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Archaeological Impact Assessment at Ardagh Train Station, Kilreash Townland, Co. Limerick.



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Copies of this report have been presented by ÆGIS to: Client— Healy Partner’s Architects, The Mill, Glentworth St, Limerick.

Please note... That the archaeological recommendations, mitigation proposals and suggested methodology followed in this report are similar to those used on previous similar projects approved by the Archaeological Planning and Licencing Unit National Monuments Service, Room G50, Custom House, Dublin 1. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, The Planning and Development Act 2000 (plus any amendments) and the most recent EPA guidelines were consulted. Guidelines and plans issued from time-to-time by the statutory and regulatory bodies have been consulted. These are listed in the reference section of this report (for example Dúchas 1999; 1999a; National Monuments Service 2006; EPA 2015; 2015a; 2018).

Every effort has been taken in the preparation and submission of this report to provide as complete an assessment as possible within the terms of the brief, and all statements and opinions are offered in good faith. However, ÆGIS cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from the data supplied by any third party, for any loss or other consequences arising from decisions made or actions taken on the basis of facts and opinions expressed in this report, (and any supplementary information), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived, or as the result of unknown and undiscovered sites or artefacts.

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Cover Image Ardagh Station House, from N (F. Coyne).

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II. Glossary of Terms Used

ACA	Architectural Conservation Area.
ASI	Archaeological Survey of Ireland, a division of the DCHG.
Barony, Parish, Townland	These terms refer to land divisions in Ireland. The barony is the largest land division in a county, which is formed from a number of parishes. These parishes are in turn made up of several townlands, which are the smallest land division in the country. The origins of these divisions are believed to be in the Early Medieval/Christian period (AD500-AD1000) or may date earlier in the Iron Age (500BC-AD500).
CDP	County Development Plan.
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.
E	East.
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report.
First Edition	This relates to editions of the OS 6-inch maps for each county. The first edition map completed for the area dates to the early 1840s and this is referred to in the text as the 'First Edition'.
IT	Institute of Technology.
ITM	Irish Transverse Mercator (grid reference type favoured by ASI).
KM	Kilometre.
M	Metres, all dimensions are given in metres or part of a metre, unless otherwise stated.
MMD	Mott MacDonald.
N	North.
NDFA	National Development Finance Agency.
NGR	National Grid Reference.
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
NLI	National Library of Ireland.
NMI	National Museum of Ireland.
NMS	National Monuments Service. Regulatory body and division of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.
OPW	Office of Public Works.
OS	Ordnance Survey.
OSI	Ordnance Survey of Ireland.
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places. An update of the older SMR, (sites and monuments record), on which all known archaeological sites are marked and listed in an accompanying list. The sites marked afford legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. The record is based on the 6-inch map series for the country and is recorded on a county basis. Each archaeological monument on the RMP has a unique code known as the RMP number prefixed by OF for Offaly.
RMP Number	This code is the number of the site on the RMP constraint map. It begins with the county code, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological monument on that sheet.
RPS	Record of Protected Structures.
S	South.
Sheet	This relates to the 6-inch map for each county, which is divided into sheets.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record. The precursor of the RMP, the SMR now commonly relates to the archive paper files of known archaeological monuments maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). These files are arranged according to SMR number. Much of this information is now available online at www.webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/ .
TB	Townland Boundary.
W	West; or when used with a dimension, width.
ZAP	Zone of archaeological potential (refers to historic towns only).

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of study

The subject site is Ardagh Train Station, situated to the southeast of the village of Ardagh, the townland of Kilreash, the barony of Shanid, and the civil parish of Ardagh.

The site inspection on which this assessment is based was undertaken by the writer on 10 October 2023.

This archaeological report was funded in full by the client.

1.2 Statutory protection and policy

There is a range of existing statutory and regulatory policies upon which this report can draw (see annex 1 for list). Protection is provided by the following legislation: National Monuments (amendment) Acts 1930-2014; Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) established under section 12 of the National Monuments (amendment) Act 1994; Planning and Development Acts 2000 (and amendments); Heritage Act 1995; National Cultural Institutions Act 1997; Architectural Heritage (national inventory) and Historic Monuments (miscellaneous provisions) Act 1999. A number of international conventions are also pertinent (Dúchas 1999).

At present, **national level** policy in the Republic of Ireland on monuments of cultural heritage significance (archaeology and architecture) is in the first instance, preservation *in situ*. This policy is fully outlined in a published document *Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Dúchas 1999). Recorded archaeological monuments (i.e. RMPs) within the study area, and those architectural features which are protected structures (RPS) must be retained *in situ* and their landscape context must be either maintained or ideally improved by any future development (Dúchas 1999, 23-25). In the case of any 'new' or previously unrecorded archaeological monument or architectural feature which may be identified during the master planning stage or later development stages, governmental policy on monuments of cultural heritage significance (archaeology and architecture) is again, in the first instance, preservation *in situ*. However, in this case, if it can be clearly demonstrated that this is impossible to achieve, preservation by record on case-by-case may be permitted by the regulatory bodies (Dúchas 1999, 25).

2. Methodology

The following resources and methods of establishing the archaeological status of the site were used. These have been sub-divided into desktop survey; field survey and inspection; and impact assessment:

Desktop survey methodology

- A review of the planning history of the subject site was undertaken;
- The Record of Monuments and Places constraint maps and lists (RMP) and the sites and monuments record (SMR) were consulted;
- A wide range of local historical and archaeological records relevant to the study area were consulted (see reference section), including the Ordnance Survey First Edition six-inch map (c.1840), the Ordnance Survey twenty-five-inch map, and various aerial views;
- Current County Development Plan & Local Area Plan for the subject site were considered (and heritage plans if available);
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage to include vernacular structures of architectural heritage merit;
- Record of Protected Structures as maintained by the local authority;
- National Museum of Ireland 'topographical files';
- Pertinent Urban Archaeology Surveys were consulted;
- Folklore Commission information was consulted;
- A review of any archaeological investigations in the vicinity was also undertaken to provide an archaeological context.

Field survey and inspection methodology

- The subject site was visited and inspected by a qualified archaeologist.

Impact assessment methodology

- Published guidance was followed in the impact assessment undertaken in the study, namely EPA (2015; 2015a; 2017). Other published guidance was consulted, for example, Eirgrid (2015) and TII (2005).

3. Existing Environment

The subject site is Ardagh Train Station. It has lain derelict for many years since it closed in 1963. The Station House was purchased and renovated by Limerick City and County Council in 2020/21.

