



# John Purcell

## Archaeological Consultancy

jparch.ie jparchaeology@gmail.com Mob. 086 2506506

Archaeological Assessment at

Devoy Barracks, Naas, Co. Kildare

January 2020

**Client:** Land Development Agency, 77 Sir John Rogersons Quay,  
Block C, Grand Canal Docklands, Dublin 2, D02T804

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## **Non Executive Summary**

The proposed development consists of the development of a green field site adjacent to Davoy Barracks, Naas, Co. Kildare. The site is adjacent to a military barracks in use since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The works will have no impact on the setting of the barracks. This assessment evaluated the archaeological potential of the site. The site does not include any archaeological remains and no new archaeological sites were uncovered during field walking. Archaeological monitoring has been recommended as part of the development.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the local authority and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## 1 Introduction

It is proposed to develop a site adjacent to Devoy Barracks, Naas, Co. Kildare. The site is currently in use as rough pasture and green space for the adjoining area. This report assesses the impact of the works on the archaeological landscape and the potential for sub surface remains.

The report includes a desktop study and a site inspection. The desktop section of the report was compiled using: The Records of Monuments and Places; buildings of Ireland, Excavations Bulletin; historic maps; aerial photographs; place names and historic books and journals.

Field walking was undertaken in January 2020. John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy undertook this report on behalf of the Land Development Agency, 77 Sir John Rogersons Quay, Block C, Grand Canal Docklands, Dublin 2, D02T804



**Figure 1:** Site boundary, Naas West, Naas, Co. Kildare

## 2 **Assessment Methodology**

### 2.1 **Study Methodology**

This assessment consists of a paper survey identifying all recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed development and a site inspection. The methodology has been conducted based on the guidelines from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG.).

### 2.2 **Desktop Survey**

The desktop survey undertaken consisted of a document and cartographic search utilising a number of sources including the following:

- **Record of Monuments and Places (RMP);** The RMP records known upstanding archaeological monuments, the original location of destroyed monuments and the location of possible sites identified through, documentary, cartographic, photographic research and field inspections.  
The RMP consists of a list, organised by county and subdivided by 6" map sheets showing the location of each site. The RMP data is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey.
- **National Inventory of Architectural Heritage;** The inventory of architectural heritage lists all post 1700 structures and buildings in the country. This includes structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social, scientific or technical importance.
- **County Development Plans;** The Development plan was consulted to ascertain if any structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and/or any Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The Record of Protected Structures lists all protected structures and buildings in Kildare. This includes structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social, scientific or technical importance.
- **Cartographic Sources;** The following maps were examined: Down Survey, 1st edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1836-1846) and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1908), Rocque Map and the Cassini Map.

- **Literary Sources;** Various published sources, including local and national journals, were consulted to establish a historical background for the proposed development site. Literary sources are a valuable means of completing the written record of an area and gaining insight into the history of the environs of the proposed development. Principal archaeological sources include: The Excavations Bulletin; Local Journals; Published archaeological and architectural inventories; Peter Harbison, (1975). *Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland*; and O'Donovan's *Ordnance Survey Letters*.

A comprehensive list of all literary sources consulted is given in the bibliography.

### **2.3 Site Inspection**

An archaeological field inspection survey seeks to verify the location and extent of known archaeological features and to record the location and extent of any newly identified features. A field inspection should also identify any areas of archaeological potential with no above ground visibility.

## **3 Receiving Environment**

The proposed development is located in the townland of Naas west in the town of Naas in the north of Co. Kildare. The area is currently in use as a green area. The site is located adjacent to Devoy Barracks a 19<sup>th</sup> century military barracks. A section of the east of the site contained structures associated with Devoy Barracks. These are not visible at ground level. The site is bounded by the local road network at the south, by the barracks at the east and by modern housing at the west and north.

## **4 Archaeological and Historic Summary**

### **4.1 Prehistory**

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) lists a number of prehistoric sites in the north of Co. Kildare. The earliest recorded archaeology in the area dates from the Neolithic (4,200-2,500BC). At this stage communities became more stable with the introduction of agricultural practices. The more permanent settlement allowed communities to construct large ceremonial sites.

The bronze age marks the introduction of metal working to Ireland. This allowed for more efficient farming and hunting techniques. It also allowed for small industry and trade to take place between communities. Barrows are a common form of monument across in this area from this period. These are associated with the Bronze/Iron Age burial tradition (c. 2400 BC - AD 400) and are defined by an artificial mound of earth or earth and stone, normally constructed to contain or conceal burials. These sites vary in shape and scale and can be variously described as bowl-barrow, ditch barrow, embanked barrow, mound barrow, pond barrow, ring-barrow and stepped barrow. The incidence and frequency of these sites in the area attests to the extent of prehistoric settlement in this area from earliest times. Prehistoric settlements sites are generally not visible at ground level and can only be uncovered as a result of ground works.

