

**Preliminary Excavation Report
Ballymount Great
Dublin 22**

Licence No. 00E0538

John Ó Néill
Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.

For
CIE/LRT

April 4, 2001

List of Figures:

- Figure 1 Location map
- Figure 2 Rocque's map, showing the Ballymount area in 1760
- Figure 3 First edition Ordnance Survey, showing the Ballymount area in 1836
- Figure 4 Beranger's depiction of 'Ballymount Castle' in 1767 (from Harbison 1998, p.85)
- Figure 5 Saunders' depiction of 'Ballymount Castle' in 1797 (from Corlett 2000, p.16)
- Figure 6 Plan of excavated features at lowest level, 1997 (from Conway 1997, Figure 6)
- Figure 7 Layout of buildings at Ballymount (from Stout 1998, p. 149, Figure 3a)
- Figure 8 Location of features excavated in 2000
- Figure 9 Plan of features excavated in 2000
- Figure 10 Profile through possible souterrain
- Figure 11 Elevation of east-facing wall of chamber
- Figure 12 Elevation of south-facing wall of chamber
- Figure 13 Elevation of north-facing wall of chamber
- Figure 14 Location of excavations of enclosure ditch and associated features
- Figure 15 Section through ditch from 1982 excavations (from Stout 1998, p.148, Figure 2c)
- Figure 16 Section through ditch from 1997 excavations (Conway 1997, Figure 12)
- Figure 17 Section through ditch from 2000 excavations

List of Plates

- Plate 1 View of excavated area with possible souterrain feature exposed, from the west
- Plate 2 View of excavated floor of 'chamber,' from the east
- Plate 3 View of 'chamber,' 'creep' and 'passage,' from the west
- Plate 4 View of passage with in-fill material *in situ*, from the east
- Plate 5 Flagstones on base of creep, at entrance to passage
- Plate 6 Section through ditch

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report describes the results of the most recent excavations in Ballymount Great, Dublin 22 (NGR 30906 23046; see Figure 1 for site location).
- 1.2 The excavations took place within the area of archaeological potential around Ballymount Great (SMR 021:015). Two features of the existing complex were investigated: the manor house buildings (SMR 021:015/2) and the large oval enclosure (SMR 021:015/6). The site is shown on Rocque's map of 1760 (Figure 2) and on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey, 1836 (Figure 3).
- 1.3 The archaeological investigations took place in advance of the proposed construction of the LUAS scheme through the complex. This scheme involves the laying down of a railway line through the manor house buildings along a route previously disturbed by the construction of a sewage scheme in the 1970s.
- 1.4 There have been two earlier excavation campaigns within the complex. The first was conducted in 1982 under Geraldine Stout (Stout 1998) prior to the construction of the M50. The second was conducted in 1997 under Malachy Conway (Conway 1998) as part of the LUAS scheme. The current phase of excavation work was carried out to resolve a number of outstanding issues arising from the earlier investigations.
- 1.5 The 2000 investigations in the manor house complex focused on a number of features uncovered during the 1997 excavations. They have revealed that a probable souterrain and other features were located below the south wall of RB1. A trench inserted across the ditch of the oval enclosure revealed stratigraphy more or less similar to that identified in 1982 and 1997.
- 1.6 Investigations of both parts of the complex removed any archaeological materials that would have been disturbed during the construction of the LUAS line. The excavations were carried out by John Ó Néill under licence from Dúchas (licence number 00E0538), with the assistance of Peter Kerins, Kevin Weldon and Penny Johnston.

2 Historical Background

Dr Sean Duffy, Dept. of Medieval History, Trinity College

- 2.1 The archaeological remains in the townland of Ballymount Great, parish of Clondalkin, barony of Uppercross, County Dublin, are very extensive. They include the levelled remains of an earthwork enclosing a two-tiered mound with a berm at its base, making it closer to the barrow tradition than that associated with medieval mottes (perhaps constructed to serve a funerary or ritualistic purpose), and an early fosse with a terminus post quem of the ninth century but probably considerably earlier in date. Medieval remains, still visible or uncovered during excavation, include a paved floor, possibly of Early Christian date; a ninth-century bronze stick pin; a medieval, possibly thirteenth-century, cooking area; and a section of medieval limestone masonry wall, reused in the seventeenth century, possibly as part of the bawn wall surrounding the manor house constructed at that point. The mound is surmounted by a square turret with a plain doorway and window and chamfered brick corners, which may be a folly-type landscape feature, though possibly seventeenth-century in date (Stout 1998).
- 2.2 The existence of such extensive archaeological remains at Ballymount is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the name does not occur in the historical record until as late as 1621. This silence about a site that was both prominent and productive at an earlier period is difficult to explain. While our documentary sources are incomplete, it is, nevertheless, possible to account for virtually every other surviving townland in this area in documentary sources that emanate from the medieval and early modern periods: it would be extraordinary if Ballymount simply went unrecorded previously. Neither is it the case that the site was previously of no consequence, since the archaeological evidence points to the contrary. That leaves only one likely explanation: Ballymount is recorded in 1621 for the first time because the name was only adopted at that point, the site having previously been known by another name.
- 2.3 The 1621 reference to Ballymount occurs in the Irish patent rolls for the reign of James I in connection with a grant of lands by the crown to Sir William Parsons, the surveyor general for Ireland (ancestor of the earls of Rosse). Being surveyor general afforded Parsons ample opportunity to acquire lands, and this he eagerly did, especially in the case of Wicklow, the county he created in 1605. As commissioner of plantations, he took charge of the plantation of Ulster in 1610, of Wexford in 1618, of Longford and Ely O'Carroll in 1619 and of Leitrim in 1620. He himself was an

English undertaker in Ulster and gained 1,000 acres of arable land near Clogher, Co. Tyrone; a similar amount near Dungannon, Co. Tyrone; and likewise in Tullagha, Co. Cavan. He also obtained 1,500 acres in Wexford and 800 acres in Leitrim. In 1620, when he was created a baronet, he received a grant of the former royal manor of Saggart in County Dublin and other lands amounting to a yearly rental to the crown of £100.

- 2.4 These lands are listed in a royal letter-patent dated January 25, 1621, as follows: Ballymergin, alias Ballymarge, near Killmannagh; Corbally, alias Corballis, near Tassegard; Salesbawne; Fingowre; Killardan; Byrraght; the king's wood near Tassagard; 15 acres near Ballmallace; Keranstown, alias Caranstown, near Ballymergin; the castle and lands of Newhall; 40 acres near Jobstown; the castle, manor, town and lands of Killmannagh, alias Killnemannagh; one carucate; and the cell of Killmannagh near the parish of Tawlagh.
- 2.5 There then follows a list of lands in County Tyrone that Parsons also acquired at this point, but the document concludes by stating that 'All the lands in the County of Dublin, together with the lands of Clondalkin, created the manor of **Bellamont**' (*J.R.C.* 1830, 526).
- 2.6 Of the names listed in the grant, all recur repeatedly in earlier descriptions of the area and in earlier records of land transactions there, with the solitary exception of 'Bellamont.' Yet this location is, nevertheless, important enough for the entire estate to be grouped together under its name. One is forced to the conclusion that Bellamont is not, as is generally assumed, an anglicisation of the Irish Ballymount—which is, in any case, a most improbable name, the first component being Gaelic, the second most definitely not. Rather, it is precisely the reverse: Ballymount is a gaelicisation of Bellamont, an elegant new name that Sir William Parsons selected for the manorial headquarters of his new Dublin estate and the site of his manor house. It means, needless to say, 'beautiful mount,' in reference to the pre-existing mound on the spot.
- 2.7 However, Parsons' great scheme for the development of the manor came to nothing as a result of the civil wars of the 1640s and his forced withdrawal from Ireland. In November 1646, it was reported that 'Ballemount is burnt by the rebels' (Lomas 1905, 334–5), and there is no evidence that it was reoccupied. One can well imagine how a once-formidable residence could rapidly go into decline and its very name be corrupted. In the three great inquisitions of the 1650s—the Civil Survey (1654), the Down Survey (1657) and the Census (1659)—it is spelt, respectively, Ballymounte, Ballimount, and Ballymount, and so it has remained.

- 2.8 However, Ballymount is not the name that distant officialdom applied to the location. In 1662, Charles II referred to ‘Sir William Parsons Bart., late of Bellomont, County Dublin’ (Mehaffy 1905, 576). By then, the title to the baronetcy had been conferred on an English soldier and diplomat, Henry Bard, who, in 1645, was created viscount Bellomont. When his heirs failed, Lord Wooton of Wooton in Kent was granted, in 1681, the title earl of Bellomont. The Parsons family still had its eyes on the title, however, and in that same year the earl of Arran (guardian of Sir Richard Parsons, heir to William Parsons’ titles and lands) wrote to the earl of Ormonde stating that ‘My Lord Wooton having taken the title of Bellamont ...I hope you will not be any hindrance if I can get that title for Sir Richard’ (Litton-Falkiner 1911, 58). However, the family never did recover the title, which, in 1689, was conferred by William of Orange on Richard Coote of Colooney. His heirs had died out by 1767, when what was called the earldom of Bellamont was granted to a cousin, Charles Coote of Cootehill, Co. Cavan, though the title finally became extinct at his death in 1800 (Clokayne 1912, 105–7).
- 2.9 Ballymount is not, therefore, a mere townland, but a name, albeit corrupted, that preserves a memory of a distinguished and now defunct Irish peerage, the holder of which had, until the Act of Union, a seat in the Irish House of Lords. As such, its history is not the history of a townland but of an assemblage of lands grouped together under that title, as listed in the 1621 grant to Sir William Parsons.
- 2.10 It is important to try to tie down the lands listed as being part of this new manor of Bellamont. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the grant is the fact that it begins with a place called Ballymergin alias Ballymarge. This might be taken for the modern townland of Ballymanaggin (par. Clondalkin), but it is described as near Killmannagh, and Kilnamanagh is some distance away, across the parish boundary in Tallaght. Furthermore, the variant readings of it that occur in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents (Ballymergy, Ballym[a]cgy, Ballymergan) do not look likely to have produced the modern Ballymanaggin, and it may well be a now-historically submerged site: as it is near Kilnamanagh, it is quite likely to be at or near Ballymount. It is worth pointing out that the suggestion that Ballymergy may in fact be Ballymount was made by A. K. Longfield (wife of H. G. Leask) in her 1960 edition of the *Fitzwilliam Accounts* (Longfield 1960, 125).
- 2.11 Corbally, alias Corballis, near Tassegard is the townland of Corbally, just southeast of Saggart. Salesbawne occurs repeatedly in earlier records, then vanishes at about the time that Oldbawn appears, and is possibly the same place (perhaps from

Seanbhádhún). Fingowre is also attested at an earlier date but has left no later trace in the records. Killardan is Killinardan, but Byrraght, though also attested earlier, has vanished without trace. The king's wood near Tassagard is probably the modern townland of Kingswood between Cheeverstown and Baldonnell. The 15 acres near Ballmallace are in the townland of Ballymaice, between Killinardan and Glenasmole. Keranstown, alias Caranstown, near Ballymergin is potentially significant. It is the small townland of Carranstown, otherwise known as Kingswood (though not the same Kingswood mentioned above), which lies between Ballymount and Belgard. Its northeastern boundary is not much more than 500m from the mound at Ballymount, and the fact that it is described as near Ballymergin strengthens speculation that the latter may in fact be synonymous with Ballymount.

