



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 243

**60m NORTH OF 64 BALLYGROOBANY ROAD
BALLYNAHINCH
RICHHILL
COUNTY ARMAGH**

LICENCE NO.: AE/12/91E

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: site 60m north of 64 Ballygroobany Road, Ballynahinch, Richhill, Co. Armagh

Townland: Ballynahinch

SMR No. : ARM 013:010

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: H 9552 4620

County: Armagh

Excavation Licence No. : AE/12/91E

Planning Ref / No. : O/2010/0596/F

Dates of Monitoring: 6th August 2012

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site 60m north of 64 Ballygroobany Road, Richhill, Co. Armagh in response to a planning application for a new dwelling and garage. In the field adjacent to the application site are the remains of a rath (NISMR ARM 013:010). The evaluation consisted of four mechanically-excavated test trenches each 30.0m long and 1.7m wide. No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered during the course of the evaluation and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out, as the development does not pose a threat to significant archaeological remains.

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 1.6m wide and 30.0m long.

Current Land Use: Pastoral

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site for a proposed new dwelling and garage is located approximately 8km east of Armagh city and 2km south-east of Richhill (Figures 1 and 2). The site lies around 80m above sea level. There are a number of sites of archaeological interest in the surrounding area. An archaeological evaluation was requested due to the presence of a rath on the northern limits of the proposed development site. The rath, known as 'Hentley's Forth' is recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) as ARM 013:010 where it is described as a 'low, roughly circular platform raised c.0.6m above the surrounding ground level'. The rath is approximately 47m in diameter. The probable remains of its platform are visible in the northern portion of the field in which the evaluation took place (Plates 1 and 2). There may also be a ditch present in this area.

The application site consists of a rectangular field approximately 0.3 hectares in size (Plates 3 and 4). It is fenced off from the area of the rath on the northern side and bounded on all other sides by hawthorn hedges interspersed with mature trees. The entrance to the field is in the north-western corner. The application site slopes gently from west to east. It is mainly used for grazing although has been used for making hay in the past. The surrounding land use is predominantly pastoral.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for a new dwelling and garage and was requested by Kevin Maguire of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Historic Monuments Unit.

Excavation

The evaluation request allowed for the excavation of trial trenches, the exact size and location of which was to be decided by the licensed archaeologist (Figure 3). A total of four test trenches were excavated in the application area.

The trenches were 1.7m wide and 30m long. The trenches were all excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil which was encountered at a depth of around 0.3m.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned parallel with the southernmost field boundary and located 8.5m from it and 3.5m from the westernmost boundary. The trench was 1.7m wide and 30m long (Plates 5 and 6). The uppermost layer in Trench 1 was the sod and topsoil layer (C101) which consisted of grey brown silty clay which contained sub-rounded stones around 15mm long. The sod and topsoil layer was around 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (C101) was a cultivation soil (C102) which consisted of grey brown clay which was 0.2m thick and contained few inclusions. Underlying the cultivation soil was the natural boulder clay subsoil (C103) which was orange grey in colour. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.3m. There were no features of archaeological significance visible in the subsoil and no finds were retrieved during the excavation of Trench 1.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located 5m to the north of Trench 1 and ran parallel to it. The trench was 4m from the westernmost field boundary and 22m from the easternmost boundary. It was 1.7m wide and 30m long (Plates 7 and 8). The uppermost layer in Trench 2 consisted of the sod & topsoil layer (C201), a grey brown silty clay containing sub-rounded stones around 15mm in length. This layer was around 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (C201) was a cultivation layer (C202) which consisted of grey brown clay up to 0.2m thick. Below the cultivation layer (C202) was the natural subsoil (C203), an orange boulder clay with no archaeological features. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.3m. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during the excavation of Trench 2.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located 2.5m to the north of Trench 2 and 3.5m from the westernmost field boundary. The trench ran parallel to Trench 2 and was 1.7m wide and 30m long (Plates 9 and 10). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 3 (C301) consisted of grey brown silty clay which was up to 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer was a cultivation soil (C302) consisting of grey brown clay up to 0.25m thick. The layer contained 19th century pottery. The cultivation soil overlay the natural subsoil (C303) which consisted of orange grey boulder clay, the surface of which was encountered at a depth of 0.35-0.40m. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance recorded in Trench 3.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was positioned 6m to the north of Trench 3 and 4m from the westernmost field boundary. The trench was 1.7m wide and 30m long (Plates 11 and 12). The uppermost layer in Trench 4 consisted of the sod and topsoil layer (C401), a grey brown silty clay which was around 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer was a cultivation soil (C402) consisting of greyish brown clay which was 0.15m thick. The cultivation soil overlay the natural subsoil (C403) which consisted of orange boulder clay with gravelly patches. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance in Trench 4.

