



Monitoring Report No. 108

**Site 170m north-west of 91 Fingean Road
Loughmacrory
Co. Tyrone**

AE/06/295

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Address: 170m north-west of 91 Fingrean Road

Townland: Loughmacrory

SMR No.: TYR 027:013

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: H 5785 7742

County: Tyrone

Excavation Licence No.: AE/06/295

Planning Ref / No.: K/2005/1520/O

Date of Monitoring: 4th January 2007

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

The supervision of the mechanical excavation of four test trenches was carried out at an application site 170m north-west of 91 Fingrean Road, Loughmacrory Co. Tyrone. The site lies in an archaeologically-sensitive area, with many monuments recorded in the general vicinity. Many of these monuments are prehistoric and include the Carnanbane court tomb (TYR 027:014), which lies around 350m to the north-west of the application site. This evaluation was prompted by the presence of an unclassified megalith (TYR 027:013) which lies around 50m south-east of the application site. A simple stratigraphy was observed in all the trenches which were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in the evaluation and it is recommended that no further archaeological programme of works is carried out at the application site.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of four test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Four trenches, each measuring 20m in length by 2m in width, aligned north-east/south-west in the area of the application site.

Current Land Use: Pastoral agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located 170m north-west of 91 Fingrean Road, Loughmacrory, Co. Tyrone (Fig. 1). The site lies approximately 6km north-west of the town of Carrickmore, approximately 250m from Lough Fingrean, and at a height of approximately 200m above sea level. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological sites (Figs. 2-3). Numerous cairns and megalithic tombs, most notably Carnanbane court tomb (SMR TYR 027:014) are to be found in the immediate vicinity. The site lies approximately 50m north-west of a megalithic tomb (SMR TYR 027:013) which is classified in the sites and monuments record as a possible cairn. The surrounding landscape consists of both pastoral and arable land, interspersed with dwelling houses. The trenches were aligned north-east/south-west across the application site (Fig. 4) and were requested by Edith Gowdy (Case Officer Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage).

Excavation

Trench 1 was positioned approximately 10m from the north-western boundary of the application site and measured 20m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.35m.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 1 (Context No. 101) consisted of a mid to dark brown humic loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.05m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 101) was a relatively compact peaty deposit (Context No. 102). Many plant roots were observed in this deposit, as were infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Observations made in Trench 3 suggest that this deposit had been subject to at least one episode of deep-ploughing to improve the quality of the soil in the recent past. The peaty deposit (Context No. 102) was on average 0.3m thick. Directly below the peaty deposit (Context No. 102) lay the natural subsoil (Context No. 103). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench (Plates. 1-2).

Trench 2 was located approximately 6m south-west of Trench 1 and measured 20m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.5m.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 2 (Context No. 201) consisted of a mid to dark brown humic loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.1m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) was a relatively compact peaty deposit (Context No. 202). Many plant roots were observed in this deposit, as were infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). The peaty deposit (Context No. 202) was, on average, 0.4m thick. Observations made in Trench 3 suggest that this deposit had been subject to at least one episode of deep-ploughing to improve the quality of the soil in the recent past. Directly below the peaty deposit (Context No. 202) lay the natural subsoil (Context No. 203). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench (Plates. 3-4).

Trench 3 was positioned approximately 10m south-west of Trench 2 and measured 20m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, whose surface sloped towards the south-western end of the trench and occurred at a maximum depth of 0.75m. Prior to the excavation of this trench it was noted that this area of the application site was quite wet with a lot of surface water present.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 3 (Context No. 301) consisted of a mid to dark brown humic loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.1m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 301) was a relatively compact peaty deposit (Context No. 302). Many plant roots were observed in this deposit, as were infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). The peaty deposit (Context No. 302) was on average 0.2m thick. Directly below the peaty deposit (Context No. 302) lay a layer of decomposed grass and sod (Context No. 303). The landowner remarked that the field had been ploughed approximately 10 years ago and this layer probably represents the preserved remains of the overturned sods from this episode of activity. The preserved sod layer had an approximate thickness of 0.15m.

The preserved sod layer (Context No. 303) overlay another peaty deposit (Context No. 304). This was similar in texture and consistence to Context No. 302, but stratigraphically separated from it by the preserved sod layer (Context No. 303). It is probable that this is not a

distinctly separate stratum from Context No. 302, rather material that was not disturbed by the episode of ploughing. This deposit was on average 0.3m thick.

The lower deposit of peat (Context No. 304) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 305) which consisted of orange yellow gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench (Plates. 5-6).