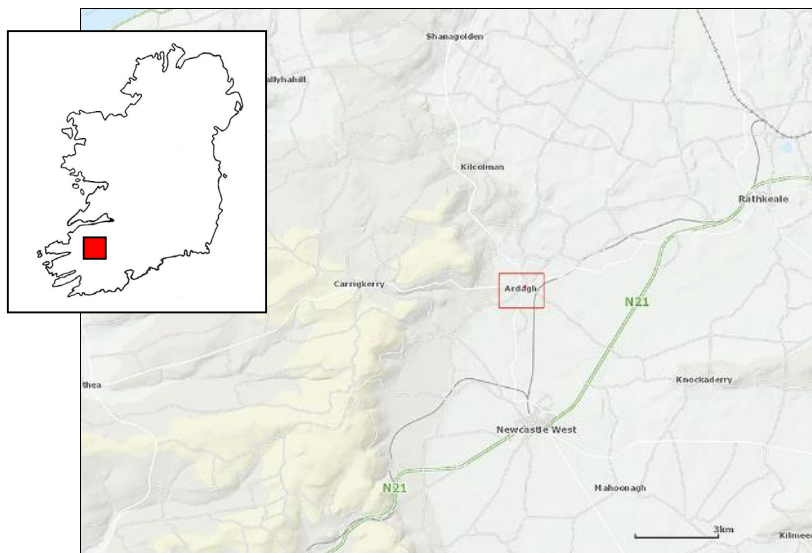


Figure 1. Location map with Ardagh indicated, N to top (after www.archaeology.ie).



Figure 2. General site location in red at Ardagh (after www.archaeology.ie). North to top.

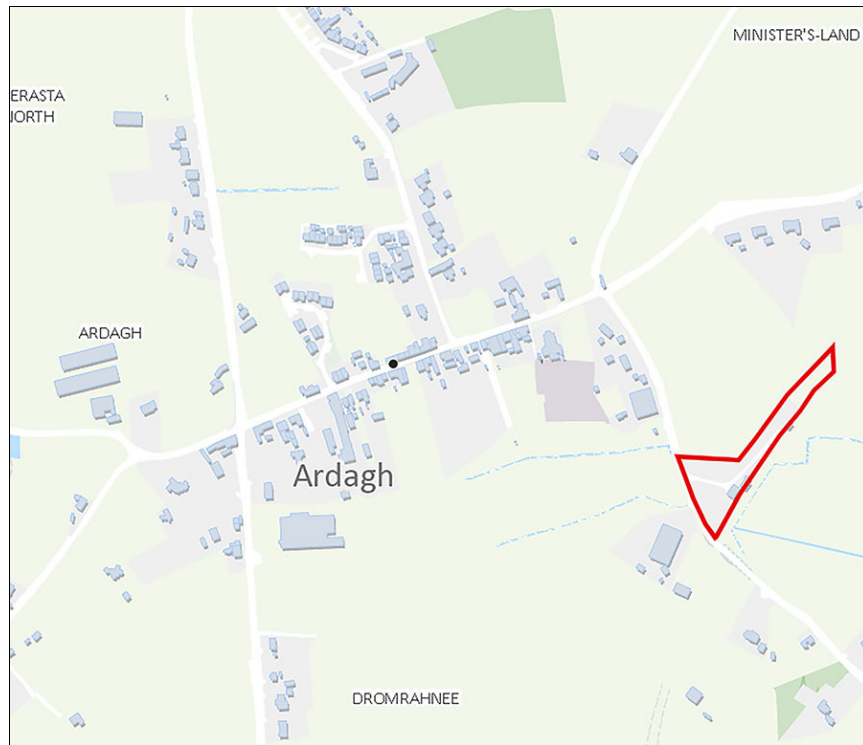


Figure 3. General location of site in relation to Ardagh (after www.archaeology.ie). North to top.



Figure 4. Detailed location of subject site, outlined in red (after www.archaeology.ie). North to top.



Figure 5. Aerial view of Ardagh Train Station, prior to renovation (after Digital Globe 2011). North to top.



Figure 6. Aerial view of Ardagh Train Station after renovation, Google Earth 3 November 2022 (North to top).

3.1 The proposed development

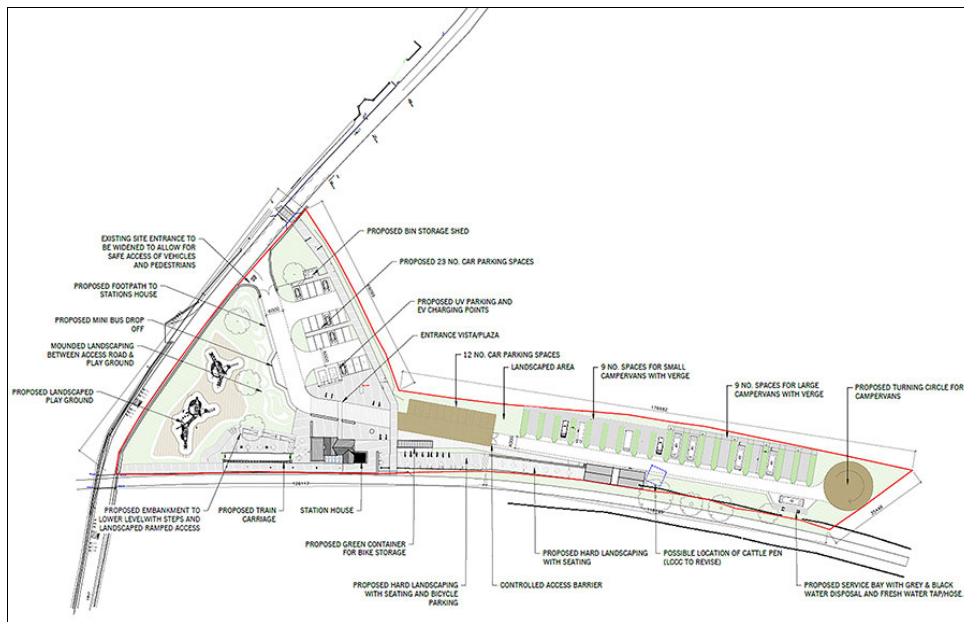


Figure 7. Proposed development (after Healy partners Architects).

The development will include: Refurbishment and renovation of the Ardagh Station House and Goods Shed (which is a protected structure, RPS 900) and change of use to commercial, community and tourism. Develop the buildings and site to include toilets, café, playground, interpretation and camper van facilities. The provision of on-site parking to include car and universal access parking spaces, electric vehicle charging point spaces and camper van parking bays. Installation of a railway carriage on the site for commercial, community, and tourism use, and all associated site works. Construction of extensions to the Station House and Goods Shed. Works to include all site development works for the buildings and site including utilities, drainage, landscaping and public realm. Widening of the existing entrance to accommodate 2-way traffic.