- 2.12 If we work on the assumption, which seems a not unreasonable one, that the remains at Ballymount may, in the medieval period, have been recorded under a variant of the name Ballymergin, then the history of Ballymergin and the other lands making up the manor of Ballymount can be traced, initially, by following the history of the royal manor of Saggart, in the vale of Dublin, of which it formed one of the outlying manorial centres. Perhaps the earliest surviving reference to it occurs in the Irish exchequer roll for Michaelmas Term 1295, which records the receipt from Simon de Camera, one of those to whom the manor had been let 'at farm,' of 60 shillings 'of the farm of Tassagard [Saggart], for Ballymargyn' (Sweetman 1881, 113).
- 2.13 Unfortunately, Saggart, which suffered much from the resurgent activity of the Irish of the Wicklow massif, is one of the more poorly accounted royal manors, and when next we hear of Ballymergin it is in 1332, when William le Dyer, the extern provost of the manor, a post that Simon de Camera had previously held, accounted to the exchequer for £16 11s. 9d. of 'extern rent for Ballymargyn' and other outlying lands of the manor (P.R.O.I. 1903–27, no. 43, 61). Ballymergin appears regularly as part of the 'external rents' of the manor of Saggart in the years that followed, but by the fifteenth century, the area was very much on the frontiers of the Pale, subject to hostile assault and yielding no profit to the crown. As a result, much formerly royal land was leased out or alienated to powerful local landholders, able, by their presence on the ground, to maintain some level of government control.
- 2.14 If we wish, therefore, to trace the later history of Ballymergin, we must follow the fortunes of the family of Talbot of Belgard, a cadet branch of the lords of Malahide. With their caput at Belgard, by the end of the fifteenth century they became the most prominent lay landholders in the area, when Robert Talbot, son of John Talbot of

Feltrim, purchased Killinardan, Ballymaice, Ballinascorney and Fyngower from the fitzWilliam family, lords of Merrion (Kingston 1955, 81). However, it was stated in 1525 that Robert Talbot of Belgard held not only these lands, but 'Corbally, Salisboan, **Ballymergy**, Kingswood near Saggart, Killinardan, Fyngon, Byrragh and 16 acres near Ballymaice' (Griffith 1991, 13).

- 2.15 With some surrounding lands later added, this is precisely the estate that Sir William Parsons was to rename Bellamont almost exactly a century later. Under Parsons, it saw its finest hour, but his fall from grace saw it fall into ruin, a decay that continued unabated in the years that followed.

3 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The excavation took place as archaeological mitigation of the area of the track bed for the rail alignment at Ballymount Great, between Chainages 997.400 and 1197.400. The proposed corridor for the track bed is around 8 m wide and is flanked by a series of poles. The width of the track is 5.9 m, with the poles being located inside the 8 m corridor. The formation levels are 700 mm below the current ground surface, or at 62.65 m OD for the base of the track bed (ref. Semaly dwg. pcr. 80 July 98).
- 3.2 In 1997, Malachy Conway excavated the archaeological soils to a cobbled surface, which had a maximum level of 62.35 m OD. Wall structures associated with the manor house were recorded in plan, section and elevation. The maximum level of these structures was 63.40 m OD. The area where the excavations took place was across the 8 m width of the corridor between Chainages 997.400 and 1197.400. However, at the time of the 1997 assessment, the formation level of the track bed was not known. In advance of the construction of the trackway, Dúchas requested full excavation of the wall structures and cobbled surface in the area to a level below the formation level and to allow for a buffer zone.
- 3.3 The track is also to be laid across part of the ditched enclosure to the north of the manor house complex. Sections of the ditch and a portion of the interior were excavated in 1982 by Geraldine Stout, and much of the remaining parts of the ditch that would be affected by the LUAS Scheme were excavated in 1997 by Malachy Conway. A single remaining section of the ditch was re-exposed and excavated in 2000.

4 Archaeological Results: Manor House Building Complex (SMR 021:015)

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The information given here is drawn from the 2000 excavations, the paper published by Geraldine Stout on the 1982 excavations (Stout 1998) and the report compiled at the end of those excavations by Malachy Conway (Licence number 97E0316). The layout of the buildings in the manor house complex was originally surveyed in the 1970s by Paddy Healy for South Dublin County Council, and there are two existing depictions of the buildings by Beranger (Figure 4; Harbison 1998, No. 31) and Saunders (Figure 5; Corlett 2000). The recent publication of the James Saunders print has dramatically improved our knowledge of the layout at the end of the eighteenth century.
- 4.1.2 Excavations within the area of the manor house buildings concentrated on resolving a number of features identified in the 1997 excavations. The 1997 excavations revealed the cobbled floors of the nineteenth-century building referred to as RB2 and exposed an extensive layer of mid-brown clays (F121) underlying the earliest cobbled floor (F120). This layer was present beyond the walls to the north of RB2, where it was labelled as F118. Here, and south of RB2, the archaeological levels had been removed by the end of the 1997 season. The plan of the lowest recorded level within RB2 is included as Figure 6. Originally the date of the deposition of F121 was uncertain and had been suggested as medieval, as only sherds of Leinster cooking wares and Dublin-type wares had been recovered from this level. The addition of a number of sherds of seventeenth-century pottery (North Devon wares) from this year's excavation implies that this deposit was laid down when the manor house was built in the 1620s, or accumulated until that date. The presence of F118, a deposit of similar date, to the north (and outside) of RB2, suggests that this layer had accumulated over time. On the removal of F121, a number of earlier features were noted, and these are discussed below.
- 4.1.3 The results of the investigations at the Ballymount complex are discussed below in two sections. The first outlines the features that appear to relate to the medieval occupation of the site, when it was probably known as Ballymergin. The second section details the final results of excavations within the manor house structure—Saunders' Ballymount Castle—believed to have been built by Sir William Parsons in the 1620s.

4.2 *Ballymergin: Medieval Features Pre-Dating Ballymount Castle*

4.2.1 *Introduction*

A number of features were identified in Stout's excavations as pre-dating the seventeenth century development of the site, when the earlier name Ballymergin was suppressed. At least one wall (Wall 1), some sort of kiln or oven and a number of other features were uncovered and tentatively dated to the late twelfth to early fourteenth century (Stout 1998, 147; and see Figure 7).

During the 1997 excavations, a series of features was noted within a layer of compacted brown clay, F121, and sealed by it. These features included a rough cobbled area (F17), a gully (F16) and a possible limekiln (F18). The area where the investigation took place in 2000 is indicated on Figure 8.

On removal of F121 across the whole area, it was noted that it constituted the backfill or accumulated fill in the top of the possible limekiln and a second cut to the west of the limekiln. This western feature extended beyond the trench, below F121 and F3/F6, the southern wall of RB2. After the full excavation of all of these features, they now appear to be part of a largely dismantled souterrain rather than a limekiln (see Plate 1 and Figure 9). The reuse of the chamber of the souterrain for mixing lime mortar during the seventeenth-century construction phase would explain the presence of the deposit of lime mortar within the chamber.

The feature exposed in the sewer pipe trench in 1997 was visible in profile as dry stone walls and a paved floor. A layer of lime mortar overlay the paved floor and was covered by two subsequent deposits of clay (see Plate 1). Full excavation of this feature in 2000 exposed a small paved and walled chamber.

The profile through the site from west to east (Figure 10) shows the relationship between the three elements of the possible souterrain, including what are provisionally identified as a chamber, creep and passage, as indicated in the figure and discussed below.

4.2.2 *Souterrain chamber*

The floor area of the chamber was 1.20 m wide (north–south), with 1.00 m of its length surviving (see Figure 9). The maximum internal height was 0.55 m (or three courses of stone). A rough core of clay and boulders was present between the walls and the edges of the cut containing the chamber. A sherd of Dublin-type

ware was recovered from this core on the northern side. The cut for the chamber measured 2.60 m in width (north–south) by 1.60 m in length.

The walls of the chamber were 0.30–0.40 m thick and of unmortared, random coursed limestone blocks. The blocks were present on the southern, western and northern sides (see Figures 11, 12 and 13); the eastern side of the chamber had been removed by the sewer pipe trench. Most of the limestone used in the wall was of roughly hewn blocks, varying in length, but generally 0.15–0.20 m in height. The northern 0.70 m of the western wall appeared to have been in-filled later, as it was completely irregular in construction. This in-fill corresponded to a 1.50 m length of passageway leading west from the in-filled section and opening onto a drop of 0.50 m onto the floor of a wider, deeper passage, as discussed below.

The floor of the chamber was made up of irregular limestone flagstones, up to 0.40 m in length and up to 0.10 m thick (see Plate 2). A crushed sherd of Dublin-type ware was recovered from beneath one flagstone. A thin deposit of brown clay was present between and on top of the flagstones. This clay deposit and the flagstones were sealed by a layer of mortar (see Plate 3) up to 0.15 m deep (F128), overlain by two separate deposits of clays (F126 and F127). A sherd of Dublin-type ware was recovered from F127, and two sherds of Dublin-type ware and a sherd of Leinster cooking ware were recovered from F126, the upper fill of the chamber. The chamber itself was sealed by F121.

