



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 253

**ADJACENT TO 50 LIBERTY ROAD
MIDDLE DIVISION
CARRICKFERGUS
COUNTY ANTRIM**

LICENCE NO.: AE/12/147E

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: site adjacent to 50 Liberty Road, Middle Division, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim

Townland: Middle Division

SMR No. : ANT 052:016

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: C3881 9012

County: Antrim

Excavation Licence No. : AE/12/147E

Planning Ref / No. : V/2012/0099/F

Dates of Monitoring: 5th November 2012

Archaeologist(s) Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site adjacent to 50 Liberty Road, Middle Division, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim in response to a planning application for a new dwelling and garage. The site is approximately 100m north-east from Killyann Church and graveyard (NISMR ANT 052:016) and there are two further scheduled monuments within 250m. The evaluation consisted of four mechanically-excavated test trenches each 1.6m wide and 35.0-36.0m long. Several features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the evaluation. These are described in the following report. It is recommended that further archaeological mitigation is carried out at the site and suggested that this consists of topsoil-stripping the footprint of the proposed development and associated groundworks.

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 approximately 1.6m wide and 35.0-36.0m 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 on the outskirts of Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, around 3.5km from the town centre (Figures 1 and 2). The site occupies a ridge overlooking the town at a height of 162m above sea level. There are a number of sites of archaeological interest in the surrounding area. In closest proximity to the evaluation site is Killyann Church (NISMR ANT 052:016). There are no visible remains of this site which occupies a flat ridge overlooking a small stream approximately 100m to the south-west of the proposed development site. There are another two sites of archaeological interest within 250m of the proposed development site. These consist of a motte known as Duncrue Fort (NISMR ANT 052:014) and a rectangular fortification known as Dunrock (NISMR ANT 052:015). Both occupy the same field to the south-west.

The application site is located in the northern portion of a large field approximately 0.88 hectares in size (Plates 1-4). The area of the proposed development itself occupies around 0.23 hectares. The site is bounded on the northern, eastern, south-eastern and southern sides by hawthorn hedges growing from a stone wall or bank. The limit of the development area to the south is defined by a break in slope beyond which the ground falls away to the lower part of the field. There is a dwelling house to the west of the site. The site commands excellent views, particularly to Belfast Lough and the North Co. Down coastline.

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

Excavation

The original evaluation request proposed the excavation of five test trenches of approximately 60m in length. Given the topography of the site and the location of the proposed new dwelling, garage and associated services, it was decided that four trenches each around 35m long would be excavated and concentrated in the area of the proposed works (Figures 3 and 4).

The trenches were 1.6m wide and 35.0-36.0m long. The trenches were all excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the northern part of the field and ran parallel to the northernmost field boundary. The trench was 4.0m from the easternmost boundary and 22.0m from the westernmost field boundary. It was 1.6m wide and 35.0m long (Plates 5 and 6). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 1 (C101) consisted of mid brown loamy clay containing few coarse components. It was 0.1m thick and overlay a cultivation layer (C102) of mid brown loamy clay with sub-angular stones 30mm long. It was 0.25-0.30m thick and contained gravelly patches at the western end. Modern glass, 19th century pottery and natural flint were found within the cultivation layer.

Below the cultivation layer was a linear/curvilinear feature (C103/104) which was 14.0m from the eastern end of the trench (Plates 7 and 8). The cut of the feature (C103) was approximately 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep at its deepest point. The feature was subsoil-cut with steep sides to the north-east and a step at the south-western side. The base was flattish and stone-lined. The feature ran broadly north-west/south-east. It was filled with compact mottled black/greyish orange silty clay (C104). The fill contained occasional small sub-rounded to sub-angular grits which were 10mm long. It contained lumps and flecks of charcoal along with possible flint micro-debitage. The upper part of the fill contained sub-rounded stones around 200mm long.

