



Monitoring Report No. 218

**21 Limentary Road
Ballylesson townland
County Antrim**

AE/10/201E

Ruth Logue

Site Specific Information

Site location: 85m south-east of Liminary Road, Ballycregg, Ballymena

Townland: Ballylesson

SMR number: Ballyclug Old Graveyard, ANT 037:045

State Care Scheduled Other

Grid reference: D12490102

County: Antrim

Excavation licence number: AE/10/201E

Planning reference number: G/2010/0465/E

Date of monitoring: 28 and 31 January 2011

Archaeologist present: Ruth Logue

Brief summary:

Monitoring of three test trenches excavated to subsoil to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on any previously unrecorded below-ground remains. Several features of archaeological significance found.

Type of monitoring: Mechanical back-acting digger

Size of area opened: Trench 1: 46.0m long
 Trench 2: 35.0m long
 Trench 3: 35.0m long

Current land use: Pasture

Intended land use: Single dwelling

Account of the monitoring

An archaeological evaluation was requested by Caseworker Neil Yeaman to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on any below-ground archaeological remains; there was the potential that the ground-works for this development could have impacted on buried remains associated with the site of the medieval church of Ballyclug.

The application site was located in a field adjacent to 21 Liminary Road, Ballyleson townland, in County Antrim (Figure 1). The proposed development was for a single dwelling. The application site was beside, and to the west of, Ballyclug Old Graveyard, ANT 037:045 (Figure 2). The graveyard was enclosed by a modern wall and at the east by the ruins of a school-house (Plate 1). The foundations of a church used to be present at the eastern end of the site; any standing masonry was used to build the school-house. The old entrance to the graveyard was at the north-west corner, but this was changed to its current position at the south-east. There had been an ancient paved roadway at this entrance; it is said to have led from Kells to the neighbourhood of Gracehill via Ballyclug. There is now no visible trace of the foundations of the church, the previous entrance or the roadway.

Topsoil stripping of three trenches, aligned approximately north-east/south-west, took place on 28 January 2011 using a smooth-edged bucket. On this date a couple of features were identified along with a number of possible features. These features were further investigated on 31 January and positively identified as being archaeological in nature. Both the Caseworker and the landowner were informed of the findings of the test trenching. Trenches have been named A, B and C, and features have been numbered from 1 to 10, for the purposes of this report.

Trench A

Trench A was 46.0m long and 2.0m to 2.2m wide.

Feature 1 was at the base of a dip in the subsoil, it was undetermined as to whether this feature is archaeological or natural. (Plate 2)

Feature 2 was linear and ran roughly north-west/south-east across the trench, it had a burnt layer along its surface. (Plate 3)

Trench B

Trench B was 35.0m long and 2.5m to 2.7m wide; the topsoil produced a blue glass bead and struck flint.

Feature 3a was a linear and adjacent to burnt spread 3b. (Plate 4)

Feature 4 was sectioned and turned out not to be archaeological in nature as it contained a sherd of modern pottery.

Feature 5 was a burnt area from which was recovered a piece of crucible.

6a, b and c were three legs of a feature which ran roughly at right angles to each other; they contained stones and appeared to be structure footings. Feature 6b contained a sherd of everted rim ware and a piece of struck flint, while 6c contained a piece of clay pipe stem. (Plate 5)

Trench C

Trench C was 35.0m long and 2.2m to 2.8m wide; the topsoil contained a flint flake and two pieces of burnt flint.

Feature 7 was small and sub-circular, and on sectioning the fill contained fragments of burnt flint. (Plate 6)

Feature 8 contained large stones and ran the width of the trench. Feature 9 was similar in nature to 8 but was at a higher level and contained more stones; it produced a piece of souterrain ware pottery. These two features lay roughly to the middle of the line of the graveyard wall (running north/west) and therefore approximately where the previous entrance to the graveyard site was reported (SMR) to have been. It was also reported that some of the paving stones with which the road was constructed were 3 feet broad; some of the stones within these features were of considerable size. There were also two trees, which stood apart from, and were of a different type to, the row of trees parallel to the graveyard wall, which were standing at the outer limits of the two features; it is unclear whether these are coincidental or deliberate plantings. (Plates 7, 8 and 9)

Feature 10 was linear and ran north-east/south-west through the trench running into the south-east-facing section; the fill contained a piece of struck flint. (Plates 8 and 9)

As a number of the finds are medieval in nature, it could be concluded that the features present within the trenches represented activity related to the medieval church.



Figure 1: 1: 50 000 map (supplied by Caseworker) showing site and surrounding area.

