



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 161

**SITE 250M NORTHWEST OF 33 BALLYLAME ROAD
BALLYDULLAGHAN
GARVAGH
COUNTY LONDONDERRY**

LICENCE NO.: AE/08/177

Peter Bowen
October 2008

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 33 Ballylame Road.

Townland: Ballydullaghan

SMR No. : LDY 026:016

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: C 8375 1115

County: Londonderry

Excavation Licence No. : AE/08/177

Planning Ref / No. : C/2008/0200/RM

Dates of Monitoring: 7th October 2008

Archaeologist(s) Present: Peter Bowen

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site 250m northwest of 33 Ballylame Road, Ballydullaghan, Garvagh, County Londonderry as part of the planning application for a new development. A recorded archaeological site, SMR LDY 026:016, a standing stone, possibly within an enclosure, lies immediately to the north of the site. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken to investigate the potential presence of archaeological remains within the development and to assist NIEA:HMU to make an informed response to the Planning Service on the potential impact of the development.

The evaluation consisted of four mechanically excavated test trenches measuring 25m by 2m. Prior to the evaluation the site was greenfield, used for pasture with no above ground archaeological remains evident. Several features of archaeological potential including a possible ditch, a pit and several postholes were uncovered along with some evidence for agricultural activity. It is recommended that if planning permission is granted then further archaeological fieldwork is carried out, including the monitoring of topsoil removal for the development and archaeological investigation of the features.

Type of monitoring:

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

Size of area opened:

Four trenches each approximately 2m wide and 25m in length.

Current Land Use: Agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located 250m northwest of 33 Ballylame Road, Ballydullaghan, Co. Londonderry. The site is located approximately 4.75km south of the town of Garvagh and 4km northeast of Swatragh (Figure One). The application site is relatively high, approximately 190m OD, but is overlooked by higher ground to the north where the recorded monument, LDY 026:016 is located (Figure Two). This monument is recorded as a standing stone within a possible enclosure, although it is shown on maps as a rath. The application sites lies beyond the limit of this possible enclosure. The surrounding landscape comprises of small drumlins, many of which overlook the site. The application site is located on a level terrace in the northeastern corner of a large field. The northern and eastern limits of the site are defined by a mixture of hedgerows and stone walls with a laneway bounding the site to the east and southeast. The south and western side of the site are open grassland. This level terrace covers an area measuring approximately 45m east-west by 40m north-south with a steep slope to the south and west.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for a new development and was requested by Adrian McAleenan, caseworker with NIEA:HMU. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the recorded standing stone within a possible enclosure with a potential for related archaeological deposits to exist within the limits of the proposed development.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the supervision of four mechanically-excavated test trenches (Plate One), each measuring 25m by 2m (Figure Three). All four test trenches were excavated to the subsoil which consisted of an orange sandy clay. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of between 0.15m and 0.25m.

Trench One

Trench One was located parallel to the southeastern boundary of the application site. Trench One was approximately 2m wide and 25m long and was aligned approximately northeast -southwest (Plate Two).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench One (Context No. 101) consisted of a loose, mid brown sandy loam. It contained occasional sub-rounded stones (average size 15 x 15 x 10mm). This layer was between 0.15 – 0.2m in thickness. Following the mechanical removal of this layer a single feature (Context 102) was observed 5m from the northeastern end of this trench (Figure Four). This feature, running approx east-west across the trench, measured 1.6m wide and was cut into subsoil. A small trench was excavated across this in an attempt to determine its nature and recover some dating material. The feature was found to be a small shallow ditch cut into the subsoil (Context 104) to a maximum depth of 0.2m. It had shallow sloping sides with a very slightly rounded base (Plate Three). The fill, Context 103, was a mottled orange brown gritty silty clay containing numerous

small rounded stones (average size 10 x 10 x 10mm). No artifacts were found within this small ditch.

The subsoil in Trench One (Context No. 104) was an orange compact sandy clay with small patches of gravel and several larger stones (average size 0.4m).

Trench Two

Trench Two was positioned 10m northwest of Trench One. The trench was 2m wide and 25m long (Plate Four).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Two (Context 201) consisted of a loose, mid brown sandy loam. It contained occasional sub-rounded stones (average size 15 x 15 x 10mm). This layer was around 0.2m in depth. Following the mechanical removal of this layer a total of ten potential archaeological features were observed cutting the subsoil (Context 225).

Lying approximately 8m southwest from the northwestern end of the trench was a possible pit (Context 202). This measured 1.6m east-west by 1.1m north-south and was sub-oval in plan. Although un-excavated it was possible to see two fills of this pit on the surface (Figure Five and Plate Five). Context 203 was a moderately compact reddish brown clayey loam containing a few stones up to a maximum of 0.15m in diameter, and occasional charcoal flecking. A single rim sherd of coarse pottery was found on the top of this fill. A second fill, Context 204, was lying over Context 203. This was located at the centre of the pit covering a circular area 0.5m across. Context 204 was a soft, black, heavily charcoaled clay loam. A single small sherd of pottery, similar to that recovered from Context 203 was recovered from this fill along with two fragments of burnt flint (Plate Six).

A further feature, Context 205 was located 0.2m southeast of Context 202 and is a probable continuation of the ditch uncovered in Trench One (Context 102). In trench two this ditch runs east-west across the trench and was 1.6m wide. It was filled with Context 215, a soft mid brown clay loam with patches of orange stony gravel (Figure Five).

