



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 138

**120M EAST OF 6 DERRYOGHILL ROAD
DRUMDERG
BENBURB
COUNTY TYRONE**

LICENCE NO.: AE/07/66

Sarah Gormley

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Stangmore artillery fort (TYR 062:007) & Drumderg artillery fort (TYR 062:012)

Townland: Drumderg

SMR No. : TYR 062:007 & TYR 062:012

Status: The site is not Scheduled or in State Care

Grid Ref.: H8388352633

County: Tyrone

Excavation Licence No. : AE/07/66

Planning Ref / No. : M/2005/2236/O

Date of Evaluation: 21 March 2007

Archaeologist Present: Sarah Gormley

Dates of Excavation: 22 - 23 & 26 - 27 March 2007

Archaeologists Present: Sarah Gormley, Clare McGranaghan, Ruth Logue, Samantha Jones

Brief Summary: An archaeological evaluation was carried out in the townland of Drumderg, Benburb, County Tyrone, as a requirement of a planning application for a new dwelling. The proposed site lies to the west of a late 16th century artillery fort (TYR 062:007) and to the north west of a second artillery fort of the same period (TYR 062:012). Five trenches were opened in total, all located over anomalies identified by geophysical survey. Topsoil was mechanically removed in three of the trenches to natural subsoil, with nothing of archaeological significance uncovered. In the other two trenches the removal of topsoil revealed five features which required further evaluation through a short excavation. One of the features proved, on excavation, to be naturally occurring (c202/c203), two others are likely to be the result of recent activity (c108 and c206) and two linear gullies are potentially archaeological (c102 and 104). Unfortunately no artefacts were recovered from the gullies.

Type of evaluation/ monitoring: Mechanical excavation of topsoil from five trenches, using a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket and supervised by an archaeologist, followed by manual excavation of features uncovered in order to evaluate the archaeological potential.

Size of area opened: Five trenches were opened in total, one measuring 1.6m x 36m, three measuring 1.6m x 15m and one measuring 1.6m x 5m.

Current Land Use: Improved grassland, currently used for pastoral farming. Both fields are regularly ploughed and the easternmost field has reportedly been quarried for gravel in the past.

Intended Land Use: Residential.

Brief account of the evaluation

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was requested by Environment and Heritage Service caseworker, Paul Logue, in order to inform a planning decision in respect of a proposed dwelling located 120m east of 6 Derryoghill Road, Benburb, Co. Tyrone (Planning Service application number: M/2005/2236/O; Fig. 1). The application site is located in an area which was fought over by the English and the O'Neills at the end of the 16th century and beginning of the 17th century. Four artillery forts are known to have been located in the immediate vicinity. Two of the forts are located less than 300m from the application site (Sites and Monuments Record no. TYR 062:007 and TYR 062:012, while the exact location of the other two is not known (Fig. 1). The archaeological and historical importance of the area and the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be located within the application site prompted the evaluation. A geophysical survey had been undertaken, including earth resistance and magnetometry, prior to the evaluation by Steven Trick and Ronan McHugh (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork). A number of geophysical anomalies were highlighted by the work (Fig. 2) and the five evaluation trenches were located over a sample of the anomalies detected (Fig. 2).

