

# Appendix C17.06b

## Archaeological Investigations (Testing) Programme Results

### TA2 Trimragh Stage (i)a Test Excavation and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Report

# Archaeological Consultancy Service Contract: Stage (i): TEN-T Priority Route Improvement: TA2 Trimragh Updated Stage (i)a Test Excavation and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Report



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Licence Nos.: 20E0501 and 20R0183

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## TITLE PAGE

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## Executive Summary

This report describes the results of Stage (i)a Standard Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Surveys in the townlands of Trimragh and Drumgreggan as part of the Archaeological Consultancy Services Contract of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project. This road scheme is covered by the Code of Practice agreed between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (now the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (TII 2017). TII nominated Orlaith Egan as Project Archaeologist with responsibility for the management of all archaeological aspects of the project.

The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project is part of the Trans-European Transport Network and comprises the construction of three sections of new road: Section 1: N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region; Section 2: N56/N30 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham; and Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 link. Trimragh, in Section 2, is one of five Testing Areas (TAs) along the preferred route of the TEN-T project which require Stage (i)a Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services. The results of works at the other TAs will be reported in separate reports, with works in each location being undertaken under different licence numbers.

Two phases of Stage (i)a testing were undertaken. The first phase (Phase 1) was undertaken between 30 September and 2 October 2020. The total Stage (i)a testing linear metres excavated at this stage was 1,466m, representing a >12% sample of the greenfield area available for test excavations at this time. During this phase of testing, a single site of archaeological significance was found, comprising an isolated burnt spread (Trimragh 1). Stage (i)h Metal Detection surveys also uncovered no archaeologically significant artefacts, with the exception of one copper alloy halfpenny coin. The recovered coin was assessed by metal artefact specialist Orla Scully and the results of her assessment were incorporated into this report where relevant.

A second phase of Stage (i)a testing (Phase 2) was undertaken at TA2 in the northeastern portion of this testing area in September 2021. This area was previously only partially tested during the Phase 1 testing (Trenches 30–34) with the remainder of the area unavailable due to the presence of dense overgrowth. The site of a possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) is located close to the northern extent of the testing area. The field was subsequently partially cleared of vegetation to facilitate this further testing which was undertaken between 07–09 September 2021. In total, 17 test trenches (Trenches 36–52) were excavated, totalling 879.5 linear metres. Nothing of archaeological significance was found.

The site at Trimragh (Trimragh 1) will be adversely impacted upon by the proposed route corridor for the TEN-T road scheme, resulting in the removal of the archaeological site. As such, the site at Trimragh, as defined by the Stage (i)a testing, is recommended for full excavation and ‘preservation by record’ if the archaeological feature cannot be avoided by the proposed development.

## Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Archaeological Management Solutions (AMS) on behalf of Donegal County Council.

All archaeological excavations and surveys and other relevant archaeological works required were carried out under a licence issued by the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (formerly the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).

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## Disclaimer

The results, conclusions and recommendations contained within this report are based on information available at the time of its preparation. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that all relevant data has been collated, the authors and AMS accept no responsibility for omissions and/or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available subsequent to the report's completion.

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## Abbreviations and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
AMS	Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
GPS	Global Positioning System
ITM	Irish Transverse Mercator
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NMS	National Monuments Service
OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
TA	Testing Area
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland

## Coordinate System

All coordinates are in Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)

## 1 Introduction

This report describes the results of Stage (i)a Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services in the townlands of Trimragh and Drumgreggan as part of the Archaeological Consultancy Services Contract of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project (Figures 1–9).

This road scheme is covered by the Code of Practice agreed between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (now the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (TII 2017). TII nominated Orlaith Egan as Project Archaeologist with responsibility for the management of all archaeological aspects of the project.

### 1.1 Brief Description of the Approved Scheme

The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project is part of the Trans-European Transport Network and comprises the construction of three sections of new road: Section 1: N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region; Section 2: N56/N30 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham; and Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 link. Trimragh, in Section 2, is one of five TAs along the preferred route of the TEN-T project which require Stage (i)a Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services. The results of works at the other TAs will be reported in separate reports, with works in each location being undertaken under different licence numbers.

**Table 1: Names of townlands which contain Testing Areas**

Testing Area	Townland	Civil Parish	ITM	Licence Nos.
<b>TA1</b>	Drumboe Lower	Stranorlar	613410, 895454	20E0455 and 20R0167
<b>TA2</b>	Trimragh and Drumgreggan	Leck	621237, 911224	20E0501 and 20R0183
<b>TA3</b>	Carnshannagh	Drumcliffe	628587, 904423	20E0502 and 20R0184
<b>TA4</b>	Murlough	Drumcliffe	631615, 899290	20E0487 and 20R0182
<b>TA5</b>	Curragehalane	Drumcliffe	632263, 897206	20E0503 and 20R0185

### 1.2 Planning Background

Stage (i)a Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services in the townlands of Trimragh and Drumgreggan were undertaken to provide further information as part of the design and environmental evaluation phase of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Co. Donegal.

The investigations described herein are at one of five areas along the preferred route of the TEN-T project and include the areas as listed in Table 1 above.

### 1.3 Statutory Approvals

The test excavations detailed in this report were carried out under Licence No. 20E0501 (Test Excavations). The metal detection survey was undertaken under Licence No. 20R0183. Permits were issued by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (now Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).

### 1.4 Previous Assessments and Documented Archaeological Sites

There have been no previous intrusive archaeological investigations for the TEN-T project. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is currently being prepared by Kate Robb of John Cronin and Associates but was not available at the time of writing. Geophysical and LIDAR assessments undertaken in 2020 are described in further detail below.

The site of a possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) is located close to the northern end of the site (a local woman reported that this was removed during the construction of a railway). The central portion of the site was archaeologically tested in 2003 for a planning application and no archaeology was found (Moore Archaeological and Environmental Services Ltd., 03E0014).

A total of five documented archaeological sites were subject to Stage (i)a Standard Test Excavation Services, as listed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Documented Archaeological sites subject to Stage (i)a Standard Test Excavations**

TA No.	Townland	RMP No	ITM	Classification
TA1	Drumboe Lower	DG078-005	613410, 895454	Site of Church
TA2	Trimragh and Drumgreggan	DG53-028 and DG053-28001	621237, 911224	Site of Church and Graveyard
TA3	Carnshannagh	DG062-024	628587, 904423	Site of Enclosure
TA4	Murlough	DG070-048	631615, 899290	Site of Standing Stone
TA5	Curragehalane	DG070-082	632263, 897206	Souterrain

### 1.5 Archaeological and Environmental Context

The site is located predominantly within the townland of Trimragh, although extends into the townland of Drumgreggan at its western limits. The indicative route of the proposed new road passes over the site of the possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001), which is located at the southern verge of the current N13 road, toward the northeastern limits of the TA (Figure 2).

The TA is in a greenfield and 'wooded area', which slopes markedly from south to north, directly southwest of the Recorded Monument. The field is bounded and dissected by watercourses (at its western limits), one of which forms the townland boundary. The TA consists predominantly of three

large fields, two of pastureland and one (at the TA's eastern limits) which is entirely overgrown with scrub and trees. The fields are all bounded by hedgerows with the TA's limits at its northern and southern extent defined by the N13 and a regional road respectively.

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records the following on the church and graveyard: 'Although not marked on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map the 2nd and 3rd editions show this as the site of a church (DG053-028) and burial ground (DG053-028001-). No trace of it now survives and it was probably destroyed by the building of the railway line'.

On the first-edition six-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map (1836), the site and proposed development appear as pasture across two large irregular fields (separated by a stream and the townland boundary), surrounded by smaller rectangular and square fields. The testing area also contains a *circa* nineteenth-century(?) road as well as a millpond and the site of a flax mill. The site is also close to the nucleated farmsteads/settlements of Trimragh Upper and Lower, as shown on the first-edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 3).

The 25-inch OS map surveyed 1900–05 (Figure 4) indicates that some field boundaries have been added to the south of the site. The area remains shown as rough pasture, although cropping rock and furze/whins are also indicated. The main changes from the first-edition six-inch map are the additions of the site of the church and graveyard and the railway, which are clearly shown on this edition. The railway line – Letterkenny Branch of the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway (1883–1953) – bounds the site at its northern extent and has been reused as the modern N13.

Geophysical surveys identified possible pits, ditches and surfaces in the testing area, as well as potentially the site of the flax mill. Nothing archaeologically significant was apparent on LiDAR (see also below).

A cluster of monuments is recorded 220–375m north of the church and graveyard site (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) including a redundant record (DG053-052, formerly classed as a dolmen) and four rock art sites (DG053-027001 to DG053-027004). In total within a 0.5km radius of the church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) are a total of five previously recorded sites and monuments (Table 3). The monuments represent early prehistoric settlement in the immediate area of the scheme, possibly dating from the Bronze Age or Neolithic. Kinahan's notes on *'The Antiquities of Donegal'* (1886, 426) reference Trimragh, where he notes the existence of 'The giant's rock and grave, described in a previous report; also the site of an ancient church over which the railway to Letterkenny now runs'.

