



Monitoring Report No. 242

**Main Street
Ballykelly
Co.Derry**

AE/12/59E

B/2011/0092/O

BRIAN SLOAN

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Main Street Ballykelly, Co. Derry

Townland: Ballykelly

SMR No. : LDY 009:019

State Care Scheduled Other ✓ [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: 262355 422241

County: Derry

Excavation Licence No. : AE/12/59E

Planning Ref / No. : B/2011/0092/O

Dates of Monitoring: Thursday 24th May 2012

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

Three trenches were mechanically excavated to assess the presence and survival of archaeological strata at the proposed development site. The trenches were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil which consisted of a reddish orange sandy clay. Features of potential archaeological significance were encountered in Trenches One and Two, although Trench Three was archaeologically sterile.

Type of monitoring:

Mechanical excavation of three evaluative trenches

Size of area opened:

Three trenches measuring roughly 15m in length and 2m in width

Current Land Use:

Greenfield site

Intended Land Use:

Residential dwelling

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located at Main Street, Ballykelly, Co. Derry (Fig. 2). The site lies just on the outside of the current town, at a height of approximately 70m above sea level. The proposed development is located in the south-east corner of a roughly rectangular field close to the site of the seventeenth-century plantation settlement (LDY 009:019). The application site is bounded on all sides by a wire and post fence interspersed with a mature hedgerow, and is currently planted with a winter wheat crop.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling and was requested by Andrew Gault: Caseworker with Northern Ireland Environment Agency. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the plantation settlement (LDY 009:019) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this monument.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological supervision of three mechanically-excavated test trenches. The trenches averaged 15m in length by 2m in width and their positions are illustrated in Figure Three. All three test trenches were excavated to the subsoil which consisted of reddish orange sandy clay.

Trench One

Trench One measured 15m by 2m and was aligned approximately east/west. Trench One was excavated to the surface of the subsoil (Plate 1).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench One (Context No. 101) consisted of mid to dark brown, silty clay loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was around 0.2m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 101) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 102) which was 0.1m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

The cultivation soil in Trench One (Context No. 102) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 103). The subsoil in Trench One (Context No. 103) was reddish orange sandy clay with frequent inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m. Two features were observed cutting the natural subsoil. A small rounded pit (Context No. 104) (Plates 1, 2 and 3), Measuring 0.48m east/west by 0.32m north/south by 0.28m deep, was encountered approximately 3.5m from the western edge

of the trench. The fill of this feature (Context No. 103) produced abundant fragments of burnt bone and charcoal, although no artefacts were recovered. The burnt bone has been provisionally identified as animal (Emily Murray *pers comm.*). The age or function of this feature is unclear. However, the lack of *in situ* burning or scorching would suggest that this is a deposition of burnt material rather than representing evidence for a hearth. Approximately 2.5m to the east of this pit (Context No. 104) a linear feature was encountered.

The linear feature (Context No. 106 – Plate 4) was on average 1m in width and spanned the width of the trench. The feature was roughly aligned south-west/north-east, and was filled by a mid brown sandy loam (Context No. 105). This deposit (Context No. 105) contained frequent inclusions of small angular stones and gravel, as well as infrequent inclusions of charcoal flecks. Excavation of a thin cutting across the linear feature (Context No. 106) produced two sherds of glazed pottery of probable seventeenth century date (provisionally identified by Prof. Audrey Horning QUB). The profile of this feature (Context No. 106) would suggest that it represents a possible field boundary of post-medieval date. No other finds or features were encountered during the excavation of this trench.

Trench Two

Trench Two was positioned approximately 3m to the north of Trench One and was aligned east/west (Fig. 3). The trench was 18m long and 2m wide, and was excavated to the surface of the subsoil.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Two (Context No. 201) consisted of mid to dark brown, silty clay loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was around 0.2m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 202) which was 0.15m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

The cultivation soil in Trench Two (Context No. 202) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 203) (Plate 4). The subsoil in Trench Two (Context No. 203) was an orangey yellow gravelly clay with frequent inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.35m. A continuation of the linear feature (Context No. 204) encountered in Trench One (Context No. 106) was observed in this trench (Plate 5). A cutting into the fill of the feature (Context No 203 – Plate 6) produced a single sherd of glazed pottery of late medieval/seventeenth-century date (Audrey Horning *pers comm.*). No other finds or features of an archaeological nature were encountered during the excavation of this trench.

