

## 5.10. Archaeological Investigations

Despite the potential, significance and interest in the monument there has been limited archaeological investigation undertaken at Drumanagh or its environs to date.

### 5.10.1. Geophysical Surveys:

A geophysical survey of the promontory was undertaken by Martina McCarthy (GeoArc Ltd.) for the National Museum of Ireland in 1999. This consisted of a magnetic gradiometry survey (resolution 1m x 0.5m) of the seaward side of the ramparts, essentially the entire promontory. As with the aerial photography the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century field boundaries to the north and south, and the road to the Martello are highly visible. A topographical study was also undertaken and analysed in conjunction with the geophysical survey results (Eamonn Kelly, pers. comm).

As part of the *Late Iron Age and 'Roman Ireland' Project 2011-14* undertaken by the Discovery Programme, six separate areas, comprising 4.7 ha in total were targeted for geophysical survey at Drumanagh and environs (Licence No.: 12R127). Three areas (1A, 1B, 1C) were to the east of the promontory and another (1D) was to the west of the ramparts in the south-west of the site. Gradiometry was conducted using 0.25m sample and 0.5m traverse intervals (Dowling 2014, 65).

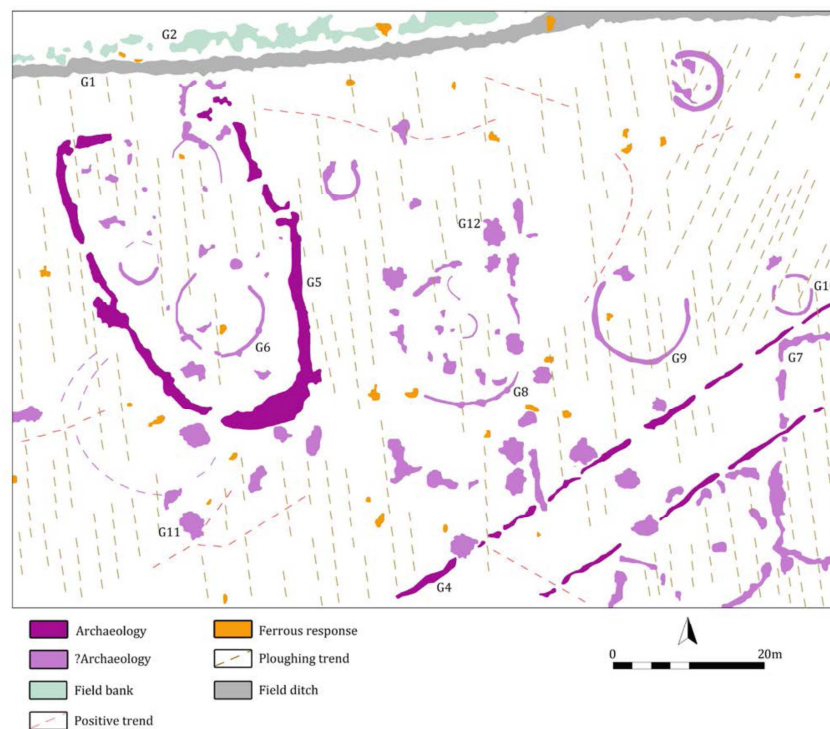


Fig. 12: Area 1A Interpretative Plan. Courtesy of the Discovery Programme

Within the promontory a large D-shaped enclosure (G5/SMR: DU008-006004) 43m NW/SE by 26m NE/SW enclosing a possible structure (G6/ SMR: DU008-006005) was identified. An enclosure with an array of large pit-type anomalies (G8/ SMR: DU008-006007); a rectangular enclosure c.30m in diameter (G7/ SMR: DU008-006006); possible ring-ditch truncated by a field ditch (G13/ SMR: DU008-006008) and another possible ring-ditch with a well-defined pit anomaly at its centre (G14/ SMR DU008-006009) were also identified. These were interspersed with discrete pit-type anomalies, fragmentary circular anomalies and positive ditch-type anomalies (Dowling 2014, 59-74).