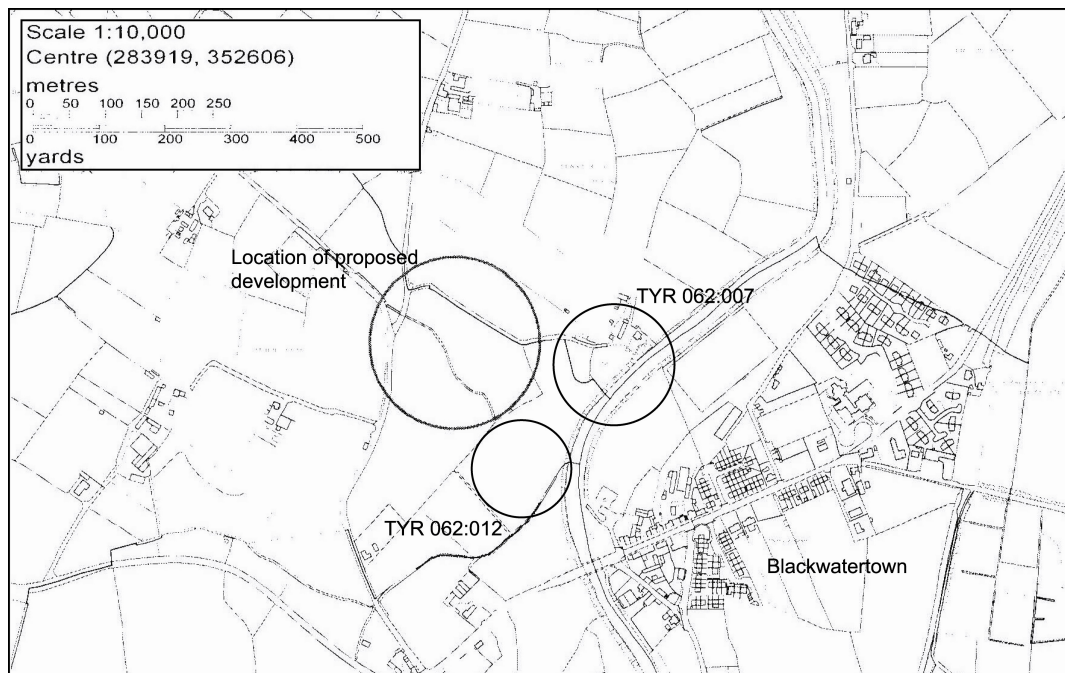


Fig. 1 – Location of the application site, northwest of Blackwatertown and proximity to known archaeological sites TYR 062:007 and TYR 062:012.