4.2.3 *Souterrain creep*

The section of passage linking the chamber to the deeper passage corresponded to a creep in a souterrain. This ‘creep’ was 1.40 m in overall length (east–west), with a 0.60 m wide base, widening out to 1.00 m at a surviving height of 0.40 m. Two factors suggested that this creep was contemporary with the chamber: the face of the northern wall of the chamber was aligned on the wall at the northern side of the creep, and the in-fill in the western wall corresponded to where the creep met the chamber.

The backfill of the creep was mainly a clay deposit, similar to F126 (see Plate 4). It contained a quantity of stones where the creep dropped into the passage and a flagstone where the chamber would have been entered from the creep.

4.2.4 *Southern passage*

The western end of the creep ended in a drop of around 0.50 m to the floor of a wider passage (see Plate 5) measuring some 2 m in length and 1.40 m wide at the base, increasing to 2.05 m at a height of 1.10 m. A small area of cobbling, identified in the 1997 excavations as F17, appeared to correspond to a similar episode of in-filling as F126 within the chamber. In the passage, F17/F126 sealed a deposit of clay similar to F127 in the chamber, suggesting that these events took place simultaneously. A quantity of Dublin-type ware and Leinster cooking ware was recovered from the backfill of the passage.

A narrow gully was present at the northern side of the passage and extended, on the ground surface, for some 1.50 m to the northeast. This gully was 0.40 m and 0.30 m deep and appeared to be contemporary with the passage. The gully had been noted in section in the 1997 excavations as F16.

The configuration of chamber, creep and passage would be typical of a souterrain, a monument that is relatively rare in Dublin, although not unknown in the Liffey valley (Clinton 1998). Although only a short section of the souterrain was uncovered, the identifiable features included a chamber, a creep, a passage and possibly even an air vent (F16). The drystone walls set over a clay and stone core could have easily supported a corbelled or lintelled roof, as would be expected for a souterrain. A substantial quantity of the stone removed from the fill of the chamber, creep and passage was flagstones and blocks of limestone, similar to the construction elements recovered *in situ*.

While there is a difficulty reconciling the mortared floor of the chamber with the evidence known from elsewhere, this would appear to be a secondary feature at Ballymount, being contemporary with the in-filling of the entrance to the creep. Prior to analysis of a sample of the mortar, it may be suggested that the souterrain was dismantled during a period of activity on the site in the thirteenth/fourteenth century, contemporary with the series of features noted to the south and west by Stout in 1982. This activity included the construction of a number of mortared walls.

4.3 *Ballymount Castle*

4.3.1 Some new information is now available regarding the form of the Ballymount complex around 1797, when it was painted by James Saunders. The gable of the

manor house and portions of the circuit of the enclosure wall appear to be the castle painted by Saunders. The barrel-vaulted building appended to the northern gable wall of the manor house can now be dated to after the watercolour (1797). The chimney and ground floor window in the gable of the castle (normally referred to as the manor house) are clearly visible, as is the gate tower and the two-roomed building to the west (as also shown by Beranger in 1767). Given the earlier fabric, including walls and features, identified by Stout in 1982, it is likely that the structure depicted by Saunders is of multiperiod construction. Parson's seventeenth-century building, of which a gable survives, may have been added to substantially earlier buildings.

- 4.3.2 Ballymount Castle (as it is called by Gabriel Beranger and James Saunders), or the manor house building as it is now generally known, only survives in the form of the gable wall. This appears to have been subsequently propped up by the barrel-vaulted building to its north after 1797, when the building was in some disrepair. Stout (1998, 149) identifies the early seventeenth-century date for the 'manor house building' through block-and-start plaster decoration on the quoins. The fireplace in the north wall can be clearly seen on Saunders' drawing, and the proportions of the wall seem correct, confirming that this is the north wall that is preserved within the barrel-vaulted structure. On the basis of Saunders' print, it is clear that Ballymount Castle was more complex than the single-pile rectangular ground plan that the evidence pointed to previously (Stout 1998, 149).
- 4.3.3 The layout of the castle is far from clear in Saunders' depiction. In ground plan, the visible portion in the picture would have a very irregularly shaped ground plan, with a single bay flanked by a single bayed projection and a third single bayed projection at the southern end of the structure. The layout of the building recorded by Saunders is very difficult to interpret from his picture, and it may be that more than one phase of building had taken place by 1797.
- 4.3.4 The enclosure wall projecting west from the manor house is still visible, as is the return of the manor house wall, to the south. The enclosure wall clearly abuts the gable of the manor house and probably postdates it, although not necessarily by any length of time. The easternmost buttress on RB1 is the widest and most substantial and appears to mask the join of RB1 to RB2 and possibly the return on the enclosure wall shown on Saunders' depiction of the site. A section of walling in Trench 7 (in Stout's report) was identified as seventeenth-century in date. This section is co-linear with elements of Wall 3 and the location of the easternmost

buttress on RB2, and this possibly indicates the western circuit of the enclosure wall depicted by Saunders. The southern circuit of the enclosure wall is likely to have incorporated the laneway emerging from the gatehouse into the complex.

- 4.3.5 An enclosing wall extending east from the manor house building can also be identified in the surviving fabric. This has been incorporated into the barrel-vaulted structure. Another building shown on Saunders' map may have still stood when the barrel-vaulted structure was erected, as the western gable corresponds to the approximate location of the eastern gable of the building represented in the painting. The drainage pipe trench running through the site would have removed much of the traces of that building, and none was noted in any of the phases of excavation.
- 4.3.6 A number of new statements can now be made about the relative chronology of the later buildings. It appears that the barrel-vaulted structure was added post-1797. Although the buttressed elements were considered contemporary before (Stout 1998, 150), the surviving buttress has been bonded into the barrel-vaulted structure, while those in the north wall of RB1 merely abut the structure. On this basis, it is likely that RB1 and RB2 are wholly nineteenth-century in date, with the exception of part of the north wall of RB2. It is likely that the courtyard was extended sometime in the nineteenth century, and it is also possible that RB1 was not solely intended for use as a byre or barn.

5 Archaeological Results: The Enclosure Site (SMR 021:015/6)

- 5.1 Most of the area of the enclosure within the proposed LRT alignment was excavated by Stout in 1982 or Conway in 1997 (see Figure 14). These excavations revealed a small number of internal features, the profile of the ditch and the possible existence of an outer bank. While the upper fills of the ditch of the enclosure to the north of this complex produced a stick pin of tenth/early eleventh-century date, no dating evidence was recovered from the lower fills of the ditch. Since a small part of the ditch was unexcavated along the route of the proposed realignment, this was removed in order to obtain some evidence for the actual date of construction of the enclosure. The 1982 excavations provided evidence that the ditch may originally have had an external bank and uncovered several pits and post holes within the area enclosed by the ditch. The 1997 excavations uncovered much of the remainder of the enclosure ditch and outer bank material, revealing sherds of Dublin-type ware in the clay deposit sealing the top of the ditch.
- 5.2 The previous excavations had revealed a series of three deposits within the ditch, each composed of a varying number of lenses (Figures 15 and 16). The ditch itself was around 2.45 m in width and up to 1.30 m in depth. In profile, it was slightly funnel shaped, with a flat base measuring around 1.30 m in width. The primary ditch fill was up to 0.40 m deep and was mainly a grey-brown silty fill with some comminuted charcoal and tiny fragments of shell and animal bone. A secondary fill of mid-brown clay overlay the primary silts. This layer was more compact and found to be up to 0.60 m in depth. After the secondary fills had accumulated the ditch appears to have been recut. A further series of deposits developed within the recut ditch, including an initial deposit of burnt clay and charcoal and later silty clays.
- 5.3 On removal of the topsoil from within the area investigated previously, a small section of the ditch was found intact. This was excavated with the express purpose of identifying whether the sequence of finds at the upper level of the ditch reflected the construction date. In 1982, a tenth/eleventh-century stick pin was removed from the upper levels of the fill (Stout 1998), which were found to have been sealed by a deposit containing sherds of pottery dating to the thirteenth century (Conway 1998).
- 5.4 The section of the ditch excavated in 2000 (see Figure 17 and Plate 6) measured 2.80 m in width at the top and was 1.65 m in depth. The base of the ditch measured 1.10 m in width. The primary fills were present to 0.90 m from the base of the ditch, but were mainly around 0.50 m deep (these correspond to F210/209 noted in 1997). The

secondary fill was mostly removed by the recut and was between 0.10 m and 0.30 m deep (corresponding to F208 from 1997). Practically no datable material was recovered from either the primary or secondary fills of the ditch. Some tiny fragments of charcoal and bone were noted. The ditch was recut to measure 0.85 m in depth and around 2.10 m in width at the top with steep sides and a concave base. Charcoal and burnt clay were recovered from the basal fill of the recut similar to previous excavations (noted as F207 in 1997). Two more layers of silty clay were present within the cut (F205/204 from 1997). A deposit of mid-brown clay sealed the eastern side of the upper ditch fills (F203 from 1997), suggesting that ploughing had partially removed the top of the ditch.

- 5.5 The finds from the previous excavations suggest that the recut ditch predates the tenth/early eleventh-century date provided by the stick pin recovered from the fills. By the thirteenth century, a clay mantle had begun to develop over the ditch, as evidenced by the sherds of Dublin-type ware. While some iron fragments were noted in the primary ditch fills in previous excavations, no further evidence was retrieved that would allow for a more direct assessment of the date of the enclosure.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 The final phase of archaeological investigation of the Ballymount site posed as many new questions as it answered. While the lowest level reached in the 1997 excavations was identified as seventeenth-century in date, the possible remains of a souterrain were exposed beneath those layers. The publication of Saunders' painting has also revealed a number of new details regarding the layout of the castle.
- 6.2 The identification of the pre-castle, or Ballymergin, features as a souterrain is tentative. While the chamber/creep/passage configuration seems correct, and both the location (Clinton 1998) and dating (mediaeval pottery sherds) are as expected, some doubts remain. The absence of walling within the passage and creep does not immediately suggest a souterrain, nor does the lime-mortared flooring in the chamber. However, the deliberate destruction of portions of the souterrain in the medieval period or later cannot be discounted. Mortar samples retrieved from a number of the masonry features exposed in the 1997 and 2000 excavations were retained for analysis. This may differentiate features constructed during the known phases on the site.
- 6.3 The original date for the construction of Ballymount Castle (i.e., the manor house buildings) cannot be confirmed. The gable dated by Stout to the seventeenth century should be associated with Parsons, but the layout indicated by Saunders in 1797 is unusual, and it is no longer certain whether the site should be considered as a tower house or a fortified house. Although tall chimney stacks, transoms and hood mouldings are not depicted, neither are bartizans or machicolations. While small opes are depicted both at ground level and first-floor level, larger opes are indicated at upper levels. These may have originally been transomed and mullioned, but this cannot be ascertained now. The wide chimney breast and high gable are suggestive of a fortified house, but the focus of the building is still largely vertical rather than horizontal. The most likely explanation is that the manor house element was added to a pre-existing tower house.
- 6.4 Ballymount Castle cannot be simply classified as a fortified house on the basis of block-and-start plaster decoration on the quoins, probable transomed windows, the surviving chimney and the enclosing walls visible in Saunders' print. The smaller opes at ground-floor level, the asymmetry of the visible ground plan and the general appearance of the buildings suggest that an earlier building was incorporated into Parsons' manor house. The emphasis on extended, and comfortable, accommodation,

alongside outer defensive walls is recognised as a feature of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century evolution of fortified house from tower houses (Sweetman 2000).