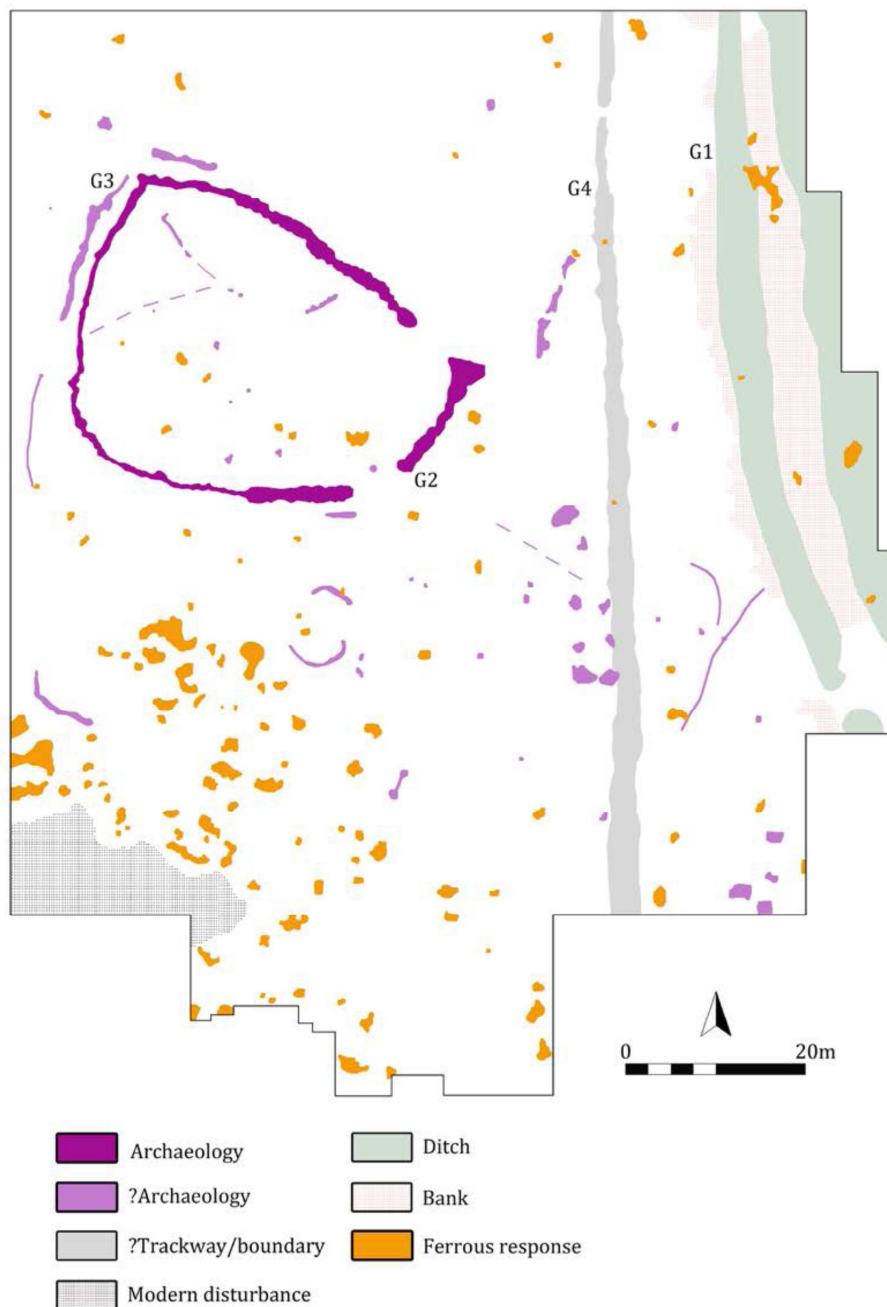


Fig. 13: Area 1D Interpretative Plan. Courtesy of the Discovery Programme

An area (1D) of c.1ha was investigated to the west of the ramparts extending southwards to the southern boundary of the site. Magnetic disturbance and a scatter of ferrous litter defines the area to the south near the derelict building, but further north is a large oval enclosure measuring approximately 42mEW x 30mNS (G2/ SMR: DU008-094----) (Dowling 2014, 74).

### 5.10.2. Auger Surveys:

Two auger surveys were undertaken in advance of proposed fencing at Drumanagh promontory in 2014 and 2018.

