



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 159

**THE RECTORY
CHURCH HILL
KILLYLEAGH
COUNTY DOWN**

LICENCE NO.: AE/08/127

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Location: The Rectory, Church Hill, Killyleagh, County Down

Townland: Corporation

SMR No. : DOW 024:043

State Care Scheduled Other ✓ [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: J 5277 5276

County: Down

Excavation Licence No. : AE/08/127

Planning Ref / No. : R/2007/1344/O

Dates of Monitoring: 26th August 2008

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site in the grounds of The Rectory in Killyleagh, Co. Down, as part of the planning application for a single dwelling and garage. The site lies within the Area of Archaeological Potential (ADAP 2015) assigned for the historic settlement of Killyleagh (DOW 024:043). Two test trenches were excavated on the site within which there was no evidence of archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out.

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 2m wide and 25m long

Current Land Use: Residential garden

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site for the proposed new dwelling is in Killyleagh, a village on the western shores of Strangford Lough (Figure One). The application site is located in the northern corner of the grounds of The Rectory (Figure Two), which is situated on Church Hill, beside St John's Church of Ireland. The Rectory grounds are approximately 0.57 hectares in size and the application site itself covers an area of around 0.07 hectares (Figure Three). The gardens, which are laid out in lawns planted with mature trees and shrubs, slope down from the existing house towards the application site. The application site is on a level piece of ground at the base of the gardens. To the south is The Rectory, while there are buildings to the north and west. Immediately on the other side of the boundary wall to the north-east and east is a river, beyond which are fields, while St John's Church of Ireland lies beyond The Rectory gardens to the south-east. The boundary wall to the north-east seems to be of some antiquity. The landowner said that the site used to be a tennis court c 1900 (Bob Elwood, *pers comm.*) and the slope appears to have been terraced to create a flat area, probably around this time. An interesting feature immediately beside the application site is an old pump house, probably dating to around the time The Rectory was built (Plate One).

The development site lies within the Area of Archaeological Potential designated for Killyleagh (ADAP 2015). Killyleagh is a historic settlement, the core of which dates back to the late 16th/early 17th Century. Records suggest that the town was of importance prior to the Norman invasion. A series of archaeological investigations have been carried out in the town since 2001. Archaeological monitoring in the area of the harbour uncovered decaying timbers which may have been the remains of the 17th Century quay which is shown on Raven's map 1625 (all information from Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record).

The evaluation was requested by Neil Yeaman: Protecting Historic Monuments Caseworker with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in response to a planning application for a proposed new dwelling.

Excavation

Two test trenches were excavated in the area of the proposed development. They were located in the positions shown in Figure Three. The trenches were both approximately 2m wide and 25m long. The trenches were excavated to various depths, depending, on the nature of the stratigraphy within each individual trench.

In the initial remit NIEA requested the excavation of three trenches but this was not possible due to both the topography of the site and the presence of mature trees and other vegetation (see Figure Three and Plate Two).

Trench One

Trench One ran parallel to the north-eastern boundary wall and was located 3m from the base of the lowermost garden terrace. The trench was orientated north-west/south-east (Plates Three and Four). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench One (Context No. 101) consisted of dark brown clay loam which was 0.09-0.10m thick. It contained small stones (average size: 2x2x2mm) and medium-sized stones (average size: 60x50x20mm). A small number of artefacts were retrieved from the topsoil. These consisted of 19th-century ceramics, slate and fragments of brick. Below the sod and topsoil layer was a cultivation layer (Context No. 102) which covered the whole trench. The cultivation layer consisted of greyish-brown clay loam and contained small (average size: 2x2x2mm) and medium (average size: 60x50x20mm) stones. The layer was 0.10m thick and contained a small number of sherds of 19th-century pottery.

Following the removal of the cultivation soil, two linear cuts (Context Nos. 103 and 105) were visible in the boulder clay subsoil. At the south-eastern end of the trench was the cut of a sewer pipe which ran north-east/south-west across the trench (Plate Five). The cut for the pipe was 0.7m in diameter; its depth was not investigated. It was filled with large sub-angular stones (average size: 0.5x0.5x0.2m) and also some small stones (average size: 100x100x50mm). Between the stones was a matrix of gritty loam, below which was a ceramic pipe. There was also a linear cut (Context No. 105) running north-west/south-east along the middle section of the trench (Plate Six). It was 0.5m wide and at least 5m long. A small section excavated across the linear cut showed that it was 0.1m in depth and was filled with compact mid to dark brown clay loam with frequent flecks of charcoal (Context No. 106). The fill of the cut also contained small stones (average size: 100x50x10mm) and some fragments of coal and brick. It was probably a relict cultivation furrow. The subsoil in Trench One (Context No. 107) was orange boulder clay encountered at a depth of 0.2m. No other features in the trench.

Trench Two

Trench Two was located 2m to the north-east of Trench One and also ran parallel with the north-eastern boundary wall of the application site (Plates Seven and Eight). The surface of the subsoil in Trench Two was much deeper than the subsoil in Trench One, due to the original slope which had been terraced for the tennis court. The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Two (Context No. 201) consisted of dark brown clay loam which contained small stones (average size: 2x2x2mm) and medium stones (average size: 60x50x20mm). The layer was 0.1m thick and contained few finds, apart from several sherds of 19th-century pottery. Below the sod and topsoil layer in Trench Two was a cultivation soil (Context No. 202) consisting of greyish-brown clay loam with small (average size: 2x2x2mm) and medium (60x50x20mm) stone inclusions. The cultivation soil was much deeper than the corresponding

layer in Trench One- on average it was 0.4-0.5m thick. The cultivation soil contained two sherds of 17th-century pottery and several fragments of animal bone.

Below the cultivation soil in Trench Two was the subsoil (Context No. 203) which, as in Trench one, consisted of orange boulder clay. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.4-0.5m. There were pockets of the cultivation soil on the surface and traces of possible cultivation features, but nothing distinct.

A third trench was not excavated due to the cramped space and presence of vegetation and the slope (see Figure Three). The results of the evaluation show that there are not significant archaeological remains present in the evaluated area. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out and that no further work is required except for a brief summary in the annual '*Excavations*' bulletin.

Archive:

Finds:

The artefacts recovered from the evaluation are temporarily archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs:

The digital images taken during the evaluation are currently 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: General location map showing Killyleagh (circled in red)



Figure Two: Detailed location map showing site outline (in red)



Figure Three: Site plan showing location of test trenches (in red) and extent of evaluation site (highlighted red). The green circles show the extent of dense shrubbery



Plate One: Old pump house, looking north-west



Plate Two: General view of the application site prior to the excavation of test trenches, looking north-west



Plate Three: Trench One following excavation to subsoil level, looking north-west



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



Plate Five: Cut of sewer pipe (Context No. 103), looking south-east



Plate Six: Cut of linear feature (Context No. 105), looking north-east



Plate Seven: Trench Two following excavation to subsoil level, looking north-west



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