



EVALUATION REPORT No. 268

St Patrick's Catholic Church,
Dungiven,
Co. Londonderry

Licence No.: AE/13/94E

Sapphire Mussen

Report Date: 28th June 2013

Site Specific Information

Site Name: St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Dungiven, County Londonderry

Site Location: Greenfield site adjacent to existing church graveyard

Townland: Dungiven

SMR No.: In the immediate vicinity of LDY 025:004

Irish Grid Ref.: Approximately C6947 0843

County: Londonderry

Excavation Licence No.: AE/13/94E

Dates of Evaluation: 9th May 2013

Archaeologists present: Sapphire Mussen and Dermot Redmond

Brief Summary:

Type of Evaluation: Mechanical excavation of four trenches

Size of area opened: Four trenches of varying length and approximately 1.8m width, total area approximately 0.0126 hectares

Current land use: Grazing pasture

Intended land use: Extension of existing graveyard

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on behalf of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on the 9th May 2013 at the site of a proposed extension to the graveyard of St. Patrick's Church in Dungiven, County Londonderry (Figure 1). The proposed site is currently used as grazing pasture for livestock (Plate 1) and is situated adjacent to, and south of, the already existing graveyard (Figure 2). Work was carried out in the western half of the site as the eastern half was evaluated at an earlier date (3rd May 2012). Trenches were located in order to test anomalies detected in a geophysical survey conducted in 2012 (Figure 3). The evaluation revealed a number of features, most of which provide evidence of successive phases of cultivation. A number of potential post-holes were revealed although definition is uncertain due to the extent of rabbit burrowing and root activity at the site (Figures 4-5). All artefacts uncovered dated to the 19th century and later.

Archaeological Background

There is one known archaeological site within the *immediate* vicinity of the graveyard extension. Just outside the field boundary at the north east corner there is a standing stone erected upon a low mound (LDY 025:004), which has been subjected to antiquarian excavations in the 19th century and a modern excavation in 1975 by A.D. Bratt of the then Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch of the Department of the Environment. The modern excavation suggested that the stone had been erected on a natural rise which had been enhanced by the building up of the surrounding ground with turves and enclosure by a ditch.

At a greater distance from the site are a number of other monuments. A holy well, Toberpatrick (LDY 025:008) is located approximately 300m northwest of the site. The location of the later Medieval settlement at Dungiven (LDY 025:021) is uncertain but from the Ordnance Survey Memoirs it seems likely to be located at most, 1-200m south west of the current site. The ruins of a 17th century mill (LDY 030:048) are preserved at a bend in the River Roe approximately 400m southwest of the graveyard site. Somewhat closer is Dungiven Priory, at approximately 300m

southwest. A large rath(LDY 031:014) is recorded on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps about 300m southeast of the site but no trace now remains and a single urn burial (LDY 031:016) was found 400m southeast of the site during building work in the 1950's.

As a preliminary to the evaluations, an earth resistance survey of the proposed graveyard extension was carried out in April 2012. A series of high and low resistance anomalies were detected; those deemed to be of archaeological potential were targeted in the placement of evaluation trenches across the site. An evaluation was previously carried out at the eastern half of the site in May 2012 (CAF Monitoring Report No. 263; AE/10/48), during which, five evaluation trenches were excavated. Aside from modern debris, no archaeological features were uncovered. The geophysical survey results and 2012 and 2013 trenches are shown in Figure 3.

Account of the 2013 evaluation

Trench 1

Trench 1 (Plate 2) ran 20m northeast to southwest with a width of approximately 1.8m, crossing a vague curvilinear anomaly detected in the geophysical survey. The sod layer was fairly uniform across the site with a maximum thickness of 0.12m. Removal of the sod revealed a gravelly layer containing glass, ceramics and other small debris, likely to have been washed down through the sod layer over time. This layer was found in all trenches and had a maximum thickness of 0.04m. This gravelly sub-sod layer was found to be overlying a thick deposit of cultivation soil which varied in depth across the site. Within trench 1 its maximum thickness was 0.30m and it contained ceramics, glass and iron from farm machinery. This layer was directly overlying the mottled orange fine sandy subsoil of the site. The subsoil in trench 1 was sterile and contained no cut features or deposits and was encountered at a depth of 0.45-0.55m. It is likely that the remains of cultivation furrows found in the latter three trenches extend to this area of the site but were completely missed by the cutting of this trench as they run along the same linear alignment.

