



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 248

**OLD GENERAL HOSPITAL
WOODSIDE AVENUE
LISNAMALLARD
COUNTY TYRONE**

LICENCE NO.: AE/12/132E

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Old General Hospital, Woodside Avenue, Omagh, Co. Tyrone

Townland: Lisnamallard

SMR No. : TYR 035:024

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: H 4553 7341

County: Tyrone

Excavation Licence No. : AE/12/132E

Planning Ref / No. : K/2012/0383/F

Dates of Monitoring: 28th September 2012

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site in the vicinity of Omagh Workhouse (NISMR TYR 035:024). Previous investigations at the site uncovered burials. The evaluation consisted of two small test trenches in advance of service pipe installation. The trenches were approximately 2m by 3m in size and mechanically excavated. Brick foundations were uncovered in both test trenches. There were no finds associated and they appeared to be modern in date. It is recommended that no further work is carried out at the site as the development does not pose a threat to significant archaeological remains.

Type of monitoring:

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

Size of area opened:

Two trenches each 2.0m wide and 3.0m long

Current Land Use: Waste ground

Intended Land Use: Commercial

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located to the rear of Omagh Early Years Centre on the grounds of the old general hospital in Woodside Avenue, Omagh, Co. Tyrone (Figure 1). The planning application consists of the installation of a modular building and associated services. The site consists of an area of concrete, tarmac and weeds. The trenches were excavated on a gravelly area in the vicinity of a sewage pipe.

The site is close to the location of the former workhouse and fever hospital (NISMR No. TYR 035:024). Omagh workhouse opened in 1841 following the establishment of the Omagh Poor Law Union in 1839. It was followed a decade later by a purpose-built fever hospital for the confinement of those with infectious diseases such as typhus. The fever hospital was later incorporated into the Omagh General Hospital, while the workhouse buildings were demolished in 1967.

Previous work at the site in 2007 uncovered a number of burials in the grounds of Omagh General Hospital. Monitoring by Brian Sloan (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast), which was undertaken as part of the planning application for a temporary classroom within the Early Years complex, uncovered a grave cut containing a child's burial as well as eleven other possible grave cuts. The grave cuts were left undisturbed and were reburied underneath geotextile and hardcore. The excavator concluded that the graves were within a previously unknown extension to the original burial ground of the fever hospital.

This investigation was followed by a detailed geophysical survey using ground penetrating radar, magnetometer and metal detectors which identified a number of anomalies- probably representing over 70 graves. An excavation in the main graveyard site in 2009 uncovered 45 burials from an area measuring less than 100m² (Archaeological Development Services).

Further archaeological testing to the west of the main graveyard area was undertaken at the site in 2009 as part of the planning application for the development of a horticultural therapy centre by Kara Ward (Archaeological Development Services). The area under investigation had been highly disturbed by construction works through the years. No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Excavation

The licence application and research design for the site proposed the excavation of two evaluative trenches in the area where the modular building would be connected to services. Two trenches were excavated in this area, each measuring 2.0m by 3.0m (Figure 3). Each was excavated to the surface of brick foundations, a depth of approximately 1.5m.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 2.0m wide and 3.0m long. It was located beside the northernmost side boundary and ran parallel to it. The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 consisted of a gravelly/grassy layer (C101) consisting of angular stones around 100mm long. Below this was a topsoil (C102) consisting of dark grey stony clay loam. It overlay a hardcore

deposit (C103) of angular stones of a mixture of sizes. The hardcore deposit stratigraphically overlay a rubbly deposit (C105) consisting of large stone rubble in a matrix of sandy gravel. This deposit was contained within brick foundations (C104), the corner of which was encountered in the trench. The foundations were 0.3m wide and consisted of angular red bricks. They had been built directly onto a greenish grey boulder clay subsoil (C106). There were no finds associated with the foundations.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located 7.0m to the west of Trench 1 and also ran parallel to the northernmost boundary of the site. The trench was 2.0m wide by 3.0m long. The uppermost deposit in the trench was a gravelly/grassy layer (C201) similar to the uppermost deposit in Trench 1 (C101). Below this was a dark brownish black clay (C202) which contained coarse rubble components including brick and stone. This deposit overlay two walls which were probably part of the same brick foundations encountered in Trench 1. The earlier wall (C203) ran east-west along the edge of the trench. This was overlain by a second wall (C204) which ran perpendicular to the first. The walls had been built directly onto the greyish green boulder clay subsoil (C205). There were no finds associated with the foundations.

