



Monitoring Report No 83.

**Glenleslie Road
Tullykittagh Lower
Co. Antrim**

AE/06/176

Ronan McHugh

Site Specific Information

Site Address: Glenslie Road.

Townland: Lower Tullykittagh

SMR No.: Closest recorded sites are Ant 027:018 and Ant 027:019

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: D 1135 1553

County: Antrim

Excavation Licence No: AE/06/176

Planning Ref / No.: G/2006/0231/O

Date of Monitoring: 28th August 2006

Archaeologist Present: Ronan McHugh

Brief Summary:

The proposed development is located within 110 metres of two registered monuments, both of which are recorded as the site of standing stones or megalithic tombs. Three trenches were excavated to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on hidden archaeological remains. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of the trenches.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of three test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a grading bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened: Three trenches were excavated. Each of these measured 25 metres x 2 metres.

Current Land Use: Conifer plantation

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief Account of the Monitoring

Background

Archaeological evaluation was requested as part of an application for outline planning permission for a single dwelling house in the townland of Lower Tullykittagh, Co. Antrim, approximately 2 kilometres north-east of Clough, Co. Antrim (Fig. 1). The evaluation was requested because of the proximity of the proposed development site to two registered monuments (Fig. 2). Both the precise locations and the interpretation of the nearby sites, however, is problematic.

Approximately 110 metres to the south-west of the development site is the reported site of four standing stones, or possibly a megalithic tomb, which is recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) as Ant 027:018. The SM 7 reports that this monument is recorded on the third edition Ordnance Survey maps (c. 1904/5) as "Standing Stones", but, by the 1933 edition, it appears that the stones had been removed and the monument is labelled as "Standing Stones" (site of), although the location is marked by a cross (Fig. 3a). The recorded location of the monument depicted in Fig. 2 is based on the position indicated on the 1933 map.

The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) SM 7 file contains a report on the site dating to 1991. At this date, it was confirmed that there were no extant stones at the recorded location of the monument. However, two standing stones are marked on the 1977 revision of the Ordnance Survey maps, in a field to the north-east of the recorded location of the monument (Fig. 3b), which is the field where the proposed development is to be located. According to the SM 7 file, one stone stood in the position indicated on the 1977 map, while two other stones of megalithic proportions were incorporated into nearby field boundaries. In addition, local tradition recalls that a fourth stone was buried at some time in this area by a previous landowner. Whether any of the stones recorded in the SM 7 were part of the monument recorded as Ant 027:018, or indeed of any other monument is impossible to verify.

The second recorded monument near to the development site is described in the NISMR as standing stones or a possible megalithic tomb. It is designated as Ant 027:019, and its recorded position is approximately 90 metres to the south-east of the development site (Fig.2). The initial designation of the site dates to the 1933 six inch maps, where the site is labelled "Standing Stones", although there is no actual symbol locating this site on the 1933 map. There are no extant stones on the site today, but the EHS SM 7 file discloses that there are two sub-rectangular depressions at the site, which might conceivably be the remnants of socket holes for standing stones. The proximity of the recorded location of the site to the stones observed during

the 1991 EHS inspection of the surrounding environs suggests that the three stones noted during this inspection might as easily be the disturbed remnants of this monument (Ant 027:019) as the nearby standing stones recorded as Ant 027:018.

Assessment of the archaeological significance of the area where the development is located is fraught with difficulty as the surviving evidence for archaeological activity in the area is confusing. There are currently no definitive archaeological remains in the locations specified in the NISMR, whereas there are possible disturbed stones located around the surrounding area, including within the field where the development is to be located. The nature of the sites that were formerly located in this area is also unknown. Archaeological evaluation was therefore required to assess whether the proposed development would have an adverse impact on hidden archaeological remains, potentially including previously hidden traces of the two no longer extant monuments recorded nearby.

