



Monitoring Report No. 107

**91 Ballylumford Road
Islandmagee
Co. Antrim**

AE/06/294

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Address: 91 Ballylumford Road, Islandmagee, Co. Antrim

Townland: Ballylumford

SMR No.: ANT 041:007

State Care **X** *Scheduled* *Other*

Grid Ref: D 4305 0163

County: Antrim

Excavation Licence No: AE/06/294

Planning Ref / No.: F/2006/0277/LB

Date of Monitoring: Monday 8th January – Wednesday 10th January 2007

Archaeologist(s) Present: Brian Sloan and Ruth Logue

Brief Summary:

Two trenches were hand excavated to evaluate the potential impact of a proposed extension to a dwelling on any previously unknown archaeological remains. The proposed development site is located in an archaeologically-sensitive area with known prehistoric sites in the immediate vicinity (Ballylumford Dolmen ANT 041:007). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in either of the trenches.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of two test trenches by hand

Size of area opened:

Two trenches each measuring approximately 2m by 1m

Current Land Use: Residential

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located to the rear of the nineteenth-century 'Druid's Cottage' and the 'Druid's Altar (Ballylumford Dolmen ANT 041:007, Plate 8) at 91 Ballylumford Road, Islandmagee, Co. Antrim. The site lies approximately 3km due south-east of the town of Larne and at a height of approximately 60m above sea level (Fig. 1). The surrounding area is extremely rich in archaeological sites (Fig.2). The application site is approximately 25m north-east of Ballylumford Dolmen (ANT 041:007) which is of probable Neolithic date. Standing stones (ANT 041:009, 041:010) lie to the south and south-east of the application site and numerous find spots of Bronze Age gold ornaments (ANT 041:031, 041:030 and 041:032) make up this part of the prehistoric landscape of Islandmagee. It appears that Ballylumford Dolmen provided a focal point for the deposition of these gold ornaments (Fig. 2). The surrounding landscape consists of both arable and pastoral land, interspersed with dwelling houses. The evaluation was requested by Andrew Gault (Case Officer Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage).

Excavation

Trench 1 was aligned south-west/north-east within the application area and measured 2m by 1m. The trench was hand excavated down to the natural bedrock, which was encountered at a depth of 0.58m. The stratigraphic relationship of the layers in Trench 1 is illustrated in the section drawing (Fig. 4).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 1 (Context No. 101) consisted of a light to mid brown silty loam. This layer was, on average, 0.1m thick and contained numerous inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Numerous modern finds were recovered from the topsoil, including sherds of black glazed earthenware, metal, plastic and glass, as well as undiagnostic struck flint and thermally-shattered natural flint.

Upon removal of the topsoil (Context No. 101), a layer of dark brown gritty loam was uncovered (Context No. 102). This layer was a maximum of 0.15m thick and produced finds of a modern date (glass, metal etc). In the northern most corner of the trench, a cut (Context No. 105) for an orange plastic service pipe (Context No.103) was observed cutting through the

dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 102). The lowermost fill of this cut (Context No. 105) was a thin layer of orange silty sand (Context No. 107). The orange silty sand had a maximum thickness of 0.05m and it is assumed this deposit was laid down to provide a level base on which the pipe (Context No. 103) was placed, following the excavation of the cut (Context No. 105). The uppermost fill of the cut (Context No. 105) was a mid brown silty loam (Context No. 106) which contained the service pipe (Context No. 103). The silty loam (Context No. 106) was similar in texture and consistence to the topsoil (Context No. 101), although the cut for the service pipe (Context No. 105) was not observed at topsoil level.

Directly below the dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 102) was a deposit of mortar and rubble (Context No. 104), probably derived from the construction of the adjacent dwelling (91 Ballylumford Road). This deposit had frequent inclusions of brick and angular stones (average size: 50mm x 50mm x 100mm) as well as fragments of bottle glass and metal, mostly corroded iron nails. The mortar and rubble deposit tapered in thickness from the south-western (approximately 0.2m) to the north-eastern (approximately 0.1m) end of the trench. This deposit was not observed in Trench 2, and so it is assumed that the layer peters out just beyond the north-eastern end of the trench.

