



**Monitoring Report No. 251**

**Monitoring of the mechanical excavation of service trenches  
Bellaghy Bawn  
Bellaghy  
Co. Derry**

**AE/12/136E**

**BRIAN SLOAN**

**Site Specific Information**

*Site Name:* Bellaghy Bawn, Bellaghy Co. Derry

*Townland:* Old Town Deer Park

*SMR No. :* LDY 037:003

State Care      X      Scheduled                      Other                      [delete as applicable]

*Grid Ref.:* H 9534 9634

*County:* Derry

*Excavation Licence No. :* AE/12/136E

*Planning Ref / No. :* N/A

*Dates of Monitoring:* Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012

*Archaeologist Present:* Brian Sloan

*Brief Summary:*

Monitoring of the excavation of two trenches for the installation of drainage pipes was carried out at Bellaghy Bawn. The first consisted of a trench approximately 0.3m in width which was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.4m, and was located between the south-eastern turret of the monument and the nineteenth-century 'doctor's house'. Sherds of nineteenth and twentieth ceramics were recovered from this service trench but nothing of archaeological significance was observed. The second trench was aligned north-south and was positioned parallel to the upstanding remains of the western wall of the bawn, in an area that that previously undergone archaeological excavation by Nick Brannon following the acquisition of the site by the State in the late 1980s. A 1m extension of the bawn wall was encountered and left in situ. No finds or other features of an archaeological nature were encountered.

*Type of monitoring:*

Mechanical excavation of two service trenches.

*Current Land Use:*

State Care monument.

*Intended Land Use:*

N/A

## Brief account of the monitoring

### *Introduction*

The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork was contacted by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to monitor the invasive groundworks associated with the installation of drainage pipes at Bellaghy Bawn, Bellaghy Co. Derry (Figure 1). Bellaghy Bawn is located south of the town of Bellaghy, approximately 0.5km from its centre. The bawn is a state care monument, having been acquired by the NIEA during the late 1980s. A series of archaeological excavations took place within the bawn prior to its refurbishment. The construction of the bawn began in 1619 following the allocation of the area to the Vintners' Company during the Ulster Plantation. The bawn and plantation town are depicted in a map drawn by Raven in 1622 (Figure 2), and shows a square bawn with two large towers at diagonally opposite corners (Jope 1960, 108; Donnelly 1997, 116). The bawn was taken over and subsequently damaged during the rebellion of 1641, but was reoccupied in the late seventeenth century (Brannon 1989). The occupation of the bawn carried on continuously until the monument came into state care in 1987 (Donnelly 1997, 117). On the whole, the bawn survives today as a 'complex, multi-period monument' with the original early seventeenth-century features visible alongside eighteenth and nineteenth century additions and modifications (*ibid*, 116)

The monitoring was requested by Andrew Gault: Caseworker with Northern Ireland Environment Agency. It was requested due to the proximity of the invasive ground works to the bawn (LDY 037:003) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this monument.

### *Account of the excavation*

#### *Trench One*

Trench One was located adjacent to the exterior of the eastern wall of the bawn, running north/south between the upstanding turret and the 'doctors house' (Figure 3). The trench was manually excavated to aid the installation of a drainage pipe, and measured 3m in length (north/south) by 0.3m in width (east/west) and had a maximum depth of 0.4m (Plates 1 & 2). A single deposit of light to mid brown sandy loam (Content No. 101) was encountered which produced sherds of nineteenth or twentieth century ceramics. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench, which was backfilled following the installation of the drainage pipe (Plate 3).

### *Trench Two*

Trench Two was aligned north-south and was positioned parallel to the upstanding remains of the western wall of the bawn (Figure 3), in an area that that previously undergone archaeological excavation by Nick Brannon following the acquisition of the site by the State in the late 1980s. The trench measured approximately 13m in length (north/south) by 0.5m in width (east/west) and had a maximum depth of 1m (Plate 4). At the northern end of the trench, it turned to the west for 3m to allow the runoff of water from the drainage pipe. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered during the excavation of this trench which consisted of a single deposit of mixed greyish brown sandy loam (Context No. 201). This deposit was interpreted as representing the backfill from the 1980s excavation and artefacts recovered included small fragments of animal bone, shell and plastic.

