

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment
of proposed car-park construction at
Doneraile, Co. Cork.

Eamonn Cotter

March 19th 2024

Client: Cork County Council



© Eamonn Cotter

SITE LOCATION

County: Cork
Townland: Doneraile
ITM grid ref.: 559970 607152

BUILT HERITAGE

Site type: Demesne Wall
RMP no.: N/A
NIAH no.: N/A
RPS no.: N/A

The site is located within an Architectural Conservation Area.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development: Construction of carpark
Developer: Cork County Council

THIS REPORT

Type: Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment
Report author: Eamonn Cotter
Report date: March 19th 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	
2.1 <i>Medieval</i>	1
2.2 <i>Post-Medieval</i>	1
3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE	
3.1 <i>Cartography</i>	2
3.2 <i>Topography</i>	3
3.3 <i>The stone boundary walls</i>	3
4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
5. ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	5
6. REFERENCES	6

List of Figures

Fig. 1 The proposed development site indicated on modern OS Street map.

Fig. 2 Estate map of Doneraile dated 1728 (Grove White 1905-25, vol 3, 20).

Fig. 3 The proposed development site on historic and modern mapping.

Fig. 4 Existing site layout (Baseline drawing courtesy of Cork County Council).

Fig. 5 Proposed site layout (drawing courtesy of Cork County Council).

List of Plates

Plate 1 Front (west) façade of the proposed development site.

Plate 2 West end interior; site entrance centre, storage shed & cattle pen to right.

Plate 3 Looking east towards the abattoir.

Plate 4 Storage shed in southwest corner of site.

Plate 5 The eastern end of the site, looking east.

Plate 6 Looking west along the southern boundary of the site.

Plate 7 Interior of abattoir.

Plate 8 Interior of storage shed in northwest corner of site.

Plate 9 Interior of cattle holding pen.

Plate 10 Looking east towards rear of site. Abattoir on left.

Plate 11 North boundary wall, detailed view of masonry coursing.

Plate 12 The east boundary wall. Note lack of coursing lines in contrast to the north wall.

Plate 13 Junction of north wall (left) and east wall. No tie-in visible. Note missing facework near ground level.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cork County Council proposes to construct a car park on a disused plot of ground at Main Street, Doneraile, Co. Cork. The County Council have requested this Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment since the plot in question lies within an Area of Architectural Conservation and is bounded on two sides by the demesne wall of Doneraile Court Demesne.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Medieval

The town of Doneraile as we see it today dates largely to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with some elements dating to the eighteenth. It is likely that the town originated as a settlement linked to a Late Medieval castle/tower house (RMP no. CO017-086), which stood to the north of the Awbeg River, but which no longer survives above ground. There is evidence for an earlier settlement a short distance to the northwest in the townland of Oldcourt, believed to be the location of the original Doneraile, in Irish *Dún ar Áill*, the fort on the cliff. The name Oldcourt itself suggests the former presence of a castle, and the church which formerly stood in the adjacent graveyard has been identified as the Medieval parish church of Doneraile (MacCotter 2013, 171). The site is located on a steep-sided promontory formed by the confluence of two rivers, the Awbeg and Bregoge. It was most likely an Anglo-Norman settlement cluster of the late 12th/early 13th centuries, which would have typically included a castle, parish church and town in close proximity. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland classifies the site as an Inland Promontory Fort (CO017-084), and there may well have been a prehistoric fortification here before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, as was the case at Castletownroche, 10Km to the southeast and also overlooking the Awbeg River.

Doneraile and the surrounding district was colonised by the Anglo-Norman Synan family. At what date they entered the area is unknown, but they were said to have eventually owned six castles in the area, guarding their extensive landholdings. At some point in its history the focus of settlement moved eastwards from Oldcourt, probably with the construction of a new castle/tower house immediately north of the present town.

2.2 Post-Medieval

The Doneraile area was settled by New English colonists during the Munster Plantation of the late 16th century. In 1594 Nicholas Synane mortgaged extensive lands in the area to Sir Thomas Norris, builder of Mallow Castle, and together they leased it to one Francis Waynman. During the Irish rebellion of 1598 the castle was sacked and Waynman fled. The lands were subsequently

leased to two Englishmen and finally, in 1630, sold to William St Leger, Lord President of Munster (MacCarthy-Morrogh 1986, 168). St Leger rapidly extended his estate, buying up further lands in the area and building a new mansion house, which was admired by Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork (*ibid.*, 168). In 1633 a new church was built to west of the house (Grove White 1905-16, vol 3, 36), and in 1639 the estate was created a manor with rights of market and court (Lewis 1837, 478). The town must have been laid out around that time.

