



Geophysical Survey Report No. 012

**Ramoan Church
Novally Road
Ballycastle
Co. Antrim**

Dr Steven Trick

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Ramoan Church, Ballycastle

Townland: Glebe

SMR No (if applicable): ANT008:014

Other

Grid Ref: D 1023 4018

County: Antrim

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

Dates of Survey: 12th – 16th, 19th February, 2007

Surveyor(s) Present: Steve Trick, Ronan McHugh

Brief Summary:

The survey was carried out in advance of a housing estate development, in an area that lies approx. 100m east from an old church site identified as the Patrician foundation *Raith Mudain*. The battle of Glentasie (1565) was also fought in the vicinity (see Fig. 1). The survey found few geophysical anomalies near to the church site of archaeological potential (see Figs. 3 & 4). Most anomalies are thought to reflect modern agricultural practice and background geological response. However in the far southeast of survey area there are geometric anomalies of possible archaeological potential. It is suggested that these be investigated with excavation, along with exploratory trenches over the anomalies nearest to the church site and one of the more tentative geological anomalies.

Size of area surveyed: c. 3 ha.

Weather conditions: Sun and showers

Solid Geology: Basalt

Drift Geology: Till

Current Land Use: Horse pasture

Intended Land Use: Housing estate

Survey specific information

Survey type: Resistivity

Instrumentation: Geoscan RM15 with MPX15

Probe configuration: Parallel twin (4 probe)

Probe spacing: 0.5m

Grid size: 30m

Traverse interval: 1m

Sample Interval: 1m

Traverse Pattern: zig-zag

Spatial Accuracy: Gridded with Total Station

Georeferencing: TPS survey spatially adjusted to Irish Grid in GIS

Software filters applied:

Edge Match
Interpolate
Despike

Introduction

The Planning Service granted permission for a housing development on land adjacent to Novally Road, Ballycastle (see Fig. 1). This land lies approximately 100m east of an old graveyard on an early site (SMR ANT 008:14). This was a medieval parish church and graveyard, on an early site identified with the Patrician foundation *Raith Mudain*. Other than this the early history of the site is uncertain. The Ordnance Survey Memoirs (Day *et al.* 1994, 107) report a cross-carved stone and an inscribed stone and font, but the stones are now lost. The church may have been located in a sunken part of the graveyard where one side is delineated by grass covered blocks of stone. The Ordnance Survey Memoirs (Day *et al.* 1994, 107) also report a closed well and bell – there are now no visible traces of these. The graveyard is still in use.

A rapid-assessment geophysical survey was commissioned within the development area by EHS: Built Heritage, to locate potential archaeological remains before construction work begins. The development area consists of three fields, shown in Fig. 2 as Areas A, B and C. Area A is bordered on its northern, eastern and southern sides by narrow corridors of woodland. The survey strategy considered the whole of Area A worthy of survey since it is closest to the old graveyard (note that the woodland could not be surveyed). In addition, single strips of grids were planned in Areas B and C to provide corollary information. To the northern end of Area B there are some suggestive undulations in the topography and so additional grids were planned here in the case that these are archaeological in nature. In addition, during the course of the survey interesting results were obtained in the southern end of Area B and so an extra grid was placed here to provide more information (see Fig. 2).

Description and interpretation of anomalies (see Fig. 4)

Code	Description	Interpretation
r1, r2, r3	high-resistance linear anomalies, c. 1m across, that turn through an angle	possible former field boundaries, or field drains
r4	pair of parallel high-resistance linear anomalies, both c. 1m across, which splay out towards the eastern end	possible pathway between former field divisions
r5, r6	pair of parallel high-resistance curvilinear anomalies, both c. 1m across	proximity and shared alignment with modern road suggests former trackway
r7	curvilinear high-resistance anomaly, c. 1m across	conjunction with r5 and r6, and r9 (see below), suggest a relation, possible enclosure around r9
r8	groups of parallel linear high-resistance anomalies, c. 1m across	possible lazy beds or field drains
r9	two adjacent sub-rectangular high-resistance areas c. 10m x 5m	possible structure associated with route suggested by anomalies r5 and r6
r10	high-resistance linear, c. 1m wide and c. 40m long	field drain
r11	amorphous high-resistance area	coincidence with topographic relief suggests geological source
r12-r19	amorphous high-resistance areas	geological response, possible natural caches of flint

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following anomalies highlighted by the survey be further investigated with excavation:

1. The geometric nature of anomalies r7 and r9 suggest anthropogenic origin. Their spatial association with anomalies r5, and r6 (see above) suggest they may be related to a former trackway, perhaps a structure of some kind. It is suggested that an excavation trench be opened encompassing anomalies r9 and r7 to assess the nature of the anomalies.
2. It is also recommended that anomaly r4 be investigated with excavation. It is the closest anomaly to the old graveyard and may be related in some way.
3. Anomaly r11 is interpreted as a geological response based on its irregular shape. However there are high-resistance curvilinear 'arms' emanating from it, suggestive of archaeological remains.