The east/west return of the service trench was located at the northern end and measured approximately 3m (east/west) by 0.5m (north/south). Excavation of this portion of the trench revealed a brick and mortar wall (Context No. 202) that followed the line of the upstanding remains of the bawn wall. This wall (Context No. 202) comprised of red handmade bricks bonded with a whitish buff mortar and survived to a depth of six courses. At the northern end of this wall (Context No. 202) it appeared to be bonded into another brick wall (Context No.203) that was orientated south-west/north-east (Plate 5). It is postulated that this wall (Context No.203) represents the remains of the circular turret that is depicted on Raven's map of 1622. As these walls (Context Nos. 202 and 203) were deemed to be archaeologically significant as construction elements of the bawn, they were left *in situ*. However, it was possible to install the drainage pipe under the foundations to aid the run-off of water (Plate 6). No finds or other features of an archaeological nature were encountered in this trench, which was backfilled following the installation of the drainage pipe.

### *Conclusions*

The only archaeologically significant element encountered during this monitoring exercise was the extension to the bawn wall in Trench Two (Context No. 202) and the south-west/north-east aligned section of wall which has been tentatively identified as the sub-surface remains of the north-western turret (Context No. 203) that is depicted on Raven's map of 1622. These features were left *in situ* and the installation of the drainage pipe will not impinge on the features. No publication of this work is merited save a short summary in the annual *Excavations Bulletin*.

### *References*

- Brannon, N., 1989. *Derry 1989:015: Bellaghy Bawn, Bellaghy*. Excavations Bulletin [Online] Available at <<http://www.excavations.ie>> [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012]
- Donnelly, C., 1997. *Living Places: Archaeology, Continuity and Change at Historic Monuments in Northern Ireland*. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast.
- Jope, E. M., (1960) 'Moyry, Charlemont, Castleraw and Richill: Fortification to Architecture in the North of Ireland 1570-1700' *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 23 1960 97-123.

**Archive:**

*Finds:* The finds recovered during the monitoring exercise are currently archived at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN.

*Photographs:* The photographs taken during the monitoring exercise are currently archived at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN

*Plans / Drawings:* No plans or drawings were generated during the monitoring exercise.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

