

Final Archaeological Testing Report,  
Cloon More,  
Tralee,  
Co. Kerry

August 2023

Report prepared for: John Phelan Architects  
On behalf of: Tulfarris CG Ltd

Archaeological Licence No. 23E0586

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## 1 Introduction

This final report relates to archaeological testing at Cloon More, Tralee, Co. Kerry (**Figure 1**). The test excavations were undertaken in compliance with a request from Kerry County Council (KCC) Large Residential Development (LRD) Opinion (Ref. No. PP23/132) with regard to a proposed residential development by Tulfarris CG Ltd comprising of construction of 147 units on their 1.55ha site at Cloon More, Tralee (**Figures 2 - 3**). The proposed development site (PDS) will also include the demolition of existing buildings on the site and provision of site development works including service roads, cycle and pedestrian facilities, car and bicycle parking, public lighting, drainage works, water supply, public open spaces and boundary treatment (**Figure 3**). Archaeological testing was requested by KCC archaeologist Dr. Michael Connolly as a part of the planning application process due to location and area of the PDS. In support of this, Dr. Connolly also referred to thirty-seven archaeological features that were found in the course of the recent construction of Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí school to the south (see MI. Connolly's recommendation, **Appendix 1**).

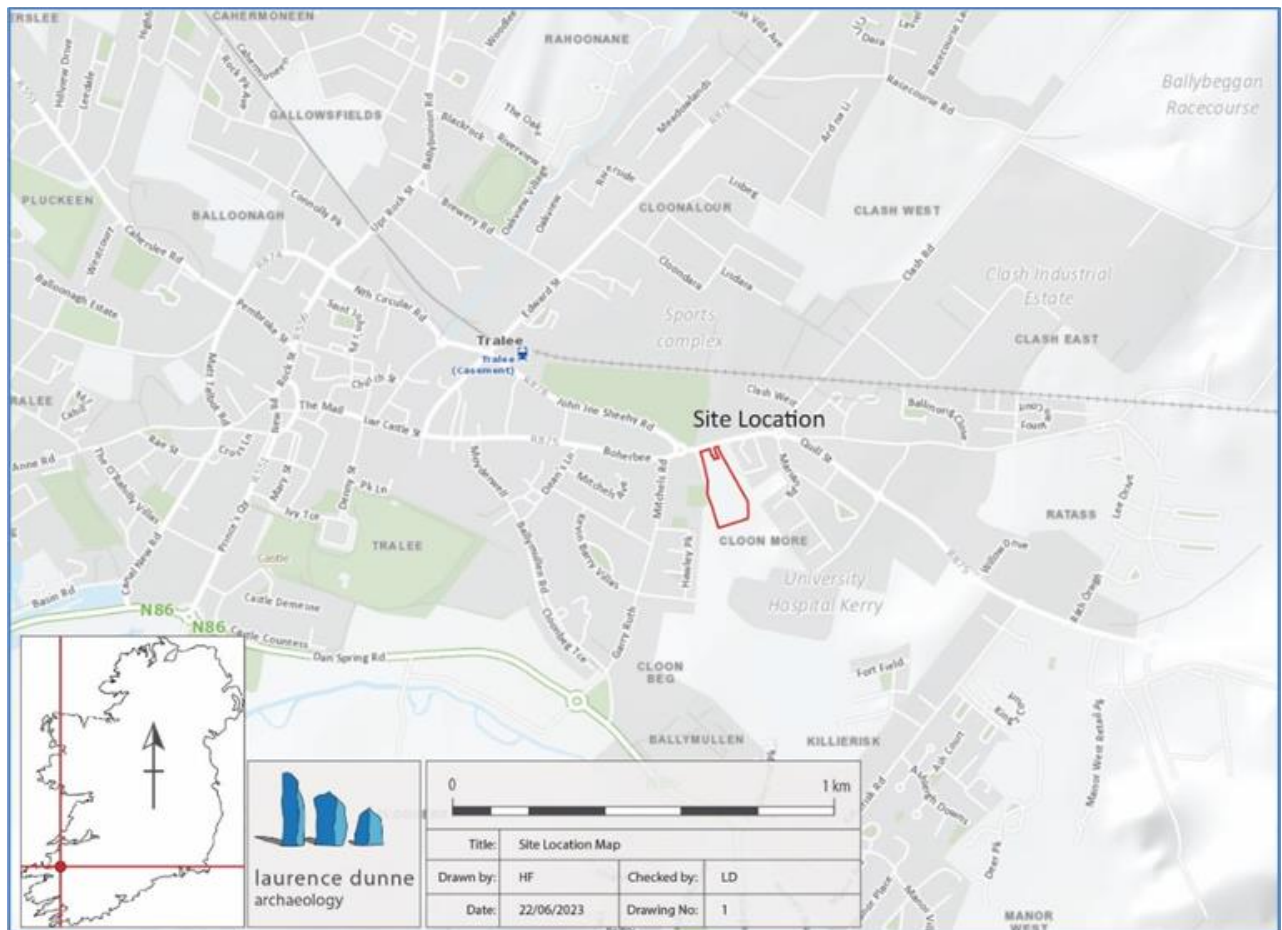


Figure 1: Site Location Map





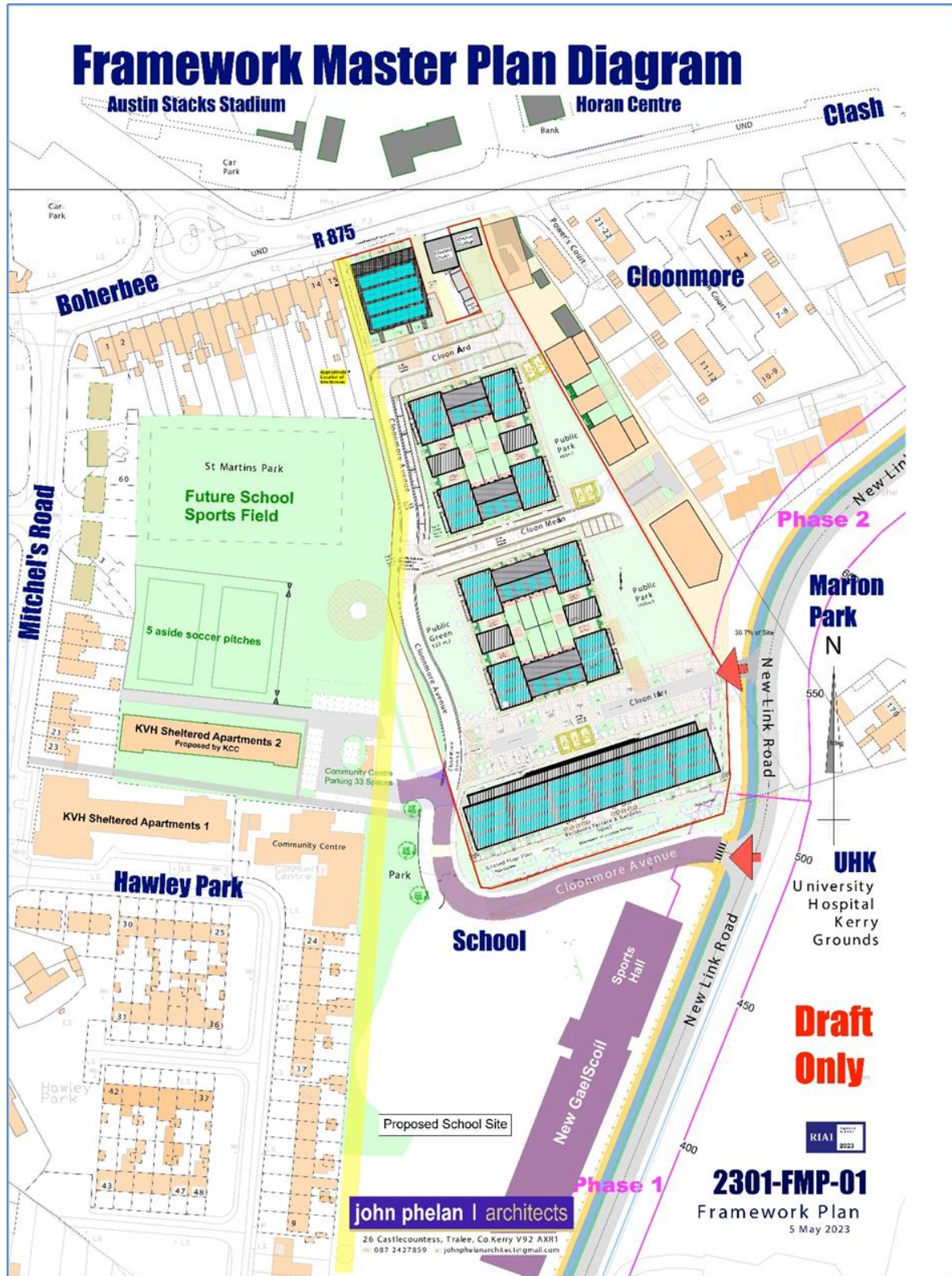


Figure 3: PDS layout plan (courtesy of John Phelan Architects).