Upon removal of the mortar layer (Context No. 104) a ceramic service pipe (Context No. 109) was observed. No cut was visible for this service pipe which ran parallel to the plastic pipe (Context No. 103). The position and thickness of this service pipe proved it impossible for excavation to continue in this area of the trench, and so excavation was continued to the north of the pipe. In this area a mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 108) lay directly below the mortar layer (Context No. 104). This deposit was, on average, 0.3m thick and had frequent inclusions of small rounded stones (average size: 30mm x 30mm x 20mm) and larger angular stones (average size: 100mm x 150mm x 150mm). Modern white glazed ceramics and metal fragments were recovered from the brown gritty loam (Context No, 108) suggesting this deposit is not of great antiquity.

The mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 108) directly overlay the natural bedrock in this trench. Apart from the unstratified and undiagnostic struck flint recovered from the topsoil (Context No. 101), nothing of any archaeological significance was encountered during the excavation of Trench 1.

Trench 2 was aligned north-west/south-east and was positioned approximately 0.5m from the north-eastern edge of Trench 1. The trench measured 2m by 1m and was excavated to the surface of the natural bedrock, which was encountered at an average depth of 0.5m.

The stratigraphic relationships of the layers in Trench 2 are illustrated in the rear of this report (Figs. 5 and 6).

The sod and topsoil in Trench 2 (Context No. 201) consisted of a light to mid brown silty loam. This layer was, on average, 0.1m thick and contained numerous inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Numerous modern finds were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 2 (Context No. 201), including sherds of glazed ceramics, metal, plastic and glass, as well as thermally-shattered natural flint.

Upon removal of the topsoil in Trench 2 (Context No. 201), a layer of dark brown gritty loam was uncovered (Context No. 202). This layer was a maximum of 0.15m thick and produced finds of a modern date (glass, metal, etc). In the south-eastern corner of the trench, an orange plastic service pipe (Context No. 203) was observed. This was the same pipe that was encountered in Trench 1 (i.e. Context No. 103), and its cut was not excavated in Trench 2. The position of the pipe (Context No. 203) made it impossible for excavation to continue in the southern area of Trench 2, and so excavation was concentrated on the area north of the pipe (Context No. 203).

Directly below the dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 202) was a relatively compact reddish brown stony layer (Context No. 204). This deposit was archaeologically sterile and had a maximum thickness of 0.15m. The reddish brown stony layer directly overlay a mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 205). This deposit was, on average, 0.25m to 0.3m thick and had frequent inclusions of small rounded stones (average size: 30mm x 30mm x 20mm) and larger angular stones (average size: 100mm x 150mm x 150mm). Modern white glazed ceramics and metal fragments were recovered from the brown gritty loam (Context No. 205) suggesting this deposit is not of great antiquity. This deposit was similar in both texture and consistence to the mid to dark brown gritty loam encountered in Trench 1 (i.e. Context No.108).

The mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 205) directly overlay the natural bedrock in this trench. Nothing of any archaeological significance was encountered during the excavation of Trench 2.

Apart from the undiagnostic struck flint recovered from the topsoil in Trench 1 (Context No. 101), nothing of archaeological significance was noted during the evaluation. The excavation showed that the area has been heavily disturbed by the insertion of modern services. However, given the concentration of gold artefacts deposited in the development site's immediate environs, and the possibility that this depositional activity may be focused upon the dolmen (ANT 041:007), monitoring of the entire area to be disturbed by the development may

be of merit. No publication is required, apart from a short summary in the annual bulletin of excavations.

