



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 257

**SITE ADJACENT TO 100 FORKHILL ROAD
AGHAYALLOGUE
MEIGH
COUNTY ARMAGH**

LICENCE NO.: AE/13/10E

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Adjacent to 100 Forkhill Road, Meigh, Co. Armagh

Townland: Aghyallogue

SMR No. : ARM 029:008,016 & 018

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: J 0599 2075

County: Armagh

Excavation Licence No. : AE/13/10E

Planning Ref / No. : P/2012/0849/O

Dates of Monitoring: 28th February 2013

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site adjacent to 100 Forkhill Road in Aghyallogue townland, Meigh, Co. Armagh in response to a planning application for a new dwelling and garage. The development site is approximately 95m to the south of the Danes Cast (NISMR ARM 029:016) and there are also other sites of archaeological significance in the general area. Four trenches were excavated at the site. The trenches were 2.1m wide and 30.0 - 39.0m long. No finds or features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the evaluation. It is therefore recommended that there is no need for any further archaeological mitigation at the site.

Type of monitoring:

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

Size of area opened:

Four trenches each 2.1m wide and ranging 30.0-39.0m long.

Current Land Use: Agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site for a proposed new dwelling and garage is located adjacent to 100 Forkhill Road on the outskirts of Meigh, Co. Armagh (Figure 1). It is around 6km south-west of Newry and lies at a height of around 100m above sea level, sloping gently from north-south, with good views to the south to Slieve Gullion (Plate 1). The site is located in the southern part of a large field (Plate 2). It covers an area of approximately 0.15 hectares, bounded to the south by the Forkhill Road. The western boundary of the site consists of mature conifer trees and a post-and-wire fence, beyond which is a dwelling house, while the eastern site is enclosed by a dry stone wall overgrown with hawthorn trees, gorse and other small trees (Plate 3). The northern end of the site is unenclosed but the boundary is in line with the corner of the house plot to the west. Prior to the evaluation the site was used as pasture.

The evaluation was requested due to the proximity of the site to a segment of the Danes Cast (NISMR ARM 029:008). This linear earthwork is thought to have been constructed during the Iron Age and is similar to other linear earthworks in the border area such as the Dorsey in Co. Armagh. The Danes Cast consists of a single ditch with a bank on the downslope side. To the north of the evaluation site local knowledge suggests that there was a souterrain (NISMR ARM 029:018) set into the north-eastern side of the Danes Cast. The Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) notes that the existence of this feature is uncertain.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for a new farm dwelling and was requested by Kevin Maguire of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Historic Monuments Unit.

Excavation

Four test trenches, each measuring 2.1m wide and 30.0-39.0m long were excavated at the site in the approximate positions shown on Figure 3. The trenches were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil which was encountered at depths of between 0.3-0.4m.

Trench 1

Trench 1 ran parallel with the westernmost field boundary and was 4.0m out from it (to avoid an electrical cable running alongside the boundary). It was 5.0m from the road which borders the site to the south. The trench was 2.1m wide and 38.0m long (Plates 4 and 5). The uppermost layer in Trench 1 was the sod and topsoil layer (C101) which consisted of dark brown silty loamy clay. It contained a few small sub-rounded stones around 2mm long and was 0.1m thick. There were no finds in the topsoil apart from modern plastic sheeting. Below the sod and topsoil layer was a cultivation layer (C102) consisting of dark brown loamy clay silt. It contained angular and sub-angular stones 50mm long and was 0.2m thick. There were no finds in the layer. Below the cultivation layer was the subsoil (C103) which consisted of stony