Bibliography

Hamlin, A. 1976. *The archaeology of Early Christianity in the North of Ireland*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast.

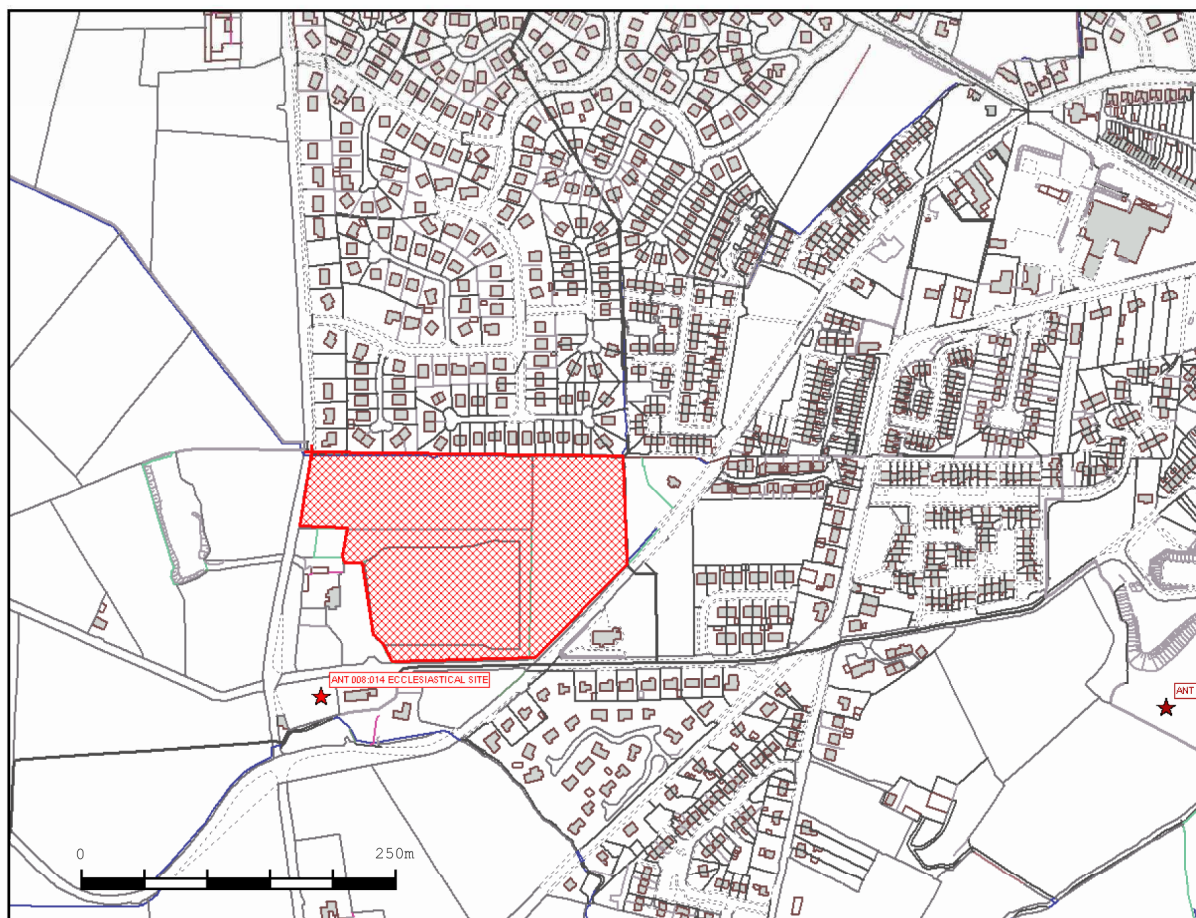
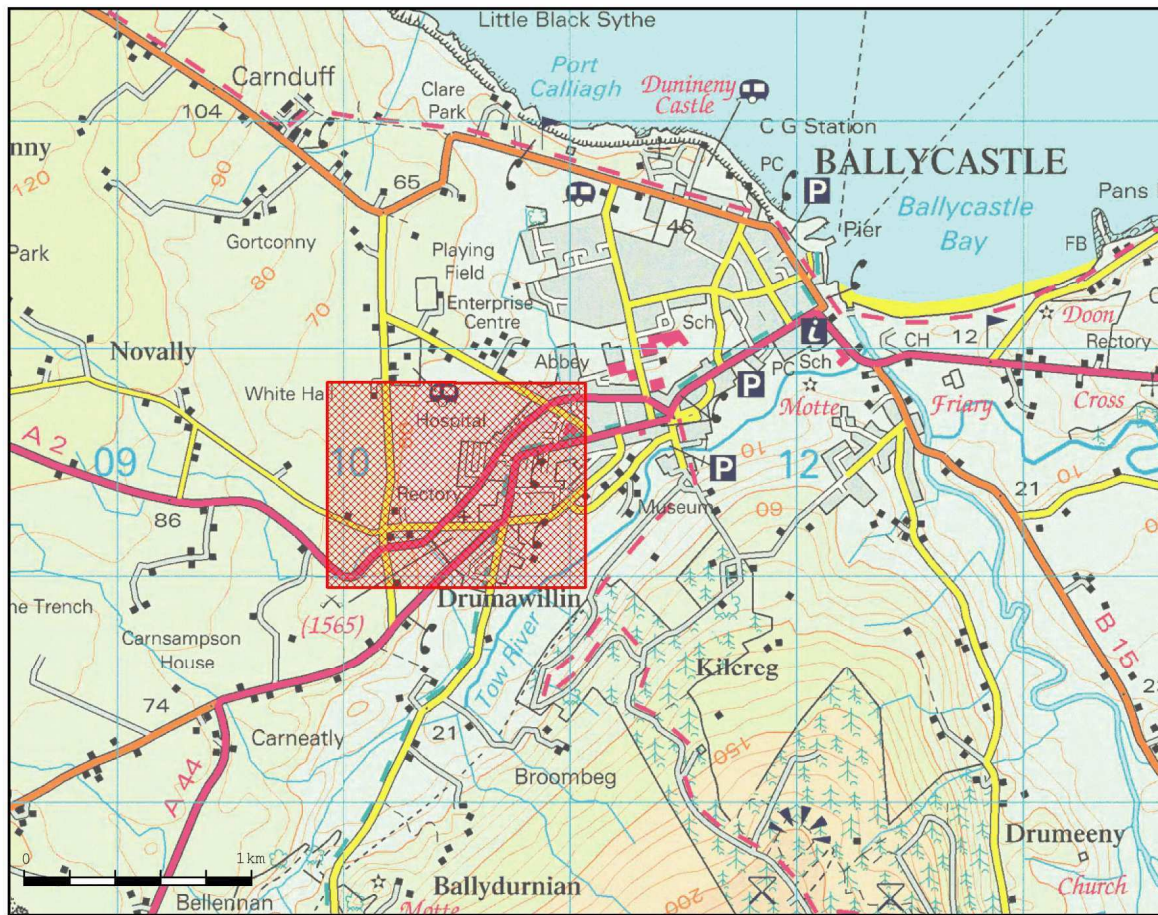
Day, A., McWilliams, P. and Dobson, N. 1994. *OS Memoirs of Ireland. Parishes of Co. Antrim IX, North Antrim Coast and Rathlin. 1830-2, 1835, 1838-9*. Vol. 24. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

O'Laverty, J. 1884. *An historical account of the Diocese of Down and Connor, ancient and modern*. Vol. IV. Dublin: James Duffy and Son.

Reeves, W. 1847. *Eccleasticastical Antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore, consisting of a taxation of those dioceses, compiled in the year MCCCVI*. Dublin: Hodges and Smith.