## 2 Site Description

The proposed development site was inspected in June 2023 in good weather conditions. The current existing entrance to the site is located to the N where partially demolished buildings and associated concrete yards are situated (**Plate 2**). Further to the S there is a large linear plot of green pasture expanding to the southernmost limits of the site and more or less takes up the entire western limits of the PDS (**Plate 3**). The eastern 'half' of the PDS comprises of a long driveway into Cloonmore House B & B that features a garden and small orchard at the rear and small car park at the front (**Plate 1**). Dense vegetation unmanaged and partially cleared scrub vegetation extends along the easternmost limits of the site (**Plate 4**).



**Plate 1:** Vertical UAV image of the PDS, June 2023.





**Plate 2:** Northernmost limits of the PDS comprising of partially demolished building (LDARCH).



**Plate 3:** View from N of the large green pasture field that extends along the western limits of the PDS to the southernmost boundary (LDARCH).





**Plate 4:** View from SE of the easternmost limits of the PDS. Note recent vegetation clearance (LDARCH).

### 3 Archaeological Background

There are no known recorded monuments within the limits of the PDS. The site is located c.360m east of the Zone of Notification (ZON) of the Historic Medieval Town of Tralee, KE029-119. The earliest definite evidence that Tralee had achieved borough status and therefore became a town, dates to 1298 - 1299 when the burgesses of Tralee paid 100 shillings a year to Thomas FitzMaurice at his manor house at Castleisland. This indicates that there were approximately 100 burgesses in the town, which would assume a population of between 600 and 1000 (Bradley 1986, 95 & 1995, 174-5).