Trench 4 was located approximately 10m south-west of Trench 3 and measured 20m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.3m.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 4 (Context No. 401) consisted of a mid to dark brown humic loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.1m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) was a relatively compact peaty deposit (Context No. 402). Many plant roots were observed in this deposit, as were infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Observations made in Trench 3 suggest that this deposit had been subject to at least one episode of deep-ploughing to improve the quality of the soil in the recent past. The peaty deposit (Context No. 402) was, on average, 0.4m thick. Directly below the peaty deposit (Context No. 402) lay the natural subsoil (Context No. 403). This consisted of orange yellow gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench (Plates. 7-8).

Nothing of archaeological significance was noted during the evaluation. Although the application site was relatively flat, the excavation of the trenches showed that the subsoil gently slopes towards the middle of the field, perhaps suggesting a ‘hollow’ once existed in this area of the site. This is illustrated by the increased depth of the peaty deposits in trenches 3 and 4 (Context Nos. 302, 304 and 402), and the amount of surface water observed prior to the excavation of Trench 3. 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: n/a

Photographs: 24 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: n/a

Signed: _____ Date: _____

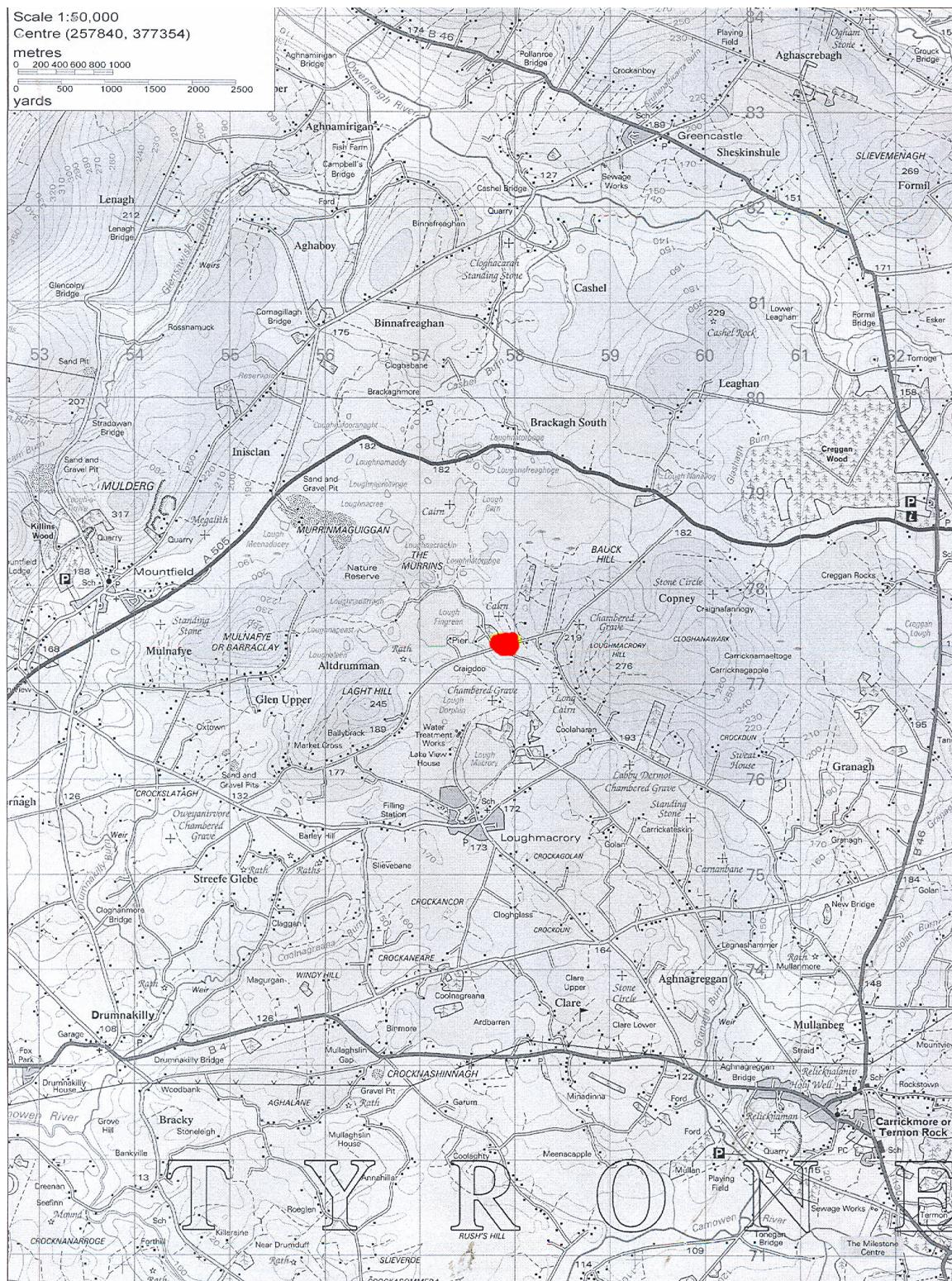


Fig. 1: 1:50,000 Map showing location of site (in red).