orange brown boulder clay. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.3-0.4m, slightly deeper at the northern end of the trench. No finds or features of archaeological significance were observed in Trench 1.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located 2.5m to the east of Trench 1 and was roughly parallel to it. The trench was 3.0m from the southernmost field boundary. It was 2.1m wide and 39.0m long (Plates 6 and 7) stones around 2mm in diameter. There were no finds in the topsoil. Below the topsoil was a cultivation layer (C202) consisting of dark brown loamy clay silt around 0.2m thick and containing larger angular stones around 50mm long. The layer contained some small sherds of glazed red earthenware. It overlay the subsoil (C203) which was heterogeneous in character, varying from orange brown clay to gravel. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m. Cut into the subsoil, at the southern end of the trench and stratigraphically below the cultivation layer (C202), was a linear feature (C204: Plate 8) running north-south. The feature was 0.8m wide and at least 4.0m long. A small investigative section across it revealed that it was 0.15m deep with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. The feature was filled with mid brown clay sand (C205) and contained no finds. The nature of the feature and its position north-south running gently down-slope indicates that it is a cultivation ridge and not of archaeological significance. There were no other subsoil-cut features in Trench 2.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located 2.5m to the east of and parallel to Trench 2. The trench was 2.0m from the southernmost field boundary of the site. It was 2.0m wide and 36.0m long (Plates 9 and 10). The stratigraphically latest layer in Trench 3 was the sod and topsoil layer (C301) which consisted of dark brown silty loamy clay with few small stones around 2mm long. It was 0.10-0.15m thick. Below the topsoil was a cultivation layer (C302) consisting of dark brown loamy clay silt containing some angular to sub-angular stones 50mm long. The layer was 0.15-0.20m thick. The cultivation layer physically overlay the subsoil (C303) which consisted of sandy boulder clay ranging in colour from yellow to orange to brown. Cut into the subsoil at the southern end of the trench were two linear features (C304/305 and C306/307: Plate 11). The first linear feature (C304) was 0.3m wide and 0.08m deep (Plate 12). It ran for 2.5m north-west/south-east and was filled with mid brown clay sand (C305). No artefacts were found within the feature. The second linear feature (C306) ran parallel to the first. It was 0.3m wide, at least 3.0m long and 0.10m deep (Plate 13). It was filled with mid brown clay sand (C307) containing no finds. Both features were interpreted as the traces of cultivation ridges and there were no other subsoil-cut features in Trench 3.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located 4.0m to the east of Trench 3 and 2.0m from the field's southernmost boundary. The trench was 2.0m wide and 30.0m long (Plates 14 and 15). It ran at a slight angle to Trench 3. The uppermost layer of Trench 4 was the sod

and topsoil layer (C401) which comprised dark brown silty clay 0.1m thick and containing some small stones 2mm long. Below the topsoil was a cultivation layer (C402) consisting of dark brown loamy clay silt with angular to sub-angular stones 50mm long. It was 0.2m thick. The cultivation layer overlay the subsoil (C403) which consisted of brownish orange sandy clay which was stony in parts. There were no subsoil-cut features in Trench 4.

The evaluation uncovered evidence of cultivation. This was indicated by the presence of traces of cultivation ridges and also the depth/thickness of the cultivation layer in each of the four trenches. It is probable that these features are of modern date. No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered within the four trenches excavated at the proposed development site. 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: _____



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Figure 1: Map showing the location of the site (red dot)

