



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 279

**Vernacular House
Dunanney Lane
Newtownabbey
County Antrim**

LICENCE NO.: AE/14/53

Dr Henry Welsh

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Dunanne Lane, Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Townland: Dunanne

SMR No. : Not in SMR

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: J 3360 8220

County: Antrim

Excavation Licence No. : AE/14/53

Planning Ref / No. : Not Applicable

Date of Monitoring: 14 April 2014

Archaeologist present: Dr Henry Welsh

Brief Summary:

Archaeological monitoring took place on Monday 14 April 2014, during the removal of building rubble from the interior of a vernacular building, prior to a public-outreach excavation, planned for 19 May to 30 May 2014. This building was severely damaged by fire in the past and most of the roof and gables had collapsed into the interior of the building. This project is being managed by the Belfast Hills Partnership and supported by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Built Heritage and Newtownabbey Borough Council. The property is owned by Newtownabbey Borough Council and managed by the Woodland Trust, who intend to conserve the remains of the building and place it on display to the public.

Type of monitoring:

Removal of building rubble by mechanical excavators under archaeological supervision. The rubble was deposited at another part of the site (an adjacent disused quarry) for potential use in restoring parts of walls of the vernacular building.

Size of area opened:

The vernacular building comprises of three rooms and a porch (see Figure 02). All these rooms were filled with building rubble, which was substantially removed during this monitoring phase of the project. A layer approximately 0.2m in thickness above floor level was left in situ to provide members of the public with material to excavate. No in-site archaeological features were disturbed during the removal of rubble.

Current Land Use: Woodland

Intended Land Use: Woodland

Brief account of the monitoring/evaluation

Introduction

The monitoring site is located at Dunanney Lane, on the southern slopes of Dunanney Hill, which is itself located some 650m to the south of Carnmoney Hill. The building is located close to the 130m contour line around the hill, where it contacts a lane which forms part of a series of public pathways into the woodland area. It is aligned north-east/south-west and is approximately 16m in length by 6m in width. It has been severely damaged by fire, partial collapse and plant activity. The remains consist of three rooms, each approximately 5m in length by 5m in width (Figure 03).

There is local tradition that the house was occupied by an elderly woman until the 1970s or 1980s, when she lost her life in a fire at the house, caused either by her accidentally knocking over an oil lamp, or as a result of fireworks being pushed through her letterbox. Research is currently on-going by the Belfast Hills Partnership to obtain more details about this.

The aim of this monitoring was to remove as much of the collapsed masonry from the interior of the building as possible, without disturbing any of the remaining fabric or contents. The next phase of activity on the site is for a proposed public-outreach excavation by members of the public, to encourage local people to visit the woodland area and learn more about its historic and archaeological features.

Monitoring

The monitoring consisted of the removal of collapsed rubble by mechanical excavators from the interior of the three rooms of the vernacular house and an adjoining hallway to the north-west. When the rubble was removed, it was placed in an adjacent derelict quarry for re-use by stone masons engaged in the subsequent restoration and conservation of the building. The site is managed by the Woodland Trust and it is their intention to present the building as a feature of interest along the woodland trackways, with accompanying information boards.

During its removal, the rubble was observed for artefactual evidence and several iron items were recovered. These included an iron trestle, winding handle and parts of a fire grate (Plates 05 & 06). The remains of a sewing machine were also recovered. These items have been temporarily stored at the offices of the Belfast Hills Partnership as theft and vandalism has been a problem at this site in the past.

Following the removal of the rubble, particularly in the central and north-eastern rooms, a layer of burnt material, approximately 0.1m in depth, was observed just above floor level. Further, in the north-eastern room, several partially burnt roof timbers were observed. These confirm that the house had been severely damaged by fire, particularly in these two rooms.

Safety

During the monitoring, it was observed that parts of the remaining walls of the vernacular house appeared to be unstable. This is unsurprising, given the history of fire, collapse and vegetation damage suffered.

It is strongly recommended that the building be inspected by a structural engineer in order to confirm that it is safe for people to work there, particularly during the proposed public-outreach excavation.

Further, it is recommended that steps are immediately taken to secure the site from passers-by and that 'dangerous building-keep out' signs be displayed. Notification of this has already been made to the Belfast Hills Partnership.

Archive:

Finds: Iron items as detailed above, currently stored at the offices of the Belfast Hills Partnership.