St Leger's new house appears to have been on the site of the existing castle on the north bank of the Awbeg, and perhaps incorporated the castle. He did not long enjoy it, as he died in 1642 (Grove White 1905-25, vol 3, 45). The castle was said to have been burned in 1645 during the Confederate Wars and subsequently rebuilt (*ibid.*, 46). On an estate map dated 1728 it is labeled 'Castle' and is accompanied by extensive geometrically-designed gardens and orchards (*ibid.*, 20).

Around 1730 a new house, known today as Doneraile Court, was built on the southern bank of the Awbeg.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

3.1 Cartography

Doneraile town, as depicted on the 1728 estate map, is laid out in typically geometric fashion (Fig. 2). The castle/manor house is sited on the north side of the river with the parish church adjacent to the west and a 'Fair Place' (fair green) between. From the fair green a bridge crosses the river leading to a straight road simply named 'Street' and a crossroads from which Buttevant Lane leads to the west and 'Fish Pond Lane' to the east. Buttevant Lane still exists, but by the time of the first Ordnance Survey map (published 1844) Fish Pond Lane has been incorporated into the grounds of the country house, Doneraile Court. Main Street and both cross streets are lined with houses, with garden plots behind. The gardens plots are of uneven widths, but it may be that not all boundaries are depicted. At the southern end of the town the road bends sharply to the west onto 'Mallow Lane'. The present entrance to Doneraile Court in that area did not exist in 1728. The present proposed development site appears on the 1728 map to be part of the southernmost garden plot on the street (Fig. 3, A).

The general layout of the town today has changed little since 1728, and most likely retains its original 17th-century topography (Fig. 1). The 1844 Ordnance Survey map depicts the proposed development site as a long narrow plot with houses on the street front and two smaller structures to the rear of the houses (Fig. 3, B). The 25-inch OS map published in 1904 depicts it as two plots

with a street-front house on the southernmost plot (Fig. 3, C). On the 1937 6-inch Os map the two plots have been merged into one, as it exists today (Fig. 3, D).

3.2 Topography

The proposed development site was inspected on March 8th 2024. Trees which grew along the southern boundary of the site had been recently cut down. The timber had been removed but many light branches remained strewn across the site. Much of the northern boundary wall was covered in ivy, with lesser ivy cover on the eastern wall (Pl. 5).

The site is located at the southern edge of Doneraile town, on the east side of Main Street, and is approximately 60m x 14m in extent. The entire western front of the plot, facing onto the street, is a modern concrete block wall with a wide entrance at its centre (Pl. 1). Inside, the western end is occupied by several modern buildings and a yard, which formerly constituted an abattoir (Fig. 4; Pls. 2-4), while more than half the plot is vacant, a neglected former garden (Pl. 5). The northern and eastern boundaries are stone walls (Pl. 5), while the southern boundary, separating this plot from its neighbouring plot, is comprised of a row of trees (recently cut down) with some broken-down fencing (Pl. 6).

According to local information the abattoir was first built around 1960, renovated and upgraded in 1980, and continued in use until it was closed in 2012. The main building, the slaughterhouse, is a modern concrete block structure which still retains some of its internal equipment (Pl. 7). To the west of the slaughterhouse a single-storey structure with a lean-to roof projects northwards from the northern boundary of the plot. This structure is divided internally into three compartments – one was a holding pen for cattle and the others were used for storage (Pl. 2). The front façade of this structure is of concrete block construction but its east and north walls are stone-built, presumably contemporary with the plot boundary wall. All the interior walls are coated with cement render (Pls. 8-9).

An open-front shed with lean-to roof occupies the southwestern corner of the plot (Pl. 4). This too is a concrete block construction.

3.3 The stone boundary walls

The north and east boundary walls of the plot are high walls, associated with Doneraile Court estate (Pl. 5). The north wall stands approximately three metres high and is built of random limestone rubble with the regular coursing frequently seen on walls of the nineteenth century (Pl. 11). The east wall stands approximately four metres high, though the upper one metre or so is an

addition. This wall too is built of random limestone rubble but with no coursing (Pl. 12). At the northeastern corner of the plot it is clear that the north wall abuts the east wall and is therefore a later build than the latter (Pl. 13). Both walls appear in good condition with no obvious faults or fractures. However facework is missing from the east wall in two locations, one at ground level where the north wall abuts it (Pl. 13), and another, also at ground level, approximately 7m to the south.

