



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 172

**Site 140m North of 32 Fingrean Road
Loughmacrory
Altdrumman
County Tyrone**

LICENCE NO.: AE/09/33

Peter Bowen
March 2009

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 32 Fingrean Road, Loughmacrory.

Townland: Altdrumman

SMR No. : TYR 36:26, TYR 36:32

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: H 5580 7620

County: Tyrone

Excavation Licence No. : AE/09/33

Planning Ref / No. : K/2006/1061/RM

Dates of Monitoring: 13th March 2009

Archaeologist(s) Present: Peter Bowen

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site just off the Fingrean Road, Loughmacrory, Altdrumman, Co. Tyrone as part of the planning condition for a proposed new dwelling and septic tank (Figures One and Two). There are two recorded archaeological monuments recorded within 50-60m of the proposed dwelling. These are a court tomb (TYR 36:32) and a wedge tomb (TYR 36:26) (Figure Three). Although neither of these two monuments would be directly affected by the proposed dwelling there was a possibility that related archaeological deposits may have extended into the area of the site.

The evaluation comprised of three trial trenches, two positioned across the area of the proposed dwelling, while the third was sited where a septic tank is to be located. Trenches One and Two, across the dwelling, were 15m and 20m long respectively with Trench Three measuring 4m. All trenches were 2m wide. Prior to the commencement of the evaluation the site was greenfield, located beside the ruins of an earlier farmyard and derelict buildings. There were no archaeological deposits in any of the trenches although in Trench One there was some disturbance associated with the neighbouring abandoned farm.

It is recommended that the construction of the new dwelling be allowed to proceed with further archaeological investigation.

Type of monitoring:

Archaeological monitoring of three trial trenches excavated by a back acting mechanical digger fitted with a flat, toothless bucket. .

Size of area opened:

Trench One: 15m northwest-southeast by 2m wide.
Trench Two: 20m northwest-southeast by 2m wide.
Trench Three: 4m north-south by 2m wide.

Current Land Use: Agricultural

Intended Land Use: New dwelling and septic tank.

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The development is located 2.5km southeast of the village of Mountfield, on the Omagh – Cookstown A505 main road (Grid Ref. H 5580 7620). It is approximately 140m north of 32 Fingrean Road, Loughmacrory, Altdrumman, Co. Tyrone (Figure One)

The site is located on the natural level terrace on what is a generally steep, southwest facing slope of Laght Hill. (Figure Two) at a height of approximately 80m OD. It is located in a small field at the western edge of a now abandoned farmyard that contains several derelict buildings. It has extensive views across the lower lying land to the south, west and north

The two scheduled monuments are located approximately 50-60 east of the proposed dwelling (Figure Three). The closest, TYR 036:026 is a wedge tomb, orientated northwest-southeast and has been incorporated into a post-medieval field boundary that forms the eastern edge of the farmyard. It consisted of one chamber defined by some side stones & is filled with rubble. There is a capstone still intact over the entrance at northwest with some traces of outer walling visible at east. A good sillstone separates ante chamber from the chamber. It is 8m long overall & 3.6m wide with the stones heavily covered with moss. The court tomb, TYR 036:032 is slightly further to the east, located in the neighbouring field. The remains comprises of parts of a chamber & court, with a beehive compound built between the surviving back chamber & the remains of the court. The gallery is estimated to be 9m long & probably had 3 chambers. It was under heavy vegetation during the evaluation and was not clearly visible.

The evaluation was undertaken as part of the planning condition for the proposed new dwelling and was requested by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency caseworker Paul Devlin. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the two scheduled monuments with a potential for related archaeological deposits to exist within the limits of the proposed development.

