or hilltop locations. The defensive element of this site is composed of two bank and ditch enclosures incorporating earthen and stone ramparts. Promontory forts situated on cliff edges are a monument associated with the Iron Age. Cashels and Raths are a feature of the Early Historic or Early Christian period in Ireland. These are circular enclosures consisting usually of an earthen bank and ditch in the case of Raths or stone walling in Cashels. There is a gap in the enclosure for access and egress and there is often a causeway to facilitate this. These sites are often associated with souterrains, stone lined underground passages which probably acted as storage areas and, when the need arose, places of refuge.

The Keshcarrigan bronze bowl was discovered in 1854 in a river flowing into Lough Scur, which lies just north of Keshcarrigan in Co. Leitrim. Iron Age in date and measuring approximately 14 cm in diameter, it may have been a ceremonial drinking cup. The bowl is fashioned out of beaten bronze and was probably finished on a lathe, as a chuck mark is visible on its base. The handle is soldered on and is decorated with a distinctive bird's head motif, which may represent a swan or duck. This simple but striking artefact is reminiscent of 1st century AD bowls from southern Britain, and it may

represent an import. It would undoubtedly have been a prestigious item and its deposition in a watery context may represent ritual activity rather than an accidental loss.

#### 4.5 Early Christian or Early Medieval:

Christianity came to Ireland around the start of the 5th century AD. It brought many changes including the introduction of writing and recording events. The tribal 'tuatha' and the new religious settlements existed side by side. Sometimes it suited the chieftains to become part of the early Churches, other times they remained as separate entities. From the middle of the 6th century hundreds of small monastic settlements were established around the county. Early church sites in Co. Leitrim include Cleighran, Cloone, Cloonmorris, Fenagh, Kilargue, Rossclogher, Rossinver and Tullaghan.

#### 4.6 Later Historic Period:

The Medieval period includes the arrival of the Anglo Normans in the 12th century. The Late Medieval Period may be seen as running up to the 17th century. From 1169 AD when one of the warring kings (Dermot MacMurrough) in the east of Ireland appealed to the King of England for help in his fight with a neighbouring king, the response of which was the arrival of the Anglo-Norman colonisation of Ireland. Norman control meant the eclipse of many Gaelic lords and chieftains, chiefly the O'Connors of Connacht. Following the collapse of the lordship in the 1330s, all these families became estranged from the Anglo-Irish administration based in Dublin and assimilated with the Gaelic-Irish, adopting their language, religion, dress, laws, customs, and culture and marrying into Irish families. They "became more Irish than the Irish themselves".

The Anglo Normans encouraged and established many religious orders from continental Europe to settle in Ireland. Mendicant orders—Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans, and Franciscans began new settlements across Ireland and built large churches, many under the patronage of prominent Gaelic families. During the 15th and 16th centuries, despite regular conflicts between them as England chopped and changed between religious beliefs, the Irish usually regarded the King of England as their King. When Queen Elizabeth 1 came to the throne in the mid-16th century, the English people, as was customary at that time, followed the religious practices of the reigning Monarch and became Protestant. Many Irish people had close relationships with the English monarchy and the English kings and queens were welcome visitors to Irish shores. The Irish however, generally held onto their Catholic religious practices and beliefs. The early plantations of settlers in Ireland began during the reign of Queen Mary in the mid-16th century and continued

throughout the long reign of Queen Elizabeth I until 1603. Almost all the religious foundations set up by the Anglo Normans were suppressed in the wake of the Reformation in the 16th century.

Creevelea Abbey is a medieval Franciscan friary located in Dromahair, Co. Leitrim close to the River Bonet. Founded in 1508 by Eóghan O'Rourke, Lord of West Bréifne. The Franciscans were driven out by the Cromwellian Army in the 1650s. After the Restoration, the abbey remained in use until 1837. The remains consist of the church (nave, chancel, transept, and choir), chapter house, cloister and domestic buildings. The belltower was converted to living quarters in the 17th century. Carved in the cloister is an image of Saint Francis of Assisi preaching to birds.

#### 4.7 History of the Mullaghgarve Area

The Sliabh an Iarainn mountain dominates the Mullaghgarve area and is an area steeped in Irish mythology. There is an ancient Irish Legend that tells of the Tuatha de Dannan, a magical race that possessed supernatural powers who are said to be god-like creatures or divine beings that were worshipped there. This race was also known to believe in Goddess Danu. According to the legend, they came to Ireland "in dark clouds" and landed on the mountains of Sliabh an Iarainn, bringing with them their wisdom and skills.

Iron Ore has been dug at Sliabh an Iarainn since the 1600s, the Ore rather tough like Spanish Iron. Commercial Iron works existed around Sliabh an Iarainn c. 1630, and though nearly all were destroyed during the Irish Rebellion of 1641, they were revived after the Irish Confederate Wars at the earliest, or in the 1690s after the Battle of the Boyne. Many smelting works employed English or other foreigners instead of Irish labour which generated much local hostility. The siting of Smelting works contiguous to Lough Allen allowed for the transportation of Pig Iron in boats of up to forty tons. Commercial iron mining declined after c. 1750 – c. 1760 as deforestation exhausted the fuel for burning charcoal.

After the ironstone melted, the Pig iron was brought to Drumshanbo Finery forge to the south of Lough Allen to produce the malleable iron product which was transported to Dublin and Limerick by boat. Folklore claims the "Iron ore was conveyed to the Drumshanbo furnaces by boat, on Lough Allen. The sources of supply, were, the Slieven an Iern, Ballinaglera, Arigna mountains, all situated around Lough Allen. It is thought that the town of Drumshanbo had its origin in these industries". Drumshanbo Iron works closed in 1765.