Both walls form a townland boundary between Doneraile townland to the west and Demesne townland to the east, the latter of which contains Doneraile Court and its estate. The townland boundary generally runs north-south in this area, but immediately north of our subject plot Demesne townland projects sharply to the west, into Doneraile townland (see Fig. 1). This projecting portion contains a secondary entrance to Doneraile Court, accessing the yards and gardens to the rear of the house. The abrupt projection of the townland boundary suggests that this entrance was a later addition to the estate and that the boundary was altered to include it. It further suggests that the northern boundary wall of our subject plot was contemporary with that new entrance. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage suggests a date of 1720-1740 for the entrance, but in its appraisal describes it as “*of substantial limestone construction with delicate wrought-iron detailing, is representative of the imaginative novelty and craftsmanship of the mid-nineteenth century*”.¹ A mid-nineteenth century date would certainly be more in keeping with the construction style of the wall separating the entrance area from our subject plot.

It is most likely therefore that the northern boundary wall to the proposed development site dates to the nineteenth century, while the eastern boundary wall is earlier and probably dates to the mid-eighteenth century, contemporary with the construction of Doneraile Court.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Cork County Council proposed to construct a car park on this plot (Fig. 5). The development will include the following works:

- Demolition of existing abattoir and other existing ancillary outhouse buildings located on site.

¹ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/20808033/doneraile-court-main-street-doneraile-doneraile-cork>

- Development of a new hardscaped public car park including 25 car spaces.
- Installation of a new soakaway at the rear of the site to deal with any surface water run-off.
- Demolition of the front entrance wall including the existing mural.
- Erection of a new 1m high entrance wall and new entrance gates.
- The modification of the existing vehicular entrance/exit including sight lines at entrance/exit.
- Lowering of the existing public footpath to facilitate the modified vehicular entrance/exit.
- Provision of new bollards on the existing public footpath.
- Associated groundworks including drainage, stormwater connections, watermain connections and electrical ducting.
- Provision of Public Lighting.
- Provision for recycling bins to be located in the new car park.

The stone walls forming the eastern and northern boundaries to the site will be retained

5. ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed car park development will involve removal of existing buildings on the site. As noted above these are all of modern concrete block construction.

The structures of architectural heritage value are the eastern and northern boundary walls, which are part of the demesne wall of Doneraile Court. These walls are to be retained.

The proposed development should have no adverse impact on the architectural heritage of the site, provided that due care and attention is paid to the conservation of the walls.

The following recommendations are made:

- That particular care be taken during excavations or construction works close to the stone walls to prevent any damage to them.
- That attaching any fittings or fixtures to the stone walls be avoided if possible, and if not, that they be discussed in advance with the Cork County Council Conservation Officer.
- That the modern cement plaster on the stone wall in the vicinity of the abattoir be carefully removed and the exposed stonework be repointed where necessary with appropriate lime mortar.
- That areas of loose and missing masonry, as noted on the east boundary wall, be repaired and stabilised.
- That the advice of a conservation engineer/architect be sought prior to engaging in any conservation works to the stone walls.

6. REFERENCES

Grove-White, James 1905-16, *Historical and Topographical Notes, etc. on Buttevant, Castletownroche, Doneraile, Mallow and Places in their Vicinity*. 4 vols. Guy & Co. Cork.

Lewis, S. (1837) *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols. London.

MacCarthy-Morrogh, M. 1986, *The Munster Plantation*. Oxford University Press. London.

MacCotter P. 2013, *A history of the Diocese of Cloyne*. The Columba Press. Dublin.