Trench 2

Trench 2 (Plate 3) ran 20m northeast to southwest at the southernmost corner of the site. It measured approximately 1.8m in width and crossed a high resistance anomaly detected by geophysical survey. The sod layer and sub-sod gravelly layer were consistent with trench 1 and were overlying the same thick deposit of cultivation soil. Further fragments of ironwork, glass and ceramics were retrieved from this layer. Subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.45-0.55m and into it a number of linear features running northeast to southwest along the line of the trench were cut. Upon investigation these were found to be shallow and void of artefacts material, most likely the remaining evidence of spade and plough cultivation. No further finds or features were detected.

Trench 3

Trench 3 (Plate 4) ran for 10m northeast to southwest with a width of approximately 1.8m and was situated across a high resistance anomaly along the western edge of the site. Excavation revealed sod, sub-sod, and cultivation layers consistent with those found in trenches 1 and 2. Artefacts retrieved from these layers comprised of brick, glass, ceramics and aluminium. Subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.45-0.55m. A number of circular, linear and amorphous features appeared to be cut into the subsoil. C304 (Plate 6) was a linear feature measuring 0.60m width and cutting across one end of the trench in a northwest to southeast direction. There was no clearly defined base to this 'cut' and the fill (C305) was mottled grey-orange sand, very similar to the subsoil and containing no artefacts or charcoal. The appearance of this 'feature' is most likely due to a natural variation in the subsoil.

C306 (Plate 7) was of ovoid shape and filled with loose grey –orange sandy silt, similar to C305. Investigation revealed it to have an irregular base and sides and void of artefact material. This may again be a natural discoloration of the subsoil or due to animal burrowing or root activity at this area of the site.

Cuts 308, 310, 312 (Plate 5) and 314 (Plate 10) were circular features with diameters of 0.15-0.18m and depths of 0.12, 0.18, 0.25 and 0.07m respectively respectively. C308 was filled with compact, dark grey-brown silt, with charcoal and root inclusions and a single fragment of burnt bone. The fills of 310, 312 and 314 were of loose, grey-brown gravelly silt with flecks of charcoal and no artefact material. The features appeared to be steep sided with almost flat bases, aside from C314, which had a tapered base. A spread of light grey-brown sand was observed around 310 and 312. Whilst the regularity of these features may be suggestive of post-holes or structural remains it is not improbable that they are present due to animal or root activity in the area.

C316 (Plate 11) appeared to be a linear feature running in a northeast to southwest direction and truncated by the edge of the trench. Investigation found it to be irregular in form with a maximum depth of 0.08m and filled with loose grey-brown loam mottled with orange-grey sand. Two ceramic fragments were uncovered from this fill. It is likely that this feature represents a field cultivation furrow which has been disturbed by animal burrowing or root activity.

C318 (Plate 12) was irregular in form and filled with loose, mottled grey-brown and orange sandy silt and void of artefact material; most likely the remains of an animal burrow.

C320 (Plate 13) was vaguely circular in plan and filled with mottled grey-brown and orange sandy silt, possibly the result of natural variation in the subsoil of the site.

Trench 4

Trench 4 (Plate 15) measured approximately 1.8m in width and ran for 20m in a west-northwest to east-southeast direction. Sod, sub-sod, and cultivation layers were all found to be consistent with that of the previous three trenches and removed. The layer of cultivation soil within this trench was thicker than in the others, ranging from a depth of 0.30m to 0.55m. Ceramics, glass, brick, iron and aluminium debris was uncovered, similar to the previous trenches. A large boulder with rusted wire wound around it was uncovered at a depth of approximately 0.6m in the eastern end of the trench.

Subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.45-0.70m. A number of linear features were observed, cut into the subsoil and all cutting across the trench in the same northeast to southwest alignment. These ranged in width from 0.29 to 0.76m and in depth from 0.04 to 0.15m. All were fairly flat-based with short sloping sides and filled with grey-brown loam. Some charcoal flecking was observed in the fills of features 406, 410 and 412 (Plates 17-19) but no artefact material was retrieved.

C416 (Plate 22) was a sub-circular feature filled with loose, grey-brown loam (C417). This was flecked with charcoal and contained one fragment of clay pipe stem. The feature had an irregular base and was cut directly into the subsoil. Its shape, size and position beneath the boulder which was removed from the trench would indicate that it is simply a stone-hole which became partially backfilled when the boulder was previously disturbed by field cultivation activity.