Located behind the tall pinnacle of Sliabh an Iarainn, there is a hidden stone altar, a Mass Rock used in the past as a place for Catholic worship. A Mass Rock (Irish: Carraig an Aifrinn) was a rock used as an altar in mid-17th century Ireland as a location for Catholic Mass. Isolated locations were

sought to hold religious ceremonies, as observing the Catholic Mass was a matter of difficulty and danger at the time as a result of both Cromwell's campaign against the Irish, and the Penal Law of 1695. Bishops were banished and priests had to register to preach under the 1704 Registration Act. Priest hunters were employed to arrest unregistered priests and Presbyterian preachers under an Act of 1709.

The following story was recounted in the National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection: Penal Times - The Mass Rock

"I never heard tell of any happening around this district in the Penal Days. Oh, yes of course there is the Mass Rock on the top of the mountain (Slieve-an-larainn). and I think it is in the townland of Mullaghgarve. I never heard who the priest was who said Mass there. All I know is that Mass was said there in the Penal Days at Teampall (pronounced locally camp-ell), and anyone can point out the spot where it was said. I'll tell you a story that might have some connection with the Mass Rock and the priest hunters. One night about 40 years ago John Conifry of Mohercregg was going home late from his "Kaley" (a nightly visit to a house is given this name). When he came out of Kelly's land on to the old Moher road, he heard a lot of horses coming behind him galloping furiously. At first he thought it might be Moran's horses but then it struck him that there must be over 20 or more in this lot from the noise they were making. At last when they drew near he jumped up on the ditch to let them pass. As he did so he saw a troop of horse soldiers passing him at the same furious rate. He even saw their helmets. There were no soldiers around here at that time, nor even in any part of Leitrim, particularly cavalry). They might have been the ghosts of the priest hunters, or the ghosts of the soldiers the priest hunters sent out after the priest. Lately, I heard one of the tinker Heaneys who was camped on that road heard a terrible galloping of horses, and he thought they would trample down his little tent. There are not a half-dozen horses in the whole of the Moher district to-day, and certainly when Conifry heard the noise there were not more than four in it then".

Archival reference: The Schools' Collection, Volume 0211, Page 439 Image and data © National Folklore Collection, UCD.

## 5 DESKTOP DATA

### 5.1 National Monuments

No national monuments listed in state care are in the immediate vicinity of the subject site.

## 5.2 Previous Archaeological Work

A search of the database [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) indicated that no archaeological investigations have been carried out in the townland of Mullaghgarve and the wider environs of the proposed trail.

## 5.3 County Development Plan

The Leitrim County Development Plan (2015-2021) was consulted for the Mullaghgarve area. The proposed development site is in an area designated as a High Visual Amenity (HVA) area. There are several listings in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for the Mullaghgarve area:

RPS No.: 1 NIAH No.: 30924006

ITM Co-ordinates: 604278, 813732

Aghacashel Detached country house-built c.1800

Three-bay two-storey over raised basement country house with splayed stone steps to entrance. Hipped slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles, ashlar chimneystacks and cast-iron rainwater goods. Cut limestone walls with quoins and string course separating basement from ground floor level. Timber sash windows set in blind arches to ground floor with tooled limestone sills. Round-headed door opening with fluted stone surround and decorative fanlight. Multiple-bay two-storey outbuilding to rear yard with cut-stone carriage-arch opening. Ruined walled garden to east. Stone piers and wrought-iron gates to front site. House approached up tree-lined avenue.

## 5.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage of Ireland

A search of the database [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie) revealed the following structures registered in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage of Ireland in the Mullaghgarve area and wider environs:

Aghacashel House, AGHACASHEL, Aghacashel, LEITRIM

Reg No: 30924006

Rating: Regional

Categories of Special Interest: Architectural, Artistic, Social, Technical

Original Use: Country house

In Use As: Country house

Date: 1790 - 1810

Coordinates: 204329, 313723

Description: Detached three-bay two-storey over raised basement country house, built c.1800, with splayed stone steps to entrance. Hipped slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles, ashlar chimneystacks and cast-iron rainwater goods. Cut limestone walls with quoins and string course separating basement from ground floor level. Timber sash windows set in blind arches to ground floor with tooled limestone sills. Round-headed door opening with fluted stone surround and decorative fanlight. Multiple-bay two-storey outbuilding to rear yard with cut-stone carriage-arch opening. Ruined walled garden to east. Stone piers and wrought-iron gates to front site. House approached up tree-lined avenue.

Appraisal: Aghacashel House is of apparent architectural design and detailing. The splayed cut limestone steps leading to the entrance are of particular note and an important feature of the house that contributes to its significance. The overall impression created by the imposing stone house is one of solidity and austerity.

Aghacashel Post Office, AGHACASHEL, Aghacashel, LEITRIM

Reg No: 30924007

Rating: Regional

Categories of Special Interest: Architectural, Social, Technical

Previous Name: Aghacashel Post Office

Original Use: House

Historical Use: Post office

Date: 1760 - 1840

Coordinates: 204663, 313479

Description: Detached three-bay two-storey vernacular house, c.1820, with 'bed outshot'. Blocked up window openings. Timber battened door. Limewashed stone walls. Pitched corrugated-iron roof with single chimneystack. Side of house with outshot now faces road.

Appraisal: This vernacular house is notable by the presence of the 'bed outshot'. This projection, formerly accommodating a bed space in the kitchen, beside the hearth, was traditionally the sleeping place of an elderly parent or grandparent, who was thus involved in the everyday activities of the house. The outshot is found in north-western counties between Galway and Antrim and is a traditional feature of many houses in Atlantic Europe.

## 5.5 Toponymy

Toponymy is the study of place names (toponyms), their origins, meanings, use, and typology. Place names can provide information on the previous history and heritage of a location. The townland of Mullaghgarve is in the Barony of *Liatroim*/Leitrim and the Civil Parish of *Cill Tiobrad*/Kiltubbrid. Mullaghgarve translates in Irish as *An Mullach Garbh* (genitive: *an Mhullaigh Ghairbh*), meaning 'rough hillock'.