This reference refers to monument DG053-052, described in the RMP as:

*'A feature named 'Giant's Rock' on the original OS 6-inch map (1834–5) but not shown on later editions has been listed as a 'dolmen' by Borlase (1897). This is a large erratic.*

*According to Kinahan (1879–88; 1885–6), a large flat stone, known as the 'Giant's Grave', on which he noted two cupmarks stood c. 100 yards (c. 90m) E of the 'Giant's Rock'.*

This site cannot now be identified and has been delisted (Table 3) but does further support the evidence of Bronze Age or Neolithic activity in the vicinity of Trimragh, as does the discovery of a burnt spread during these current archaeological works (see below).

**Table 3: Recorded archaeological monuments within a 0.5km radius of TA2, Trimragh**

SMR No.	Townland	Classification	ITM
DG053-027001-	Trimragh	Rock Art	621419, 911767
DG053-027002-	Trimragh	Rock Art	621503, 911812
DG053-027003-	Trimragh	Rock Art	621522, 911823
DG053-027004-	Trimragh	Rock Art	621546, 911808
DG053-052----	Trimragh	Redundant Record (previous dolmen site)	621345, 911692

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Aims and Scope of Stage (i) Test Excavations

The overall aim of Stage (i)a Test Excavations was to ascertain the location, nature, date, character, extent and significance of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present in the areas assigned for testing. In this way, the horizontal extent of all archaeological sites/features/deposits and the vertical extent of archaeological stratigraphy could be established and a preliminary report on the findings produced.

Stage (i)a Test Excavation Services were carried out across a minimum of 12% of the testable areas and also targeted anomalies recorded in the geophysical survey undertaken between May and October in 2020 (Gimson 2020).

### 2.2 Survey and Excavation Methods

The Stage (i)a Test Excavations undertaken within the footprint of the Testing Area were carried out by a single team, utilising one mechanical excavator, working under the direction of James McKee and Denis Shine. Apart from the directors, the team consisted of a supervisor and two site assistants. Survey services were provided by Daniel Keane. The Senior Archaeologist on the project was Denis Shine.

The first phase of Stage (i)a Test Excavations took place at Trimragh between 30 September and 2 October 2020 with (i)h Metal Detection Surveys completed across all TAs the week commencing 14 September 2020. The metal detection surveys were completed by Ed Danaher and Ger Dowling, with additional metal detection undertaken on the trench spoil by the testing team (see below).

The total area available for test excavations at Trimragh was originally 1.94 greenfield hectares, across three fields, but this area was significantly reduced on the ground. One field (to the northeast of the TA) was only partially tested as the area was heavily overgrown and much of the available testing area was not accessible due to a sheer fall toward the N13 road (Figure 5). The middle field was also not tested, as landowner access was not secured, with this report now constituting a description of all Stage (i)a Test Excavations for Trimragh.

Subsequent to this, a second phase of Stage (i)a testing was undertaken at TA2 in the northeastern portion of this testing area in September 2021. This area was previously only partially tested during the Phase 1 testing (Trenches 30–34) with the remainder of the area unavailable due to the presence of dense overgrowth. The site of a possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) is located close to the northern extent of the testing area. The field was subsequently partially cleared

of vegetation to facilitate this further testing which was undertaken between 07–09 September 2021 by James McKee.

A proposed (indicative) test trench layout was set out in the testing Method Statement submitted to the National Monuments Service (NMS) on 27 August 2020 (McKee 2020). An updated Method Statement was submitted to the NMS in September 2021 in regard to the second phase of testing.

In general, the test trenching layout followed a standard array consisting of a centreline trench in each field with offset trenches at right-angles, at regular intervals and to the limits of the footprint of the field. In some places, the layout was adapted to target features identified either through geophysics or during the course of testing and to ensure adequate testing of available lands. The location of each test trench was 'set-out' and re-surveyed after excavation, where required, using GPS equipment by the AMS surveyor (see below).

As part of the investigations, topsoil was removed from the test trenches by a 13-tonne 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket working under the direct and continuous supervision of an Excavation Director. Where archaeologically significant features were identified, these were cleaned and tested by hand. Context numbers were used sequentially at each site, starting from number 1. A written and photographic record was prepared of identified features, and all trenches and features were surveyed using a Leica Viva GS20 with smart antenna GPS and related to Ordnance Datum (OD) and the Irish Transverse Mercator Grid (ITM).

The testing areas were assessed and recorded in accordance with the archaeological Method Statement, the contract with Donegal County Council and in a manner consistent with the Code of Practice agreed between TII and the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (TII 2017). A full list of features and finds recovered are included in the appendices.

### 2.3 Finds Retrieval and Sampling Methods

Every effort was made to ensure the highest possible level of identification and retrieval of archaeological objects in the course of excavations. Archaeological objects of all periods were retained at each TA, with the exception of obvious 'scrap' or modern metal. No finds were recovered from Trimragh during archaeological testing, although a single copper alloy halfpenny coin was retained during metal detection surveys (see appendices). All of the recovered metal objects were assessed and subsequently identified to type where possible by metal artefact specialist Orla Scully (Appendix 2).

The treatment of artefacts complied with the policies of the NMI as set out in *Advice Notes for Excavators* (NMI 2010) and the Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Archaeological Objects ratified by the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI 2006).

None of the finds recovered during the works required immediate conservation; however, provision was made for this during the works, as required and set out in the Method Statement.

Finds were housed temporarily on-site and following this at the AMS Head Office where they are currently stored. The storage of artefacts has been undertaken in accordance with the *Advice Notes for Excavators* (NMI 2010).

## 2.4 Specialist Contributions and/or Consultations

There were no specialist contributions during the Stage(i)a works. A single metal object was recovered as a result of the Metal Detection Surveys at TA2 Trimragh (Table 8). The single metal object was assessed and identified to find type by Orla Scully. The results of Orla's assessment have been incorporated into this report (Appendix 2).

## 2.5 Radiocarbon Dating

As part of the Stage(i)a works, samples from select contexts at three of the five sites investigated on the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project were forwarded to the <sup>14</sup>CHRONO Centre, Queens University Belfast for priority radiocarbon dating. The nominated sites were Drumboe Lower, Carnshannagh and Curragehalane (Table 4).

**Table 4: Samples for priority radiocarbon dating on TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project**

Site name	Site type	Sample No.	Context	Sample type
Drumboe Lower 1	Enclosure	6	C.17: fill of enclosure ditch C.11	Barley ( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> )
Carnshannagh 1	Settlement, possible	1	C.12: fill of pit C.11	Barley ( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> )
Curragehalane 1 & 2	Enclosure	3	C.6: upper fill of enclosure ditch C.27 (Curragehalane 1)	Barley ( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> )
Curragehalane 1 & 2	Settlement, possible	2	C.12: fill of pit C.54 (Curragehalane 2)	Hazel ( <i>Corylus</i> )

## 2.6 Conditions

The weather conditions during the Stage (i) works comprised a mixture of dry and wet days, with very heavy rain on two days during the Phase 1 archaeological testing.

## 2.7 Constraints on Methods

As stated above, at Phase 1 a large portion of the northeast field was not tested as part of the present investigations as they lie under forest/dense scrub. The middle field was also not accessible during

works. Other constraints to the testing strategy included heavy rain making steep slopes hazardous for excavation. However, this required only a minor reduction in length of a small number of trenches. Trenches which could not be excavated owing to various reasons are presented in Table 5. It ought to be noted, however, that additional trenches were excavated elsewhere, wherever possible, to make up for any shortfall due to unforeseen constraints.

**Table 5: Trenches not completed at Phase 1**

Trenches	Reason not excavated
<b>36–73</b>	A large number of test-trenches could not be excavated in the middle and eastern field at Phase 1 owing to access issues and heavy forestry respectively. The Phase 2 testing involved comprehensive testing of the eastern field.

### 3 Stage (i)a Test Excavation Results

The total linear metres excavated during the Phase 1 testing was 1,466m (Plates 1–5). During this phase of Stage (i)a testing a single archaeological site, consisting of a burnt spread, was identified in the western field. No archaeological features were found in the eastern field, containing the site of the possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) during the Phase 1 testing.

The total linear meters excavated during the Phase 2 testing was 879.5m (Plates 6–10), which was confined to the field containing the possible church and graveyard. Nothing of archaeological significance was found.

#### 3.1 Phase 1 Testing

<u>Site Name</u>	<b>Trimragh 1</b>
ITM	621220, 911219
Townland	Trimragh and Drumgreggan
No. of Trenches	35 (73 planned)
Total Meterage	1,466m

##### 3.1.1 Summary

Trimragh’s Testing Area comprised three large fields, two of pastureland and one (at the TA’s eastern limits) which is entirely overgrown with scrub and trees. The fields are all bounded by hedgerows with the TA’s limits at its northern and southern extent defined by the N13 and a regional road respectively. The middle and western field are separated by a stream, which forms the townland boundary between Trimragh (to the east) and Drumgreggan (to the west). As stated, only the westernmost field was tested in its entirety, with a limited programme of testing also completed in the eastern field, at its northeastern limits, closest to the site of the possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001). This field slopes steeply from south to north, directly southwest of this monument making further trenching impossible. In total, 35 test trenches were excavated, totalling 1,466 linear metres (Figures 6–8; Plates 1 and 2). The topsoil (C.1) ranged, on average, from 0.20m to 0.50m in depth, being deeper towards the base of slopes. The natural subsoil (C.2) was predominantly a mottled, light orangey-brown gritty clay interspersed with patches of grey gravel.