Trench Three

Trench Three was positioned approximately 2m to the north of, and parallel to, Trench Two and measured 20m in length by 2m in width (Fig. 3). The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil.

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Three (Context No. 301) consisted of mid brown, silty clay loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was approximately 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 301) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 302) which was 0.2m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

The cultivation soil in Trench Three (Context No. 302) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 303) (Plate 6). The subsoil in Trench Three (Context No. 303) was an reddish orange sandy clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Conclusions

The three evaluative test trenches excavated in the application area showed features of a potential archaeological nature are present. Given the proximity of the development site to the Plantation Period settlement (LDY 009:019), as well as the sherds of seventeenth century pottery (Plate 7) recovered from the linear feature encountered in Trenches One and Two, it is likely that this activity relates to peripheral agricultural activity on the fringes of this settlement. It is thought that should development proceed as it stands, then these features would be adversely affected. It is therefore recommended that further archaeological mitigation is carried out at the site to excavate and record the archaeological features, prior to their destruction through development. No publication of this work is merited, at this stage, save a short summary in the annual *Excavations Bulletin*.

Archive:

Finds: The finds recovered during the evaluative investigation are currently housed at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast BT7 1NN.

Photographs: The photographs taken during the evaluative investigation are currently archived at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast BT7 1NN

Plans / Drawings: No plans or drawings were generated during the evaluation.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