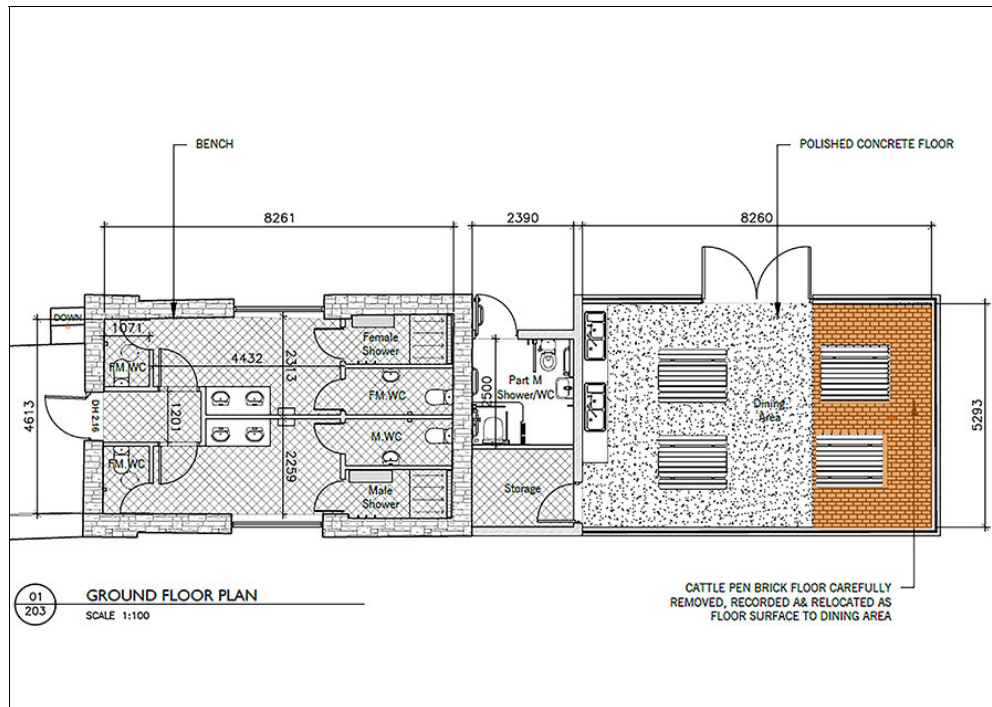


Figure 8. Proposed extension to goods shed, with location of cattle pen floor on right (highlighted in orange by writer, after Healy partners Architects).

The Good's Shed is to be restored and repurposed as a segregated male and female WC's and changing/shower area. External access is provided via a new compliant set of steps. The new build dining area is scaled similarly to the existing Good's Shed, to compliment it. The brick flooring taken from the cattle pen on site will be repurposed as the flooring in the dining area, with the remaining made of a polished concrete – differentiating between new and old. As this is a semi-internal/external space, the upper sections of the walls are made up of timber shutter; allowing for the space to be opened during the day and securely closed during the night.

3.2 The site inspection (Figs 1-6; Plates 1-6)

The site was visited on October 10th. The Station House platform and surrounds have been restored, with a new car park for users of the greenway constructed to the northwest of the station house.

The former route of the railway line, now under tarmac, is part of the Limerick Greenway section of the Great Southern Trail.

The brick floor of a former cattle pen remains in site at the northeastern side of the site. This is an area of red brick, set in a cementitious mortar, measuring an area of approximately 5.5m by 5m. Portion of a field bank now grows on top of portion of the floor. The floor is incomplete and bricks appear to be missing at the northeastern side. This floor itself is very overgrown and in poor condition.

For many of the railways, the most important traffic was livestock. It is said that the Englishman's love of roast beef kept the railways in business. It is hard to appreciate how important the export of live cattle was to the economy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At this time, cattle trains converged from all over the country to sidings in Cabra near Smithfield in Dublin for the Thursday market (Ferris 2010, 69). Much of this livestock was then transported to England.

It is proposed to record, excavate and reconstruct the floor of the animal pen in an extension to the existing goods shed as part of this development.



Plate 1. View of rear of Station House, from car park at W.



Plate 2. View of front of Station House, from NE. The railway track is now part of the Greenway.



Plate 3. View towards goods shed and cattle pen, from SE.



Plate 4. Goods shed, remains of cattle pen under grass at rear, from SW.



Plate 5. Edge of floor of cattle pen marked by ranging rod, from NW.



Plate 6. Brick floor of cattle pen, from NE.

4. History and Archaeology of the Site and Vicinity

4.1 Historical and archaeological background

The subject site is Ardagh Train Station, situated to the southeast of the village of Ardagh, the barony of Shanid, and the civil parish of Ardagh. Kilreash is translated from the Irish *Chill Réis*, meaning 'Church of Réis -the meaning of Réis is unclear (<https://www.logainm.ie/31651.aspx>). No specific history relating to the townland of Kilreash was uncovered.



Figure 9. Subject site in red on Digital Globe aerial photo of Kilreash townland (after <https://www.logainm.ie/en/31651>), annotated by writer.

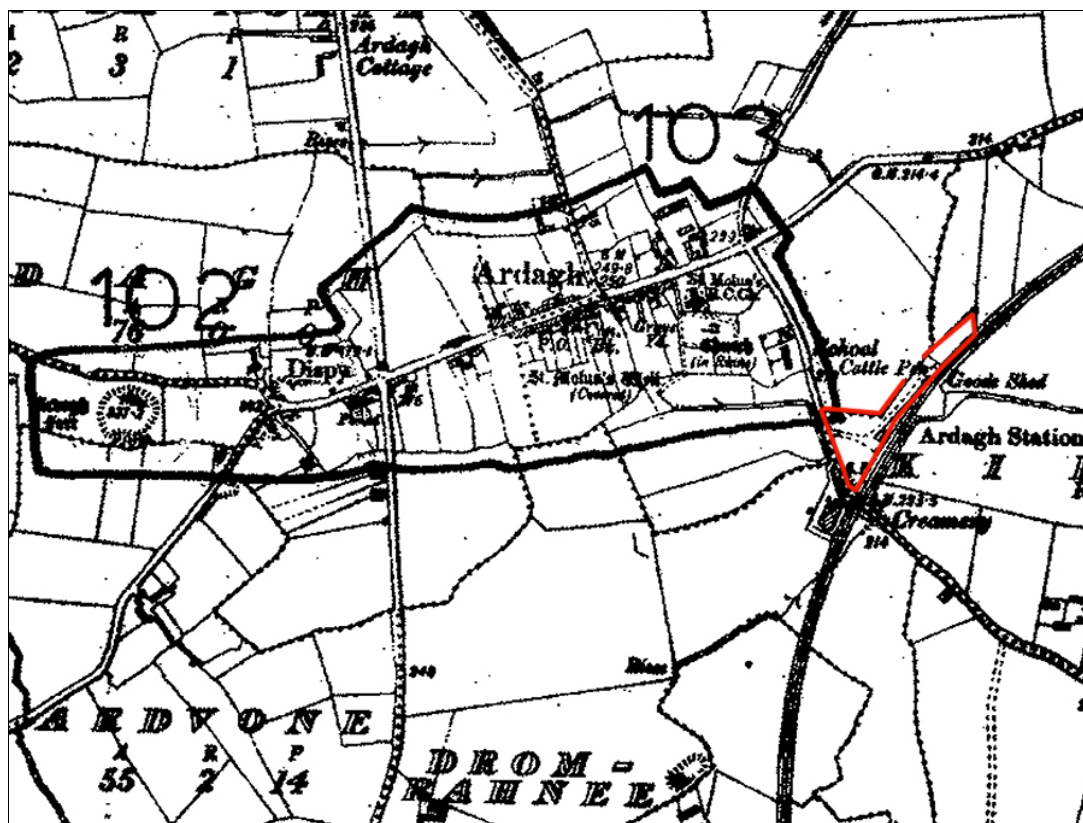


Figure 10. Extract of RMP map LI Sheet 28 (SMR detail 1997 on 1923 edition of map), subject site location in red. Cattle pen is marked at this time.