Conclusions

Excavation of the four trenches has revealed an extensive amount of animal burrowing, root activity and evidence of plough or spade cultivation. The features discovered within trench 3 may potentially represent post-holes but a lack of artefact material, charcoal, associated features and other evidence suggests that they may also be the remains of disused animal burrows. Where a trench crossed an earth resistance anomaly as detected in the geophysical survey, no corresponding features were found upon excavation, which may indicate that the anomalies detected during the course of the survey are for the most part imaging the background geological conditions at the site. All artefact material from the site was of 19th century and later in date. It is not thought that the extension of the graveyard will impact on previously unrecognised and unrecorded archaeological remains and therefore not recommended that further evaluation work is carried out at the site. However the western corner of the site (which forms the base of slope from the nearby barrow) may merit some surveillance and further investigation. This is also the area in which the

potential post-holes were sited. A short summary of this report will be included in the Excavations Bulletin, no further publication is merited.

References

Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Sites and Monuments Records; LDY 025:004; LDY 025:008; LDY 025:021; LDY 030:048; LDY 031:014; LDY 031:016

Maps obtained from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Land and Property Services, 2006;
<http://maps.ehsni.gov.uk/MapView>

Archive

Digital images and site drawings from the evaluation are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.



Figure 1: Map showing location of evaluation site, Dungiven, Co. Londonderry (NIEA, LPS, 2006)