In an Early Medieval ecclesiastical context Ratass Church & Graveyard, KE029-157, is situated c.540m to the east of the PDS (**Figure 4**). As well as the church (**Plate 5**) and graveyard the ecclesiastical complex at Ratass and also contains an ogham stone (KE029-157002), wall armorial plaque of the Creagh family (KE029-157003), cross-slab (KE029-157004) and an architectural fragment (KE029-157006) (**Plate 6**). Significantly, Ratass is the most important early Christian site in the Tralee area and indeed for a short period of six years from 1111AD it was the See of the Kerry diocese. In Irish, the word Ratass - *An Ráth Theas* translates as the southern fort. However, in earlier literary annalistic sources, Ratass is recorded as *Ráth Maighe Deiscirt* - 'The Fort of the Southern Plain' (O'Donovan 1841, 59). Archaeologically, Ratass is an ecclesiastical complex that may possibly date as early as the 5th century AD based on the Uí Angáin inscription on the Ogham stone in the church (**Plate 6**).



**Figure 4:** Recorded archaeological monuments in vicinity to the PDS.



**Plate 5:** View from SW of the early 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century church at Ratass, Tralee (LDARCH).





**Plate 6:** View of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century Ogham Stone in Ratass Church. Further note the nearby Cross-Slab and Creagh family Armorial Stone (LDARCH).

## 4 Archaeological Testing

### 4.1.1 General

Licensed archaeological testing (Licence No. 23E0586) was undertaken over one day in July 2023 in mixed (showery) weather conditions. A series of 7 test trenches (T1-T) with a total length of c.563m was opened with a 6-ton track machine utilising a 1.6m wide flat grading bucket under archaeological supervision (**Figure 5, Table 1 & Plate 7**). Nothing of archaeological interest was noted during the testing and no artefacts were recovered.



