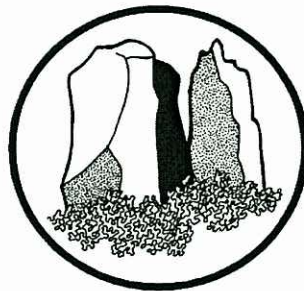


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REPORT ON

MACHINE ASSISTED
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION
AT MURPHYSTOWN
SOUTH EASTERN MOTORWAY
CO. DUBLIN

00E0924



Valerie J Keeley Ltd
Archaeological Consultancy
November 2001

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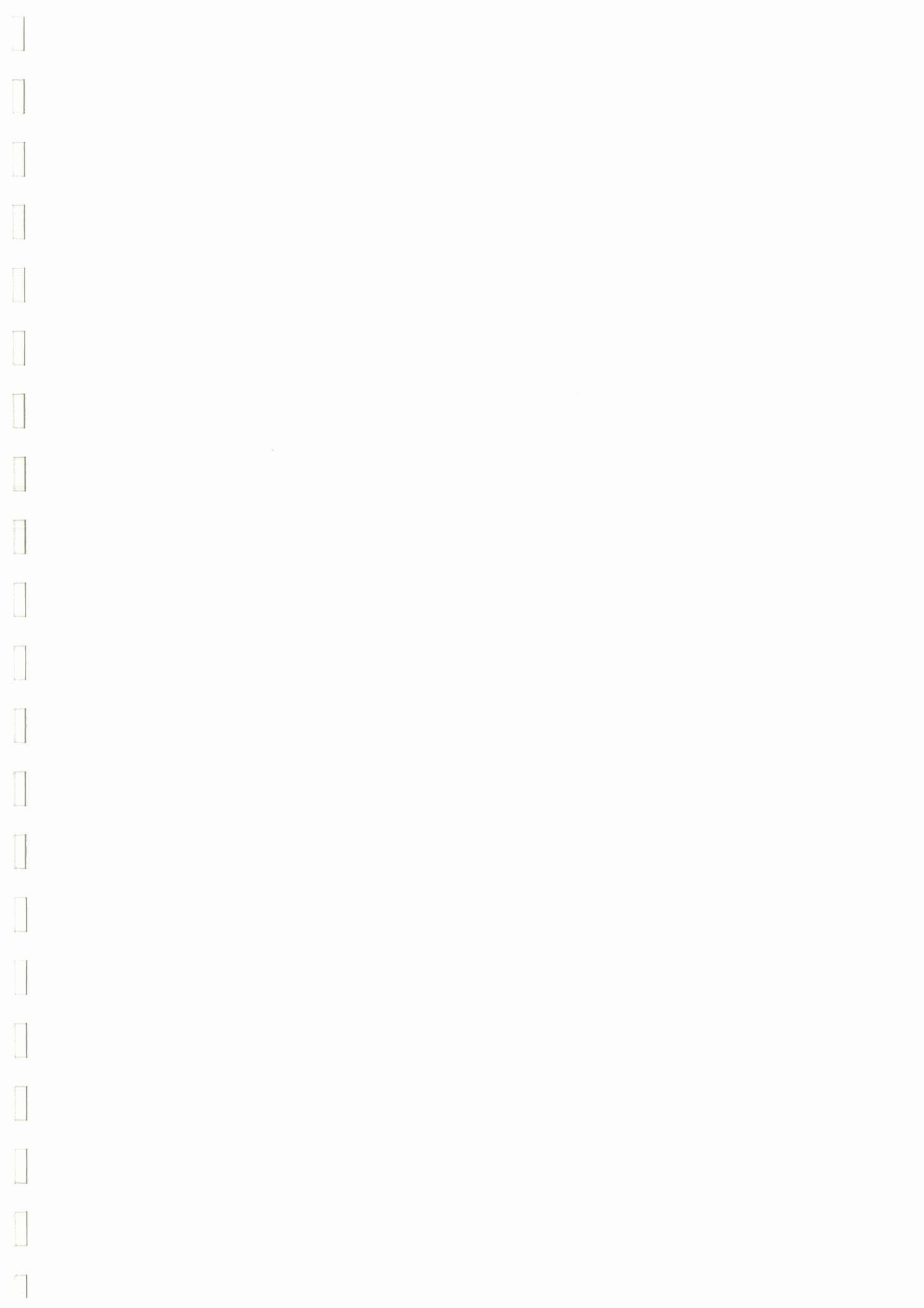
00E0924