The remaining features within the trench were located 6m southwest of Context 205 (see Table One for details). These features consisted of seven postholes (Contexts 206-210 and 212-214) and a pit (Context 211) all within an area measuring 3m x 2m (Figure Six). With the exception of Context 211, they were all filled with a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay (Contexts 216-220, and 222-224) (Plate Seven).

Table One: Details of Contexts 206-214 uncovered in Trench Two.

Context Number	Dimensions	Description
206	0.28m E-W x 0.2m N-S	Possible posthole, sub-oval in plan, containing Context 216, a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts recovered.
207	0.15m E-W x 0.1m N-S	Possible small posthole/ large. It was sub-circular in plan and was filled with Context 217, a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts recovered.

Context Number	Dimensions	Description
208	0.36m E-W x 0.25m N-S	Possible posthole, sub-oval in plan. The fill, Context 218 was a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts recovered.
209	0.3m NW-SE x 0.2m NE-SW	This possible posthole was sub-oval in plan. The fill, Context 219, was a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts were recovered.
210	0.3m NW-SE x 0.2m NE-SW	It was oval in plan, but had been disturbed when a large stone within the subsoil was accidentally removed by the machine. As with the other postholes it was filled with a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay although in this case there was also some charcoal flecking evident (Context 220). At the southwestern edge of Context 210 where it had been disturbed it was possible to see that Context 220 was 0.2m deep (Plate Eight). No artifacts were recovered.
211	0.85m N-S x 0.5m E-W.	Possible pit, sub-oval in plan. The fill, Context 221 was a moderately compact dark brown loamy clay with a few stones (average size 80mm x 50mm) and some light charcoal flecking. No artifacts were recovered.
212	0.2m N-S x 0.12m E-W	Small posthole, oval in plan. The fill, Context 222, was a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts were recovered.
213	0.15m diameter	Context 213 was circular in plan and filled with a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay (Context 223). No artifacts were recovered.
214	0.18m N-S x 0.12m E-W	A small posthole filled with Context 224), a soft, dark greyish brown gritty loam clay. No artifacts were recovered.

The features detailed in Table One above are possible postholes suggesting that they may be the remains of a structure. It is unlikely that they define a complete structure as it would be small in scale, being approximately 2m in diameter. However the limited nature of the trench precludes any definitive conclusion as to their nature.

The subsoil in trench two, Context 225, was an orange compact sandy clay with small patches of gravel and several larger stones (average size 0.4m).

Trench Three

Trench Three was situated 10m to the northwest of Trench Two. It measured 25m northeast-southwest and was 2m wide (Plate Nine).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Three (Context 301) consisted of a loose, mid brown sandy loam. It contained occasional sub-rounded stones (average size 15 x 15 x 10mm). This layer measured between 0.15 - 0.2m in thickness. Following the mechanical removal of this layer a total of four potential archaeological features were observed cutting the subsoil (Context 310).

Three of these features (Contexts 302-304) were located at the northeastern end of the trench within an area measuring 3m by 2m with a further feature (Context 305) located a further 5m to the southwest (Figure Seven).

Context 302 was a possible posthole measuring 0.4m east-west by 0.35m north-south (Plate Ten). It was filled with a moderately compact light-mid brown loamy clay with light charcoal flecking and a few small stones (Context 306).

Lying 1.4m southeast of Context 302 was Context 303. This was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.25m north-south by 0.2m east-west. The fill, Context 307, was a soft, dark grayish brown loam clay with some grit (Plate Eleven).

The final feature in this group was Context 304. This was 0.6m long northeast – south west by 0.38m wide although it did run beyond the northwestern limit of the trench. The fill, Context 308, was a soft, dark grayish brown loam clay with some grit and light charcoal flecking (Plate Eleven).

The final feature within Trench Three was Context 305, a continuation of the ditch found in Trenches One and Two (Figure Eight & Plate Twelve). This ran east-west across the trench and was 1.8m wide. The fill, Context 309, was a dark brown clay loam with lots of stones (average size 10 x 10 x 10mm) and occasional charcoal flecks.

The subsoil in Trench Three (Context 310) was the same as in the other trenches. It was an orange compact sandy clay with small patches of gravel and several larger stones (average size 0.4m). No artifacts were recovered from Trench Three.

Trench Four

Trench Four was situated 10m to the northwest of Trench Three. It measured 25m northeast-southwest and was 2m wide (Plate Thirteen).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Four (Context No. 401) consisted of a loose, mid brown sandy loam. It contained occasional sub-rounded stones (average size 15 x 15 x 10mm). This layer was around 0.2m in thickness. Following the mechanical removal of this layer the ditch observed in the previous three trenches (Contexts 102, 205, 305) was also noted in trench four (Context 402) along with three agricultural features (Context 403-405).

In this trench a small section was excavated into the ditch, Context 402, in an attempt to obtain some dating evidence. The ditch was 1.2m wide and cut into the subsoil (Context 410) to a depth of 0.12m. It had shallow sloping sides and a slightly rounded base (Figure Nine and Plate Fourteen). It was filled with a mid brown loam (Context 406) that contained lots of small stones (average size 10 x 10 x 10mm) and mixed with some orange sandy clay. No artifacts were recovered.

The final three features uncovered within this trench were the remains of three plough marks. Context 403 lay 0.4m southwest of Context 402. It emerged from the northern trench edge running approximately north – south for 1.6m (Figure

Nine). It measured 0.4m in width and when a small section was excavated it was found to be no more than 0.05m in depth (Plate Fifteen). The fill, Context 407, was a very dark brown/black silty clay with very few small stones.