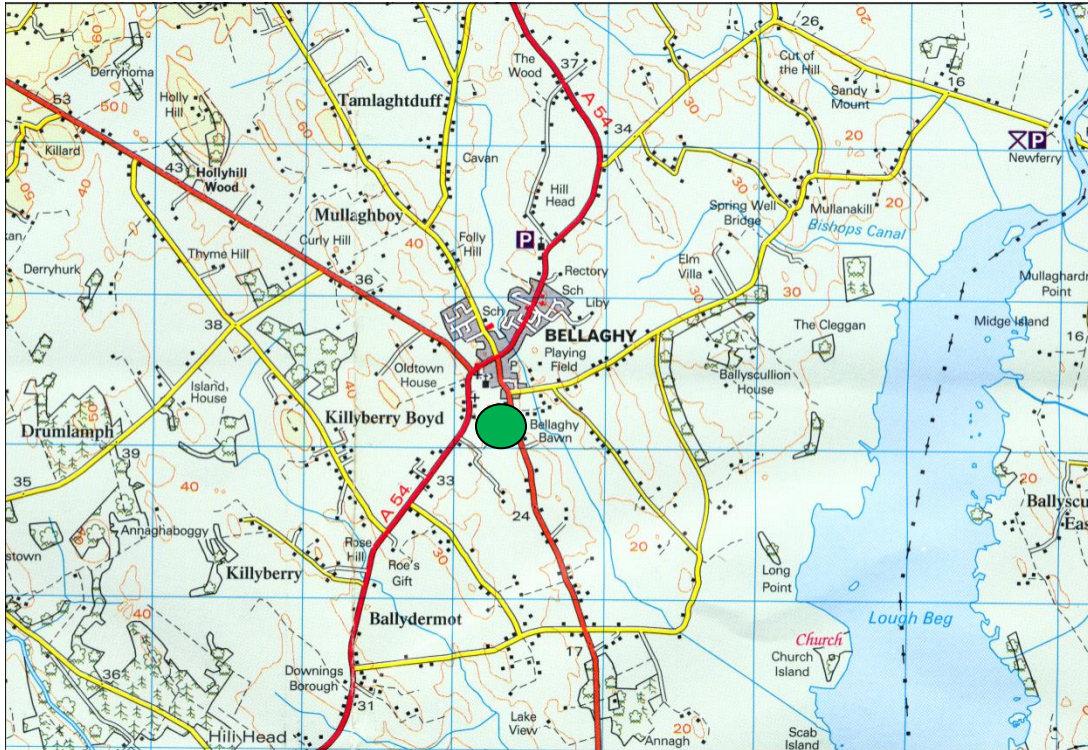


Figure One: General map showing location of Bellaghy Bawn (green dot).

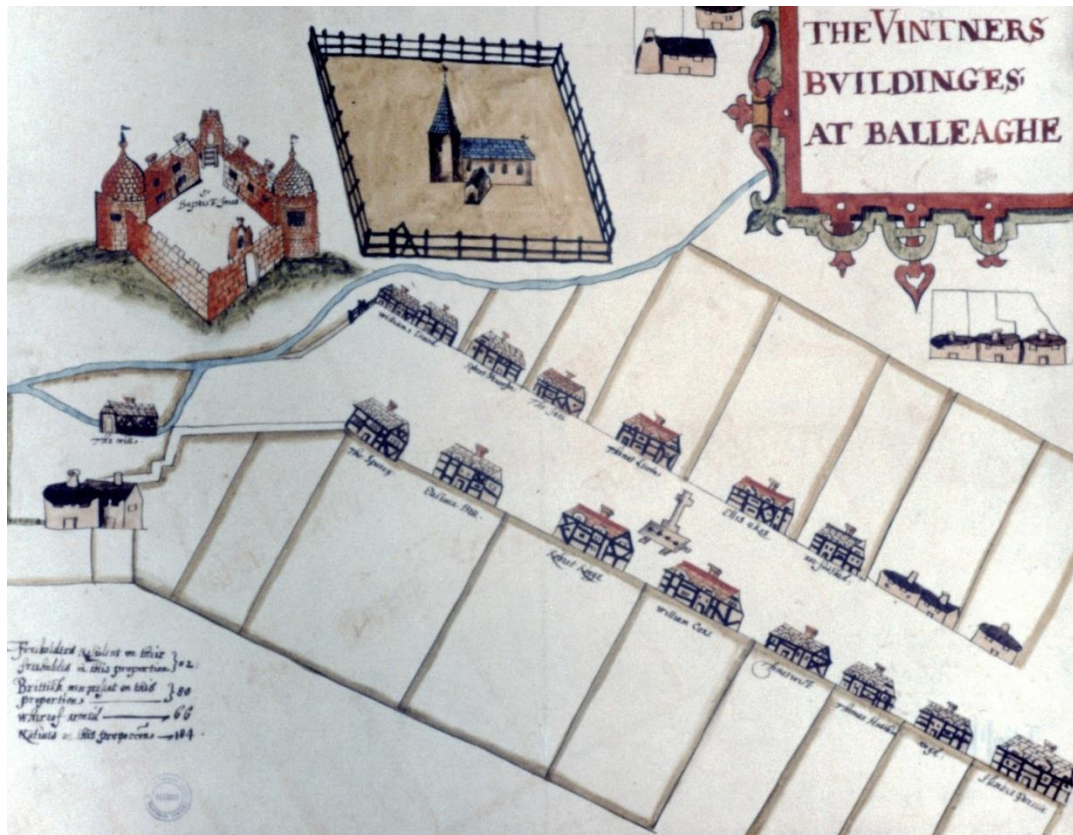


Figure Two: Raven's 1622 map of Bellaghy Bawn and Plantation Village..

