



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 079

**ENNISLARE ROAD
BALLEER
COUNTY ARMAGH**

LICENCE NO.: AE/06/170

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Ennislare Road

Townland: Balleer

SMR No. : ARM 016:034

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: H 8682 3824

County: Armagh

Excavation Licence No. : AE/06/170

Planning Ref / No. : O/2005/0183/O

Dates of Monitoring: 19th July 2006

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site 160m north-west of 129 Ennislare Road, Balleer, County Armagh in response to a planning application for a new dwelling. A partially destroyed rath (ARM 016:034) is situated approximately 40m from the application site, within the same field. The evaluation consisted of five test trenches within the area of the proposed development. There were no archaeological features within the test trenches. Several sherds of nineteenth century ceramics were recovered, presumably derived from manuring with midden material. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of five test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Five trenches each approximately 2m wide and ranging in length between 30m and 80m.

Current Land Use: Agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located 160m north-west of 129 Ennislare Road, Balleer, County Armagh. The site is situated close to the County Monaghan border, approximately 7.0km from Armagh and 4.5km from Keady (Figure One). The site lies in the valley of the River Callan, at a height of approximately 100m above sea level. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological sites. The Dane's Cast (ARM 016:025) is just over 1km to the north-east, while there are at least four raths (SMR Nos.: ARM 016:021, 016:022, 016:032 and 016:033) and one enclosure (ARM 016:023) within 2km to the north and north-west (Figure Two). The surrounding landscape consists predominantly of agricultural land, interspersed with dwelling houses. The application site is situated in the northern part of a rectangular-shaped field, the long axis of which is aligned north-south. The field is around 1.5 hectares in size and the field boundaries consist of hedgerows interspersed with some trees. The field is surrounded by agricultural land. There are two entrances to the field- one in the north-eastern corner and another around a third of the way down the eastern side. A rough lane runs along the easternmost field boundary, between the two entrances, then veers off to the north-east where it joins the Ennislare Road.

The remains of a rath (ARM 016:034) are situated on a ridge in the middle of the field, from which the field slopes to the south and south-west. To the north the field is flattish. The southern part of the rath survives as a semi-circular bank (Plate One). There is no surviving bank to the north but traces of a ditch are visible. The bank stands at a height of around 0.5 to 1.0m (Plate Two) and is lowest at the western end where it has been more visibly eroded. There is a hedge growing out of the top of the bank, suggesting that this part of the rath was once utilised, perhaps as part of an enclosure. Close to the bank in the interior of the monument is a small hut or farm building and there is also a concrete platform in the centre of the rath which may comprise the remains of another farm building. To the north-west of the rath is a relict field boundary running north-west/south-east between the monument and the field's westernmost boundary. The boundary consists of a slight bank with a hedge on top, and may be contemporary with the rath although it is more likely to be more modern. It may have comprised part of a field system into which the rath was incorporated.

The evaluation took place in response to a planning application for a new dwelling and was requested by Stiofán Ó Cathmhaoil: Protecting Historic Monuments Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage.

Excavation

The original research design requested the supervision of five mechanically excavated trenches, each approximately 2m wide and 85m in length. The research design was revised in the field (Figure Three) due to time constraints and limitations imposed by the type of mechanical excavator provided for the evaluation. Four of the evaluation trenches (Trenches One to Three and Five) were approximately 80m in length. Trench Four was approximately 30m in length. The trenches covered the area where the house was to be built as well as testing the area which would be disturbed by services. All five trenches were excavated to the subsoil, which

consisted of light greyish brown boulder clay which was present across the site at depths of between 0.24m and 0.32m.

Trench One

Trench One was situated in the northernmost part of the field and ran parallel to the east-west field boundary. The north-eastern corner of the trench was approximately 2m from the northernmost field boundary while the north-western corner was approximately 3m from the northernmost field boundary and 7m from the westernmost field boundary. The trench was approximately 80m long and 2m wide (Plate Three).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench One consisted of a compact, light brown silty loam which contained angular and sub-angular stones (size range 5x5x2mm to 20x20x10mm). Nineteenth century ceramics were found within the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 101). The layer was, on average, 0.16m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 101) was the cultivation soil (Context No. 102). This deposit consisted of compact, light orangeish brown silty clay loam. The cultivation soil (Context No. 102) contained frequent angular stones which had an average size of 40x30x15mm. Nineteenth century ceramics were recovered from the cultivation soil (Context No. 102). The deposit was 0.12m in depth.