A further 1.5m southwest of Context 403 was the second plough mark, Context 404. As with Context 404 this emerged from the northern trench edge, running north – south for 1m before petering out. It measured 0.56m in width and when a small section was excavated it was found to be less than 0.05m in depth (Plate Sixteen). The fill, Context 408, was a very dark brown/black silty clay with a few small stones, the same as that found within Context 404.

The final plough mark was located 7.5m southwest of Context 403. This feature, Context 404 was similar to the other plough marks uncovered. It ran out from the northern trench edge for 0.8m north – south and measured 0.4m wide. The fill, Context 409, was identical to that in the other two plough marks, being a very dark brown/black silty clay with very few small stones (Plate Seventeen).

The subsoil in Trench Four was an orange compact sandy clay with small patches of gravel and several larger stones (average size 0.4m). No artifacts were recovered from Trench Four.

Discussion

The four test trenches excavated at the application site revealed that there are sub-surface archaeological deposits within the confines of the development. These comprise possible postholes, pit and the ditch that was uncovered within all four trenches. This ditch, curving slightly from southeast – northwest, was found to be very shallow with no datable artifacts recovered. The shallow nature of this ditch is probably a reflection of its original dimensions and not a result of truncation. An examination of the first, second and third edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps has shown that this feature is not recorded. The curve of this ditch, when projected across the proposed application site (Figure Ten) would suggest it encloses an area on the northern half of the site, possibly mirroring the curve of the enclosure LDY 026:016. However without further investigation there is no way to determine the function or date of this feature. The only datable artifacts are the pottery sherds recovered from the surface of Contexts 203-204 from pit 202 in Trench Two. Both sherds are believed to be Early Christian in date and may be indication of the date for of the other deposits found during the evaluation, excluding the ditch. If the material upcast from the ditch had been formed into an earthen bank (although no traces were visible during the evaluation) then this presumed bank would have either covered Context 202 or at the very least Context 202 would have been excavated through it making it improbable that they are contemporary. Only Context 202 and the features uncovered in Trench Three (Contexts 302-304) would have been within the area enclosed by this ditch with the remaining features beyond it.

The other potential features uncovered during the evaluation suggest that there may be further archaeological deposits within the confines of the proposed application that would be adversely effected by the development. However on present evidence the archaeological deposits would appear to be in distinct clusters rather than a widespread dispersal across the site although it must be noted that further deposits are likely to exist beyond the trenches excavated.

Recommendations

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of potential sub-surface archaeological deposits surviving within the area of the application site in order that NIEA:HMU could make an informed response . The evaluation has shown that there are surviving archaeological features within the proposed development. It is recommended that if the development is granted permission further archaeological work should be undertaken on the site in advance of the development. This should include the monitoring of topsoil removal followed by an investigation of any features uncovered to record their nature and investigate their function and date.

Archive:

Finds:

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

Plans / Drawings:

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

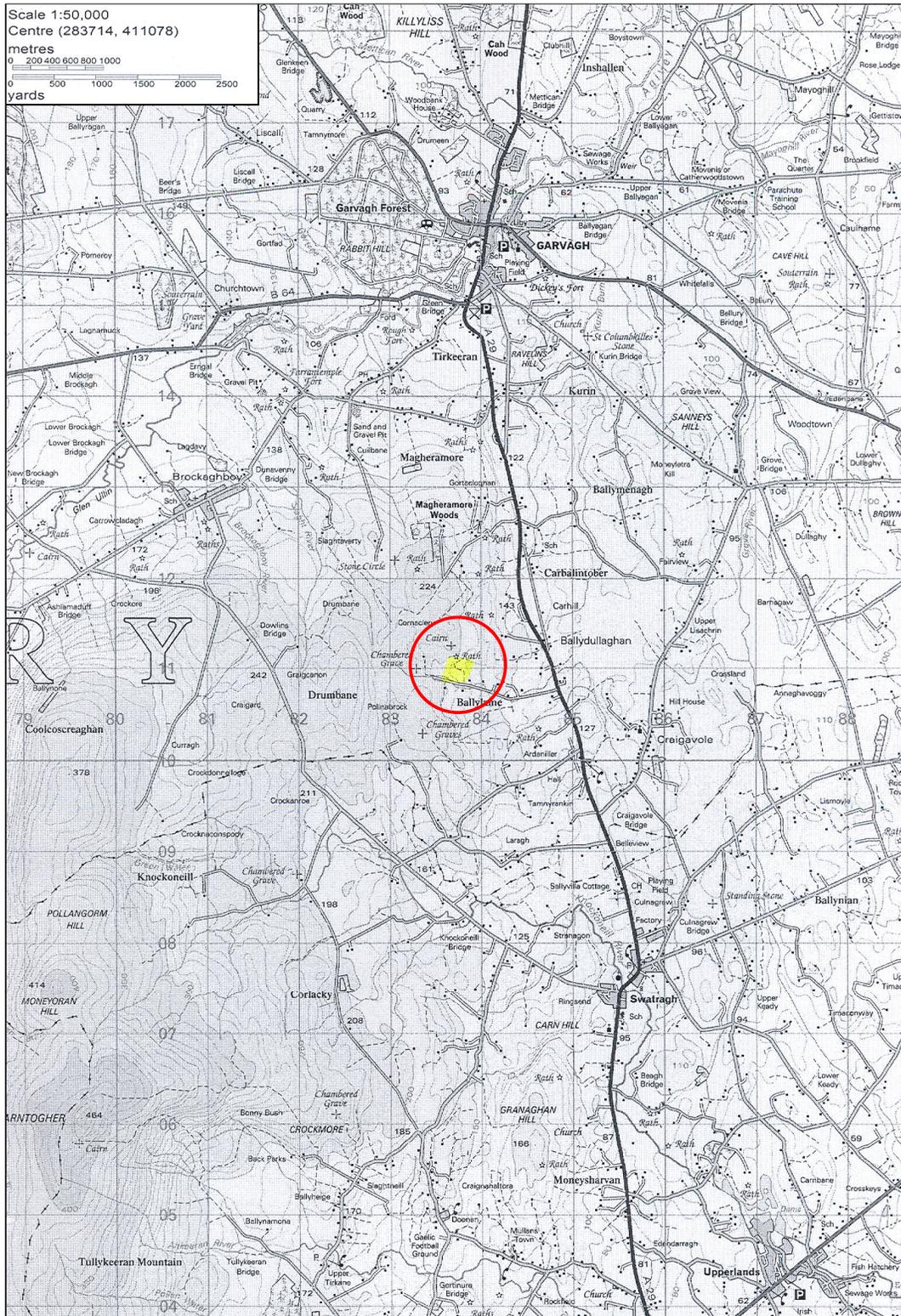


Figure One: 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Map showing location of the application site (circled in red).

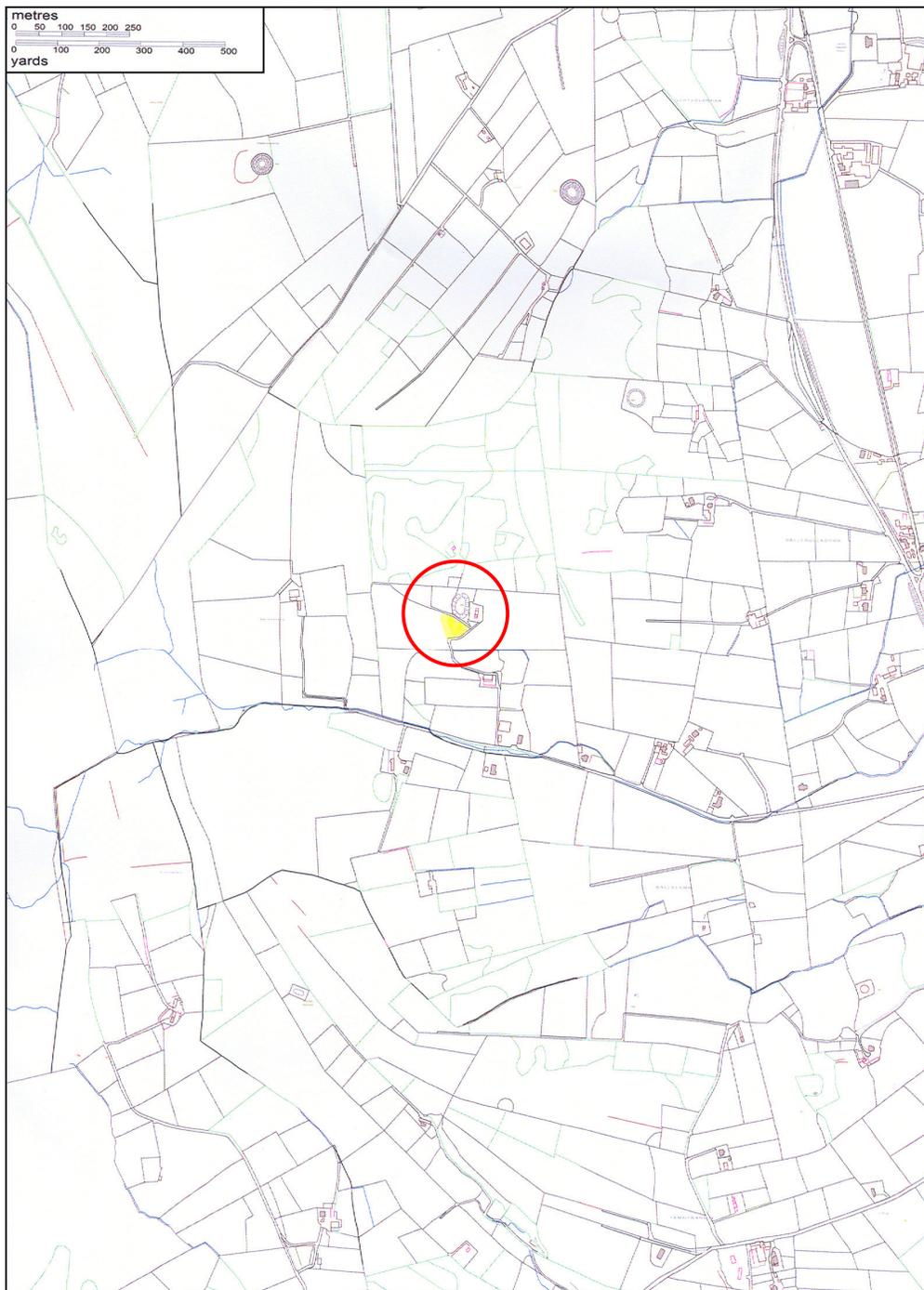


Figure Two: Detailed location of proposed application with site circled in red and highlighted in yellow.