The subject site is immediately outside the zone for the historic town of Ardagh (fig. 10). While the line on the map above clips the extreme northwest side of the subject site, and encroaches slightly into the townland of Kilreash, the townlands listed in the accompanying manual (Record of Monuments and Places) for the historic town are Ardvone, Minister's-Land, Reerasta North and Reerasta South.

4.1.1 Ardagh Train Station

This station was part of the Limerick to Tralee railway, which was built in stages. The Limerick to Ballingrane Line was constructed first in 1856, and when the line was extended to Newcastle West, Ardagh Station was opened in 1867. The station was located close to the creamery which opened in 1891, and the railway provided an essential outlet for dairy farmers to send their produce into an expanding economy. The transport of livestock was also part of the lifeblood of the railway network. The remains on a cattle pen are located on the site, and marked on maps of the station from 1898 onwards.

The station was opened by the Waterford and Limerick and Rathkeale and Newcastle Junction railways, then absorbed into the Great Southern and Western Railway. In 1924 the Railways Act moved the station to the Great Southern Railway. In 1925 another merger led to management by the Great Southern Railways. It passed under the control of CIÉ in 1945. The station finally closed in 1963.



Figure 11. Ardagh Station, late 1950s/early 1960s (photo provided by Limerick City and County Council).



Figure 12. Passengers on the platform at Ardagh Station, late 1950s/early 1960s (photo provided by Limerick City and County Council), colourised by writer.

4.1.2 The transport of Livestock (Edward Riordan).

The physical layout of Ardagh station consisted of a single platform, with station house, on the up side (NW or Limerick side) of a level crossing. Also on the up side and further NW of the station house was a goods yard consisting of a goods shed, a single cattle pen and a loading dock served by a loop on the single Irish gauge (5' 3" [1.6m]) line. The station house and goods shed remain in good condition, although no standing element of the cattle pen remains. However, an undated photograph from the Ian Allan Library and included in *The Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway* (Shepard 2006) depicted the cattle pens at the adjacent Rathkeale Station where freight activity was also kept at a distance from passenger services (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Cattle pens at Rathkeale Station.

Figure 13 shows the loading dock with a goods wagon in place on the track siding. The size and shape of the timbers used for the building of the cattle pens suggests that these were built of railway sleepers. The pens comprise an external upright support and, internally, four tiers of horizontal timbers. The pens at Rathkeale also appear to be coated in a faded white coloured paint, usually a lime wash coating for hygienic reasons, due to its antiseptic properties. As Ardagh station was part of the same line and was constructed at the same time, it is likely that the cattle pen at Ardagh (detailed in this report) was of similar appearance.

A similar type of pen is visible on a picture held by the Irish Railway Record Society of the D&BST depot in Blessington, Co. Dublin, recorded in June 1932, and showing the cattle dock on the left, again whitewashed, and constructed from railway sleepers.

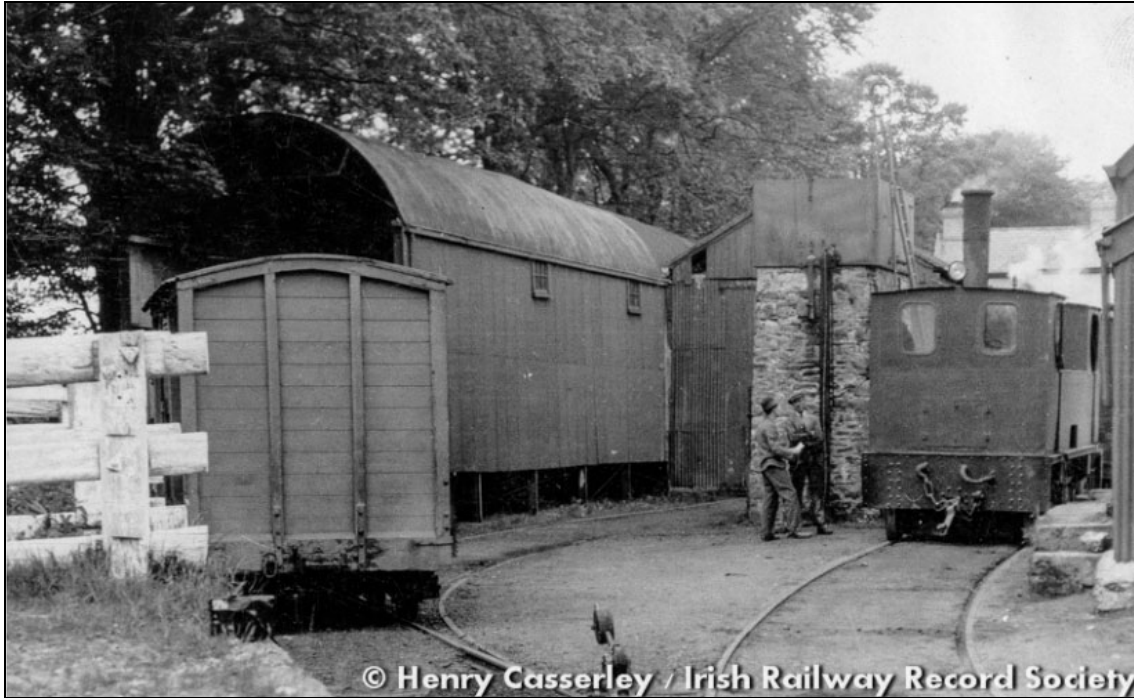


Figure 14. The D&BST depot in Blessington, Co. Dublin.

Livestock were be corralled in these pens prior to transport by train, usually from country fairs to Dublin for export. From the foundation of the railways the transport of livestock constituted an important source of revenue. For example, the CIE archives contain a half-yearly report of the Waterford and Limerick railway of 30 June 1884 that provided a breakdown of revenue for that year and a comparison with affairs of the previous year 1883. It was reported that the transport of livestock accounted for over 19% of freight receipts and that cattle alone accounted for almost 17% of freight receipts. Cattle were transported in specially constructed wooden wagons which mostly had covered roofs and large open upper spaces to increase ventilation (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Covered cattle wagon of the Waterford and Limerick Railway, 1895.



Figure 16. CIE Cattle wagons.