**Table 6: Test trench detail**

Area	Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Archaeological Features	Non-Archaeological Features
<b>W Field</b>	1	120	1.8	N/A	N/A
<b>W Field</b>	2	40	1.8	N/A	N/A
<b>W Field</b>	3	165	1.8	N/A	N/A
<b>W Field</b>	4	14	1.8	N/A	N/A

Area	Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Archaeological Features	Non-Archaeological Features
W Field	5	37.5	1.8	C.3 (Burnt Spread)	N/A
W Field	6	29	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	7	44	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	8	39	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	9	44	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	10	34	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	11	44	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	12	34	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	13	49	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	14	29	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	15	59	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	16	34	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	17	59	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	18	21	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	19	24	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	20	26.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	21	39	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	22	59	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	23	44	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	24	51	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	25	54	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	26	53	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	27	59	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	28	55	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	29	27	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	30	11.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	31	11.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	32	8	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	33	15	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	34	18	1.8	N/A	N/A
W Field	35	15	1.8	N/A	N/A
M Field	Not accessible	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 3.2 Phase 2 Testing (September 2021)

The testing area comprised a large sub-rectangular field overgrown with scrub and trees on an undulating north-eastern facing slope which was steep in places. The field was bounded by timber and wire fences and hedgerows and its north-eastern and south-western extents defined by the N13 and a regional road respectively. The site of a possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) is located close to the northern end of the site (a local woman reported that this was removed during the construction of a railway). The central portion of the site was archaeologically tested in 2003 for a planning application and no archaeology was found (Moore Archaeological and Environmental Services Ltd., 03E0014).

The field was partially tested (Trenches 30–34) during the first phase of testing and no archaeology was found. At that time dense vegetation prevented further testing as planned. The field was subsequently partially cleared of vegetation, under the supervision of an ecologist, to facilitate further testing from 07–09 September 2021. In total, 17 test trenches (Trenches 36–52) were excavated, totalling 879.5 linear metres (Figure 9; Plates 6–10). Trenches 50 and 51 were relocated due to the presence of vegetation. The topsoil (C.1) consisted of dark brown sandy clay which ranged from 0.05m to 0.35m in depth, being deeper towards the base of slope at the eastern side. Overburden up to 1.2m in depth consisting of compact yellow clay fill with frequent modern debris was encountered across parts of the centre of the site. Dumps of modern rubbish up to 1m deep were also found in the centre of the site. Rock outcrops were a feature of the north-eastern side of the site and areas of bedrock were exposed in most of the trenches. The natural subsoil (C.2) was predominantly a mottled, light orangey-brown gritty clay interspersed with patches of grey gravel. No archaeology was found.

**Table 7: Eastern field test trench detail (September 2021)**

Area	Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Archaeological Features	Non-Archaeological Features
E Field	36	91	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	37	30	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	38	98	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	39	35	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	40	52	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	41	62	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	42	68	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	43	53	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	44	30	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	45	42	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	46	102	1.8	N/A	N/A

Area	Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Archaeological Features	Non-Archaeological Features
E Field	47	42	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	48	18.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	49	24.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	50	43.5	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	51	70	1.8	N/A	N/A
E Field	52	18	1.8	N/A	N/A

### 3.3 Geophysical and LiDAR Survey

In 2020, several anomalies were identified at Trimragh (Figure 6) in geophysical surveys carried out by Heather Gimson (Earthsound Geophysics: licence 20R0078) to investigate numerous archaeological areas and potential archaeological areas within and adjacent to the preferred routes of the TEN-T Project.

Preliminary results revealed c.26 geophysical anomalies, including several possible pits (some very large in nature at 15m+), ditches, possible surfaces and disturbed soil. A small 'enclosing ditch', 8.6 x 10m, was also found to enclose three compacted earthen or stone anomalies which could be archaeological in nature. In the middle field, a zone of high resistivity could be related to the flax mill recorded on the first-edition six-inch OS map. During archaeological testing, none of the anomalies were resolved as archaeological, with several representing modern field drainage and/or changes in the natural geology and geomorphology. As stated, the anomaly potentially related to the flax mill is located in the middle field and remains to be tested.

An archaeological LiDAR survey was also commissioned for the TEN-T Project by Donegal County Council to capture low and high resolution data to assist with the archaeological assessment of the TEN-T study area as part of the Design and Environmental Assessment Phase. The archaeological LiDAR data was captured and provided by BlueSky and subsequently assessed by Dr Richard Clutterbuck of AMS (Clutterbuck 2020); however, nothing archaeologically significant was apparent on the LiDAR for Trimragh.

### 3.4 RMP Site DG053-028 and DG053-028001

Testing at Trimragh was conducted in close proximity to site of the possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001), which is located at the southern verge of the current N13 road, toward the northeastern limits of the TA.

### 3.5 Archaeological Features

A single archaeological feature was encountered at Trimragh (Trimragh 1), consisting of a burnt spread (C.3) measuring 4.47 x 1.70 x 0.24m (Plates 3 and 4). The spread is typical of burnt mound material being a mix of burnt stone and charcoal-rich soil (see Appendix 1 for an archaeological description). The feature was located at the east-facing side of a steep hill, c.10m west of a stream, which forms the townland boundary, in low-lying wet field conditions.

### 3.6 Non-Archaeological Features

Modern field drains were encountered, but none that merited archaeological recording. Modern dumps of refuse/scrap-like material were also recorded in the trenches in the eastern field.

## 4 Metal Detection Survey

### 4.1 Aims and Scope of the Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services

Metal detection surveys were completed across four TAs in the week starting Monday 14 September by Ed Danaher and Ger Dowling; Stage (i)h surveys were completed previously at Drumboe, during a programme of site works, from Monday 31 August to Friday 4 September.

### 4.2 Survey Methodology

The metal detection survey employed a metal detector with a penetration depth of 0.5m and was designed to recover from the topsoil all items of metalwork of possible historical or archaeological significance. All finds were recorded using a Leica Viva GS20 with smart antenna GPS and related to Ordnance Datum (OD) and Irish Transverse Mercator Grid (ITM).

### 4.3 Survey Constraints

The survey was constrained at Trimragh due to the volume of modern material, especially toward the northeastern limits of the TA, closest to Recorded Monument DG053-028/DG053-028001. This field appears to have been used for modern dumping and/or to have been extensively disturbed in the recent past; confirmation of which was indicated by the amount of disturbance recorded in the trenches excavated in this area of the site (Plate 2).

### 4.4 Survey Results

The results of the metal detector surveys are summarised below in Table 8. The Stage (i)h Metal Detection survey in the townlands of Trimragh and Drumgreggan uncovered no archaeologically significant artefacts, with the exception of one copper alloy halfpenny coin. The recovered object was assessed and subsequently identified to type by metal artefact specialist Orla Scully (Appendix 2).

None of the finds recovered during the works required immediate conservation. Finds were housed temporarily at the AMS Strokestown Office. They are currently stored at the permanent and secure AMS Head Office Post-Ex Facility in Kilrush. The storage of artefacts has been undertaken in accordance with the *Advice Notes for Excavators* (NMI 2010).

**Table 8: Artefacts recovered from Metal Detection Surveys**

Testing Area	Description	Licence Number
TA 1 (Drumboe)	Seven objects (three unidentified iron, one iron staple, one iron horseshoe, one tip or sock of plough share and one copper alloy buckle)	20R0167

Testing Area	Description	Licence Number
TA 2 (Trimragh)	One copper alloy halfpenny coin	20R0183
TA 3 (Carnshannagh)	One coin and a single lead waste piece (note: a copper alloy fitting was recovered from spoil during testing)	20R0184
TA 4 (Murlough)	None	20R0182
TA 5 (Curraghalane)	One copper alloy sixpence coin and one copper alloy mount	20R0185

## 5 Discussion

During the test trenching at Trimragh, a single burnt spread, probably associated with a burnt mound, was identified. This site (designated Trimragh 1) is inside the preferred route corridor and will be directly impacted by the proposed development. Archaeological testing within the preferred route corridor revealed no further evidence for archaeological features or yielded any artefacts, meaning the spread appears to be an isolated feature, likely to relate to (early?) prehistoric activity in Trimragh and Drumgreggan. No archaeological remains associated with the site of a possible church and graveyard (DG053-028 and DG053-028001) were identified.

## 6 Significance of Findings

The following significance criteria have been taken from Appendix 2 of the *Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Heritage Impacts of National Road Schemes* (NRA 2005). They are not presented in any ranking order but can be used to evaluate the significance of an archaeological site, monument or complex. They should not, however, be regarded as definitive; rather they are an indicator which contributes to a wider judgment based on the individual circumstances of each feature.

### Existing Status

The level of protection associated with a monument or complex is an important consideration.

### Condition/Preservation

The survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is an important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features. Well-preserved sites should be highlighted; this assessment can only be based on a field inspection.

### Documentation/Historical Significance

The significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigations or contemporary documentation supported by written evidence or historical maps. Sites with a definite historical association or an example of a notable event or person should be highlighted.

### Group Value

The value of a single monument may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments or with monuments from different periods indicating an extended time presence in any specific area. In some cases, it may be preferable to protect the complete group, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within that group.