Eamonn Cotter
19-03-2024

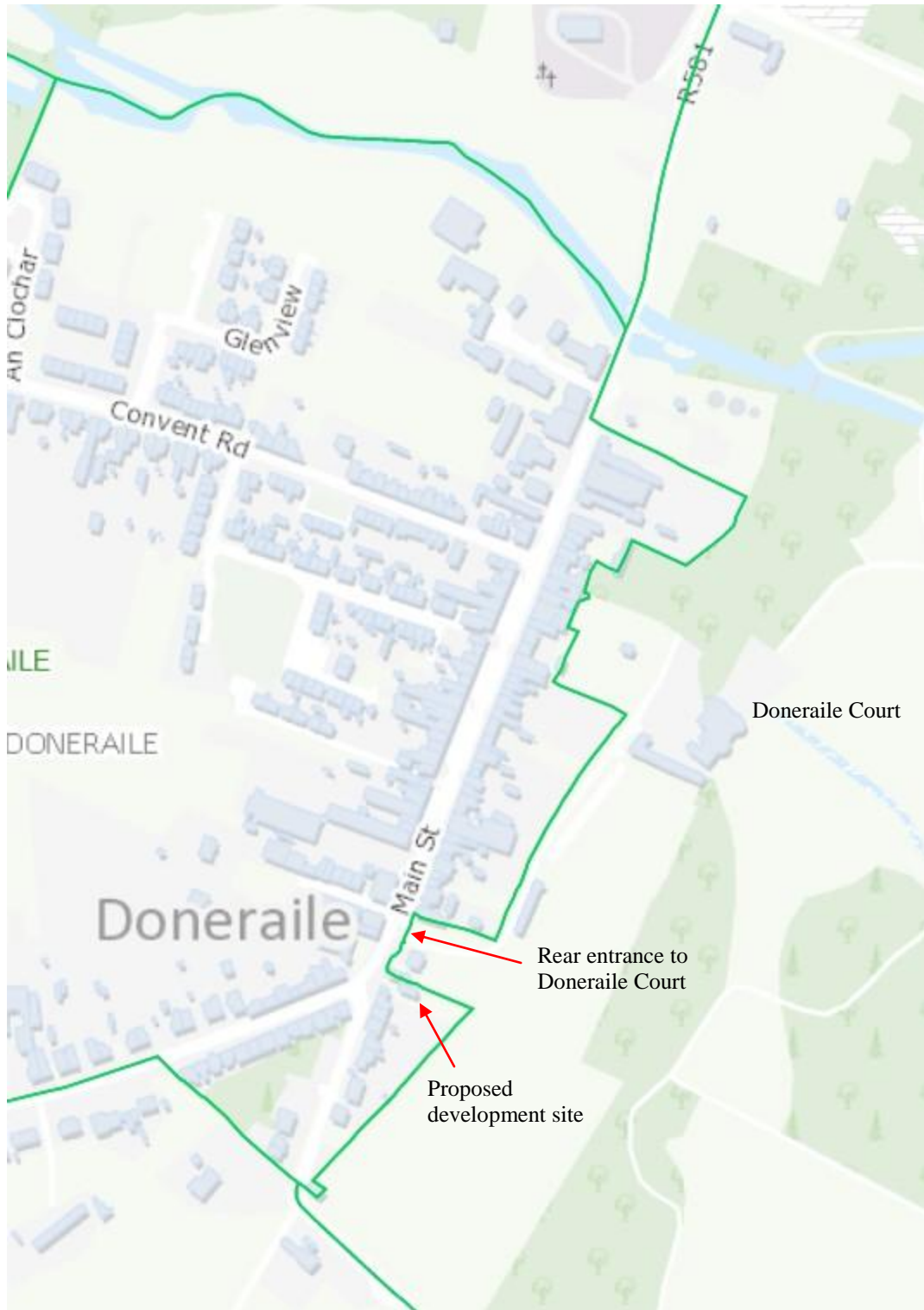


Fig. 1 The proposed development site indicated on modern OS Street map. Townland boundary in dark green.