The Evaluation

The site was situated immediately to the east of a narrow road on a very gradual north-east facing slope. It was located within an area that has been heavily planted with conifer trees within the past 10 years, although the proposed site of the house coincided with a sub-rectangular clearance in the trees. The tree-plantation is too recent to be depicted on ordnance survey maps for the area. The interior of the site was covered by a thick covering of grass, although tree-cutting debris was scattered around the clearance while a small growth of saplings had colonised the north-western edge of the proposed site (Plate 1).

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of three trenches, each measuring 25 metres x 2 metres (Fig. 2). These were excavated mechanically using a smooth-edged (sheugh) bucket operated on a back-acting mechanical digger, under the supervision of the licensed archaeologist.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was set out approximately parallel to the narrow roadway, at a distance of 33 metres (Fig. 2), on an approximate north-west/south-east alignment. A covering sod of matted grass and soil, with a maximum depth of 0.18 metres (Context 101) was removed to reveal a loose, grey-black loam topsoil (Context 102), that contained fragments of modern glass and ceramics, particularly at the northern end of the trench. This deposit was consistently between 0.18 – 0.20 metres in depth across the trench. Immediately beneath the topsoil deposit (Context 102) was a layer of coarse yellow sand (Context 103), which contained periodic rounded basalt stones, with

diameters of up to 0.4 metres. This deposit (Context 103) had a maximum depth of approximately 0.34 metres at the northern end of the trench. No cultural material was recovered from this deposit, which was probably natural in origin. The sand deposit (Context 103), overlay tenacious gravelly boulder clay (Context 104), which had a distinctly mottled appearance. The parent material was reddish-orange, but weathered and decayed basalt within the boulder clay produced blue, yellow and red spreads within the matrix of the subsoil (Plate 2). No material or deposits of archaeological significance were recovered from Trench 1, which had a maximum depth of 0.6 metres recorded 19.8 metres from the north-western end of the trench (Plate 3).

Trench 2

Trench 2 was set out from the eastern edge of Trench 1. It was aligned north-east/south-west approximately perpendicular to the long axis of Trench 1, and intersected trench 1 between 4 and 6 metres from the north-western end of Trench 1 (Fig. 2). The uppermost stratum was a shallow sod (Context 201) with a maximum depth of 0.05 metres which overlay a grey-black loam topsoil (Context 202), which had a maximum depth of 0.21 metres. The topsoil was sterile of artefacts. Removal of the topsoil revealed a deposit of coarse yellow sand with rounded basalt stone inclusions (Context 203) similar to the natural sand deposit recorded in Trench 1 (Context 103). This sandy deposit (Context 203) was slightly shallower than the corresponding deposit in Trench 1, with a maximum recorded depth of 0.26 metres. The yellow sand deposit overlay a reddish-orange gravelly boulder clay (Context 204). Excavation in Trench 2 was discontinued with the exposure of the boulder clay stratum along the base of the trench. The maximum depth of the trench was recorded as 0.58 metres at 16.7 metres from the south-eastern end of the trench. No material or deposits of archaeological significance were recovered from Trench 2.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was set out parallel to Trench 2 and intersected with Trench 1 between 20 and 22 metres from the north-western end of Trench 1 (Fig. 2). Like Trenches 1 and 2, Trench 3 measured 25 metres in length and 2 metres in width. The uppermost strata in Trench 3 replicated those recorded in the earlier trenches; a shallow sod of vegetation (Context 301) with a maximum depth of 0.04 metres overlay a grey-black layer of loamy topsoil with a maximum recorded depth of 0.14 metres. Immediately beneath the topsoil layer was a deposit of coarse yellow sand (Context 303) similar to the deposits recorded in a corresponding stratigraphic position in Trenches 1 and 2 (Contexts 103 and 203). As with these sand deposits (Contexts 103 and 203), the yellow sand deposit in Trench 3 (Context 303) contained basalt stone inclusions. The stones in Trench 3, however were appreciably larger. A number of massive rounded