**Plate 7:** View from N of testing underway along western limits of PDS (LDARCH).



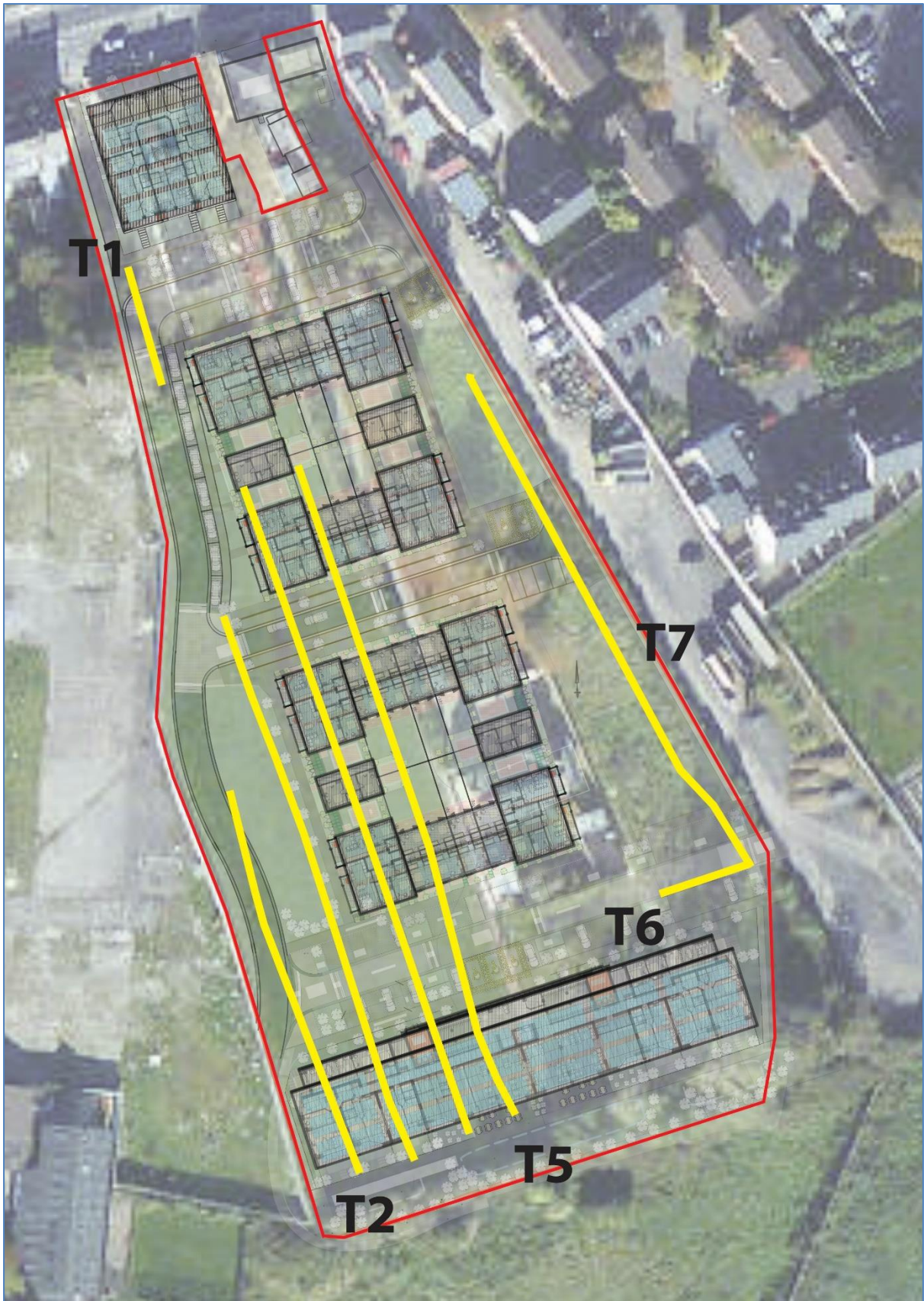


Figure 5: Archaeological testing results.



#### 4.1.2 Testing Results

No archaeological features or deposits were noted in any of the trenches. Except for a small number of modern pottery sherds recovered from the topsoil layer no artefacts were found.

