



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 144

**150m NE of 86 Glasdrumman Road
Crossmaglen
Newry
County Armagh**

LICENCE NO. : AE/07/168

David McIlreavy

Site Specific Information

Site Name : 150m NE of 86 Glasdrumman Road, Crossmaglen, Newry,
Co. Armagh

Townland : Glasdrumman

County : Armagh

Grid Ref. : H 9665 1461

SMR No. : ARM 31:27

State Care : Scheduled []
Other [X]

Excavation Licence No : AE/07/168

Planning Ref / No. : P/2006/0904/F

Dates of Monitoring : 12/10/2007

Archaeologist Present : David McIlreavy

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in the townland of Glasdrumman, Co. Armagh, as part of the planning regulations surrounding the erection of a new building. The archaeological evaluation was requested due to the proximity of a tower house and bawn site (ARM 031: 027). The NISMR indicates that the site was originally that of an O'Neill castle, sacked in 1642, partially rebuilt, and then demolished in the early 1700s. No visible remains are noted for the site.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of the area of proposed dwelling, by mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 metre wide smooth edged bucket, under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Three trenches were opened on the proposed house site (A, B and C), 35m, 25m and 10m respectively. All trenches 2 metres wide. The proposed trench to be opened across the access way was not completed due to the frequency of bedrock outcropping across the trench area. In place of the trench across the proposed access way two sondages were archaeologically excavated by hand.

Current Land Use: Agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was conducted in the townland of Glasdrumman, approximately 150m NE of the Glasdrumman Road, Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh. The proposed development site consisted of a roughly rectangular field, approximately 75 m NE – SW, and 50 m NW - SE (Fig. 3). The site slopes SW to NE, and has a significant rock outcrop at the SW entrance to the field. Heavy vegetative cover was noted to the SE area of the site.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling, and was requested by Andrew Gault (Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage) due to the proximity of the development site to the site of a tower house and bawn (ARM 31:27) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this site.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological supervision of three mechanically excavated test trenches (A , B and C), approximately 45 m, 30, and 25 metres respectively, all of which were 2 metres wide. These test trenches were excavated to the glacial subsoil level, which was noted as a reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions. Two evaluation sondages (Trenches D and E) were excavated along the course of the proposed access way, approximately 50 cm x 50 cm, and were excavated to a depth of 10cm where unmodified bedrock was encountered.

Trench A was excavated running 45m NW – SE along the raised area that provided access to the field. The topsoil (Context No. 101) was a light brown grey sandy loam (approximately 70 / 30 % sand:loam) varying in depth between 10 cm at the NW end of the trench, increasing to approximately 30 cm at the SE end. This layer showed little organic content, and frequent stone inclusions c. 5 x 3 x 3 cm. Given the lack of organic inclusions and the undulating nature of the proposed development site, it is unlikely that the site has been significantly agriculturally improved.

The topsoil (Context No. 101) directly overlay the glacial boulder clay (Context 102), with bedrock ridges noted in the NW are of the trench.

At the SE extremity of Trench 1 an irregular feature was noted running across the trench, with an indistinct terminus. The main body of the feature was approximately 1

m wide, and the exposed area ran for approximately 1.5 metres. The fill of the feature was a light grey sandy loam with stone inclusions (Context No. 103). The fill was almost analogous with the topsoil for the trench, however, there were noticeably higher stone inclusions. No finds were recovered from this trench.

Trench B was excavated running 30m NE – SW, along the proposed limit of the house footprint. The topsoil (Context No. 201) was a light brown sandy loam (approximately 70 / 30 % sand:loam), approximately 40 cm in depth. Little organic content was observed in the layer, and frequent, well distributed stone inclusions c. 5 x 3 x 3 cm were observed. The layer is considered analogous with the topsoil layer (Context No. 101) in Trench A. The topsoil layer (Context No. 201) directly overlay the glacial subsoil (Context No. 202), a reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions.

Trench C was excavated running 25 m NW – SE, along the base of a hollow in the proposed development site. The topsoil (Context No. 301) was a light brown sandy loam (approximately 70 / 30% sand:loam), approximately 40 cm in depth. The layer is considered analogous with both Context No. 101 and 201. The topsoil layer (Context No. 301) directly overlay the glacial subsoil (Context No. 302), a reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions.

Trenches D and E were excavated along the proposed access way to the development site. This area had frequent rock outcropping, and consequently it was considered unsuitable for mechanical excavation. The two trenches were excavated with hand tools, and revealed that a thin organic rich topsoil (Context Nos. 401 and 501) directly overlay bedrock. The depth of the topsoil layer in both trenches was approximately 10 cm at its maximum. No finds were recorded from Trenches D and E.