At the western end of the trench were a pair of linear features (C105/106 and 107/108: Plate 9). These resembled cultivation ridges and ran west north-west and east south-east, parallel to one another with a strip of subsoil in between. Both were filled with compact mid brown silty clay with some small sub-rounded stones (30mm long). The linear features were also cut into the subsoil (C109) which in Trench 1 consisted of orange boulder clay, the surface of which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located 4.0m to the south of Trench 1 and ran parallel to it. It was 5.0m from the easternmost field boundary. The trench was 1.6m wide and 35.0m long (Plates 10 and 11). The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 2 (C201) consisted of mid brown compact loamy clay which contained no stones. The layer was 0.1m thick. Below it was a cultivation layer (C202) consisting of mid brown loamy clay with sub-angular to sub-rounded stones 20mm long. The layer was 0.2m thick and contained 20th century pottery, glass and natural flint. Following the removal of the cultivation layer it was possible to see three features cut into the subsoil. Around 8m from the western end of the trench was the cut (C203) and fill (C204) of a field drain which ran north-west/south-east (Plate 12). The feature was 0.2m wide and filled with angular gravel 20mm long. It was not investigated any further. Approximately 14m from the eastern end of the trench was the cut (C205) and fill (C206) of another field drain (Plate 13). The feature was 0.3m wide and filled with angular gravel 20mm long in a matrix of mid orangeish brown silty clay.

Also cut into the subsoil in Trench 2 was an irregularly-shaped feature (C207/208: Plate 14) 1m to the west of the field drain (C203/204). The feature was filled with mottled black/grey/orange clay silt and contained possible flint debitage. The subsoil (C209) in Trench 2 consisted of orange boulder clay with stones, the surface of which was encountered at a depth of 0.3m.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located 4m to the south of Trench 2 and ran parallel to it. The trench was 1.6m wide and 36.0m long and was 4.0m from the easternmost field boundary (Plates 15 and 16). The uppermost layer in Trench 3 consisted of the sod and topsoil layer (C301). This was a mid-brown silty clay which was 0.1m thick and contained no stones. Below the sod and topsoil layer was a cultivation layer (C302) consisting of mid-brown silty clay. It contained sub-angular stones 20mm long and was 0.2m thick.

The cultivation layer also contained pottery, glass and natural flint. Following the removal of the cultivation layer a linear feature (C303/304) was visible cut into the subsoil of Trench 3 (Plate 17). This feature was probably a continuation of the field drain (C203/204) uncovered in Trench 2. It was 0.3m wide, filled with angular gravel 20mm long and ran north-west/south-east through the trench. The subsoil in Trench 3 consisted of orange boulder clay which was encountered at a depth of 0.3m.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was positioned 5m to the south of Trench 3 and ran parallel to it. It was 4.0m from the easternmost field boundary. The trench was 1.6m wide and 35.0m long (Plates 18 and 19). The uppermost layer in Trench 4 consisted of the sod and topsoil layer (C401) which consisted of mid-brown loamy clay with no stones. It was 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer was the cultivation layer (C402) which consisted of mid brown silty clay with some sub-angular stones which were 20mm long. The layer was 0.2m thick. The cultivation layer overlay the boulder clay subsoil (C403) which was orange in colour and contained stones as well as some natural flint pressed into the surface. The surface of the subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.3m.

Several features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the evaluation. The most significant is the cut feature in Trench 1 (C103/104). The nature of this feature and the presence of possible struck flint may suggest that it is of prehistoric origin. Another possible feature in Trench 2 (C207/208) may be of a similar nature. Due to the presence of these negative features it is recommended that further archaeological mitigation is carried out. This could consist of using a mechanical excavator to strip topsoil from the footprint of the proposed development and associated services. Any archaeological features could then be planned and half-sectioned to obtain information on their character and date.

Archive:

Finds:

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

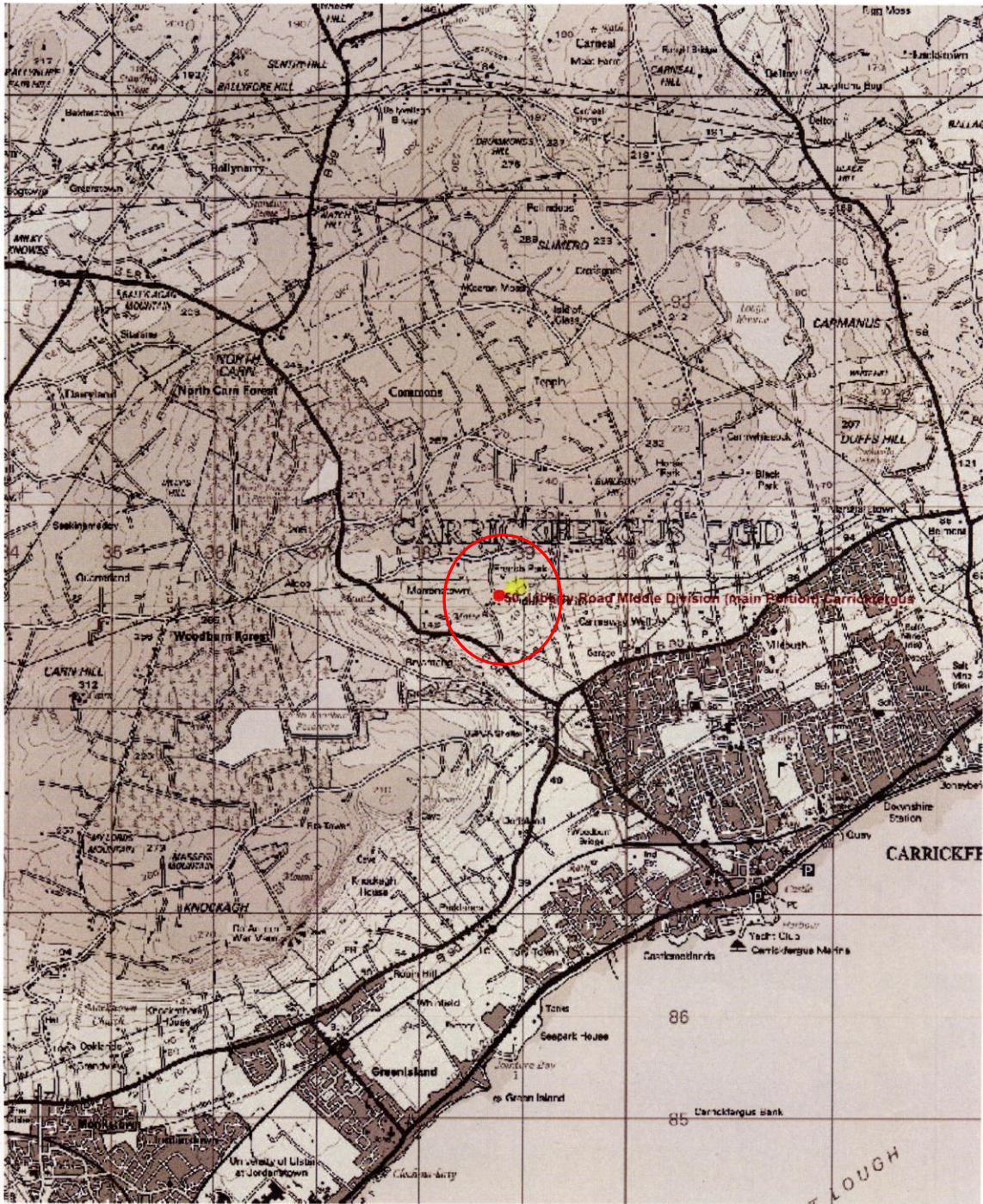
Photographs:

The digital images taken during the evaluation are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: N/A