boulders, were recorded within the sand deposit, the largest of which has a diameter of approximately 0.92 metres (Plate 7). These large boulders were recorded chiefly towards the southern end of the cleared area, presumably reflecting the natural accumulation of the larger boulders at the base of the gradual prevailing slope. The sand deposit in Trench 3 (Context 303) was deeper than the similar deposits in Trenches 1 and 2 (Contexts 103 and 203), with a maximum depth of 0.43 metres. No anthropogenic material was recovered from this yellow sand deposit, which overlay a reddish-orange gravelly boulder clay (Context 404) similar to the basal deposit recorded in Trench 2 (Context 204). Excavation of Trench 3 was discontinued with the exposure of the boulder clay (Context 304). The maximum depth of the trench was recorded as 0.64 metres at 2.42 metres from the south-eastern end of the trench. No material or deposits of archaeological significance were recovered from Trench 3.

Conclusion

After evaluating the three test trenches, no archaeologically significant features or artefacts were discovered, suggesting that there is no material of archaeological importance on the development site. It is therefore unlikely that the development of a dwellinghouse in this area will have any archaeological impact.

Archive

Finds:

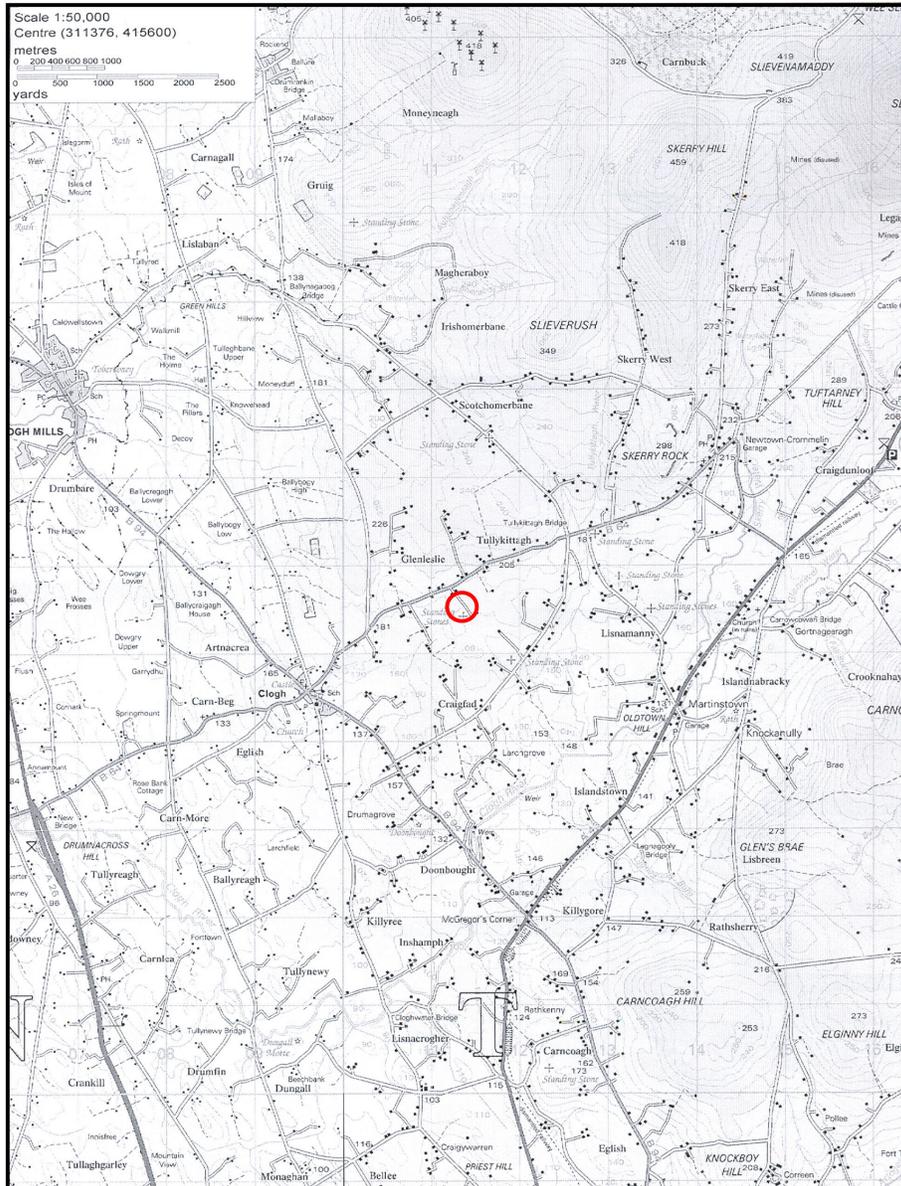
None

Photographs:

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

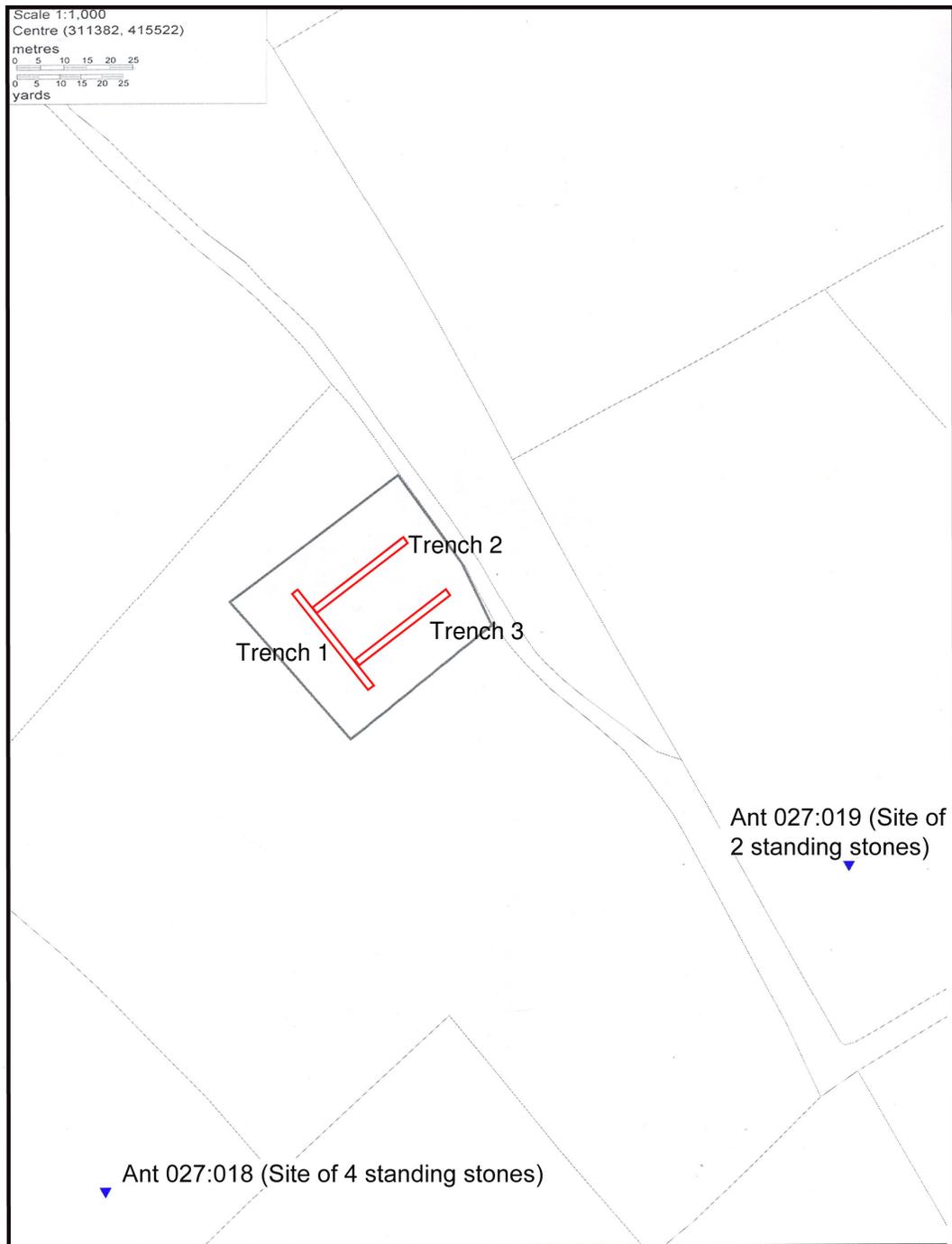
Drawings:

None



○ Approximate site of proposed development

Fig. 1. Location map showing approximate position of the site



- ▼ Location of recorded archaeological sites
- ▭ Proposed location of evaluation trenches

Fig. 2. Location map showing location of the proposed development site, the evaluation trenches and the nearby sites. Location of the sites is taken from the positions indicated by EHS in documentation relating to this evaluation.

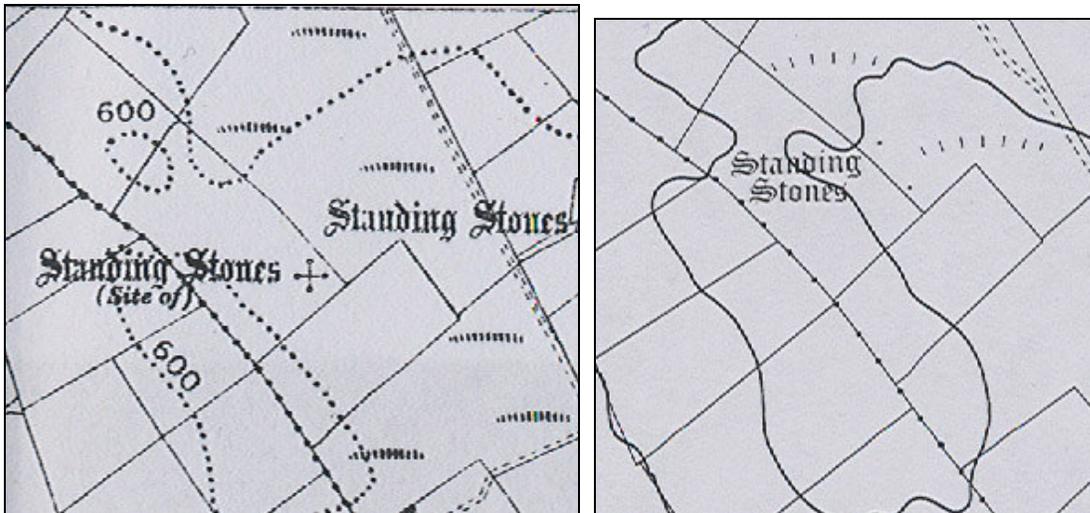


Fig. 3. fig 3a (Above left) shows the 1933 OS map with the locations of the two sites recorded as Ant 027:018 and Ant 027:019. Fig 3b (Above right) is the extract from the 1977 Ordnance Survey maps. The location of only one monument is shown and it is in a different field to any of those shown on the 1933 map.



Plate 1. Centre of cleared area before the excavation of the evaluation trenches. Tree felling debris and saplings lined the north-western edge of the site, while thick grass covered the centre. (taken from the south-east corner of the cleared area, facing north-east).



Plate 2. Trench 1 (facing north-west). The mottling in the subsoil is evident.



Plate 3. Mottling at base of trench 1.



Plate 4. Trench 2 at completion of evaluation (facing north-east).



Plate 5. South-east facing section in Trench 2, illustrating the typical sequence of deposits recorded throughout the site,



Plate 6. Trench 3 at completion of evaluation (facing north-east). Darker patches in the soil are due to loose soil collapsed from the sides of the trench.



Plate 7. Rounded boulder recorded at 2.3 metres in Trench 3.