



Monitoring Report No. 246

**36-38 Windsor Park
Queen's University Belfast
County Antrim**

**AE/12/31
(Phase 2)**

Grace McAlister

Site Specific Information

Site location: 36-38 Windsor Park

Townland: Windsor

SMR number: n/a

State Care Scheduled Other

Grid reference: J32657174

County: Antrim

Excavation licence number: AE/12/31

Planning reference number: Z/2011/0570/F

Date of monitoring: 26th June-27th July 2012

Archaeologists present: Grace McAlister

Brief summary:

The archaeological monitoring of the foundation dig for a new residential development. Nothing of archaeological significance was found.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation by mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth edged "sheugh" bucket under archaeological supervision. A "toothed" bucket was used in some areas to remove substantial structural deposits

Size of area opened: An area of 2838m² was mechanically excavated and foundations were dug to a maximum depth of 1.8m below the modern ground surface.

Current land use: Residential

Intended land use: Residential

Introduction

The monitoring that took place in June and July 2012 was the second phase of an archaeological mitigation program that centered on QUB Staff Accommodation at Windsor Park. This program of works was required prior to the construction of a new residential development on the site.

Background

In April 2011 an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA Report No. 10) was carried out to assess the potential impact of development on the archaeological record in order to devise appropriate mitigation measures. Cartographic evidence suggested that this area of Windsor Park was not developed until sometime between 1860 and 1904. No scheduled monuments are recorded on the site itself although there are numerous prehistoric sites recorded along the Malone Ridge and within a 1km of the development area. There have been numerous prehistoric finds in the area, most notably at Tyrone House (SMR No.: ANT 060:065) where Neolithic pottery, a porcellanite axe and various lithic tools were found in association with a hearth (Andrews and Davies, 1940, 152). Tyrone House is located less than 300m south of Windsor Park therefore it is possible that similar archaeological deposits may exist at the development site.

As part of Phase One of the archaeological works, seven evaluative test-trenches were mechanically excavated in March 2012, prior to the demolition of the pre-existing buildings on site (Figure 1). No archaeological features were found during the course of the excavation. Finds included brick, ceramic pipe and pottery, all of which were 19th or 20th century in date. Three flint artifacts were found which correspond with prehistoric activity in the vicinity (CAF Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 237). The remains of concrete floors and the bases of demolished walls were encountered in two of the evaluative trenches; it was observed that archaeological material could still survive undisturbed under these intact development layers. Therefore it was deemed necessary to continue with Phase Two of the program of works. However it was noted that the archaeologist would not be required to be

present during the removal of the floor levels of the pre-existing building and the associated leveling deposits. Archaeological monitoring would continue when the foundation dig commenced.

Brief account of Monitoring

Archaeological monitoring was carried out between 26th June 2012 and 27th July 2012. An area of approximately 2838m² (43m south-west/north-east and 66m north-west/south-east) was excavated and archaeologically monitored (Figure 2). This area was to accommodate the foundations of two buildings, Block A and Block B which are part of new accommodation being built by Queen's University Belfast at 36-38 Windsor Park. There had also been a third building, Block C, but the construction of this has been postponed, although planning permission is still in place.

Between April and June 2012 the pre-existing buildings on site were demolished and the flooring removed. From 18th to 22nd June 2012 a leveling deposit present across the development area associated with the most recent development on the site; this work occurred prior to the archaeologist arriving on site and therefore was not archaeologically monitored. This leveling deposit, (1001) was approximately 0.9-1.1m in depth consisted of hard core stones and building rubble and in section appeared to contain red brick and ceramic pipes. There are some structural features such as leveled walls and floor levels, none of which were pre-19th century in date. A flint flake was removed from the section; however this was clearly residual as it was found in close proximity to plastic and white ceramic. The subsoil (1002) had already been uncovered in the area over Block B by the time the archaeologist arrived on site, no archaeological features were observed in this area. The subsoil was a pinkish orange sand with thin slightly greyish clay lens's in places (Plate 1). The subsoil had few inclusions, only occasional flint nodules.

The remainder of 1001 was removed from Block A to reveal the surface of the subsoil, again no features were observed on the surface of the subsoil (Plate 2).

During the mechanical excavation of the foundations a linear cut was found (1003). This appeared to have been an old drain probably associated with the late Victorian buildings on site and was directly under 1001 (Plate 3 and 4). 1003 was filled with two deposits; the upper fill (1004) was a very compact grey clayey sand which was slightly sleachy in nature with root inclusions and a maximum depth of 0.25m. The lower deposit (1005) was a soft grey sand mottled with orange sand which had charcoal flecks and a maximum depth of 0.17m. The two deposits were separated by a thin layer of iron panning. 1004 contained a small piece of flint, a fragment of clay pipe bowl and stem and a piece of blue and white glazed ceramic. As well as the charcoal flecking in 1005, there were also occasional red bricks fragments. The evidence suggests that this is a modern feature, most likely a drain associated with the Late Victorian phase of development on the site.

Across the site 8 pieces of flint were found on the surface of the subsoil though only one appears to be struck, the rest appear to be thermally shattered (Brian Sloan *pers. comm.*). Other finds included red brick and cream glazed ceramics and the remains of ceramic pipes.

During the monitoring it was observed that the subsoil was at a consistent level across the development area (Plate 4). This perhaps indicates the scarping and levelling of the site prior to the original development. When the original buildings were demolished in the 1970s, some of the demolition material was then used to build up the site in preparation for the new build thus resulting in context no. 1001. This process would account for the lack of archaeological features on site but the occasional presence of prehistoric finds.

Conclusions

The evaluative works has shown than no archaeological deposits survived on the site of the new development at Windsor Park. Any prehistoric artifacts uncovered were either isolated or residual.

