Geophysical Survey Report. 18

Inisloughin Fort
Co. Antrim

CAF GSR 14

Ronan McHugh

1. Site Specific Information

Site Name: Inisloughlin Fort

Townland: Inisloughlin

SMR No (if applicable): Ant 067:029

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref: J 1755 6065

County: Antrim

Planning Ref / No. (if applicable): Not applicable

Surveyor(s) Present: Ronan McHugh and Clare McGranaghan, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Brief Summary:

This report details the results of an evaluative geophysical survey undertaken at the proposed site of Inishloughlin Fort, Co. Antrim. Inisloughlin Fort was a significant Gaelic fortification in the early 17th century. Although the general area of the fort and its associated military landscape area is know, its precise position has not been definitively located. Two potential sites for the fort have been suggested.

The fort is recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) as ANT 067:029 and its recorded location is in south-east Co. Antrim, close to the border with Co. Down in a field known locally as the "Ramp Field". The presence of archaeological remains in this field was reported to the Environment and Heritage Service in 1978. No surface remains of the fort are visible today and there is some doubt as to whether the location recorded in the NISMR is the definitive site of the monument. Inisloughlin Fort is depicted on a contemporary 17th-century map by Richard Bartlett, and routine field investigation of the Inisloughlin area undertaken during the survey identified a potential alternative site for the fort close to the Ramp Field. This second possible site is more consistent with Bartlett's illustration and ties in with the description of the site recorded in the Ordnance Survey Memoirs.

The survey was confined to the Ramp Field with the aim of investigating the presence of any subsurface remains on the recorded site of the fort and to inform on a proposed programme of excavation scheduled for Autumn 2007. An initial resistivity survey was undertaken over an area of 90 m x 120 m at a resolution of 1 m x 1 m. A number of features were detected in this area. Of primary interest was an angular anomaly which returned the highest resistance levels recorded during the survey. The area over this anomaly was re-surveyed at a resolution of 0.5 m x 0.5 m with the aim of clarifying its detail. The survey results show that this high resistance anomaly consisted of two perpendicular arms, both of approximately 50 m in length, which form an east-facing corner on the south-eastern slope of a small hillock in the north-west corner of the field. The dimensions of the anomaly are

broadly consistent with the recorded dimensions of a ruined structure which existed on the site in 1837. The anomaly might represent the remnant of this structure, although it is not well defined, and might alternatively reflect a response to a bedrock ridge on the hilltop. A second, less distinct high resolution anomaly surrounds this feature, which in turn is surrounded by a band of low resistance. No conclusive interpretation is forwarded because the relatively imprecise definition of these anomalies suggests that they may reflect natural variations in the underlying geology. However, the survey results are not inconsistent with an internal structure surrounded by a bank and ditch.

In addition to the anomalies which may be of archaeological significance, a number of high resistance linear features corresponded with the position of modern field boundaries, while a low resistance feature extending north-east/south-west across the site was identified as the remnant of a field boundary depicted on early Ordnance Survey maps.

Size of area surveyed: 10800m ^{2} (90 m x 120 m)
Weather conditions:

Solid Geology: Mudstone and sandstone

Current Land Use:
(e.g., farming / industrial)

Grazing

Intended Land Use:

Grazing

Survey type:

Resistivity.

Instrumentation:

Geoscan RM 15

Probe configuration:

Twin probe

Probe spacing:

0.5 m

Grid size:

30 m x 30 m

Traverse interval:

1m over total survey area
0.5 m over high resistance anomaly

Sample Interval:

1m over total survey area
0.5 m over high resistance anomaly

Traverse Pattern:

Zig-zag

Spatial Accuracy:

Grids set out using TPS 705 series Total Station

2. Introduction

This report details the results of an evaluative geophysical survey which was undertaken on the reported site of Inisloughlin Fort which, as is detailed in Section 3 below, was considered to be a site of pivotal military and strategic importance by some of the leading figures in Anglo-Irish affairs in the early 17th century. The fort was seized from the Gaelic Irish by Tudor English forces in August 1602 in a campaign that has been graphically captured in a map by the contemporary English cartographer, Richard Bartlett. The site of the fort is recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) as ANT 067:029, but there are no surviving visible remains on the ground, so the definitive identification of this site as the location of the fort is by no means certain.

The objective of the survey was to investigate the possibility of hidden remains of the fort being preserved beneath the modern ground surface at the reported site of Inisloughlin as part of a wider investigation of the landscape of south-east Antrim that aims to locate the battlefield landscape depicted by Bartlett using a combination of topographical, historical and cartographic sources as well as archaeological and remote-sensing techniques. The results of the survey will inform a decision on whether to undertake a programme of excavation work at Inisloughlin in Autumn 2007.

3. Historical Background

Inisloughlin, in the Manor of Kilultagh (now incorporated into the Barony of Upper Massereene), Co. Antrim was reportedly the site of a major Gaelic stronghold in the early 17th century. The townland is situated in the south-east of Co. Antrim, overlooking the River Lagan which defines the border between Counties Antrim and Down in this area (Fig. 1). A number of variations of the place-name are recorded in documentary sources, but Inisloughlin probably derives from the Gaelic *Inish – Lochain*, or Island of Lochain. The first component, "*Inish*" Implies that the area was formerly an

island. This suggestion is bolstered by an annalistic reference under 1165, when, in response to hostilities initiated by the Ulidians, Muircherateach Ua Lochlainn entered Ulidia and "proceeded to "Inish-Lochain and burned and destroyed the Island" (O'Donovan 1848-51, 1154-55). The annals do not provide an insight into the nature of the settlement or fortification which existed at Inisloughlin in the twelfth century.

By the beginning of the 17th century, Inisloughlin had assumed a position of strategic importance in the conflict between the Gaelic Irish and the forces of the Tudor Crown during the Nine Years War and was the site of a stronghold of considerable significance. This is demonstrated by contemporary accounts written by some of the pivotal figures in Irish affairs at the time. In 1601, Sir Arthur Chichester had tried and failed to capture "*Eneslaghane*", which he described as "the chief entrance into the spoil of these parts" (Mahaffy 1916, 63), from Hugh O'Neill. After the fall of the latter's stronghold in Dungannon in 1602, O'Neill strengthened Inisloughlin by sending his nephew, Brian MacAirt O'Neill with a force to operate in that area. The threat of this move, which Hayes McCoy (1964, 11) suggested would have had the effect of both compromising the English army's line of communication between Antrim and Carrickfergus and also the path between Newry and the River Blackwater, prompted Chichester to undertake a campaign against "a fort in Killulah, held by Brian MacAirt" (Bullen and Brewer 1867-73, 63), which he described as "a place of great strength and exceeding importance"(*ibid.*). The fort was taken by English forces on 15th or 16th August 1602 and it ("*Eneslaghen*") was described at the time by the Lord Deputy Mountjoy as "one of the strongest places I have heard of in Ireland, with 42 musketeers" (*ibid.*, 306).