## 5.6 Record of Monuments and Places

The following sites are listed on the Record of Monuments and Places in the vicinity of the subject site:

SMR No.	Class	Townland	ITM Easting	ITM Northing	Approximate Distance to PDA
LE021-003---	Redundant record	BARNAMEENAGH	600384	815241	c.1900m W
LE021-004---	Ringfort - rath	AGHACASHEL	604282	814115	c.1200m SE
LE021-016---	Megalithic tomb - court tomb	MULLAGH GARVE	603910	814272	c.800m S
LE024-001---	Ringfort - rath	BUNREVAGH	602700	813100	c.1600 S
LE024-071---	Rock shelter	GORTNAWAUN, MULLAGH GARVE	602996	813954	c.800m SW

### LE021-003----

Class: Redundant record

Townland: BARNAMEENAGH

Description: Located on a small shelf towards the top of the SW-facing slope of Slieve Anierin. A natural erratic (dims c. 3m x c. 2m; H c. 2m) which was reputed to rock at the pressure of a finger, but no longer does so, perhaps after an attempt to explode it. (Faughnan 1943)

**LE021-004----**

Class: Ringfort - rath

Townland: AGHACASHEL

Description: Situated on a knoll of rock outcrop towards the bottom of an E and SE-facing slope of Slieve Anierin. This is a grass and scrub-covered D-shaped area (int. dims 38.5m NE-SW; 22.2m NW-SE) defined by a scarp (H 1.2m) on top of a cliff (H 2m) at SE, and elsewhere by an overgrown earthen bank, best preserved at N (Wth 5.5m; int. H 0.6m; ext. H 1.6m), accompanied by an external fosse (Wth of top 7.2m; Wth of base 3-3.5m; max. D 1.4m at N) WSW-N-NE. The entrance (Wth 1.4m) is at W.

**LE021-016----**

Class: Megalithic tomb - court tomb

Townland: MULLAGHGORVE

Description: Situated on a slight W-E spur on a shelf that is close to the bottom of the S-facing slope of Slieve Aniarin. This is described in the folk record (IFC, The Schools' Collection: vol. 0211, 502-06) as 'big long limestone flags, standing up on end along the sides of the mound and at both ends. Outside the flags there were piles of stones of various sizes and shapes - some of them would weigh about 2 cwt. Inside the same standing flags there were a number of broken flags which appeared to me to have been a cover that reached from the standing flags on one side to those on the opposite side. Of the standing flags there was one on the western end higher than the others. Outside that flag we got ashes similar to that, what comes from a turf fire.' The description was provided by Terrence Geoghegan who also recovered unburnt bones, and who relates how the material was used in road-building during 1936. Terrence's grand-nephew, Mícheál Geoghegan (senior), was able to locate the remains and reported the discovery to the National Monuments Service.

Only one stone on the N (dims 0.8m x 0.25m; H 0.4m) and one on the S (dims 1.75m x 0.1m; max. H 0.9m) sides of a chamber (dims 3m plus E-W; 1.6m N-S) survive at the W side of a circular court

(dims of base 5.4m N-S; 4m E-W) defined by a grass-covered spread of cairn material (Wth 2.8-5m; int. H 0.2-0.3m; ext. H 0.2-0.7m) that has one upright stone set radially at SE but no opening. A line of four stones (L 3.7m; H 0.1m) aligned E-W on the outer edge of the court at N could be kerbstones of a cairn, some stones of which extend W of the chamber (max. dims 21m E-W; 12m N-S).

**LE024-001----**

Class: Ringfort - rath

Townland: BUNREVAGH

Description: Situated at the crest of the E side of a steep-sided N-S valley on the S-facing slopes of Slieve Anierin. This is a grass and rush-covered oval area (int. dims 27.5m E-W; 22m N-S) defined by an overgrown earth and stone bank which is best preserved at NE (Wth 2.4m; int. H 0.25m; ext. H 0.8m) but which is reduced to a scarp at S, and an external fosse (at N: Wth 2m; D 0.6m) W-E-S. A gravel road was laid over the surface NW-E-SE in 1999.

**LE024-071----**

Class: Rock shelter

Townland: GORTNAWAUN, MULLAGHGORVE

Description: Situated in a slight hollow in an upland valley. A N-S stream terminates at a rock-cut gully (L c. 10m NNE-SSW; Wth c. 3m; D c. 5m) with a swallow hole (diam. c. 3m) at its S end. It is described as 'Politicoghan' in italic lettering on the 1835 and 1907 editions of the OS 6-inch map, and its full depth is over 30m with access to other chambers (Coleman 1965, 57). Polticoghan – Poll Tigh Coghlan (the cave at Coughlan's house) was the focus of an outing on Pulty Sunday or Garland Sunday, the last Sunday in July, into the 20th century as part of a celebration of Lughnasa which also included a visit to St Patrick's Well (LE024-007----), c. 2.5km to the SSW and c. 250m lower. (Dalton 1921-4, 53; MacNeill 1962, 121)