Interpretation

The feature archaeologically excavated in Trench A is considered to be a modern leveling deposit, used to fill a natural hollow at the base of the entrance 'ramp' to the proposed development site. The rock outcropping noted in Trench A is considered to be unmodified. Both Trenches B and C showed no evidence of previously unrecorded archaeological remains.

Given the rock outcropping on the proposed access way to the development site, Trenches D and E were archaeologically excavated as *sondages*, which revealed no archaeological features or artefacts.

Recommendations

It is not considered that the proposed development of the main site will impact on previously unrecorded archaeological remains. Consequently, it is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out, and no further publication except a short summary in the annual '*Excavations*' bulletin.

Table 1

Context Register

Context No.	Description
101	Light brown sandy loam topsoil
102	Reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions
103	Light brown sandy loam with frequent stony inclusions
201	Light brown sandy loam topsoil
202	Reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions
301	Light brown sandy loam topsoil
302	Reddish orange boulder clay with frequent stony inclusions
401	Black topsoil with frequent organic inclusions
501	Black topsoil with frequent organic inclusions

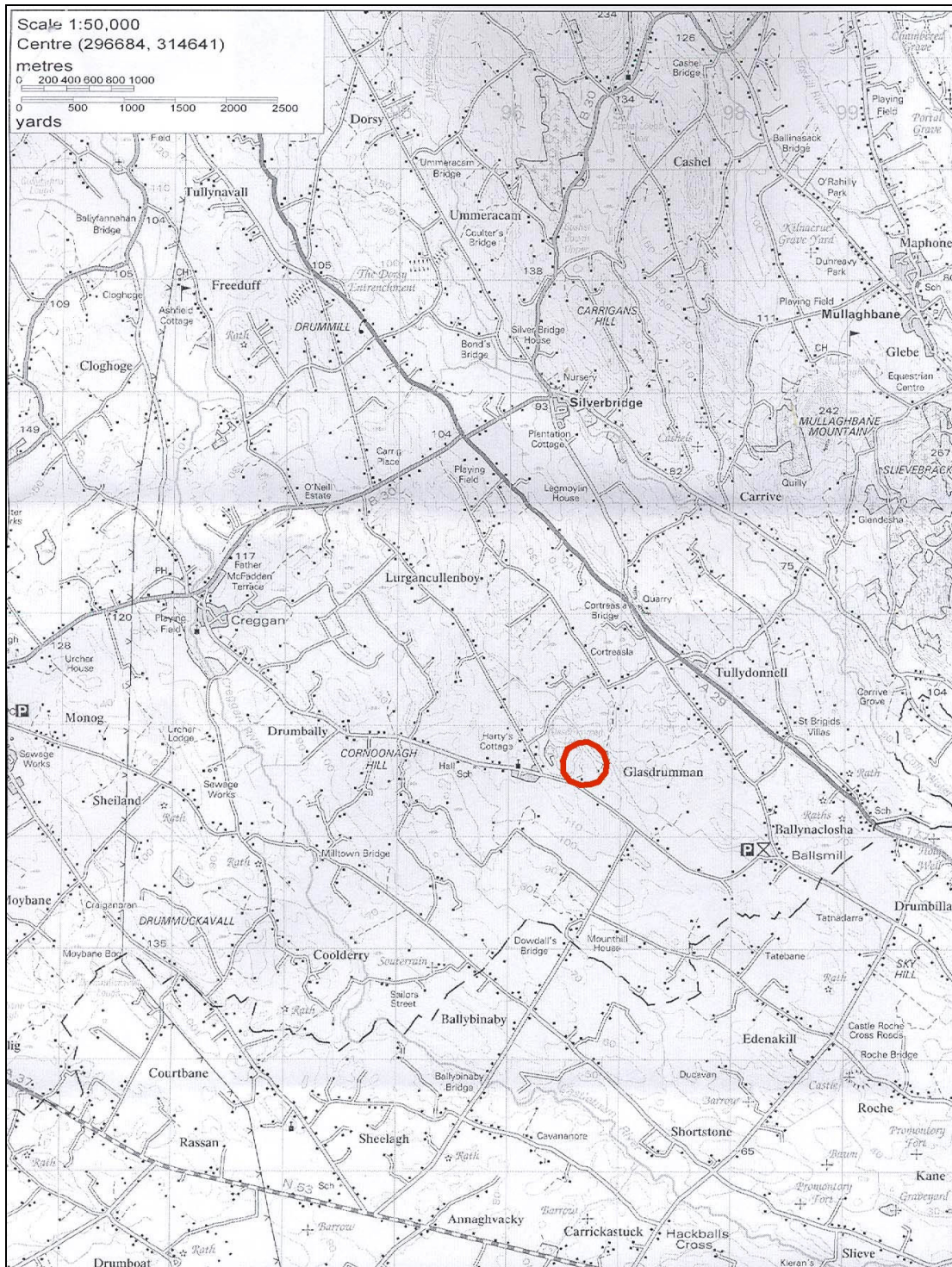


Fig. 1 Location map of the development site (circled in red).

