



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 238

**200M WEST OF 77 BALLYNAHINCH ROAD
TONAGHMORE
SAINTFIELD
COUNTY DOWN**

LICENCE NO.: AE/12/46E

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 200m west of 77 Ballynahinch Road, Saintfield

Townland: Tonaghmore

SMR No. : DOW 022:055

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: J 33876 35678

County: Down

Excavation Licence No. : AE/12/46E

Planning Ref / No. : R/2011/0152/F

Dates of Monitoring: 3rd May 2012

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site 200m to the west of 77 Ballynahinch Road, Tonaghmore, Saintfield, Co. Down in response to a planning application for a farm dwelling. The area of the application site was said to include a cashel (NISMR: DOW 022:055). No remains of the cashel now exist. The evaluation consisted of two mechanically-excavated test trenches both of which were 13m long. 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 site does not pose a threat to significant archaeological remains.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of two test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Two trenches each approximately 1.6m wide and 13.0m long.

Current Land Use: Agricultural/farm outbuildings

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site for a proposed new farm dwelling is located in County Down, between the towns of Saintfield and Ballynahinch, approximately 2km to the south-west of the former and 4km to the north-east of the latter (Figure One). The site lies on a ridge approximately 120m above sea level. There are several sites of archaeological interest in the surrounding area, including two raths to the north-east (NISMR DOW 022:024 & 023:001: Figure Two). The nearest site of interest is a windmill stump (NISMR DOW 022:501) which lies to the west of the application area. An archaeological evaluation was requested due to the recorded presence of a cashel within the application area (NISMR DOW 022:055: Figure Three). Although this feature was recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR), there are no visible remains of it now. The NISMR notes that it was known as the 'Cassy' or 'Castle' and was said to have been a semi-circular drystone structure.

The application site consists of a sub-rectangular shaped enclosed yard approximately 0.5 hectares in size at the end of a lane which runs from the Ballynahinch Road, Saintfield. The application site is bounded on the southern and western sides by a fence and neat conifer hedge. On the eastern side is a row of trees and to the north is a farmyard outbuilding. Much of the application area has been landscaped and covered with gravel. The applicant says that he landscaped the area several years ago, moving stone from one part of the site to level-up depressions in the bedrock (Robert Smyth *pers. comm.*). The site commands good views to the south, east and west of the surrounding drumlins. Land use in the immediate area is primarily pastoral agriculture.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for a new dwelling and was requested by Adrian McAleenan 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 Four). It was initially intended to excavate three trenches across the development site, but after the first trench revealed shallow bedrock and also confirmed that the area had been heavily landscaped, this number was reduced to two.

Each trench was around 1.5m wide and 13.0m in length. The trenches were all excavated to a depth of around 1m or to the surface of the bedrock, whichever was encountered first.

Trench One

Trench One was situated perpendicular to the southern boundary of the site and was 4.0m from this boundary and 15.0m from the eastern boundary. Trench One was approximately 1.6m wide and 13.0m long (Plate Three). The stratigraphically most recent layer in the trench consisted of well-sorted gravel (C101) which comprised angular grey stones approximately 30mm long. Below the gravel was a layer of

hardcore (C102) consisting of angular stones approximately 200-300mm long. Mixed in between the stones was a matrix of topsoil. The hardcore directly overlay the bedrock (C103) and was thicker at the southern end of the trench (up to 0.6m thick). The bedrock in Trench One consisted of fragmented shale, the surface of which was present at 0.2m at the northern end of the trench and 0.6m at the southern end (Plate Four). No archaeological features were encountered during the excavation of Trench One and no artefacts were recovered.

Trench Two

Trench Two ran parallel to Trench One and was approximately 4m to the west of it. The trench was approximately 1.5m wide and 13.0m long (Plate Five). It contained a similar stratigraphy to that observed in Trench One. The most recent layer consisted of gravel (C201) which was made up of angular grey stones approximately 30mm long. Below the gravel was a hardcore fill (C202) consisting of angular stones up to 300mm long. The hardcore was up to 1.0m thick at the southern end of the trench. Below the hardcore was the bedrock (C203) which consisted of fragmented shale. The surface of the bedrock was encountered at a depth of around 0.1m at the northern end of the trench. The hardcore fill was excavated to a depth of 1.0m at the southern end of the trench but due to the unstable nature of the fill the surface of the bedrock was not exposed at this part (Plate Six). No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Trench Two.