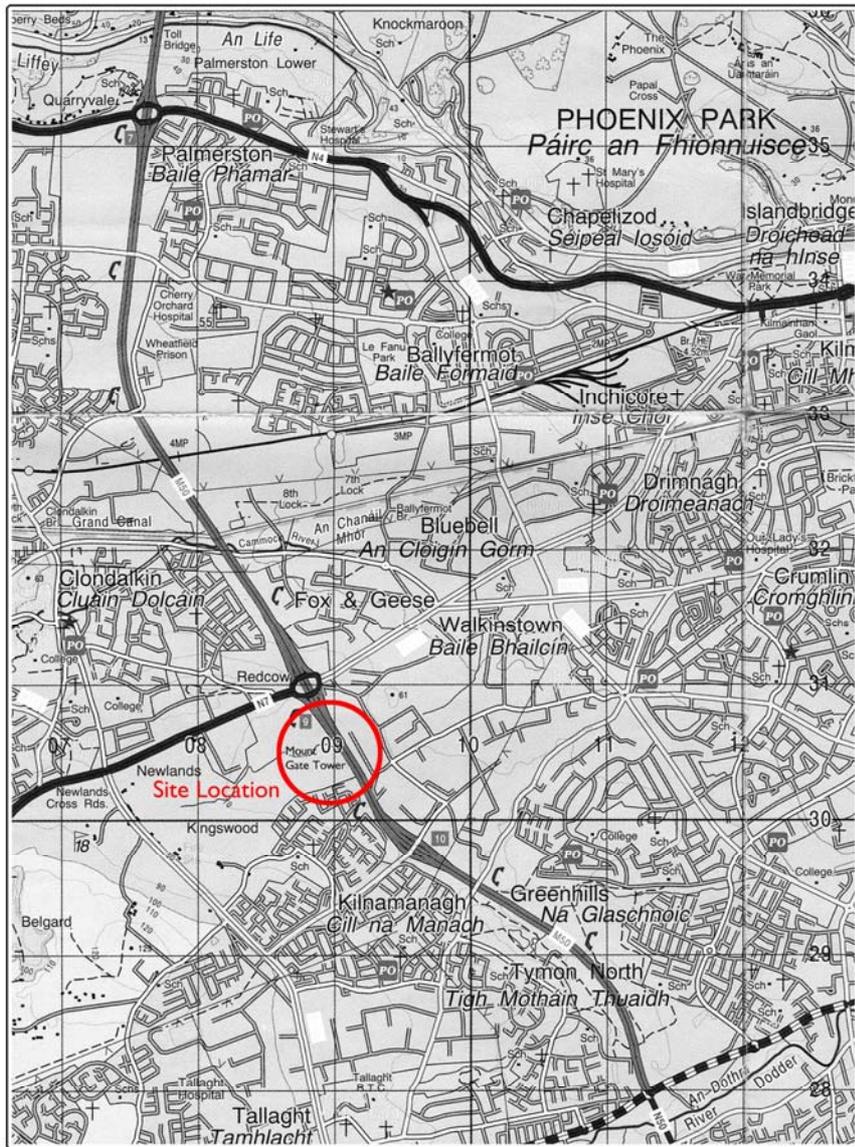
- 6.5 The dating of F121 as being deposited until the seventeenth century has implications for a number of features uncovered at that level. A number of walls uncovered in the 1997 excavations must relate to the seventeenth-century structure (i.e., that recorded by Saunders). Two post pits marking a northwest–southeast alignment were present within F121. While these two features were of unknown date, the only other northwest–southeast alignment on site was the mediaeval wall to the southwest, and the two post pits may derive from a structure parallel to that wall.
- 6.6 At the moment, the most significant result of the investigations is the identification of a possible souterrain confirming the medieval activity identified by Stout and Conway. Saunders’ depiction of Ballymount Castle could be taken as suggesting that a tower house phase bridges the gap between the medieval activity, when the site may have been known as Ballymergin, and the seventeenth-century development of the sites by Parsons, when it was renamed Bellamont.
- 6.7 The excavations of the enclosure to the north of the manor house complex failed to resolve the issue regarding the date of construction. While the artefacts from the tenth to thirteenth century date the recutting and sealing of the ditch, no date has yet been produced for the primary phase of activity, when the bank and ditch were constructed. The configuration of an outer bank and inner ditch enclosing an earlier mound is attested to elsewhere in Ireland. While the date of the mound at Ballymount is unknown, the naming of the site as Bellamont in the seventeenth century implies that the mound was present before that date. Similarly, as the ditch was recut sometime around the ninth or tenth century (or possibly earlier), a prehistoric date for the original enclosure is not out of the question.
- 6.8 In comparative terms, a number of the known parallels for the layout at Ballymount are dated to the later prehistoric period and are often characterised as ‘royal sites’ (e.g., Warner 1988). These include Ráith na Ríog at Tara, Co. Meath (Byrne 1973; Newman 1997); Knockaulin, Co. Kildare (Ó hUiginn 1990); and Navan Fort, Co. Armagh (Mallory 1987). The identification of royal sites by archaeology rather than documentary sources has been claimed for Raffin Fort, Co. Meath (Newman 1997, xiv). Until further evidence has been recovered from the ditch, or the mound, the most likely explanation for the Ballymount enclosure is as a minor ‘royal site’ of the later prehistoric period.

Bibliography

- Byrne, F. J. (1973) *Irish kings and high kings*. London.
- Clinton, M. (1998) 'The souterrains of County Dublin.' In C. Manning (ed) *Dublin and beyond the Pale*, 117–28.
- Clokeyne, G. E. (1912) *The complete peerage*, vol. **ii**, London.
- Conway, M. (1998) *Archaeological assessment and excavations at Ballymount Great, Co. Dublin*. Unpublished report. Margaret Gowen & Co.
- Corlett, C. (2000) 'The antique sketches of James Saunders.' *Archaeology Ireland* **53**, 16–17.
- Griffith, M. (1991) *Calendar of inquisitions formerly in the Office of the Chief Remembrancer of the Exchequer*. Irish Manuscripts Commission. Dublin.
- Harbison, P. (1998) (ed). *Beranger's antique buildings of Ireland*. Four Courts Press.
- I.R.C. (1830) *Irish Patent Rolls of James I*. Calendar prepared for the Irish Record Commissioners. London.
- Kingston, J. (1955) 'Catholic families of the Pale.' *Reportorium Novum*, vol. **i**, no. 1.
- Litton-Falkiner C. (1911) *Calendar of manuscripts of the marquess of Ormonde*, new ser., vol. **vi**. Historical Manuscripts Commission, London.
- Lomas, S. C. (1905) (ed.), *Report on the MSS of the earl of Egmont*, vol. **i**, pt. i. Historical Manuscripts Commission, London.
- Longfield, A. K. (1960) *Fitzwilliam Accounts 1560–65*. Irish Manuscripts Commission. Dublin.
- Mehaffy (1905) *Calendar of the state papers relating to Ireland, in the Public Record Office, 1660–1662*. London.
- Mallory, J. (1987) 'The literary topography of Emain Macha.' *Emania* **2**, 12–18.
- Newman, C. 1997 *Tara: An Archaeological Survey. Discovery Programme Monographs* **2**.
- Ó hUiginn, R. (1990) 'The literature of the Laigin.' *Emania* **7**, 5–9.
- P.R.O.I. (1903–27) 'Accounts of the great rolls of the pipe of the Irish exchequer, Henry III–Edward III,' *Reports of the deputy keeper of the public records in Ireland*, nos. 35–54. Dublin.
- Stout, G. (1998) 'The archaeology of Ballymount Great, Co. Dublin.' In C. Manning (ed.) *Dublin and beyond the pale*, 145–154.
- Sweetman, D. (2000) 'The fortified house in Ireland.' In A. Smyth (ed.) *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*. 448–453. Four Courts Press.
- Sweetman, H. S. (1881) *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1293–1301*. London.
- Warner, R. (1988) 'The archaeology of early historic Irish kingship.' In S. Driscoll and M. Nieke (eds.), *Power and politics in early medieval Britain and Ireland*, 47–68. Edinburgh.