Archive:

Finds: All finds recovered from the excavation are temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs: 56 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: All plans and drawings from the excavation are temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

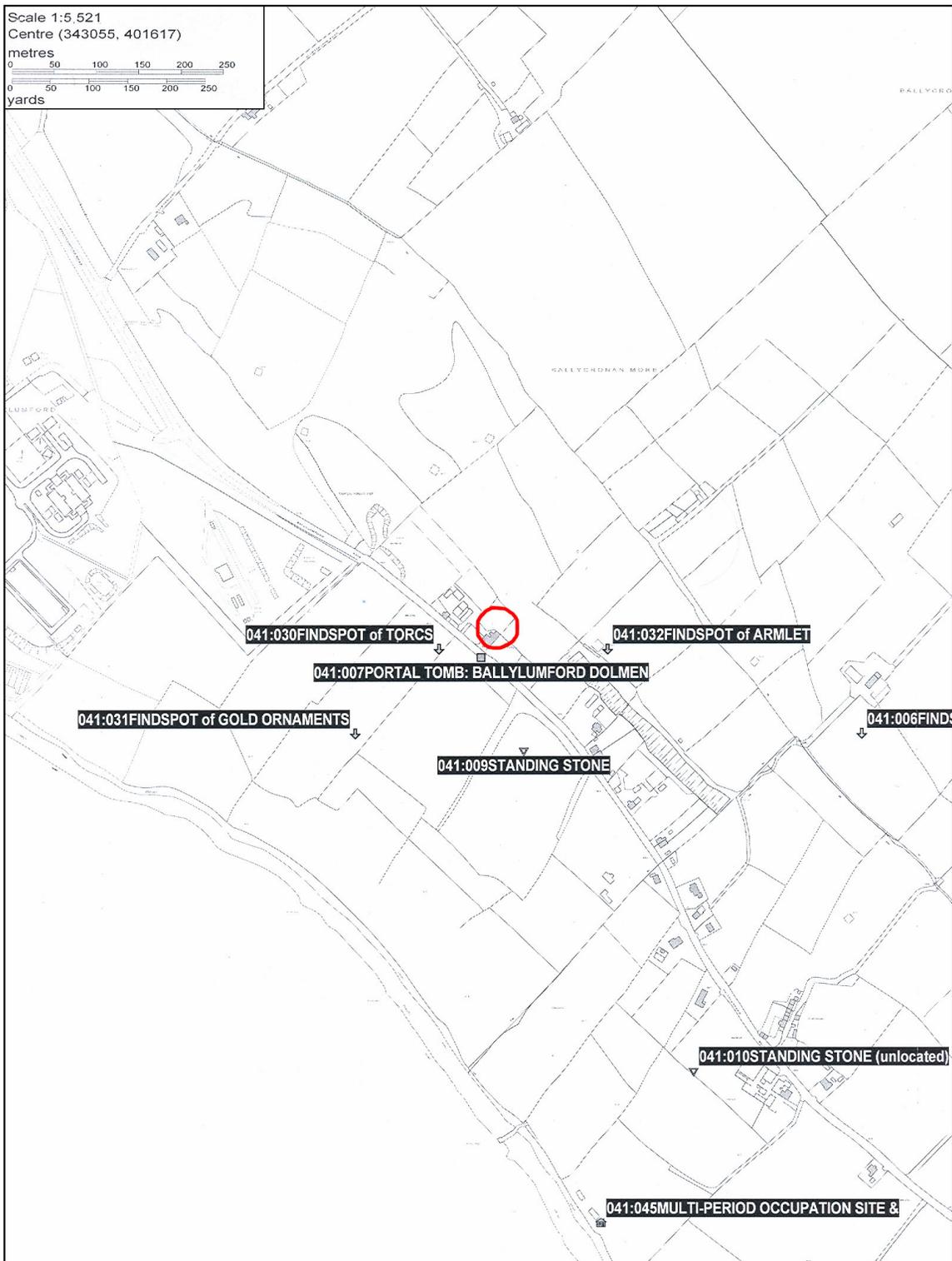


Fig. 2: Location of site (red circle), archaeological monuments and find spots in the immediate vicinity.