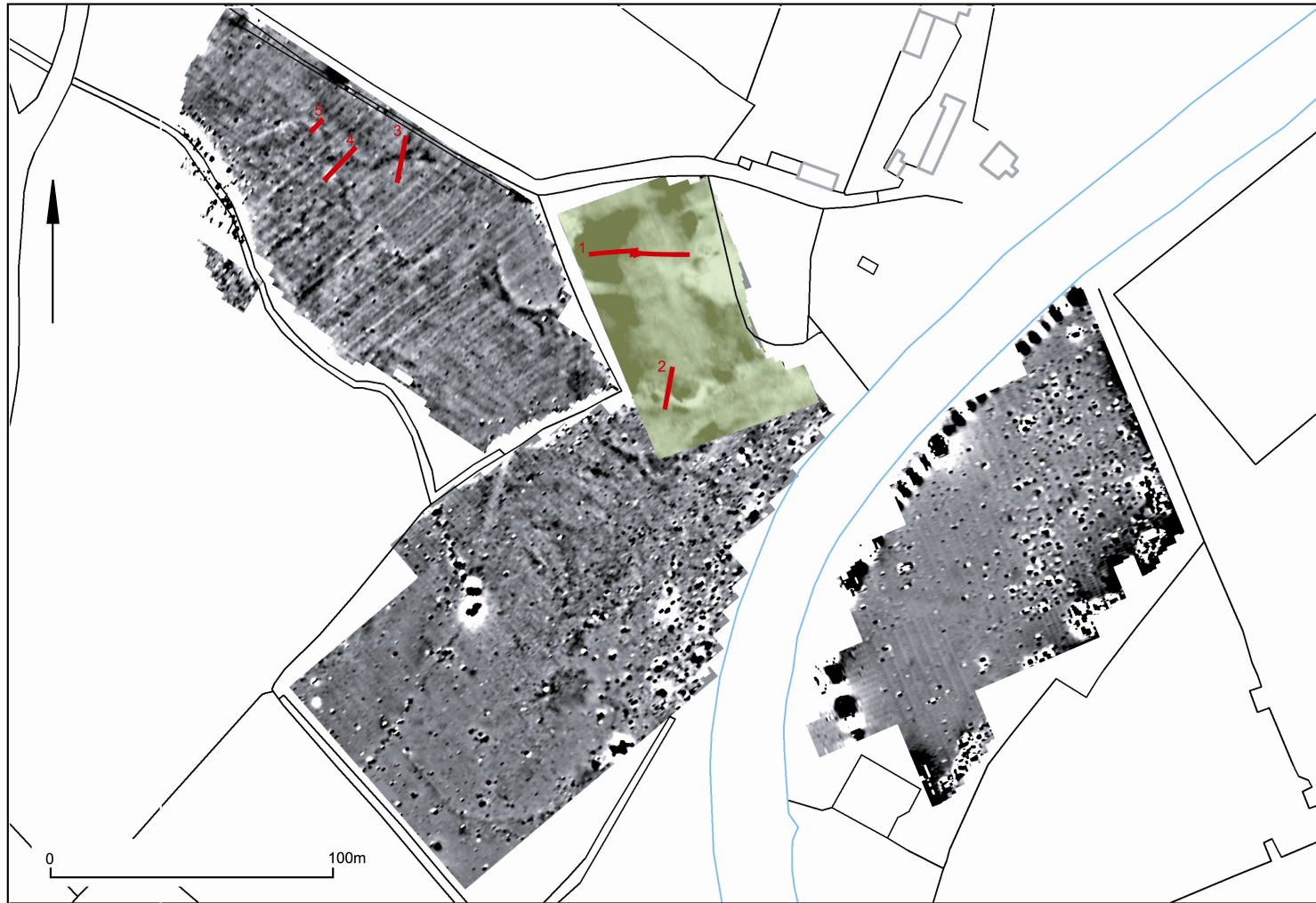


Fig. 2 – Results of earth resistance and magnetometry survey and location of five evaluation trenches numbered 1 to 5.

Excavation

The topsoil in all five trenches was removed mechanically by a back-acting digger fitted with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket measuring 1.6m wide. This work was subject to archaeological supervision at all times. In three of the trenches (trenches 3-5) the topsoil was removed to subsoil, with nothing of archaeological significance noted. In trenches 1 and 2, however, a total five features were uncovered which were subject to further investigation during a short evaluative excavation.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located over an arcing geophysical anomaly and was orientated approximately east west (Fig. 2). The trench was intended to measure 1.6m x 15m, however, upon the removal of the topsoil at the eastern end, a linear feature was partially exposed (c102). As a consequence the trench was extended eastwards in order to evaluate further the extent of the feature. Trench 1 was extended to approximately 36m in length, with a width of 1.6m. This extension revealed two further features (c104 and c108).

When the topsoil (c100) was removed from the entire trench, therefore, three features were apparent (cuts c102, c104 and c108), cut into the sand and gravel banded subsoil (c101; Fig. 3). Cut 102 was a linear feature which ran approximately north to south. It measured 1.03m wide (at its widest point) and extended beyond the trench to the north and south (Fig. 3). The feature was sectioned and was found to be 0.40m in depth. The upper most fill (c103) ranged in thickness from 0.08m at the northern end to 0.22m at the southern end and was a light brown sandy loam, which contained light charcoal flecking. At the southern end of the linear feature was a dark brown, very sandy loam (c106) which lay below c103 and above c107. The fill (c106) measured approximately 1.5m x 0.38m, extending beyond the trench to the south. It (c106) contained charcoal and was 0.08m thick and lay above a light brown loamy sand (c107) which was the primary fill of the feature and extended across its full length and width to a thickness ranging from 0.18m at the south to 0.32m at the north (Fig. 4). The feature was fully excavated (Fig. 5), however, no artefacts were recovered from any of the fills. A sherd of sgraffito pottery was found in the topsoil (c100) immediately above the gully. As this field has been ploughed regularly it is probable that the feature has been truncated, which further hinders interpretation.