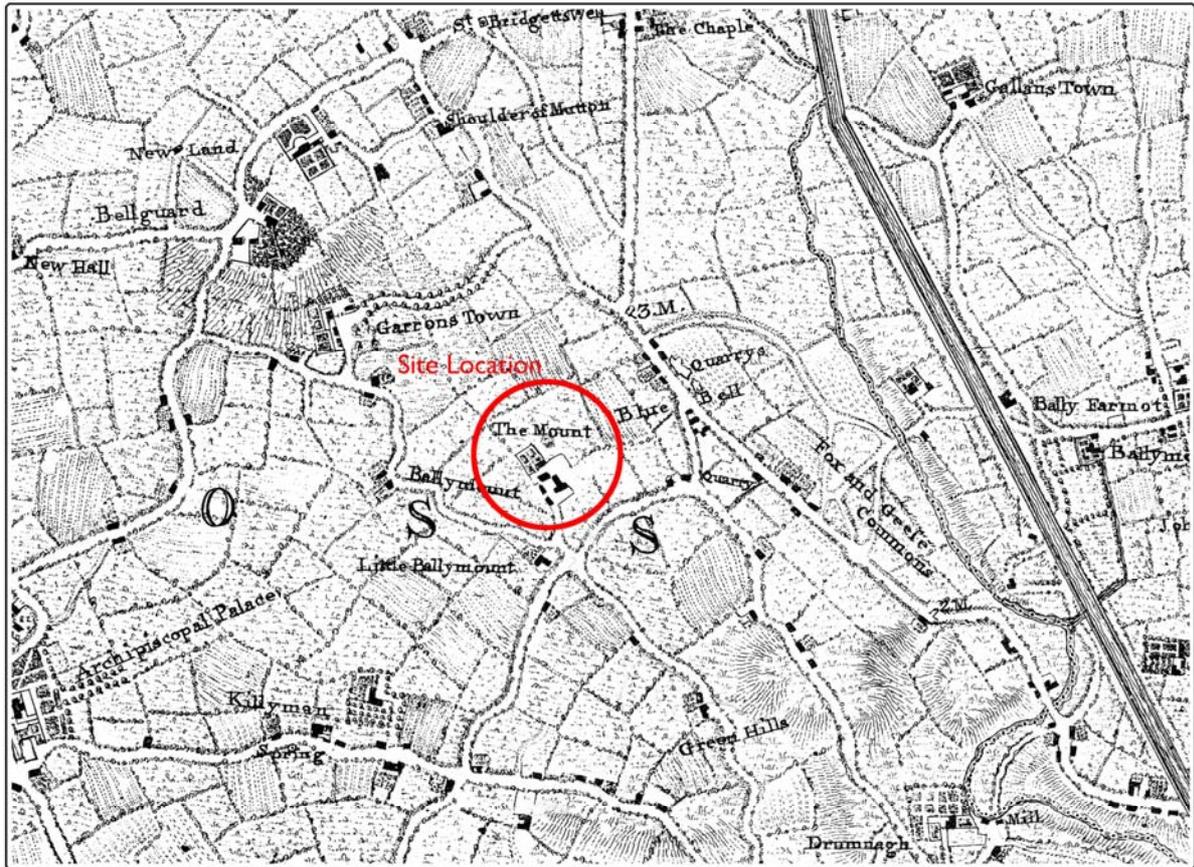
John Ó Néill,

April 4, 2001



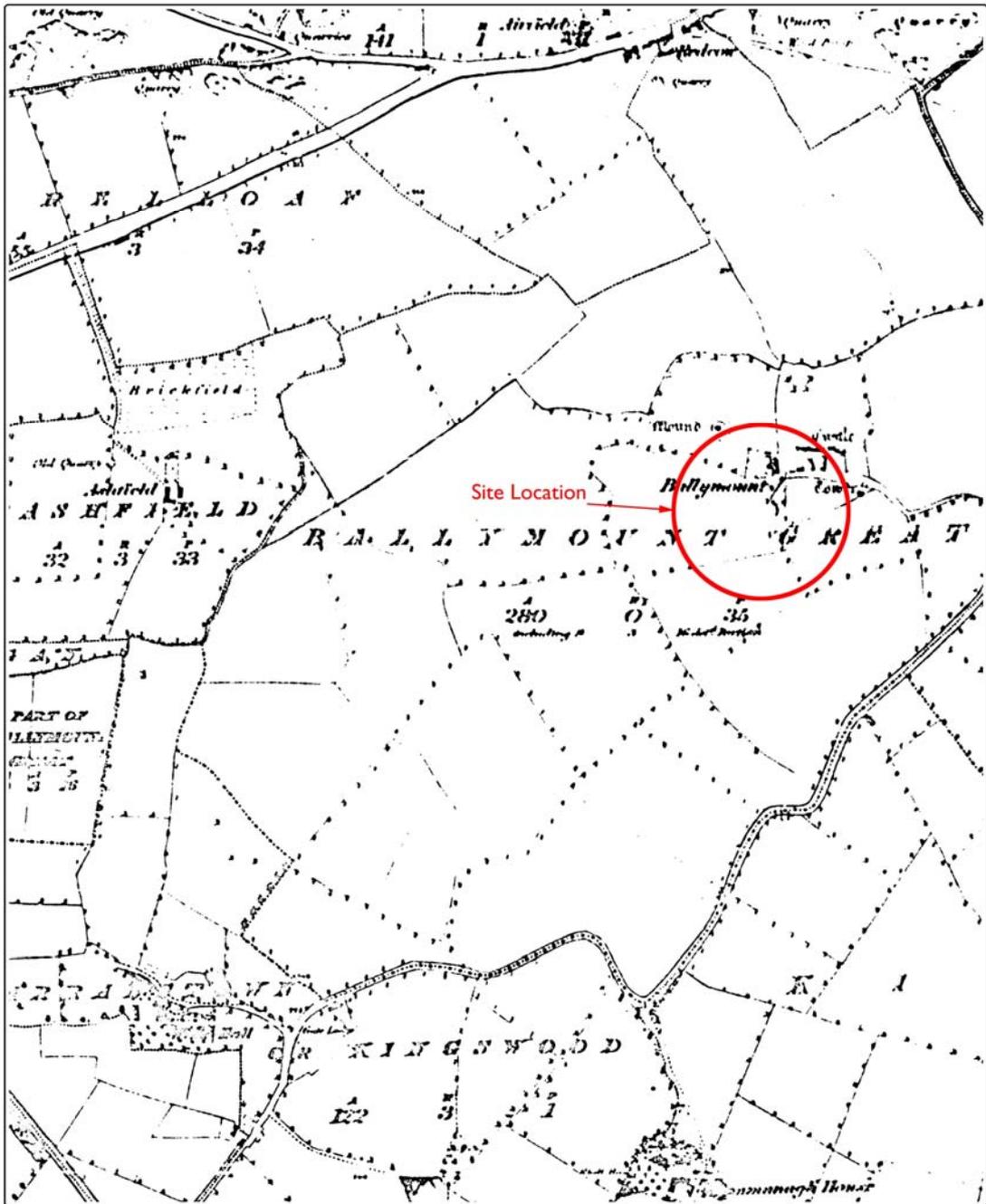
Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd
Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers

Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale 1:50,000
Fig. 1 Location map



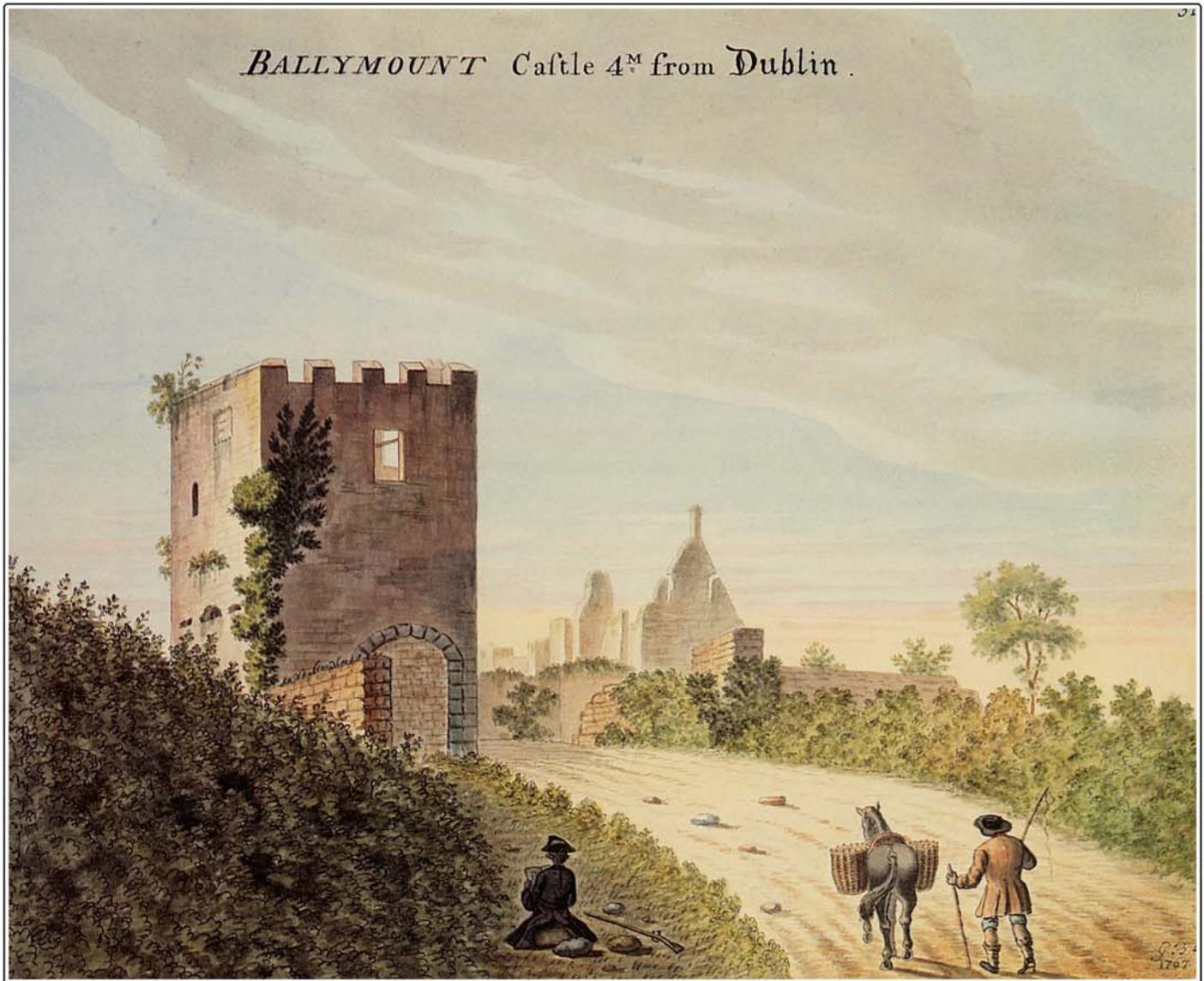
Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd
Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers

Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale Not applicable
Fig. 2 Rocque, 1760



Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd
Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers

Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale Not applicable
Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey, 1836



 Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd
Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers

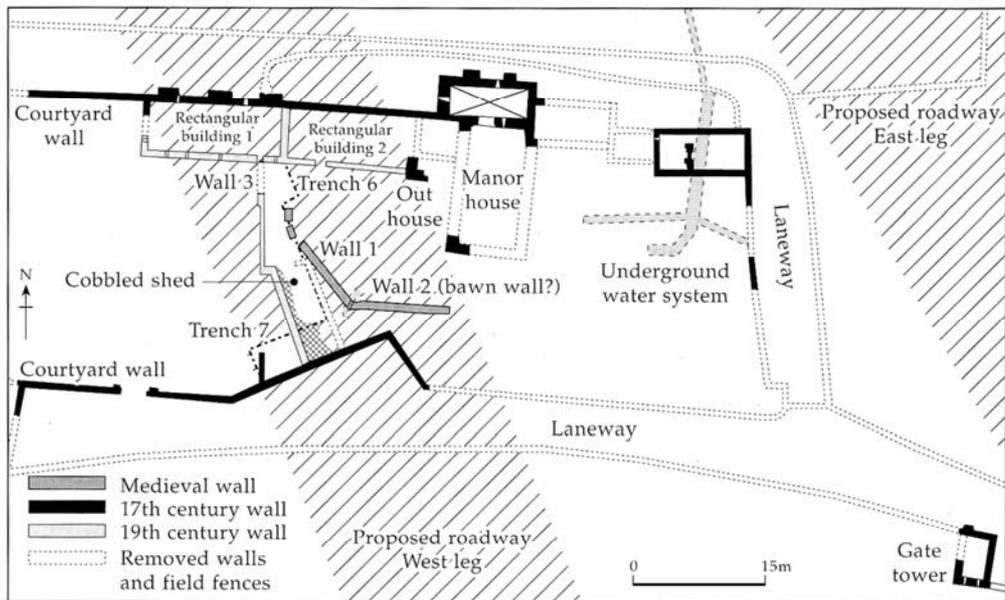
Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Fig. 4 'Ballymount Castle' in 1767
(Beranger)



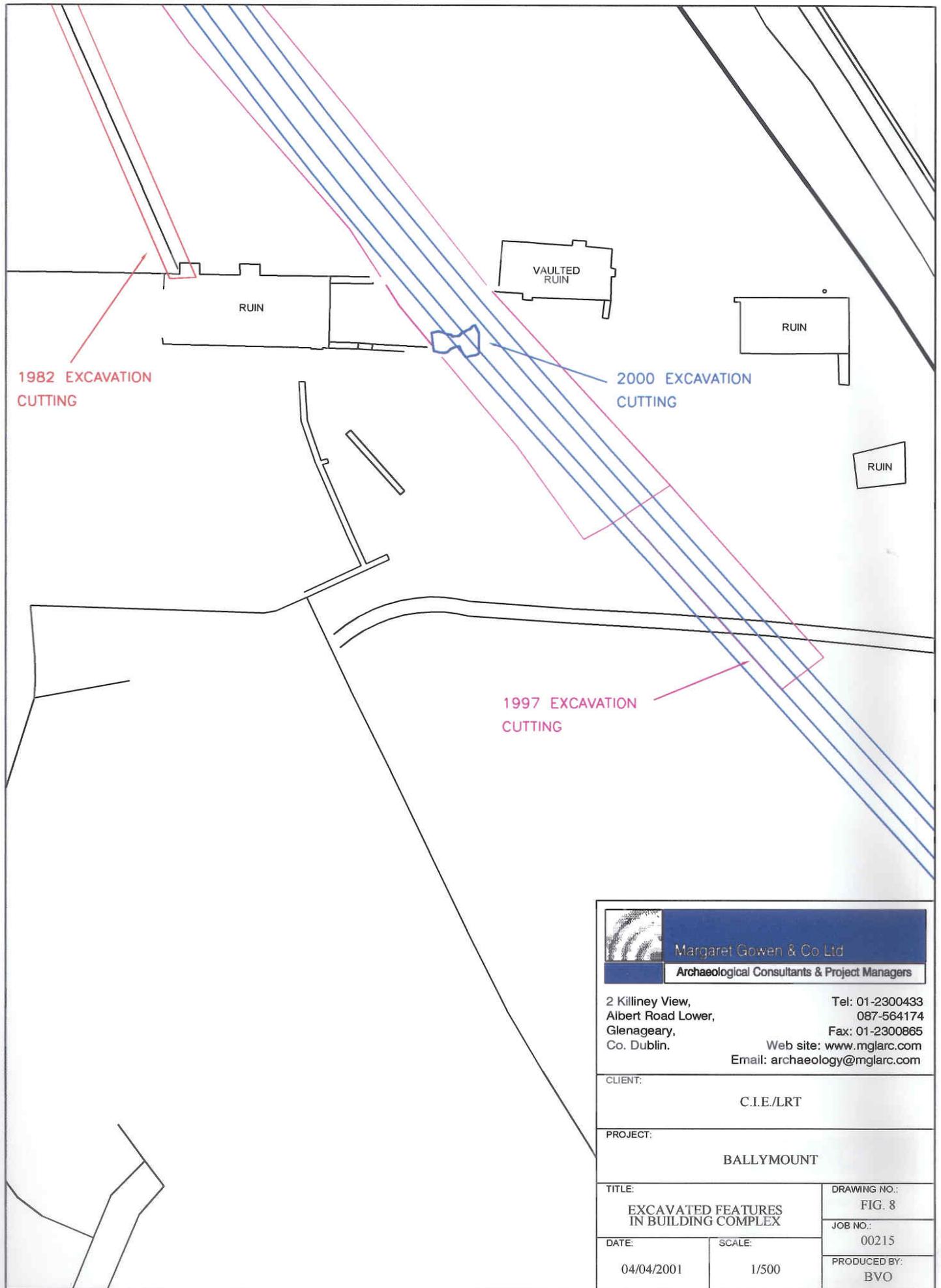
Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Fig. 5 'Ballymount Castle' in 1797
(Saunders)



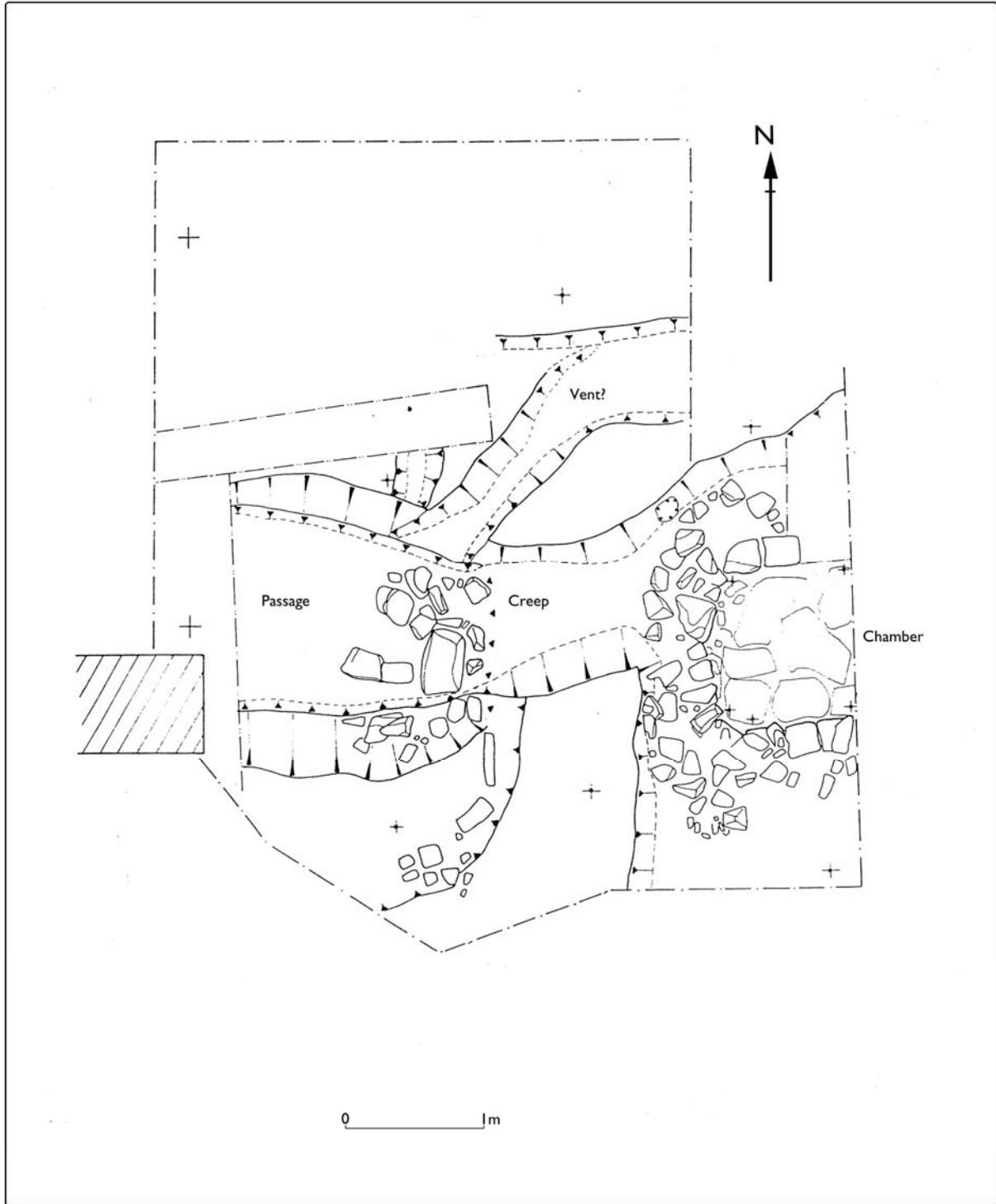
Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 6 Plan of excavated features at lowest level, 1997 (Conway)