Two comprehensive contemporary records of the morphology of Inisloughlin Fort provide an indication of the character of the fortification. Writing in the early 17th century the commentator Fynes Moryson described the fort as consisting of "two deep ditches, both comprised with strong palisades, a verie high and thicke ramperie of earth and timber, and well flanked with Bulwarkes" (Moryson 1907-08, 195). The fort was "situated in the middest of a great bogge and no way accessable, but through thicke woods and barely

passable". A number of the features listed by Moryson can be seen in a depiction of the capture of Inisloughlin (*Enish Aloughan*) drawn by Richard Bartlett in 1603. This illustration is reproduced in Figure 2, and the fort is shown surrounded by two broad ditches enclosed by earthen banks topped by wooden palisades. The internal area is shown enclosed by a rampart and contains five elliptical-plan (cob-built) houses and a single, two-storied rectangular timber building. A timber tower, of seemingly circular format, stands in the bulwark at one side of the rampart, while what appears to be a wooden tower or platform is shown opposite the gable of the main building in the corner of the enclosed area. Bartlett shows the fort situated in an acute bend in a river, presumably the Lagan and it is flanked on two sides by an arc of standing water, presumably representing the "great bogge" referred to by Moryson.

As well as detail of the fort itself, Barlett's map provides some indication of the character and position of the English army's attack. Three camps, each characterised by a pointed marquee surrounded by a cluster of smaller cabins, are shown spread across an area of higher ground above the fort, while two cannon have been set up behind what appears to be a line of gabions on a rounded eminence overlooking the fort.

Following the fall of Inisloughlin to the English, the fort was granted to Sir Faulke Conway, who repaired and strengthened it (O'Laverty 1880, 270). Referring to the original Plantation Commissioners Report of 1611, O'Laverty recorded that Conway had built a "fayre gate" on the site of the fort and intended to build a house (*ibid.*). The site was reportedly levelled in 1803 by the landowner who "filled up its entrenchments, and left only a small fragment of the castle standing" (*ibid.*). The Ordnance Survey Memoirs recorded that, in 1837, a damaged remnant of the fort survived in Inisloughlin (Day and McWilliams 1993, 125). It was described as being 40 yards square with corner bastions, with only the south-east bastion and traces of the north-east surviving. It had reportedly been surrounded by a moat and parapet, again echoing the form of the fort described by both Bartlett and Moryson, and was

set in an area which was formerly "bog and morass". The moat, however, had completely disappeared by 1837 and only a skeleton of the parapet, on the north east and south east side survived (*ibid.*). A large quantity of artefacts which attested to the nature of the conflicts at Inisloughlin was said to have been found on the site (*ibid.*) and a number of these were drawn during the preparation of the Ordnance Survey records (*ibid., xiii*).

4. The Site

The NISMR identifies an irregularly-shaped field known locally as the "Ramp Field" as the likely site of Inisloughlin Fort (Fig. 3). The site is situated 1.8 km east of Moira in south-east Co. Antrim. No antiquities are depicted on any of the Ordnance Survey maps of the field, although the former position of a number of monuments were indicated by Rev. Adamson to Clare Foley of the Environment and Heritage Service when she visited the site in 1978 (EHS SM 7 file ANT 067:029). There are no visible archaeological remains in the field today.

The Ramp Field is bounded on the north and north-east by a public road and on the north-west by the access laneway to a cluster of farm buildings. A line of trees and hedgerow forms the western boundary of the field. Less than 100 m to the west of the hedgerow is a narrow canal that runs into the River Lagan opposite the southern corner of the field The Lagan itself flows along to the south of Ramp Field and a line of small trees separates the southern edge of the field from the flood plain of the river (Plate 1). Four wire fences extend across the field, internally dividing it into five smaller paddocks (F1 – F5)(Fig. 4). These divisions are more than 30 years old according to the landowner (J. Swain 2007, pers. comm.) although they are not depicted on any of the Ordnance Survey maps. The field is used primarily for cattle grazing and is adjacent to a cluster of twentieth century farm buildings which are situated immediately to the east of the field (Fig. 4).

Plate 1. View from top of the hillock towards the south-western corner of the ramp field. The River Lagan lies immediately beyond the line of trees at the top of the picture (facing south).

The Ramp Field is a component of an undulating landscape of low, gently sloping eminences on the northern bank of the River Lagan. The north-western corner of the field is characterised by a flat-topped hillock and the prevailing slopes in the field are to the east and south. The slope to the east is gradual and the topography levels off approximately 110 m from the western field boundary. A linear depression approximately 5 m in width extends north-east/south-west across the field for approximately 140 m at the foot of the slope. This feature was identified by James Swain as the site of a modern field drain (J. Swain 2007, pers. comm.). As the slope from the hillock progresses southwards, it subtly alters in character. The gradient at the south-east facing side of the hill begins as a gradual incline before being interrupted by a series of subtle plateaus and low mounds, which fall away in a barely discernable rounded south south-east facing ridge. The slopes

around the remainder of the hill are more regular but become increasingly pronounced at the southern facing side of the hill, where the gradient is at its steepest and is accentuated by a step formed by the boundaries between the two paddocks F2 and F3 (Plate 2). This step has a maximum height of 0.3 m and is probably due to more intensive cultivation or trampling by livestock in the lowlying paddock, F 3.

Plate 2. View of the hillock, along the line of the fence dividing paddocks F2 and F3, illustrating both the gradient of the south-facing slope and also the appreciable height differential between the levels of the two paddocks (facing west).