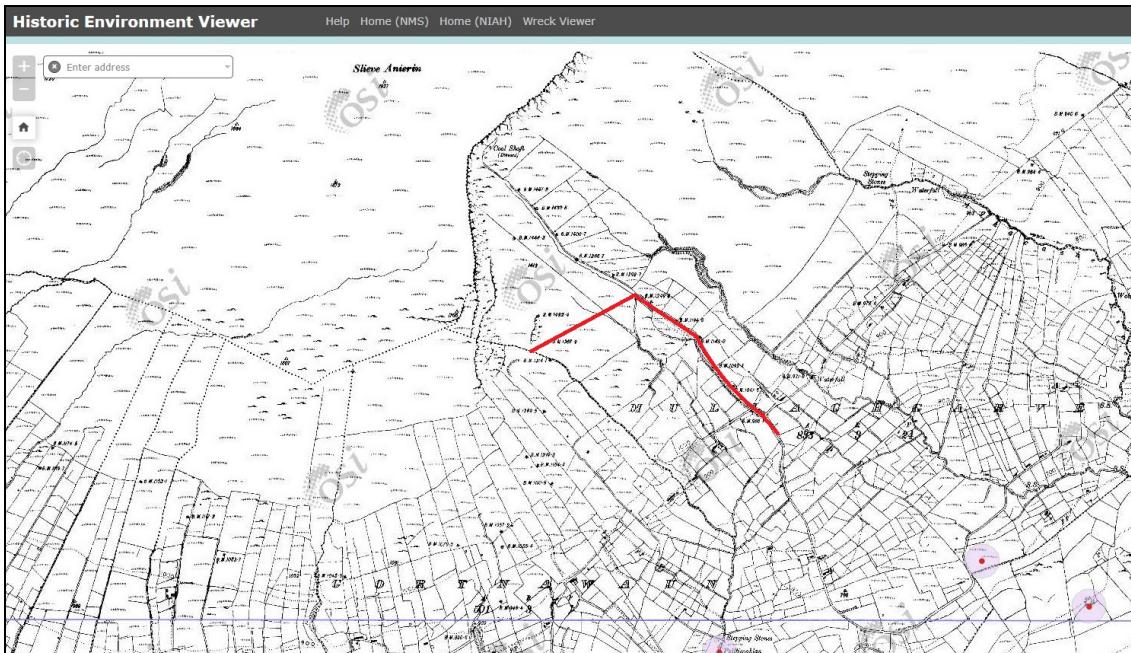


Figure 5: Record of Monument and Place Map of Mullaghgarve, Co. Leitrim.

## 5.7 The National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files

The topographical survey for the townland of Mullaghgarve was consulted up to the year 2010 on [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie) and it produced no results for the subject area.

## 5.8 Aerial Photography

Aerial photography of the development area was consulted. The main source used was Ordnance Survey of Ireland website [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie) which clearly showed an aerial view of the area in which the scheme will be developed in the townland of Mullaghgarve. The aerial photograph clearly shows the scheme area, the existing trail, and the location of the proposed carpark. An examination of the area in which the proposed extension from the existing trail to the Mass rock revealed no additional archaeological features in the aerial photography of this area.

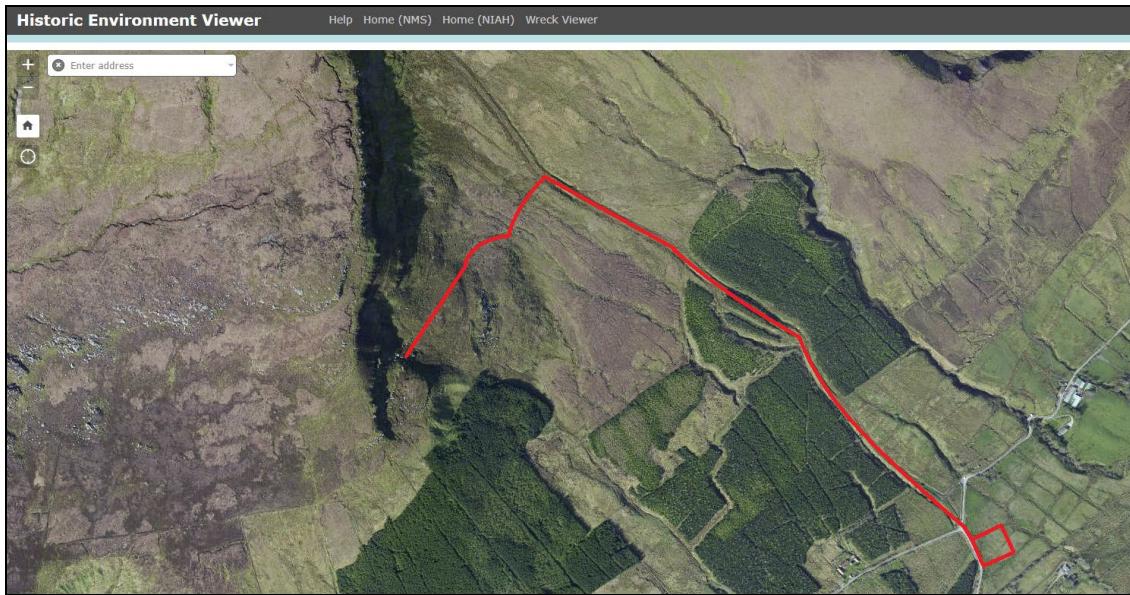


Figure 6: Aerial photograph of the Proposed Development Site.

## 5.9 Cartographic Evidence

The following section considers major maps of Co. Leitrim with reference to the townland of Mullaghgarve including the subject site.

### 5.9.1 McParlan's Statistical Survey of the County Leitrim 1802

James McParlan's Statistical Survey of the County Leitrim was published in 1802 on behalf of the Dublin Society. It is one of a series of statistic surveys of the counties of Ireland just after the turn of the 19th century which examined its agriculture, economy, and society. The survey was accompanied by a map entitled 'Sketch of the County of Leitrim'. An examination of this map shows Lough Allen, west of Sliabh an Iarainn mountain which is also indicated on the map. The village of Drumshambo appears on the map as does Aghacashel House. The landscape is shown as upland with hills and mountains and the access road to the Mullaghgarve area is present as a dotted line indicating a minor road west and north of Aghacashel.