The field in which the dwelling is located measures 40m northwest-southeast (max) by 25m wide (max). The northern field boundary comprises of a small stone wall, while the others (east, west and south) are all formed from small earthen and stone banks with trees growing from them. There is a small access lane running along side the eastern edge of the site, leading from the Fingrean Road, through the farmyard and northwards into the neighbouring fields.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of three mechanically excavated trial trenches (Figure Four). A back acting digger, fitted with a flat toothless bucket was used to remove the topsoil onto the underlying subsoil. Trench One measured 15m northwest-south by 2m wide and was positioned to run across the area of the proposed dwelling. The topsoil, context 101 was removed to the underlying natural subsoil, context 102. This was a compact, orange sandy clay with lots of small angular stones (measuring 0.15-0.10m max) with either natural bedrock or the top of several large boulders within the subsoil also uncovered (Plate One). Lying 3.6m from the southern end of the trench was a deposit of

modern material, context 103. Context 103 comprised of loose, stony, mid-dark brown gritty loam with red brick fragments and modern ceramics, most likely associated with the abandoned farm. This covered an area approximately 5m long (max) by 1.4m wide and continued beyond the eastern edge of the trench (Plate Two). A further 1m south and running across the trench north-south was a plastic waterpipe (context 104) used to fill a nearby animal trough. Sealing the trench was the topsoil (context 101). This was a mid brown, soft, sticky clay loam measuring between 0.15m-0.4m in thickness. No archaeological deposits were uncovered within the trench.

Trench Two was located 5m west of Trench One. This trench also ran across the area of the proposed dwelling, measuring 20m long northwest-southeast by 2m wide. The topsoil (context 201) was removed to the underlying natural subsoil, context 202. This subsoil was an orange sandy clay with lots of angular stones measuring 0.15-0.10m (max) (Plate Three). Running north-south across the southern end of the trench was a plastic waterpipe (context 203), a continuation of the waterpipe (context 104) uncovered in Trench One. Above the subsoil, and sealing this trench was the topsoil, context 201. This was a soft and sticky clay loam containing a few small angular stones. The topsoil measured a maximum of 0.2m thick in this trench. No archaeological features were uncovered within the trench.

The final trench, Trench Three, was located to the south of the proposed dwelling, where a septic tank is to be installed. This trench was orientated north-south, measuring 4m long by 2m wide. The topsoil (context 301) was removed directly onto the subsoil (context 102). This subsoil was an orange sandy clay with some small gritty inclusions (Plate Four). At the south of the trench it changed slightly to a yellowish stony sandy clay. Running east-west across the trench was a thin metal wire (context 303), an earth cable from a nearby electricity pole. Sealing this trench, the topsoil, context 301, was a mid brown, friable sandy loam measuring 0.20m in thickness. No archaeological deposits were uncovered in this trench.

Discussion

All the trenches investigated on the site were excavated to subsoil. The area of modern disturbance in Trench One, context 103, is probably derived from the abandoned farm, and is not archaeological in nature. There were no archaeological deposits uncovered within any of the trenches during the evaluation, and no evidence to suggest that there are any remains associated with the two nearby scheduled monuments within the area of the development.

Recommendations

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of sub-surface archaeological deposits surviving within the area of the application site including any deposits associated with the two nearby scheduled monuments. As no archaeological deposits were found during the evaluation it is recommended that no further archaeological work is undertaken and the construction of the proposed dwelling is allowed to proceed.

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. Site Location Map. (Site highlighted in red).