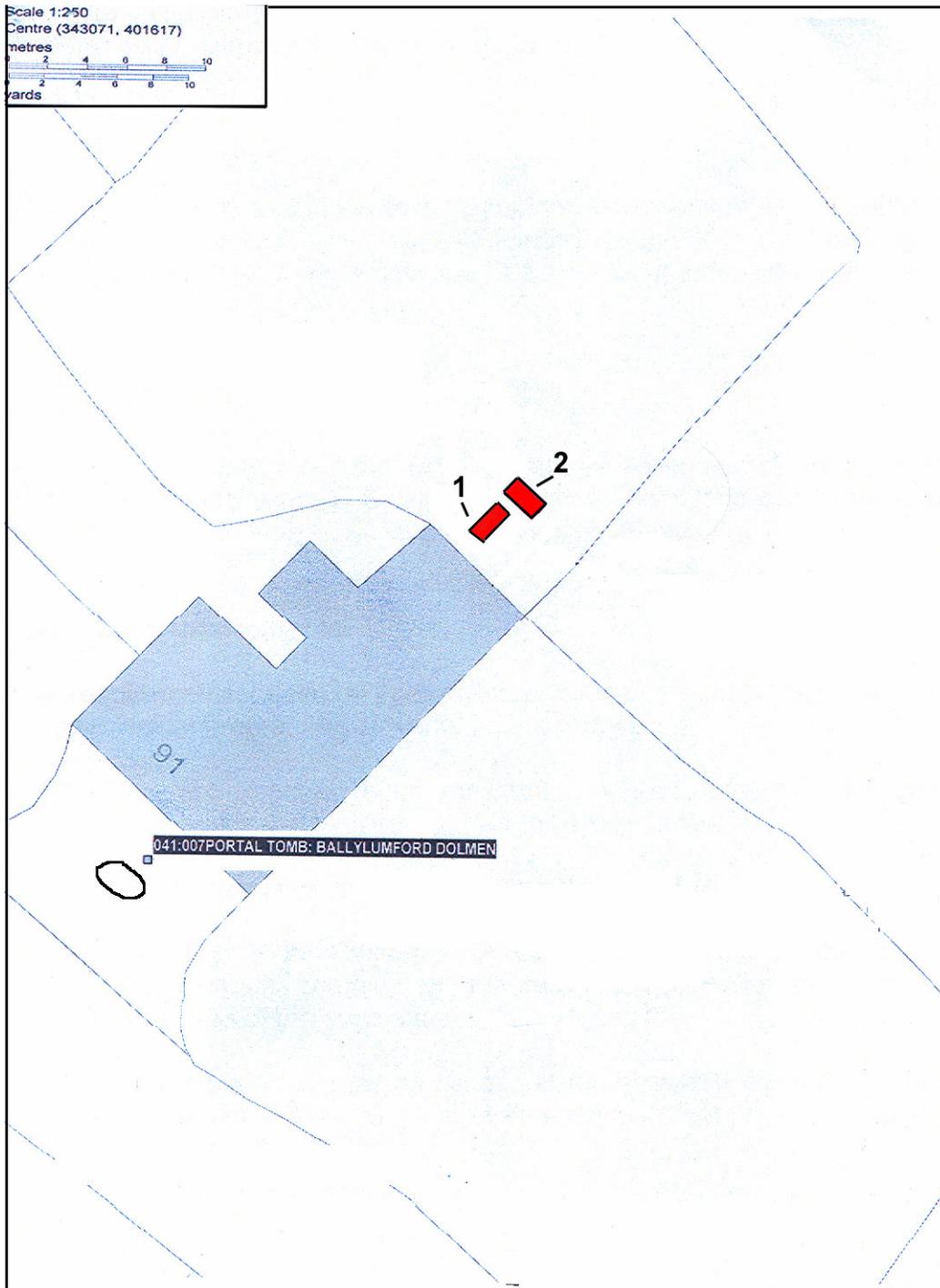


Fig. 3: Location of trenches