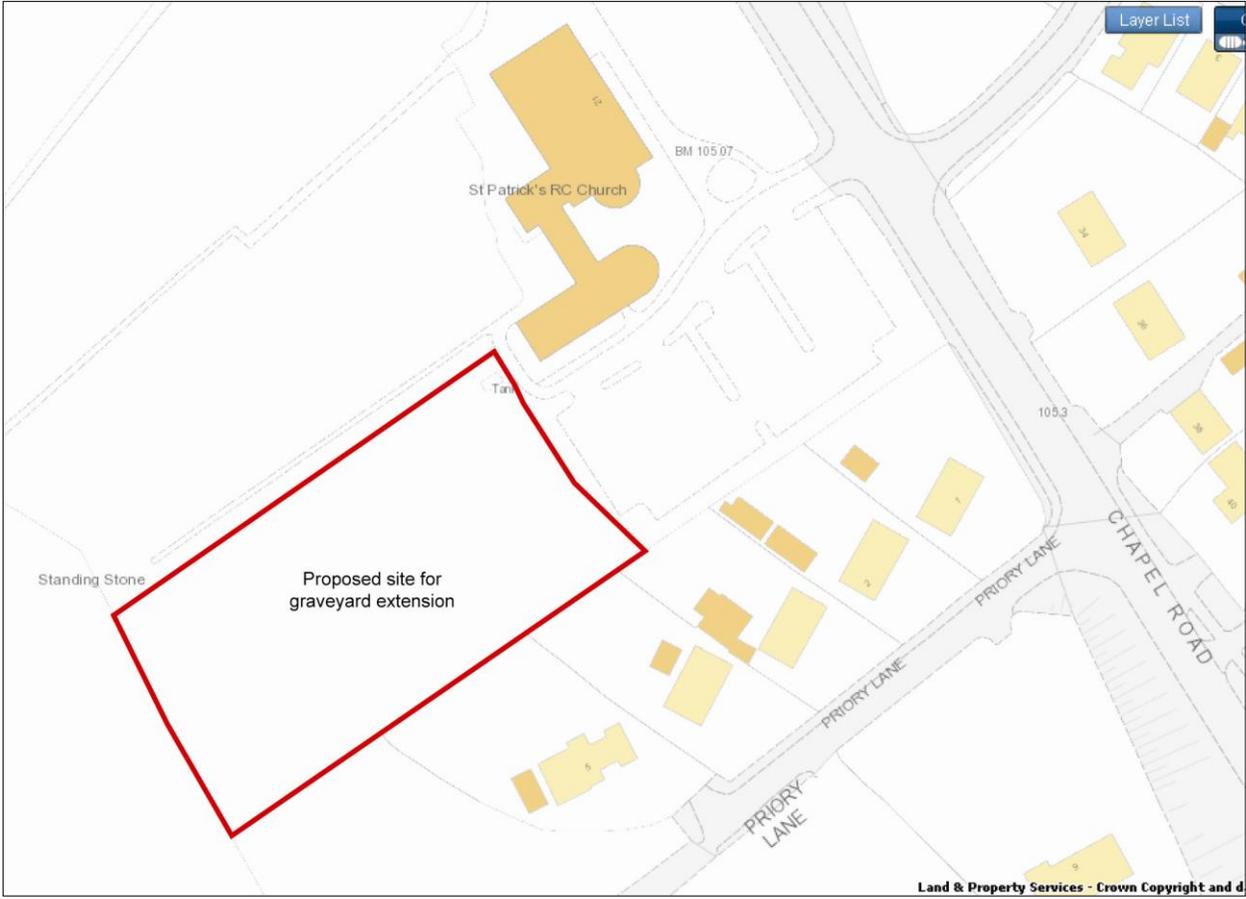


Figure 2: Location of the proposed extension to St Patrick's Church graveyard, Dungiven