### Rarity

The rarity of some monument types can be a central factor affecting response strategies for development, whatever the condition of the individual feature.

### Visibility in the Landscape

It is important to recognise sites that have a limited distribution. Monuments that are highly visible in the landscape have a heightened physical presence. The inter-visibility between monuments may also be explored in this category.

### Fragility/Vulnerability

It is important to assess the level of threat to archaeological monuments from erosion, natural degradation, agricultural activity, land clearance, neglect, careless treatment or development.

The nature of the archaeological evidence cannot always be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons to justify the significance of the feature. This category relates to the probability of monuments producing material of archaeological significance as a result of future investigative work.

### Amenity Value

Regard should be taken of the existing and potential amenity value of a monument.

## 6.1 Trimragh 1

**Existing Status:** The newly discovered spread has no statutory protection.

**Condition/Preservation:** This site has no upstanding remains. What has survived of this site are the subsurface remains of a burnt spread.

**Documentation/Historical Significance:** No documentation or historical significance.

**Group Value:** A number of rock art sites are located c.500m to the north.

**Rarity:** It is common to find burnt spreads on linear road schemes.

**Visibility in the Landscape:** Not visible.

**Fragility/Vulnerability:** This site will be removed under the current road scheme design.

**Amenity Value:** No amenity value.

**Conclusion:** A single burnt spread, likely to be of (early?) prehistoric date. The significance of this site is rated as **low** and it is considered of **local** significance only.

## 7 Impact Statement & Recommendations

The burnt spread (Trimragh 1) is inside the preferred route corridor and will be directly impacted by the proposed development. Archaeological testing within the preferred route corridor revealed no further evidence for archaeological features or yielded any artefacts, meaning the spread appears to be an isolated feature.

The site at Trimragh 1 is recommended for full excavation and 'preservation by record' if the archaeological feature cannot be avoided by the proposed development.

The middle field at Trimragh was not accessible during Stage (i)a works and was ultimately omitted from the testing programme.

## 8 Bibliography

### 8.1 References

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- Gimson, H. 2020. Geophysical Survey Report. TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project (Drumboe lower, Ballynaglack, Ballyraine, Trimragh, Carnshannagh, Murlough & Curraghalane Td's), Co. Donegal (20R0078). Unpublished geophysical survey report prepared for Donegal County Council.
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- TII 2017. Code of Practice for Archaeology agreed between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (June 2017).

### 8.2 Cartographic Sources

First-edition six-inch OS map 1836

First-edition 25-inch OS map 1900–05

### 8.3 Online and Other Resources

- IAI. 2006. *Code of Conduct for Treatment of Archaeological Objects*. Dublin: Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland. [Online]. [Accessed: 18 January 2019]. Available from: <http://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IAI-Code-of-Conduct-for-the-Treatment-of-Archaeological-Objects.pdf>.
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- TII. 2005. *Guidelines for the testing of and mitigation of the wetland archaeological heritage for national road schemes* [Online, Accessed: 14 October 2020]. Available from: <https://www.tiipublications.ie/library/PE-ARC-02008-01.pdf>

## Appendix 1: List of Contexts

Context	Area	Trench	Description	Dimensions (m)
<b>C.1</b>	All	All	Number used to record topsoil.	N/A
<b>C.2</b>	All	All	Number used to record subsoil.	N/A
<b>C.3</b>	W Field	5	Irregular spread of mottled grey/black clayey silt and stone of moderate compaction. Feature is an isolated spread of burnt stone and charcoal.	4.47 x 1.70 x 0.24m

## Appendix 2: List of Finds

Find number	Field	Trench	Context	Full name	Description	Dimensions in cm
<b>20E0501:1:1</b>	E Field	N/A	N/A	Copper alloy halfpenny coin	Very worn copper alloy coin with no surface detail remaining; diameter indicates halfpenny, but not known if Irish or English	(D)2.62 x (T)0.15

*Note: Find 20E0501:1:1 was recovered from Stage(i)h Metal Detection Survey (20R0183).*

### Appendix 3: List of Samples

Sample	Context	Feature	Sample type	Vol./ Weight	Process	Flot weight/ weight (g)	Retent
1	C.3	Spread C.3	Soil	10L	Retained	N/A	

## Appendix 4: Excavation Bulletin

Bulletin Field	Bulletin Detail
Excavation Completion Date	2 October 2020
Year	2020
County	Donegal
Author	James McKee
Author's Address	c/o Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd, Fahy's Road, Kilrush, Co. Clare
Site Number	To be assigned by excavations.ie
Site Name	Trimragh 1
Site Type	Burnt Spread
ITM Coordinates	621220, 911219
Site and Monuments Record No.	DG053-028 and DG053-028001
Excavation Licence No.	20E0501 (and 20R0183)
Description	<p>James McKee of Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd undertook Stage (i)a Standard Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Surveys in the townland of Trimragh as part of the Archaeological Consultancy Services Contract of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project in Donegal.</p> <p>The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project is part of the Trans-European Transport Network and comprises the construction of three sections of new road: Section 1: N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region; Section 2: N56/N30 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham; and Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 link. Trimragh, in Section 2, is one of five Testing Areas (TAs) along the preferred route of the TEN-T project which require Stage (i)a Test Excavations and Stage (i)h Metal Detection Survey Services.</p> <p>The total Stage (i)a testing linear metres excavated at Trimragh was 1,466m, representing a &gt;12% sample of the greenfield area available for test excavations. These excavations targeted anomalies identified through previous geophysical surveys are the site; these surveys were themselves undertaken to assess RMP site(s) (DG053-028 and DG053-028001), one of five known monuments which could be impacted by the scheme.</p> <p>During the Stage (i)a testing at Trimragh a single site of archaeological significance was found, comprising an isolated burnt spread measuring 4.47 x 1.70 x 0.24m. The spread is typical of burnt mound material being a mix of burnt stone and charcoal-rich soil; no artefacts were recovered from a sondage placed through the spread. Stage (i)h Metal Detection surveys also uncovered no archaeologically significant artefacts, with the exception of one copper alloy halfpenny coin.</p> <p>The site at Trimragh will be adversely impacted upon by the proposed route corridor for the TEN-T road scheme, resulting in the removal of the archaeological site. As such, the site at Trimragh was recommended for full excavation and 'preservation by record' if the archaeological feature cannot be avoided by the proposed development.</p>

Scheme Location

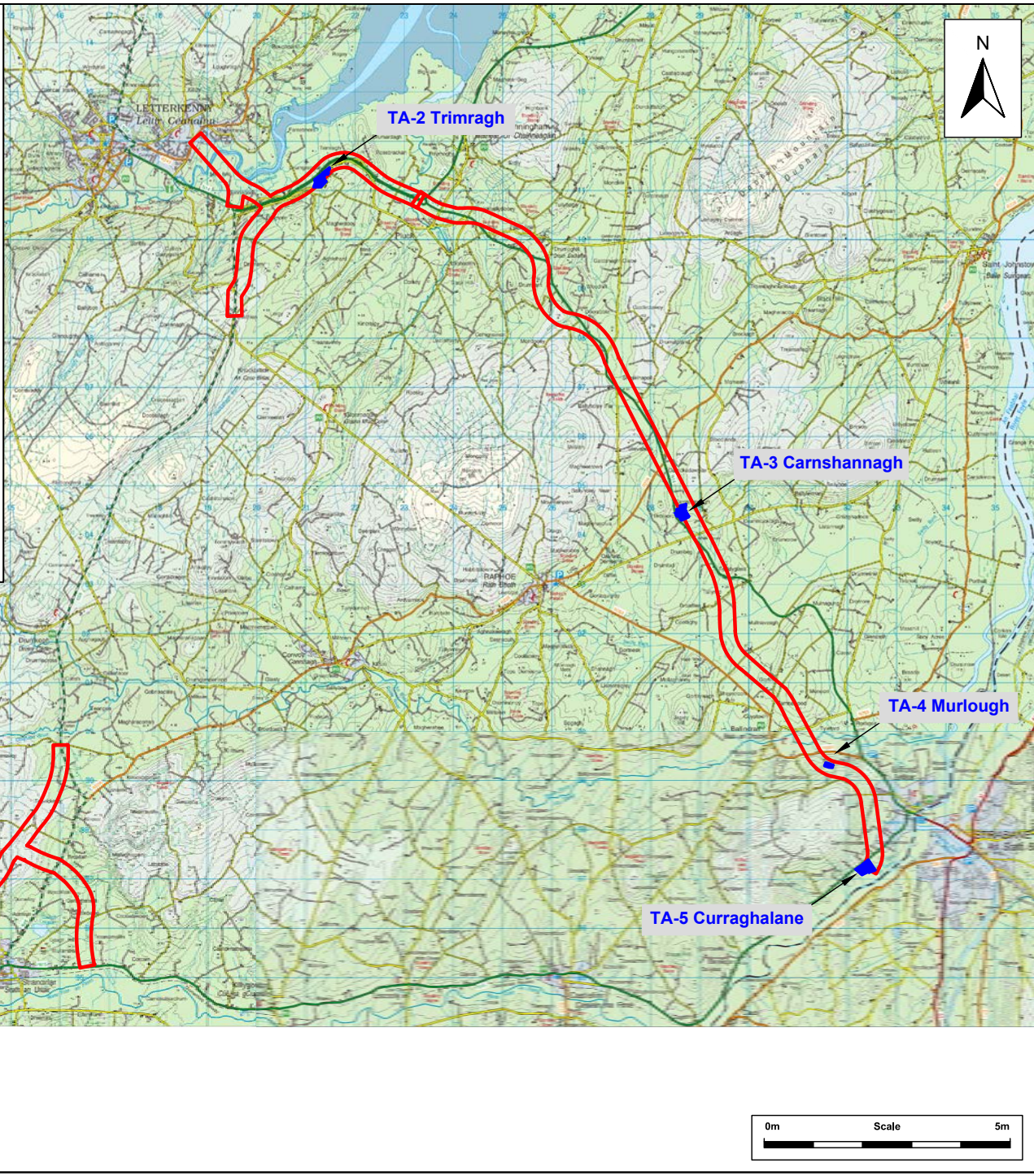
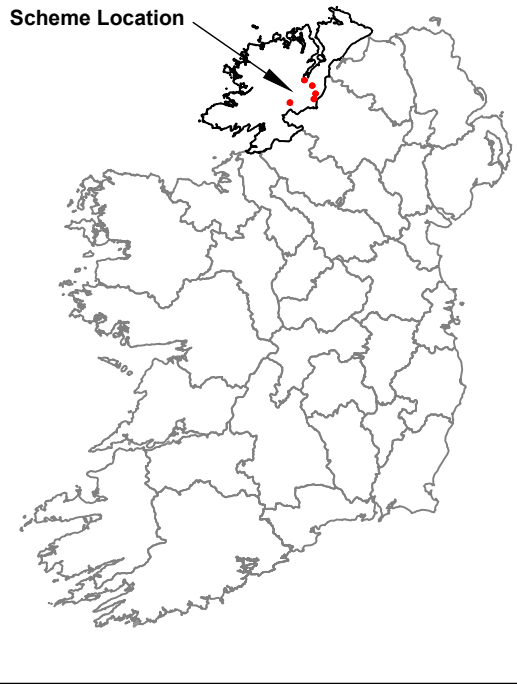