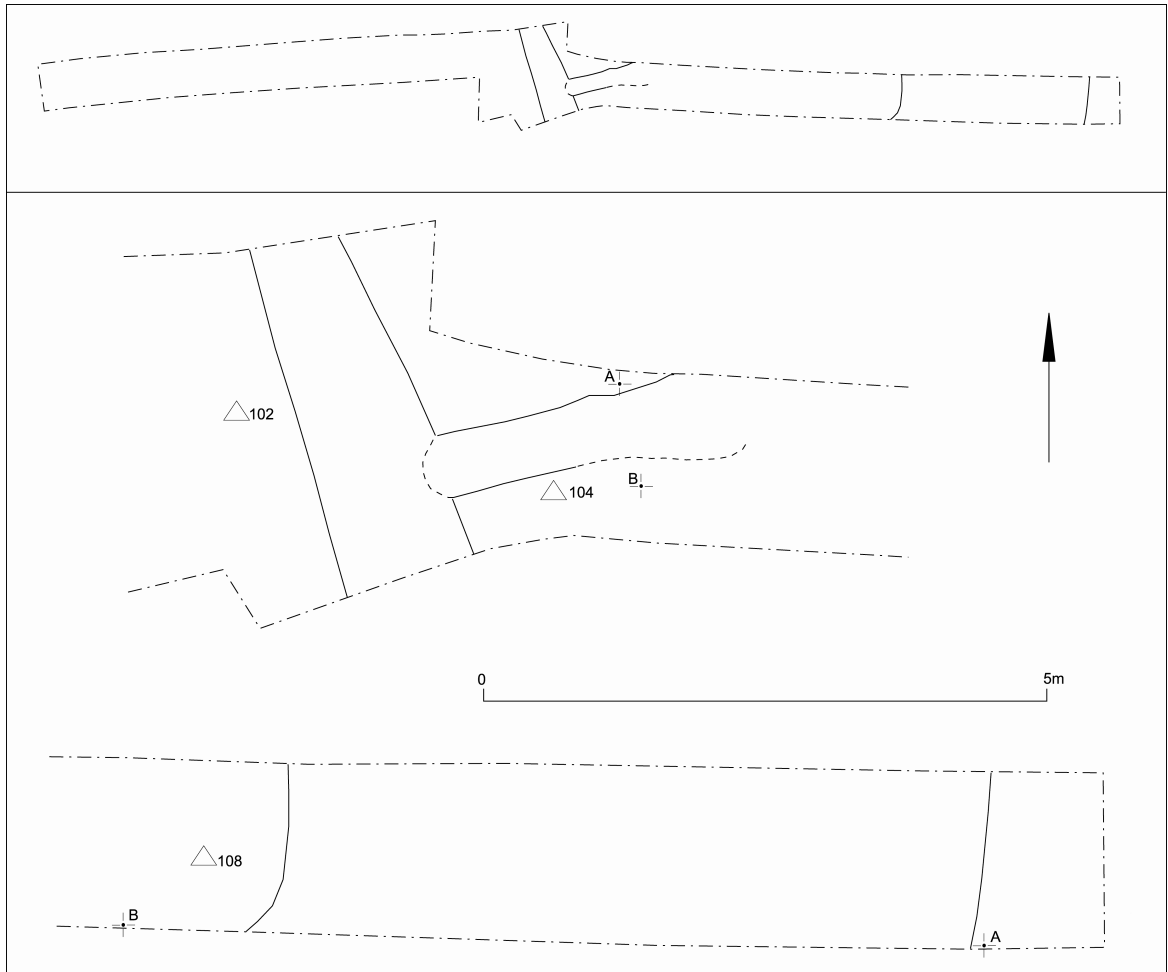


Fig. 3 – Plan of Trench 1 with c101 removed, showing features uncovered (c102, c104 and c108).