**Table 1:** Test trenches descriptions.

Trench No	Orientation	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Archaeology	Comments
1	NW-SE	25m	0.40	No	On existing gravelly trackway.
2	NW-SE	80m	0.35	No	Some introduced modern material in NW end. Mid brown topsoil. Clayey sand light yellow subsoil with some limestone bedrock in SE end.
3	NW-SE	100m	0.30-0.40	No	Mid / light greyish brown topsoil. Yellow to light orange clayey sand subsoil.
4	NW-SE	120m	0.70 (max)	No	Introduced modern material at NW end up to 0.70m. Getting shallower towards S. Light grey to light orange clayey sand subsoil.
5	NW-SE	120m	0.40	No	Dark greyish brown topsoil. Yellow to light orange sterile subsoil.
6	E-W	13m	0.35	No	Mid brown rooty topsoil. Sterile yellow clayey sand subsoil.
7	NW-SE	105m	0.40	No	Mid brown rooty topsoil. Sterile yellow clayey sand subsoil



**Plate 8:** View of test trench T2 from SE (LDARCH).





**Plate 9:** View of test trench T4 from SE (LDARCH).



**Plate 10:** View of test trenches T6 and T7 from SE (LDARCH).





**Plate 11:** View of test trench T7 from NW (LDARCH).

## 5 Conclusions

- Seven test trenches (T1-T7) were excavated over the testable limits of the proposed development site.
- Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the trenches.
- A few modern pottery sherds were recovered from the excavated topsoil.
- The archaeological recommendations by Kerry County Council Archaeologist, Dr. Ml. Connolly with regard to this proposed development have been complied with (Appendix 1).

## 6 Recommendations

- No further archaeological mitigation is required for the proposed development site.
- There is no archaeological reason to stop or delay the proposed development.
- As no archaeology was found during the licensed test excavations, this report is deemed final.

## 7 References

All site handheld digital images and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) imagery by Laurence Dunne Archaeology, June/July 2023.

BING Aerial Imagery, [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

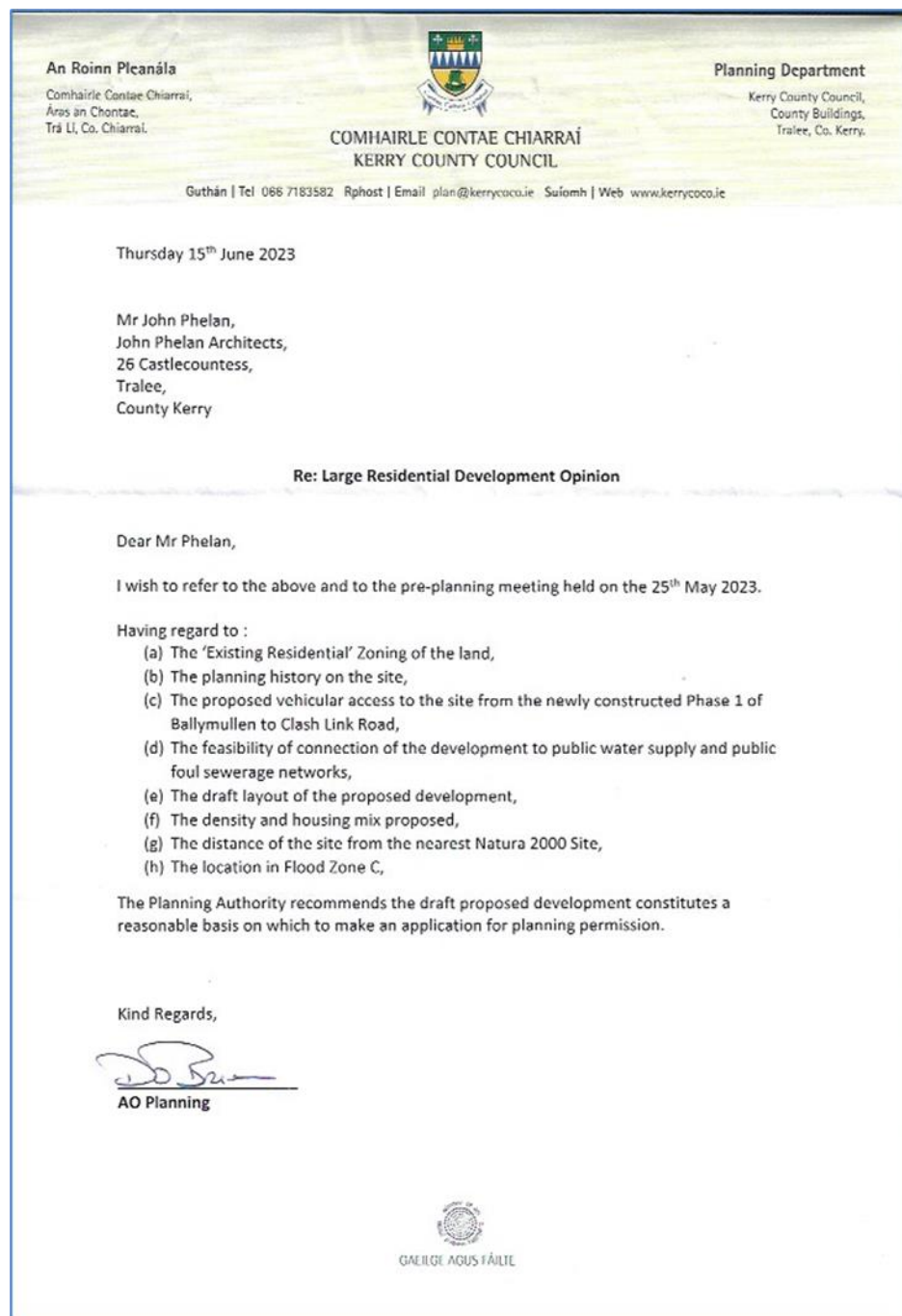
Bradley, J. 1986. The medieval towns of Kerry. North Munster Antiquaries Journal 28, 28-38.