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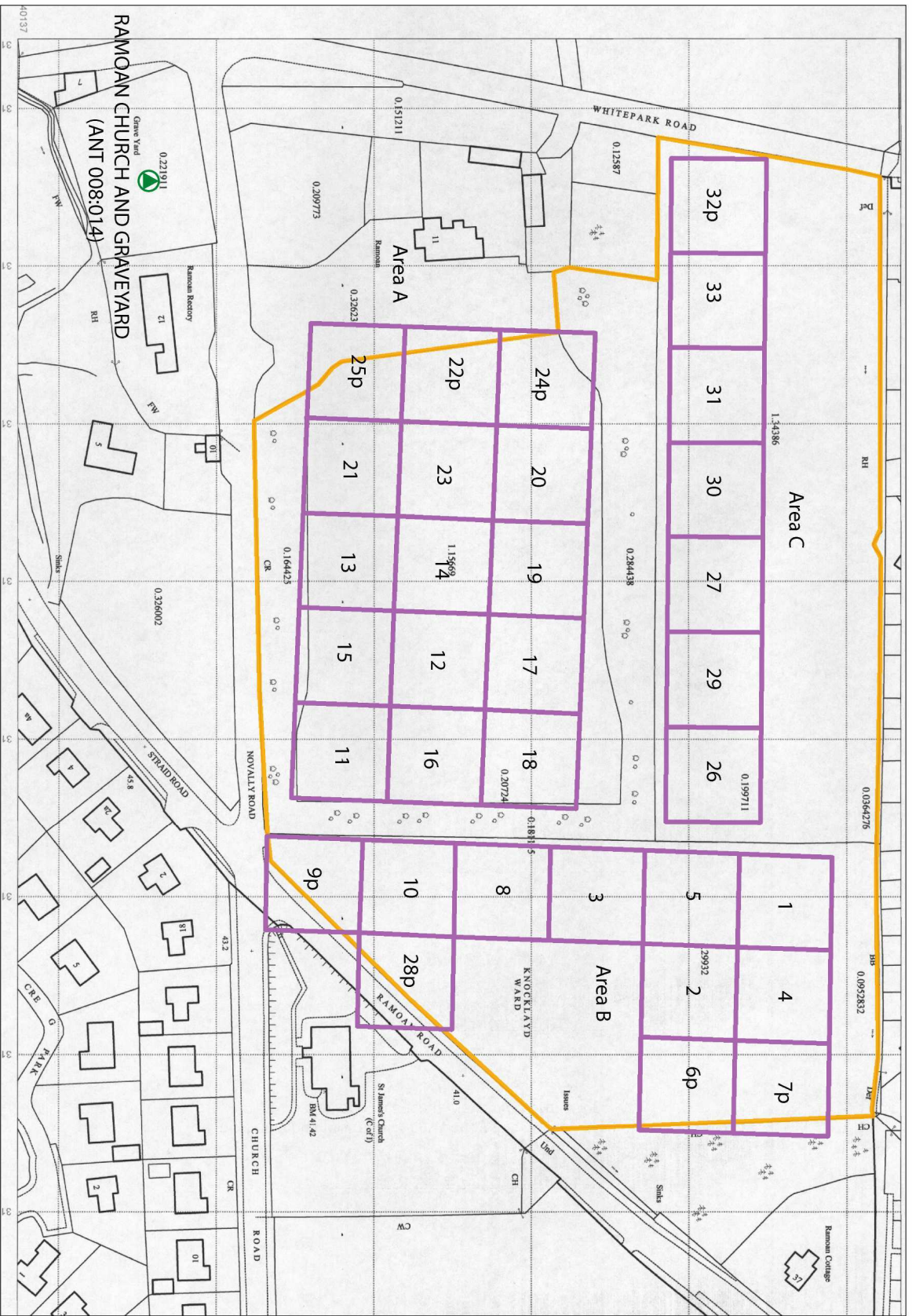
Novally Road, Ballycastle

TITLE:

Location map

FIGURE:

Figure 1



Development Area



Grids surveyed



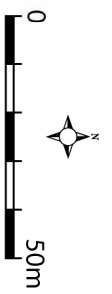
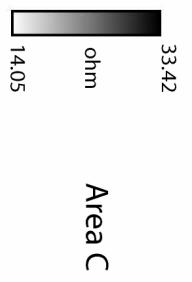
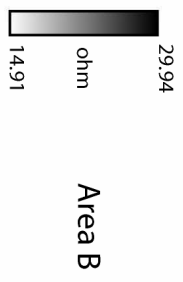
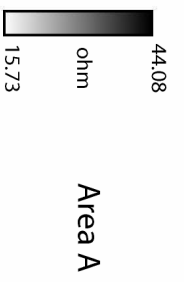
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PROJECT:
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Plan showing survey
area and grids surveyed
(‘p’ = partial grid)