Project Director: Valerie J Keeley
Project Archaeologist: Richard Jennings

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INTRODUCTION

This report details the progress of archaeological works, in the form of a programme of machine assisted archaeological mitigations (MAAM), undertaken at Site 6 Murphystown, County Dublin, NGR (32014/22540) (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and the National Roads Authority as part of the South Eastern Motorway project. The work took place between December 2000 and late January of 2001. The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the status of the site and outline information on the known archaeological features discovered during initial works in the area in January 2001.

Site 6 was originally recorded as cultivation ridges, identified from aerial photography, in the *Additional Archaeological Assessment of Routes A and 5 South Eastern Motorway Volume 1*, Valerie J Keeley Ltd, 1996. Following initial investigations of the cultivation ridges carried out between the 31st March and 11th April 2000, it was recommended that any further topsoil stripping in the area be archaeologically monitored (*Archaeological Investigations, Site 6 Murphystown South Eastern Motorway, Co. Dublin (00E0099)*, Valerie J Keeley Ltd, 2000).

Consequently, archaeological work, in the form of a programme of machine assisted archaeological mitigations, commenced at Site 6, Murphystown in December 2000. The investigations were conducted under licence number 00E0924, issued to Richard Jennings by *Dúchas*, the Heritage Service on behalf of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and the National Roads Authority.

During this archaeological procedure a series of archaeological features (1-12) were discovered during topsoil stripping (Figure 2). However, the programme was unexpectedly suspended in late January 2001 as a result of concerns with site security. It has yet to recommence. Furthermore, a licence to excavate features 1-9 was issued to Richard Jennings (01E0128) in January 2001, however, the excavation did not commence due to the security issues associated with the site. No archaeological works have been undertaken at the site since that date.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

A programme of machine assisted archaeological mitigation resulted in the discovery of 12 archaeological features after approximately two-thirds of the field was topsoil

stripped. Initially 9 areas were identified and were located within a 100m x 60m area of land at the northern end of the field that gently slopes down to a stream. They were found beneath topsoil between 0.40m and 1.00m thick. The features included:

Feature 1

This was a pit feature, measuring 0.71m x 0.15m. The feature was delimited by yellow clayey silt with ash and abundant charcoal flecks.

Feature 2

This was a pit feature measuring 1.25m x 1.35m. There was evidence of reddish (oxidised) clay silt with areas of burning and common charcoal flecks also apparent. Flecks of burnt bone were visible on the surface.

Feature 3

This feature was recorded as a spread measuring 2.65m x 2m that consisted of a greyish-yellow clayey silt with common charcoal flecks. An unworked flint flake was retrieved from the surface of the spread.

Feature 4

This feature was recorded as an occupation spread or possible old soil horizon and measured 10m x 9m. The spread was recorded as consisting of a mid yellow clayey silt with common charcoal flecks. On the western side there was a line of stone approximately 1m apart. An unworked flint fragment and small fragments of pottery were retrieved from the surface.

Feature 5

This feature was recorded as a spread, measuring 2.75m x 1.83m and contained a mid yellow clayey silt with very common charcoal flecks.

Feature 6

This feature was recorded as a spread, measuring 7m x 3m, located within 5m from the stream. It contained a grey silt with charcoal and burnt stone.

Feature 7

This feature was recorded as a pit measuring 0.55m x 0.75m and consisted of a mid-grey clayey silt with common charcoal flecks.

Feature 8

This feature was recorded as a linear feature measuring 5.6m x 1.8m and was recorded as consisting of a mid grey clayey silt with common charcoal flecks.

Feature 9

This feature was recorded as a pit, measuring 0.78m x 0.62m. and contained a reddish (oxidised) clay silt with areas of burning and common charcoal flecks.

Subsequent to the discovery of these features an excavation licence was issued to Richard Jennings in January 2001 for their excavation. This excavation however failed to commence due to continued security problems at the site.

Additionally, prior to the suspension of the programme further discoveries were made resulting in three additional areas of archaeological potential being identified, these were:

Feature 10

A spread of animal bone was located on the upper level part of the field. Located 0.30m to 0.40m below the topsoil it may relate to the series of post-medieval cultivation ridges which were the subject of a previous archaeological investigation. It is possible that the bones, sparsely spread over an area 10m x 15m, are resting in the furrows.

