



Monitoring Report No. 181

**90m north of 36 Fingrean Road,
Altdrumman,
Co. Tyrone**

LICENCE NO.: AE/09/156

BRIAN SLOAN

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 90m north of 36 Fingrean Road, Altdrumman, Co. Tyrone

Townland: Altdrumman

SMR No. : TYR 036:026, 032

State Care Scheduled Other ✓ [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: H 55808 76180

County: Tyrone

Excavation Licence No. : AE/09/156

Planning Ref / No. : K/2009/0514/RM

Dates of Monitoring: 28th September 2009

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at an application site adjacent to two prehistoric burial monuments (TYR 036:026, 032) in an effort to inform the planning service of the presence and survival of archaeological remains that would be adversely affected by development. A total of three trenches (one encompassing the footprint of the proposed structure and two along the line of the access route) were mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil with nothing of archaeological significance being observed during the evaluation.

Type of monitoring:

Mechanical excavation of the footprint of the proposed new dwelling (approximately 15m x 15m) as well as two evaluative trenches (18m x 2m) along the proposed access lane.

Size of area opened:

Approximately 305m² in total mechanically excavated.

Current Land Use:

Pastoral agriculture

Intended Land Use:

Residential development

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site (K/2009/0514/RM) is located approximately 90m north of 36 Fingrean Road, Altdrumman, Co. Tyrone. The sites lie just outside the village of Loughmacrory, lying approximately 1km north-west of its centre. The application site lies on the lower southern slope of Laght Hill, at a height of approximately 150m above sea level (Figure 1).

The application site is located across two roughly rectangular fields, delineated on all sides by a wire and post fence, interspersed with mature trees and hedgerows. Access to the fields is through a gate in the western boundary of the upper field (where the house is to be located). The upper and lower fields are separated by a mature hedgerow. The general area is comprised primarily of agricultural land interspersed with residential dwellings.

The monitoring took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling and was requested by Paul Devlin: Caseworker with Northern Ireland Environment Agency. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the burial monuments and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with these.

Account of the excavations

Trench One

Trench One was located in the upper field in the area closest to the burial monuments. The trench was roughly square and measured approximately 15m by 15m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 104) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m (Plate 1).

The sod and topsoil in this trench consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam, which had frequent inclusions of active tree roots and small angular and sub-rounded stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Numerous fragments of bottle glass were recovered from this deposit (Context No. 101), which was on average 0.2m deep.

The topsoil (Context No. 101) overlay a thin deposit of cultivation soil (Context No. 102). This deposit (Context No. 102) was visibly similar to the topsoil (Context No. 101) although the higher frequency of stones present in the cultivation soil was noted. The cultivation soil (Context No. 102) was, on average, 0.1m thick and directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 104).

Upon removal of the cultivation soil (Context No 102), numerous parallel linear features (Context No. 103) were observed cutting the natural subsoil (Context No. 104). A small cutting excavated across one of these features found it to be shallow (maximum of 0.03m deep) and their parallel alignment identified them as the remnants of spade cultivation ridges. The natural subsoil (Context No. 104) consisted of an orange sandy clay. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Trench Two

Trench Two was located in the lower field, approximately 3m south of the separating hedgerow. The trench measured roughly 18m in length by 2m in width and was orientated north/south. The trench was located along the proposed access lane to the new development. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 203) which was encountered at an average depth 0.4m (Plate 2).

The sod and topsoil in this trench (Context No. 201) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam, which had frequent inclusions of active tree roots and small angular and sub-rounded stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). Two sherds of white glazed ceramics of probable nineteenth or twentieth century date. The topsoil deposit was a maximum of 0.2m deep and overlay a cultivation soil (Context No. 202).

The cultivation soil (Context No. 202) was similar in appearance to the topsoil, although had a higher frequency of small and medium stones throughout. This deposit (Context No. 202) was an average of 0.2m thick and produced a single sherd of black glazed earthenware. The cultivation soil (Context No. 202) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 203). The natural subsoil (Context No. 203) consisted of an orange sandy clay. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted in this trench.

Trench 3

Trench Two was also located in the lower field, approximately 2m south of Trench Two. The trench measured roughly 18m in length by 2m in width and was orientated north/south. The trench was located along the proposed access lane to the new development. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 303) which was encountered at an average depth 0.4m (Plate 3).. A similar stratigraphic sequence was encountered to that in Trench Two.