### **4.2 Iron Age to Early Medieval Period**

In late Bronze Age Ireland the use of the metal reached a high point with the production of high quality decorated weapons, ornament and instruments, often discovered from hoards or ritual deposits. The Iron Age however is known as a 'dark age' in Irish prehistory. Iron objects are found rarely, but there is no evidence for the warrior culture of the rest of Europe, although the distinctive La Tené style of art with animal motifs and spirals was adopted. Political life in the Iron Age seems to have been defined by continually warring petty kingdoms vying for power. These kingdoms, run on an extended clan

system, had their economy rooted in mixed farming and, in particular cattle. Settlement was typically centred on a focal hillfort.

Another more domestic site common to the Bronze Age is the *fulachta fiadh*. These are located along the edges of streams or in damp areas. They consist of a mound of charcoal enriched soil with fragmented burnt rocks. They usually are accompanied by a wooden or stone lined trough. These were used seasonally possibly for cooking or may have been used for recreational purposes.

Settlement in the Early Medieval Period is defined by the ringfort. The country was a patchwork of competing kingdoms during this period numbering up to 150. Ringforts were a farmstead surrounded by one or more earthen banks. These are the commonest monument across Co. Kildare and have been frequently recorded in the area. These are generally located in areas with commanding views over the countryside to provide security.

The introduction of Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century had a profound impact on Gaelic society, not in the least in terms of land ownership and the development of churches and the development of a large number of religious houses. The earliest churches were constructed of wood and mortar and wattle walls. By the ninth and tenth centuries these were being replaced by stone structures. These settlements became very important around the country and became small towns. Many of these sites were surrounded large earthen enclosures.

Several other early Christian Monuments are located in the vicinity of the site these include Holy Wells and Bullaun stones.

### **4.3 Historic Period**

Following the Norman Conquest of the country a series of Castles and boroughs were built across Co. Kildare, the area was intensively settled during this period. A series of medieval parish churches were also constructed across the area to service this growing population. Naas was a prosperous Anglo Norman town founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and walled by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Remains of a number of medieval castles and other medieval structures remain within the town.

#### **4.4 Post Medieval Ireland**

Seventeenth century Ireland saw massive upheaval a result of the Confederate wars, the Cromwellian response and the Wars of the two kings. It is estimated that up to a third of the population was wiped out because of famine, disease and war. Soldiers were given land as payment resulting in further upheaval of the local population and the establishment of large estates. These came to dominate the landscape from this period onwards. Religious intolerance in other parts of Europe resulted in the expulsion of the Huguenot from France which were welcomed by the English Crown into Ireland.

#### **4.5 Devoy Barracks**

The barracks, was originally known as Naas Barracks, and were built for local militia in 1813. The barracks became the depot for Dublin Fusiliers in 1881 and was their base until 1922. At independence the barracks was used by the Irish Free State army. The barracks, which were renamed Devoy Barracks after John Devoy, the Irish republican, closed in 1928.