Because of the current absence of recognisable surface remains, the Ramp Field cannot be cited as the definite location of Inisloughlin Fort and further issues are raised by an examination of the topographical detail on Bartlett's map. Bartlett shows the fort situated in a bend in what is presumably the

River Lagan. This meander might conceivably represent the junction of the Lagan and the canal, in which case the map might ostensibly reflect the landscape to the south-west of the Ramp Field. The map does not, however, show the Lagan continuing beyond the point of intersection of the two water-ways, which is at variance with the actuality of the landscape. While the veracity of Bartlett's cartographic reportage has, to date, not been definitively attested, this must create a doubt that the landscape depicted by Bartlett corresponds with the Ramp Field and the site of the fort as recorded in the NISMR. In addition, the current landowner has indicated that the canal is of relatively modern construction, (J. Swain 2007, pers. comm.) and a relatively recent date for the canal is supported by the fact that it is not shown on the early Ordnance Survey maps, so it almost certainly postdates Bartlett's drawing. Inspection of the immediate Inisloughlin landscape undertaken in conjunction with the survey has identified an alternative location to the east of the Ramp Field which is more consistent with the detail depicted in Bartlett's drawing (Fig. 5).

In this second area, there is a small ridge which overlooks a distinctive bend in the Lagan that closely recalls Bartlett's map. Discussion with the current landowner revealed that this second parcel of land was previously owned by a Mr. McAreavey (J. Swain 2007, pers. comm.), which is consistent with detail provided by the Ordnance Survey Memoirs, where Inisloughlin Fort is located "in the townland of Inisloughlin and holding of James McAreavey" (Day and McWilliams 1993, 125). It is finally worthy of note that, although there are no visible antiquities on the property formerly owned by McAreavey, there is a fort marked in this area on the first edition Ordnance Survey map dating to 1833 and the modern maps depict a well, which again corresponds with the Ordnance Survey report of a fine draw-well within the remains of fort observed in 1837 (*ibid.*).

The combination of the reported archaeological remains in the Ramp Field, combined with these fresh strands of evidence supporting the possible location of Inisloughlin Fort less than 1 km to the east of the field, raises the prospect that the battlefield landscape depicted by Bartlett is spread across

the modern holdings on the northern banks of the Lagan in this area. While the Ramp Field comprises a component in this landscape, it is submitted that, on the basis of historic, cartographic and topographical evidence to hand, it is more likely to represent the location of the elevated site of the English camps than the Gaelic fort itself. Alternatively, it may represent the location of Conway's fortified house and bawn.

5. The survey

The survey methodology was determined during a site meeting between Ronan McHugh of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork and Paul Logue of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. The technique employed for the survey was earth resistance. Because there is no record of the exact location of any of the antiquities which reportedly stood in the field, it was decided that as large an area as possible should be surveyed, and this should include the summit of the hillock and the faint landforms observed on the south-east facing slopes. An area measuring 90 m X 120 m was initially surveyed at a resolution of 1 m x 1 m (Fig. 4). A number of anomalies were detected during this survey. Of most potential significance was an angular high-resistance anomaly, situated on the south-east facing slopes of the hillock, which broadly coincided with some of the undulations noted on the south south-east facing slope of the hillock. In order to enhance the level of detail recorded in this area, a more detailed survey at a resolution of 0.5 m x 0.5 m was undertaken over the area of the high resistance anomaly. The higher resolution survey was confined to an area measuring 30 m x 45 m (Fig. 4).

The results of the resistivity surveys are presented in Figures 6 to 8. An interpretation of the results is given in tabular form in Table 1, which should be read in association with Figure 9, which contains a graphic illustration of the survey's results.

6. Survey Results

Table 1. Description and interpretation of anomalies

Code	Description	Interpretation
r1	Angular high resistance feature, comprising two perpendicular arms which intersect to form an east facing corner. The two arms comprising the anomaly measure approximately 55 m (NW/SE) x 50 m (NE/SW). The definition of this anomaly is clearer where it corresponds with the field subdivisions F2 and F3 than in the more northern F1 and this is probably due to more intensive cultivation in the latter area.	Possible artificial feature, perhaps the remnants of an earthen bank. The dimensions of the anomaly recall those of the ruin recorded in the Ordnance Survey Memoirs (Day and McWilliams 1993, 125). However, the anomaly is not clearly defined, even when surveyed at high resolution (Fig. 7), which may indicate that this is a ridge of bedrock. Interpretation is therefore inconclusive.
r2a - b	Sub angular high resistance band that appears to broadly describe high resistance anomaly r1. The anomaly skirts the base of the hillock on 3 sides, but does not rigidly follow the topography. The band is most clearly defined where it runs through the field subdivision F2 (r2a), where it is approximately 8 m wide.	Possible remnants of an earthen bank that has subsided, or else geological feature.
r3 a - c	Low resistance band appearing to surround higher	Poor definition of anomaly suggests it might be a geological

	resistance angular feature r2. Clear definition of the anomaly is difficult as eastern edge is distorted by extreme low resistance feature r5. Anomaly is most distinct in NE corner of survey area (r3a) but becomes amorphous at SE (r3b). Anomaly r3c possibly represents a continuation of this feature turning back NW.	response, and there is no apparent indication of this anomaly in the local topography. However, the position of the band, external to a possible bank feature, together with the low resistance values which characterise the former anomaly indicate it possibly represent a a ditch or moat associated with the anomalies coded r1 and r2.
r4	Amorphous anomaly of extreme high resistance with a maximum length of approximately 40 m which is located on the corner of high resistance anomaly r1.	Possible masonry foundation or bedrock ridge close to the ground surface.
r5	Linear low resistance anomaly extending NE x SW through survey area. Surveyed portion of the anomaly measures approximately 75 m in length x 9 m in width. High resistance linear anomaly extends along the centre of the anomaly on the same axis.	Position of anomaly coincides with field boundary depicted on early Ordnance Survey maps. Anomaly physically coincides with the depression which the landowner identified as the site of a field drain. Anomaly is therefore probably a ditch which constituted the field boundary, into which a drain (the higher resistance linear feature) was set at a later date.
r6	Amorphous area of extreme low resistance which incorporates strikingly regular angular corner approximately 20 m (N/S) x 25 m (E/W), although it	Possible pit or cut associated with modification of hilltop to assist with drainage or levelling, which has filled up with fine, water-holding soil.