Below the cultivation soil (Context No. 102), at the eastern end of the trench, was a spread of gravel and rubble (Context No. 103: Plate Four). The spread consisted of loose, gravelly, silt and contained frequent angular stones of two main sizes (5x3x1mm and 50x50x20mm). The spread (Context No. 103) was 0.05m thick and had no finds associated with it. It was approximately 5.5m long (east-west) and at least 1m wide. It was probably a dump associated with leveling the area close to the north-eastern entrance of the field. The gravel spread (Context No. 103) overlay the subsoil (Context No. 104), which was present at a depth of 0.28m (Plate Five). There were no subsoil cut features in Trench One.

Trench Two

Trench Two was situated approximately 11.5m to the south of Trench One and 14.4m from the field's easternmost boundary. The trench was approximately 80m long and 2m wide (Plate Six). The long axis of the trench was aligned east-west.

The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) in Trench Two consisted of a light brown silty loam which was compact and contained frequent angular stones (size range: 5x5x2mm to 20x20x10mm). The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) was 0.13m thick and contained no finds. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) was the cultivation soil (Context No. 202) which consisted of compact, light orangeish brown silty clay loam. The cultivation soil (Context No. 202) contained frequent angular stones which were, on average, 40x30x15mm in size. Several sherds of nineteenth century ceramics were recovered from the cultivation soil (Context No. 202) and the deposit was 0.16m deep. Below the cultivation soil (Context No. 202) was the subsoil (Context No. 203), which in Trench Two was present at a depth of 0.29m (Plate Seven). There were no subsoil cut features in Trench Two.

Trench Three

Trench Three was situated 11m to the south of Trench Two and 11m to the west of the easternmost field boundary. The trench was approximately 80m long and 2m wide and ran parallel to Trench Two (Plate Eight). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Three (Context No. 301) consisted of a relatively compact, light brown, silty loam. The layer contained frequent angular stones (size range: 5x5x2mm to 20x20x10mm). There were no finds from the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 301). The layer was an average depth of 0.11m. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 301) was the cultivation soil (Context No. 302) which consisted of compact light orangeish brown silty clay loam. The cultivation deposit contained frequent angular stones (average size 40x30x15mm) and was, on average, 0.13m thick. There were no finds recovered from the cultivation soil (Context No. 302). Below the cultivation soil (Context No. 302) was the subsoil, which in Trench Three was present at a depth of 0.24m and was archaeologically sterile (Plate Nine).

Trench Four

Trench Four was located approximately 6m to the south of Trench Three and 10.5m west of the easternmost field boundary. The trench was approximately 30m long (east-west) and 2m wide (Plate Ten). The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) in Trench Four consisted of a light brown silty loam which was generally compact, although its consistency was loose in some areas. The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) contained frequent angular stones (size range: 5x5x2mm to 20x20x10mm) and also a single sherd of nineteenth century pottery. The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) was 0.16m thick on average. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) was the cultivation soil (Context No. 402) which consisted of compact light brown silty clay loam. The cultivation soil contained frequent angular stones which were around 40x30x15mm in size. There were no finds within the cultivation soil (Context No. 402) which was 0.16m deep. Below the cultivation soil (Context No. 402) was the subsoil (Context No. 403) which was 0.32m deep (Plate Eleven). There were no subsoil cut features present in Trench Four.

