

GALWAY CITY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Salthill Promenade
Other names used for site	Blackrock
IGH THEME	IGH11 Igneous Intrusions
TOWNLAND(S)	Pollnarooma West, Attithomasrevagh, Cappanaveagh, Lenaboy
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Galway
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	94
ITM CO-ORDINATES	527100E 723450N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 45	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 14
GISCODE	GC008

Outline Site Description

Coastal section of granite outcrops among sandy cobble beaches.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The bedrock comprises Murvey Granite, a fine-grained, aphyric, felsic, biotite-poor rock exhibiting a distinct pink colour. The Murvey Granite is part of the late-Caledonian Galway Batholith, emplaced around 410 million years ago (Devonian). A number of porphyry and felsite dykes outcrop along the section.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The coastal section from Blackrock Diving Tower to Palmer's Rock comprises white sand and cobble beaches interrupted by granite boulder groynes, Murvey Granite outcrops, and quartz porphyry and felsite dykes. This granite landscape is part of the eastern block of the Galway Granite Batholith. The light-coloured, pale-pink granite is named after similar granites found in the western block of the batholith at Murvey, west of Roundstone. Beach cobbles and pebbles consist of local granite, as well as rounded limestone and metamorphic rocks deposited in glacial till, and subsequently reworked by wave action along the coast. Groynes along the shore help to arrest longshore drift and maintain beach sand deposits. Reporting on the history of Salthill 'Prom', Tom Kenny (Galway Advertiser 18/4/2013) notes, *"(t)here was very little beach and what was there was rock-strewn and shingle-cluttered. Flooding from the tide would have been more frequent then. The clean-up process of the beach began when breakwaters and groynes were built. Later the Salthill Development Association spent a lot of the money they collected when they rented out the Hangar ballroom, to remove rocks and stones from the beach."*

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The accessible granite outcrops along this popular amenity space make this an excellent County Geological Site where the public can see the granite foundation that underlies west Galway City, and the landscape extending west through Cois Fharrage to Roundstone Bay.

Management/promotion issues

Any future development or coastal protection schemes along Salthill Promenade should ensure bedrock exposures are not covered by breakwaters, seawalls or concrete. The Blackrock Diving Tower, constructed in 1953, is an iconic landmark of Galway City, often photographed with Illaunafamona drumlin and Galway Bay in the background to the west. An information panel at Blackrock communicating the local geoheritage (granite, beaches, drumlins) would be of public interest.



Banded Murvey Granite at Ladies Beach.



Murvey Granite outcrops at Blackrock.



Palmer's Rock. A metamorphic boulder at Forster Park Strand, by Salthill car park.



Rounded limestone, granite and metamorphic cobbles on beach west of Blackrock.



Granite, limestone and metagabbro blocks in seawall below promenade opposite Galway Bay Hotel.