Figure No. 1

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

Location of the Testing Areas on the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project

Legend

- Scheme Corridor
- Stage (i) Testing Area

Scale 1:125000@A4

Date 14 12 20

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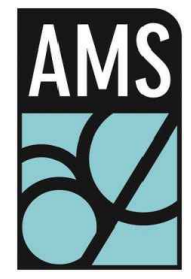
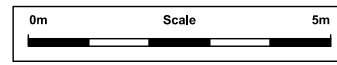





Figure No. 2

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

TA-2 Trimragh (Testing Area 2) Location, showing impacted and surrounding RMP sites

Legend

-  Scheme Corridor
-  Stage (i) Testing Area
-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification

Scale 1:10000@A4	Date 14 12 20
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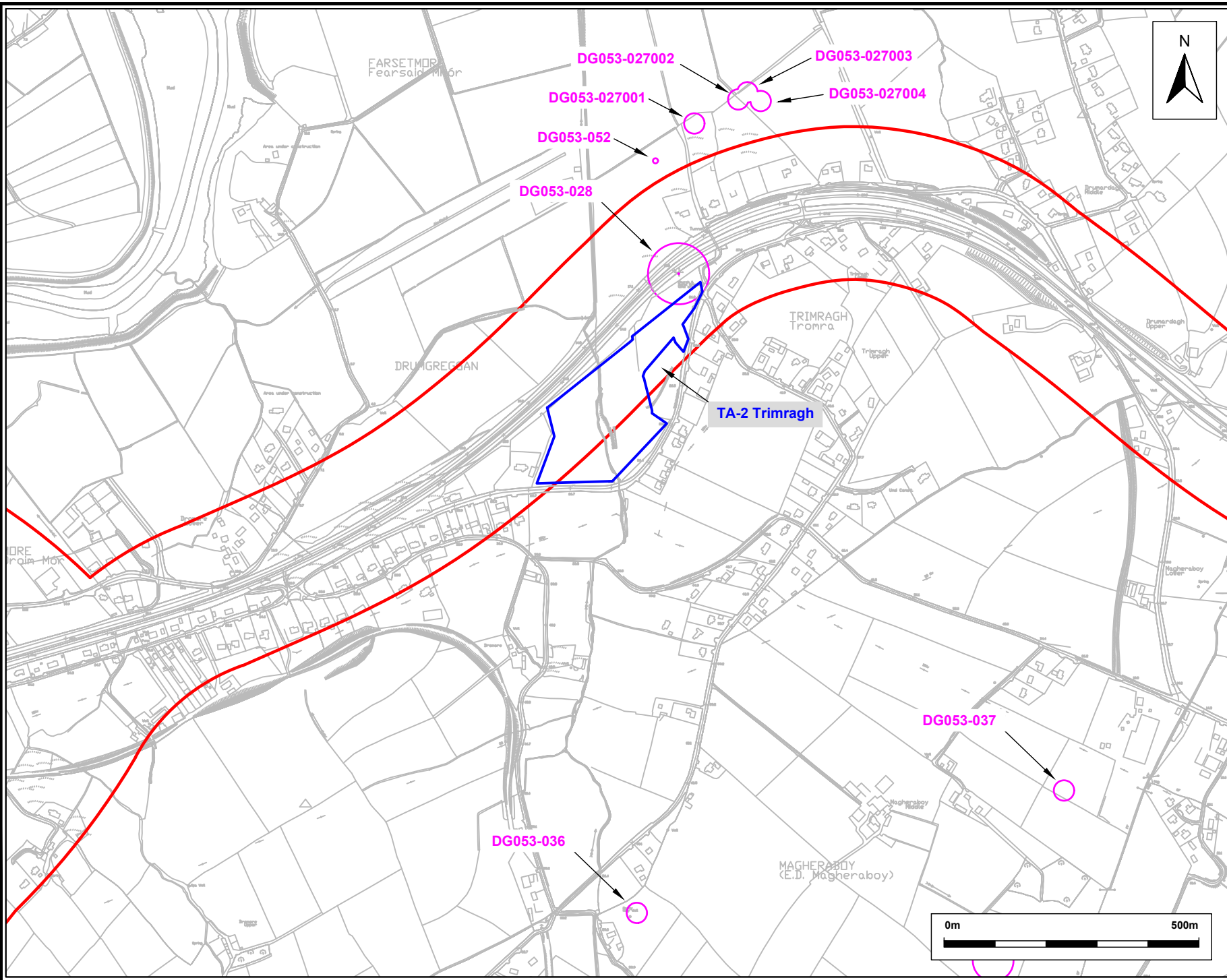
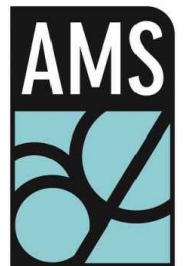







Figure No. 3

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

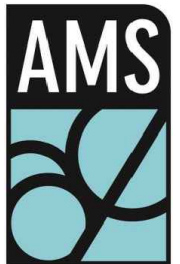
TA-2 Trimragh Trenching layout overlaid on 1st edition 6-inch OS map

Legend

-  Scheme Corridor
-  Stage (i) Testing Area
-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)

Scale 1:2500@A4	Date 14 12 20
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DG053-028