Signed: _____

Date: _____



05/10/2012 15:50:46

Scale 1:50000

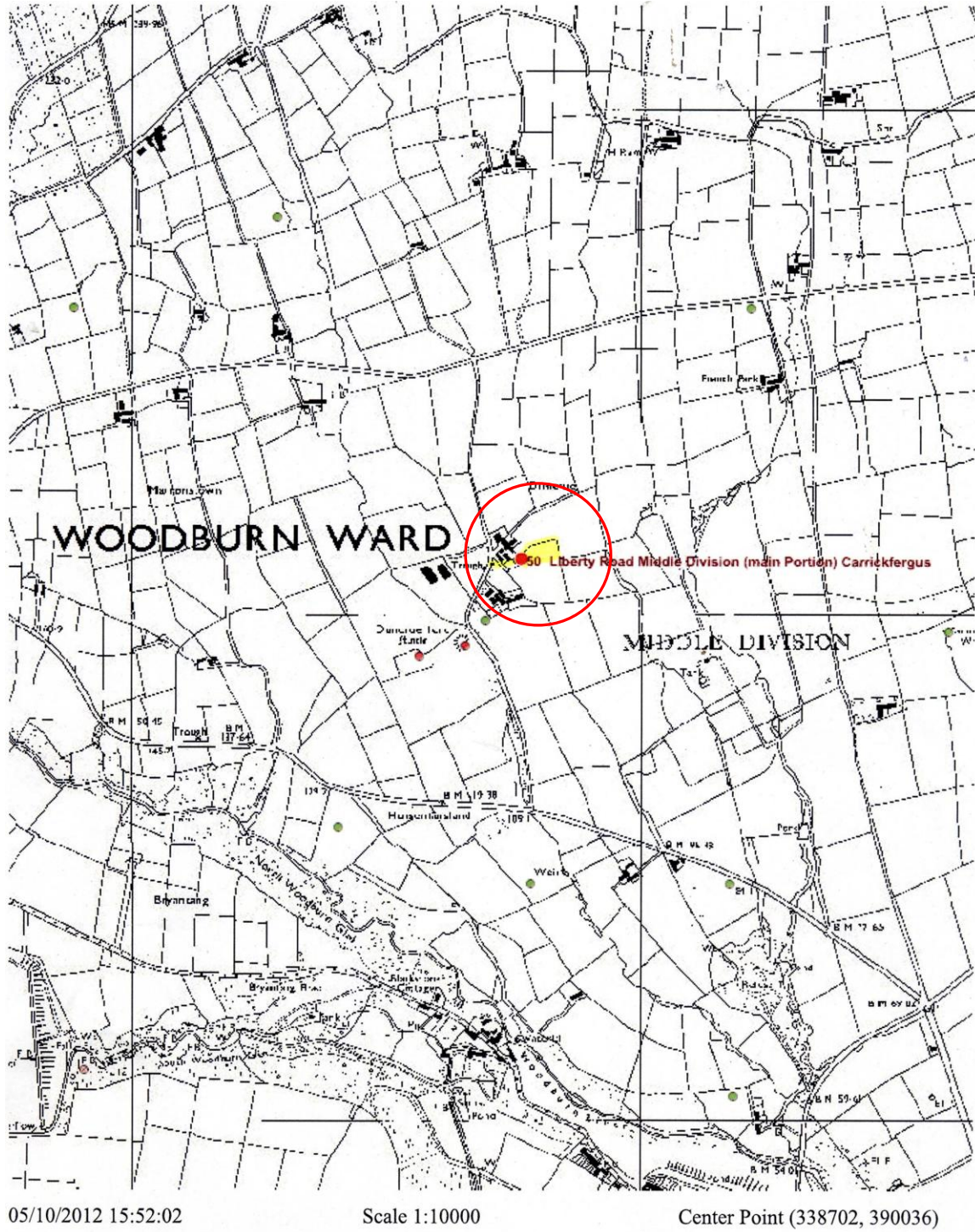
Center Point (338702, 390036)



