



Monitoring Report No. 183

**Nendrum,
Mahee Island,
Co. Down.**

AE/09/157

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Nendrum

Townland: Mahee Island

SMR No: Down 17:005

Grid Ref: Grid Ref. J5244 6363

County: Down

Excavation License No: AE/09/157

Dates of Monitoring: 21st to 24th September 2009

Archaeologist Present: Cormac McSparron, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, QUB.

Brief Summary: No archaeological artifacts or features uncovered during excavation of trench

Type of monitoring: Monitoring of mechanical excavation of trench for drainage pipe at Nendrum car park.

Size of area opened: 14m by 0.5m

Introduction

Due to regular flooding of the car park at Nendrum, Co. Down, from water seeping from a nearby ancient well, NIEA decided to excavate a drain between the car park and the nearby shore of Strangford Lough. The CAF was requested by NIEA to carry out monitoring of the excavation of the cut for this drain. The work was carried out over several days from 21st to 24th September 2009. No archaeological features or artifacts were uncovered during the excavations.

Location

The site of the excavation was the car park to the north west of the early Medieval monastic and later church site at Nendrum, Mahee Island, Co. Down (SMR No. DOW 17:005, Grid Ref. J5244 6363)(Figure 1 and 2). This car park is approximately 1m lower than the ground immediately to the south and west and it seems likely that this area was extensively landscaped in the past. The excavation trench extended across the modern road, to the shore of Strangford Lough.

Methodology

The excavations for this grating and the associated drain were conducted using a mechanical excavator. The excavation trench was 14m long, 0.50m wide and 0.50m deep. The trench was excavated in several sections. This was to allow traffic to bypass the open excavation and so avoid having to close the road through Mahee Island. As each section was dug, a length of pipe was laid in it and it was back-filled with gravel. The excavation was monitored by the licensed archaeologist.

Results

No archaeological features or artifacts were uncovered during the excavation. For the first 6m of the excavated trench orange clay subsoil was encountered immediately beneath the tarmac (Photo 1 and 2)however between 7 and 8m from the southwest of the trench the level of the subsoil began to fall off, possibly indicating the approximate position of the shore before the construction of the modern road. During the construction of the road the ground, from this point onwards, seems to have been levelled up by large quantities of stone (Photo 3). There was a dark humic material around these stones resulting from organic matter, possibly sea weed, being incorporated between them as the area was being in-filled. For the rest of the length of the trench the excavation did not penetrate to subsoil but simply dug into this stony fill material (Photo 4). There was no suggestion that this stony material was in any way archaeological.

Conclusions

The monitoring of the excavation of this drainage gully showed that no archaeological features were disturbed by its construction.