Augur Survey 2014: Ministerial Consent No. **C601/E4501**

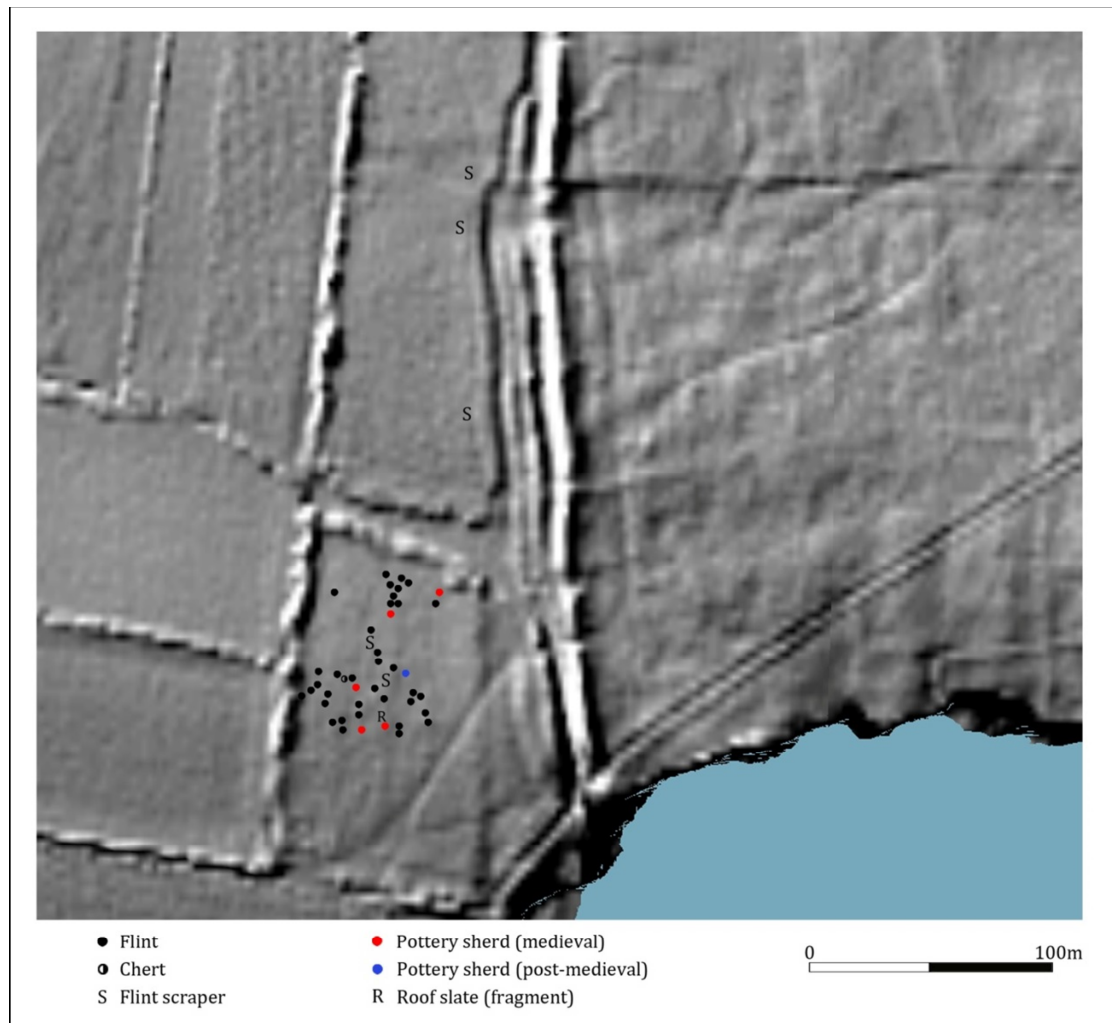
In advance of proposed fencing of the headland by the previous owners, a programme of auguring was undertaken by Mr Tom Condit, of the National Monument Service in conjunction with members of the Discovery Programme. A total of 122 test pits, arranged in a series of 'runs' comprising six or less bore holes, were excavated as close to the cliff-edge defining the promontory as feasible using an 'auto auger mechanical post hole borer' with a 20cm diameter auger over two days in June 2014. Although no artefacts or, indeed, soil horizons of clear archaeological significance were encountered during the course of auguring, this work has yielded valuable information on the depth and character of the soils along the cliff-edge and raises interesting questions concerning the nature of soils elsewhere on the promontory (Dowling 2014).



*Plate 28: Aerial image of Drumanagh promontory fort showing the location of 2014 auger test pits. The western extent of the Preservation Order is marked by a red line.*

Five additional bore holes were excavated outside the ramparts on the north in order to gauge the stratigraphy of the soils across the neck of the promontory. The soils in this area are deeper than those recorded elsewhere at the site, reaching up to 40cm in maximum thickness, and overlie what appears to be a stony clay layer. The latter material was too compact to penetrate with the auger.

In addition lands outside the fort ramparts on the west were inspected to identify any material of archaeological interest that may have been exposed by ploughing across this area.



*Plate 29: Fieldwalking finds distribution courtesy of the Discovery Programme*

A total of 49 surface finds of archaeological and potential archaeological interest were identified including flint (both worked and unworked) and pottery, together with a single fragment of roof slate.

Augur Survey 2017: Ministerial Consent No. **C786/E4805**

The auger survey was undertaken by Christine Baker, Fingal County Council and members of the Discovery Programme to inform the fencing of the site along the southern boundary (c.140m), along a short section of the north-west boundary (c.22m) and the installation of two kissing gates. A total of 56 auger holes were excavated using an 'auto auger mechanical post-hole borer' with a 20cm diameter auger over two days in January 2017. A high level of modern disturbance was evident, particularly along the north-western and southern boundaries with the recovery of plastic and twine. No artefacts or soil horizons of archaeological significance were encountered and unlike the previous 2014 auger survey, bedrock was not identified.