TA-2 Trimragh

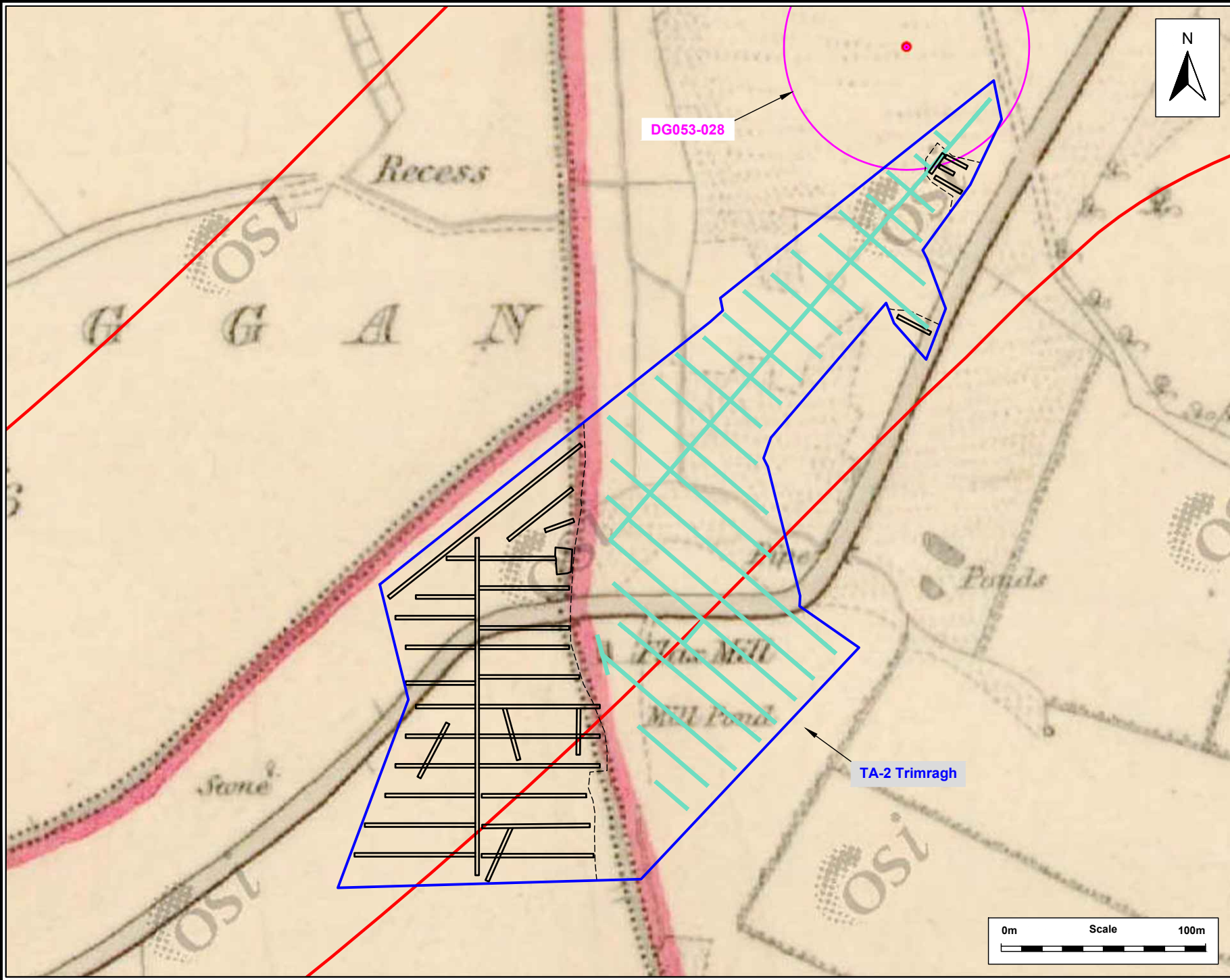
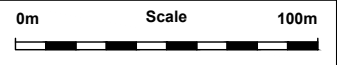







Figure No. 4

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

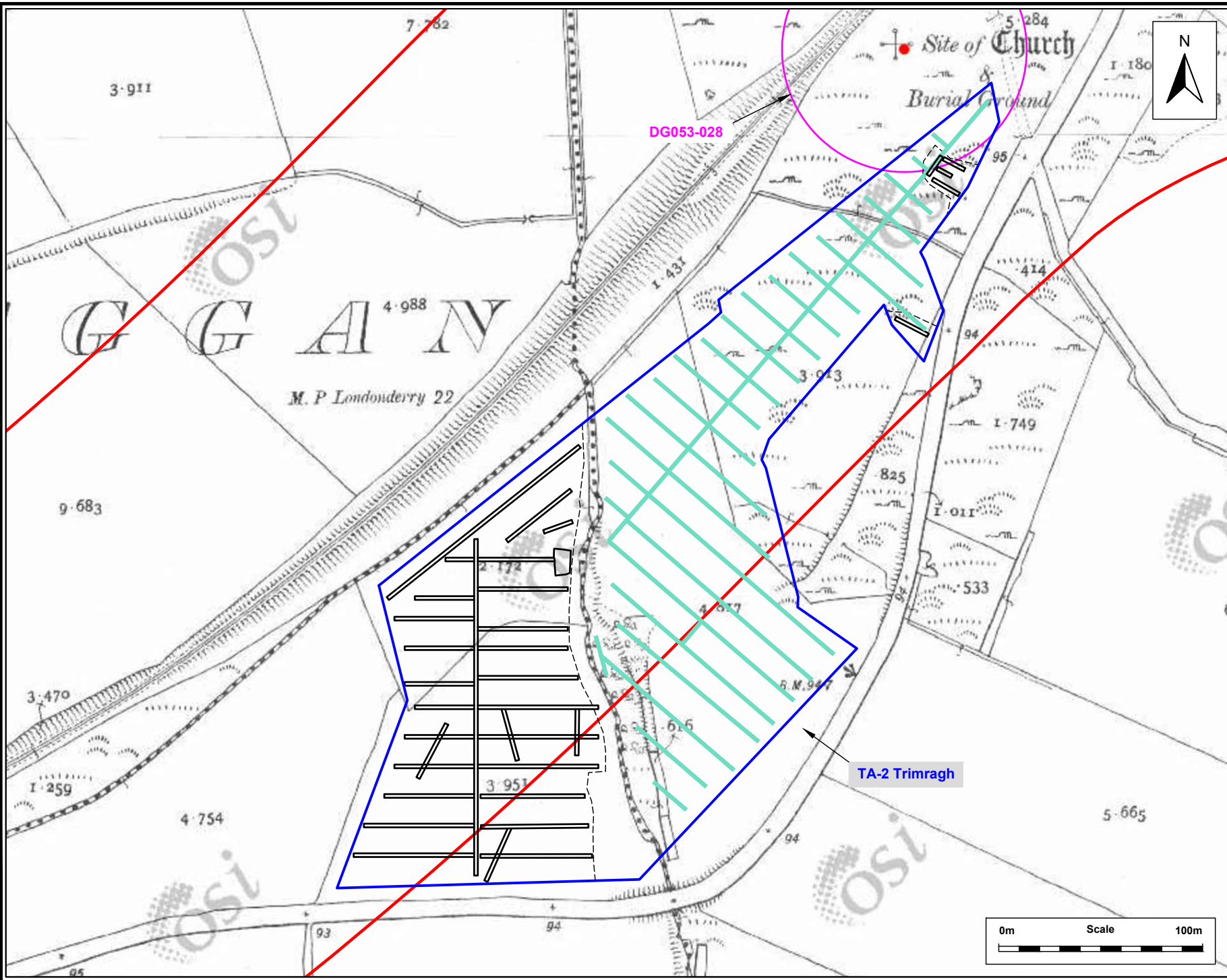
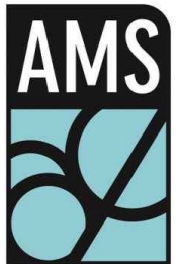
TA-2 Trimragh Trenching layout overlaid on 25-inch OS map

Legend

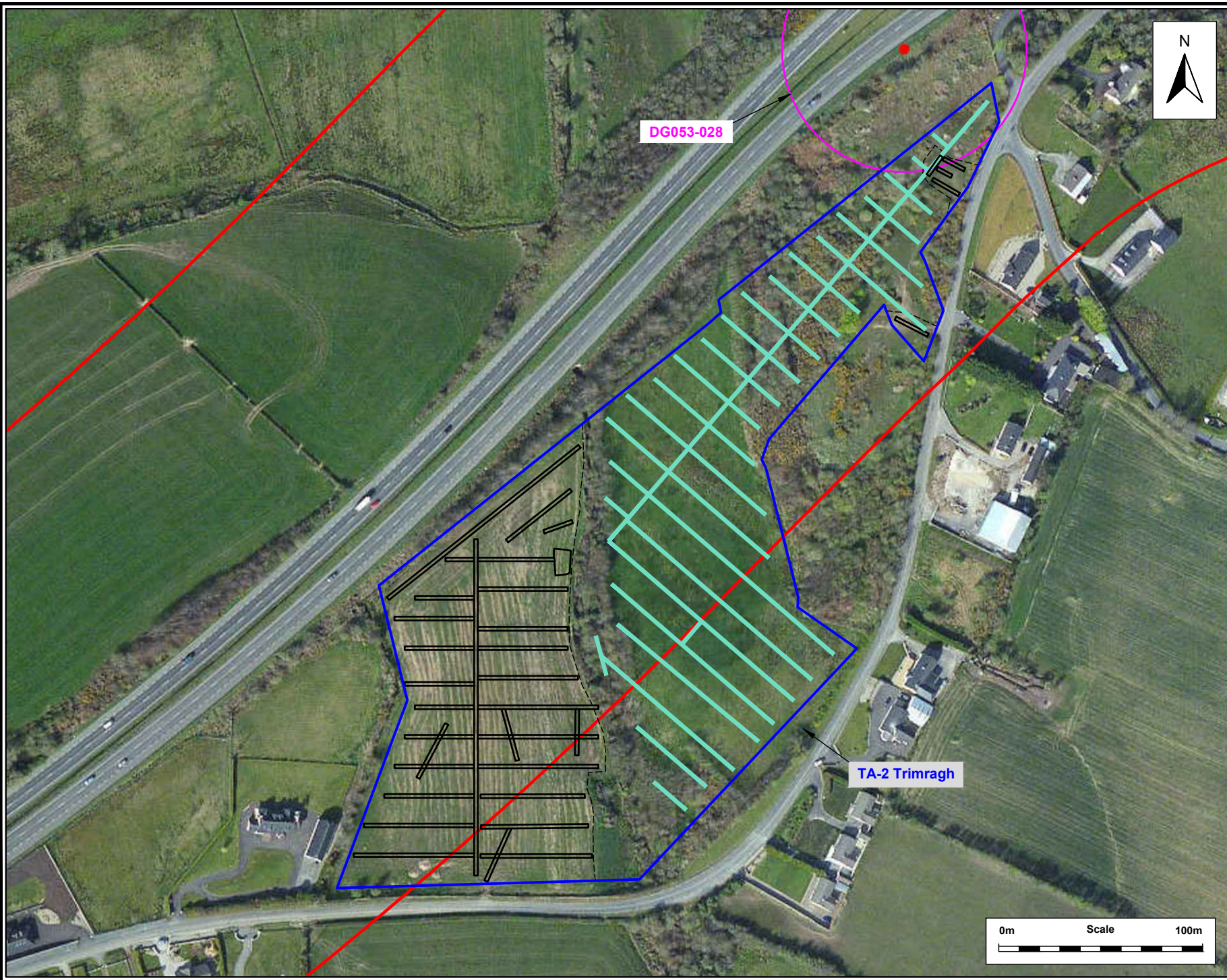
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-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)