Trench Five

Trench Five was located 3.5m to the south of Trench Four and 12.0m west of the easternmost field boundary. The trench was situated approximately 40m from the easternmost tip of the bank of the rath. Trench Five was approximately 80m long and 2m wide, with its long axis aligned east-west (Plate Twelve). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Five (Context No. 501) consisted of compact to loose silty loam which was light brown in colour. The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 501) contained frequent angular and sub-angular stones which ranged in size from 10x8x3mm to 50x20x10mm. There were no finds in the layer and it was 0.17m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 501) was the cultivation soil (Context No. 502) which consisted of compact, light brown silty clay loam. The cultivation soil (Context No. 502) contained frequent sub-rounded to angular stones (size range: 8x5x3mm to 60x30x20mm). The cultivation soil (Context No. 502) was 0.15m in depth and contained a single struck flint. Below the cultivation soil (Context No. 502) was the

subsoil (Context No. 503) which was present at a depth of 0.32m (Plate Thirteen). There were no subsoil cut features in Trench Five.

Apart from the waste flint flake, nothing of archaeological significance was noted in the five test trenches. The nineteenth century pottery is consistent with moving midden deposits. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out at the development site. No publication is required, apart from a short summary in the annual bulletin of excavations.

Archive:

Finds:

The artefacts found during the evaluation are temporarily archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs:

The digital images taken during the evaluation are currently archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: N/A

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Figure One: General location map showing site location (circled in red)