	extends beyond eastern edge of survey.	
r7	Linear low resistance anomaly extending E/W from the edge of low resistance area r13 down slope into low resistance area r 3a. Length of anomaly is 80 m and width is 0.6 m.	Possible drain or sheugh (ditch), which has been infilled with water-holding soil or material.
r8	Linear low resistance anomaly extending 65 m from low resistance area r13 down slope into low resistance area r3. Appear to run through high resistance area r 4.	Possible drain or sheugh which has been infilled with water-holding soil or material.
r9	Oval-shaped area of extreme high resistance measuring 7 m (NW/SE) x 2 m (NE/SW)	Possible bedrock outcrop or masonry fragment.
r10	Oval-shaped area of extreme high resistance measuring 5 m (NW/SE) x 1.5m (NE/SW)	Possible bedrock outcrop or masonry fragment.
r11	Sub-circular area of extreme high resistance measuring 3.5 m (N/S) x 3 m (E/W).	Possible bedrock outcrop or masonry fragment.
r12	Oval-shaped area of extreme high resistance measuring 7.5 m (NW/SE) x 2 m (NE/SW)	Possible bedrock outcrop or masonry fragment.
r13	Amorphous area of low resistance at the top of the hillock.	Probably a natural anomaly, or a result of drainage or landscaping on the hilltop where a quantity of loose water-holding soil has

		accumulated.
r14	Linear high resistance anomaly approximately 0.3 m in width, coinciding with modern wire fence.	Base of modern field boundary.
r15	Linear high resistance anomaly approximately 0.3 m in width, coinciding with modern wire fence.	Base of modern field boundary.
r16	Linear high resistance anomaly approximately 0.3 m in width, coinciding with modern wire fence.	Base of modern field boundary.
r17	Linear high resistance anomaly approximately 0.3 m in width, coinciding with modern wire fence.	Base of modern field boundary.
r18	Amorphous area of very high resistance.	Probable area of waterlogging due to combination of base of slope and adjacent drain (r5).
r19	Amorphous area of very high resistance.	Probable area of waterlogging due to combination of base of slope and adjacent drain (r5).

7. Conclusion

The geophysical survey has identified the presence of a number of anomalies within the Ramp Field that are potentially reflective of anthropogenic activity. The combination of anomalies r1 – r3 is of particular interest and might represent the remains of a former structure surrounded by a bank and ditch, although the caveat is added that, in the case of all of these anomalies, their definition was indistinct. It is not possible to offer a more conclusive interpretation of the anomalies at this stage, but the survey results suggest the possibility that the Ramp Field contains some remains that might be relict of the battlefield landscape represented by Bartlett. In addressing the specific question of whether the Ramp Field was the site of Inisloughlin Fort, a note of caution must be sounded in the light of the factors mentioned at Section 4 above and the identification of the nearby location which is topographically more consistent with Bartlett's illustration. Rather than the fort itself, the anomalies recorded during the geophysical survey are perhaps more likely to be relict of the activities of the besieging English forces when they occupied the terrain overlooking the fort, or possible of a later structure built near the site of the battle, such as Conway's fortified house. The precise location of Inisloughlin Fort therefore remains undiscovered, but the results of the geophysical survey together with the topographical investigation undertaken in association with the work have opened up a number of potential avenues of research which are worthy of further investigation.

8. Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Paul Logue of the EHS for his assistance in devising the survey strategy and to Colm Donnelly, Phil Macdonald and Steve Trick of the CAF for their input into the interpretation of the survey results. Particular gratitude is extended to James Swain, the landowner, for his kindness in accommodating the project and his insightful comments on the recent history of the site.

9. Bibliography

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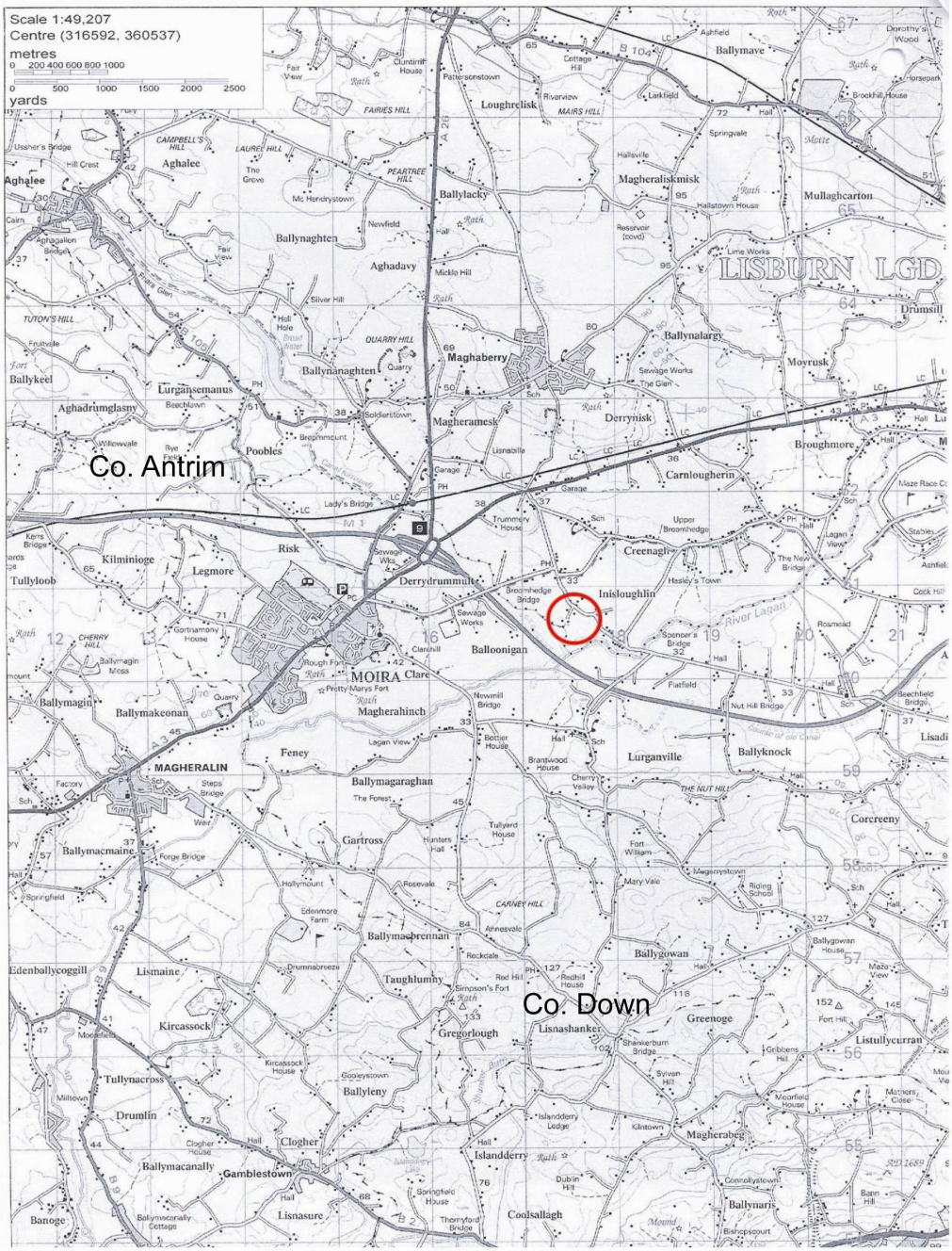


Key

Approximate Location of site
(Map supplied by EHS)

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork

CLIENT: Environment Heritage Service

PROJECT: Inishloughlin Fort

TITLE: Location map

FIGURE: 1

Centre for Archaeobgical Fieldwork

CLIENT: Environment Heritage Service

PROJECT: Inishloughlin Fort

TITLE: Excerpt from Bartlett's map of Inishloughlin Fort (after Hayes McCoy 1964,11).