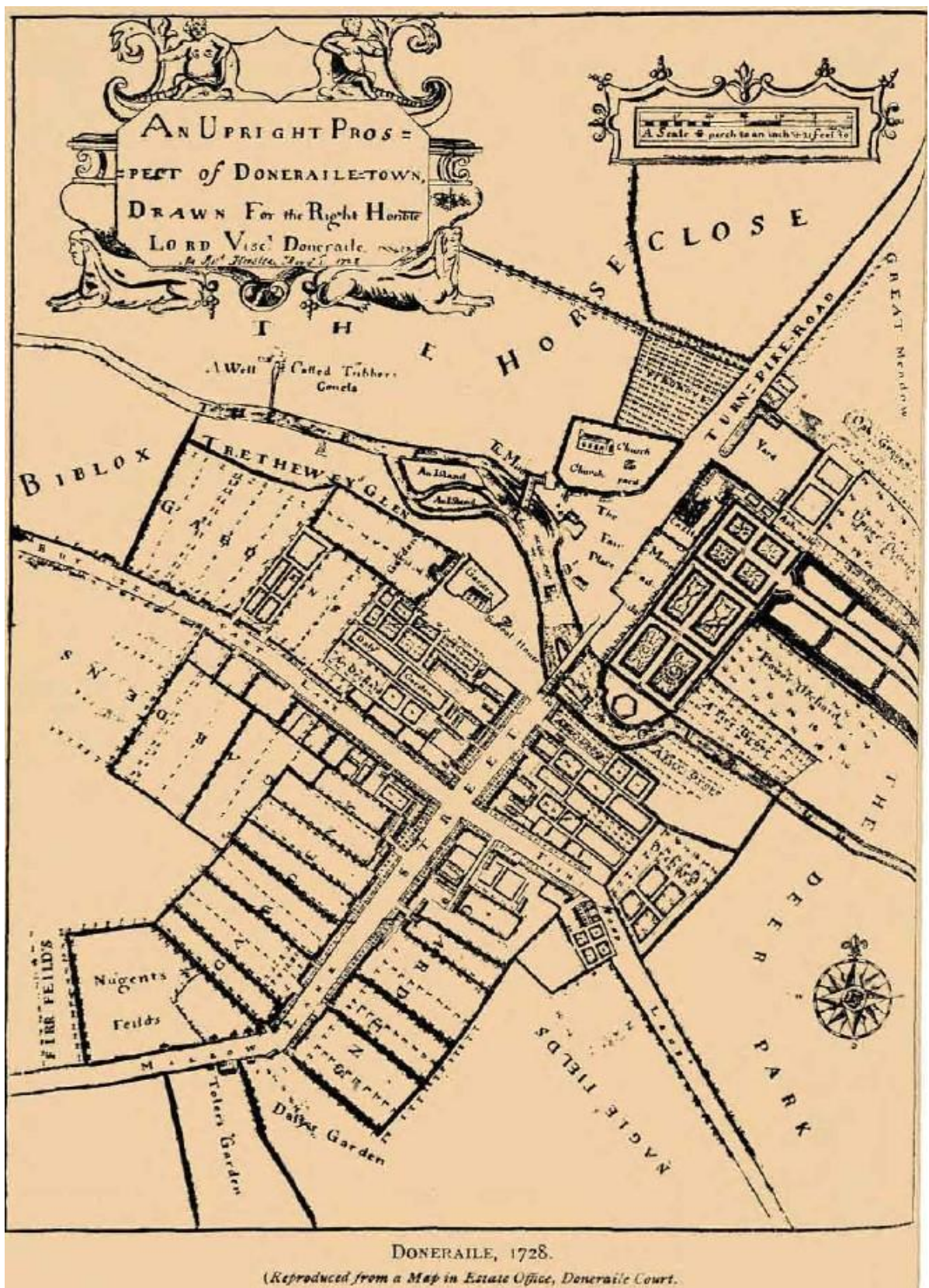


Fig. 2 Estate map of Doneraile dated 1728 (Grove White 1905-25, vol 3, 20).