©Crown Copyright.
OSNI Permit number: EMOU206.2



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



©Crown Copyright.
OSNI Permit number: EMOU206.2



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

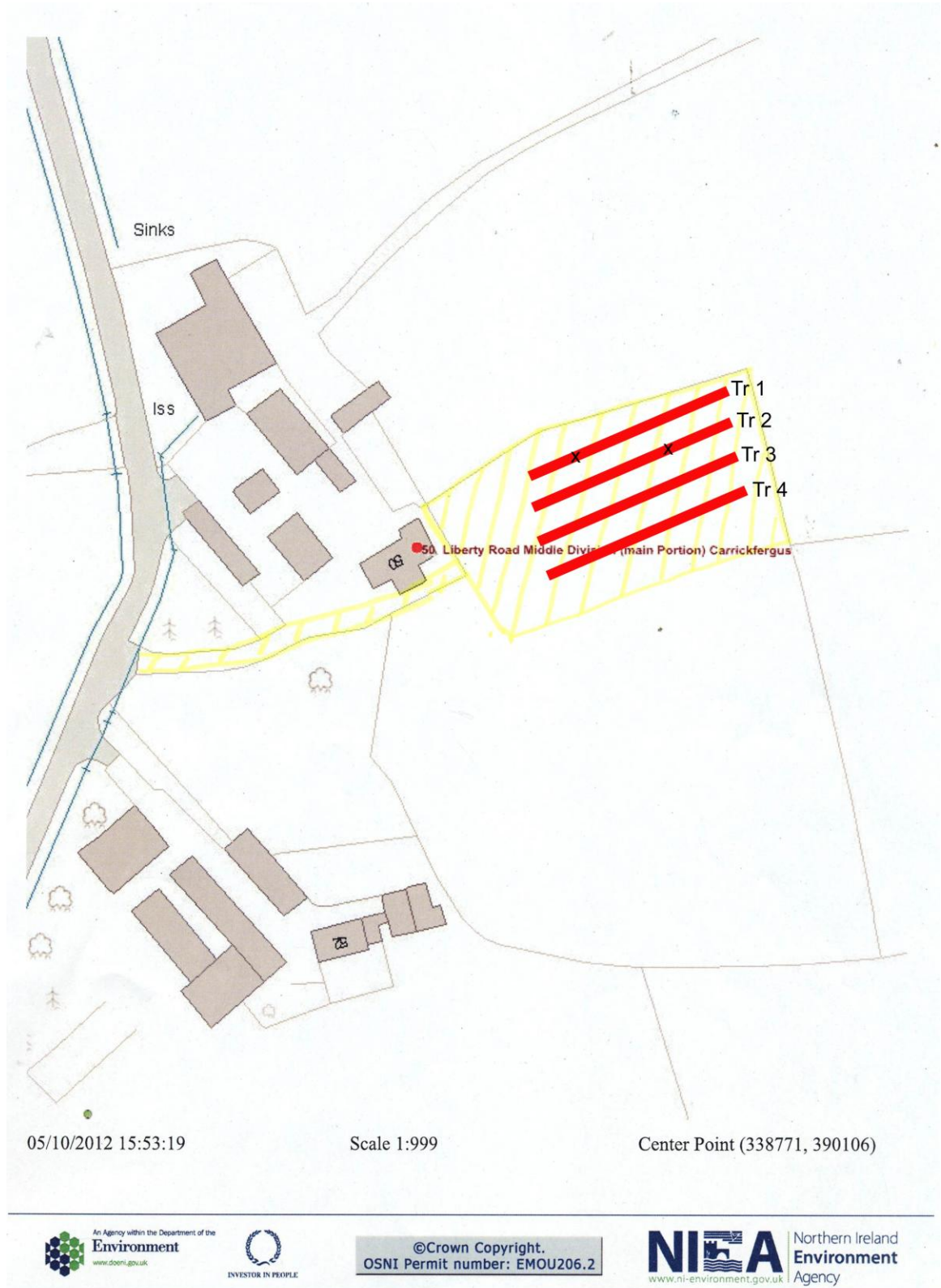


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of test trenches and approximate location of archaeological features (x)