In later examples, like those of CIE above (Figure 16), a falling door was added to bridge the gap between the loading platform and wagon. Other examples seem to show wagons with a "soft top", which were standard covered vans with the central part of the roof open. These (officially

‘convertible vans’) were used with tarpaulins over the gap for standard parcels and anything else vans would normally carry. If there were insufficient numbers of cattle trucks for a fair, the tarps were taken off and the wagons were used as cattle trucks. The image below (Figure 17) from CIE archives shows cattle being unloaded from one of these wagons onto the main platform at New Ross station in July 1956.



Figure 17. Loading of cattle onto wagons.

In an interview for Agriland.ie, a retired *Iarnrod Eireann* operative, Oliver Doyle, offered a personal insight into livestock transport when cattle were loaded onto “special trains” bound for the capital;

When I was growing up fairs were held in the town square. Farmers brought their cattle in to sell to the dealers. There were no lorries; so they were all transported away by train – largely for the British market, but for other places in Ireland as well. There would be four special trains of about 30 wagons – relatively small wagons by today’s standards – they were only four-wheel drive. They got about 10 or 12 cattle into each wagon. They would pull off in September or October, when farmers were downsizing herds for winter to reduce fodder consumption. They just stood in the wagon; there were enough animals to stop each other falling over. All the wagons had to be washed by railway staff afterwards to prevent the spread of disease; they were splashed with lime and water to disinfect it.

The special cattle wagons all rolled into a big depot at Broombridge, Co. Dublin, where they would be sorted for export. There were huge volumes of cattle wagons at the depot, perhaps around a thousand. There was another huge complex in North Wall with a big yard and cattle pens. The cattle would be unloaded and shipped to Birkenhead, in Liverpool. 'All the wagons had to be washed by railway staff afterwards to prevent the spread of disease; they were splashed with lime and water to disinfect it,' said Doyle.

The railway companies themselves also circulated instructions concerning the transport of livestock. For example, the GSR (Great Southern Railway) published an appendix that highlighted that contained the information for the transport of a variety of livestock;

Special Trains with Shipping Stock must have precedence over all trains other than Passenger trains ...Horses must as far as possible be loaded in roofed cattle truck. Livestock on slow goods trains should, as far as practicable, be attached next rear van in order to avoid injury to stock during shunting movements at stations. Calves, sheep, goats and swine, if carried in the same railway truck or other railway vehicle with any head of cattle (other than a calf), or a horse, ass, or mule, shall be separated therefrom by a suitable partition; but this provision shall not apply to the conveyance of a cow with its un-weaned calf, if they are separated from other animals. Between each first day of November and the next following thirteenth day of April (both days inclusive) every railway truck or other railway vehicle in which shorn sheep are carried shall be covered and enclosed so as to protect the sheep from the weather, without obstruction to proper ventilation; but this article shall not apply to sheep last shorn more than sixty days before being so carried.

Table 1. Archaeological monuments on/adjacent to the subject site.

RMP/SMR	Class	Townland	Description	Distance from subject site
LI028-103001-	Historic Town	ARDAGH,MINISTER'S-LAND,REERASTA NORTH	<p>Description: The Urban Survey of Limerick recorded the following about the medieval borough of Ardagh which contained the following monuments, a medieval mill (LI028-103005-), a possible castle (LI028-164----), a parish church (LI028-103002-) dedicated to St. Molua, a graveyard (LI028-103003-) and holy well (LI028-103004-) dedicated to St. Molua.</p> <p>'Ardagh is situated in west Limerick off the Limerick to Tralee road to the north west of Newcastle West. Archaeologically the village is best known as the find place of the magnificent Early Christian chalice to which it has given its name. The chalice formed part of a hoard which included four brooches one of which was of tenth century date and indicates that the chalice was already an antique at the time it was buried. The hoard was found within the ringfort beside the village and this suggests that there was pre-Norman activity at Ardagh. The dedication of the parish church to St. Molua may also indicate that there was a pre-Norman church site here.</p> <p>It is difficult to explain why the Anglo-Normans should have picked this location for development as a borough unless it was a pre-existing settlement site. The history of the Anglo-Norman settlement is itself obscure but it seems clear that a borough was established here in the thirteenth century. Revenues from its hundred court amounted to 6s 8d in 1298-9 (Sweetman 1875-86, iv, 257) and it was one of a number of boroughs which paid a subsidy of 40s to the crown in 1300 (Mills 1905, 304). It is likely that the Anglo-Norman settlement was never substantial and it was probably never anything more than a village or hamlet. The medieval borough was probably sited on the present village which has a linear, T-shaped, pattern with burgage plots fronting onto the street. None of the houses are pre-1700 in date' (Bradley et. al. 1989, vol. 1, 47-8).</p> <p>In 1452 the Rental of Connello recorded the following rental return from the burgage of Ardagh; the town of Ardagh (D'Villata de Ardagh) was valued at 24s.; D'Ballyduffgyn valued at 8s, the bake house and sergeancy there (D'Ffurno and S'iandria ibidem.) 3s 4d., the tenement of Robert Lowell 1s. The total rent of Ardagh is 36s. 4d., of which 26s 8d. is paid in rent to the Bishop and there remains for the lord 9s 8d. (Begley 1906, 328).</p> <p>The above description of this monument is taken from 'The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Limerick' compiled by John Bradley, Andrew Halpin and Heather A. King (Office of Public Works, 1985). Compiled by: Denis Power Date of upload: 26 August 2011</p> <p>References:</p> <p>1. Begley, J. 1906 The Diocese of Limerick ancient and</p>	Immediately adjacent.