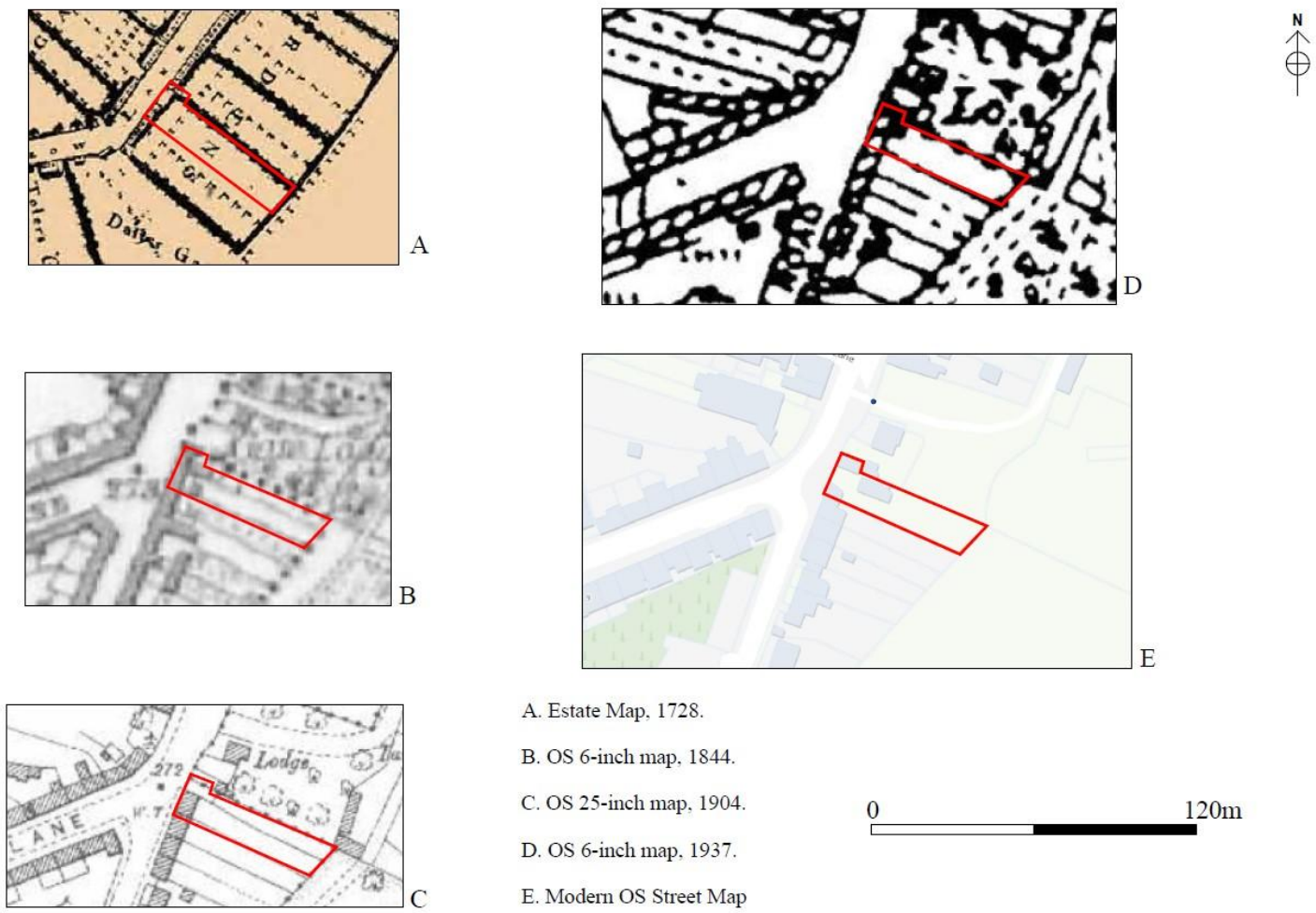


Fig. 3 The proposed development site on historic and modern mapping.

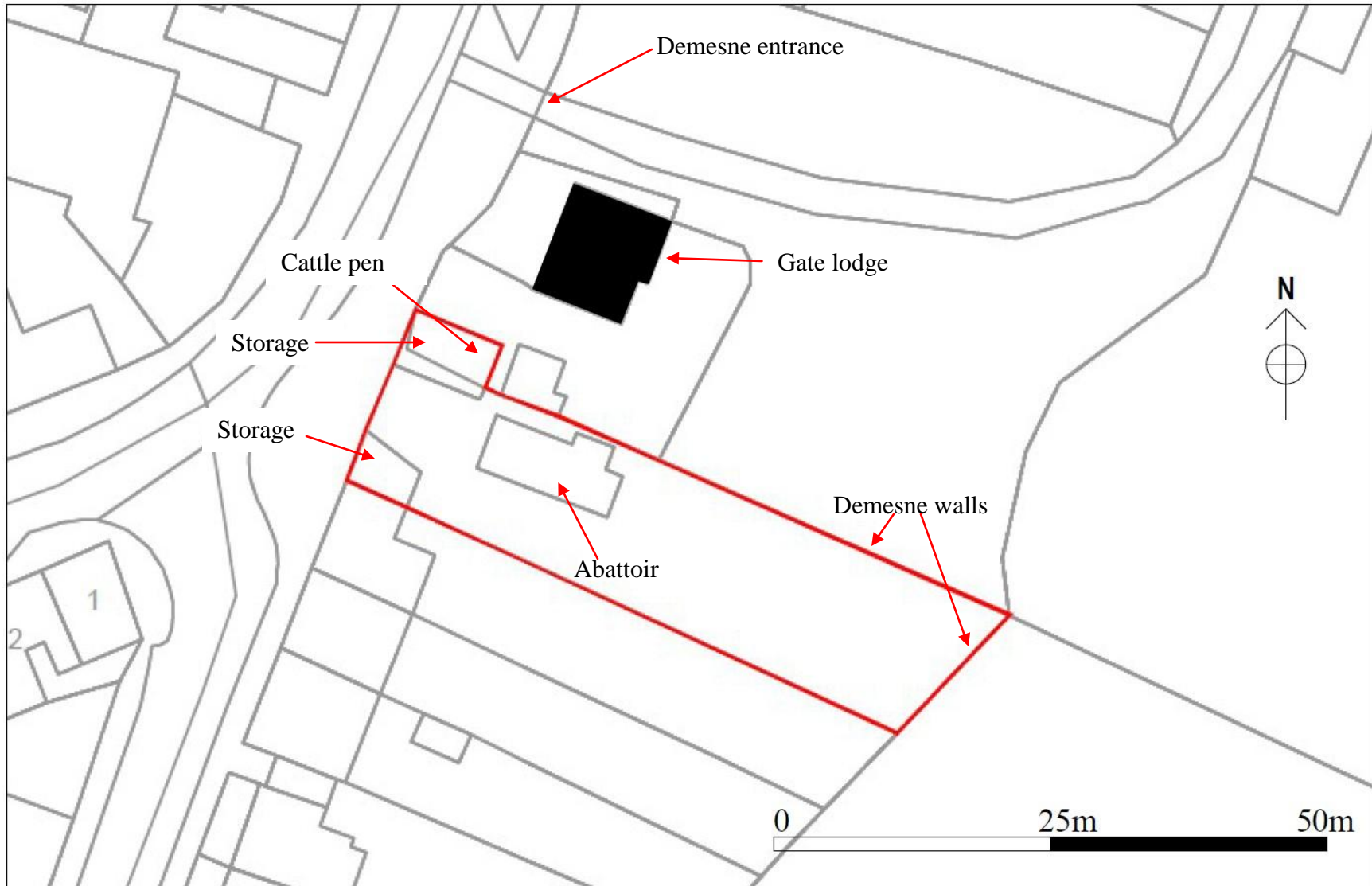


Fig. 4 Existing site layout (Baseline drawing courtesy of Cork County Council).