Archive

Finds:

Finds found during the monitoring are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork offices

Photographs:

68 digital images taken during the monitoring are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork offices.

Plans / Drawings:

N/A

Bibliography

Andrews, S. and Davies, O. 1940. Prehistoric finds at Tyrone House, Malone Road, Belfast. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 3: Vol. 3, 152-54.

McAlister, G. 2012. "*QUB Staff Accommodation, Windsor Park, Belfast- Archaeological Evaluation*". CAF Monitoring Report No. 237. Unpublished report prepared by the Centre of Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Welsh, H. 2011. "*QUB Staff Accommodation, Windsor Park, Belfast - Archaeological Impact Assessment*". CAF Report No. AIA010. Unpublished report prepared by the Centre of Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Figures and Plates



Figure 1: Phase One of archaeological monitoring - area subject to archaeological evaluation shaded in red.

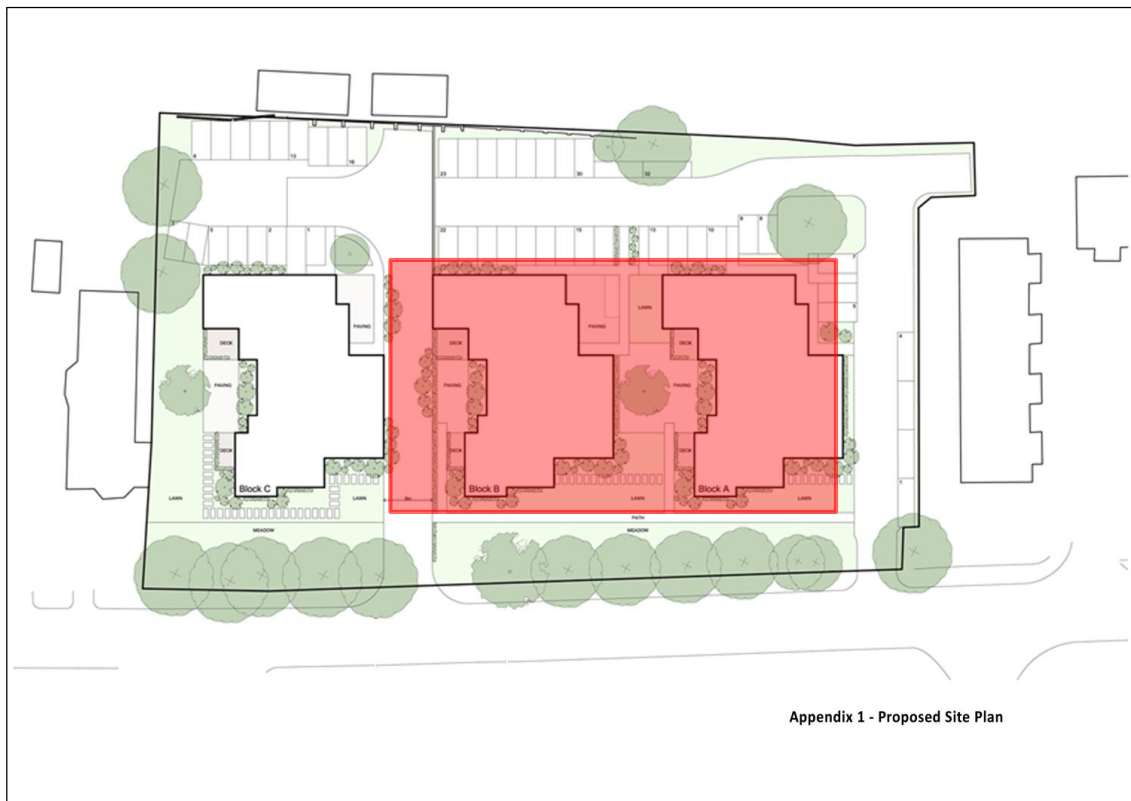


Figure 2: Phase Two of archaeological monitoring - area subject to archaeological evaluation shaded in red.



Plate 1: South facing section of Block B showing slight variation in subsoil



Plate 2: Levelled subsoil surface in Block A (variation in colour is due to lying water)

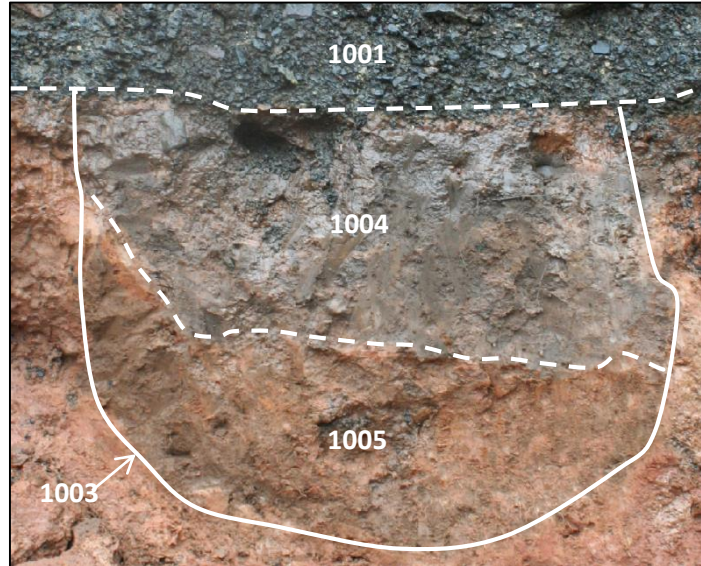


Plate 3: Pit feature (1003) in west facing section of Block A



Plate 4: Pit feature (1003) showing levelled surface of the subsoil and associated road deposits.