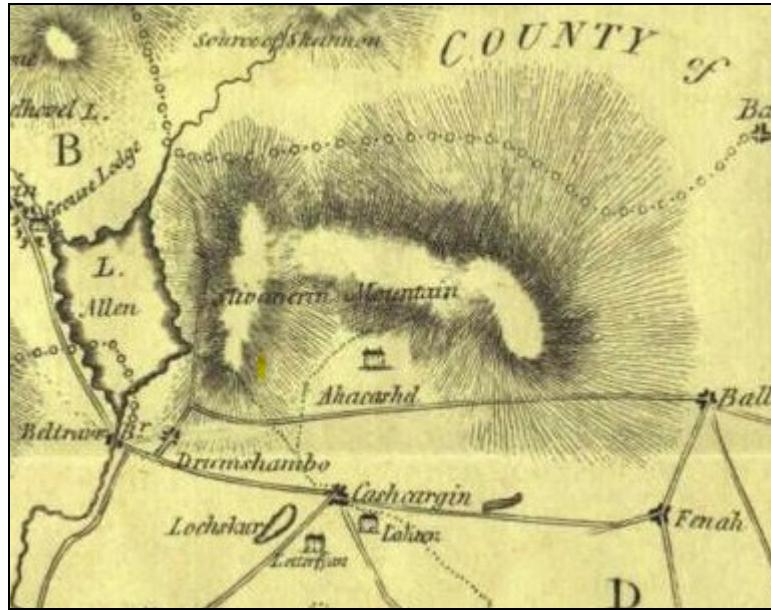
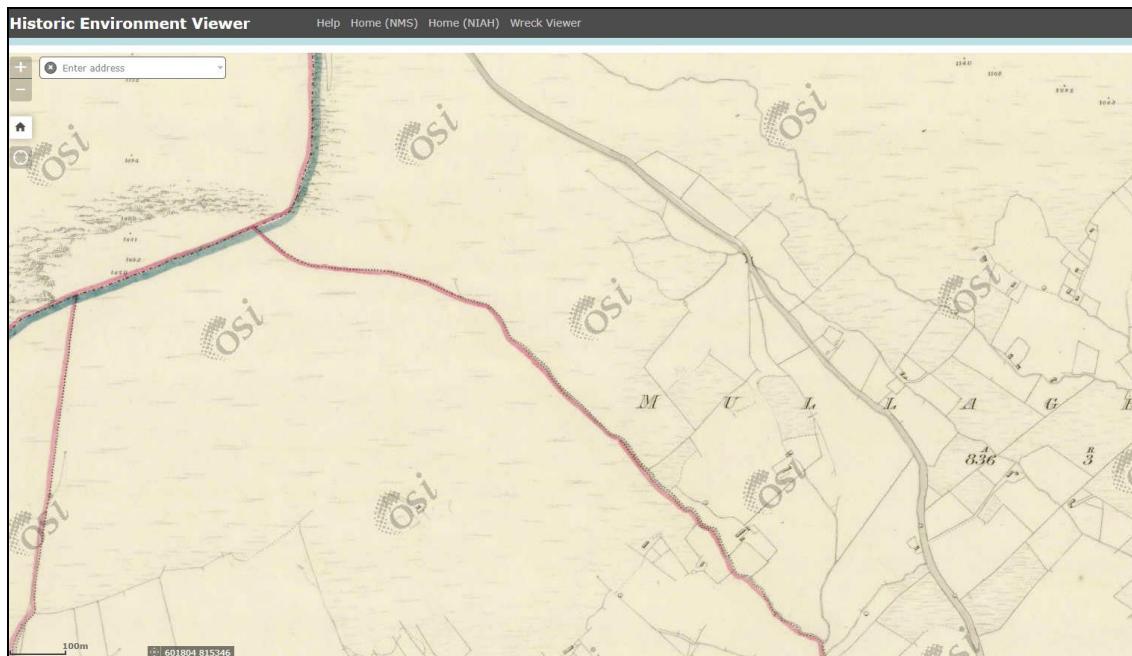


Figure 7: McParlan's Map of Co. Leitrim 1802.

### 5.9.2 Ordnance Survey 1837 edition (6" map)

The area in which the existing recreational trail is located on the first edition ordnance survey map of County Leitrim, dated to the 1830's, as a track extended in a NW-SE direction on the southeastern slopes of Sliabh an larainn. The area in which the trail extension is proposed can be clearly seen as rough, upland marginal and featureless land.



### 5.9.3 Ordnance Survey c. 1910 edition (25" map)

The proposed development area can also be clearly seen on the second edition Ordnance Survey map dated to c. 1900. The subject site and the surrounding area have undergone little change since the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map of the 1830s, this map does however include detail of the steep rocky outcrops where the Mass Rock is located. No features of an archaeological nature were noted along the route of the proposed extension, the existing trail or the proposed carpark on any edition of the OS maps, the Mass Rock is also not indicated on either edition of the map.



Figure 9: Ordnance Survey Map 1910 of Mullaghgarve showing the proposed trail.

## 6 RESULTS OF THE SITE INSPECTION

The site inspection took place on Monday the 19th of December 2022. The site conditions were good during the inspection and the areas of the new proposed extension and carpark were fully accessible to conduct a full site walkover on. The entire existing trail encompasses approximately 1km of trail following an existing track and then following the contours of the upland area which traverses bogland towards the steep cliffs where the trail terminates and in which the mass rock is located in a natural sheltered cleft in the cliff.



Plate 1: NW facing view of Mullaghgarve Mass Rock.

## 6.1 Proposed Carpark

At the trail head there is no parking provided and as part of the scheme there will be a new car park developed to accommodate up to 13 cars. The proposed car park will be constructed with a greenfield area that comprises a grass and rushes covered field gently south sloping and used for grazing. The carpark will be rectangular in plan and access will be to the southwest. The area was wet underfoot during the visit and marginal vegetation was present. There were two distinct rises in the field comprising low mounds. Given the conditions of the field there may be the possibility of uncovering wetland archaeology for example fulacht fiadh/ burnt mounds. There is also a source of water to the west in the form of a small stream. This is the type of terrain that fulacht fiadh can occur in.