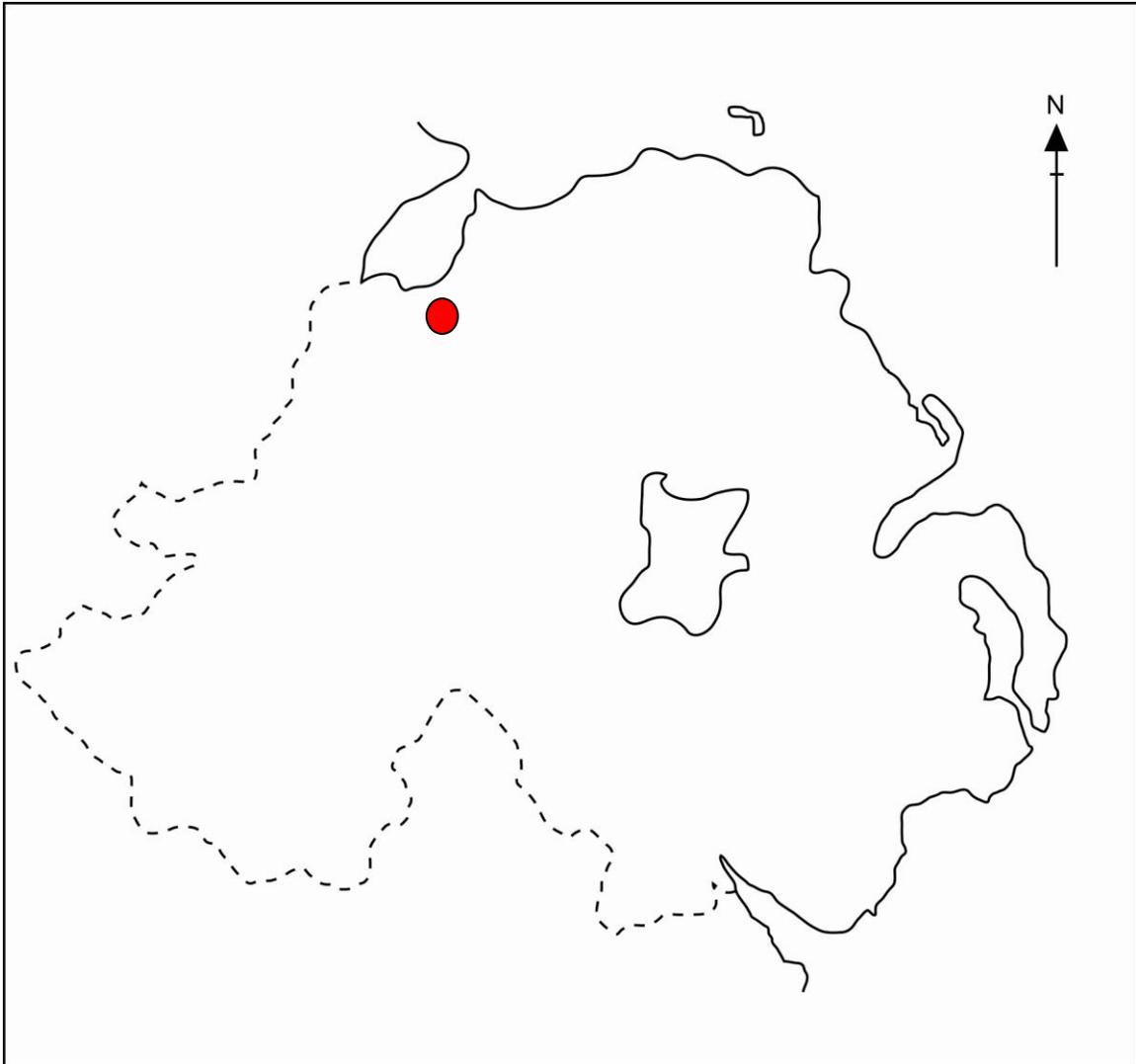


Figure One: Approximate location of Ballykelly, Co. Derry (red dot).

