



Monitoring Report No. 81

**Site to the rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street
Kilkeel
County Down**

AE/07/111

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Address: Site to the rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street

Townland: Kilkeel

SMR No.: DOW 056:026

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: J 3070 1456

County: Down

Excavation Licence No: AE/07/111

Planning Ref / No.: P/2006/2157/RM

Date of Monitoring: 20th June 2007

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

The supervision of the mechanical excavation of the topsoil was carried out at an application site to the rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street, Kilkeel, Co. Down. The site lies approximately 50m west of a medieval church and graveyard (DOW 056:026), reputedly dating to the fifteenth century (NISMR). This church is located on a disused rath, and to the west of the church are the remains of a small granite cross. This evaluation was prompted by the presence of the application site to this church site.

During the monitoring of topsoil stripping, it became clear that the site had been used as a dumping ground for building materials. Consultation with the landowner, Mr. Raymond Campbell, confirmed that the previous owner had stripped the topsoil from the site and had dumped building materials (presumably associated with the construction of other buildings in this area of Bridge Street). This, in conjunction with heavy plant machinery driving over the site resulted in the surface of the subsoil becoming severely truncated. Nothing of

archaeological significance was encountered in the evaluation and it is recommended that no further archaeological programme of works is carried out at the application site.

Type of monitoring:

Topsoil stripping by mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Current Land Use: green area to rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street, Kilkeel.

Intended Land Use: Construction of three residential dwellings

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located to the rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street, Killeel, County Down (Fig. One). The site is in the centre of the town of Killeel, at a height of approximately 30m above sea level. The site lies approximately 50m west of a medieval church and graveyard (DOW 056:026) (Fig. Two), which is dated to the fifteenth Century (NISMR). The medieval church was constructed on a disused rath, and to the west of the church are the remains of a small granite cross. The site is bounded along its western side by the Little Killeel River and on the north, east and southern limits by dwellings. The surrounding landscape consists of a substantially developed town, with both pastoral and arable land interspersed with dwelling houses, further afield. The work was undertaken on behalf of the landowner, Mr Raymond Campbell, in accordance with Conditions 4 and 5 of the Outline Planning Permission.

Excavation

The area monitored consisted of a roughly rectangular piece of ground to the rear of Nos. 1 and 3 Bridge Street, Killeel, Co. Down. Consultation with the landowner before the programme of works was implemented, indicated that the site had been topsoil stripped prior to his purchase of the plot, and that it had then been utilised as a dumping ground for building materials and other items of rubbish (Raymond Campbell *pers. comm.*) (Plates One and Two). Although the application site had become overgrown with weeds since Mr. Campbell purchased it, it was evident that they were growing through a mixed deposit of tarmac, angular stones, metal, plastic and mortar/brick, suggesting that the original view that the site had already been topsoil stripped was correct. The mixed rubble deposit was excavated to the severely truncated surface of the natural subsoil, which consisted of a orange yellow gritty sand clay, and was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

The area topsoil stripped measured approximately 12m (north/south) by 14m (east/west) and was undertaken mechanically. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in the monitoring exercise, with the mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101) lying directly on the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 102) (Plate Five). The mixed rubble deposit

(Context No. 101) consisted of small to large angular and sub-angular stones and rocks (average size: 200mm x 150mm x 180mm) (Plate Three), whole bricks and brick fragments, bottle glass, plastic, metal and discrete spreads of mortar. This deposit (Context No. 101) lay directly on the surface of the subsoil and it was evident no other stratigraphic relationships were present on site. The mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101) was generally homogenous and was on average 0.3m deep.

The mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101) directly overlay the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 102). The natural subsoil (Context No. 102) consisted of a orange yellow gritty sand clay (Plate Four). Following the dumping of the mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101), heavy plant machinery was driven over the site, pushing the larger elements of the rubble deposit into the surface of the subsoil. The result of this process was a severely truncated subsoil surface, and is likely to have destroyed any archaeological features that may have been present in the application area.

No finds or features were observed following the stripping of the mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101). It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out at the development site. No publication is required, apart from a short summary in the annual bulletin of excavations.