No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered within the four trenches excavated at the proposed development site, even those close to the bank of the rath. It is not thought that the proposed development will impinge on any unknown archaeological deposits and therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out. A short summary will be prepared for inclusion in the annual *'Excavations'* bulletin.

Archive:

Finds: N/A

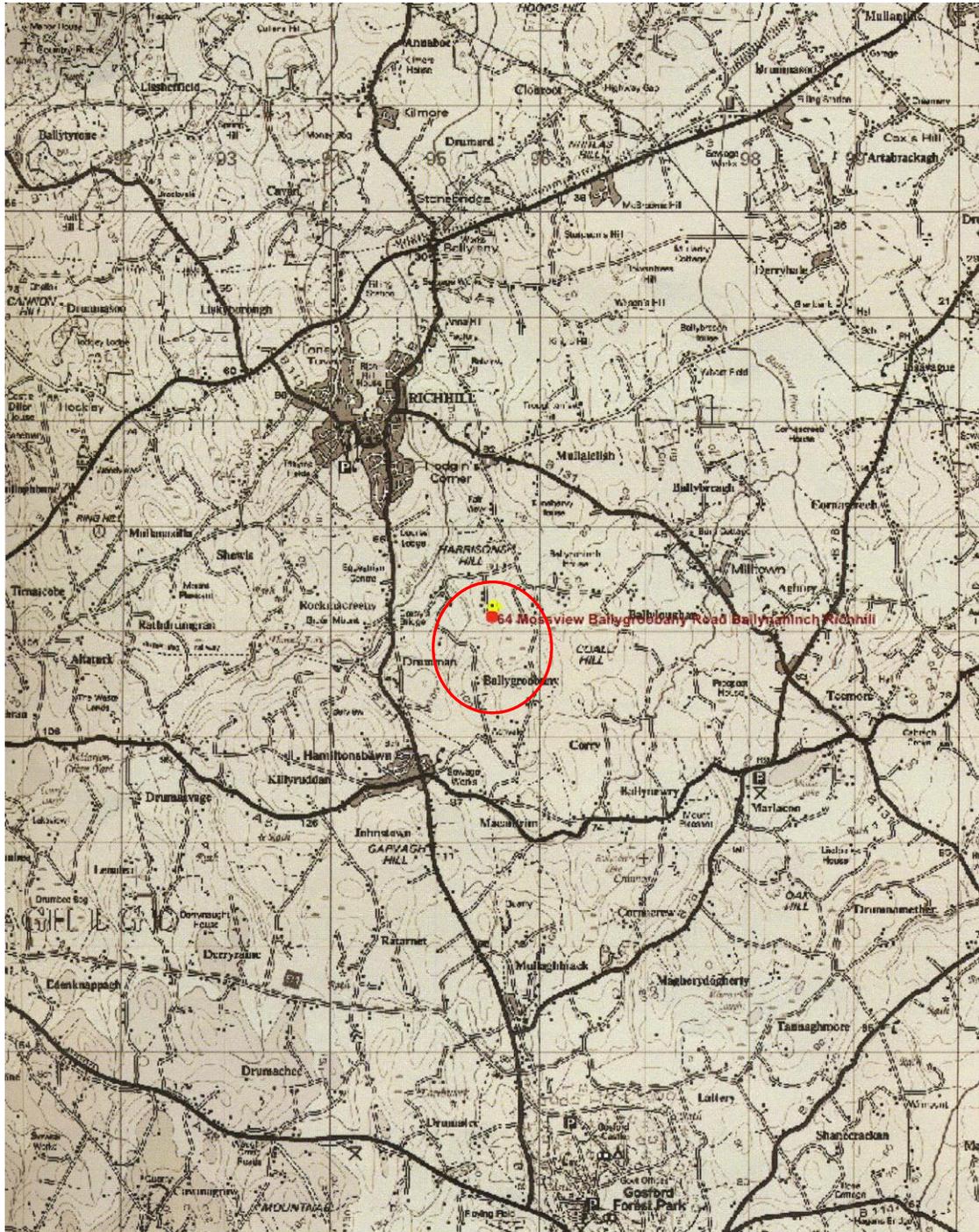
Photographs:

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: N/A

Signed: _____

Date: _____



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Scale 1:50000

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Figure 1: Map showing the location of the site (circled in red)

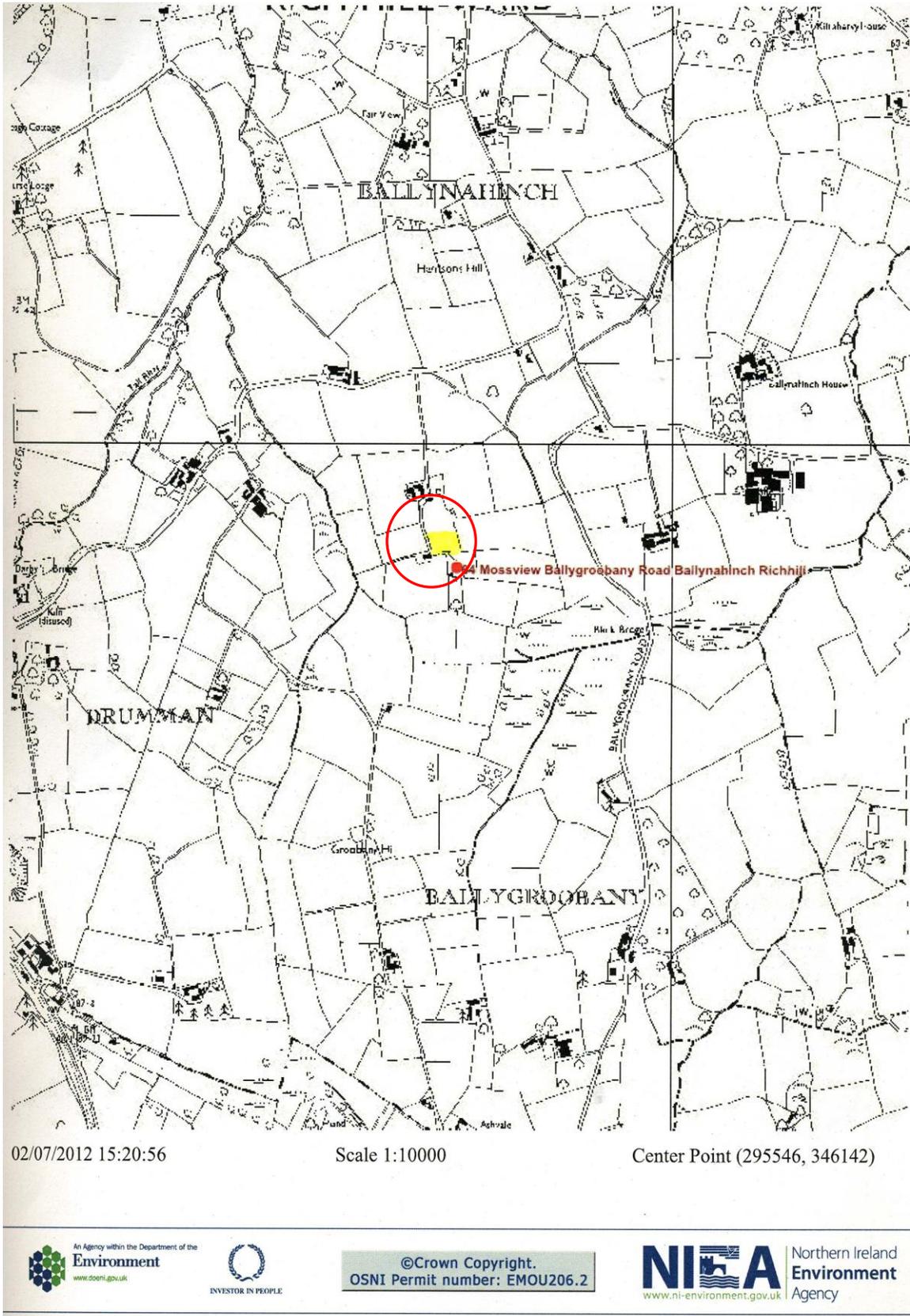


Figure 2: Detailed map showing the location of the site (circled in red)