Scale 1:2500@A4	Date 14 12 20
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TA-2 Trimragh



**Figure No. 5**

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

**TA-2 Trimragh Trenching layout overlaid on modern aerial photography**

**Legend**

- Scheme Corridor
- Stage (i) Testing Area
- Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
- Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
- Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)

Scale  
1:2500@A4

Date  
14 12 20

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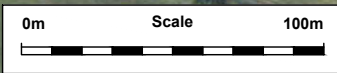


Figure No. 6

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

TA-2 Trimragh Trenching layout overlaid on geophysical survey

Legend

-  Scheme Corridor
-  Stage (i) Testing Area
-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)
-  Archaeological Feature
-  Inaccessible area
-  Possible Archaeology
-  High Resistance Anomaly
-  Low Resistance Anomaly
-  Cultivation Furrows
-  Feature on Historic Map

Scale 1:2500@A4

Date 14 12 20

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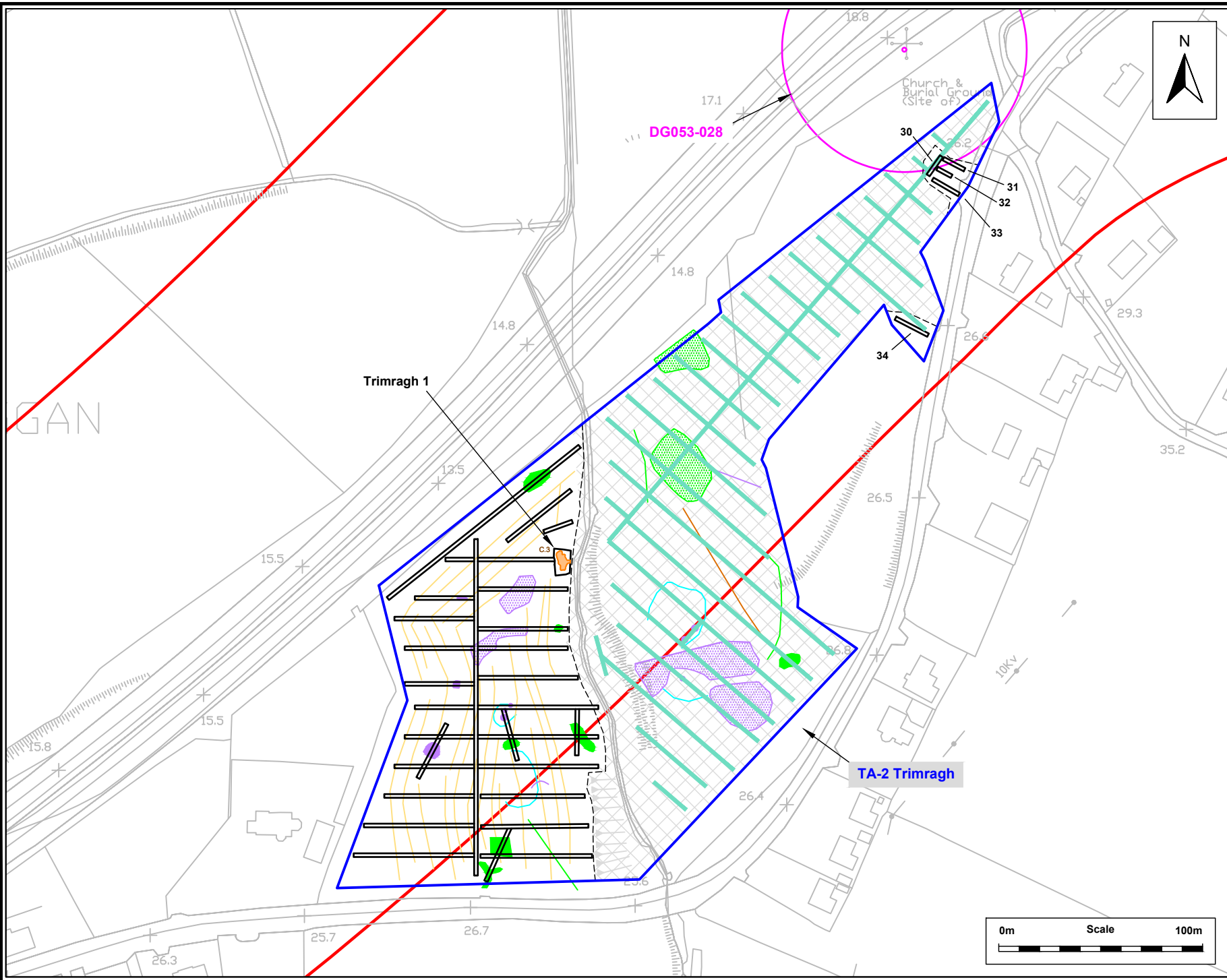
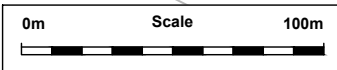


Figure No. 7

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

TA-2 Trimragh  
Trenches 1-29 and 35

Legend

-  Scheme Corridor
-  Stage (i) Testing Area
-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)
-  Archaeological Feature
-  Inaccessible area

Scale 1:1500@A4	Date 14 12 20
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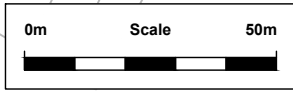
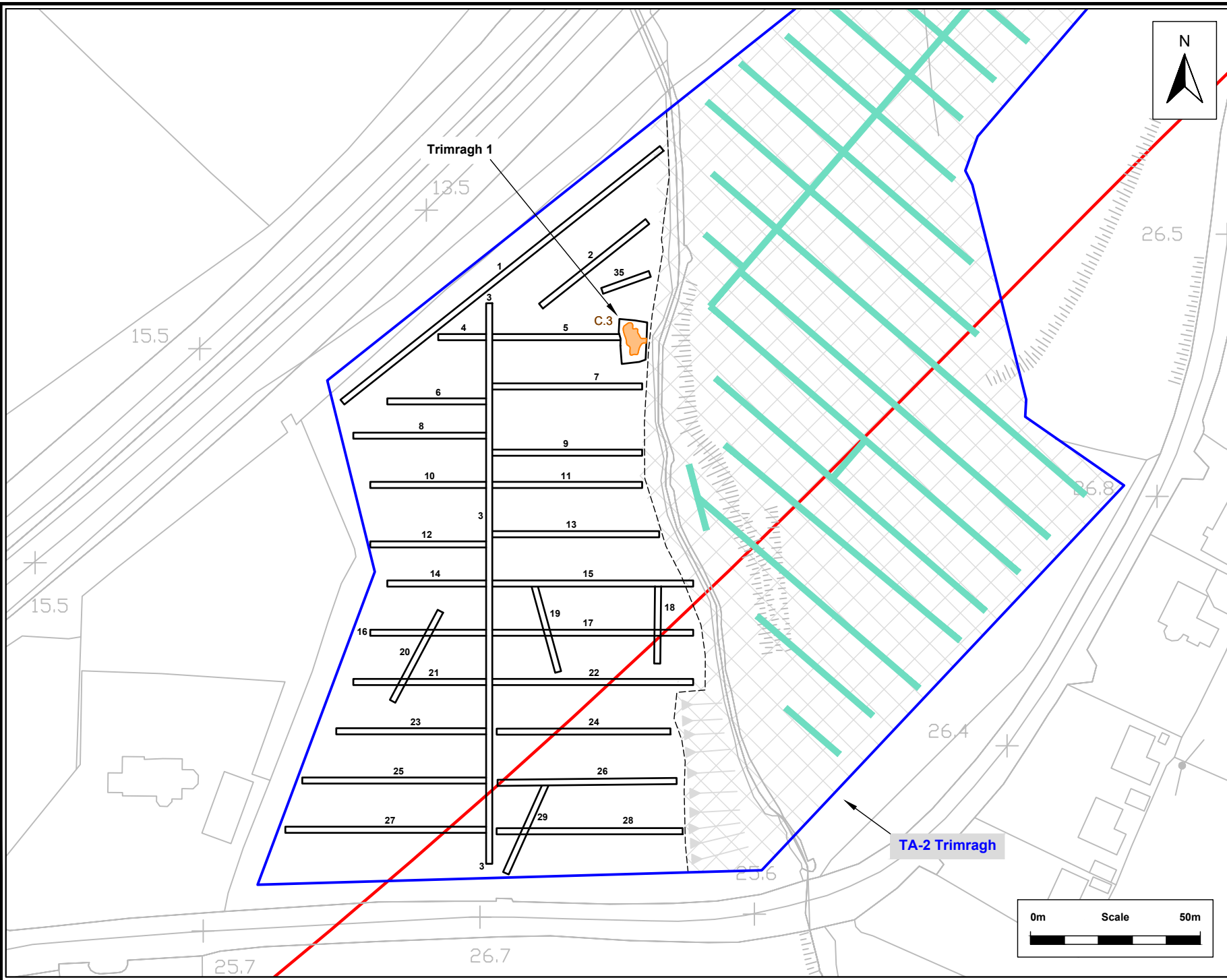