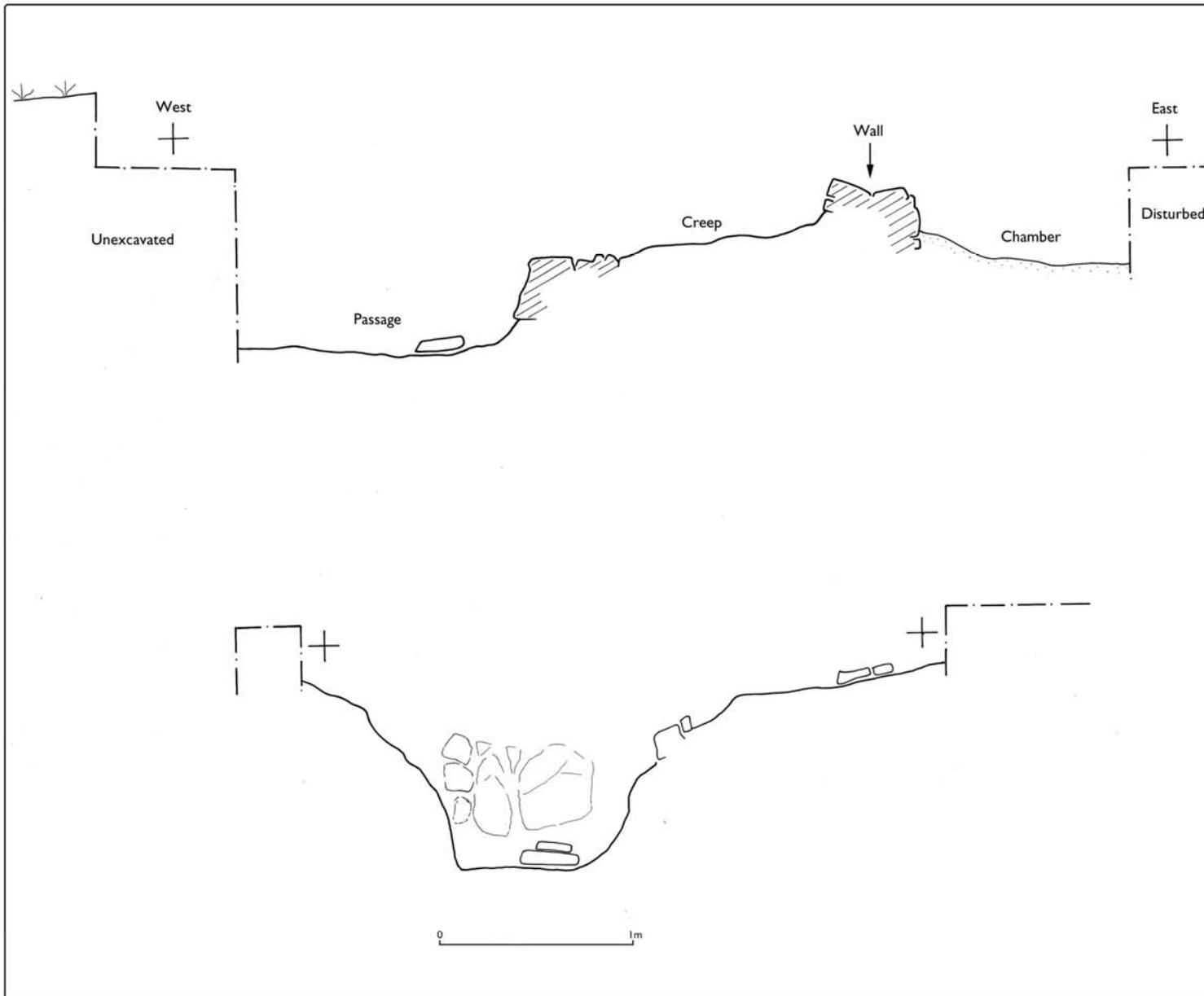
Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 7 Layout of buildings (Stout)



		Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers	
2 Killiney View, Albert Road Lower, Glenageary, Co. Dublin.		Tel: 01-2300433 087-564174 Fax: 01-2300865 Web site: www.mglarc.com Email: archaeology@mglarc.com	
CLIENT:		C.I.E./LRT	
PROJECT:		BALLYMOUNT	
TITLE:		DRAWING NO.:	
EXCAVATED FEATURES IN BUILDING COMPLEX		FIG. 8	
DATE:		JOB NO.:	
04/04/2001		00215	
SCALE:		PRODUCED BY:	
1/500		BVO	



Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 9 Plan of features excavated in 2000



Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 10 Profile through possible souterrain

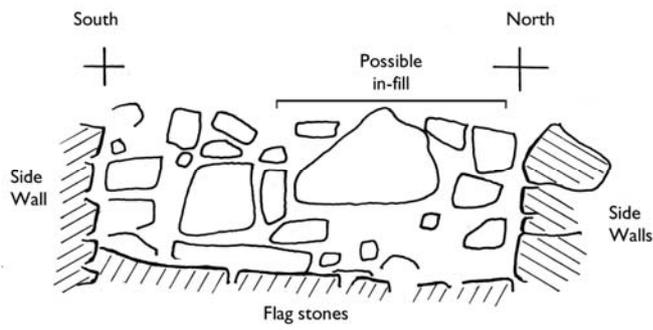


Figure 11 Elevation of east-facing wall of chamber

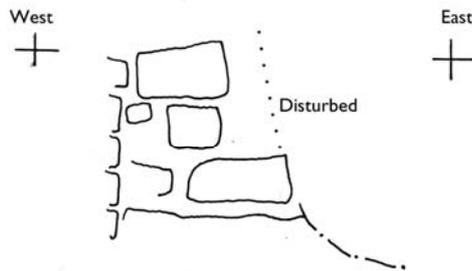


Figure 12 Elevation of south-facing wall of chamber

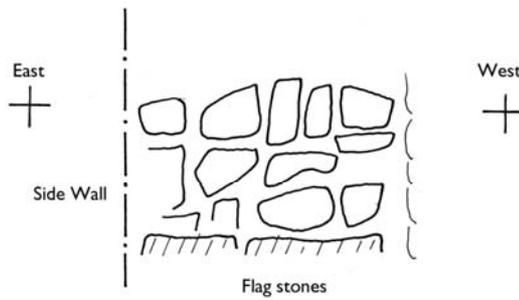
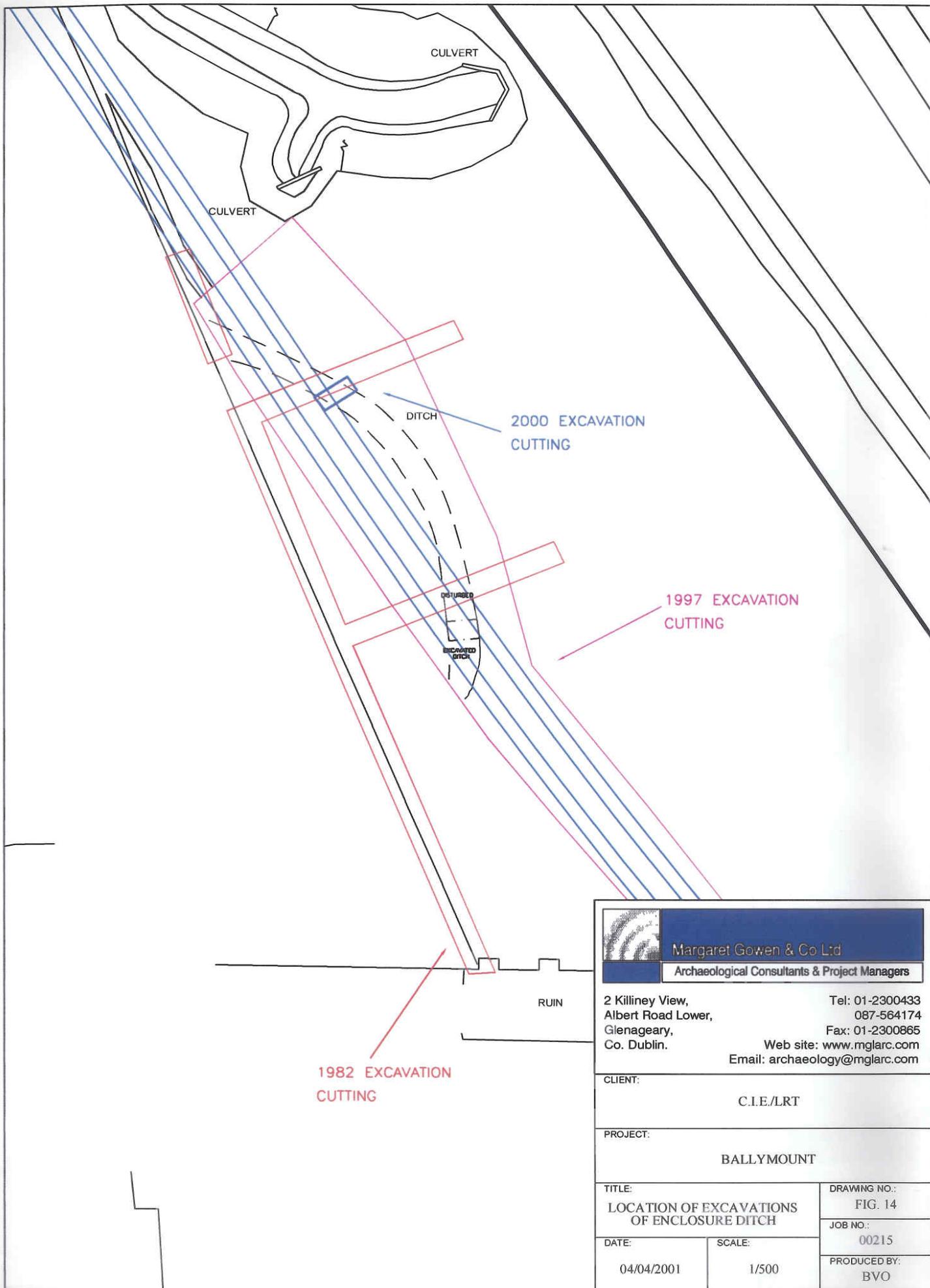
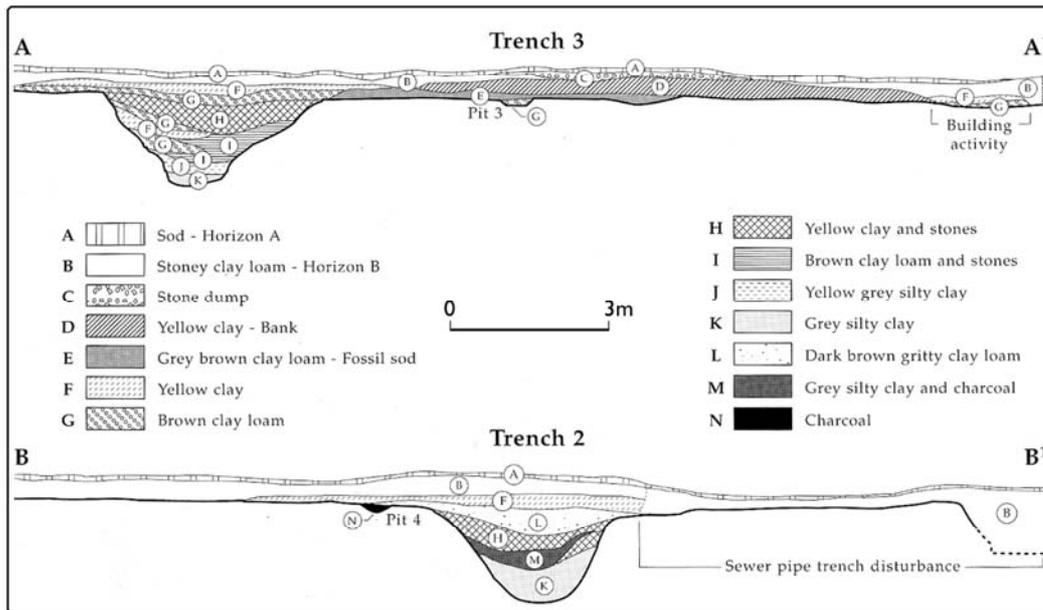