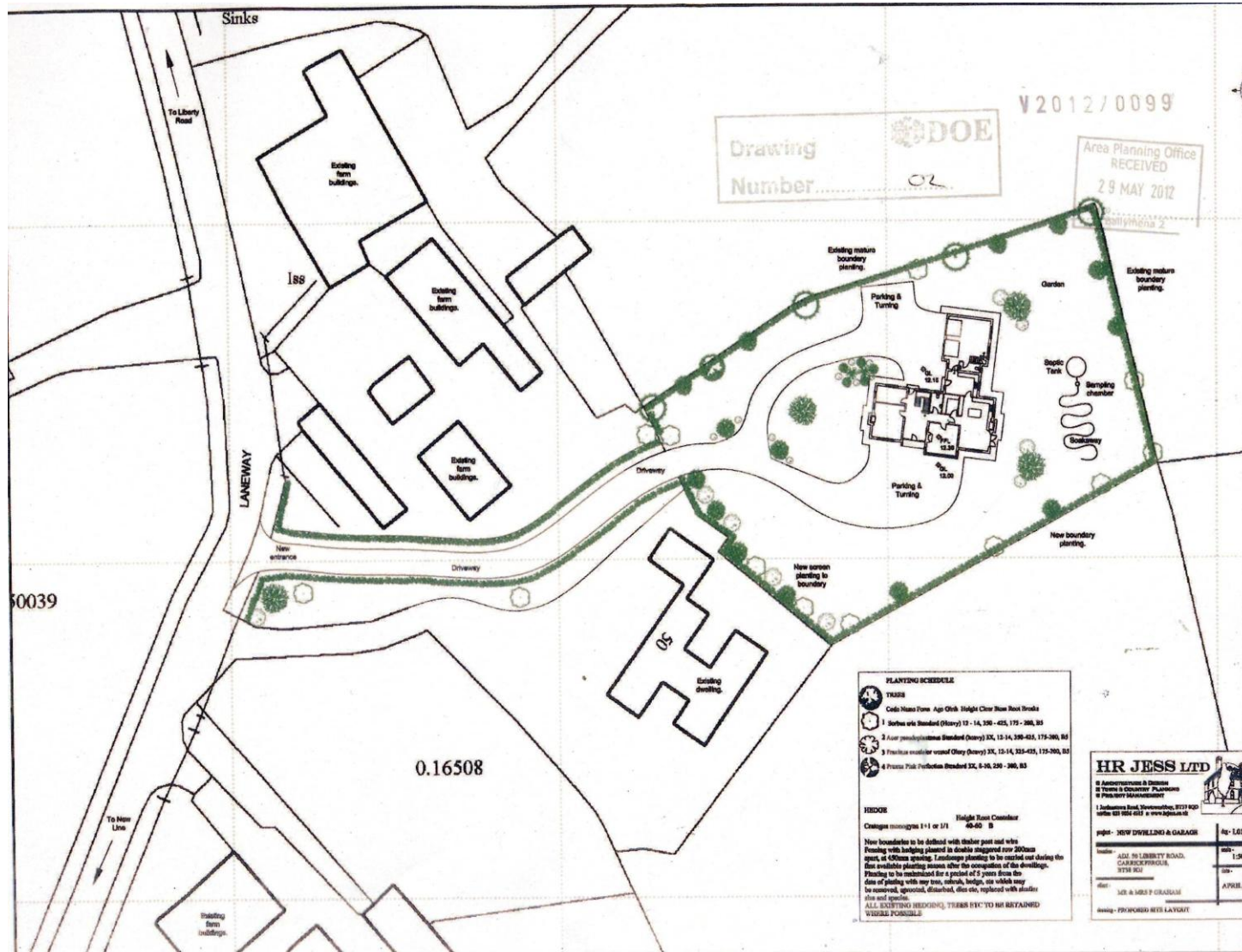


Figure 4: Architect's plan of proposed new dwelling and garage



Plate 1: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking south-east



Plate 2: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking south-west



Plate 3: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking west



Plate 4: General view of the site prior to the evaluation, looking east south-east



Plate 5: General view of Trench 1 following excavation to subsoil level, looking west



Plate 6: South-facing section of Trench 1, looking north



Plate 7: Cut feature in Trench 1 (C103/104) following excavation of section, looking west



Plate 8: Close-up of cut feature in Trench 1 (C103/104) following excavation of section, looking west



Plate 9: Probable plough furrows in Trench 1 (C105/106 and C107/108), looking west



Plate 10: General view of Trench 2 following excavation to subsoil level, looking east



Plate 11: South-facing section of Trench 2, looking north



Plate 12: Field drain in Trench 2 (C203/204), looking east



Plate 13: Field drain in Trench 2 (C205/206), looking east



Plate 14: Possible feature in Trench 2 (C207/208), looking west



Plate 15: General view of Trench 3 following excavation to subsoil level, looking east



Plate 16: South-facing section of Trench 3, looking north



Plate 17: Field drain in Trench 3 (C303/304), looking east



Plate 18: General view of Trench 4 following excavation to subsoil level, looking east



Plate 19: South-facing section of Trench 4, looking north