FIGURE: 2

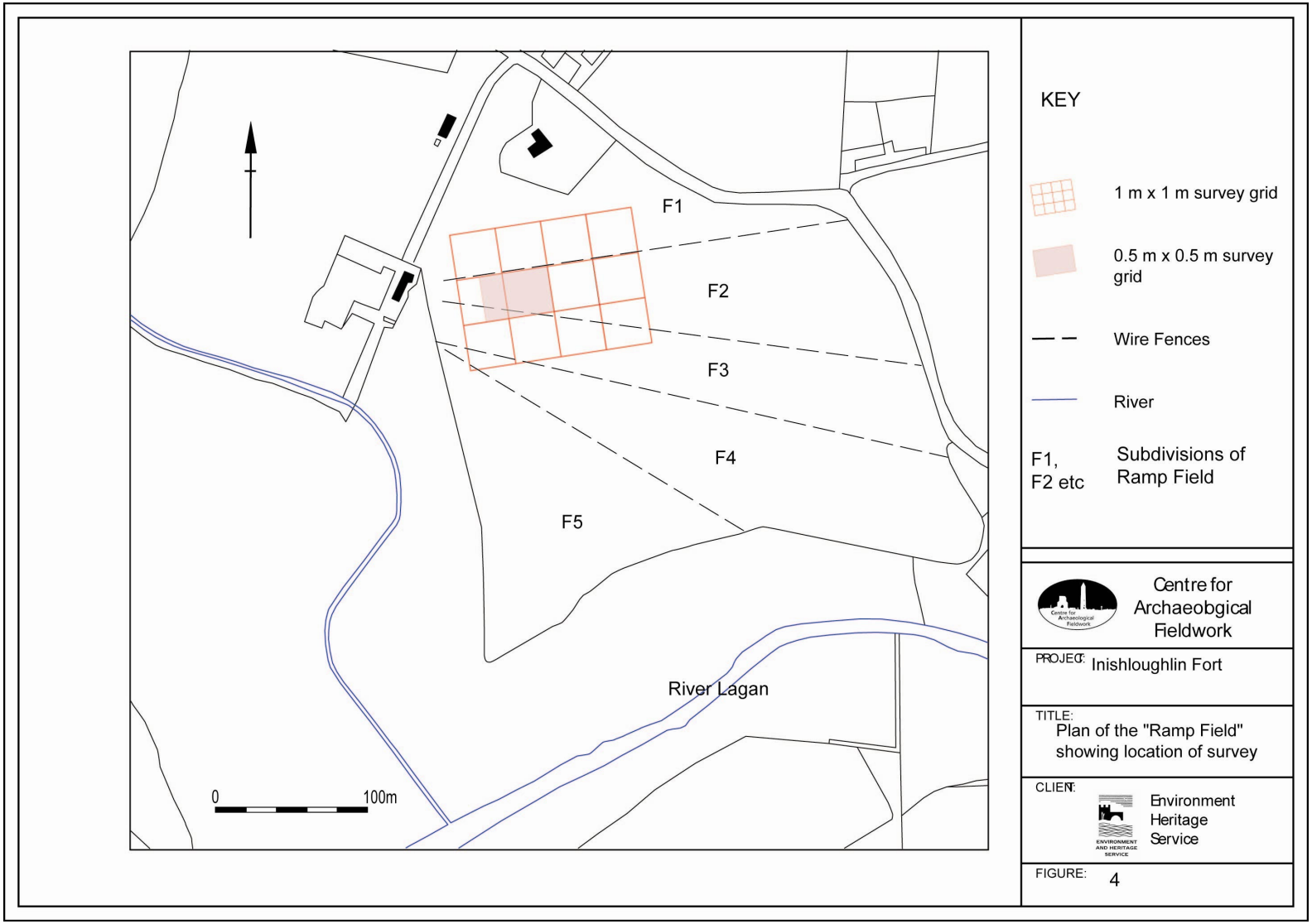
Centre for Archaeobgical Fieldwork

PROJECT: Inishloughlin Fort

CLIENT: Environment Heritage Service

TITLE: Recorded site of Inishloughlin Fort (Ant 067:029)