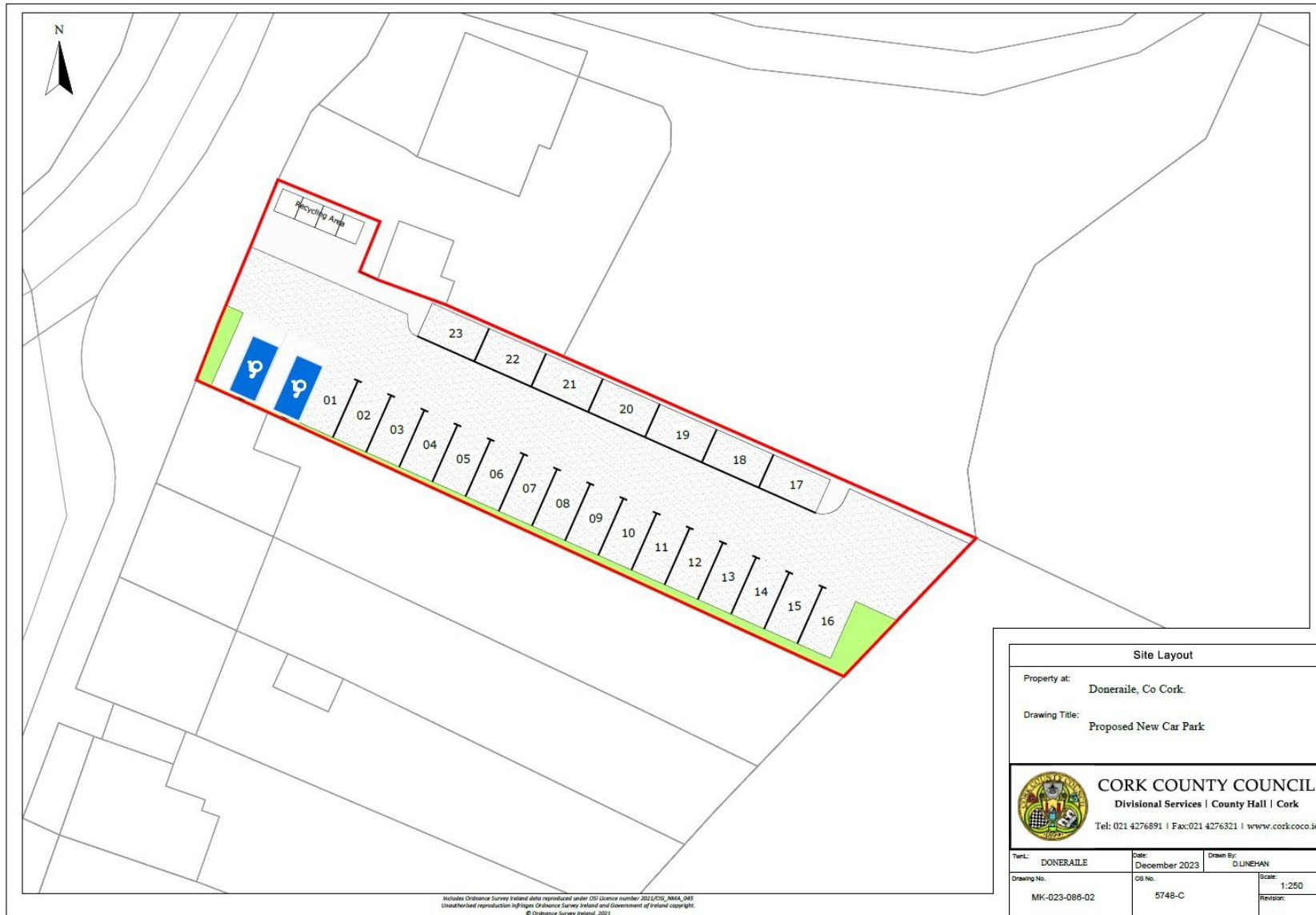


Fig. 5 Proposed site layout (drawing courtesy of Cork County Council).



Plate 1 Front (west) façade of the proposed development site.



Plate 2 West end interior; site entrance centre, storage shed & cattle pen to right.