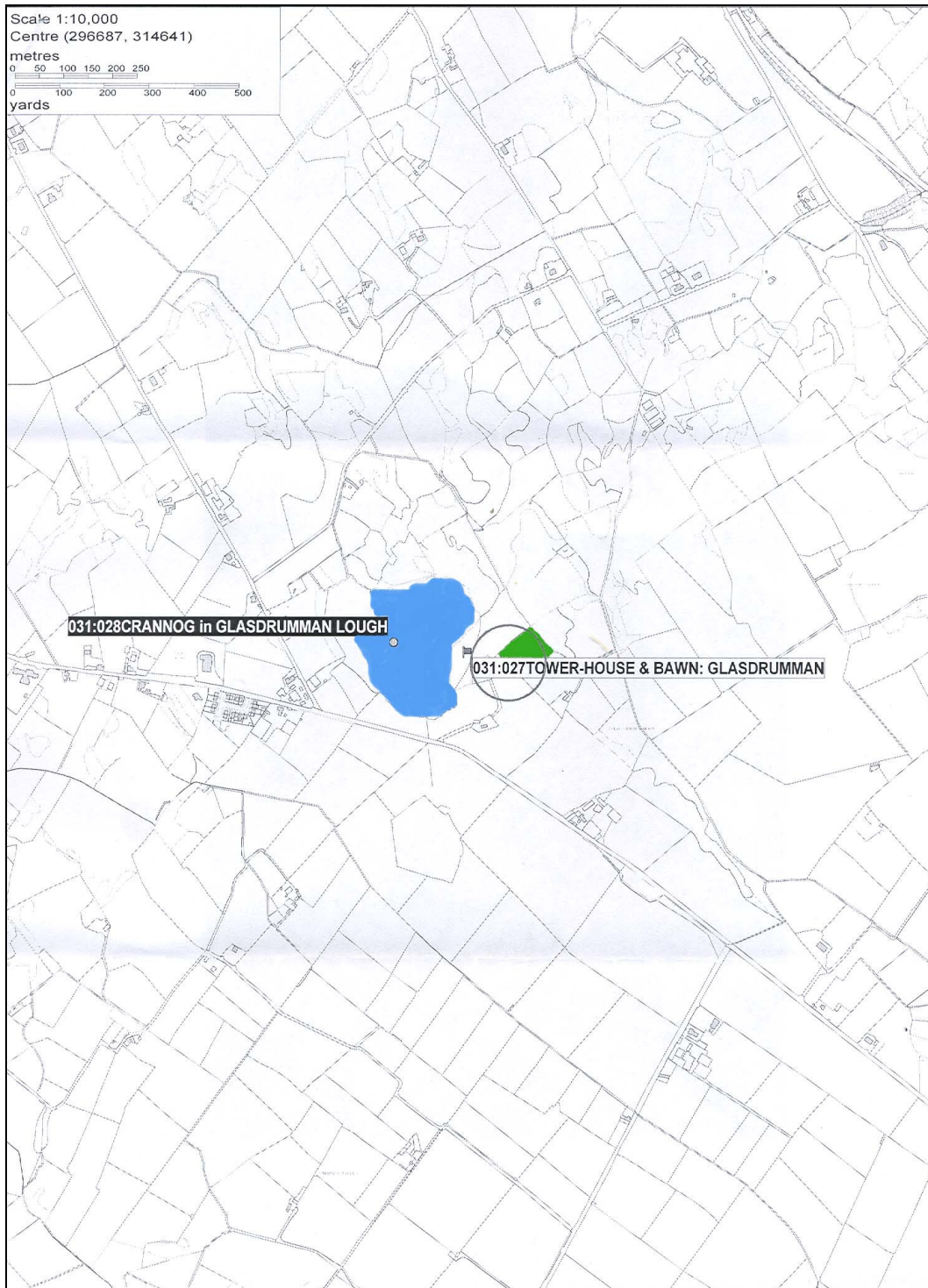


Fig. 2 Location map of development site (highlighted in green) in relation to Glasdrumman Lough (in blue). The location of the tower house and bawn (ARM 31:27) are circled.