Conclusions & recommendations

No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered within the two trenches excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. The evidence from within the trenches plus the anecdotal evidence from the landowner strongly suggests that the area has been extensively landscaped and that no remains associated with the cashel survive. 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: _____

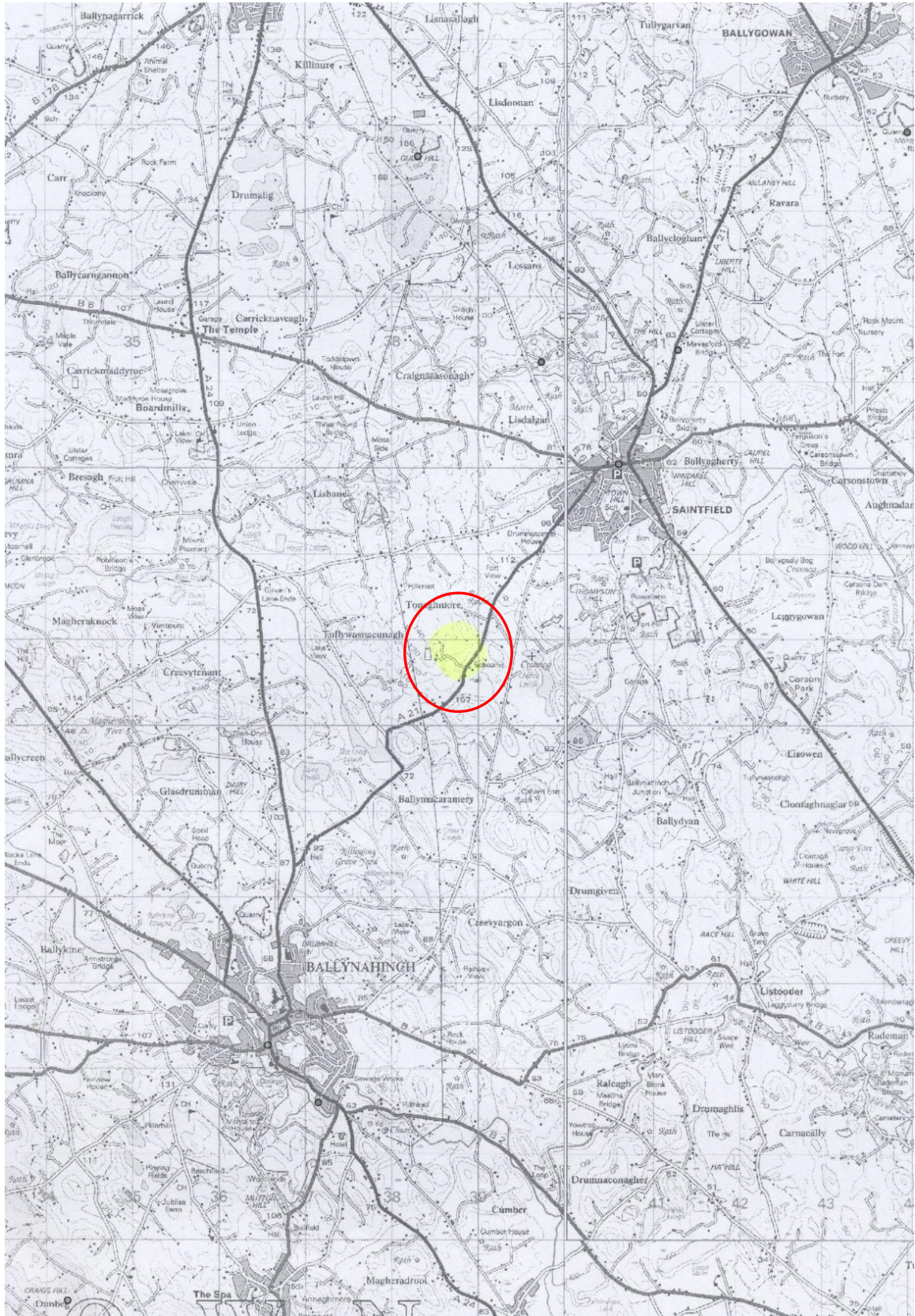


Figure One: Map showing the location of the site (circled in red)