Bradley, J. 1995 Tralee. In Simms, A. and Andrews, J. H. (eds.) More Irish country towns. Mercier Press, Dublin.

Record of Monuments & Places, Online National Monuments Service database portal,  
[www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)

Topographic Files of the National Museum of Ireland, [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)

## 8 Appendix: Kerry County Council Large Residential Development (LRD) Opinion, Ref. No. 23/132:





**Planning & Development (Amendment)  
(Large-Scale Residential Development) Act, 2021**

**Large Residential Development (LRD) Meeting**

Held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 10.00am  
Council Chamber, Kerry County Council

Reference Number: PP23/132  
Applicant Name: Tulfarris CG Ltd  
Site Location: Cloonmore, Tralee, County Kerry

**In attendance:**

Tim Cowhig, Tulfarris CG. – Applicant  
James Dowd, Tulfarris CG - Applicant  
Paul McPolin, MPA Associates  
John Phelan, John Phelan Architects - Project Architect  
Ian Brosnan, Malachy Walsh & Partners, Civil Engineering  
Eoin O'Connor, Malachy Walsh & Partners, Planning  
Caoimhe O'Connor, Malachy Walsh and Partners, Planning

**Kerry County Council:**

Michael Lynch, Senior Executive Engineer, Planning  
Anita Murphy, Tralee Area Planner  
Greg O'Connor, Area Engineer, Water Services  
Michael Connolly, County Archaeologist  
Gerry Riordan, Senior Engineer, Climate Action  
Michael O'Donoghue, Housing Capital  
Eoin Kelliher, Executive Planner and Ecologist  
Paul Byrne, Environment Dept  
Micheal Lyons, Senior Engineer, Special Projects  
Noel Kissane, Tralee Area Roads Engineer  
Sharon O'Keeffe, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Michael Lynch welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a background to the process prescribed by the Planning and Development (Amendment) (Large-Scale Residential Development) Act, 2021 for proposed residential developments comprising 100 units or more.

In this case, a formal request for LRD Meeting was received by Kerry County Council on 05/05/2023 from John Phelan Architects on behalf of Tulfarris CG Ltd in relation to a residential development of 147 units on their lands at Cloonmore, Tralee. Then, within 4 weeks of today's LRD Meeting, KCC will issue LRD Opinion to the applicant as to whether the proposal constitutes a reasonable basis on which to make an application for planning permission.