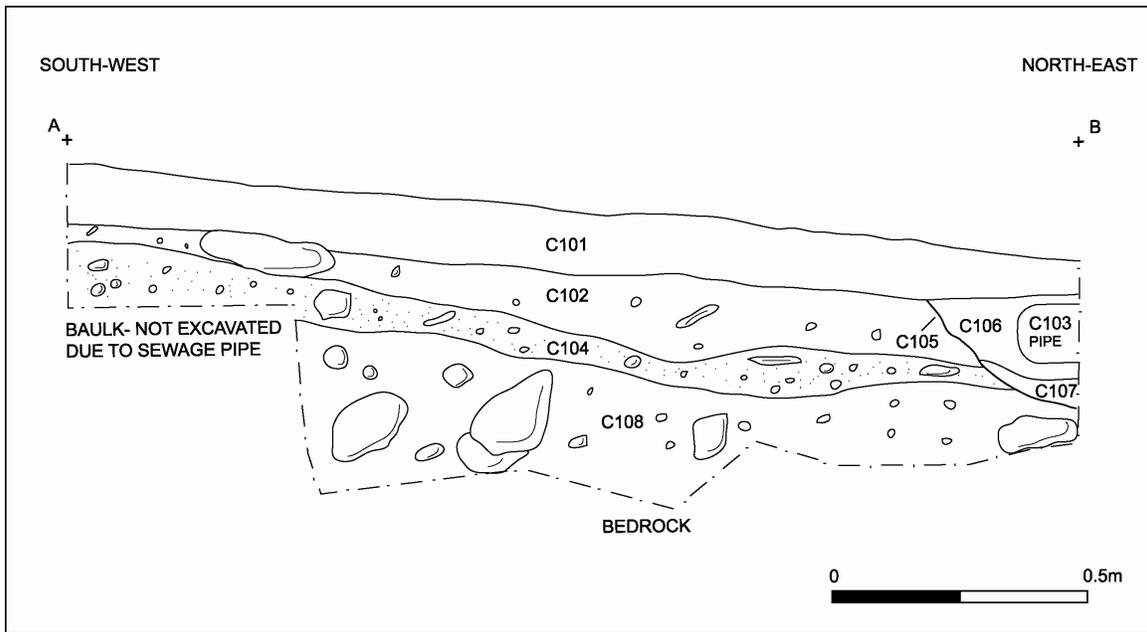


Fig 4: South-east facing section of Trench 1.