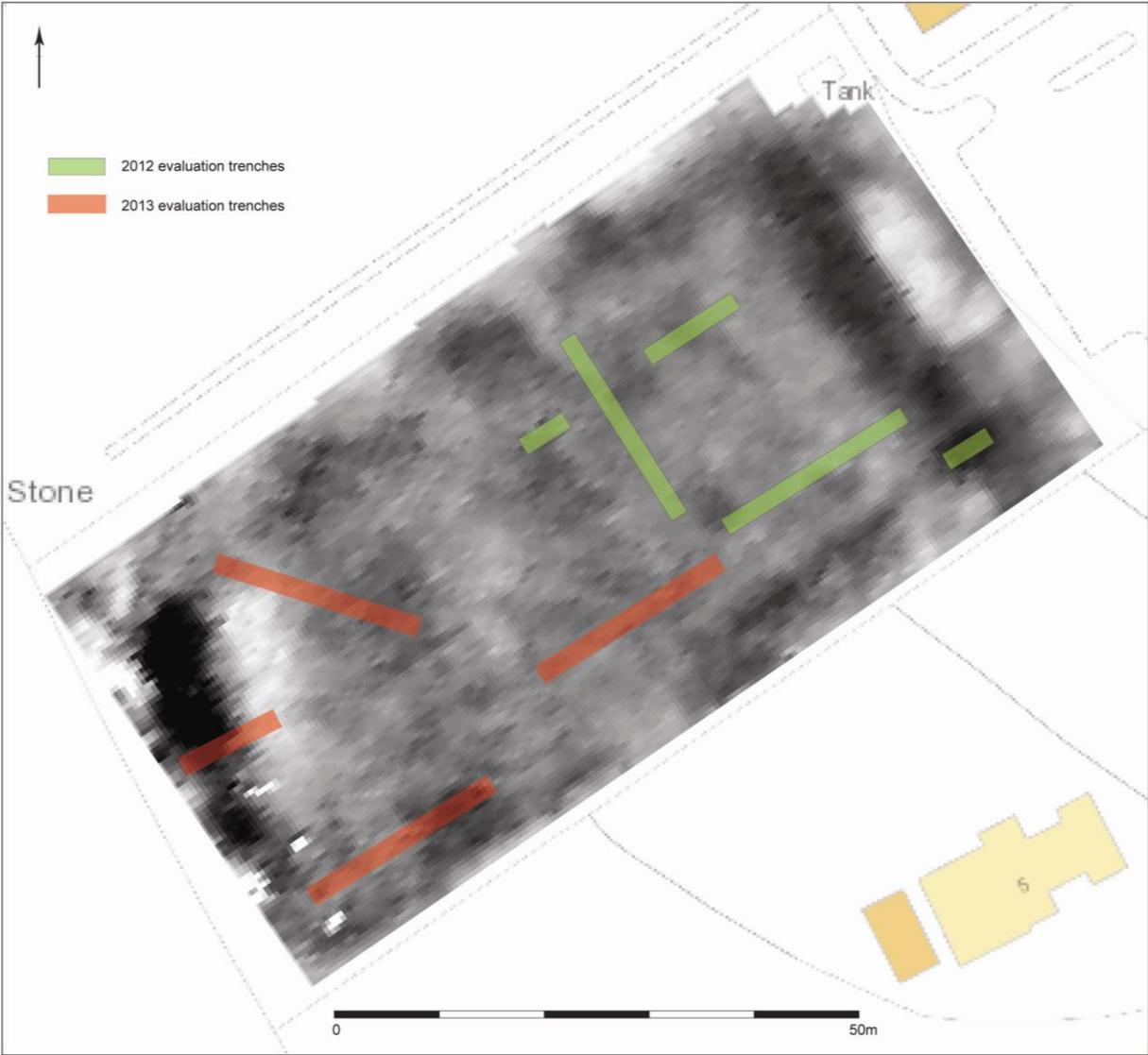
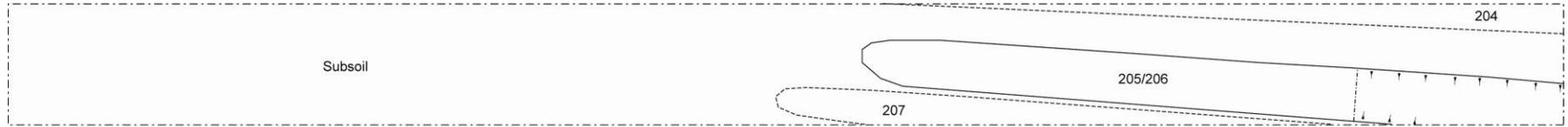
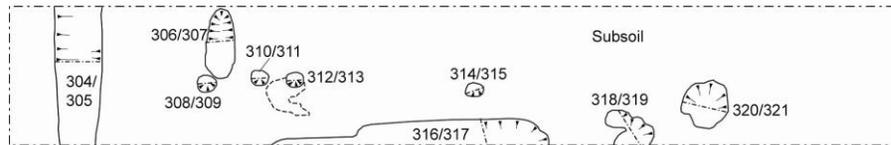