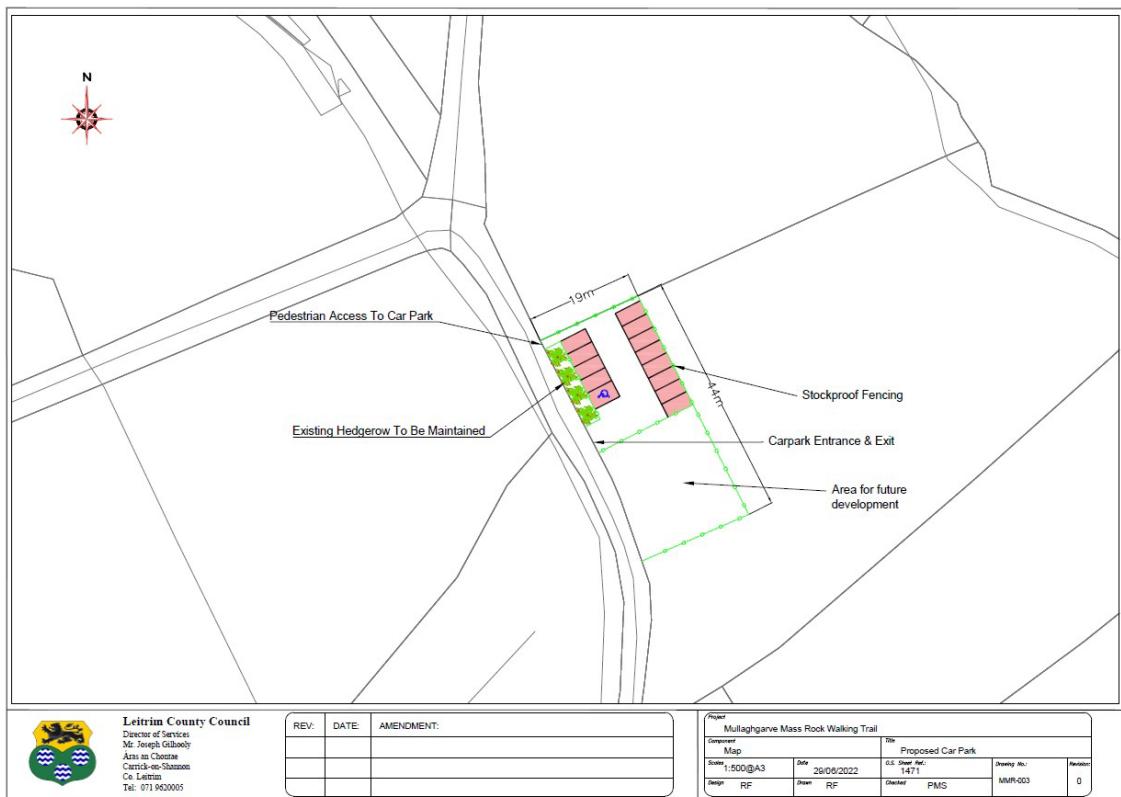


Figure 10: Detailed plan of the proposed carpark for the trail.

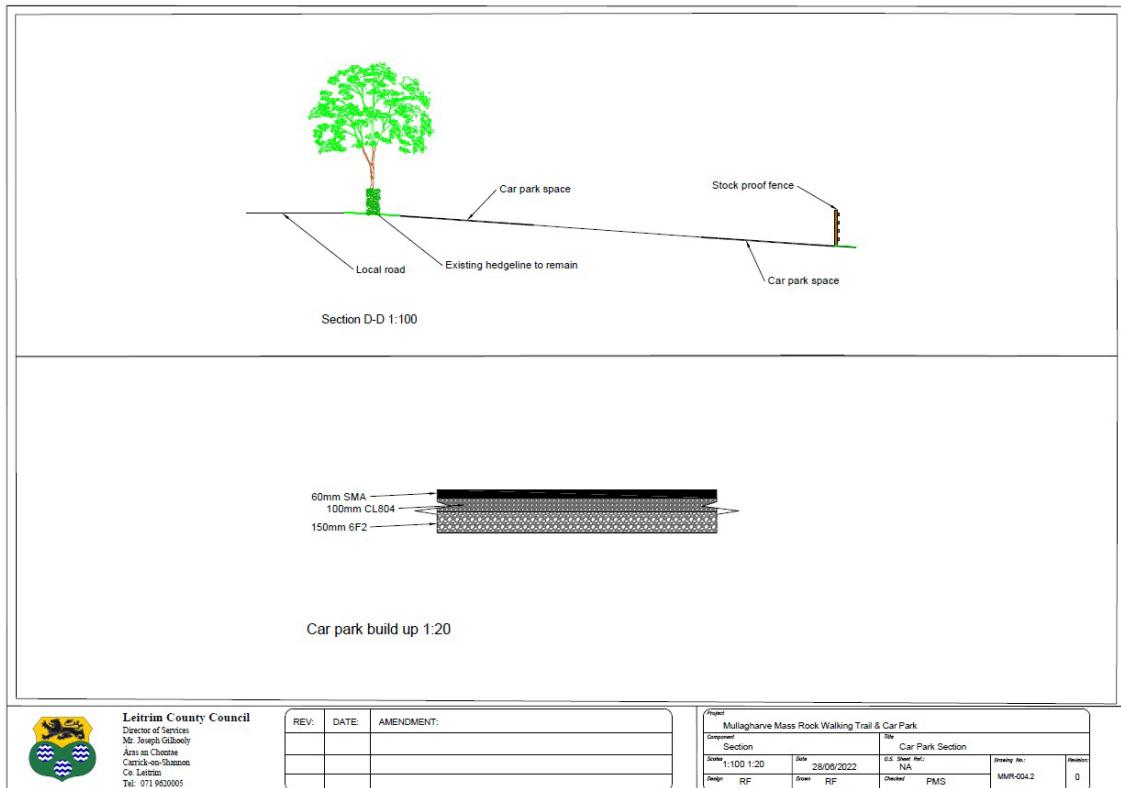


Figure 11: Section drawings of the proposed carpark for the trail.