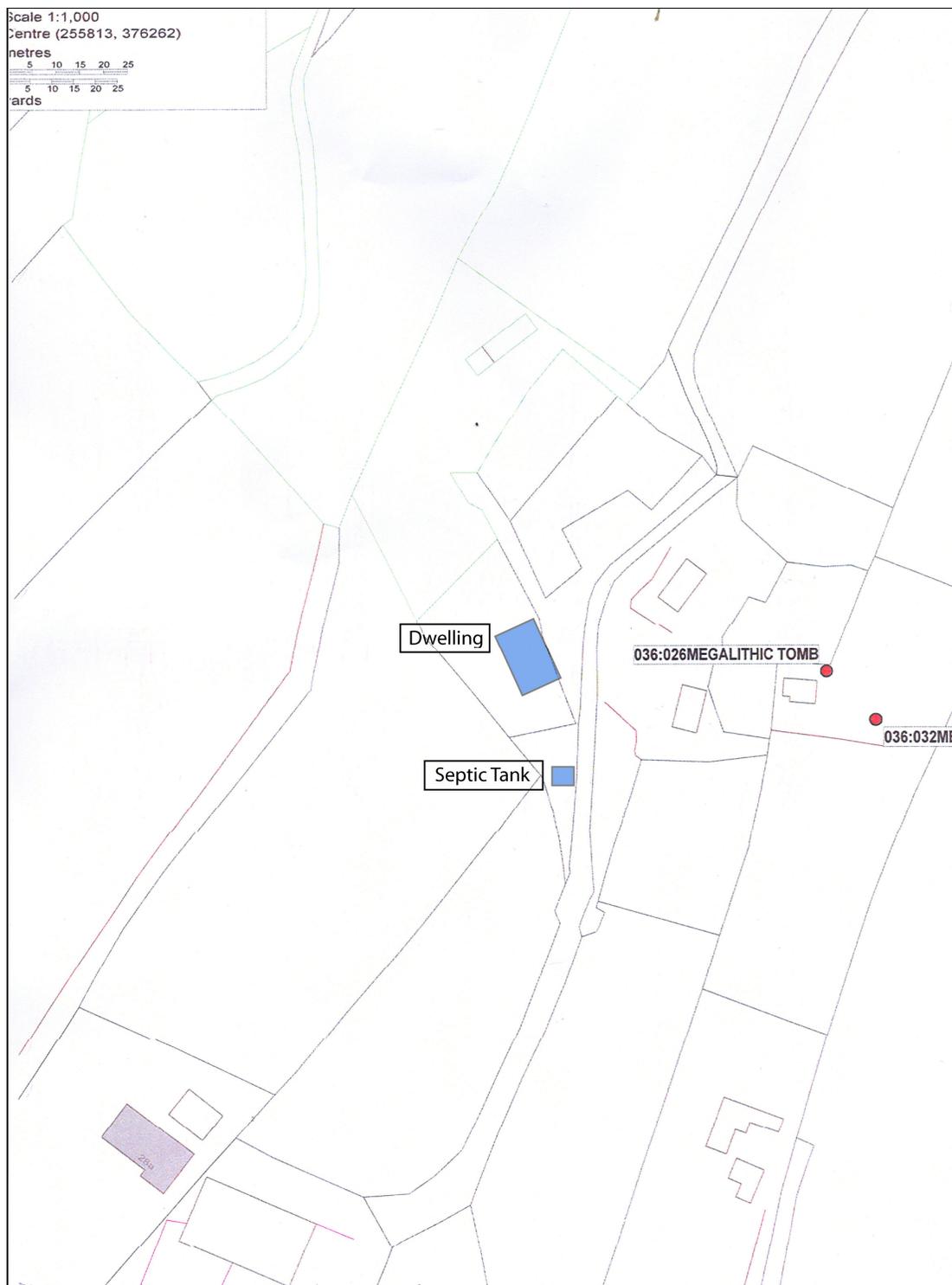


Figure Three: Map showing new dwelling and septic tank (in blue) in relation to scheduled monuments TYR 36:26 and TYR 36:32 in red.