Fig. 2: Detailed location of application site (in red).

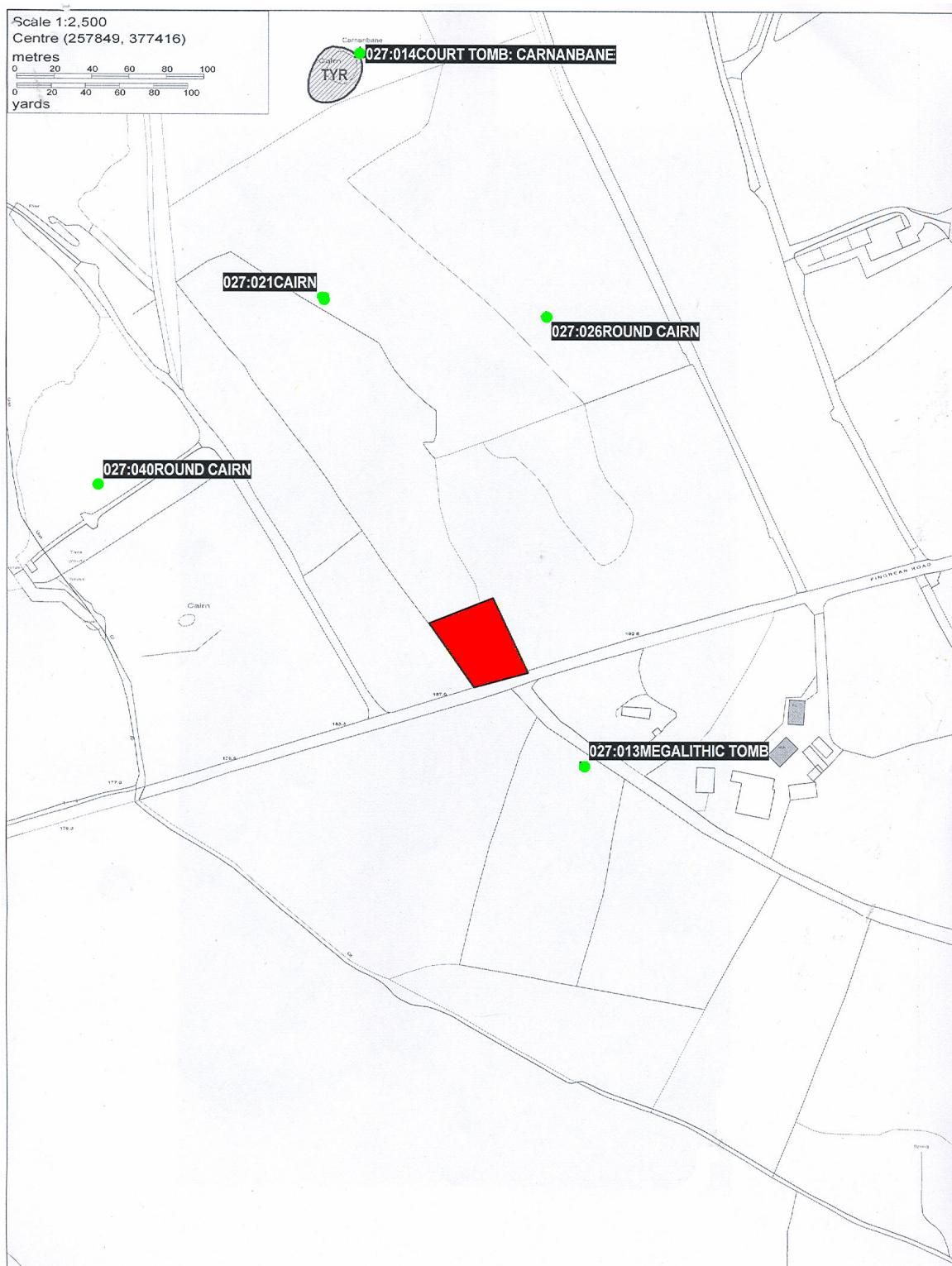


Fig. 3: Application site (in red) and archaeological sites in the vicinity (green dots).