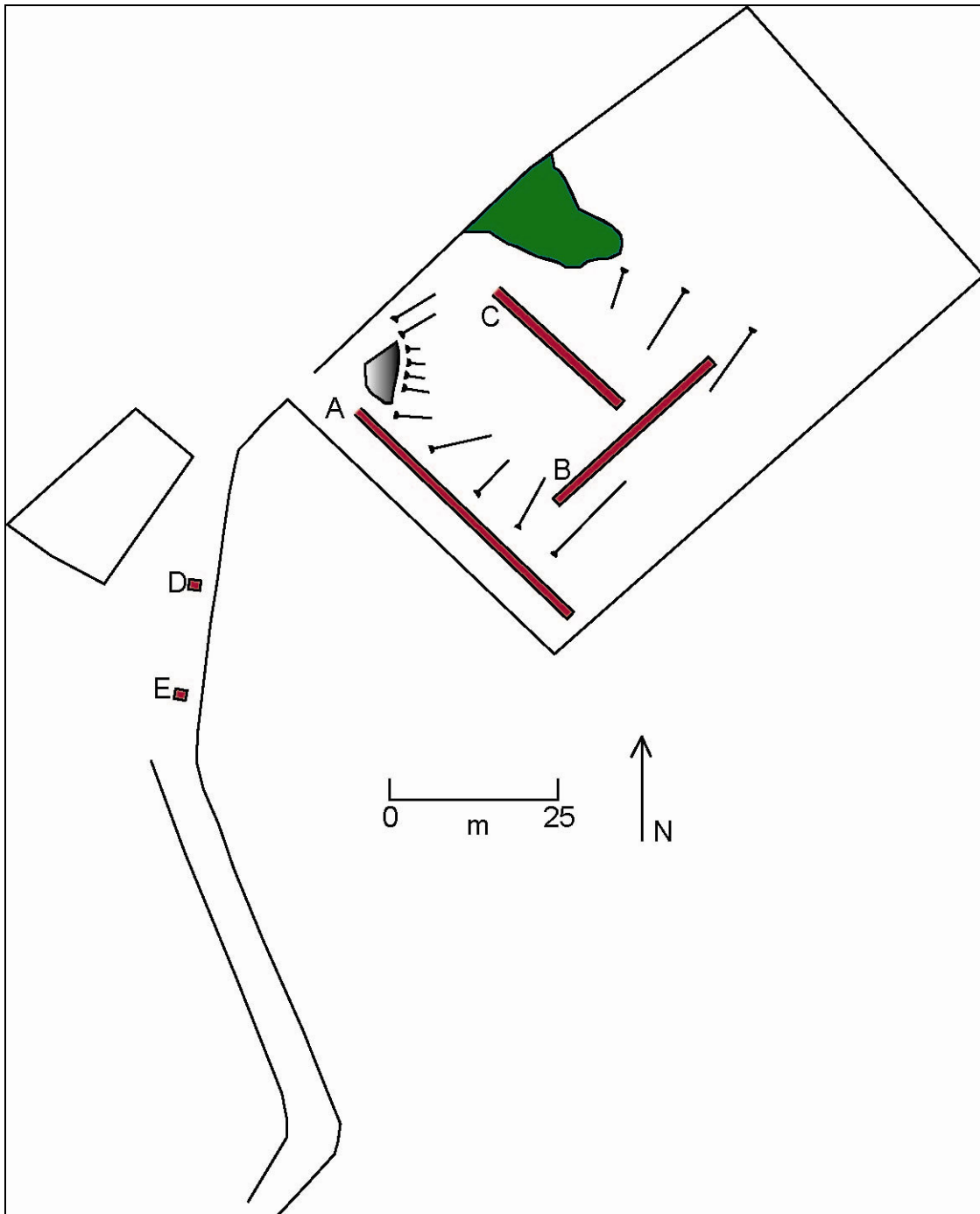


Fig. 3 Plan of the proposed development site. The rock outcropping at the entrance to the development site is colored grey, and the area of heavy vegetation is colored green. Trenches A, B and C were mechanically excavated, whilst D and E were *sondages*.



Plate 1 General shot of proposed development site looking NW during excavation of Trench C. Note the entrance 'ramp' to the left of shot along which Trench A was excavated.



Plate 2 Excavation of Trench A, looking SW, showing unmodified rock outcropping.



Plate 3 Excavation of feature (Context No. 103) at NE end of Trench A, interpreted as a leveling deposit.



Plate 4 Excavation of Trench B showing the depth of topsoil (Context No. 201) and frequent stony inclusions.



Plate 5 Excavation of Trench C, looking SE, showing topsoil (Context No. 301) directly overlying glacial sub soil (Context No. 302)



Plate 6 General shot of proposed access way for the development site. Trench E was excavated at this area of the access way encountering bedrock at approximately 10 cm.



Plate 7 General shot, looking NE, showing the proposed access way to the development site and the frequent bedrock outcropping of the area.