Archive:

Finds: n/a

Photographs: Held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: n/a

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Fig One: Map of Kilkeel and location of application site (green dot)

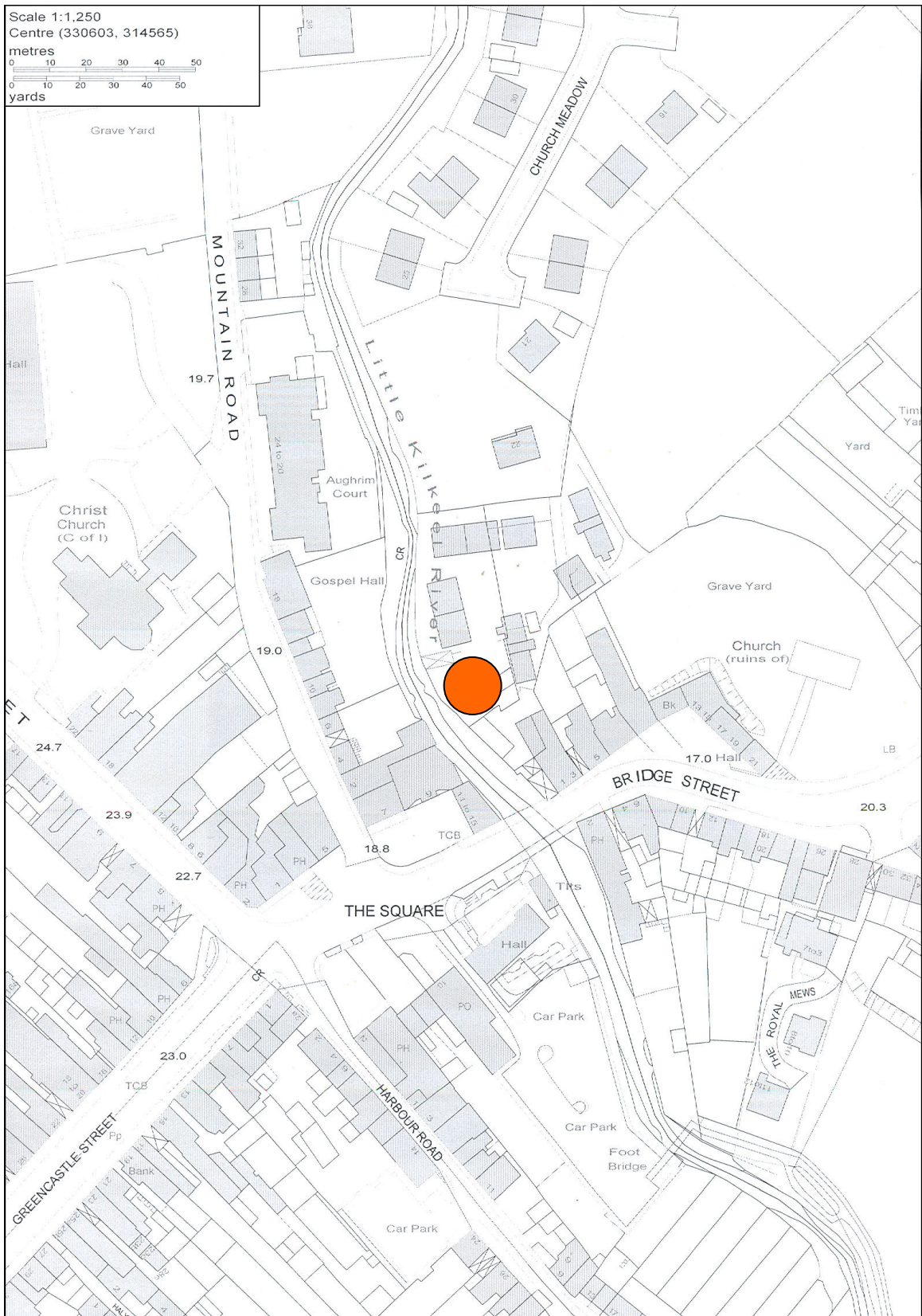


Fig Two: Map of Kilkeel showing application site (red dot) in relation to the church site (DOW 056:026).



Plate One: View of the application site prior to excavation, looking west



Plate Two: Mixed gravel and building rubble deposit (Context No. 101) prior to excavation, looking north.



Plate Three: Large angular elements of mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101).



Plate Four: Application site following excavation to the surface of the truncated subsoil (Context No. 102), looking east.



Plate Five: East facing section of application site showing mixed rubble deposit (Context No. 101) directly overlying the natural subsoil (Context No. 102).