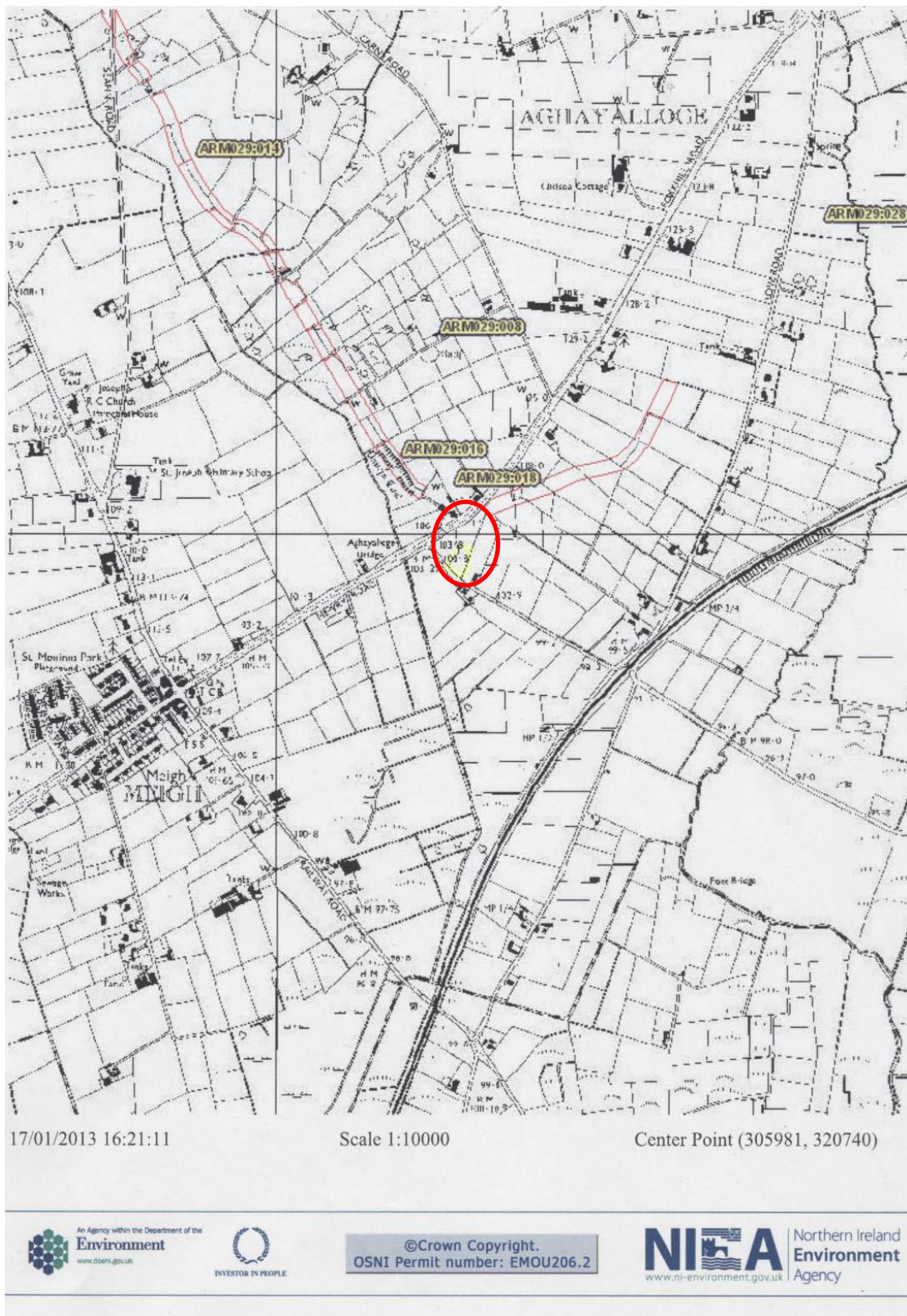


Figure 2: Detailed map showing the location of the site (circled in red). The red lines to the north indicate the position of the Dane's Cast earthwork