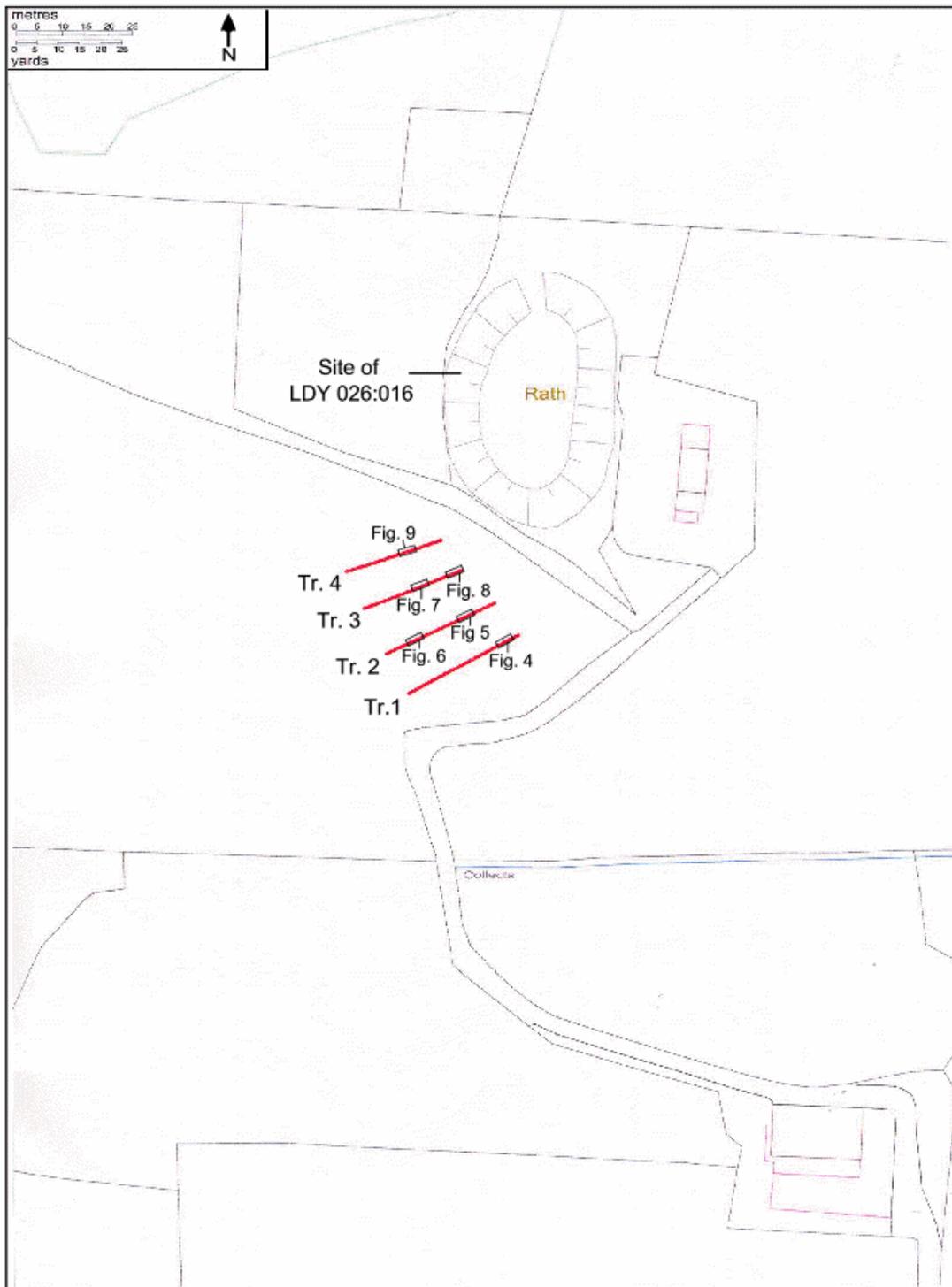


Figure Three: Plan showing location of Trenches One – Four and location of figures illustrated in report.

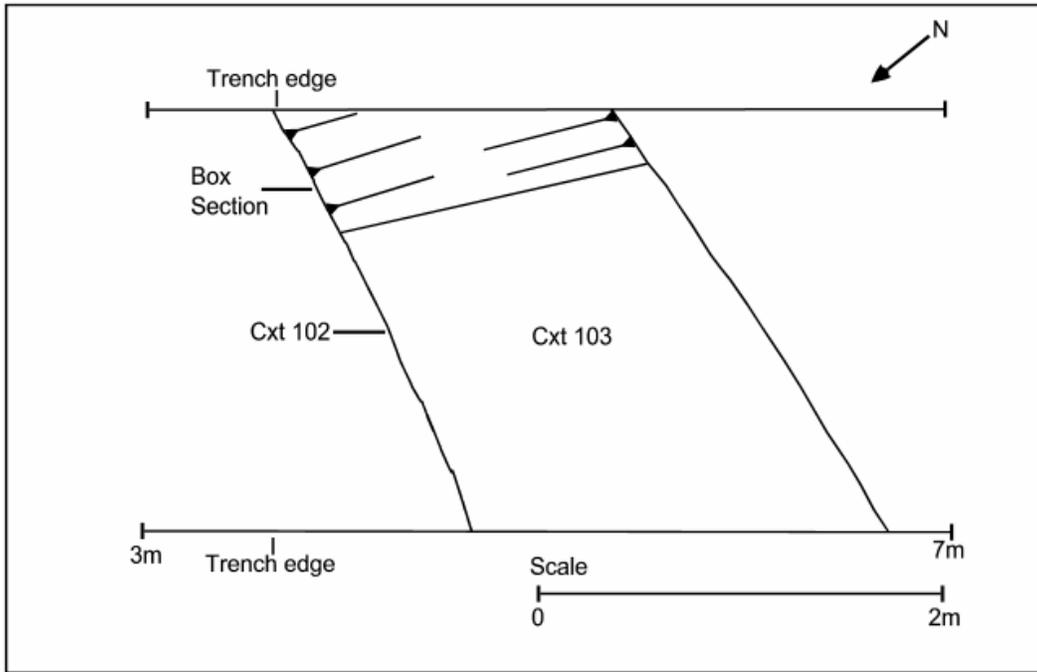


Figure Four: Plan of Context 102 in Trench 1 .See Figure Three for location.
(Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench).