Brick foundations were uncovered in both test trenches. It was not possible to date these remains due to the paucity of artefacts. However, examination of Ordnance Survey maps dating between 1854 and 1940 shows no buildings on this part of the site. It is likely, therefore, that the foundations post-date the mid-20th century. After discussion of the remains with NIEA: Built Heritage staff it was decided that no further archaeological mitigation would be carried out due to the limited scale of the development and the fact it would not impinge on the remains. A short summary has been prepared for inclusion in *'Excavations 2012'*.

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: _____



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



Figure 2: Detailed map showing the location of the site (circled in red)

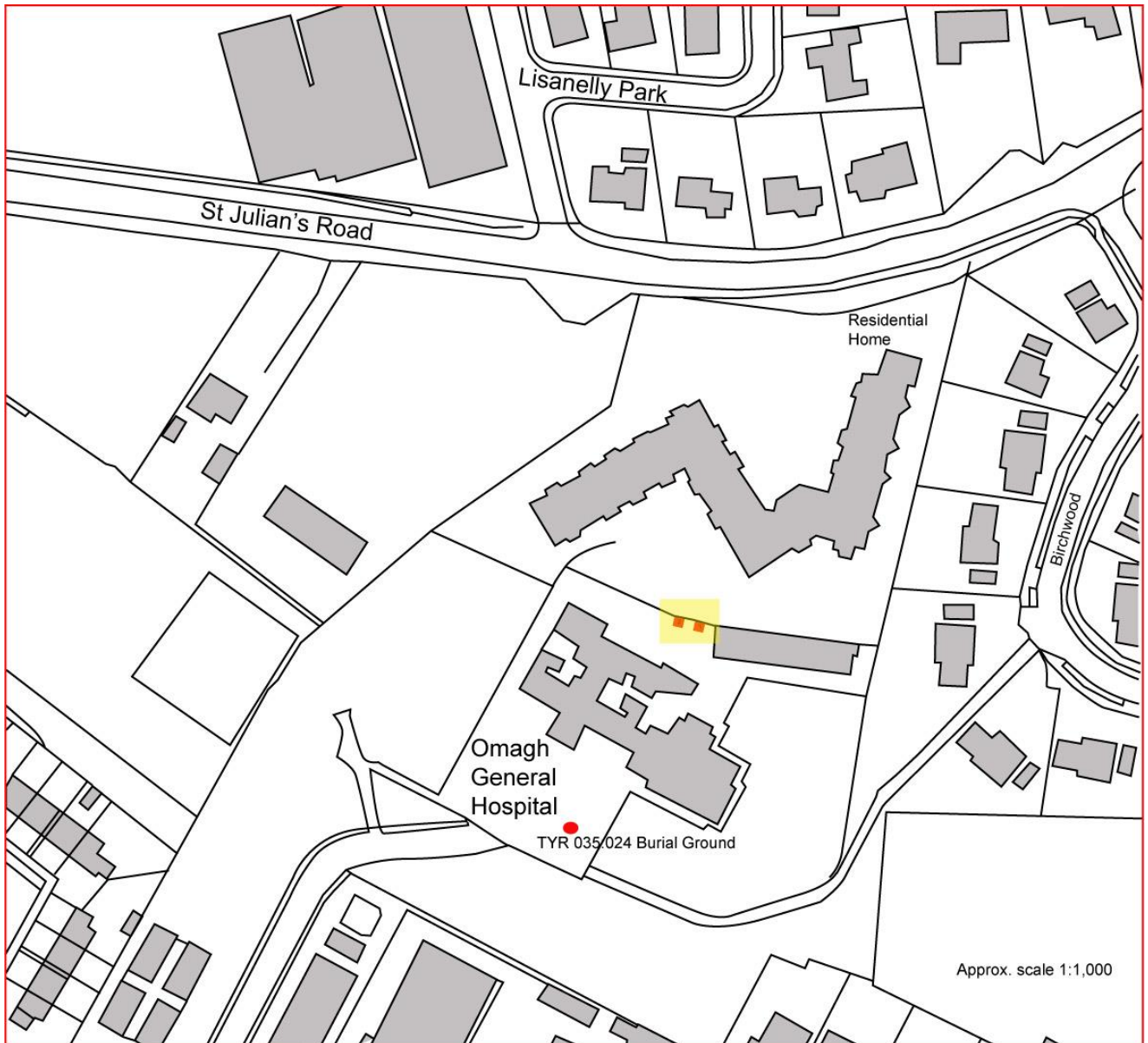


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of test trenches (red rectangles within highlighted area)



Plate 1: General view of application site, looking north-west



Plate 2: General view of application site, looking south



Plate 3: General view of application site during evaluation, looking east



Plate 4: Brick foundations in Trench 1 (C104), looking west



Plate 5: Walls in Trench 2 (C203 & 204), looking east



Plate 6: Walls in Trench 2 (C203 & 204, looking north