



Licence Ref: MUL260047

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

30 July 2026

Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
2nd Floor
Menapia House
Drinagh Business Park
Drinagh
Wexford
Y35RF29

Via: licence@mara.gov.ie

Re: Maritime usage licence application to facilitate site investigation surveys associated with the proposed N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme at River Slaney adjacent to the Irish National Heritage Park, Ferrycarrig, Wexford.

A chara

I refer to correspondence on 1 July 2026 received in connection with the above.

Outlined below are heritage-related observations/recommendations co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit under the stated headings.

Underwater Archaeology

The Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application relates to proposed marine environmental and archaeological surveys within the Lower Slaney Estuary, Co. Wexford:

- A hydrographic survey (bathymetry and current measurements) of the River Slaney is required for a section that flows through Wexford.
- An archaeological wade and metal detector survey of the nearshore at low tide under licence from the National Monument Service of this Department, in order to assess its archaeological potential.
- Subtidal and intertidal benthic survey to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date description of the species and habitats found within and in the vicinity of the proposed development.



It is noted that the MUL application area is proximal to:

- A number of archaeological monuments recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)/Sites and Monuments Record.
- Historic Shipwrecks recorded in the Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database (WIID). The WIID contains records of numerous wrecking events within the Lower Slaney Estuary. Those that have been precisely located, eg. W11330 upstream of Ferrycarrig, can be viewed here: <https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/locate-a-monument-or-wreck/wreck-viewer/>.
- Archaeological objects recorded in the National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files.
- Underwater cultural heritage assets, including maritime built heritage structures and features, archaeological discoveries made from prior marine geophysical surveys, excavations and other investigations, and potential submerged palaeolandscapes.

Legal Codes and Policy Context

Archaeological monuments are afforded statutory protection in the RMP established under section 12 (Recorded Monuments) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1930-2014. The *Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, see section 3.6.1(3) and 3.6.4) sets out national policy on the protection of the archaeological heritage in the course of development.

Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 is the primary piece of legislation for the protection of wrecks over 100 years old and archaeological objects underwater, irrespective of age. Wrecks that are less than 100 years old and archaeological objects underwater or the potential location of such a wreck or archaeological object can also be protected under Section 3 of the 1987 (Amendment) Act. Underwater Cultural Heritage also encompasses a broad range of marine heritage, the protection of which is provided for in legal codes. The WIID is the official register of historic shipwrecks protected under the National Monuments Acts. All wrecks over 100 years old are protected under the 1987 and 1994 (Amendment) Acts of the National Monuments Acts. Over 18,000 wrecks have been recorded to date, ranging from small fishing boats, dugout canoes and coastal traders to steamships and ocean-going ships. Though earlier sources have been included where obtainable, the Inventory is largely based on documentary sources available from after 1700 AD. As such, previously unrecorded wreck sites, including those dating to earlier periods, may await discovery in the marine area under consideration here.



The *National Planning Framework*¹ states that ‘the protection of archaeological heritage is recognised as a core component to achieving sustainable development’ and National Policy Objective 89 is to ‘Protect, conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural, cultural and built heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their cultural and environmental significance.

The *National Marine Planning Framework*² includes the statement that: *‘Proposals unable to contribute to the protection of the significance of heritage assets will only be supported if they demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise, or mitigate harm to the significance of heritage assets. If it is not possible, to avoid, minimise or mitigate harm, then the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal must outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets. Proposals should consider the potential impact of their application on heritage assets from the earliest stages of project development, taking into account the potential risk of damage to, or degradation of, assets. Expert advice will be required at all stages to inform the development of the proposals. Such proposals may include plans to avoid locations where heritage assets may be located, or to minimise compromise or harm through the use of less invasive construction techniques. Proposals should consider evidence for the level of significance of a heritage asset, including information and advice from relevant regulators and advisors, and on how they are managed. This applies to both identified heritage assets and the potential for such assets to be discovered during development or activity’* (National Marine Planning Framework, 89).

In light of the above, the following recommendations of this Department are provided to assist the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority to ensure the proposed marine surveys and archaeological investigations, should they receive consent, will align with statutory obligations and policy objectives for the protection of the State’s Underwater Cultural Heritage.

This Department recommend the following conditions are attached to the MUL under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, should the MUL be granted:

1. Project Archaeologist

A suitably qualified and experienced underwater archaeologist, with a track record in the archaeological interpretation of marine survey data, shall be appointed to advise on all archaeological aspects of the project.

¹ <https://cdn.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/National-Planning-Framework-First-Revision-April-2025-1.pdf>

² <https://assets.gov.ie/139100/f0984c45-5d63-4378-ab65-d7e8c3c34016.pdf>



2. Hydrographic Surveys

Bathymetric surveys shall be licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014; a Section 3 1987 National Monuments (Amendment) Act licence shall be required for all survey works. Licence applications, accompanied by Method Statements, shall be sent for approval to the National Monuments Service of this Department. This Department shall be furnished with a final archaeological report of the works, including archaeological interpretation of all survey results.

3. Archaeological Surveys

Archaeological wade and metal detector survey of the nearshore shall be licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014. A Section 3 1987 National Monuments (Amendment) Act licence shall be required for archaeological wade and intertidal surveys and a Section 2 1987 National Monuments (Amendment) Act detection device consent shall be required for metal detection. Licence applications, accompanied by Method Statements, shall be sent for approval to the National Monuments Service of this Department. This Department shall be furnished with a final archaeological report on the survey works.

4. Protocol For Archaeological Discoveries

A Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries shall be agreed at least four weeks in advance of the commencement of geotechnical works with the National Monuments Service of this Department.

Should you require any further information or clarification on any of the above submission please do not hesitate to contact this Department.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) fem.dau@npws.gov.ie, or to the following address:

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