



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 272

**190M NORTH NORTH-EAST OF 33 BALLYLAME ROAD
BALLYDULLAGHAN
SWATRAGH
COUNTY LONDONDERRY**

LICENCE NOS.: AE/13/131E & AE/15/70

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 190m north north-east of 33 Ballylame Road, Swatragh, Co. Londonderry

Townland: Ballydullaghan

SMR No. : LDY 026:016

~~State Care~~ ~~Scheduled~~ Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: C 8373 1112

County: Londonderry

Excavation Licence Nos. : AE/13/131E & AE/15/70

Planning Ref / No. : C/2012/0475/RM

Dates of Monitoring:

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver and Grace McAlister

Brief Summary:

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at a site 190m to the north north-east of 33 Ballylame Road, Ballydullaghan, Co. Londonderry. The proposed development site is in close proximity to a standing stone (NISMR No.: LDY 026:016) which is located on a rocky outcrop to the rear of a derelict dwelling house. An excavation carried out by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in 2010-2011 (CAF Data Structure Report No. 73) uncovered a settlement site thought to date to the early Bronze Age. The proposed development site was unsuitable for an evaluative test trenching strategy and therefore the monitoring was carried out in several stages, comprising a site visit, photographic survey of the derelict dwelling, supervision of the dwelling's demolition, and monitoring of terracing and topsoil stripping. No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered during the course of the fieldwork.

Type of monitoring: supervised topsoil stripping of the area of the proposed new dwelling

Size of area opened: Approximately 20m (east/west) by 25m (north/south)

Current land use: Derelict dwelling

Intended land use: Replacement dwelling

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at a site in Ballydullaghan townland, Co. Londonderry, where a planning application had been submitted for a replacement dwelling. The application site is located between the villages of Swatragh and Garvagh, at a height of approximately 190m above sea level on the eastern edge of the Sperrin Mountains, an area of rich archaeological heritage (Figures 1 and 2). The site occupies a raised but sheltered position at the base of a rocky outcrop and commands excellent views from the north north-east to the south south-west (Plates 1 and 2)

The monitoring work was requested due to the site's proximity to a standing stone and enclosure (NISMR No. LDY 026:016: Figure 3) as well as a prehistoric settlement site. The enclosure, of which there are now no visible remains, was depicted on the 1858 revision of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey six inch map. The rocky hillock that it enclosed is heavily overgrown (Plate 3). Beneath the undergrowth on the top of the outcrop is a large recumbent stone that may be the original standing stone (Plate 4). The standing stone was referred to in the Ordnance Survey memoirs as 'Boughil Braigs', meaning 'lying boys'. There are several other standing stones in the vicinity e.g. NISMR No. LDY 026:015 'Calleen Braigs'. An archaeological evaluation carried out by Peter Bowen of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) in 2008 at a site immediately to the south-west of the proposed development site uncovered subsoil-cut features and coarse pottery. These findings prompted further archaeological mitigation in the form of an excavation, which was carried out between October 2010 and March 2011. The results of the excavation indicated the presence of a significant prehistoric settlement site, with at least three structures identified and a range of material dating to the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods. The excavation was undertaken by Brian Sloan of the CAF and the findings are detailed in CAF Data Structure Report No. 73.

Monitoring at the proposed development site was carried out in several stages between June 2013 and April 2015. A visit to the site in June 2013 indicated that it was not suitable for the test trenching strategy originally put forward, due to the presence of a vernacular stone building and a number of mature trees. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) requested that a photographic survey of the vernacular building be carried out prior to its demolition, and that the demolition and removal of trees be carried out under archaeological supervision. The monitoring of the levelling and removal of topsoil from the site was also to be carried out under archaeological supervision.

The original evaluation was requested by Arlene Matthews, then of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Historic Monuments Unit, as part of a planning application for a replacement dwelling.