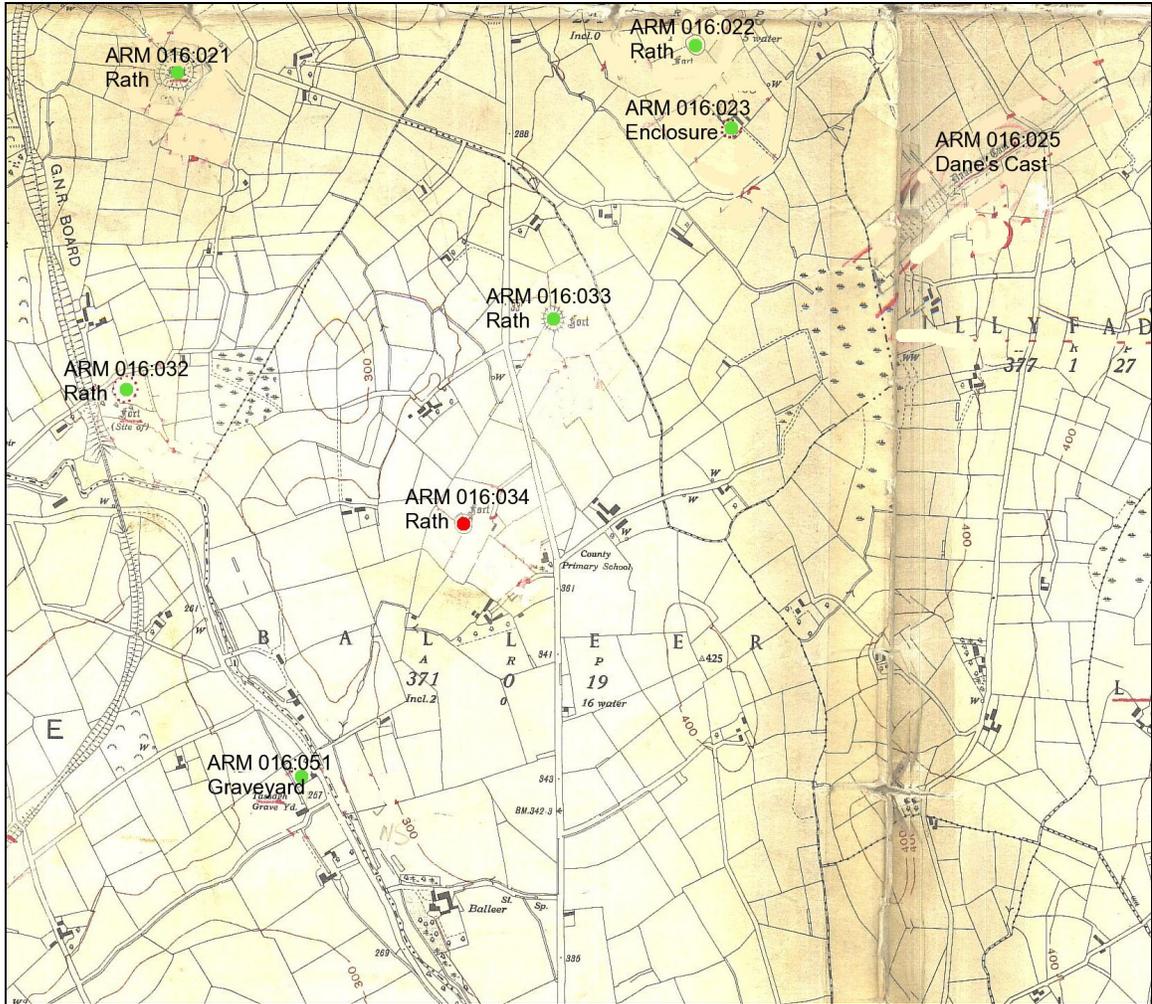


Figure Two: Detailed location map showing application site (red dot) and sites in the immediate area (green dots)



Figure Three: Site plan showing location of application site (outlined in red) and test trenches (in red)



Plate One: General view of rath (looking south-west)



Plate Two: Eastern end of rath bank (looking south-west)



Plate Three (left): Trench One following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 104) (looking east)

Plate Four (right): Gravel/rubble spread (Context No. 103) in Trench One (defined in red) (looking west)

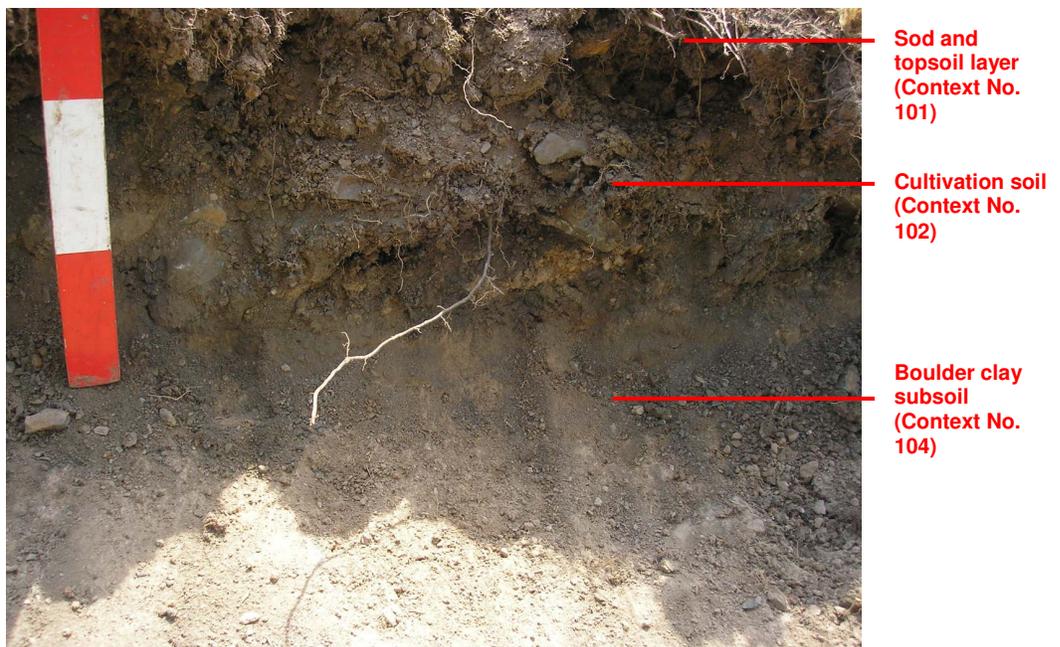


Plate Five: North-facing section of Trench One (looking south)



Plate Six: Trench Two following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 203) (looking east)



Plate Seven: South-facing section of Trench Two (looking north)



Plate Eight: Trench Three following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 303) (looking west)



Plate Nine: South-facing section of Trench Three (looking north)



Plate Ten: Trench Four following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 403) (looking east)



Plate Eleven: North-facing section of Trench Four (looking south)



Plate Twelve: Trench Five following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 503) (looking west)



Plate Thirteen: South-facing section of Trench Five (looking north)