**Applicant's Presentation**

Foin O'Connor, Malachy Walsh & Partners, Planning commenced the Applicant's Presentation with a description of the site and its context. The site is located in a predominately residential area near Tralee Town Centre and is within easy walking distance of services such as Tralee Bus and Train Station, the Horan Shopping Centre and University Hospital Kerry. The 1.55 hectare site is zoned R2 – Existing Residential in the current Tralee Town Development Plan. The recent planning history on the lands involving refusals of



permission for residential development owing to concerns regarding access and piecemeal development was referenced. The site is located in Flood Zone C and is outside Natura 2000 Sites. Mr O' Connor also noted pre-planning discussions with the Planning Dept had taken place earlier in the year under Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

John Phelan, John Phelan Architects, gave a presentation describing the site and outlining the rationale for the draft layout and design of the proposed residential development. Vehicular access to the site will be from the newly constructed Phase 1 of the Ballymullen to Clash Link Road to the south. Pedestrian and cycle access is proposed from the Boherbee Road to the north.

The schedule of proposed residential units is summarised as follows:

- (a) 51 no. 1-bedroom apartments,
- (b) 78 no. 2-bedroom apartments,
- (c) 14 no. 2-bedroom terrace townhouses and
- (d) 4 no. courtyard townhouses.

The draft layout would achieve a housing density of 95 units per hectare.

The proposed development will also involve the demolition of existing buildings on the site and the provision of site development works including service roads, cycle and pedestrian facilities, car and bicycle parking, public lighting, drainage works, water supply, public open spaces and boundary treatments.

Ian Brosnan, Malachy Walsh and Partners (MWP) advised that his firm were engaged in design of the infrastructure to serve the development. The site is served by public water supply and foul sewerage and Pre-Connection Enquiry Review from Irish Water confirms that connections to public water and foul sewerage networks are feasible subject to no stormwater permitted to enter public foul sewer.

MWP are designing nature-based solutions for dealing with surface water run-off including Infiltration Areas, Rain Gardens, swales and permeable paving.

MWP are also engaged in preparation of Road Safety Audit and Traffic Impact Assessment.

#### **Kerry County Council response to presentation**

Micheal Lyons, Special Projects.

- (a) Permeability of site for pedestrians and cyclists noted.
- (b) Consideration should be given to storage of refuse bins and provisions for bin collection.
- (c) Pedestrian Crossings – tactile paving should be provided.
- (d) Segregated cycle routes should be considered.

Gerry Riordan, Senior Engineer, Climate Action

- (a) Concerns raised regarding future maintenance of nature-based stormwater solutions.
- (b) Layout of proposed development should provide for Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- (c) Proposals for solar panels should have regard to the proximity of the site to University Hospital Kerry.

Greg O' Connor, Area Engineer, Water Services

Capacity is available in the public water supply and foul sewerage networks to serve the proposed development. Discharge of stormwater not allowed into the public sewer. No structures will be allowed to be built over existing 750mm diameter sewer running through the site.

Noel Kissane, Tralee Area Roads Engineer

- (a) Concern raised in relation to future maintenance of permeable paving areas.
- (b) Concerns also raised regarding infiltration/attenuation basins in terms of Health and Safety and future maintenance.

Dr Michael Connolly, County Archaeologist

Having regard to the location and area of the site, pre-development archaeological testing of the site will need to be carried out and report submitted with the planning application. As 37 archaeological features

were uncovered in the course of the recent construction of the school to the south, the site has high potential for archaeological features.

Michael O' Donoghue, Housing Capital

As site is area zoned Existing Residential, developer must comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) in relation to the provision of Social and Affordable Housing. High proportion of 1-bed and 2-bed units is welcomed as there is a need for such accommodation. Early engagement between the developer and KCC Housing Dept is encouraged.

Eoin Kelliher, Executive Planner and Ecologist

- (a) Planning application documents should include EIA Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.
- (b) An Ecological Impact Assessment Report should be submitted which should include consideration of possible presence of bats in buildings proposed to be demolished, possible presence of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, retention of hedgerows and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- (c) Landscaping Plan for the site should include details of proposed tree planting.
- (d) The proposal to use nature-based solutions to deal with surface water run-off including swales and infiltrations areas is welcome.

Paul Byrne, Environment Dept

- (a) Waste Management Plan should be submitted with the planning application. Possible presence of asbestos in buildings for demolition.
- (b) Construction and Environmental Management Plan for the construction phase of the development should also be submitted.
- (c) Possible presence of contaminated soil on the site arising from historic uses.
- (d) Layout of development should be designed having regard to the Refuse Bin Collection Bye-Laws

Michael Lynch, SEE Planning thanked all present for attending the meeting. KCC will issue LRD Opinion to the applicant by 22<sup>nd</sup> June.