The vernacular building

The derelict vernacular building that occupied the site prior to the monitoring work was a stone cottage of traditional style with thick walls and few windows. The building was

in a poor state of preservation; partly without a roof and overgrown with trees (Plate 5). As well as the photographic survey, measurements were taken, where possible, to reproduce a plan of the building (Figure 4). The cottage was constructed of angular and sub-angular stone blocks between 0.12 x 0.03m and 0.6 x 0.32m in size, with the largest stones used at the southern end (Plate 6). The northern gable wall was 0.64m thick while the eastern wall was 0.48m thick. The façade of the original building had a single door flanked by windows at either side (Plate 7) and there were traces of what may have been another door or window at the northern end of the building. The most intact window in the cottage, to the left of the main door, tapered inwards (0.95m internal diameter, 0.75m external). The wall was 0.56m thick at this point and there were bricks on either side of the window aperture. It was not possible to ascertain the internal layout of the cottage due to the collapse of the interior walls and roof. The most recent roof on the building was of corrugated iron and it appeared that the building had been patched up to use as a shelter for animals prior to its dereliction. On the rear/western wall of the building was a bed outshot of the type often seen in Irish vernacular cottages (Plate 8). The building had at least two extensions at the southern end (Plate 9), the most southerly of which may have been a byre as it had no internal doorway. There was possible evidence for a collapsed chimney stack on the wall between the two extensions. The original southern gable of the building had been replaced with a corrugated iron partition. At the northern end of the main building was an extension with an external doorway and no windows that may have been another shed or byre (Plate 10).

Monitoring

Monitoring of the demolition of the stone cottage was undertaken in October 2013. The work was carried out with a mechanical excavator and a number of mature trees were also removed at this time. The trees were predominantly sycamore and ash with diameters of 0.40-0.45m and 0.48-0.50m respectively. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted during the demolition process. In April 2015 further monitoring was carried out at the site while it was being levelled prior to the construction of the replacement dwelling. On this occasion the site was terraced by the removal of the bank to the west and south-west in order to produce a larger flat area upon which to excavate the foundations of the new house (Plates 11 and 12). The bank consisted of at least 2m of sandy loam topsoil that was orangeish brown in colour (Plate 13). It contained some sub-angular stones up to 0.2m long. The sandy loam topsoil was underlain by mixed glacial till ranging in colour from grey to reddish brown. There was no evidence of any prior disturbance of this ground.

Conclusions

No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the fieldwork. It is therefore recommended that no further work is carried out at the site. A short summary will be prepared for inclusion in the annual 'Excavations' bulletin.

Archive

Finds: N/a

Photographs:

The images taken during the fieldwork, including the photographic survey of the derelict dwelling house, are digitally archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast

Plans/drawings:

The plan of the derelict dwelling house is archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast

Signed: _____

Date: _____

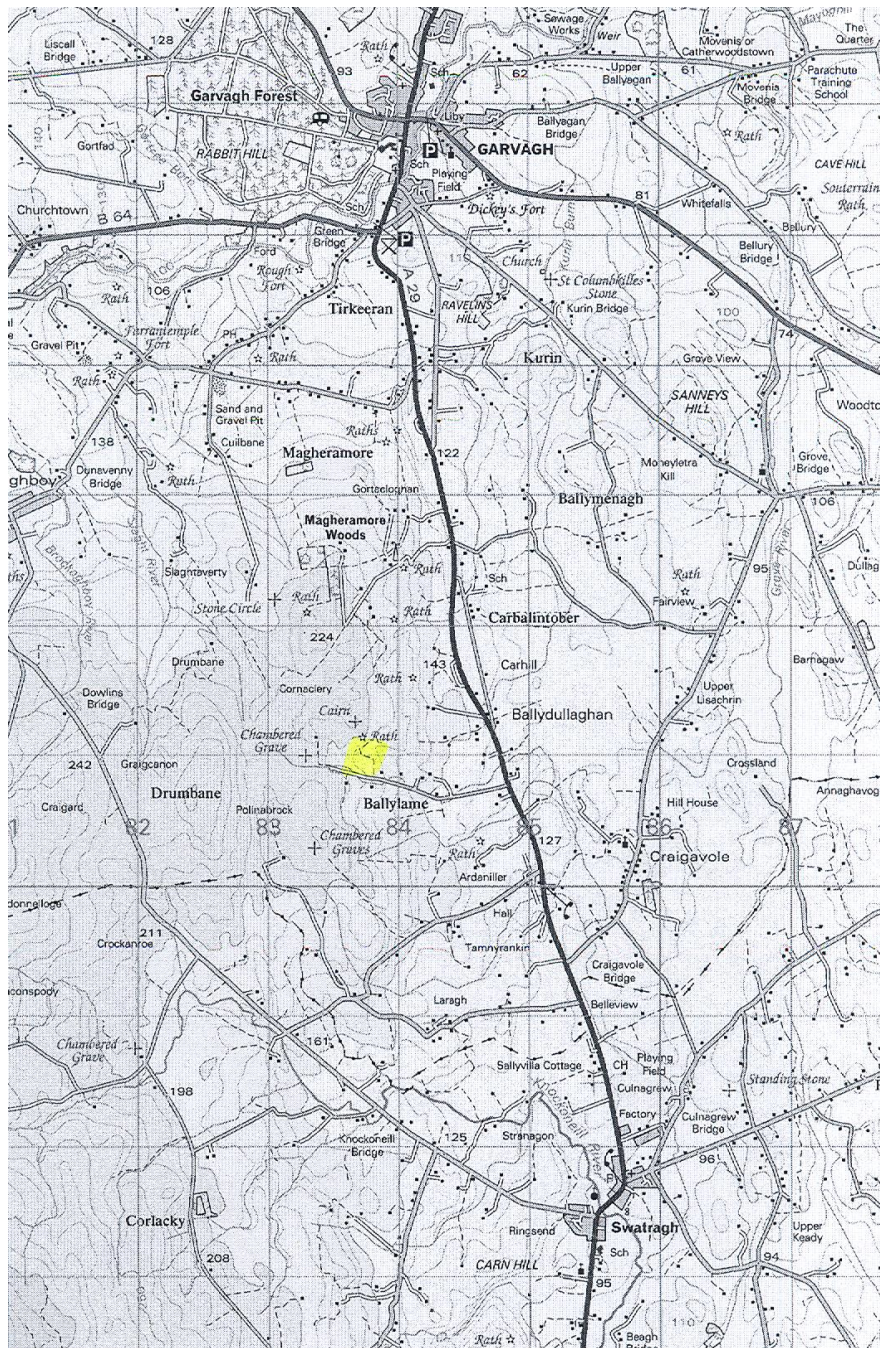


Figure 1: General location map showing the site (highlighted in yellow)

