

**Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork**  
**School of Archaeology & Palaeoecology**  
**Queen's University**  
**Belfast**

**CAF Monitoring Report 001**  
**Devenish Island, Co. Fermanagh**

**Peter Moore**  
**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004**



## **1. Introduction**

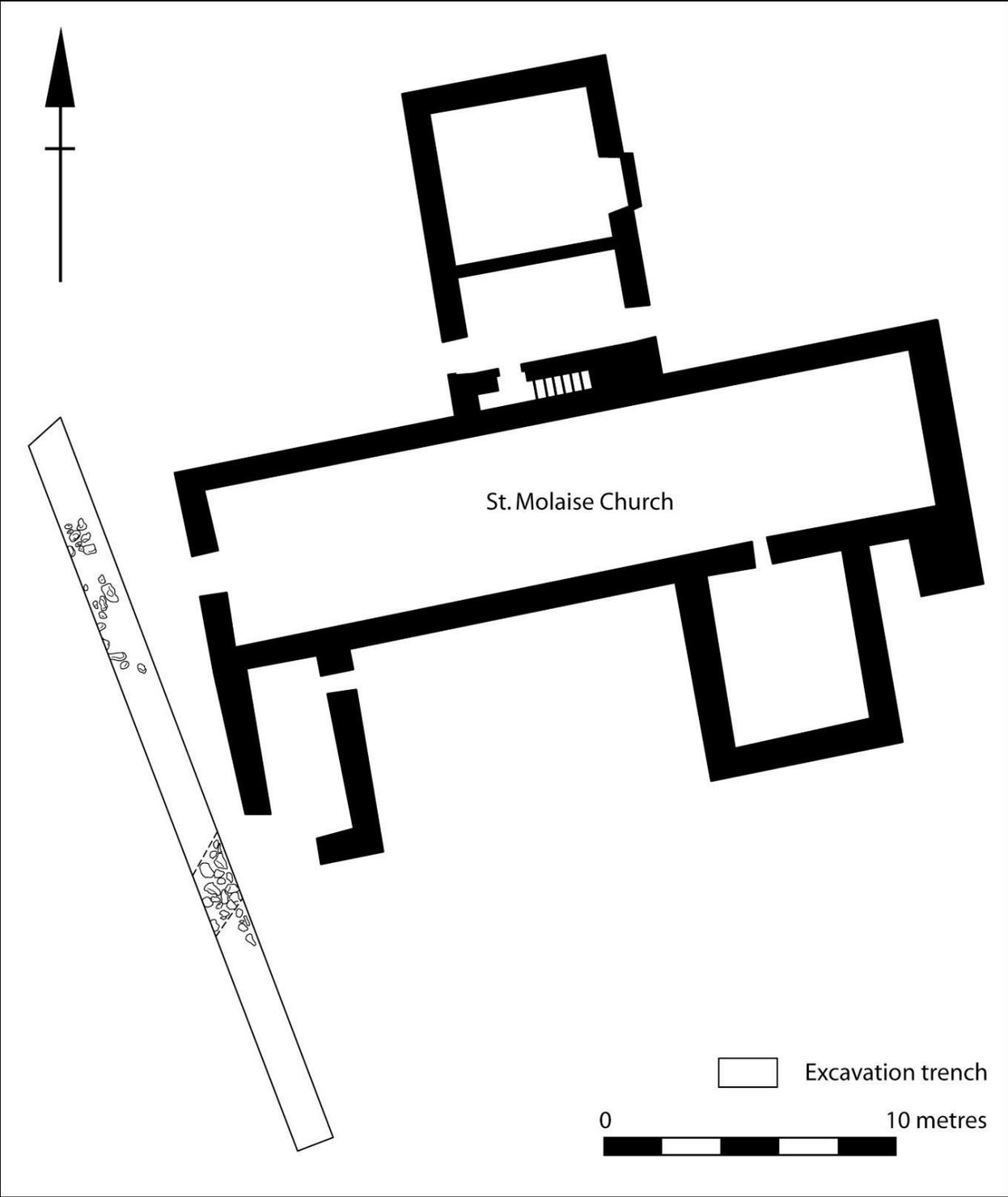
- 1.1 A monitoring exercise was undertaken by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork on behalf of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage on Devenish Island monastic site. Monitoring took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004. A scheme by EHS: Built Heritage to link two existing paths with a new pathway near the west side of the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century *Teampull Mór* (or St Molaise's Church) meant that intrusive construction work was necessary. A formation depth of approximately 0.18 m was required by the contractor in order to lay a secure tar layer for the path which is 26 m in length (approximately north to south), and 1.21 m in width (approximately east to west). Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the site all construction work was carried out by hand.

## **2. Results**

- 2.1 A stone feature was recorded within the trench, approximately 8.7 m from the southern limit of the excavation (Figure One). The stone feature ran approximately north-east to south-west across the width of the trench and appeared to continue underneath the baulks. The stones were set in a gravelly material different to the loamy topsoil recorded across much of the rest of the trench, and possibly represents a footing for a wall as they are some 2.5 m in width. Fragments of bone were recovered from between the stones. However, no other finds were recorded in conjunction with this feature.
- 2.2 A further spread of stones were recorded towards the northern end of the trench (approximately 4.5 m from the northern excavation limit: Figure One). However, these stones differed from the feature recorded to the south as they were not as uniformly and clearly laid. Although there were stones that appeared grouped together, they were more random in distribution and they were set in a more gravelly material. As with the feature to the south, bone fragments were also recovered from between the stones

## **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 The large size of the stones together with their uneven nature would seem to suggest that it is unlikely they represent paths or walkways associated with the monastic settlement. It is possible that the stones uncovered (particularly the feature recorded towards the south end of the trench) represent the footings for two walls. However, if this is the case, the walls would have existed at an awkward angle to have served *Teampull Mór* or any of the later attached annex buildings. Moreover, the upstanding remains of the church do not exhibit a scar that would suggest the features uncovered were ever attached to the surviving building. It is possible, therefore, that the features uncovered are wall footings that may pre-date the building of *Teampull Mór*.



**Figure One:** Excavation trench showing the stone features in relation to the Lower Church.