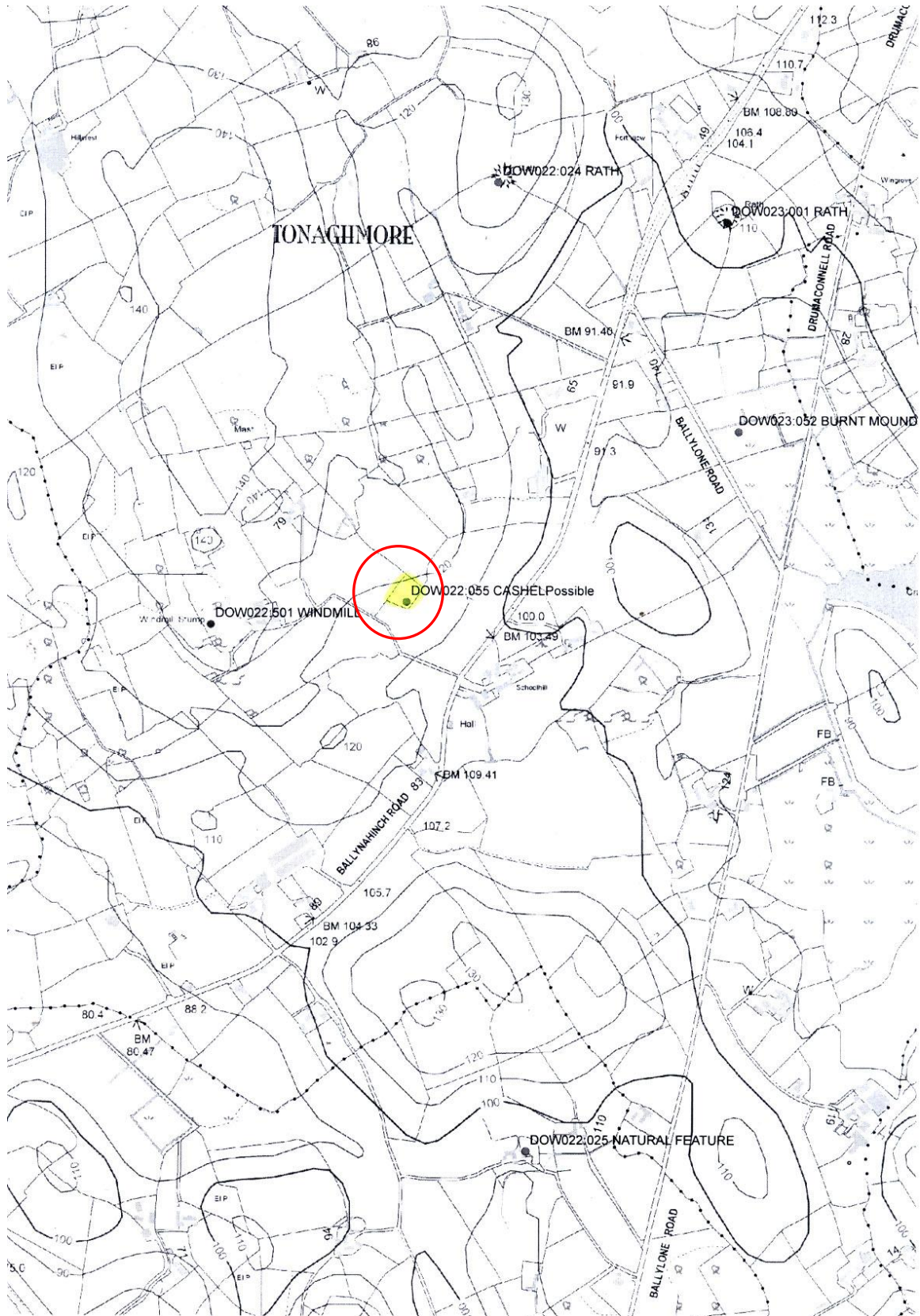


Figure Two: Detailed map showing the location of the site (circled in red) and sites in the surrounding area



Figure Three: Site plan showing approximate location of cashel (green dot)