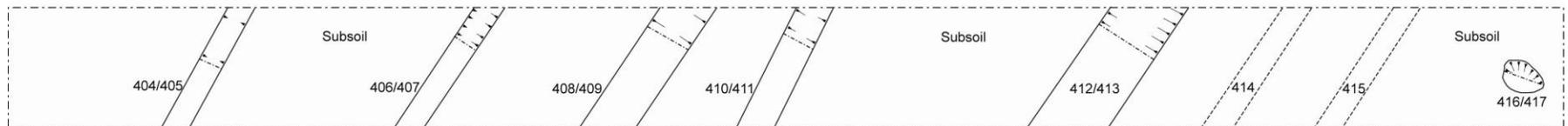
Figure 3: 2012 Geophysical Survey results with 2012 (green) and 2013 (red) evaluation trenches



Trench 2 plan, post-investigation of features



Trench 3 plan, post-investigation of features



Trench 4 plan, post-investigation of features

Figure 4: Post-excavation plans of Trenches 2, 3 & 4

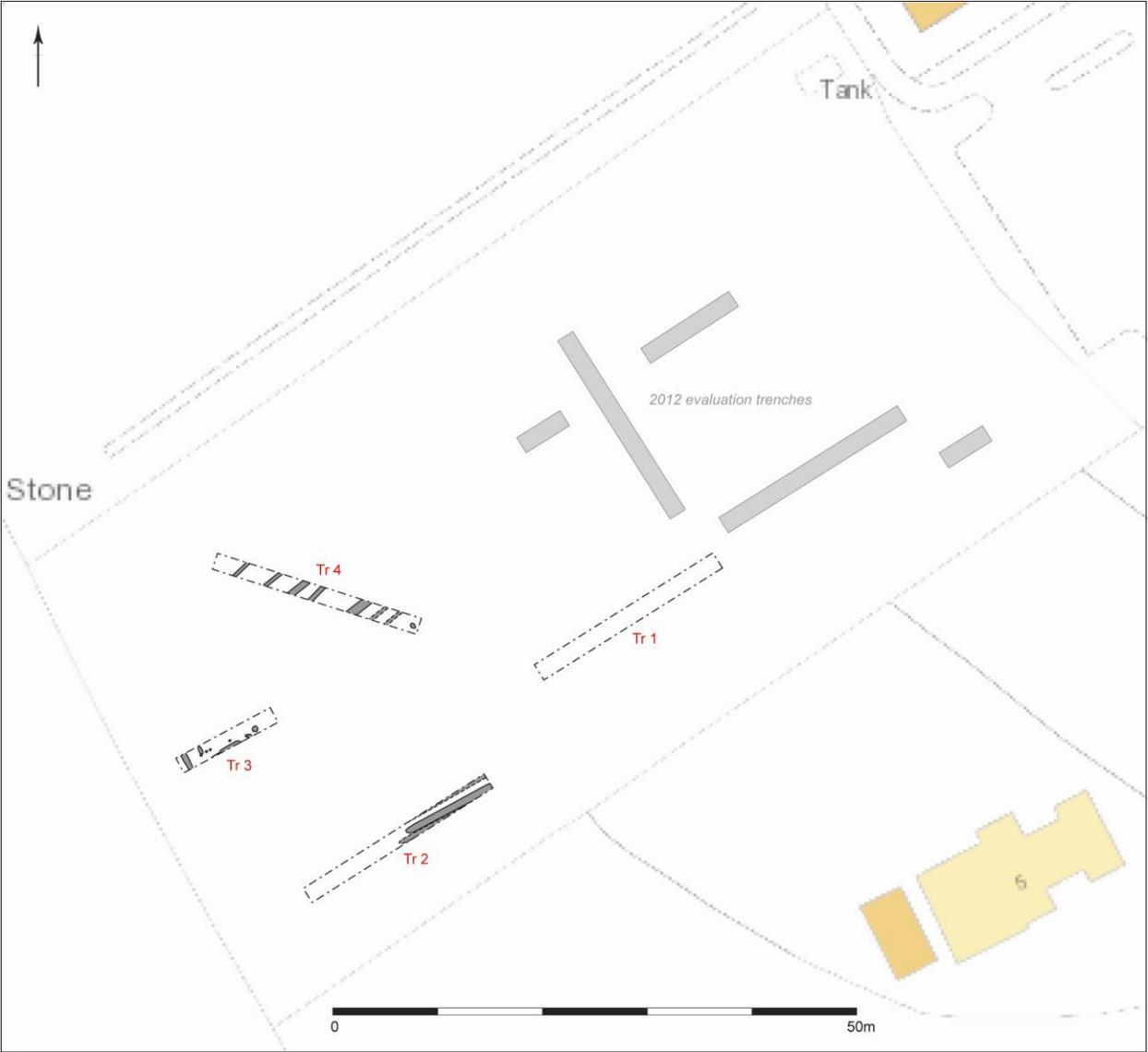


Figure 5: Location of excavated features in relation to each other and site boundaries



Plate 1: Evaluation area prior to excavation, looking southwest



Plate 2: Trench 1 post excavation, looking northeast



Plate 3: Trench 2, post-excavation, looking southwest, half-excavated feature 205/206 visible in foreground



Plate 4: Trench 3, general view looking northeast



Plate 5: Potential post-holes in Trench 3 (features 308, 310, 312)



Plate 6: Northwest facing section through feature 304



Plate 7: Northwest facing section through feature 306



Plate 8: Southeast facing section through features 306, 308



Plate 9: Southeast facing section through features 310, 312



Plate 10: Southeast facing section through feature 314



Plate 11: Northeast facing section through feature 316



Plate 12: Northeast facing section through feature 318



Plate 13: North facing section through feature 320



Plate 14: General view of trench 4, looking East



Plate 15: General view of trench 4, looking west, post-excitation
of subsoil-cut features



Plate 16: Northeast facing section through feature 404



Plate 17: Northeast facing section through feature 406



Plate 18: Northeast facing section through feature 408



Plate 19: Northeast facing section through feature 410



Plate 20: Overhead view of half-sectioned feature 412



Plate 21: Northeast facing section through feature 412



Plate 22: Overhead view of half-sectioned feature 416



Plate 23: Northeast facing section through feature 416



Plate 24: The large boulder with rusted wire found in trench 4

Appendix:

Context register and associated artefact material

Context Number	Type	Description	Contained	Width/ Diameter (m)	Depth/ Thickness(m)
101	Layer	Grass sod	--	--	0.12
102	Layer	Grey-brown, gravelly, sub-sod	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, plastic, coal, charcoal	--	0.04
103	Layer	Topsoil/Cultivation soil, grey-brown loam	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, charcoal	--	0.29-0.30
104	Natural	Mottled grey and orange sandy silt	--	--	--
201	Layer	Grass sod	--	--	0.12
202	Layer	Grey-brown, gravelly, sub-sod	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, plastic, coal, charcoal	--	0.04
203	Layer	Topsoil/Cultivation soil, grey-brown loam	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, charcoal	--	0.30-0.55
204	Cut/Fill	Ephemeral; linear cultivation furrow filled with grey-brown loam	Unexcavated	--	--
205	Cut	Linear, flat bottomed, spade cultivation furrow	--	0.30	0.08
206	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C205	None	--	--
207	Cut/Fill	Ephemeral; linear cultivation furrow filled with grey-brown loam	Unexcavated	--	--
208	Natural	Mottled grey and orange sandy silt	--	--	--
301	Layer	Grass-sod	--	--	0.12
302	Layer	Grey-brown, gravelly, sub-sod	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, plastic, coal charcoal	--	0.04
303	Layer	Topsoil/Cultivation soil, grey-brown loam	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, charcoal	--	0.30-0.40
304	Natural	Ephemeral, natural variation in subsoil of site	--	--	--
305	Natural	'Fill' of 304, grey-orange sand, natural subsoil variation	--	--	--
306	Cut	Semi-linear, indefinable edges/base, possible disused animal burrow	--	0.29-0.70	0.18
307	Fill	Mottled grey-orange sand, fill of C306, possible variation in subsoil	None	--	--
308	Cut	Circular, steep sided, possible post-hole/disturbed burrow	--	0.18	0.12

309	Fill	Compact, dark grey-brown silt fill of C308	Burnt bone, charcoal	--	--
310	Cut	Circular steep sided, possible post-hole/disturbed burrow	--	0.18	0.18
311	Fill	Grey-brown gravelly silt, fill of C310	charcoal	--	--
312	Cut	Circular, steep sided, possible post-hole/disturbed burrow	--	0.18	0.25
313	Fill	Grey-brown gravelly silt, fill of C312	charcoal	--	--
314	Cut	Circular, steep-sided, possible post-hole/disturbed burrow	--	0.17	0.07
315	Fill	Mottled grey-brown and orange silt fill of C314	charcoal	--	--
316	Cut	Semi-linear, truncated cultivation furrow with animal disturbance	--	--	0.08
317	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C316	Ceramic, charcoal	--	--
318	Cut	Amorphous, uneven base and plan, remains of disused animal burrow	--	0.40	0.10
319	Fill	Mottled grey-brown and orange silt fill of C318	None	--	--
320	Cut	Sub-circular, uneven base, remains of disused burrow/natural phenomenon	--	0.40-0.50	0.13
321	Fill	Mottled grey-brown and orange silt fill of C320, possible variation in natural subsoil of the site	None	--	--
322	Natural	Mottled grey and orange sandy silt	--	--	--
401	Layer	Grass-sod	--	--	0.12
402	Layer	Grey-brown, gravelly, sub-sod	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, plastic, coal, charcoal	--	0.04
403	Layer	Topsoil/Cultivation soil, grey-brown loam	Glass, ceramics, brick, aluminium, iron, charcoal	--	0.30-0.55
404	Cut	Linear, shallow, flat-based, probable remnant of spade cultivation	--	0.36	0.04
405	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C404	None	--	--
406	Cut	Linear, shallow, steep-sided, flat-based, probable remnant of spade cultivation	--	0.29	0.09

407	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C406	Charcoal	--	--
408	Cut	Linear, wide, very shallow, flat-based, probable remnant of spade cultivation	--	0.47	0.02
409	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C408	--	--	--
410	Cut	Linear, very shallow, flat-based, probable remnant of spade cultivation	--	0.48	0.04
411	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C410	Charcoal	--	--
412	Cut	Linear, very wide and shallow, steep-sided, flat-based, probable remnant of spade cultivation	--	0.76	0.13
413	Fill	Grey-brown loam fill of C412	Charcoal	--	--
414	Cut/Fill	Ephemeral; linear cultivation furrow filled with grey-brown loam	Unexcavated	--	--
415	Cut/Fill	Ephemeral; linear cultivation furrow filled with grey-brown loam	Unexcavated	--	--
416	Cut	Sub-circular, irregular sides and base, probable stone hole	--	0.45-0.58	0.15
417	Fill	Grey-brown loose loam fill of C416	Clay pipe stem, charcoal	--	--
418	Natural	Mottled grey and orange sandy silt	--	--	--