			<p>medieval. Dublin.</p> <p>2. Bradley, J., Halpin, A., and King, H.A. 1989 Urban archaeological survey - county Limerick (3 vols.). Unpublished report commissioned by the Office of Public Works, Dublin.</p> <p>3. Mills, J. (ed.) 1905 Calendar of the justiciary rolls, or proceedings in the court of the justiciar of Ireland preserved in the Public Record Office of Ireland. Edward I, 1295-1307. Dublin. HMSO.</p> <p>4. Sweetman, H.S. (ed.) 1881 Calendar of documents relating to Ireland. Vol. iv, 1293-1301. Longman & Co. London.</p>	
LI028-103002-	Church	MINISTER'S-LAND	<p>The medieval parish church of Ardagh was a prebend of the Archdeacon of Limerick (Begley 1906, 272; 450) and was possibly built on the site of a pre-Norman church dedicated to St. Molua. Ardagh Church was described in the Urban Survey of Limerick as following; 'This was a pre-Norman church site. This suggestion is based on its dedication to Molua, the fact that the land belonged to the see of Limerick at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the fact that the church gave its name to one of the deaneries of the medieval diocese. The ivy covered ruins of a late medieval church are situated to the rear of the modern R.C. church. Only parts of the roughly coursed rubble limestone north and south walls survive. The level within the graveyard (LI028-013003-) is raised and the top of the south wall is now only c. 3.5m above ground. There is a row of chamfered tapering corbels along the top of the wall to support a roof and the building was lit from the south by three single-light deeply splayed ogee-headed windows with rounded rear arches. The windows have chamfered limestone jambs; the centre one is blocked but has red sandstone jambs. To the west of the windows there is a break in the wall which may have been a doorway. The north wall is featureless. Broken rounded piece of limestone set in the wall of the lane leading down to the church. It has a chamfered edge, an incised marginal line and a recessed triangle in the centre. Dims: W.35 H.13" ' (Bradley et. al. 1989, vol. 1, 49-50). After the Synod of Cashel in 1172 the diocesan church in Limerick was reorganised and the Archdeacon was granted 'the church of St. John's, near the city wall, with its appurtenances, together with the churches of Kildecolum, Kildimo, with land and other appurtenances, and all the spiritual benefices of Ardagh, with their appurtenances' (Begley 1906, 129). In 1298 Maurice le Marescal, quite claimed to the bishop the land of Ardagh (ibid. 144). The medieval church was described in 1906 as following; 'It measures about 20 feet (6m) in breadth, but its length cannot be well determined, as the western gable has entirely disappeared. Judging, however, from what remains, it was considerable, as 72 feet (22m) of the south wall remains. About one hundred and fifty paces to the south of the church there is a holy well dedicated to St. Molua, who probably founded one of his monasteries here' (Begley 1906, 105-6). The following description of this monument is taken from 'The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Limerick' compiled by John Bradley, Andrew Halpin and Heather A. King (Office of Public Works, 1985). Compiled by: Denis Power Revised by: Caimin O'Brien Date of revised upload: 24 September</p>	155m

			2018 Six-Inch First edition: 'Church (in ruins)' Six-Inch Latest edition: 'Church (in Ruins)'	
LI028-103003-	Graveyard	MINISTER'S-LAND	Medieval church ruins (LI028-103002-) standing in centre of rectangular-shaped graveyard (approx. dims. 45m N-S x 70m E-W) located at S end of the village of Ardagh (LI028-103001-). Holy well (LI028-103004-) dedicated to St. Molua located 60m to SSW. St. Patrick's R.C. Church and modern car park located immediately to N. Small graveyard extension to S and SE. According to Bradley (1989, vol. 1, 49), 'It has been mentioned above that there is a possibility that this was a pre-Norman church site. This suggestion is based on its dedication to Molua, the fact that the land belonged to the see of Limerick at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the fact that the church gave its name to one of the deaneries of the medieval diocese'. Compiled by: Caimin O'Brien Date of upload: 24 September 2018 Six-Inch First edition: 'Burial Gd.' Six-Inch Latest edition: 'Grave Yd.'	128m
LI028-103004-	Ritual site-holy well	MINISTER'S-LAND	Situated on wet marshy land, 135m S of the main street running through the village of Ardagh (LI028-0103----). Medieval church ruins (LI028-103002-) and graveyard (LI028-103003-) 65m to NNE. Dedicated to St.Molua, its site is marked south of the graveyard (Bradley 1989, vol. 1, 50).The well and its pattern was described in 1906 as following: 'In times gone by the well was shaded by an aged ash tree measuring 4 feet 6 inches in girth at the base, which has now disappeared. It is still frequented by the parishioners who pay rounds there on the 3rd of August, the eve of the saint's feast. About 50 years ago the 4th of August was kept as a parish holiday in honour of St. Molua, but the custom has fallen into disuse' (Begley 1906, 106).The following folklore was recorded from Killaghteen National School about St. Molua's Well; 'In the parish of Ardagh there is a holy well dedicated to St Molua. There is a legend told about this well that one day as St Patrick was passing through a Ardagh he called at a house for a drink of water. The people refused him and so he cursed a well there. His curse was that the people who would drink its water would die. He got sorry for this course and he raised it that the birds that would drink its water would die' (The Schools' Collection, Volume 0489, Page 084; accessible online at www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4921965/4914104/4942469). See attached photos taken in 1954 by Caoimhín Ó Danachair, courtesy of and © National Folklore Collection, UCD. The Photographic Collection, F025.21.00173 accessible online at www.duchas.ie/en/cbeg/16990 and F025.21.00174 accessible online at www.duchas.ie/en/cbeg/31140 . See attached colour photographs courtesy of Amanda Clarke. Compiled and revised by: Caimin O'Brien Date of revised upload: 1 October 2020 Six-Inch First edition: 'St. Molua's Well' Six-Inch Latest edition: 'St. Molua's Well (Covered)'	197m



Figure 18. Closest Recorded monuments to the subject site (after www.archaeology.ie, annotated by writer).

4.2 Previous archaeological work on the subject site

No archaeological investigations have been carried out on the subject site. A search of the licenced archaeological work database www.excavations.ie for Kilreash townland was undertaken. No licenced investigations took place in this townland. Six excavations are recorded from Ardagh, five of which are of no archaeological significance. The sixth example (detailed in table 2 below) produced human remains, approximately 300mm to the northwest of the subject site.

Table 2. Licenced archaeological work undertaken in vicinity of subject site (after www.excavations.ie).

Author	Licence No.	Summary Report
Anne-Marie Lennon.	02E1321	Testing was undertaken on this site before its development as a surface carpark for the adjacent Roman Catholic church. The site lies near the medieval parish church to the south. Redeposited disarticulated human bone was found at 0.3m below the sod cover in three of the trenches opened in the southern half of the site. In agreement with Dúchas, the maximum depth of soil-stripping for the surface carpark was raised to 0.2m to avoid this layer. A protective layer of terram was placed between the surface of the carpark and the underlying layer. No further archaeological evidence was uncovered during soil-stripping on this site.

4.3 Protected Structures

Ardagh Station is a Protected structure RPS 900.

4.4 NIAH

Ardagh Station and railway bridge are listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

Table 3. Recorded NIAH features on subject site.

NIAH No.	Description
21825001	<p>Ardagh Railway Station.</p> <p>Detached two-bay two-storey with dormer attic former railway station, built c. 1867, now disused. Having gable-fronted south bay to west (front) elevation and gabled block to east (rear). Pitched slate roofs with rusticated limestone chimneystacks and decorative timber bargeboards. Dormer window to west elevation. Rusticated limestone walls. Square-headed openings with limestone sills and six-over-six pane timber sliding sash windows.</p> <p>Appraisal: This former station building retains much of its original form and fabric. Its stone construction and gabled form are characteristic features of railway structures of its time in Ireland. It incorporates a number of decorative features, including decorative bargeboards, which contrast and add interest to the rusticated limestone walls.</p>
21825002	<p>Ardagh Railway station-Bridge</p> <p>Single-arch railway bridge, built c. 1867, carrying road over railway track. Railway now disused. Rusticated limestone walls with rusticated voussoirs and cut limestone imposts to round-headed arch. Cut limestone to soffit of arch. Roughly dressed walls having cut limestone coping.</p> <p>Appraisal; Although the track is no longer in use, this bridge still serves an important function in carrying the road across the tracks. Its rusticated stonework and large blocks are characteristic of railway bridges of its era, and mirror the stonework of the nearby former railway station, with which it forms a group. It is an imposing structure and a manifestation of the technical engineering skill available at the time of its construction.</p>

4.5 Archaeological Artefacts

There are no recorded stray artefact finds from Kilreash townland. A hoard of metal objects was found in 1868 the SW quadrant of a ringfort in nearby Reerasta townland (800m to the west of the subject site), which contained a silver chalice, a bronze chalice, and four brooches (de Paor 1977, 138). The silver chalice is known as the Ardagh Chalice, This hoard is now kept in the National Museum of Ireland (NMI 1874:99), (in www.archaeology.ie). Information below supplied by the National Museum of Ireland.