Feature 11

Two patches of grey, clayey silt with common charcoal flecks and tiny specks of burnt bone have been identified to the west of Feature 10 and 12, on the level ground, quite close to the existing wall. They are at least 0.80m in diameter

Feature 12

This is a small complex of features that has been found within a 35m² area of land that slopes gently down to the stream. They were covered by a mid-brown, clayey, silty topsoil between 0.40m and 1.30m thick. Among the visible features are:

- 1m ditch running parallel to the stream (possibly a relatively recent drain);
- A large black spread containing burnt stone (maybe a *fulucht fiadh*);

- 2 half-ring circular gullies (perhaps slot trenches for houses). These are filled with a mid-grey, clayey silt, and from the surface a flint flake was collected;
- At least 8 pits (ranging in size from 0.80m – 1.10m) and 4 posthole-like features. Many are located within the arc of one of the curvilinear gullies – and possibly represent the interior features of a house;
- Other features include mid to dark spreads of grey, clayey silt with charcoal, burnt bone and burnt stone.

A summary of all archaeological features identified is presented in Table 1.

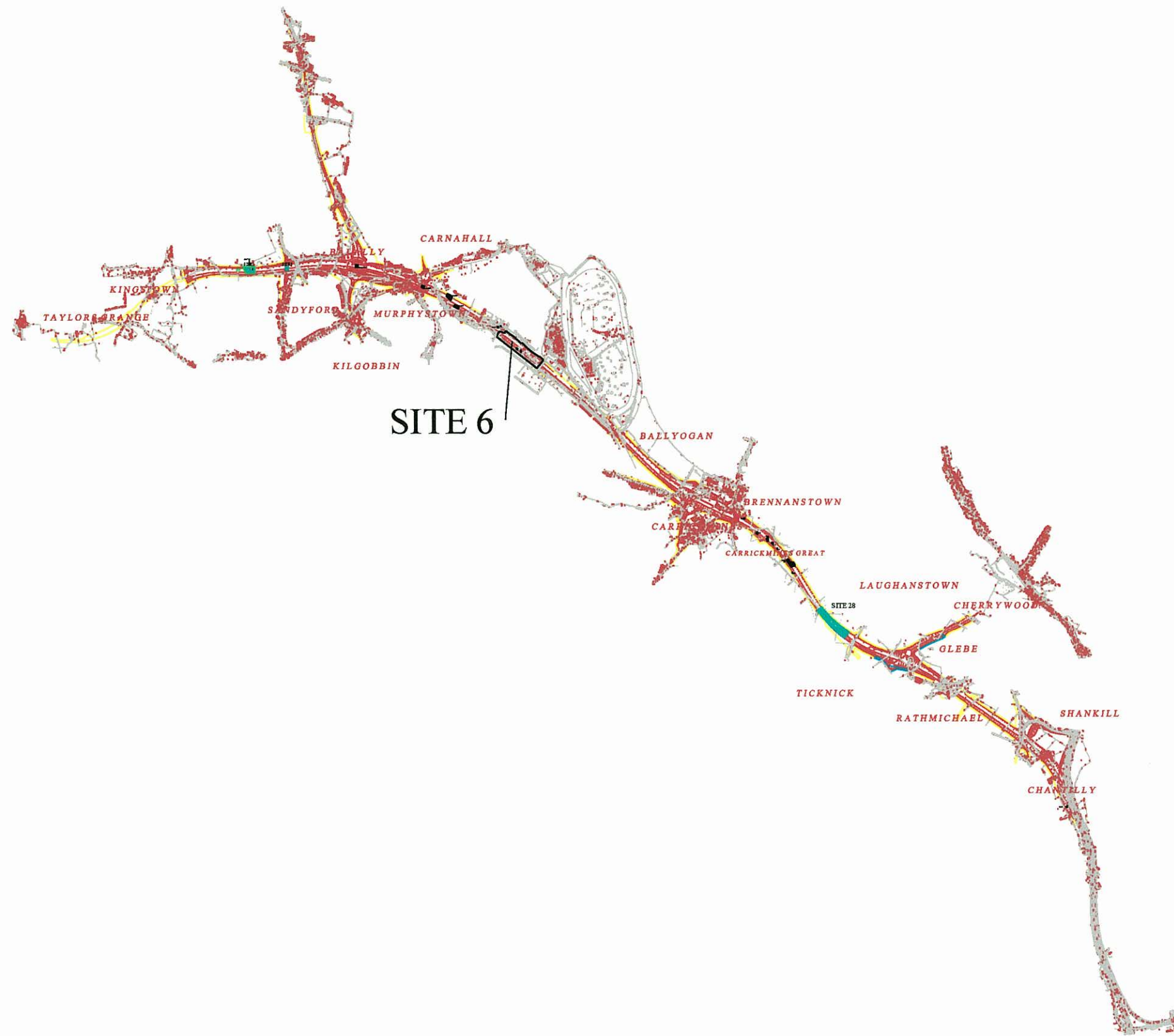
Table 1 Archaeological areas identified during MAAM at Site 6, Murphystown.