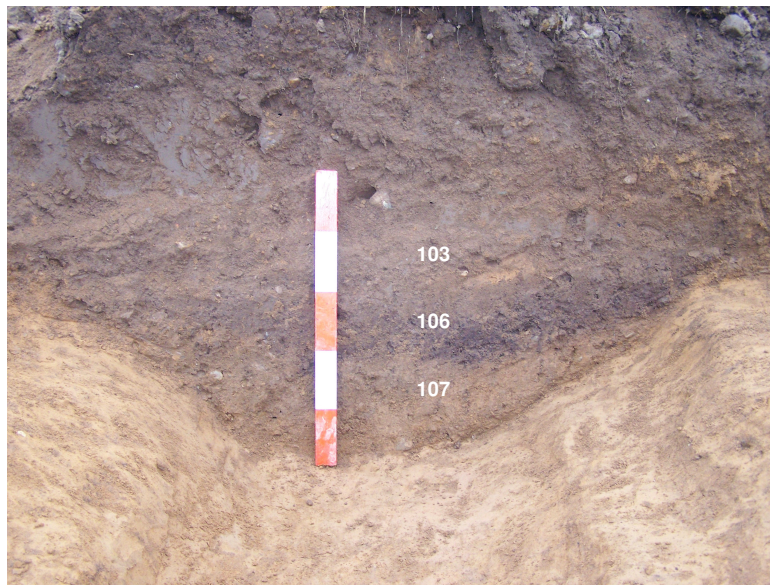


Fig. 4 – North-facing section of Trench 1 showing linear cut (c102) post-excitation and fills (c103, c106 and c107), looking south.



Fig. 5 – Linear cut (c102), post-excitation, looking north.

The north-south running gully feature (c102) was cut by second and more shallow gully (c104). This feature was aligned east-north-east to west-south-west and measured 3.3m long, and extended beyond the edge of the trench to the north-east (Fig. 3). The gully was sectioned (Fig. 6) and was found to contain one fill, a light brown sandy loam which was mottled with patches of subsoil and contained light charcoal flecking (c105). The feature was 0.5 – 0.75m wide and was shallow, ranging between 0.02 and 0.07cm in depth with gently-sloping sides. Two small sherds of modern pottery were recovered from the top of the fill of this feature, however, this feature had been severely truncated by ploughing and the pottery may be derived from topsoil.

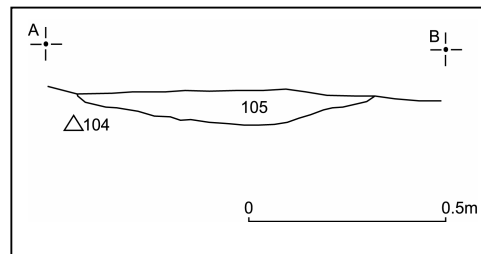


Fig. 6 – West facing section of gully (c104), see figure 3 for location of A and B points.

To the east of the linear gullies (c102 and c104) was a large cut (c108; Fig. 3) which ran north-south and beyond the extent of the trench to both north and south. The feature cut the subsoil and was filled with a mid-brown sandy loam (c109) which appeared to be redeposited topsoil and was the same as the topsoil elsewhere in the trench. The feature was 6.2m wide and had a maximum depth of 1m and was gradually sloping from the east, with a more pronounced slope from the west (Fig. 7). It seems likely that this feature is the result of sand or gravel quarrying which is reported by the landowner to have been carried out in this field.

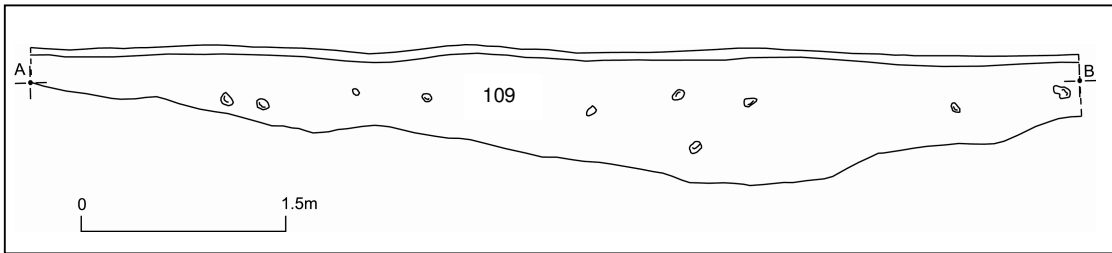


Fig. 7 – North-facing section of cut (c108), see figure 3 for location of A and B points.