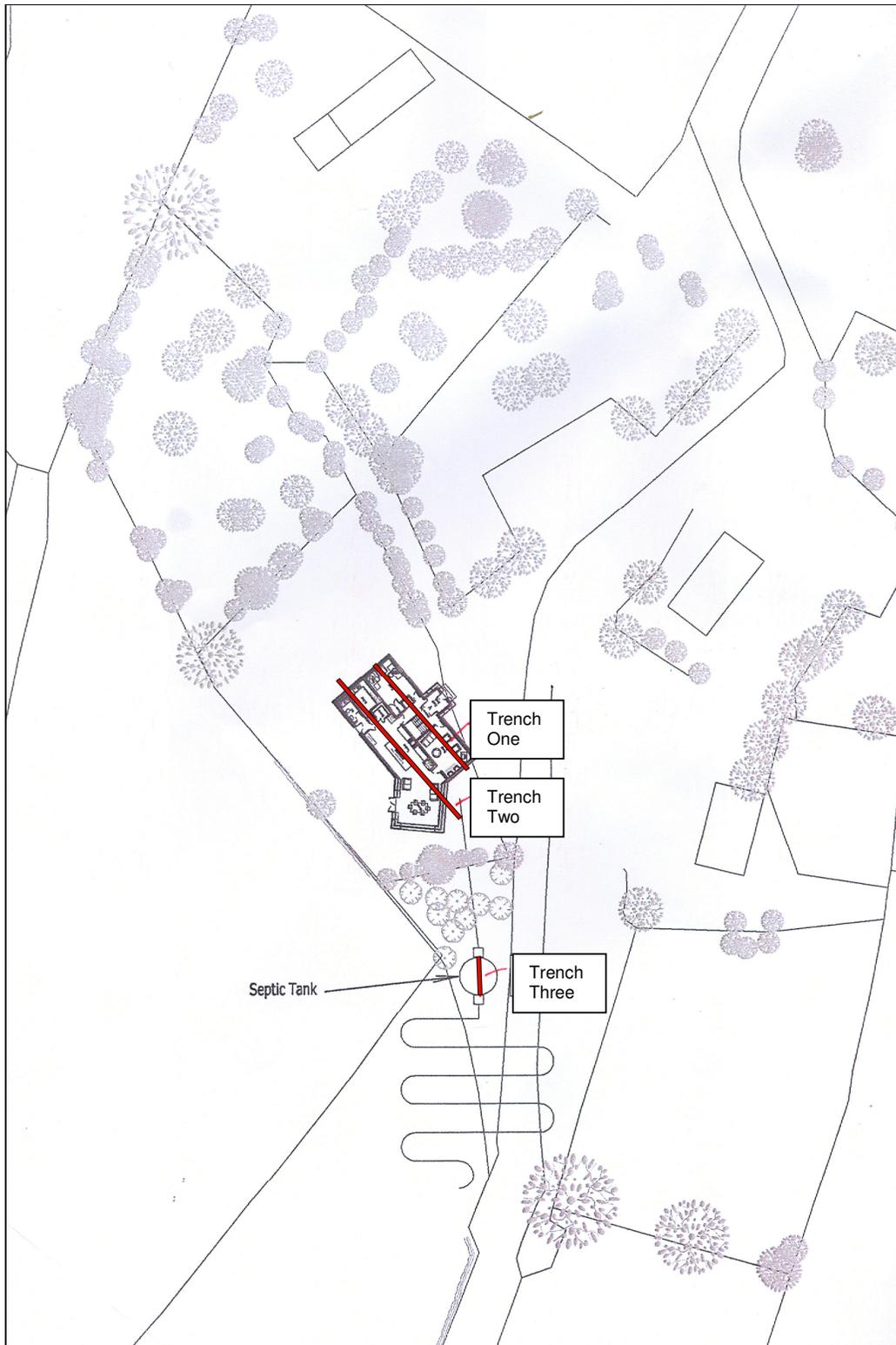


Figure Four: Location of trial trenches (in red) across site.



Plate One: Post excavation photo of Trench One looking northwest. (Modern disturbance, context 103 is darker area at centre of picture).



Plate Two: Detailed photo of modern disturbance, context 104 in Trench One looking northeast.



Plate Three: Post excavation photo of Trench Two looking southwest.



Plate Four: Post excavation photo of Trench Three, looking south. Modern earth cable, context 303 is visible at top of photo.