Area Number	Type	Location (NGR)	Dimensions	Description	Surface finds
1	Pit	320053/ 225480	0.71m x 0.51m	Yellow clayey silt with ash and abundant charcoal flecks	-
2	Pit	320079/ 225446	1.25m x 1.35m	Reddish (oxidised) clay silt with areas of burning and common charcoal flecks	Flecks of burnt bone are visible
3	Spread	320086/ 225477	2.65m x 2.00m	Greyish-yellow clayey silt with common charcoal flecks	Flint flake, unworked
4	Occupation spread/old soil horizon	320101/ 225461	10m x 9m	Mid yellow clayey silt with very common charcoal flecks. On its western side is a line of stones 1m apart	Small fragments of pottery and Flint flake, unworked
5	Spread	320104/ 225450	2.75m x 1.83m	Greyish-yellow clayey silt with common charcoal flecks	-
6	Spread	320073/ 225510	7m x 3m	Grey silt with charcoal and burnt stone, located within 5m of stream	-
7	Pit	320121/ 225470	0.55m x 0.75m	Mid grey clayey silt with common charcoal flecks	-
8	Linear feature	320137/ 225460	5.6m x 1.8m	Mid grey clayey silt with common charcoal flecks	-
9	Pit	320119/ 225427	0.78m x 0.62m	Reddish (oxidised) clay silt with areas of burning and common charcoal flecks	-
10	Spread	320139/ 225413	10m x 15m	Spread of animal bones located 0.30m below the topsoil	-
11	Spread	320129/ 225379	c.0.80m in diameter	Two patches of grey, clayey silt with charcoal flecks	Flecks of burnt bone are visible
12	Complex of features	320174/ 225405	Area 35m ²	Ditch or drain, black burnt spread, possible post-holes, pits and other potential features, spreads <i>etc.</i>	Flint flake