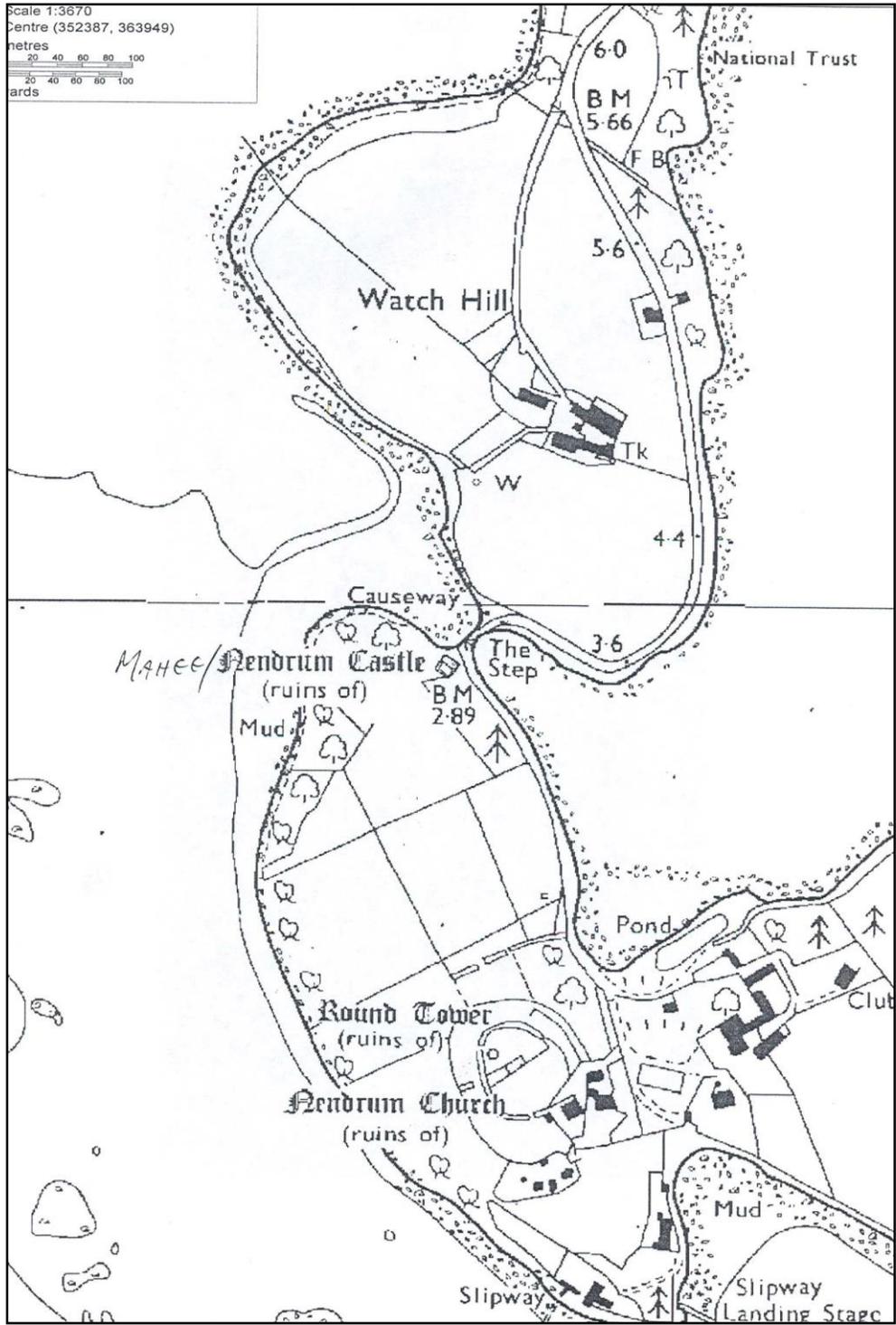


Figure 1: Location of Nendrum

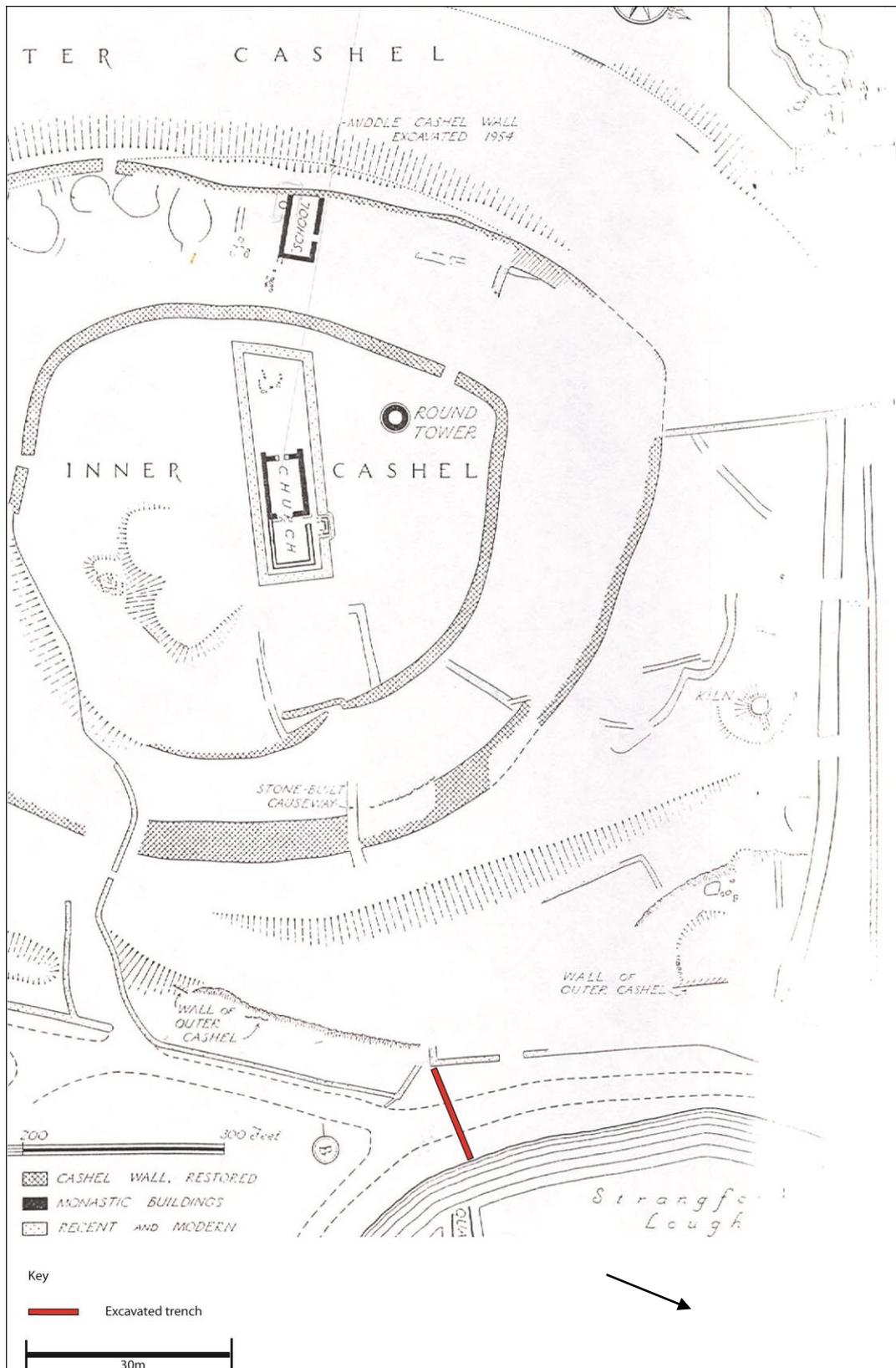


Figure 2: Location map showing position of excavated trench.



Photo 1: Excavation trench showing cut for grating and drainage gully showing orange brown clay subsoil beneath tarmac and gravel road surface



Photo 2: Continuation of cut for drain



Photo 3: Interface between subsoil and stone and humic fill, approximately 8 m from southwest end of trench



Photo 4: Final section of cut for drain extending to shoreline