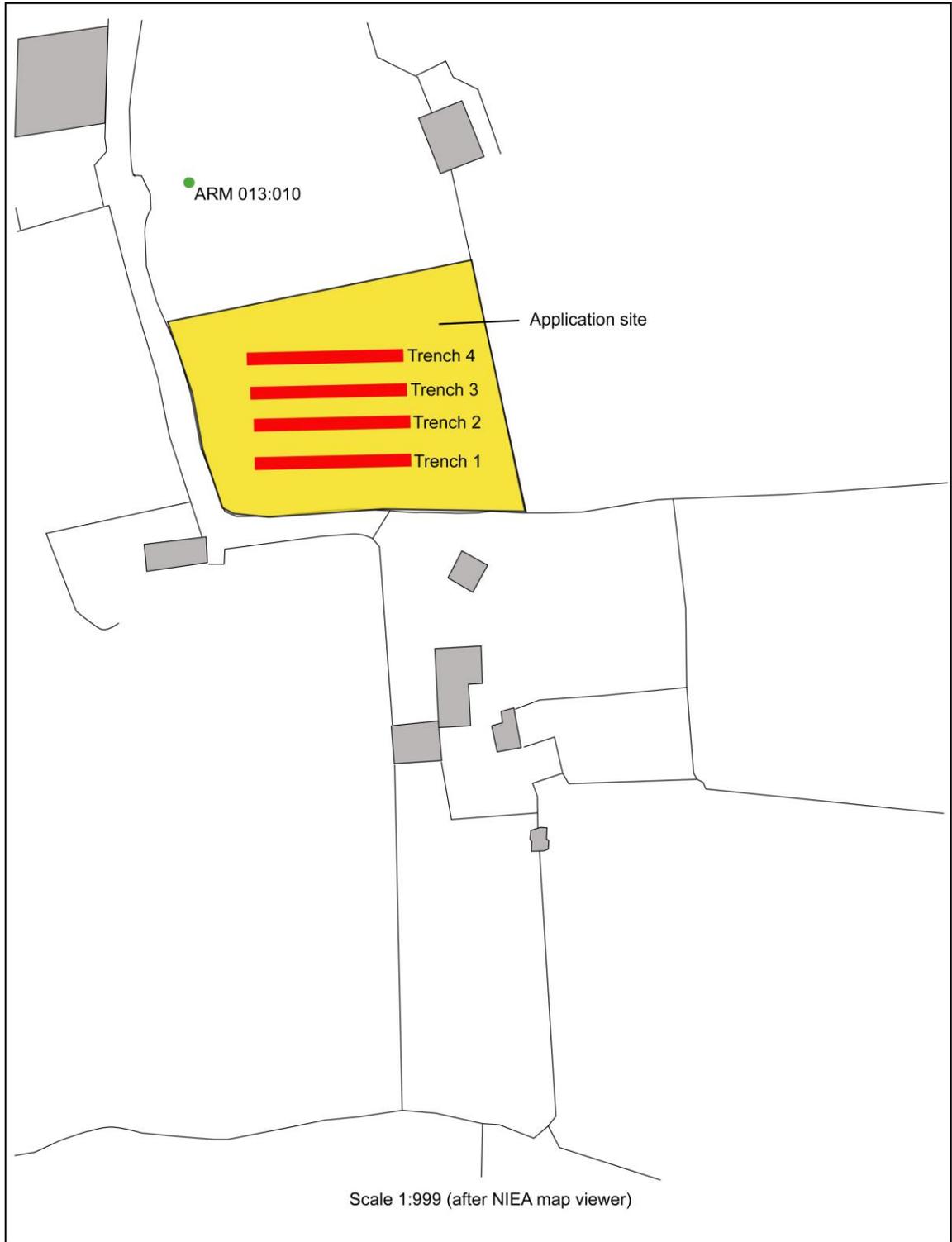


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of test trenches



Plate 1: The field in which the rath (ARM 013:010) is located, looking north



Plate 2: General view of site showing possible rath platform, looking north-east



Plate 3: General view of site, looking south



Plate 4: General view of site, looking west



Plate 5: Trench 1 following excavation to subsoil level, looking west



Plate 6: South-facing section of Trench 1, looking north



Plate 7: Trench 2 following excavation to subsoil level, looking east



Plate 8: North-facing section of Trench 2, looking south



Plate 9: Trench 3 following excavation to subsoil level, looking west



Plate 10: South-facing section of Trench 3, looking north



Plate 11: Trench 4 following excavation to subsoil level, looking west



Plate 12: South-facing section of Trench 4, looking north