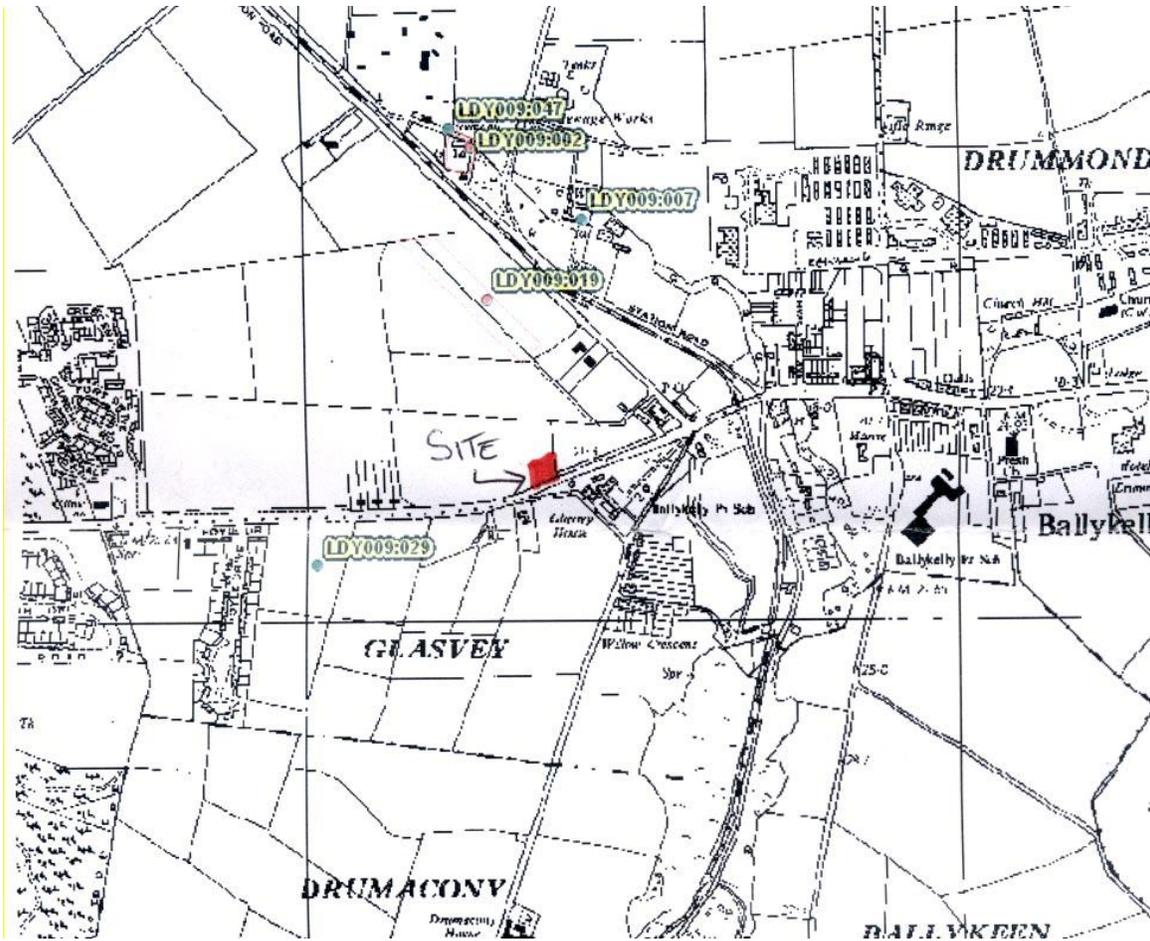


Figure Two: Detailed location map showing the proposed development site (in red) as well as the surrounding sites and monuments of archaeological and historical interest.