#### **4.6 Archaeological Monuments**

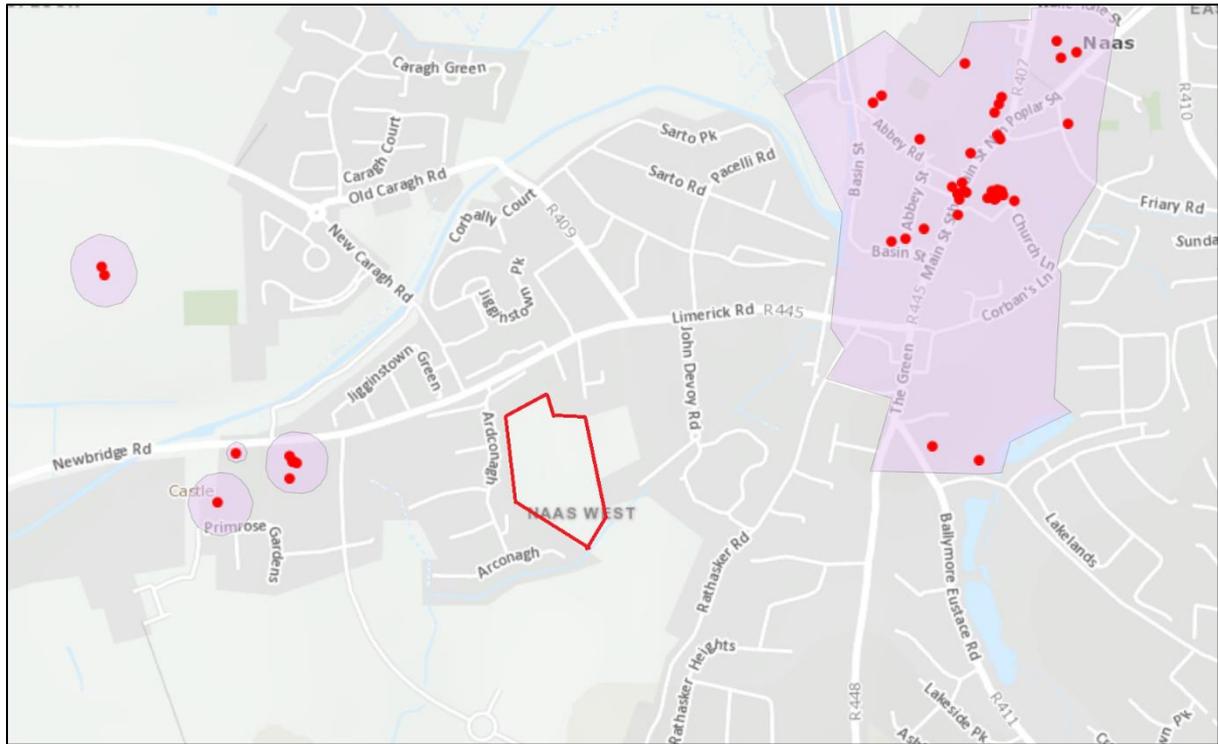
The study area includes a number of archaeological monuments and these are listed below (all information taken from archaeology.ie).

The medieval town of Naas is located to the east of the study area (KD019-030001). According to Bradley et al (1986 vol. 4, 355-9), there are no references to town defences in Naas before 1415, when the King granted the provosts and burgesses the customs of the town for 20 years in order to fortify it. Further murage grants were made by parliament between 1451 and 1468; the latter being a grant for ten years to pay for the immediate walling of the town which was 'like to be destroyed or burned, unless it is walled'. Charters of 1568 and 1609 both granted tolls and customs to the Corporation to pay for the walling of the town, and a further grant was made by Charles 1 in 1629 'towards repairing of their buildings and walls'. De Burgh (1891-5, 319) refers to a feature mentioned in leases as 'The Barrier' or 'North Barrier', the

precise location of which is unknown, but which he suggested may have been in the vicinity of St. David's Castle (KD019-030019-). Murtagh (1983-4, 356) suggests it may have formed an inner defensive line, while Healy (1984, 5) regarded it as the original N-boundary of the town. Bradley et al (1986 vol. 4, 358) are sceptical of either suggestion. While there are references to a number of gatehouses (see below), little physical evidence of the presence or course of a town wall is known. However, traces of a defensive ditch have been found. In 1996, archaeological excavation (Licence no. 96E0124: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) identified part of a possible defensive ditch adjacent to Corban's Lane. In 1998 an archaeological evaluation (Licence no. 98E0468: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) at a site on Friary Road revealed portion of a linear ditch of substantial dimensions. Its location (ITM 689499 719587) and direction suggested it was part of the town defences. A probable continuation was found to the north when in 2002 during an archaeological assessment (Licence no. 02E1788 [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) in advance of a proposed development on a large site at Poplar Square/Friary Road. Eustace Castle (KD019-030014-) stood at the south-western corner of the site, and the presumed line of the town defences runs roughly northwest-southeast across the eastern portion of the site. A large ditch was found (IG 289570 219589 ITM 689496 719634) and although not fully exposed it was 4-5m wide and 0.9 - c. 1.4m deep and 3m wide towards the base. No finds were recovered from the fill of the ditch, but it was interpreted as forming part of the town defences. Conversely in 1997, archaeological monitoring (Licence no. 97E0151: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) of the mechanical excavation of pipe trench cuttings along the length of the east-west Canal Street revealed no material of archaeological significance, or any evidence of a stone construction which might suggest the route of a suggested town wall or earthen rampart crossing the site from south to north. In 1999, archaeological testing (Licence no. 99E0111: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) at the site of a proposed rear extension to a premises on the Dublin Road (ITM 689456 719685) revealed a number of sherds of late medieval pottery together with a wall which had been truncated both by the foundation trench of the existing cottage and a service-pipe trench. The wall, although only 1.5m long, was at least 1.1m wide, although its exact width could not be measured as it appeared to continue into the adjacent property. Two rough courses of stone were revealed, standing to a maximum height of 0.43m. It was interpreted as the basal remains of the town wall defences and was subsequently preserved in situ. An alternative interpretation might

associate this wall with the North Gate, which is believed to have stood in this general area.