The sod and topsoil in this trench (Context No. 301) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam, which had frequent inclusions of active tree roots and small angular and sub-rounded stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm). The topsoil deposit was a maximum of 0.25m deep and overlay a cultivation soil (Context No. 302).

The cultivation soil (Context No. 302) was similar in appearance to the topsoil, although had a higher frequency of small and medium stones throughout. This deposit (Context No. 302) was an average of 0.15m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 203). The natural subsoil (Context No. 203) consisted of an orange sandy clay. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted in this trench.

Conclusions

The three evaluative test trenches excavated in the application site contained nothing of archaeological significance. It is not thought that the development of the dwelling will impact upon previously unrecognized and unrecorded archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out at the development site. No publication of this work is merited save a short summary in the annual *Excavations Bulletin*.

Archive:

Finds: The sherds of post-medieval ceramics are currently housed at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs: The photographs taken during the monitoring exercise are currently housed at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: N/A

Signed: _____ Date: _____

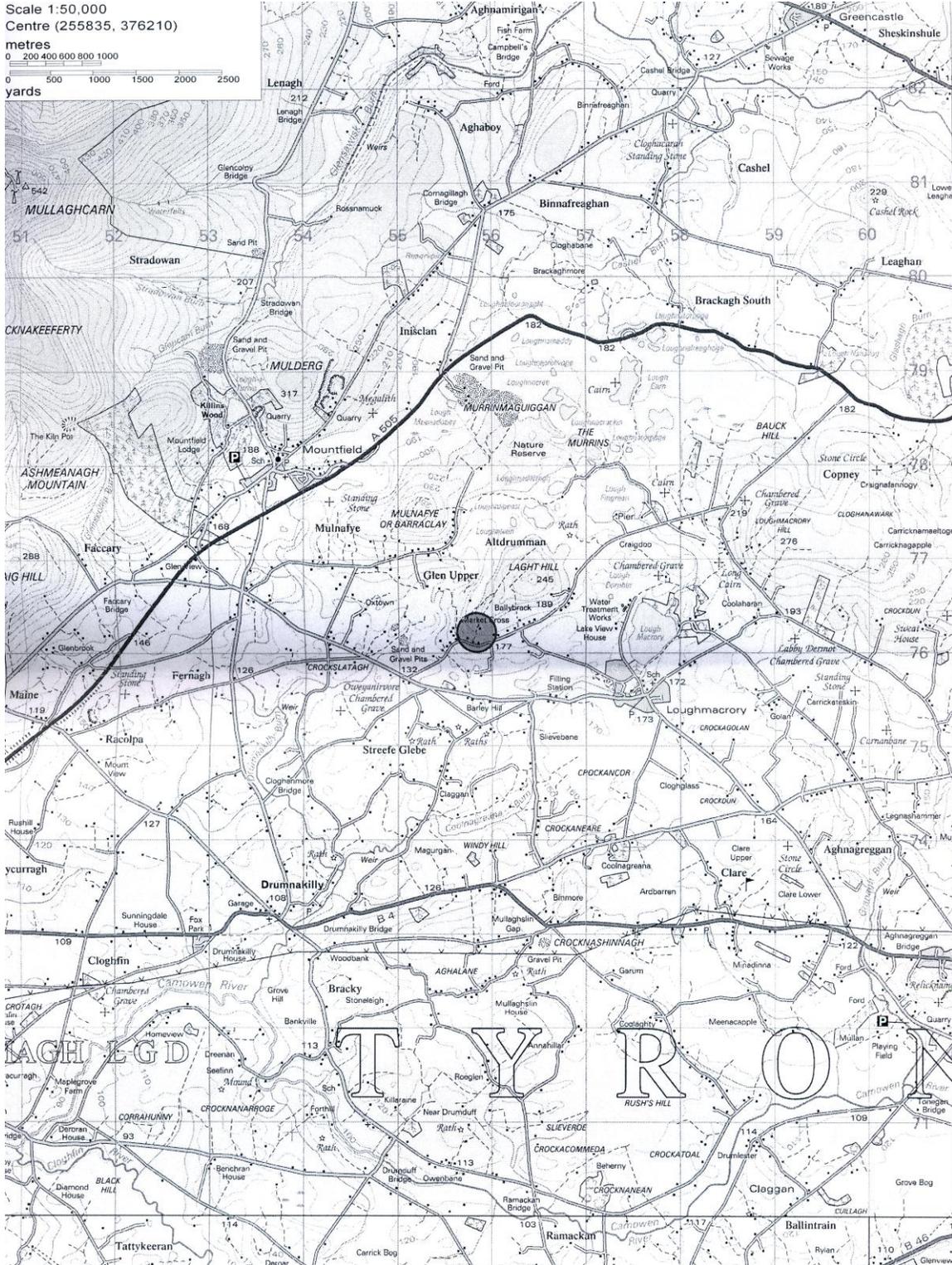


Fig. 1: General location map showing application site (grey dot)