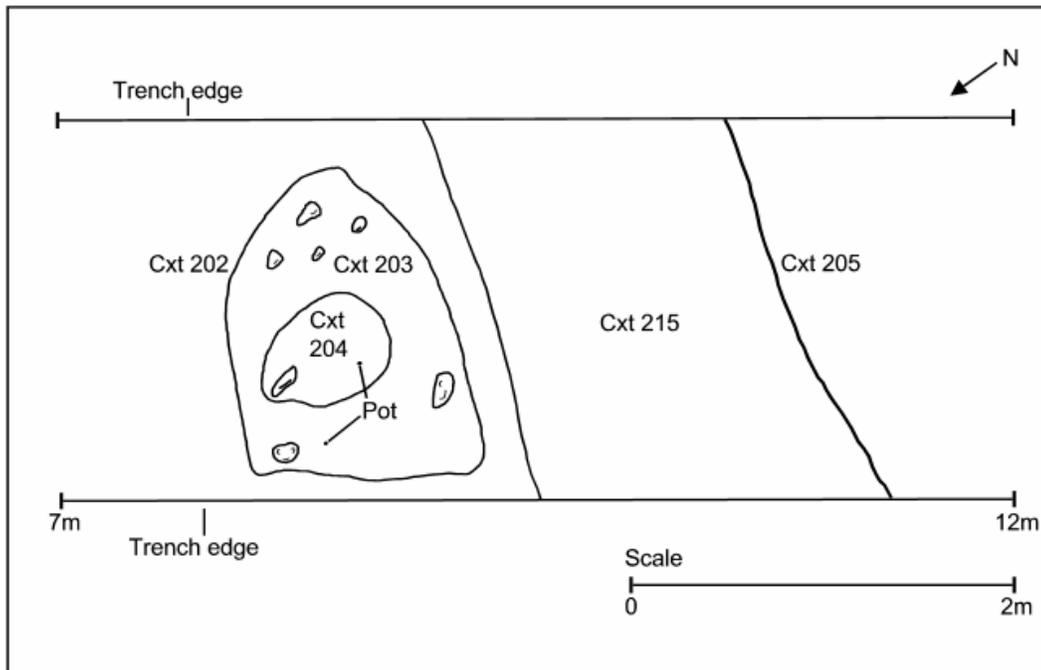


Figure Five: Plan of Contexts 202 and 205 in Trench 2. See Figure Three for location.
(Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench)

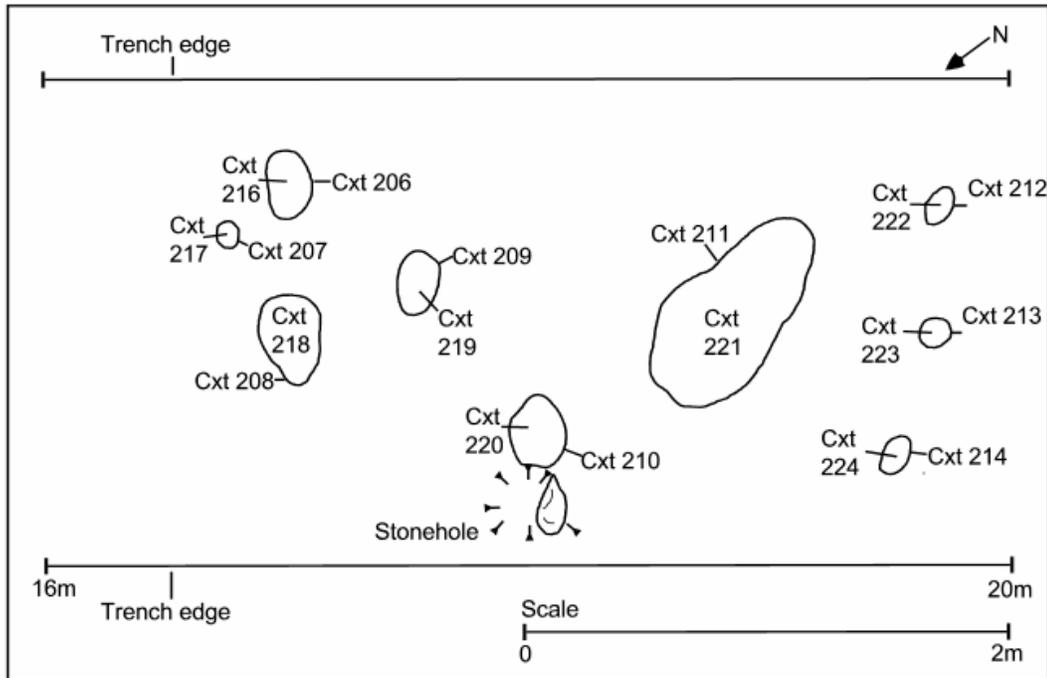


Figure Six: Plan of Contexts 206-214 in Trench 2. See Figure Three for location. (Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench).