Jigginstown house is a National Monument (No. 528) in State care (RMP KE 019 033). It was built in the 1630's by Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, and Lord Deputy of Ireland (1633-7) as a summer residence for himself and as an intended (but never used) residence for King Charles 1. Its completion date is uncertain, but by the time of the Civil Survey (1654-6) it was already in ruins (Simington 1952, 66). The Stafford Papers of c. 1665 describe the house as having been, 'A Noble Howse built in Siggenstown by my Lords your ffather which cost £20,000. The basement is walled with mortared stone, lit by mullioned windows and roofed with brick vaulting while the main floor is walled with brick and lit by large, timber framed windows. A central spine-wall (E-W) supported pitched roofs to each side. Massive brick chimney stacks rise from stone bases in the basement, and have wide fireplaces lined with very small red bricks. An ongoing conservation programme was informed by a detailed survey of the building and some archaeological excavation (Licence nos. 01E1109 and 02E1603: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)). Construction debris for the house overlay the truncated remains of a ploughed field, which overlay a number of features (not excavated) probably associated with medieval pottery found in the residual ploughsoil, suggestive of earlier, medieval settlement possibly associated with a spring now located in the basement of the house. Part of the formal gardens (KD019-033003-) survive to S and traces of a large, possibly associated enclosure (KD019-030002-) were noted in 1979 (SMR file). An earthen bank set against the S-side of the building, providing a terrace overlooking the garden, had a limekiln (KD019-033004-) built into it, and a midden (KD019-033005-) was also found (details taken from [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie)).

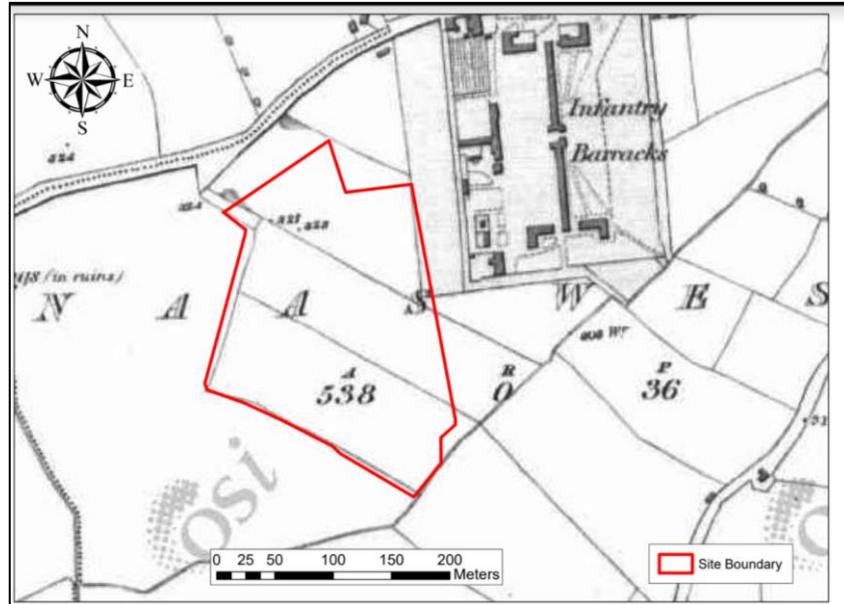


**Figure 2:** RMP for the site

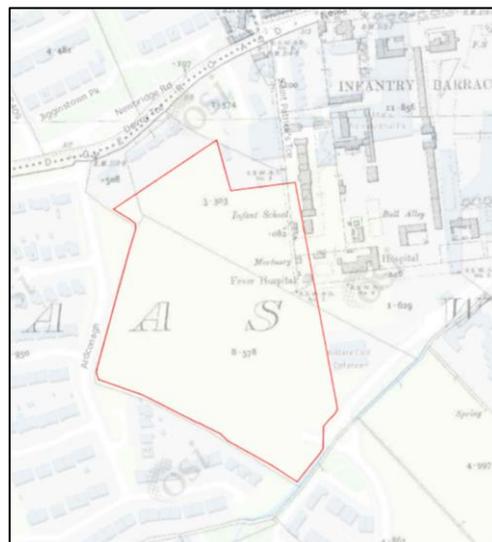
The site of the The 'South Moat' is located to the east (RMP KE 019 030). This stood at the south end of Naas 550m almost due S of the 'North Moat' (KD019-030009-). The South Moat a very large hillock of earth, broken down and encroached upon in different ways, standing in Naas Fairgreen. It is said that the barracks of Naas stood on it, before the present barracks were erected.