Trench 2

Trench 2, measuring 1.6m x 15m was laid out over a curvilinear anomaly which was visible on both the earth resistance and magnetometry survey results. The trench was aligned approximately north-north-east to south-south-west (Fig. 2). The topsoil, a mid-brown sandy loam (c200), was present to a depth of approximately 0.25cm – 0.30cm and was removed to reveal the natural subsoil (c201) an orange-brown sand. Two linear features (c202/c203 and c206) were evident in this trench, within the subsoil, on the removal of the topsoil (Fig. 8). A band of grey clay (c202) was apparent, running approximately east-west across the trench, it was 2.10m wide and was adjacent to a band of pink clay (c203), 1.20m wide, with the same orientation. A small box section was laid out over this feature and it became clear that these colour distinctions were simply natural bands of clay within the sand subsoil.

To the south of this feature, a mid-brown sandy-loam (c204) was apparent running east-west across the trench and to a width of 3.5m. At the east of this was a patch of loose yellow brown sand (c205). This feature (c204, c205, c206) was investigated with a box section. The fill of the feature (c206) was composed of redeposited topsoil (c204), mottled with possible redeposited sand subsoil (c205) and grey clay (c207; Fig. 9) and contained sherds of modern pottery at all levels. It is clear that this feature is the result of fairly modern activity. The farmer reports that this field was landscaped in the mid 20th century and in more recent years topsoil has been brought in. Noteworthy also is the fact that a dwelling was located at the southwest edge of this trench at least into the mid 19th century (Fig. 10). By the early 20th century this dwelling had been removed, however, a new field boundary had been constructed which also ran to the immediate south of the trench (Fig. 10). This boundary had been removed by the 1977 revision of the Ordnance Survey map and according to the farmer was part of the landscaping work undertaken in the 1950s. Perhaps the feature depicted in Figures

9 and 10 is the result of some of these processes, however, it may be the case that the natural sand subsoil has been quarried and subsequently backfilled with topsoil in this area.

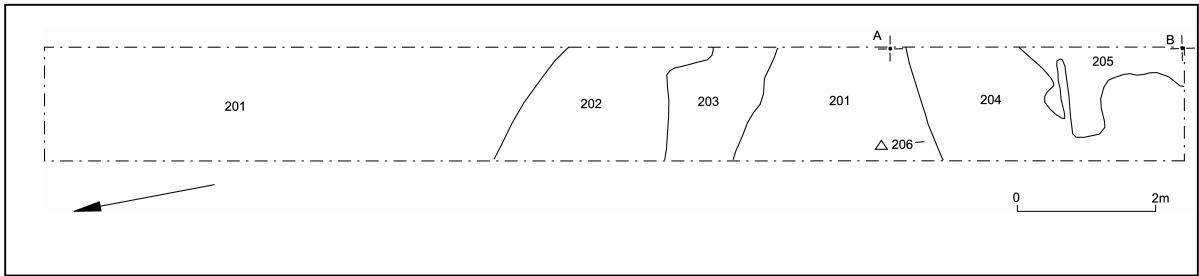


Fig. 8 – Plan of features uncovered in trench 2 on removal of topsoil (c200).