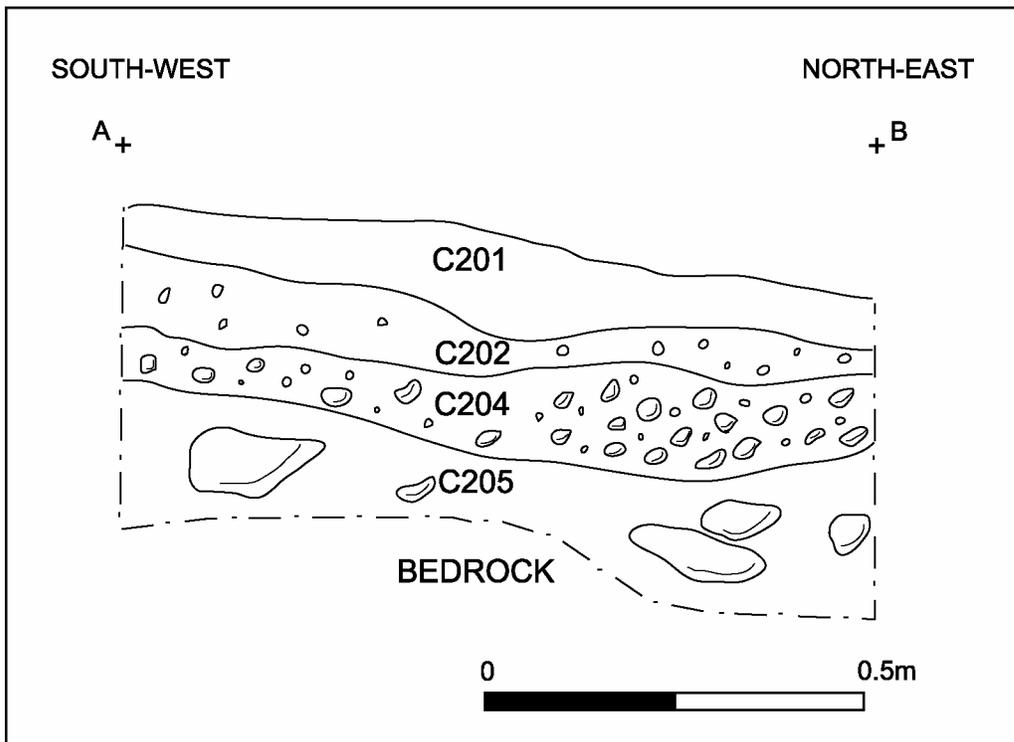


Fig 5: South-east facing section of Trench 2.

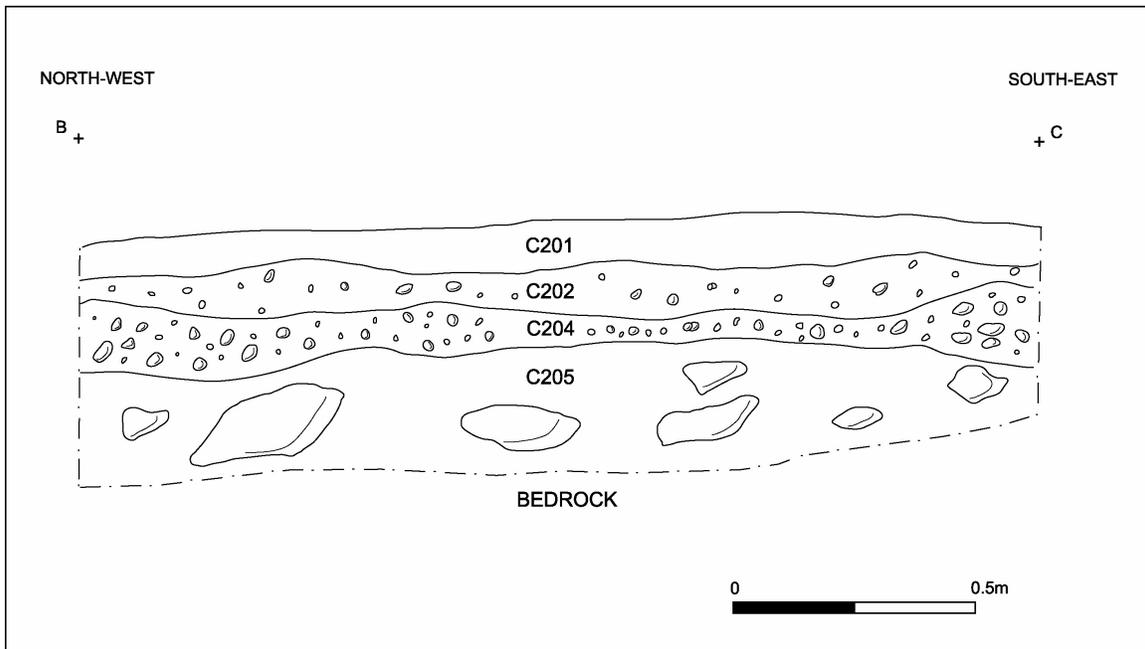


Fig 6: South-west facing section of Trench 2.



Plate 1: View of site prior to excavation, looking north-east.



Plate 2: Trench 1 showing Context No. 102, following removal of sod and topsoil (Context No. 101), looking north-east.



Plate 3: Trench 1 showing surface of mortar layer (Context No. 104), looking north-east.



Plate 4: Trench 1 showing bedrock, service pipes and remnant mortar deposit (Context No. 104), looking east.



Plate 5: Trench 2 showing Context No. 202, following removal of sod and topsoil (Context No. 201), looking west.



Plate 6: Trench 2 showing bedrock and service pipe (Context No. 203), looking east.



Plate 7: Trenches 1 and 2 following excavation, looking north.



Plate 8: Ballylumford Dolmen (ANT 041:077), looking north-east.