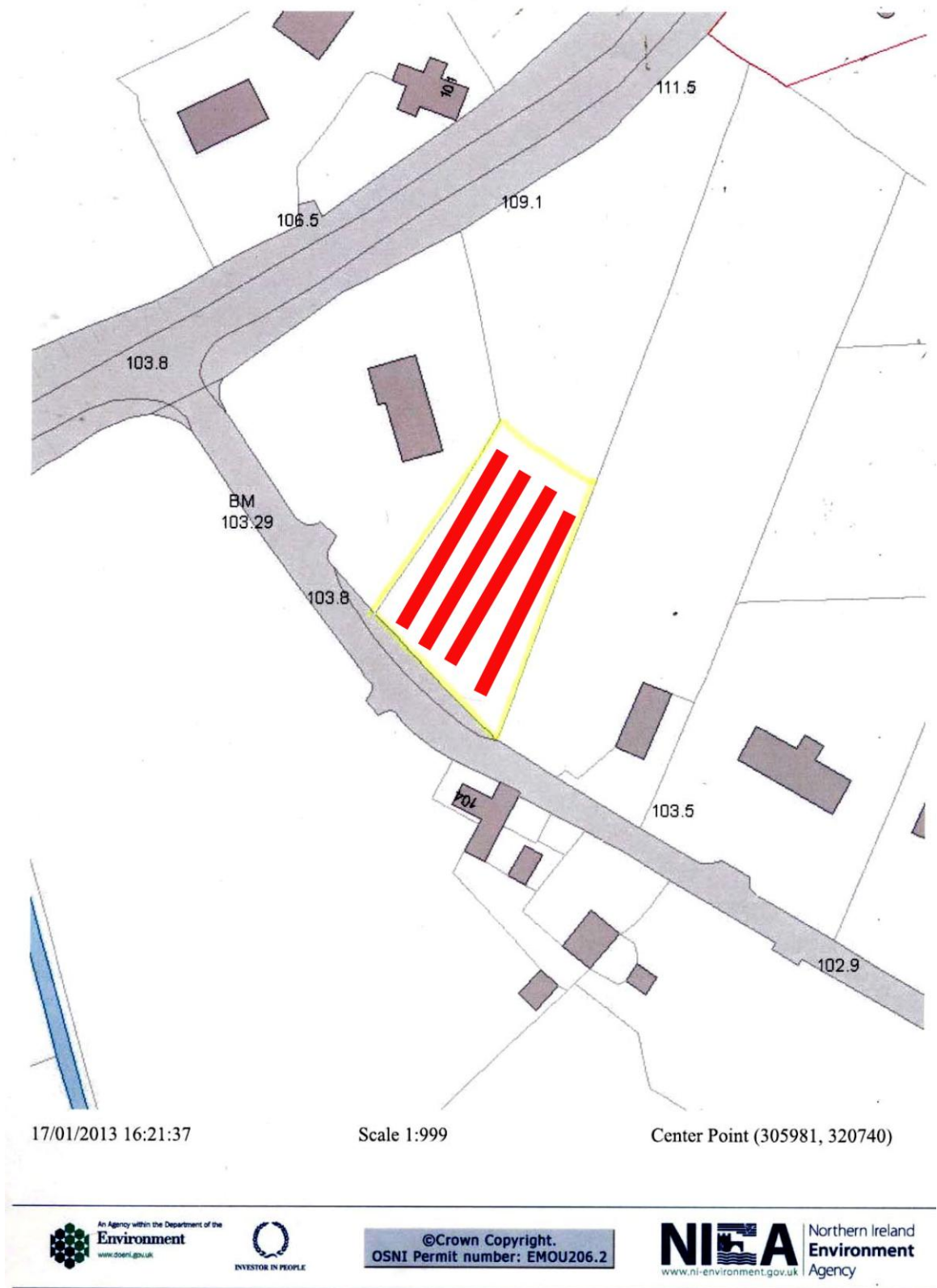


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of test trenches (1-4 from left to right)



Plate 1: General view of the site midway through the evaluation, looking south



Plate 2: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking north



Plate 3: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking north-east



Plate 4: Trench 1 following excavation to subsoil level, looking north



Plate 5: Part of east-facing section in Trench 1, looking west



Plate 6: Trench 2 following excavation to subsoil level, looking north



Plate 7: Part of east-facing section of Trench 2, looking west



Plate 8: Linear feature in Trench 2 (C204/205), looking south



Plate 9: Trench 3 following excavation to subsoil level, looking north



Plate 10: Part of west-facing section of Trench 3, looking east



Plate 11: Linear features (C304/305: left & C306/307: right) in Trench 3, looking south



Plate 12: Section through linear feature (C304/305), looking north



Plate 13: Section through linear feature (C306/307), looking north



Plate 14: Trench 4 following excavation to subsoil level, looking south



Plate 15: Part of east-facing section of Trench 4, looking west