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FIGURE:
Figure 2



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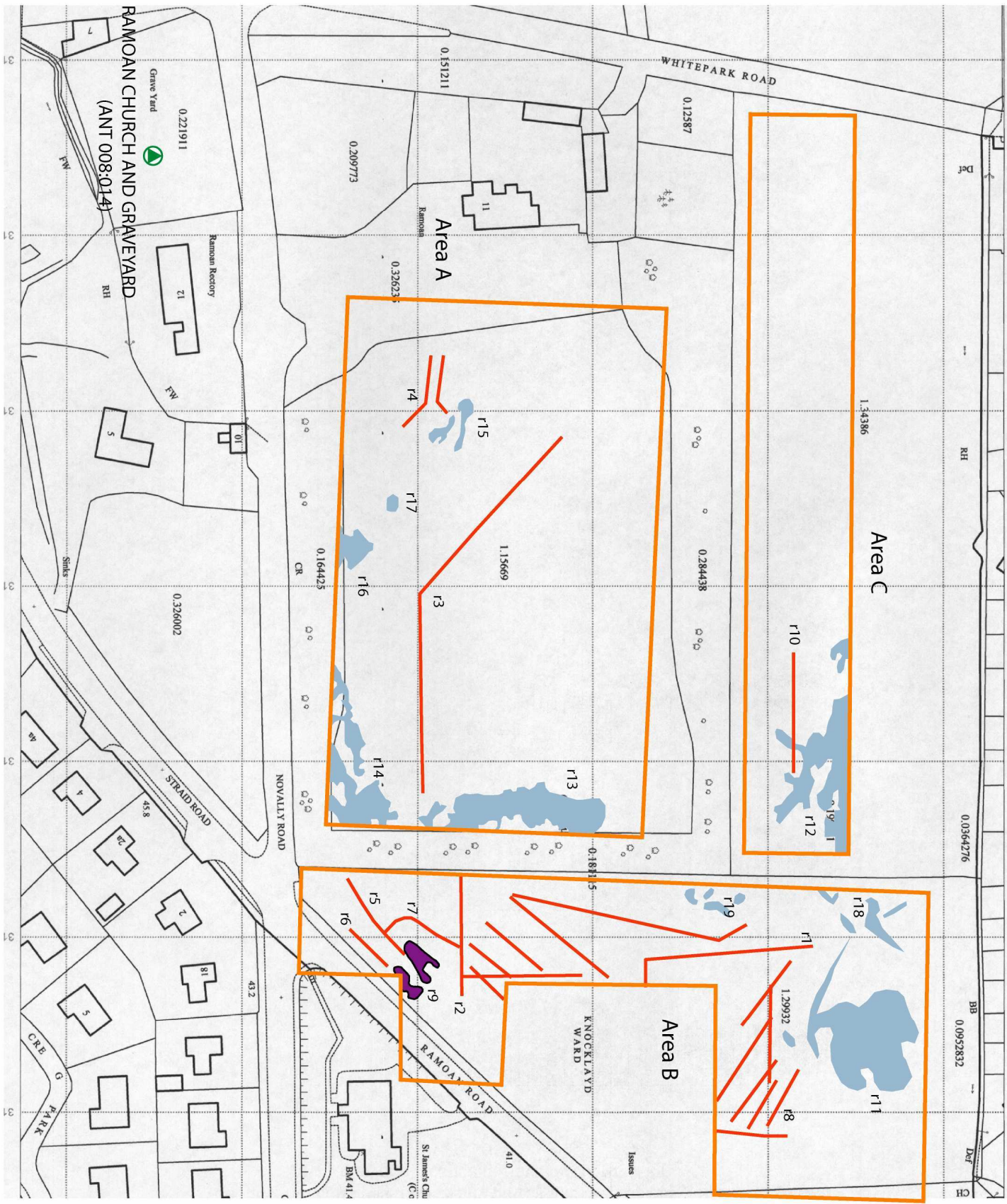
PROJECT: Novally Road, Ballycastle

TITLE: Plot of resistance data

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FIGURE: Figure 3



High-resistance linear



Geology?



Area of archaeological potential



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TITLE:

Interpretation of resistance survey

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FIGURE:

Figure 4