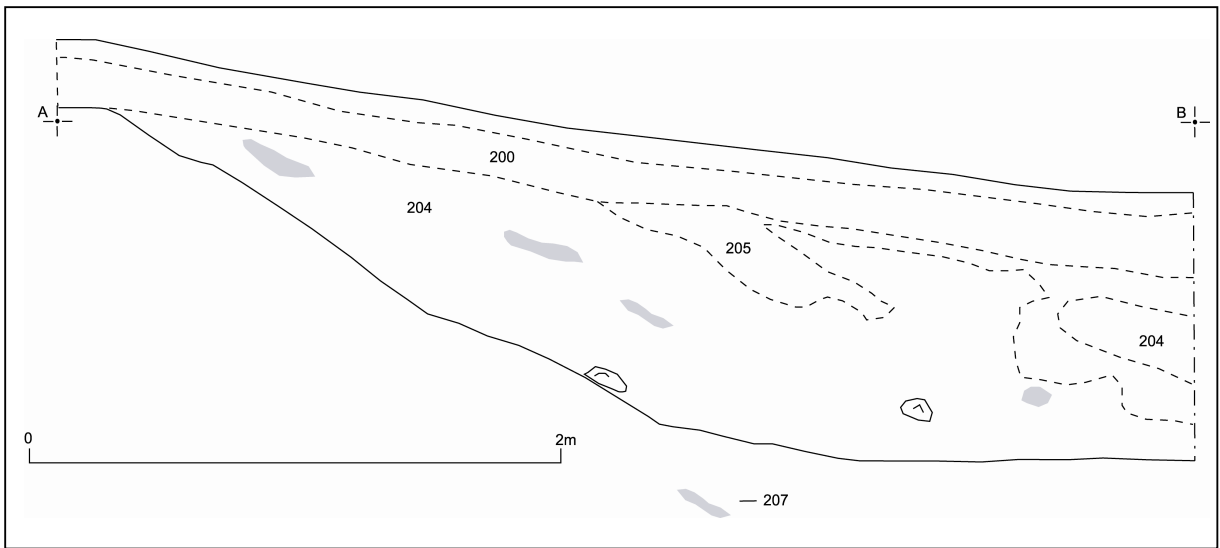


Fig. 9 – West facing section of cut 206, see figure 8 for location of A and B points.