FIGURE: 3


F1
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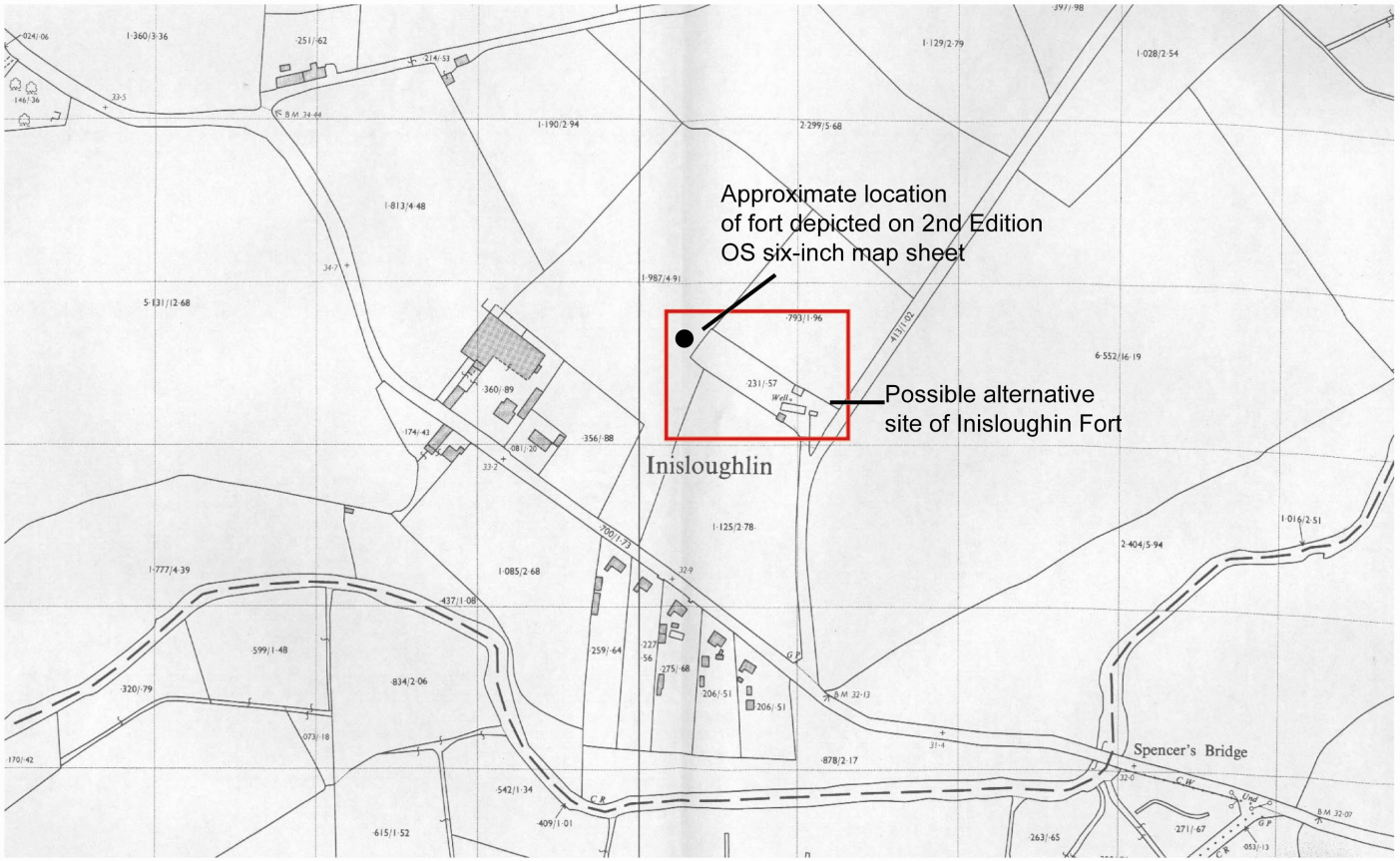
1 m x 1 m survey grid
0.5 m x 0.5 m survey grid
Wire Fences
River
F1, F2 etc
Subdivisions of Ramp Field
Centre for Archaeobgical Fieldwork
PROJECT:
Inishloughlin Fort
TITLE:
Plan of the "Ramp Field" showing location of survey
CLIENT:
Environment Heritage Service
FIGURE:
4