Table 4. Stray finds from Ardagh (Topographical Files).

NMI Reg No.	Simple name	Component	Townland	Find Place
1874:100	Chalice	Bronze	REERASTA	Close to village of Ardagh
874:101	Brooch	Silver	REERASTA	Close to village of Ardagh
1874:102	Brooch	Silver	REERASTA	Close to village of Ardagh
1874:103	Brooch	Silver	REERASTA	Close to village of Ardagh
1874:104	Brooch	Silver	REERASTA	Close to village of Ardagh

4.6 Cartographic images of the subject site (figs 19-21)

The seventeenth century Down Survey maps were consulted for the subject site and they did not show anything new of interest in the location of the subject site (see Fig. 19). In 1641 the owner is listed as Dennis Brien (Catholic), and in 1671 as John Lord Kingston, Richard hunt and Colonel Carey Dillon (Protestants).



Figure 19. Extract of seventeenth-century Down Survey county mapping for Co. Limerick; showing modern day townland of Kilreash (<https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/landowners.php#mc=52.496088,-9.045452&z=14>).

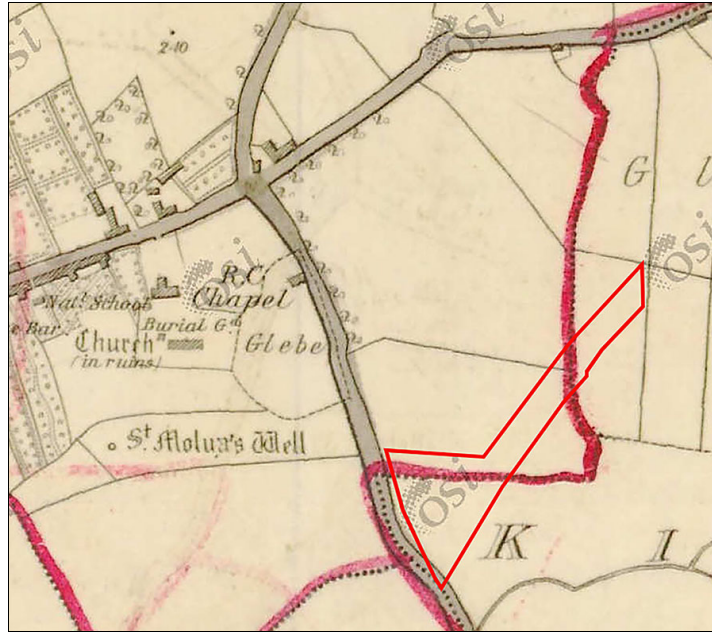


Figure 20. Location of Ardagh Station on Ordnance survey 1st Edition map c. 1840 (annotated by writer). Note the townland boundary originally ran through the site. By 1900 (fig 16 below) the boundary of the train station has become the new townland boundary.

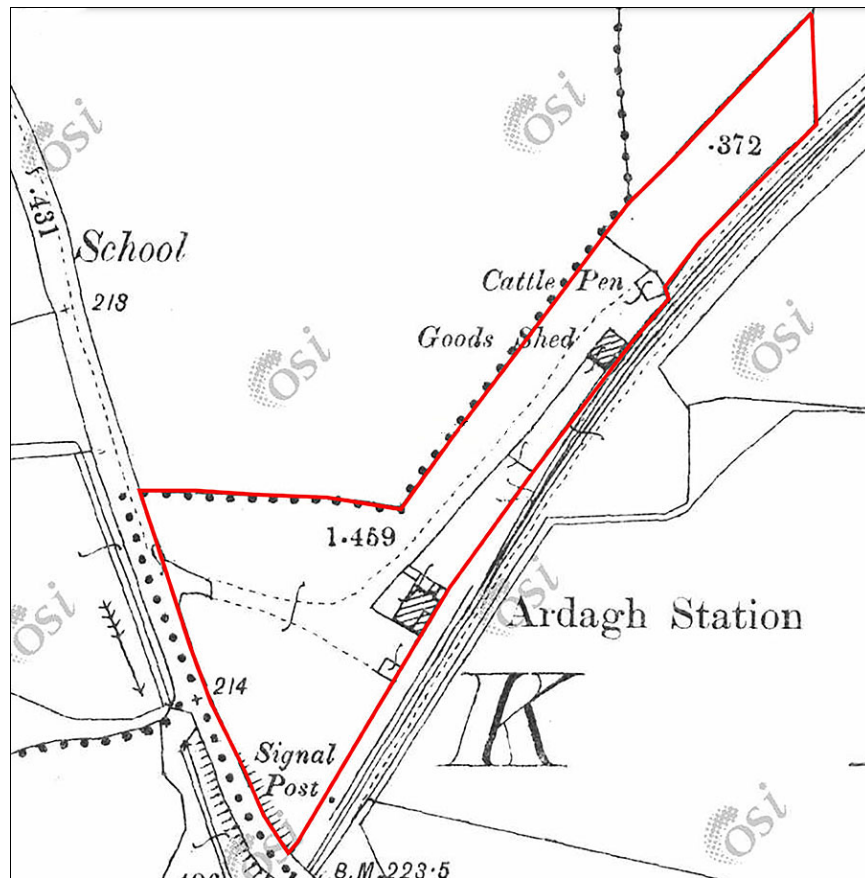


Figure 21. Ardagh Station on 25-inch OS map (after www.archaeology.ie). North to top. Surveyed 1898, published 1900. Annotated by writer. Note the cattle pen. There is a passing loop provided at the Goods Shed to facilitate the handling of freight and the embarking of cattle (Tom Cassidy, pers. comm.).

5. Impact of Proposed Development

It is proposed to develop the Limerick Greenway Hub @ Ardagh to become one of the main visitor experience and service centre hubs on the Limerick Greenway.

The subject site (former Ardagh Train Station) lies entirely within the townland of Kilreash. It is predicted that the proposed works will have a negative impact on one feature of industrial archaeology merit. See tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 5. Predicted impacts of the proposed development on archaeology and cultural heritage.

Predicted Impact No.	Description	Predicted impact without mitigation. Negative/Neutral/Positive
1.	All groundworks associated with the of the development.	Negative. The animal pen will be impacted
2.	Visual impact of the development on the archaeological monuments in the vicinity of the subject site.	Neutral. The closest archaeological monuments are at a sufficient distance that no impact will occur.