Figure 13 Elevation of north-facing wall of chamber

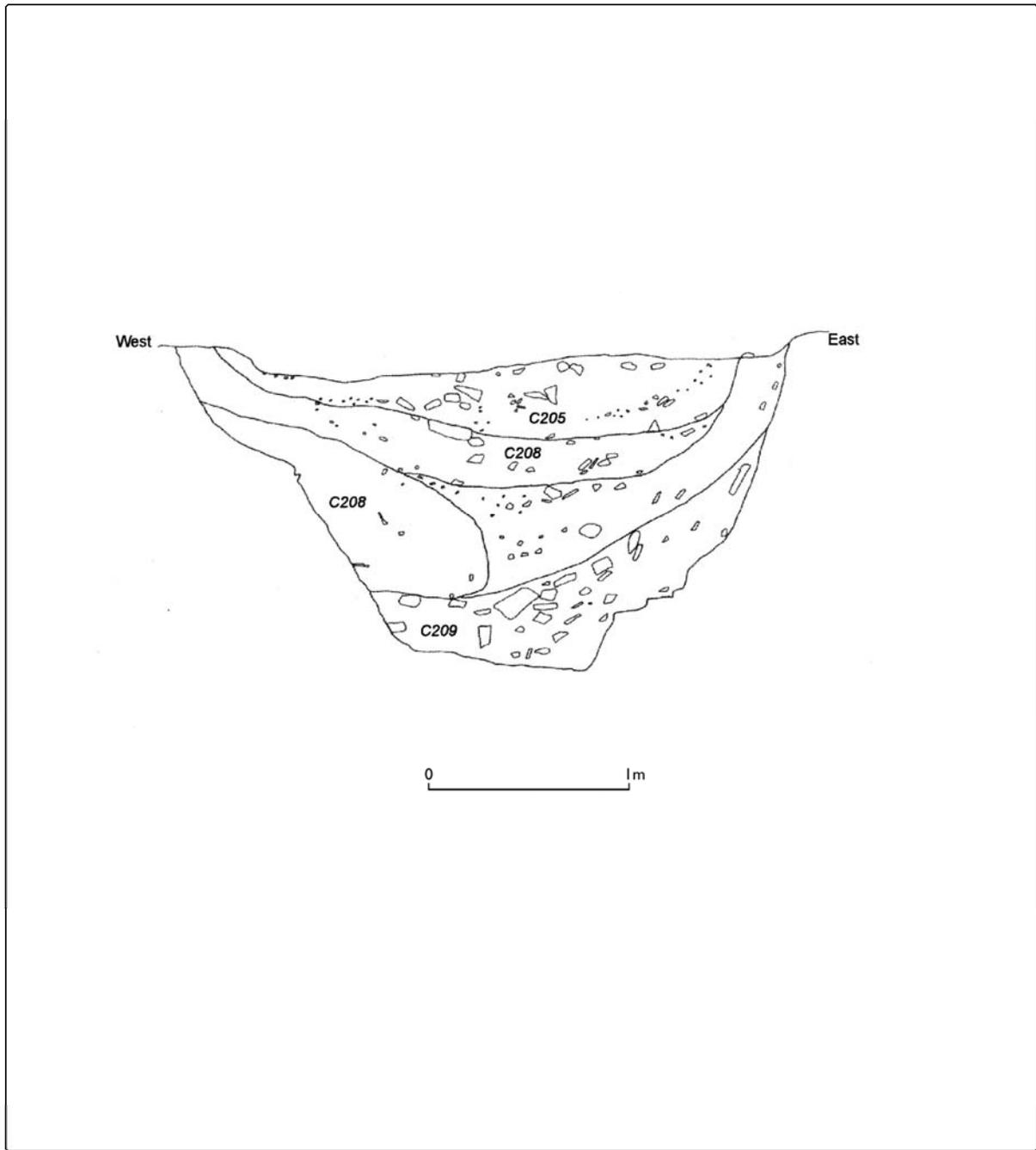




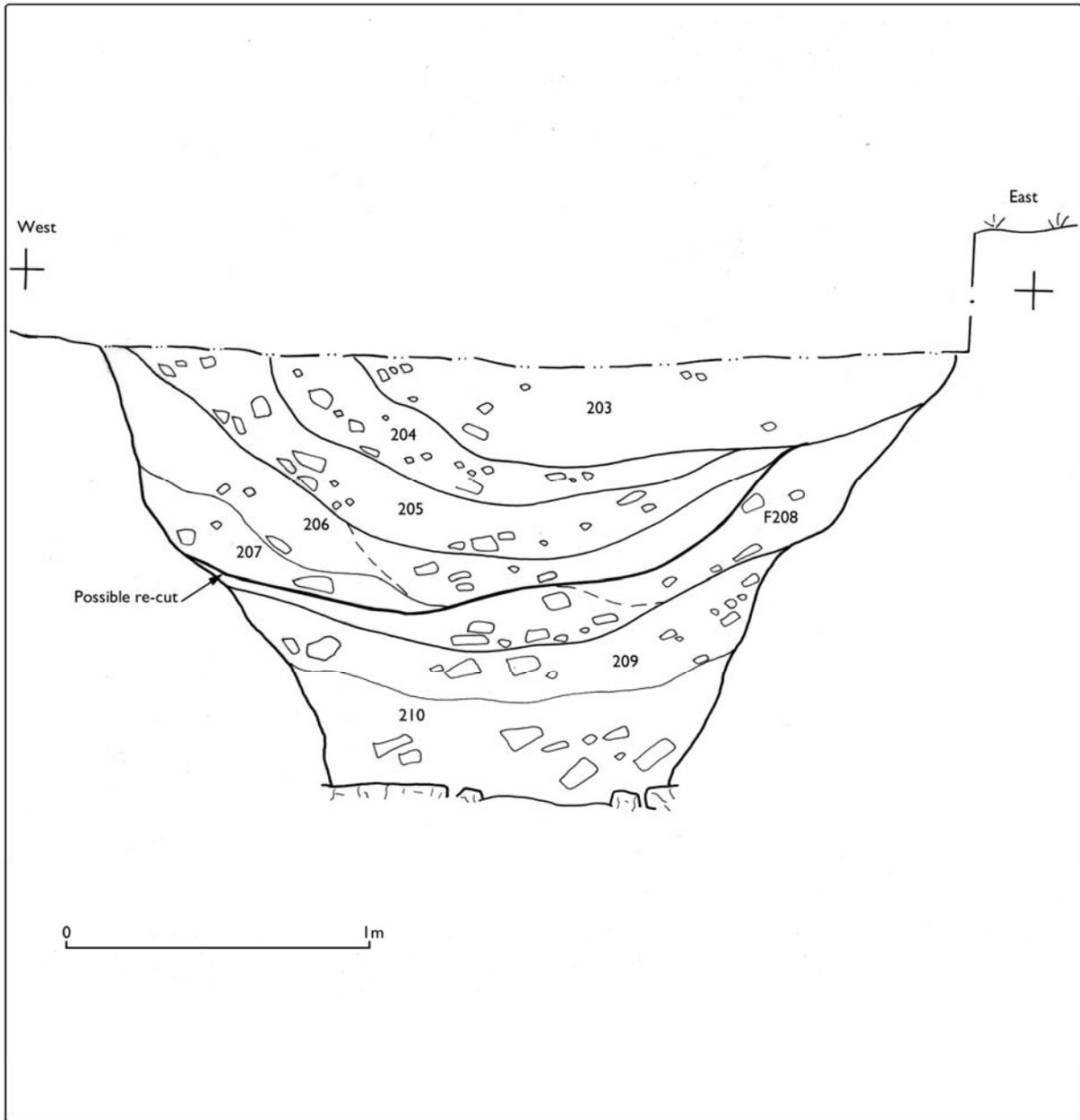
		Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers	
2 Killiney View, Albert Road Lower, Glenageary, Co. Dublin.		Tel: 01-2300433 087-564174 Fax: 01-2300865 Web site: www.mglarc.com Email: archaeology@mglarc.com	
CLIENT:		C.I.E./LRT	
PROJECT:		BALLYMOUNT	
TITLE:		DRAWING NO.:	
LOCATION OF EXCAVATIONS OF ENCLOSURE DITCH		FIG. 14	
DATE:		JOB NO.:	
04/04/2001		00215	
SCALE:		PRODUCED BY:	
1/500		BVO	



Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 15 Section through ditch from 1982 excavations (Stout)



Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 16 Section through ditch from
1997 excavations (Conway)



Job Ballymount, Dublin 22
Ref. 00215
Date 04.04.01
Client CIE/LRT
Scale As indicated
Fig. 17 Section through ditch from 2000 excavations



Plate 1 View of excavated area with possible souterrain feature exposed, from the west



Plate 2 View of excavated floor of 'chamber,' from the east



Plate 3 View of 'chamber,' 'creep' and 'passage,' from the west



Plate 4 View of passage with in-fill material in situ, from the east



Plate 5 Flagstones on base of creep, at entrance to passage



Plate 6 Section through ditch