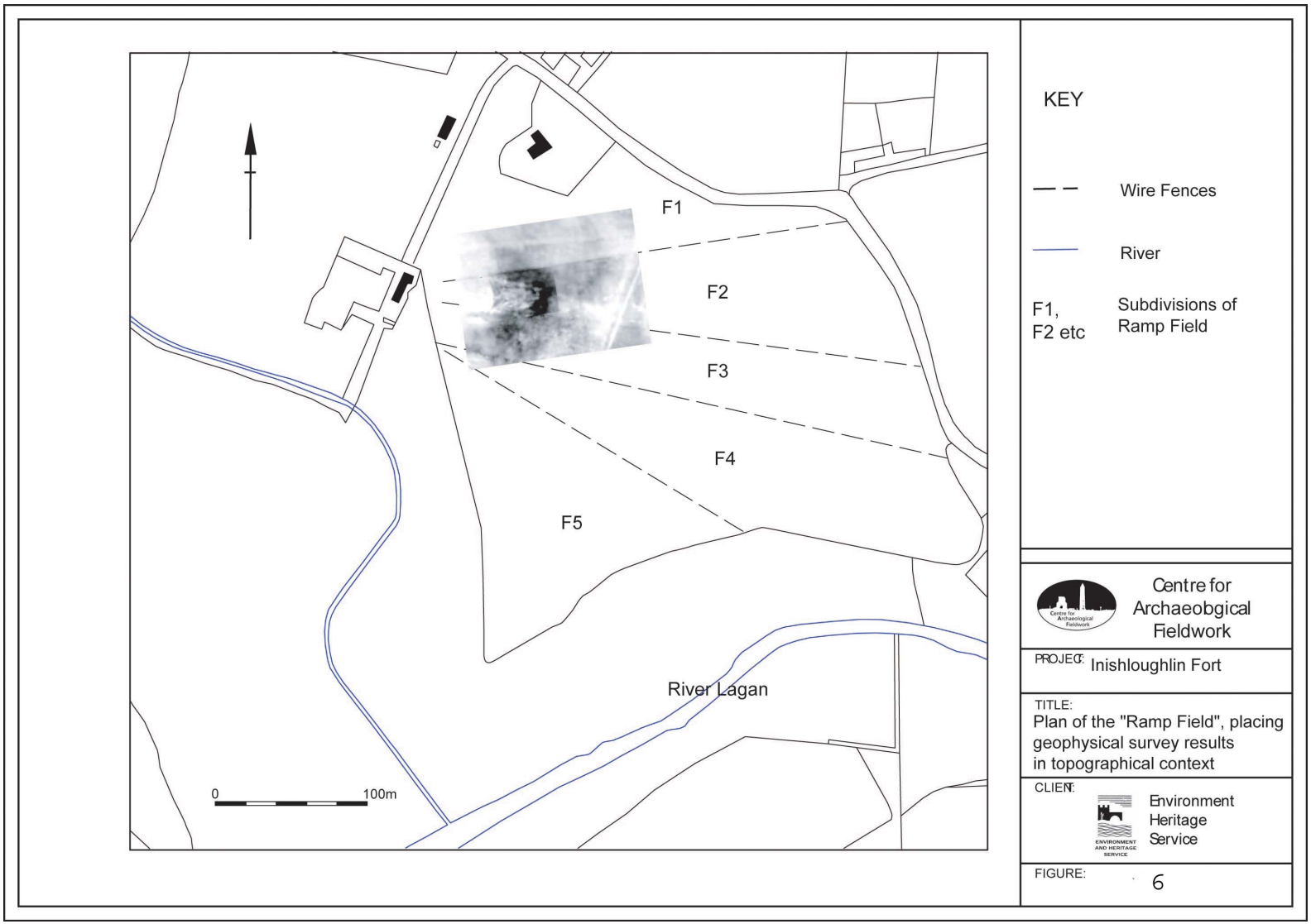
Centre for Archaeobgical Fieldwork

Project: Inishloughlin Fort

Title: Possible alternative site of fort

Client Environment Heritage Service

Figure 5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River Lagan
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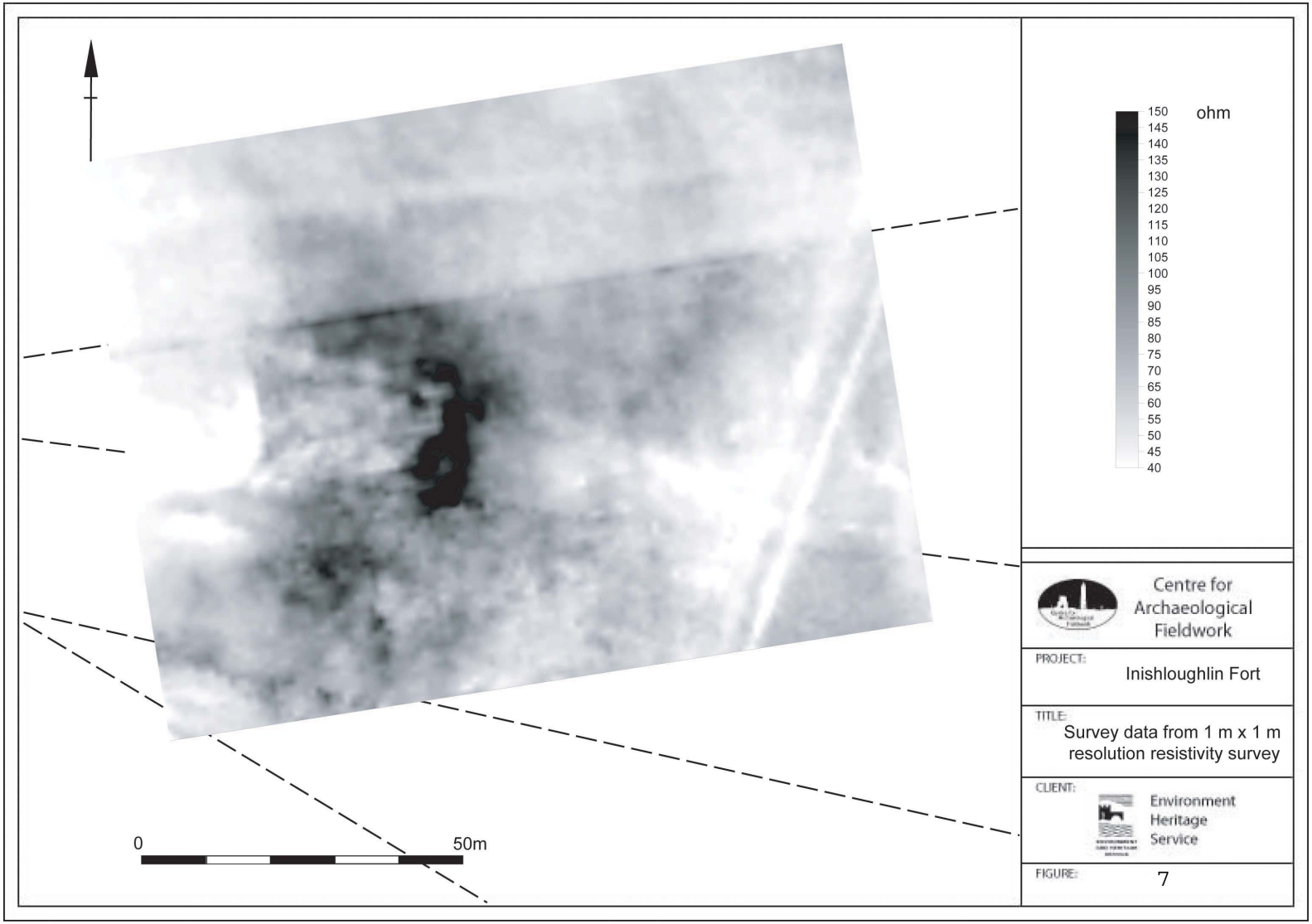
Wire Fences
River
F1, F2 etc
Subdivisions of Ramp Field
Centre for Archaeobgical Fieldwork
PROJECT: Inishloughlin Fort
TITLE: Plan of the "Ramp Field", placing geophysical survey results in topographical context
CLIENT: Environment Heritage Service
FIGURE: 6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Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork
PROJECT:
Inishloughlin Fort
TITLE:
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CLIENT:
Environment Heritage Service
FIGURE:
