



Monitoring Report No. 179

**30m north and 70m north-east of
36 Aughnagon Road
Mayobridge
Co. Down**

LICENCE NO.: AE/09/131

BRIAN SLOAN

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 30m north and 70m north-east of 36 Aughnagon Road, Mayobridge, Co. Down

Townland: Aughnagon

SMR No. : DOW 051:012

State Care Scheduled Other ✓ [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: J 1342625069

County: Down

Excavation Licence No. : AE/09/131

Planning Ref / Nos. : P/2009/0795/F & P/2009/0555/RM

Dates of Monitoring: 27th August 2009

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in two sites adjacent to the site of an enclosure (DOW 051:012) 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 nine trenches 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 nine evaluative trenches

Size of area opened:

Nine trenches measuring roughly 20m in length and 2m in width

Current Land Use:

Pastoral agriculture

Intended Land Use:

Two residential dwellings

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application sites are located adjacent to 36 Aughnagon Road, Mayobridge, Co. Down. The sites lie just outside the village of Mayobridge, lying approximately 2.5km south-west of its centre and at a height of approximately 150m above sea level (Figure 1). Two application sites were subject to an archaeological evaluation; 30m north of 36 Aughnagon Road (P/2009/0555/RM) and 70m north-east of the same (P/2009/0795/F). As the same agent was dealing with both applications, it was decided that a single archaeological licence would be sufficient to cover work at both sites (Paul Logue *pers comm.*). For the purposes of this report, the results of the evaluation of each site will be described separately.

The monitoring took place as part of the planning application for the construction of two new dwellings and was requested by Gail Howell: Caseworker with Northern Ireland Environment Agency. It was requested due to the proximity of the application sites to an unclassified enclosure (DOW 051:012) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this monument.

Account of the excavations

Site 70m north-east of 36 Aughnagon Road (P/2009/0795/F)

This application site is located within a roughly rectangular field to the north-east of 36 Aughnagon Road (Fig. 3). The field slopes gently to the south-west and the field is bounded on all sides by a wire and post fence interspersed with mature trees and hedgerows. At the time of the evaluation, the leaseholder of the field had cattle grazing there, and these were kept away from the excavation area with the use of an electric fence.

A total of four evaluative trenches were excavated across the proposed location of the new dwelling. Each of these trenches measured roughly 15-20m in length and 2m in width. They were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

Trench One

Trench One was located along the southern boundary to the field, adjacent to a ruined building. This has been tentatively identified as the remains of a nineteenth century school house. The trench was aligned roughly east/west and measured approximately 17m in length by 2m in width.

The sod and topsoil (Context No. 101) was mechanically removed across the area of the trench. This deposit was found to vary in depth from 0.1m in the eastern end of the trench to 0.4m in the western end. This is consistent of plough action and hill wash making the deeper deposit down slope. This deposit (Context No. 101) was a mid to light brown sandy loam which contained frequent

inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones, as well as active and inactive tree roots. The topsoil (Context No. 101) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 102).

The natural subsoil (Context No. 102) was a glacially derived orange sandy clay with regular inclusions of angular and sub-rounded rocks and boulders. In places the granite bedrock protruded through the subsoil. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in this trench.

Trench Two

Trench Two was located approximately 0.8m to the north of, and parallel to, Trench One. The trench was mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 202) which was encountered a depth averaging between 0.1m and 0.3m. The stratigraphy encountered in Trench Two was identical to that encountered in Trench One, with sod and topsoil (Context No. 201) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 202). Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Trench Three

Trench Three was located approximately 1.5m to the north of, and parallel to, Trench Two. The trench was mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 302) which was encountered a depth averaging between 0.1m and 0.2m. The stratigraphy encountered in Trench Three was identical to that encountered in both Trenches One and Two, with sod and topsoil (Context No. 301) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 302). Two sherds of white glazed ceramics of probable Nineteenth-Century date were recovered from the topsoil (Context No. 301). Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Trench Four

Trench Four was located to the west of Trenches One, Two and Three, and was aligned perpendicular to them (on a rough north/south axis). The trench measured approximately 15m (north/south) by 2m (east/west). It was mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 402) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m. Again the stratigraphy encountered in Trench Four mirrored the other evaluative trenches at this application site, with sod and topsoil (Context No. 401) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 402). Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the excavation of this trench.

The investigation carried out at the site 70m north-east of 36 Aughnagon Road proved that nothing of archaeological significance is present in this application site that will be adversely affected by the development.

Site 30m north of 36 Aughnagon Road (P/2009/0555/RM)

This application site was located immediately south-west of the initial one described above (P/2009/0795/F) (Fig.4). The application site is situated in a roughly rectangular field, the eastern boundary of which constitutes the south-western boundary of the enclosure (DOW 051:012), however the location of the trenches did not impinge upon the monument. A total of five evaluative trenches were excavated across the proposed location of the dwelling. Each trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil with nothing of archaeological significance being observed.

Trench Five

Trench Five was positioned parallel to the northern boundary of the field and was aligned roughly east/west. The trench measured 16m in length and 2m in width and was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 502) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

The sod and topsoil (Context No. 501) was mechanically removed across the area of the trench. This deposit was found to be on average 0.3m deep and was a mid to light brown sandy loam which contained frequent inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones, as well as active and inactive tree roots. The topsoil (Context No. 501) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 502).

The natural subsoil (Context No. 502) was a glacially derived orange sandy clay with regular inclusions of angular and sub-rounded rocks and boulders. In places the granite bedrock protruded through the subsoil. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in this trench.