**Plate 2: East facing view of the raised area in the field proposed for the carpark.**



**Plate 3: South facing view of the field proposed for the carpark.**

## 6.2 Proposed Trail Upgrade and Extension

Access to the trail is via farm gates at the southern end where the existing trail rises steeply along the grass covered stone surface of the track. A small river carves a steep sided chasm to the west of the existing trail as the track extends northwards. The trail in this area is bounded on both sides by forestry plantation. The works will involve the upgrade of 975m of existing trail with CL804 stone. The maintenance works and upgrading of the existing trail will not impact on any archaeological material and is mainly within existing trail surface as such is not subject to archaeological mitigation.



Plate 4: North facing view of the start of the trail and the existing track.



**Plate 5: South facing view of the start of the trail, carpark is proposed for the green field in the background.**



**Plate 6: North facing view of the existing track.**



Plate 7: North facing view of the existing track.



Plate 8: NW facing view of the end of the existing track and the newly inserted bridge providing access to the proposed extension to the trail.

The extension to the trail towards the mass rock extend for approximately 170m following the contours of the undulating marginal land. The proposed trial extension traverses' areas of exposed bedrock, glacial erratic boulders, and exposed peat. The trail extension will involve subsurface works to install the 20m timber boardwalk and the construction of 150m of sheep's wool pathway, and all necessary ancillary works. Access to the mass rock comprises stone steps steeply rising the location of a stone altar. The integrity and character of the area surrounding the mass rock and the environs of the altar feature should be maintained. No material of an archaeological nature was noted in the footprint of the new trail extension.



Plate 9: SW facing view of the location for the proposed trail extension.

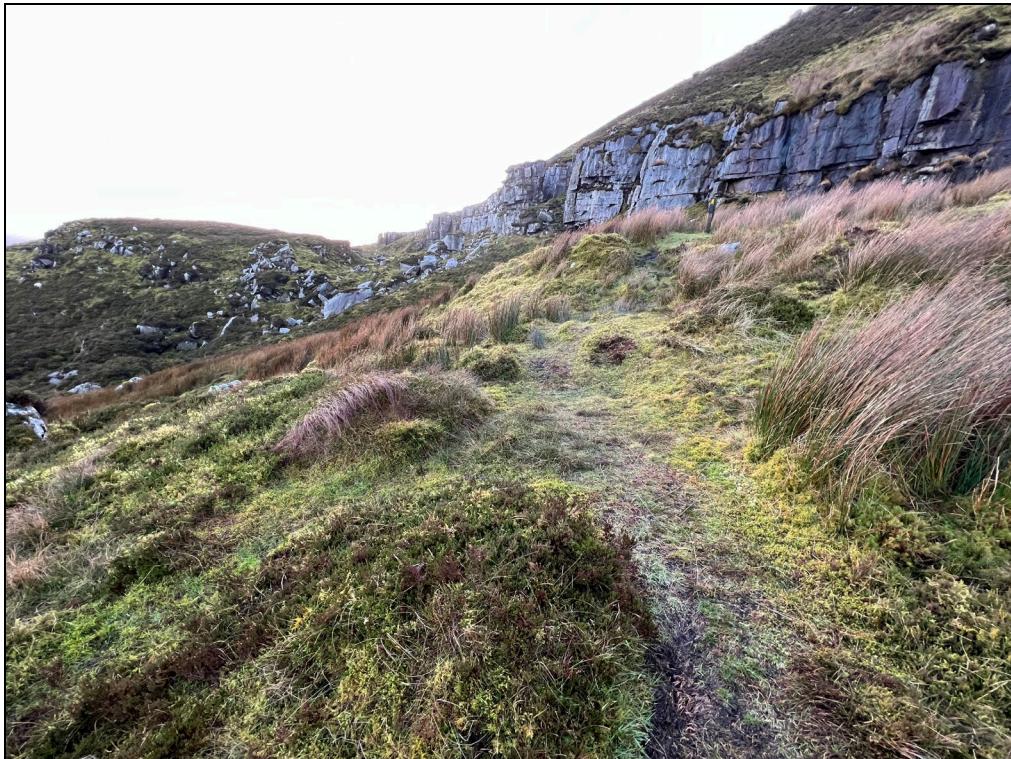


Plate 10: SW facing view of the location of the proposed trail extension.