In 2001, archaeological testing (Licence no. 01E1169: [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) was undertaken at the proposed site of a swimming-pool development at the Fair Green, immediately east of the 'South Moat'. All of the six trenches excavated revealed evidence of extensive landscaping and recent ground disturbance, and no artefactual material was recovered. However, Trench 1, in the south of the site adjacent to Craddockstown Road revealed a wide (c. 7m) linear feature with a compact grey silt fill. To the north and south of this were two other linear features of similar orientation (E-W). Other shallow (D 0.37m) linear features (Wth 1.1m) also occurred to the north and south, and a single sub rectangular post-hole was found. Trench 3, immediately west of the existing swimming-pool building, revealed eight features of archaeological potential including three linear features (principally aligned E-W), three pit features and a single spread. These features are located on the most

elevated portion of the site and may be related to activity associated with the South Moat.



**Figure 3:** First edition OS map for the development



**Figure 4:** 25" map (1897-1913) with the location marked

## **5 Impact on the Cultural Heritage Landscape**

### **5.1 Recorded Monuments**

The proposed development does not contain any recorded archaeological monuments. No monuments are located in the immediate environs of the study area. The site is in use as rough pasture. The location of the site in the environs of a medieval town would indicate that sub surface remains may exist within the study area. The medieval features are 800m to the east of medieval Naas and the complex of 17<sup>th</sup> century sites at Jigginstown are 400m to the west. Many monuments are no longer visible at ground level and may only be uncovered as a result of excavation.

### **5.2 Site Survey**

Field walking was undertaken in January 2020 on a dry overcast day. The site is a large open field, internal boundaries have been removed as a result of land improvements. The field is delineated by modern fencing and by a mature hedgerow at the east. The site is becoming overgrown in places with stands of trees visible. Due to the overgrown nature of the site visibility was low. No remains associated with Devoy barracks were visible at the site.

### **5.3 Cartographic Evidence**

An examination of the cartographic evidence for the area of proposed development was undertaken. This involved the 17<sup>th</sup> century Down Survey, the Rocque Map, the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Map and its later editions (Figure 4-6), and the Cassini map for the area. This has shown that the site includes the western extent of Devoy Barracks. These remains date to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This includes the area of the Fever Hospital, the Mortuary and the infant school, these structures are no longer visible at ground level. If excavation takes place in this area these remains will be impacted on.

### **5.4 Place name Evidence**

Townland names can give an indication of previous activities at the area that have since been forgotten and leave no trace at ground level. They can contain information on previous ownership, land use or archaeological

monuments such as churches or settlement sites. Townland boundaries may reflect ancient territories, and some have associated archaeological features. The northern boundary of the site is a townland boundaries. In this area the original hedgerow has been removed and replaced with a post and wire fence. The townland name Naas West relates to the location of the site.

## **6 Mitigation Strategies**

In order to reduce the impact of the development on the archaeological landscape and to preserve the archaeological monuments recorded within the study area a series of mitigation strategies have been recommended:

- It is recommended that the area of the 19<sup>th</sup> century remains included within the eastern extent of the study area be excluded from construction. These remains are of cultural and historic importance to the area.
- It is recommended that archaeological monitoring be undertaken as part of the development. This will allow any sub surface remains to be identified.
- Should any archaeological features be uncovered a strategy for the resolution of these sites should be formulated and agreed with the National Monuments Service of the D.C.H.G.
- All works should be undertaken under licence to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## **7 Conclusions**

- 7.1 The study area consists of a landbank in Naas West, Naas, Co. Kildare. It is now proposed to develop the site. Although the study area does not include any archaeological remains of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Jigginstown House are located 400m and the medieval town of Naas lies 800m to the east. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered as a result of the desk top study or as a result of field walking within the site. The location of the site between clusters of monuments at Naas and Jigginstown would indicate a high potential for remains in this area.
- 7.2 The site also includes the western extent of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Devoy Barracks. It is recommended that this area be excluded from development and the remains be preserved in situ.
- 7.3 Excavation may reveal sub surface remains at the site. As a result of this a series of mitigation strategies have been recommended. This includes archaeological monitoring to assess the area for sub surface remains.
- 7.2 The above recommendations are subject to the approval of local authority and the National Monuments Service at the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.



**Plate 1:** Looking west over the study area



**Plate 2:** Looking east over the study area



**Plate 3:** Looking east towards Naas town



**Plate 4:** Looking southeast towards Devoy Barracks



**Plate 5:** Looking north over the study area