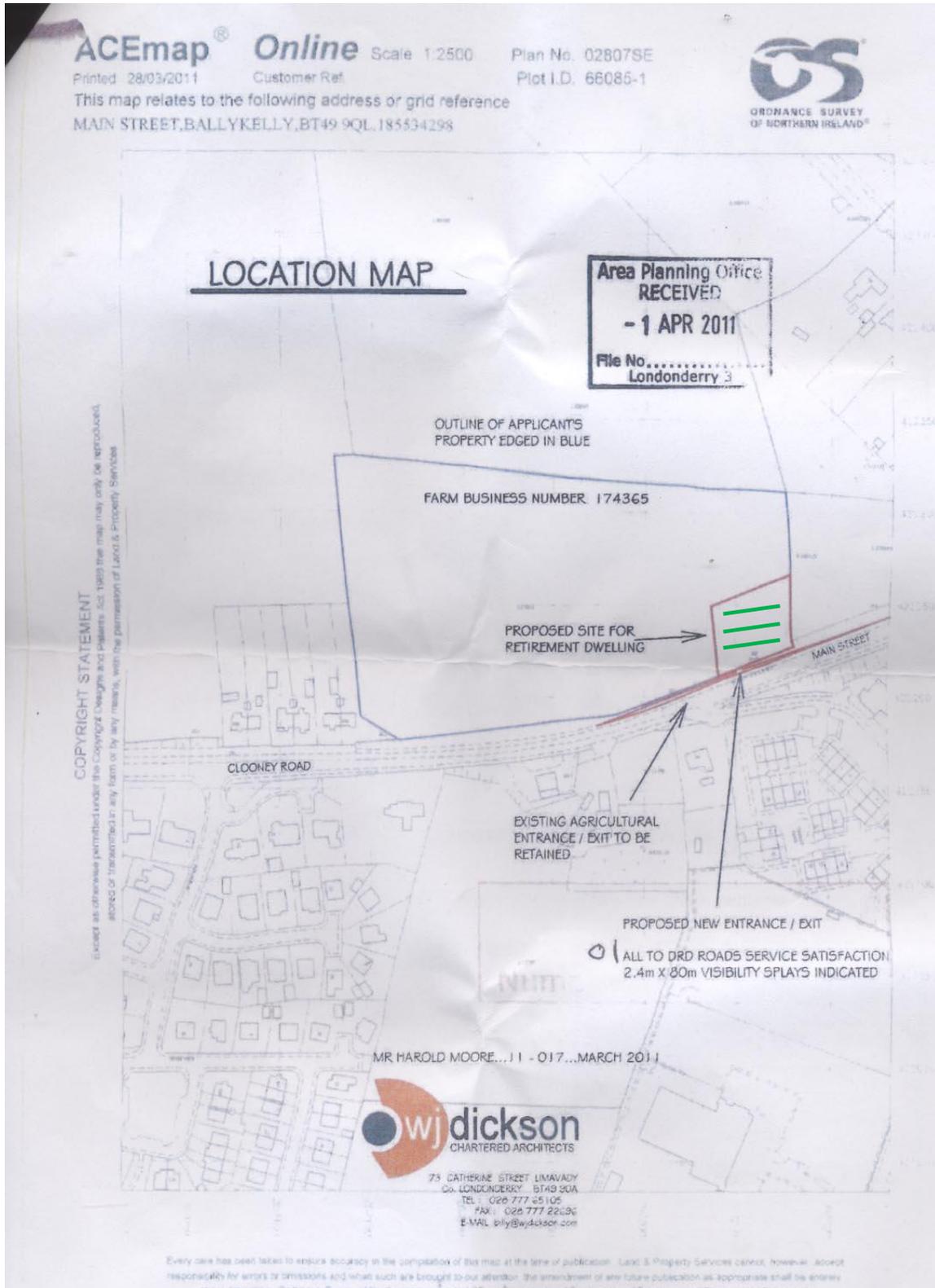
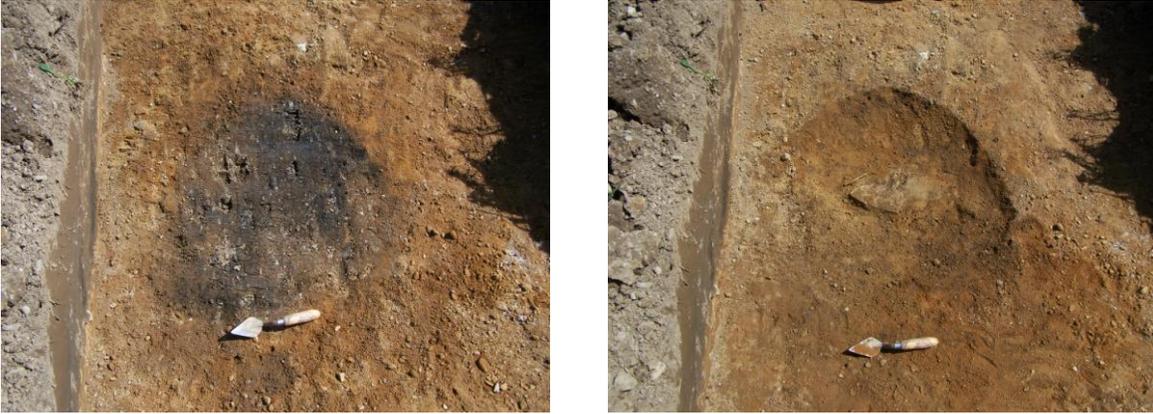


Figure Three: Architects plan provided by WJ Dickson. Shown is the approximate location of the evaluative test trenches (in green).



Plate One: Trench One looking east. The rounded pit feature (Context No. 104) is visible in the foreground of the picture.



Plates Two and Three: The rounded pit feature (Context No. 104) encountered in Trench One. The post-excitation photograph on the right illustrates the shallow nature of this feature. Looking east.



Plate Four: Linear feature (Context No. 106) encountered in Trench One, looking east.



Plate Five: Linear feature (Context No. 204) encountered in Trench Two, looking west. The feature is highlighted with a white dashed line.



Plate Six: Cutting excavated across the fill (Context No. 203) of the linear feature (Context No. 204) encountered in Trench Two, looking south-west.



Plate Seven: Sherds of possible seventeenth century pottery recovered from the fill of the linear feature (Context Nos. 106 and 204).