Plate 3 Looking east towards the abattoir.



Plate 4 Storage shed in southwest corner of site.



Plate 5 The eastern end of the site, looking east.



Plate 6 Looking west along the southern boundary of the site.



Plate 7 Interior of abattoir.



Plate 8 Interior of storage shed in northwest corner of site. Rear wall is part of demesne wall.



Plate 9 Interior of cattle holding pen. Both walls are part of demesne wall.



Plate 10 Looking east towards rear of site. Abattoir on left.



Plate 11 North boundary wall, detailed view of masonry coursing.



Plate 12 The east boundary wall. Note lack of coursing lines in contrast to the north wall.

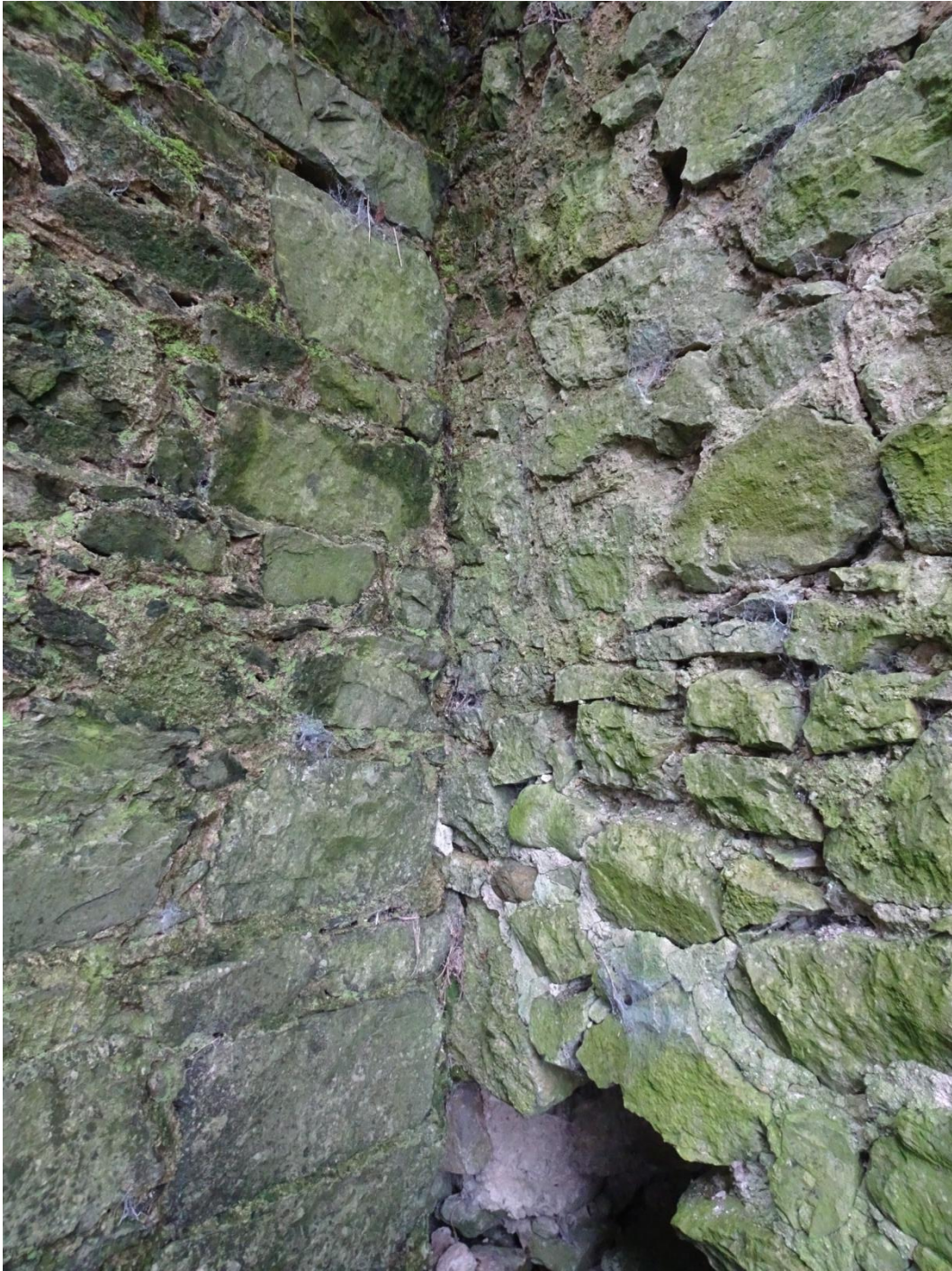


Plate 13 Junction of north wall (left) and east wall. No tie-in visible. Note missing facework near ground level.