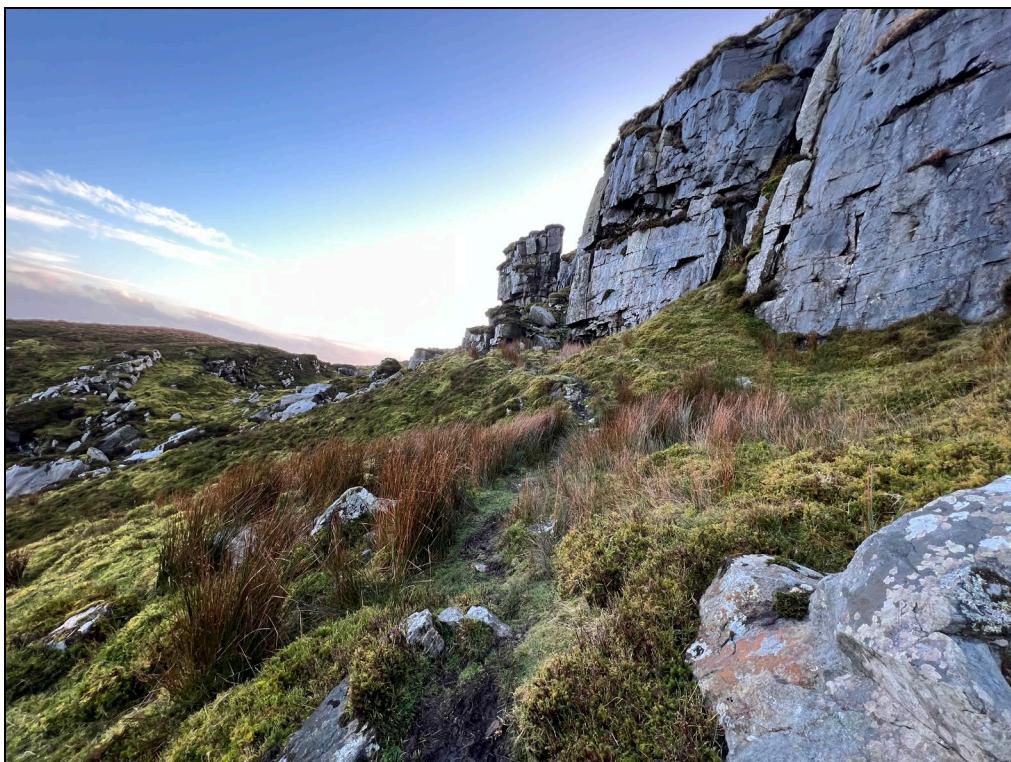


Plate 11: SW facing view of the location of the proposed trail extension and rocky cleft in which the mass rock is in the background.



Plate 12: NE facing view of the elevated location of the proposed trail extension.



Plate 13: SW facing view of the stone steps providing access to the platform on which the mass rock is located.



Plate 14: West facing view of the mass rock and the stone slabbed surface around it.

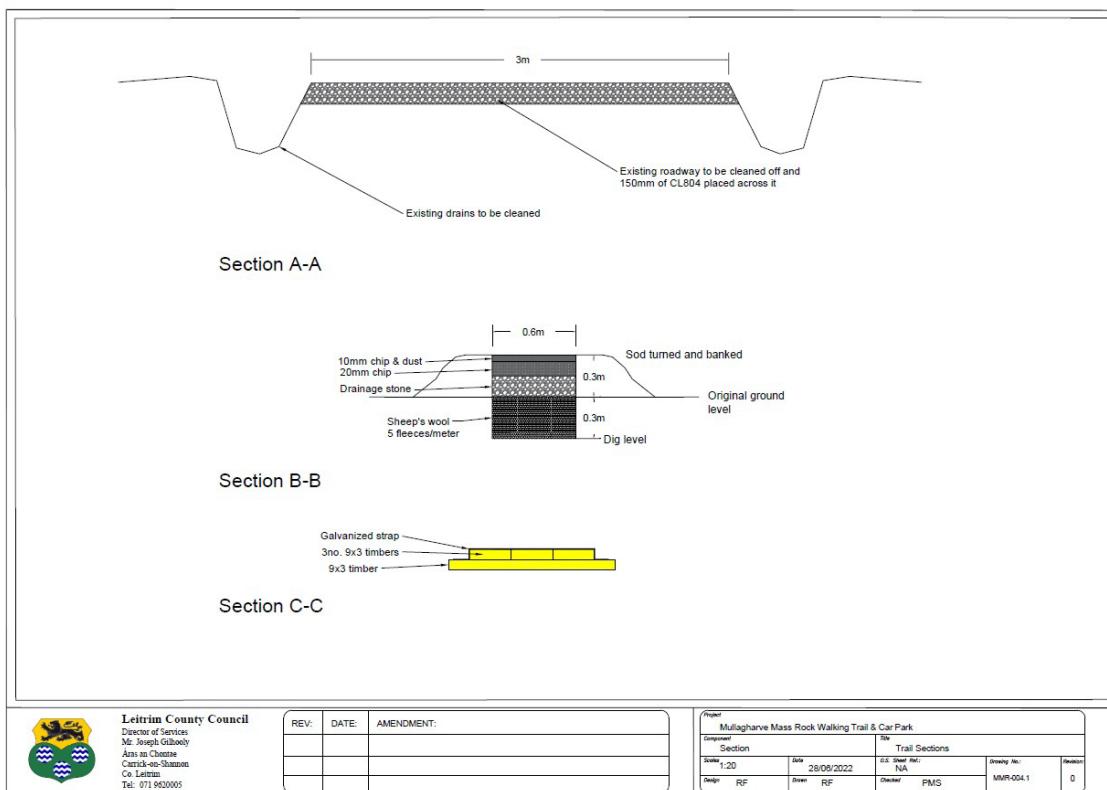


Figure 12: Section drawings of the structure of the proposed trail.

## 7 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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The development will have no direct or negative impact on any known recorded archaeological sites or monuments in the vicinity of the proposed new trail extensions, upgrade of the existing trail or addition of a trail carpark. There will be no visual impact on the recorded archaeological sites or monuments in the vicinity of the proposed new trail extensions or carpark.

The proposed enhancement of the existing trail where works are required for maintenance purposes will have no negative image on any archaeological remains. Therefore, no archaeological mitigation is required for these works. Due to the location of the remainder of the scheme in areas largely untouched previously there may be increased possibility of the uncovering of subsurface archaeological remains. Therefore, it is recommended that two areas of the proposed scheme be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring during construction, where groundworks involve removal of topsoil or subsurface works such as drainage.

The recommended monitoring areas are as follows:

- 1) Proposed location of the trail extension adjacent to the mass rock; where the proposed trail crosses the marginal land to the mass rock from the northern end of the existing track; and all areas where the trail is no longer in an existing track surface. Periodic monitoring and site inspection should be applicable to these sections of the trail.
- 2) Proposed location of the trail carpark should be subject to a programme of monitoring of topsoil removal and all groundworks involving subsurface work due to the possibility of archaeological material being present as indicated by the undulating topography of the field.

It is recommended that these areas of the proposed scheme be comprehensively subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring as required to be conducted by a suitably qualified archaeologist, under license to the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, with provision being made for full recording, preservation *in situ* or excavation of any archaeological features or deposits which may be exposed.

**Please note that all recommendations in this report are subject to approval by the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the National Museum of Ireland.**

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