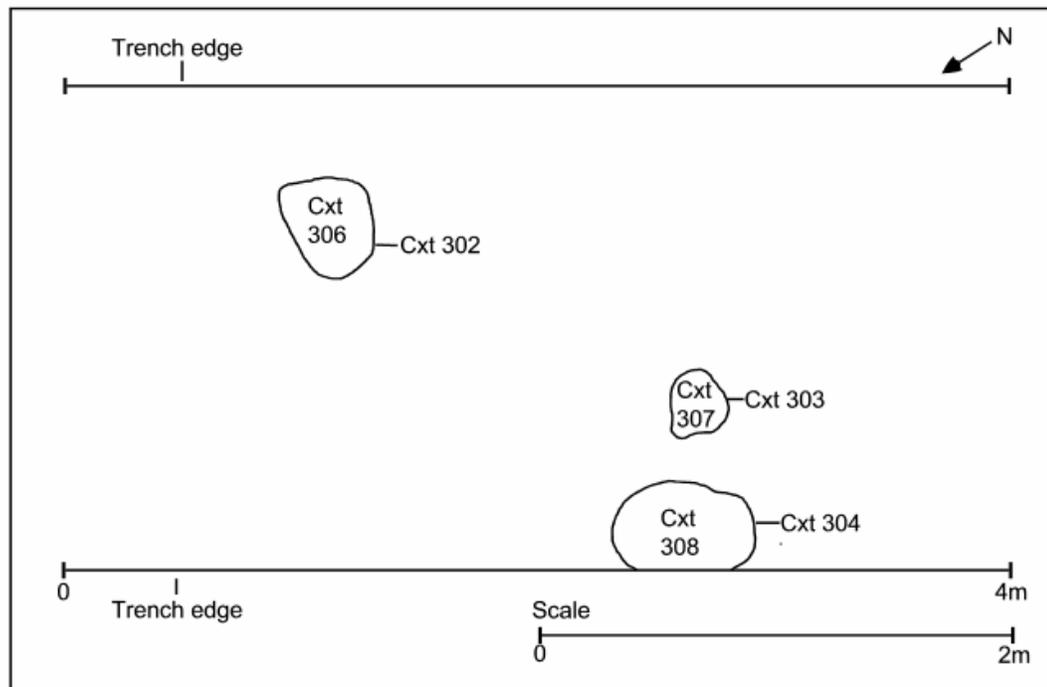


Figure Seven: Plan of Contexts 302-304 in Trench Three. See Figure Three for location. (Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench)

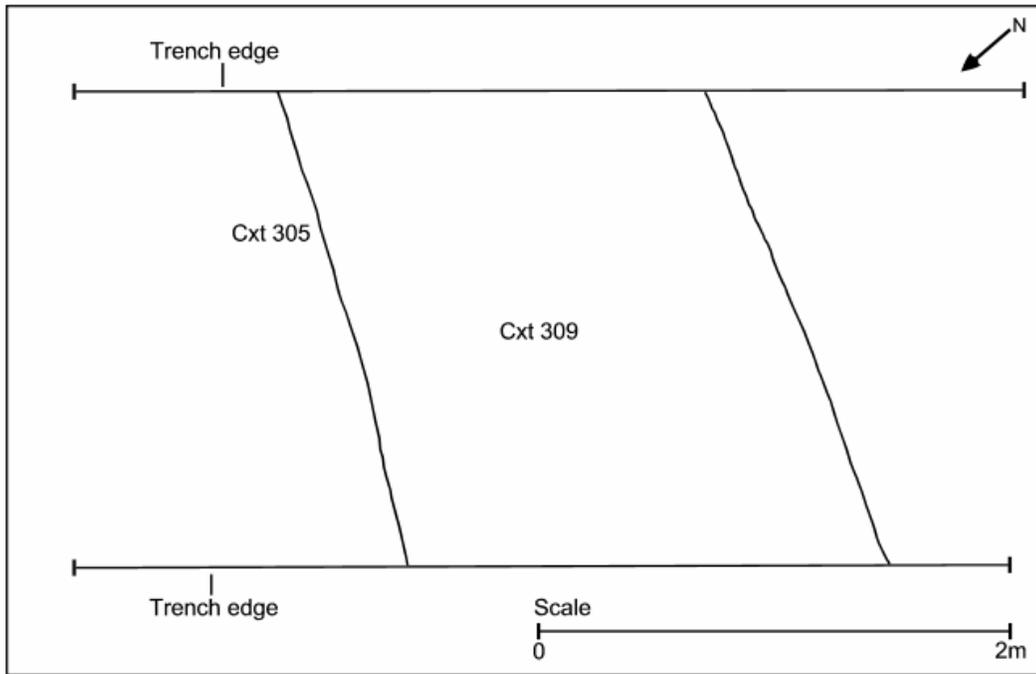


Figure Eight: Plan of Context 305 in Trench Three. See Figure Three for location. (Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench).