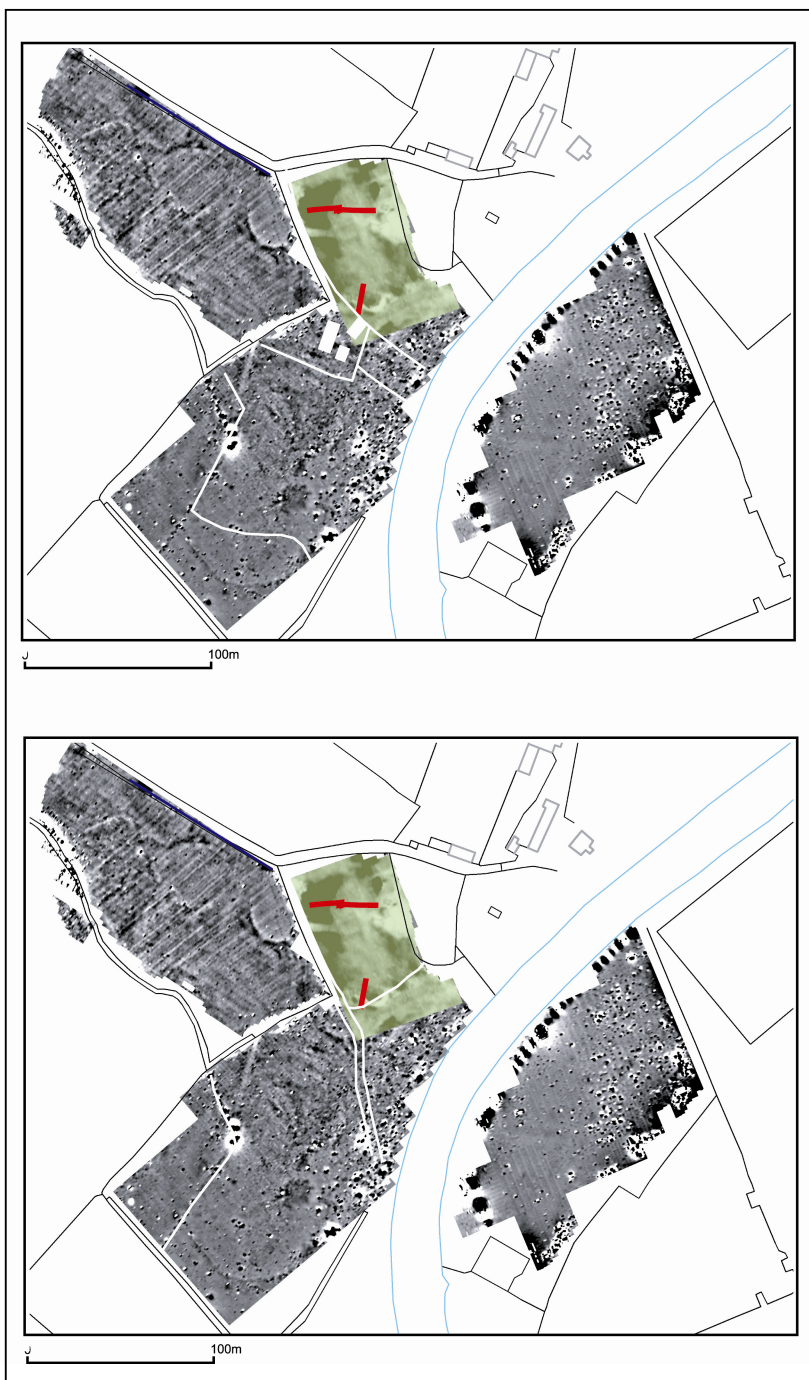


Fig. 10 – Trenches 1 (north) and 2 (south) in red and location of now removed field boundaries (shown as white lines). The upper image depicts those boundaries shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map and the lower image shows those which are shown on the 1935 revision. The figure is aligned north.

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 1.6m x 15m and was the eastern most trench set out in the western field (Fig. 2). It was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. The trench was sited in order to investigate a curvilinear geophysical anomaly which was detected running approximately east to west (Fig. 2). The topsoil (c300), a mid-brown sandy loam, covered the trench to a depth of up to 0.45m. The topsoil was removed to reveal the natural subsoil (c301) over the entire trench (Fig. 11). The subsoil was dark orange-brown sand, with a band of naturally occurring grey clay. No artefacts were recovered.



Fig. 11 – Trench 3, topsoil (c300) removed, subsoil (c301) revealed, looking north north east.

Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 1.6m x 15m, it was located to the west of trench 3 and was sited over a curvilinear geophysical anomaly (Fig. 2). The trench was aligned north east to south west. The mid-brown sandy loam topsoil (c400) in this trench was removed to the natural subsoil (c401), up to 0.45m deep (Fig. 12). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered and the subsoil, a dark orange-brown sand covered the whole of the trench. No artefacts were found in the course of the monitoring of topsoil removal in this trench.



Fig. 12 - Trench 4, topsoil c400 removed, subsoil c401 revealed, looking north east.

Trench 5

Trench 5 measured 1.6m x 5m and was the western-most trench opened. It was aligned approximated north east to south west and was sited in order to investigate a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig. 2). The topsoil (c500) in the trench, a mid-brown sandy loam, was removed to reveal the natural sand subsoil (c501; Fig. 13) with nothing of archaeological significance uncovered and no artefacts recovered.



Fig. 13 - Trench 5, topsoil (c500) removed, subsoil (c501) revealed, looking south-west.

Conclusion

The trenches opened in the western-most field (trenches 3-5) were mechanically excavated to subsoil and nothing of archaeological significance was noted. In trenches 1 and 2 features were uncovered which appear to be associated with mid 20th century landscaping or mineral extraction. Two gully features were determined to be of potential archaeological significance, although no artefacts were uncovered in secure association and both were heavily truncated by ploughing. No further works are recommended and as the application site contained nothing of archaeological significance the development will not impact upon previously unrecorded archaeological remains. No publication is required save for a short summary in the annual 'Excavations' bulletin.

Archive:

Finds: A quantity of bone, flint and pottery was recovered from Trenches 1 and 2. These artefacts are stored in the short term with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast. It is recommended that no further analysis of this material is undertaken.

Photographs: The 67 photographs taken during the monitoring and evaluation are stored digitally with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Samples: Five bulk soil samples were recovered during the excavation from gullies c102 and c104. These are stored with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Drawings: A total of 11 plans and sections were made during the excavation. The field drawings are stored with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.