Figure No. 8

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

TA-2 Trimragh  
Trenches 1-29 and 35  
overlaid on geophysical survey

Legend

- Scheme Corridor
- Stage (i) Testing Area
- Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
- Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated)
- Stage (i)a test trenches (not excavated)
- Archaeological Feature
- Inaccessible area
- Possible Archaeology
- High Resistance Anomaly
- Low Resistance Anomaly
- Cultivation Furrows
- Feature on Historic Map
- + ITM Grid Point

Scale 1:1500@A4	Date 14 12 20
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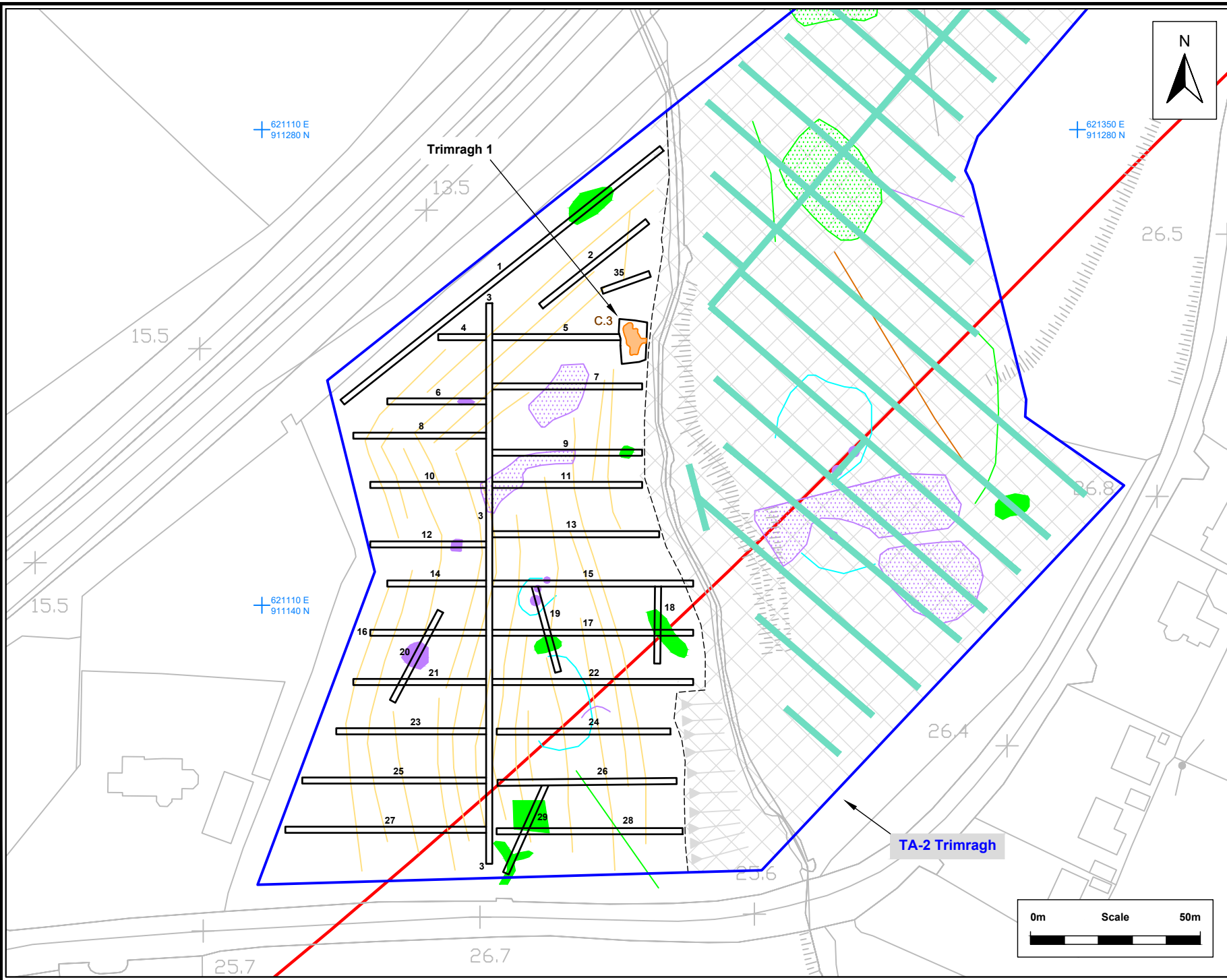







Figure No. 9

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

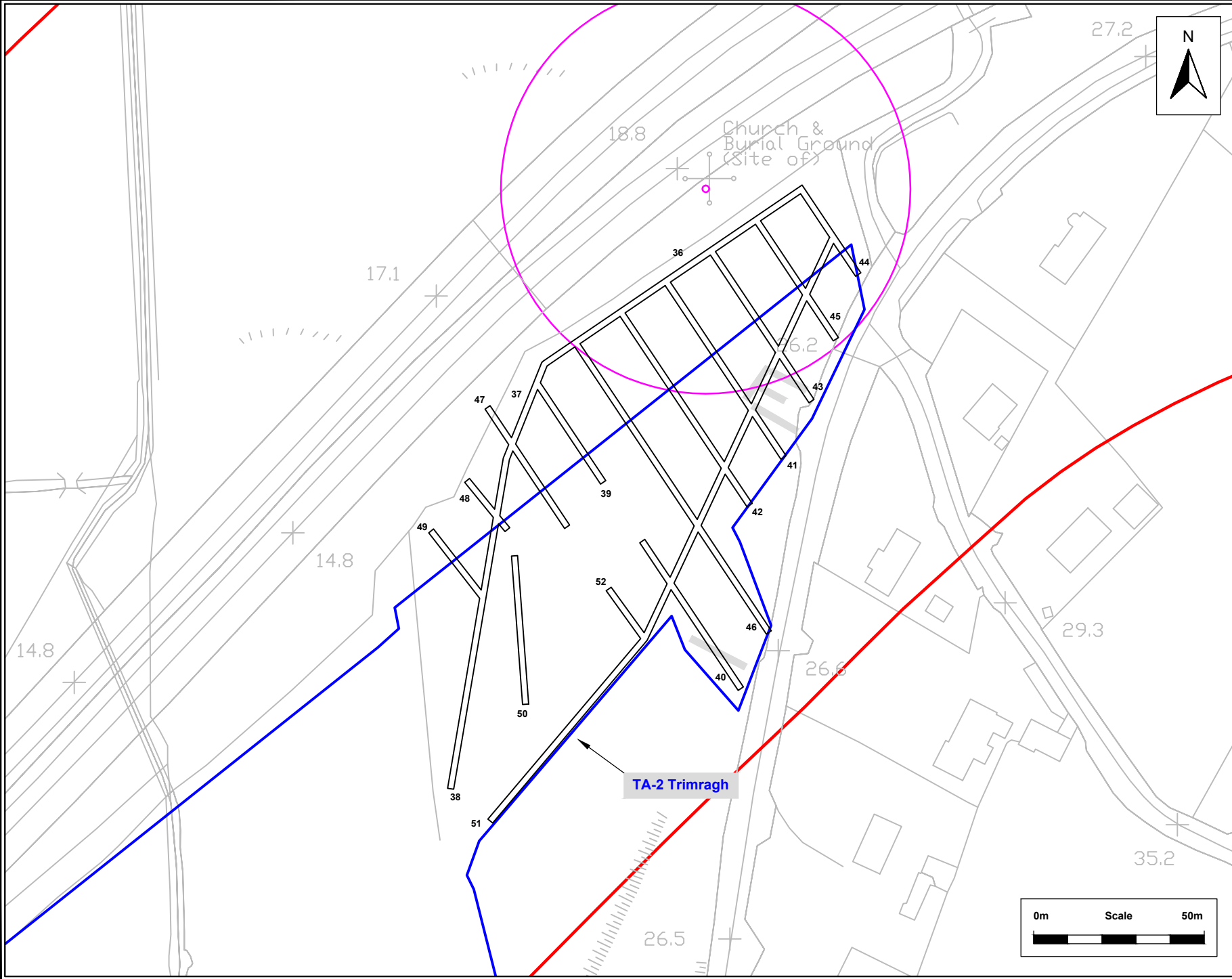
TA-2 Trimragh Trenches 36-52

Legend

-  Scheme Corridor
-  Stage (i) Testing Area
-  Recorded Monument and Zone of Notification
-  Stage (i)a test trenches (excavated 2021)
-  Stage (i)a test trenches 31-34 (excavated 2020)

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TA-2 Trimragh

## PLATES



Plate 1: Example of trenching in the eastern field (T34); facing north



Plate 2: Example of trenching in the western field (T11); facing east



Plate 3: Burnt Spread (C.3); facing east



Plate 4: Sondage through Burnt Spread (C.3); facing northwest



Plate 5: Backfilling completed at Trimragh with re-seeding in progress; facing north