

TIPPERARY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Magcobar (Silvermines)
Other names used for site	Ballynoe
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Garryard West, Gortshaneroe
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Silvermines
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	26
ITM CO-ORDINATES	582600E 670750N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 59	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 18

Outline Site Description

Large abandoned mine site on lower slopes of mountain, comprising large spoil heaps around a flooded open pit.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The mineralization at Silvermines is hosted by basement rocks of the Silurian and Devonian Old Red Sandstone and by the overlying Lower Carboniferous succession.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Magcobar barite mine site is immediately north of the Silvermines-Shallee road, 1 km west of Silvermines village. It was the last active mine in the district and closed in September 1992. Open-pit mining was followed by limited underground mining developed from the base of the pit. The mine is located on the site of a 19th century copper-lead mine but most of the remaining features from that era are covered by large waste heaps. The only visible remains of 19th century mining are a small open pit and dressing floor. In contrast, the 20th century mine has left behind a large open pit, 15 ha in surface area and 70 m deep and five large-volume waste heaps. Most of the mine buildings have been removed. A small volume of pyrite-rich waste is present in one waste heap, which holds some mineralogical interest. However, the five large solid waste heaps comprise mainly stripping waste with minimal sulphide content, meaning there is limited mineralogical interest in these larger waste heaps.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is a significant site in Silvermines, location of the district's only barite mine, and should be considered as a County Geological Site albeit within the context of the Silvermines district that should be considered for NHA status.

Management/promotion issues

The Magcobar site is now the location of a proposed pumped storage hydroelectric power plant, with the open pit to be employed as the lower reservoir. If the project proceeds, consideration should be given to incorporating a geological heritage component, e.g. signboards outlining the mining history and geology of the site.



Flooded open pit at Magcobar mine, with waste heaps in background.



View eastwards towards waste heap on eastern side of open pit.



Former entrance to Magcobar open pit site with signs for current power plant project.