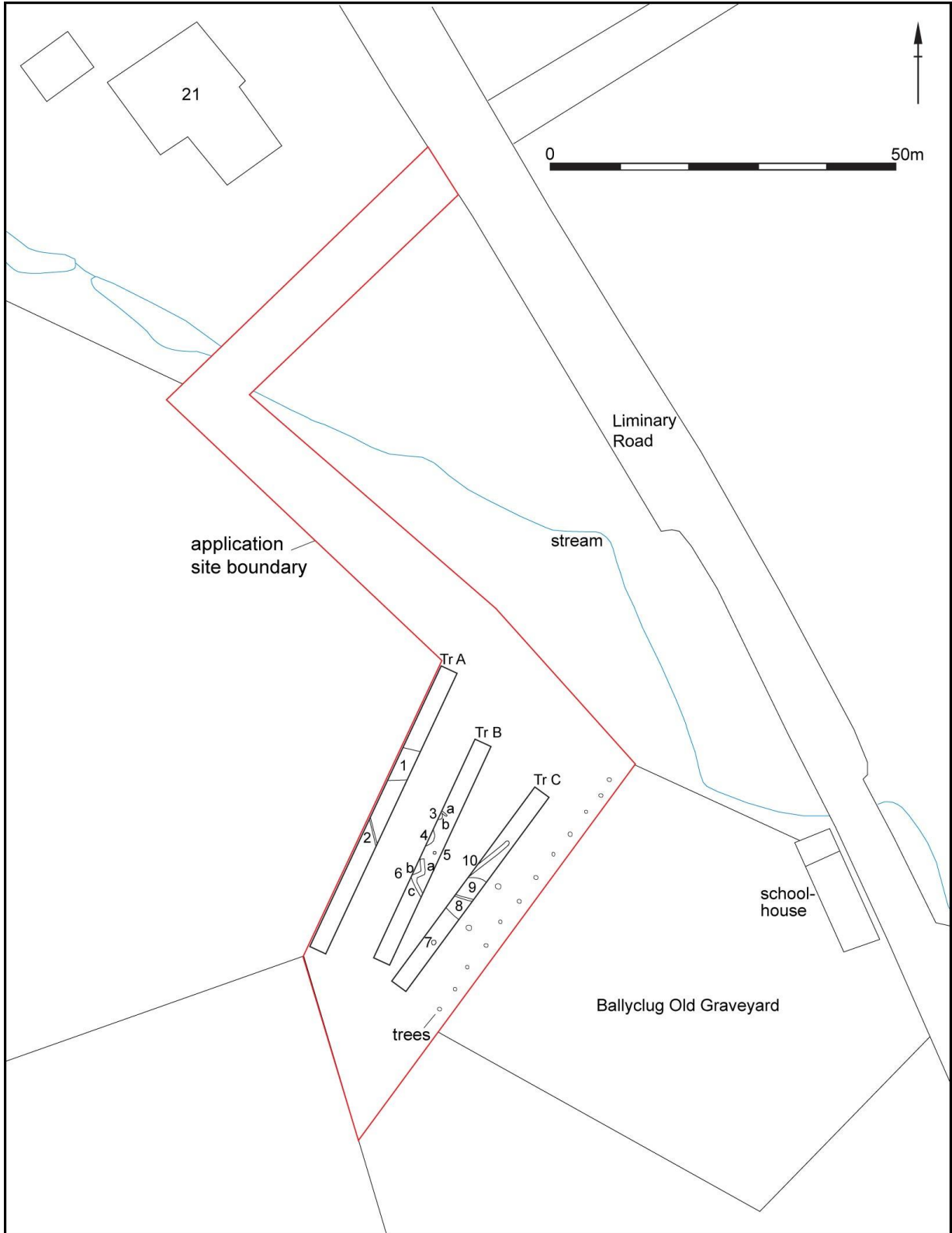


Figure 2: Plan of application site, showing locations of trenches and features, and the area immediately surrounding it.



Plate 1: Ballyclug Old Graveyard, and ruinous school-house, looking north-west.



Plate 2: Trench A, Feature 1, looking south-west.



Plate 3: Trench A, Feature 2, looking south-west.



Plate 4: Trench B, Feature 3, looking north-west.



Plate 5: Trench B, Features 6a, b and c, looking south-west.



Plate 6: Trench C, Feature 7 (sectioned), looking south-east.



Plate 7: Trench C, Feature 8 and part of 9, looking east.



Plate 8: Trench C, Features 9 and 10, looking north-east.



Plate 9: Trench C, showing Features 8, 9 and 10, looking south-west.