*Plate 30: Auger holes locations 2014 survey (blue) and 2017 survey (red), courtesy of The Discovery Programme*

Clearance & Fencing Installation 2017: Ministerial Consent No. **C786/E4805**

The demolition of the derelict building, removal of detritus in the south-west quadrant of the site and installation of fencing was archaeologically monitored over four days between the 9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. One of the boundary stones related to the Martello tower was discovered along the northern limit of the cow shed, having been re-used as a step. A total of forty-five posts were driven along the southern boundary at the base of the bank, which had previously been augered. No artefacts or soil horizons of archaeological significance were identified but a high level of modern disturbance was evident, particularly along the north-western and southern boundaries.

### 5.10.3. Excavations:

Two invasive archaeological investigations were undertaken in the townlands adjoining Drumanagh. Approximately 150m-200m west of the promontory fort in the townland of Ballustree a test-excavation (NMS Licence Ref.: 92E0205) was undertaken in advance of the Loughshinny shore station, associated with a gas interconnector. An area measuring 85mNS x 135mEW was tested. A series of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> field drains were cut into natural subsoil. No feature or finds of archaeological significance were identified (Scally 1993).

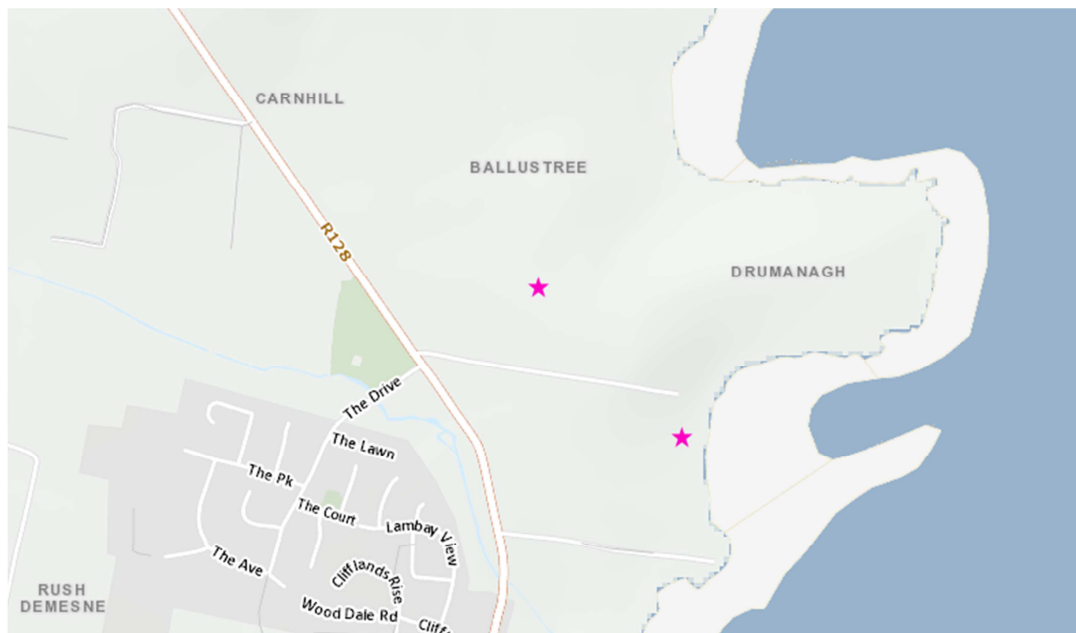


Plate 31: Location of archaeological investigations sourced from [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)

In 1992 archaeological monitoring of the initial phases of groundworks-two test pits- in preparation for receiving the gas pipeline, was carried out by Margaret Gowen (NMS files). Nothing of archaeological interest was noted during these groundworks.

Monitoring of the regrading of the cliff (NMS Licence Ref: 10E0391) was undertaken by Jane Whitaker in September 2011. It appears that the gas pipeline had been inserted previously and the ground reinstated prior to this regrading. There is no reference to the original works being undertaken under archaeological supervision (Whitaker, 2011).

### 5.10.4 Surface Collection Survey

Dr Conor Brady carried out a surface collection survey (NMI 2016C1) on behalf of the National Monuments Service in October 2016, following damage to the site by motorbike scrambling. A total of 197 artefacts were recovered. The majority were of flint and indicative of activity here in the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. Three sherds of medieval pottery were also recovered (Brady, 2016).