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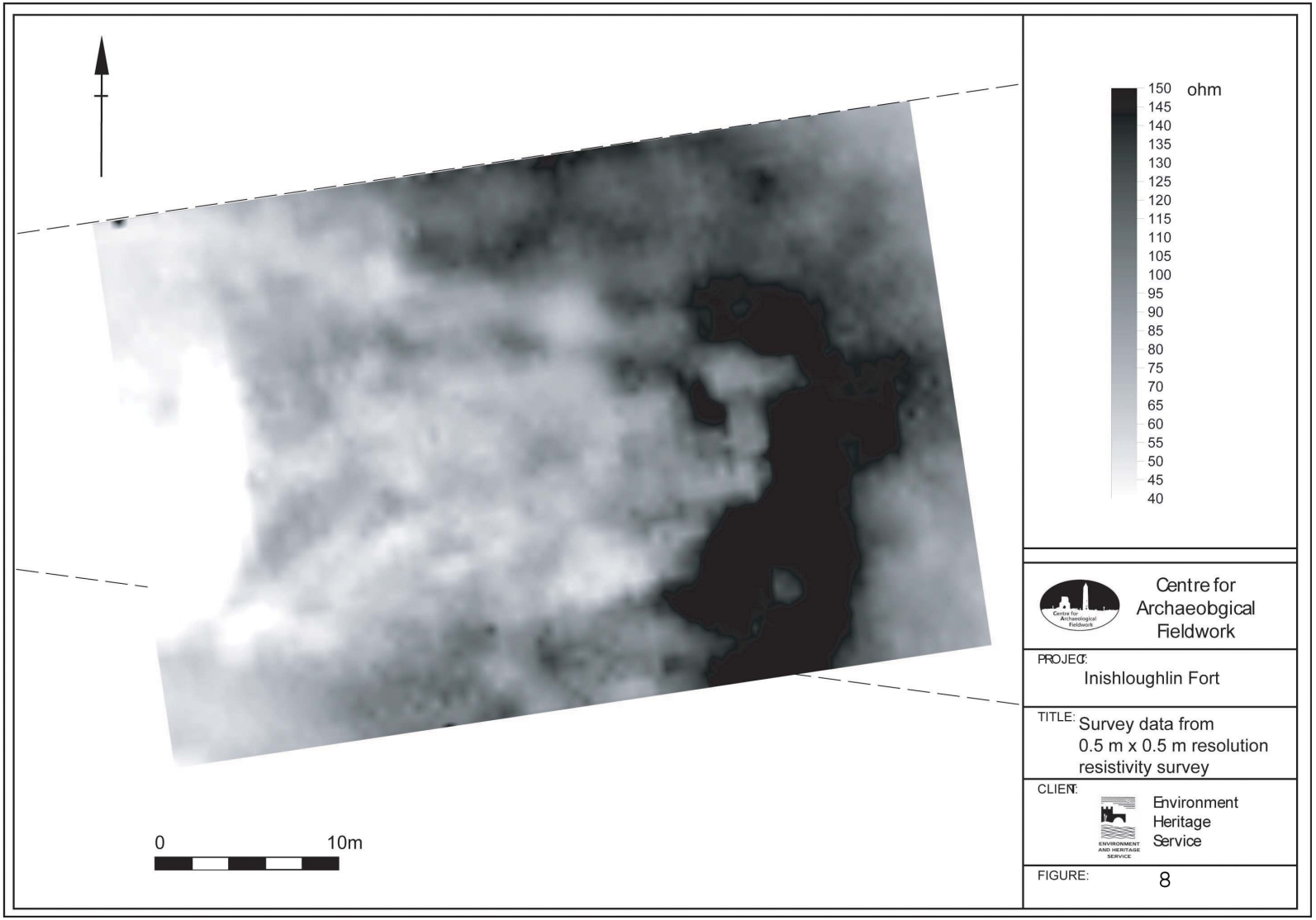
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PROJECT:
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Survey data from
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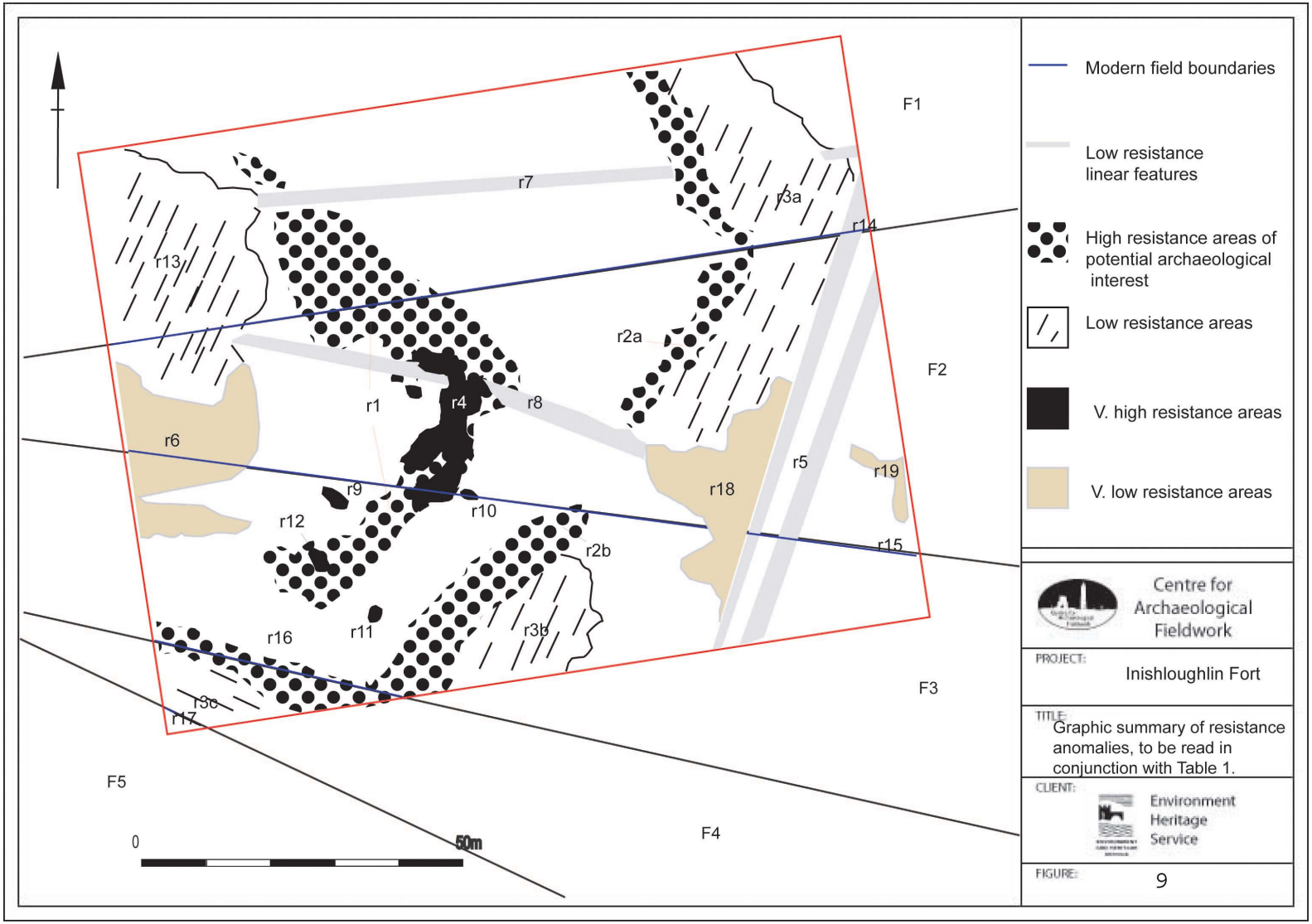
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r16
r17
r18
r19
0
50m
Modern field boundaries
Low resistance linear features
High resistance areas of potential archaeological interest
Low resistance areas
V. high resistance areas
V. low resistance areas
Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork
PROJECT:
Inishloughlin Fort
TITLE:
Graphic summary of resistance anomalies, to be read in conjunction with Table 1.
CLIENT:
Environment Heritage Service
FIGURE:
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