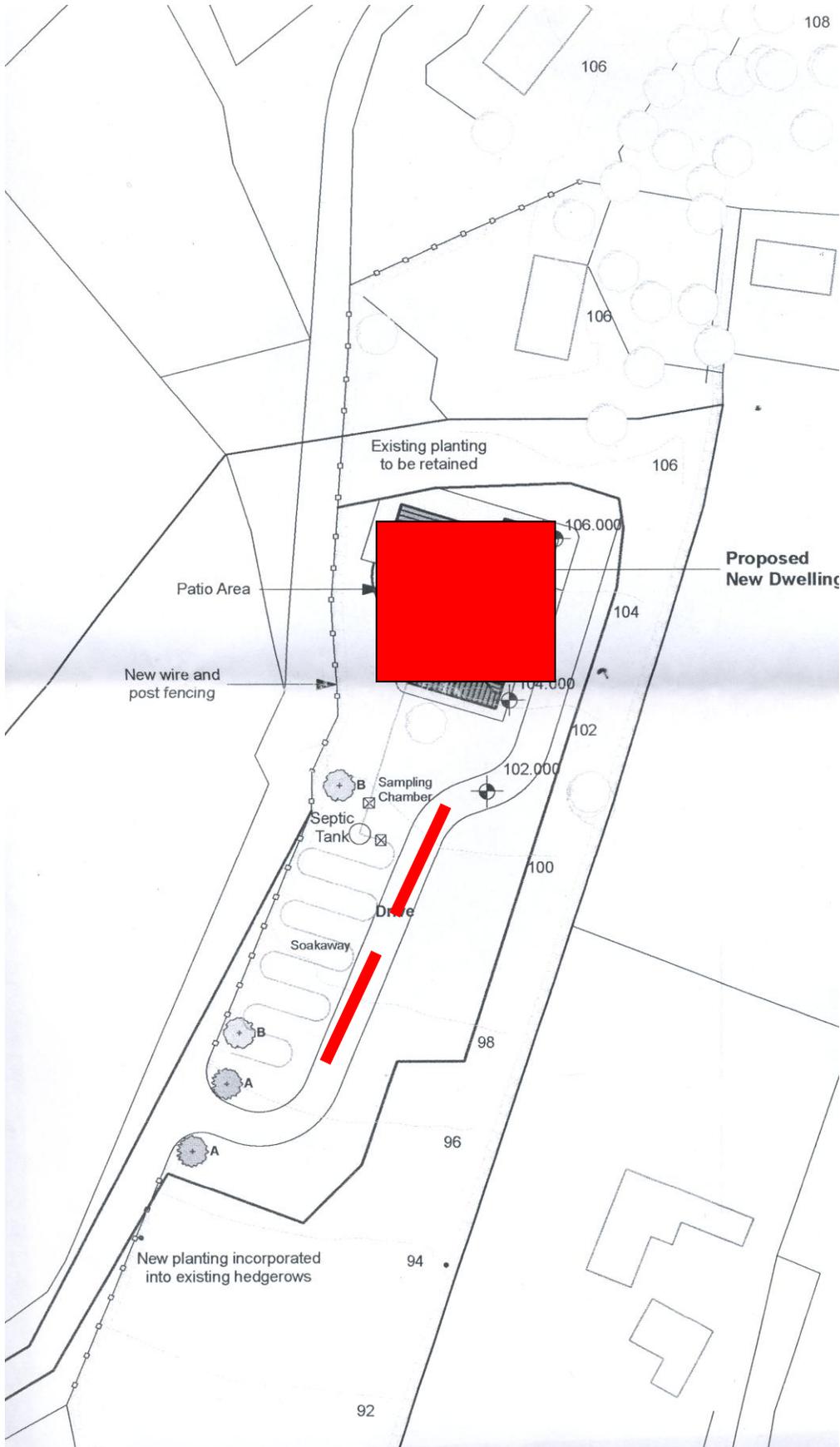


Fig. 3: Location of trenches overlaid on architects map.



Plate 1: Trench One following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil, looking north-west.



Plate 2: Trench Two following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil, looking north.



Plate 3: Trench Three following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil, looking south.