Trench Six

Trench Two was located approximately 0.8m to the south-west of Trench Five. Again this trench was aligned roughly east/west. The trench was mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 602) which was encountered a depth averaging between 0.1m and 0.2m. The stratigraphy encountered in Trench Six was identical to that encountered in Trench Five, with sod and topsoil (Context No. 601) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 602). Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Trench Seven

Trench Seven was located approximately 2m to the south-west of, and parallel to, Trench Six. The trench was mechanically excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 702) which was encountered a depth averaging between 0.1m and 0.15m. The stratigraphy encountered in Trench Seven was identical to that encountered in both Trenches Five and Six, with sod and topsoil (Context No. 701) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 702). Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Trench Eight

Trench Eight was located approximately 7m to the south-east of the eastern end of Trench Seven. The trench was aligned roughly north-west/south-east and was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 801) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m. Again the stratigraphy encountered in this trench was the same as in the other trenches in this application site and consisted of sod and topsoil (Context No. 801) lying directly over natural subsoil (Context No. 802). Nothing of archaeological significance was observed in this trench.

Trench Nine

Trench Nine was located approximately 2m north of Trench Eight and measured 18m in length by 2m in width. The trench was aligned roughly north/south and was positioned along the western boundary of the 'enclosure' (DOW 051:012). The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 902) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.2m. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in this trench with sod and topsoil (Context No. 901) directly overlying natural subsoil (Context No. 902). Nothing of archaeological significance was observed in this trench.

Conclusions

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

Archive:

Finds:

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:

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Fig. 1: General location map showing area of proposed application sites (red circle).

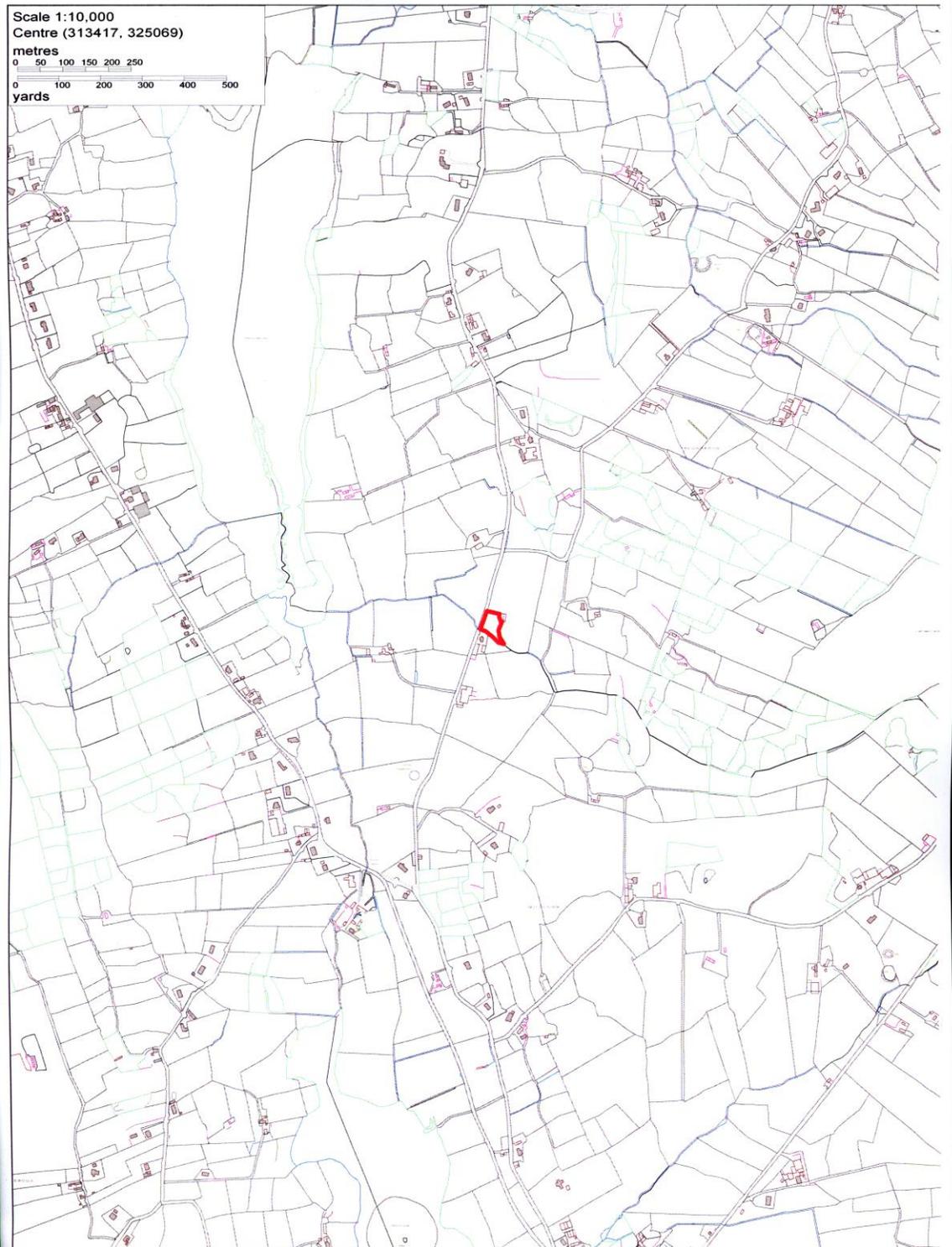


Fig. 2: Detailed map showing area of application sites (highlighted in red).



Fig.3: Application site (P/2009/0795/F)



Fig. 4: Application site (P/2009/0555/RM)



Plate 1: Application site P/2009/0795/F following the archaeological evaluation, looking west.



Plate 2: Application site P/2009/0555/RM following the archaeological evaluation, looking north-west.