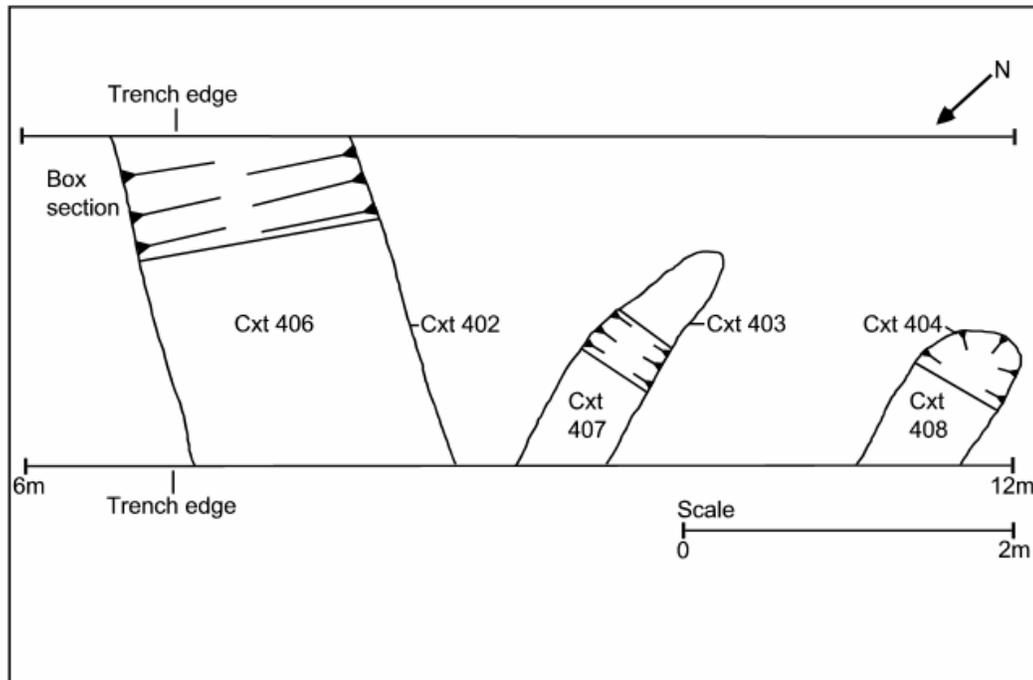


Figure Nine: Plan of Contexts 402-404 in Trench Four. See Figure Three for location. (Note measurements on trench are taken from northeast end of trench)



Figure Ten: Projected line of ditch found in all four trenches during evaluation.



Plate One: General view of the site showing test trenches looking northeast.



Plate Two: Trench One following excavation to subsoil (Context 104), looking southwest.

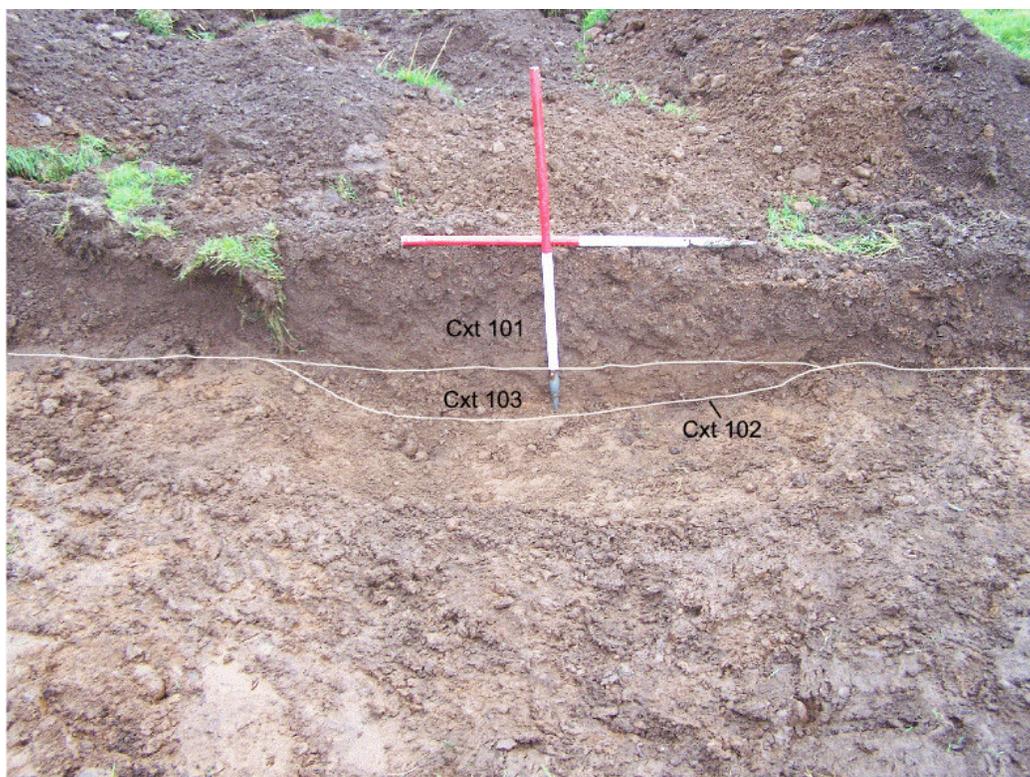


Plate Three: Ditch (Context 102) in Trench One showing excavated box section looking east.



Plate Four: View of Trench Two after removal of topsoil looking southwest.



Plate Five: View of Pit 202 in Trench Two looking southwest.



Plate Six: Finds from Context 202 in Trench Two. Top: Internal and external side of pottery from Context 203. Bottom: Pot sherd and burnt flint from Context 204.



Plate Seven: View of Contexts 206-215 in Trench Two looking southeast.



Plate Eight: View of Context 210 showing disturbance to western edge of the feature. Looking east.



Plate Nine: View of Trench Three after removal of topsoil (Context 101) looking southwest.



Plate Ten: View of Context 302 in Trench Three looking south.



Plate Eleven: View of Contexts 303 (left) and 304 (right) looking southwest in Trench Three.



Plate Twelve: View of Ditch 305 in Trench Three looking east..



Plate Thirteen: View of Trench Four after removal of topsoil (Context 401) looking southwest.



Plate Fourteen: View of East facing section of ditch (Context 402) in Trench Four.



Plate Fifteen: View of section excavated in Context 403 in Trench Four.



Plate 16: View of south facing section in Context 404 in Trench Four.



Plate Seventeen: View of Context 405 in Trench Four looking South.