Suitable mitigation to alleviate the predicted impacts on the potential archaeology and cultural heritage of the subject site has been provided in section 6.

6. Conclusions and Suggested Mitigation

An animal pen, an important part of the industrial heritage of the site will be impacted by the proposed development. Approximately 2.8m of the floor of the pen will be impacted by a proposed new access road. . Suggested mitigation is set out in table 6 as per best practice guidance (Dúchas 1999a; 1999b).

Table 6. Suggested archaeological mitigation measures.

Mitigation No.	Mitigation	Reason	Mitigates Predicted Impact No.
1.	<p>The surviving brick floor of the animal pen should be archaeological excavated under licence from the National Monuments Service.</p> <p>Once the brick floor is exposed, it should be recorded using a laser scanner. The results of the laser scan should be used to produce a drawing annotated by the archaeologist. The bricks should then be carefully lifted. Advice should be sought from a specialist conservator, due to the friable nature of the bricks ,on how best to preserve and conserve the bricks. The brick floor should then be re-set and displayed in an appropriate location in the station following consultation with Limerick city and County Council’s Conservation Officer. It is currently proposed that these will be re- used as a floor in a proposed extension to the existing goods shed.</p> <p>As this pen is within the curtilage of a Protected Structure (RPS 900), the necessity for a Section 57 Application should be discussed with the Conservation Officer.</p>	The floor of the animal pen will be impacted by the development.	1

Should archaeology be subsequently discovered *The Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* document (Dúchas 1999a, 24-25) states that, ‘When considering requests for authorisation or approval to undertake development which would involve the removal of archaeological sites and monuments (or portions of such) or before proposing to carry out such development, relevant bodies and authorities should satisfy themselves that the development (i) cannot be relocated; (ii) cannot be re-designed to avoid removal of the site or monument (or

portions of such); (iii) is really necessary', and it is on this basis that further mitigation may be required.

It is very important to note that it is the National Monuments Service (details below section 7) in consultation with the local authority, who will formulate and ratify any archaeological mitigation, should it be required, and this document can only make suggestions and report on the desk-top assessment and site inspection carried out. Archaeological mitigation may be recommended by the NMS and/or the local authority, which has not been suggested above.

While this impact assessment has reduced the likelihood of encountering unrecorded archaeological remains it cannot totally eliminate the risk and mitigation has been suggested to further reduce this risk. Therefore, the attention of the client, client agents and the developer is drawn to the relevant portions of the National Monuments Acts (1930–2014) which describes the responsibility of the site owners and procedures to report the finding of archaeological items, if any should be discovered during construction works, to the National Museum of Ireland and the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht. This legislation also outlines the developer's obligation to facilitate and fund all archaeological works that may be considered necessary by the National Monuments Service and/or the National Museum of Ireland in respect of development proposals. The state's policy in relation to the archaeological heritage is available at:

<https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/framework-and-principles-for-protection-of-archaeological-heritage.pdf>

<https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/excavation-policy-and-guidelines.pdf>

7. Non-Technical Summary

7.1 Scope of study

This is a desktop study to assess the potential impact of the subject site, namely Ardagh train station.

7.2 Method of study

The site was visited by a qualified archaeologist and recorded in the proper fashion on 10th October 2023. A desktop study was undertaken which consulted all immediately available material relating to the site as listed in the project references.

7.3 Existing environment

The subject site Ardagh train station. The Station House and platform were renovated in 2021-2022 and a new carpark constructed.

7.4 Impacts of proposed development.

The proposed development will have an impact on the remains of an animal pen. Mitigation has been suggested in section 6.

7.5 Conclusions and suggested mitigation

Mitigation has been suggested (section 6). It is the remit of the National Monuments Service, however, to legally recommend any one or a combination of these mitigation measures and perhaps to make recommendations that have not been suggested above. These recommendations may be sent directly to the applicant or more usually through the local authority in question.

7.6 Further Information & Inquiries

Any enquiries in relation to archaeological mitigation on the proposed development, should it be required, may be directed to:

Archaeological Planning and Licencing Unit,
National Monuments Service,
Custom House,
Dept of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht,
Dublin 1.
Phone: 01-8883177

Or through the local authority's archaeologist and conservation officer.

8. Signing-Off Statement

Archaeological Firm: ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Writer(s): Frank Coyne MA MIAI,
Edward Riordan.
32 Nicholas St,
King's Island,
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V94 V6F7

Client: Healy Partner's Architects,
The Mill,
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Signed:



for ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Report Status: Final

Dated: 2 November 2023

9. Project References

References consulted during this project, though not all directly cited in the text.

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Websites

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www.buildingsofireland.ie

www.downsurvey.tcd.ie

www.duchas.ie

www.excavations.ie

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www.logainm.ie

www.myplan.ie

www.nli.ie

www.osi.ie

All last accessed 19 October 2023.

Annex

1. Legislation and regulation protecting the archaeological heritage resource

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage in Ireland is safeguarded through national and international policy designed to secure the protection of the cultural heritage resource to the fullest possible extent (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, 35). This is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta Convention), ratified by Ireland in 1997.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014 (as amended) 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.

OWNERSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Minister may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian 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.

REGISTER OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

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. All registered monuments are included in the Record of Monuments and Places.

PRESERVATION ORDERS AND TEMPORARY PRESERVATION ORDERS

Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

Section 12(1) of the 1994 Act requires the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (now the Minister for the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) 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. All recorded monuments on the proposed development site are represented on the accompanying maps. Section 12(3) of the 1994 Act provides that 'where the owner or occupier (other than the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands) of a monument or place included in the Record, or any other person, proposes 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 in writing to the Minister of Arts,

Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to carry out work and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Minister, commence the work until two months after the giving of notice'. Under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, anyone who demolishes or in any way interferes with a recorded site is liable to a fine not exceeding €3,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months. On summary conviction and on conviction of indictment, a fine not exceeding €10,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years is the penalty. In addition, they are liable for costs for the repair of the damage caused. In addition to this, under the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are required for various classes and sizes of development project to assess the impact the proposed development will have on the existing environment, which includes the cultural, archaeological and built heritage resources. These document's recommendations are typically incorporated into the conditions under which the proposed development must proceed, and thus offer an additional layer of protection for monuments which have not been listed on the RMP.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

Under planning legislation, each local authority is obliged to draw up a Development Plan setting out their aims and policies with regard to the growth of the area over a five-year period. They cover a range of issues including archaeology and built heritage, setting out their policies and objectives with regard to the protection and enhancement of both. These policies can vary from county to county. The Planning and Development Act 2000 recognises that proper planning and sustainable development includes the protection of the archaeological heritage. Conditions relating to archaeology may be attached to individual planning permissions. Specific objectives are also outlined within the County Development Plans of counties and more specific local area plans which are published from time to time.



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