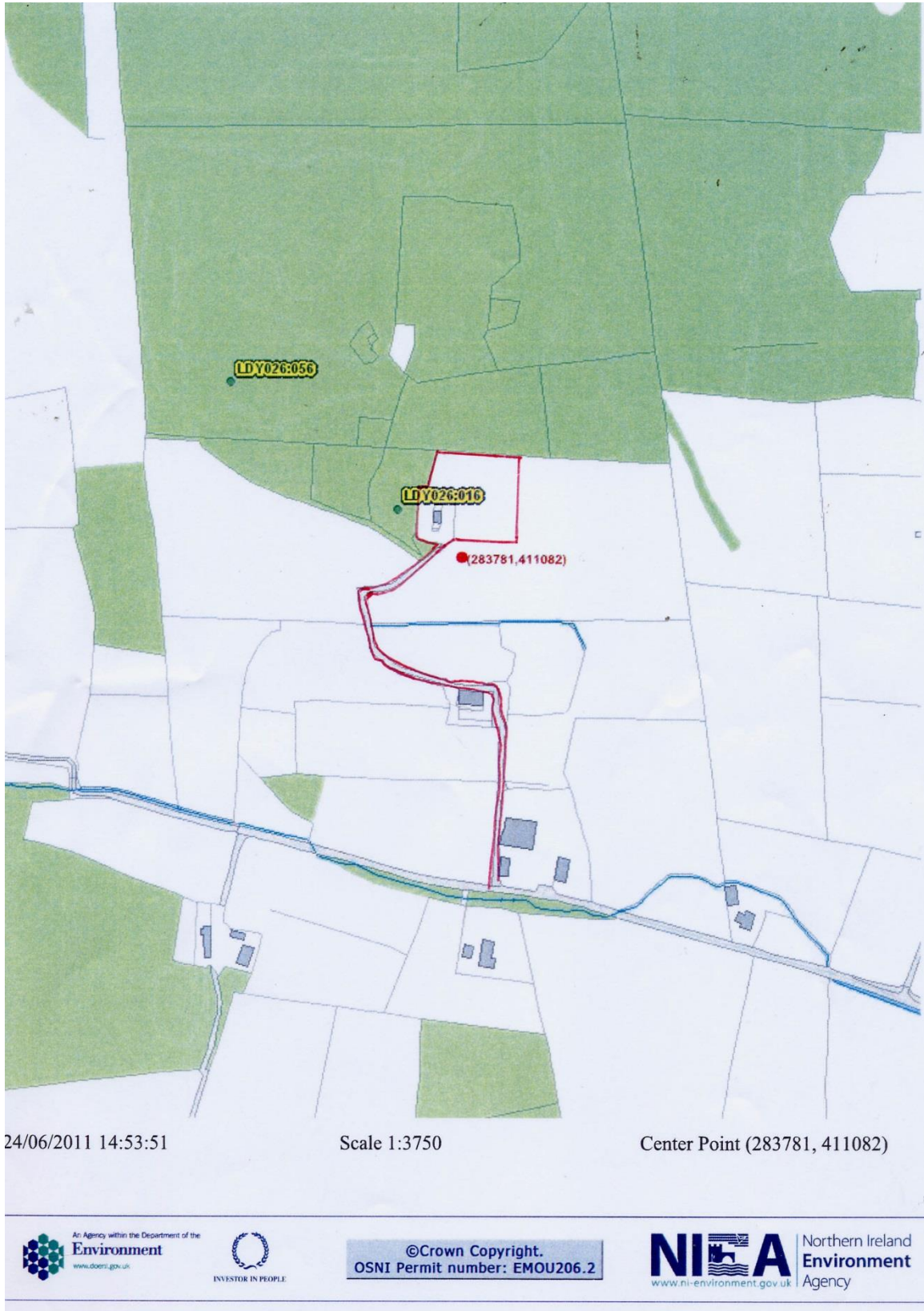


Figure 3: Plan showing the application site and the derelict dwelling house

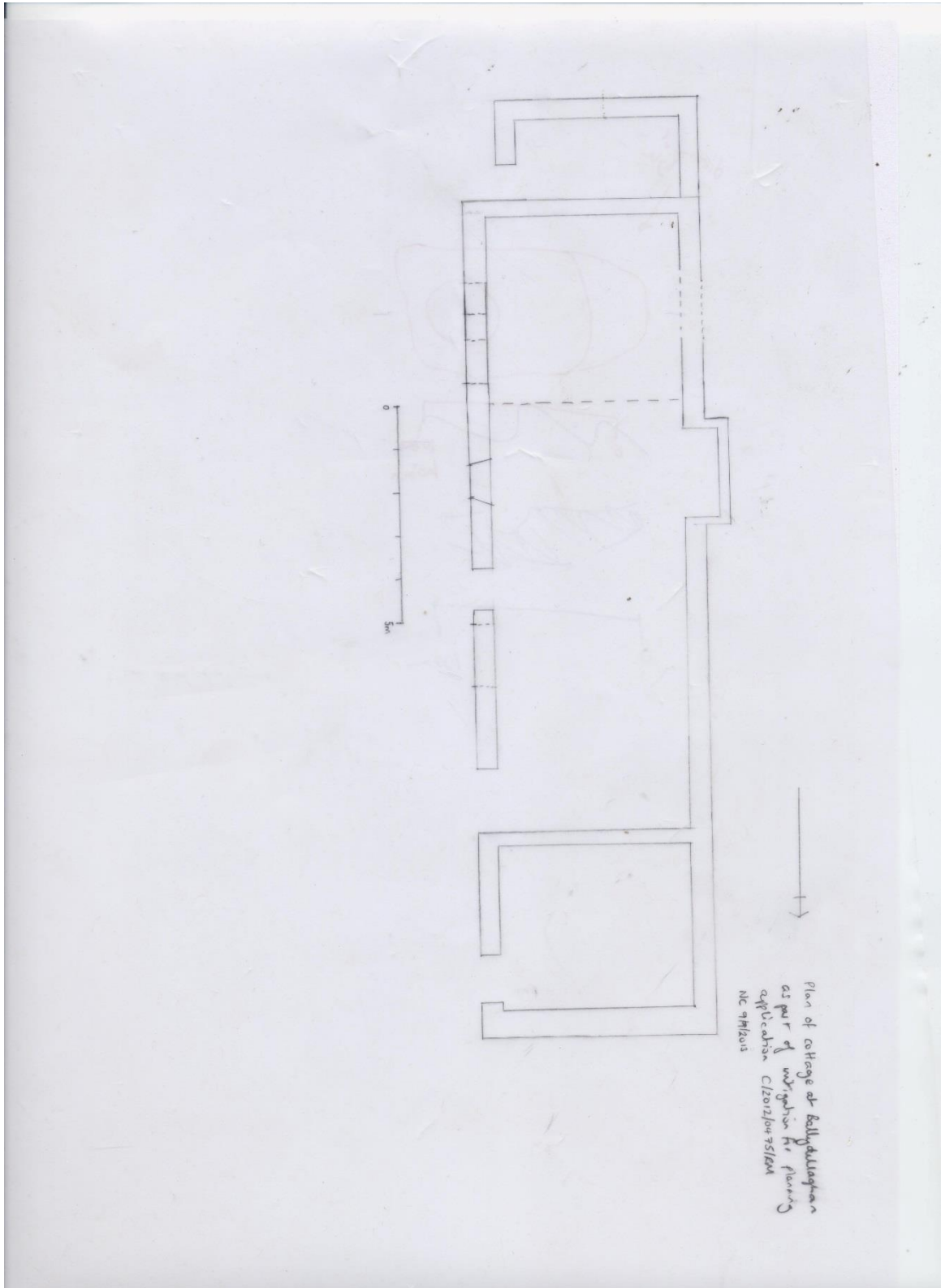


Figure 4: Plan of the cottage at Ballydullaghan



Plate 1: The view to the south-east of the site



Plate 2: The site viewed from the laneway, looking west



Plate 3: The top of the rocky outcrop – the enclosure is no longer visible



Plate 4: Possible standing stone lying horizontally below vegetation



Plate 5: Photo of cottage showing poor state of preservation, looking west



Plate 6: Southern gable, south-west corner, looking north



Plate 7: Façade of the building showing door and windows on either side, looking west



Plate 8: Bed outshot on the western side of the building, looking north



Plate 9: Remains of the extensions at the southern end of the cottage, looking west



Plate 10: Possible byre at the northern end of the cottage, looking west



Plate 11: Monitoring work in progress, looking north-west



Plate 12: Monitoring work in progress, looking north



Plate 13: Section of bank showing thickness of topsoil, looking north