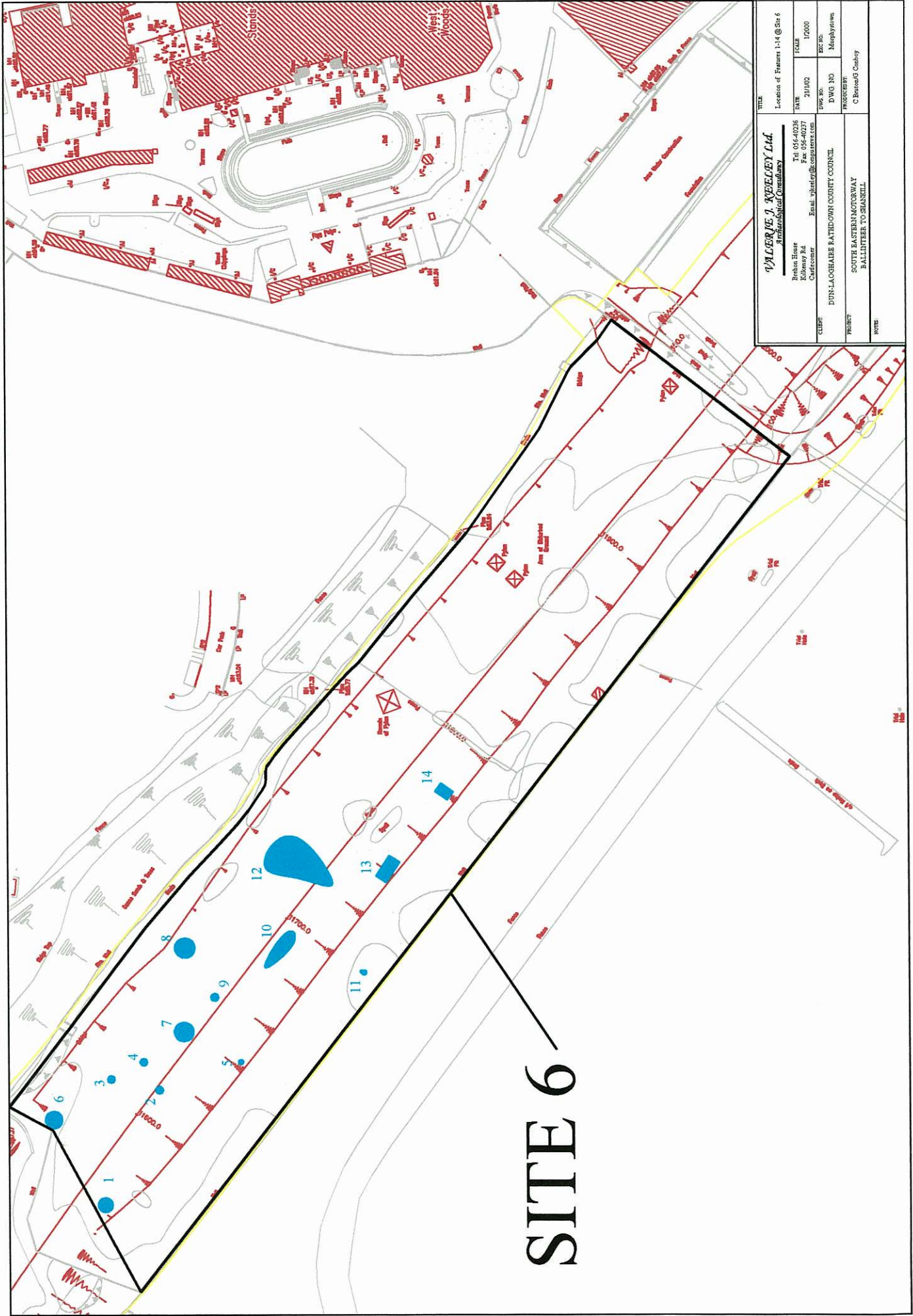
It should be noted that all of the archaeological features discovered during archaeological investigations at Site 6 still have to be cleaned back and thus only a brief description of their nature has been provided. However, the features have been protected during the last few months and due to inactivity at the site it can be presumed that they have undergone as little disturbance as is possible.

CONCLUSION

This report has presented an overview of archaeological works to date conducted at Site 6, Murphystown. During MAAM (00E0924) at the site in December 2000 at least 12 features of archaeological potential were discovered. Subsequently, an excavation licence was issued (01E0128) for 9 of these sites. However, due to ongoing security problems at the site compound, the MAAM phase of the project ceased and the excavation phase never commenced. Due to this since late January of 2001, no archaeological work has been undertaken at the site.



VALERIE J. KEELLEY Ltd <i>Archaeological Consultancy</i> Brehon House Kilkenny Rd. Castlecomer Tel: 056-40236 Fax: 056-40237 Email: vjkeeleey@compuserve.com		TITLE Site 6 Location on SEM	
		DATE 6/02/02	SCALE 1/40000
CLIENT DUN-LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL	DWG. NO.	EXC. NO.	
PROJECT SOUTH EASTERN MOTORWAY BALLINTEER TO SHANKILL	DWG. NO.		EXC. NO.
PRODUCED BY: C Bruton/G Conboy		NOTES:	



VALERIE J. KEENELEY Ltd. Architectural Consultancy Breton House Rillensay Rd Carrisdeer Tel: 016-40236 Fax: 016-40237 Email: vjke@valj.com		TITLE: Location of Features 1-14 @ Site 6 DATE: 21/10/02 SCALE: 1:2000 DRAWING NO: M04/02/01 PROJECT: SOUTH EASTERN MOTORWAY BALLINTEER TO SANDWELL CLIENT: DUN-LOOGHARE RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECT: C BretonG Conkey NOTE:
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