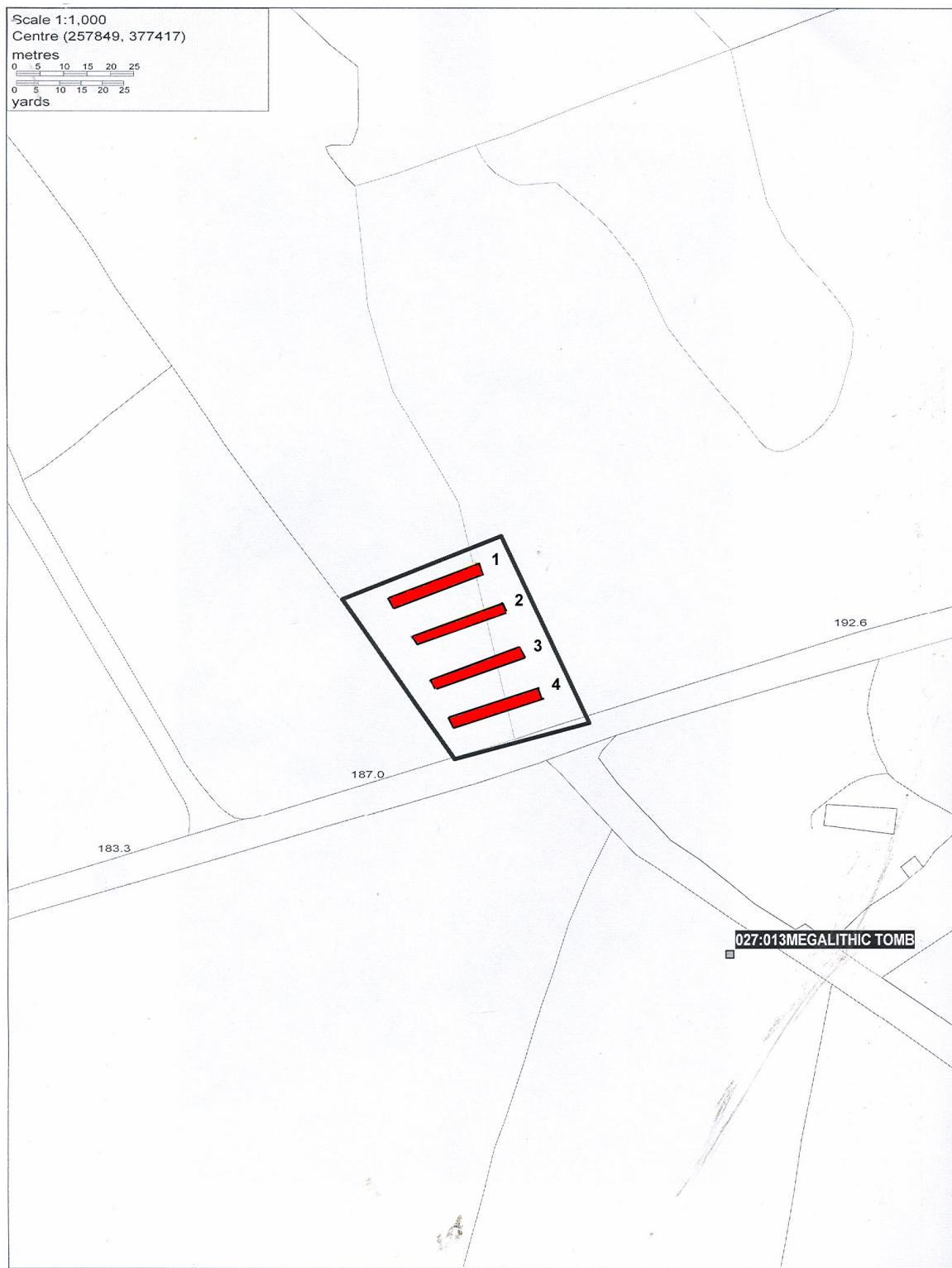


Fig 4: Location of trenches



Plate 1: Trench 1 following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 103), looking south-west.



Plate 2: North-west facing section, Trench 1.



Plate 3: Trench 2 following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 203), looking south-west.



Plate 4: North-west facing section facing section, Trench 2.



Plate 5: Trench 3 following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 305), looking south-west.



Plate 6: North-west facing section, Trench 3.



Plate 7: Trench 4 following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 403), looking north-east.



Plate 8: North-west facing section, Trench 4.