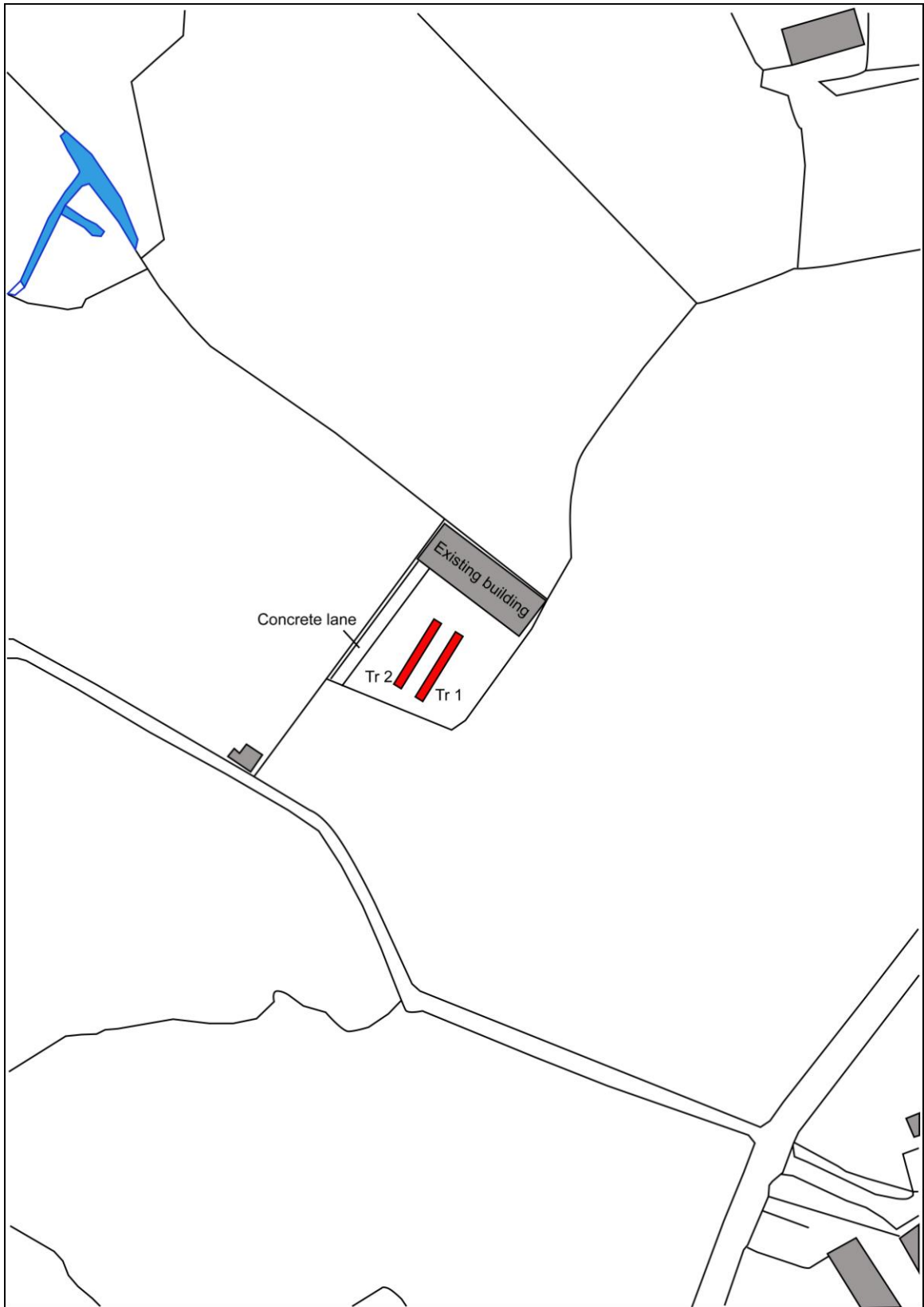


Figure Four: Site plan showing location of test trenches



Plate One: General view of site, looking south-west



Plate Two: General view of site, looking south



Plate Three: General view of Trench 1, looking south-west



Plate Four: North-west facing section of Trench One, looking south-east



Plate Five: General view of Trench Two, looking south-west



Plate Six: North-west facing section of Trench Two, looking south-east