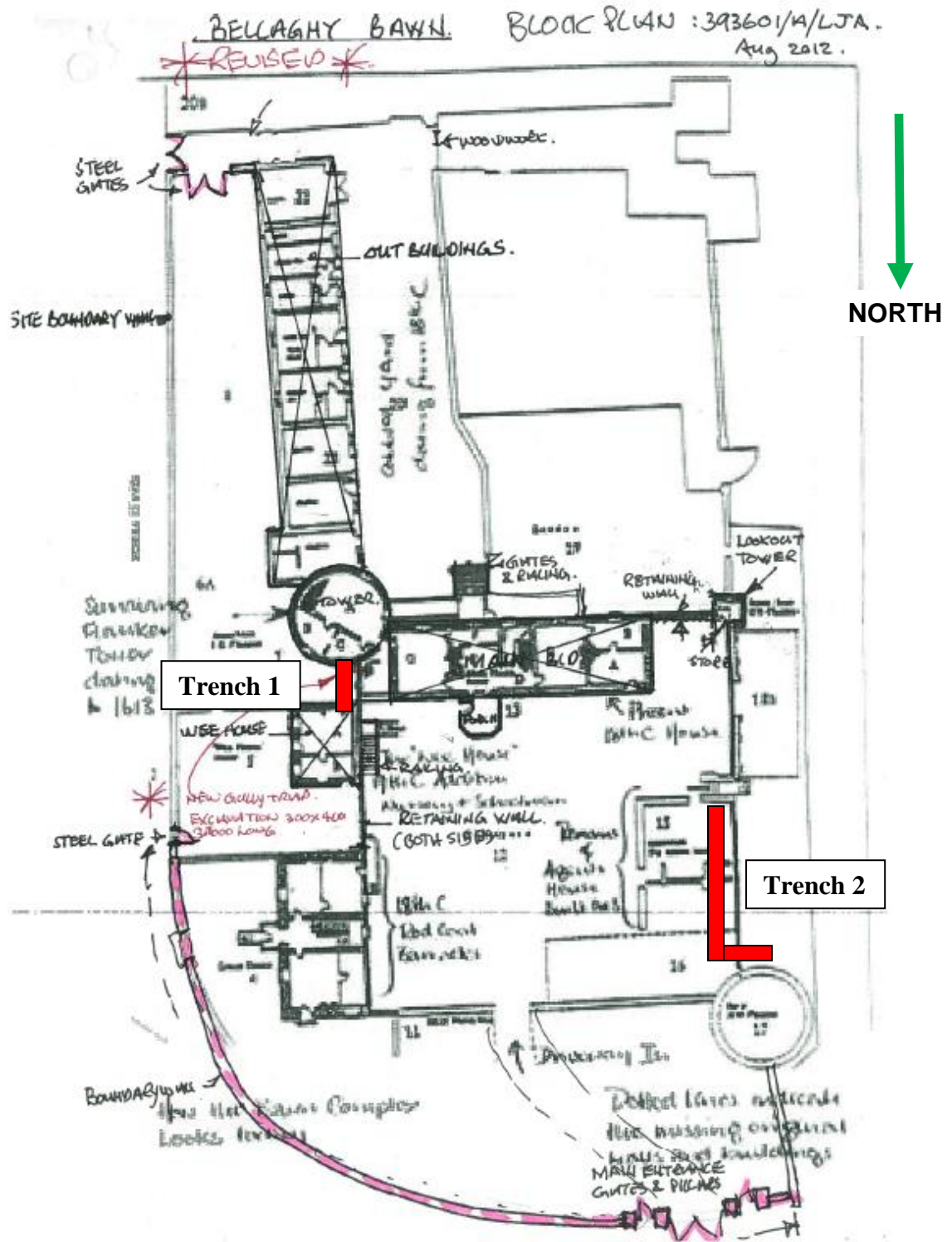


Figure Three: Block Plan (393601/A/LJA) overlain with the locations of trenches 1 and 2.



**Plate 1: Manual excavation of Trench One, looking west.**



**Plate 2: Installation of drainage pipe in Trench One, looking north-west.**





**Plate 3: Trench One following backfilling, looking west.**



**Plate 4: Excavation of Trench Two and installation of drainage pipe, looking south.**



**Plate 5: Brick walls encountered at the northern end of Trench Two. Context No. 202 is interpreted as the remains of the bawn wall and Context No. 203 is interpreted as representing a circular turret, looking north-west.**



**Plate 6: Installation of the drainage pipe beneath the foundations of the red brick wall (Context No. 202) looking east.**