Photographs:

The digital images (44 in total) taken during the monitoring are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: Field drawings are currently archived at the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

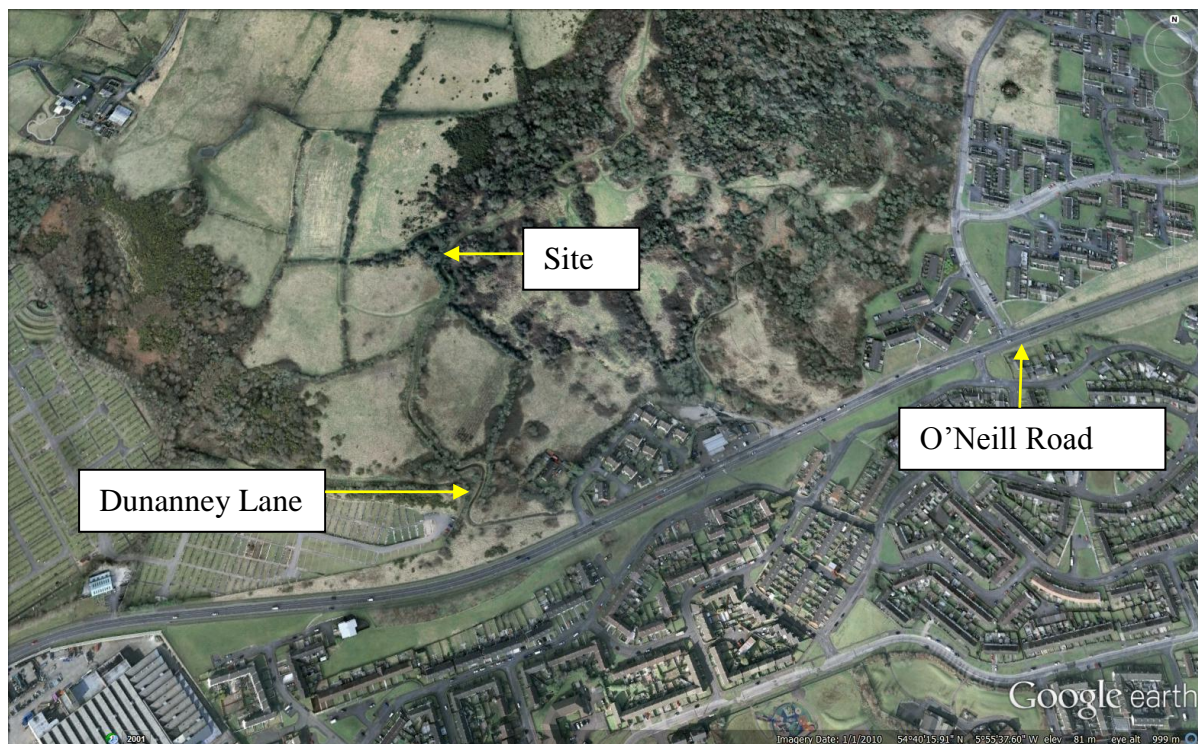


Figure 01: Aerial photograph showing location of site *Google Earth*

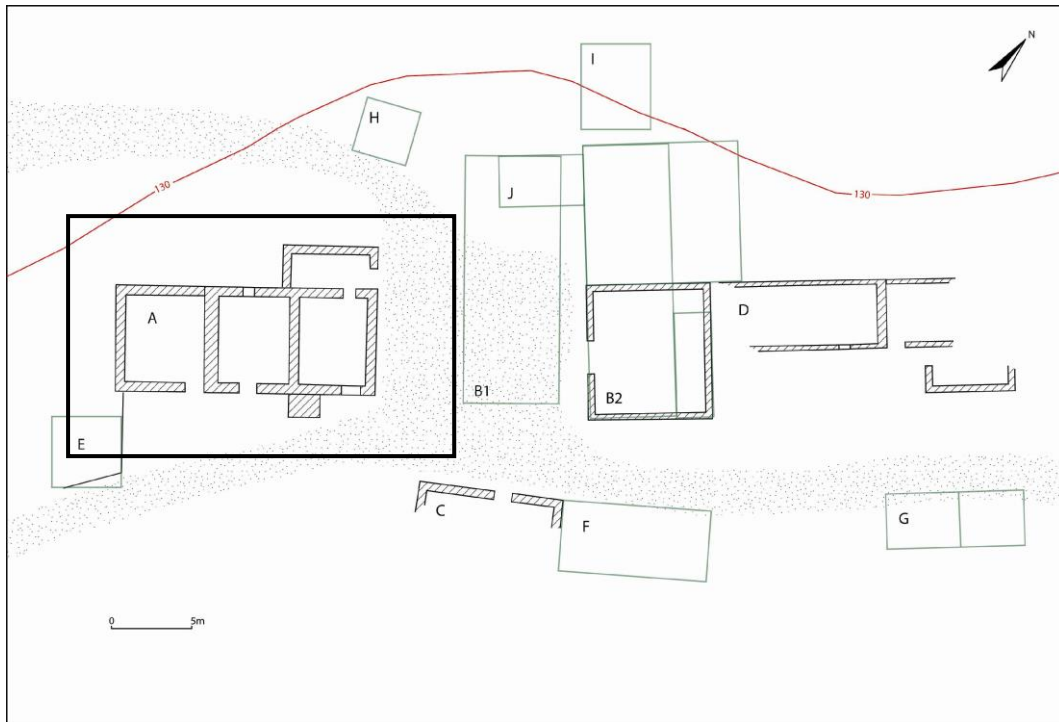


Figure 02: Plan showing location of monitoring site

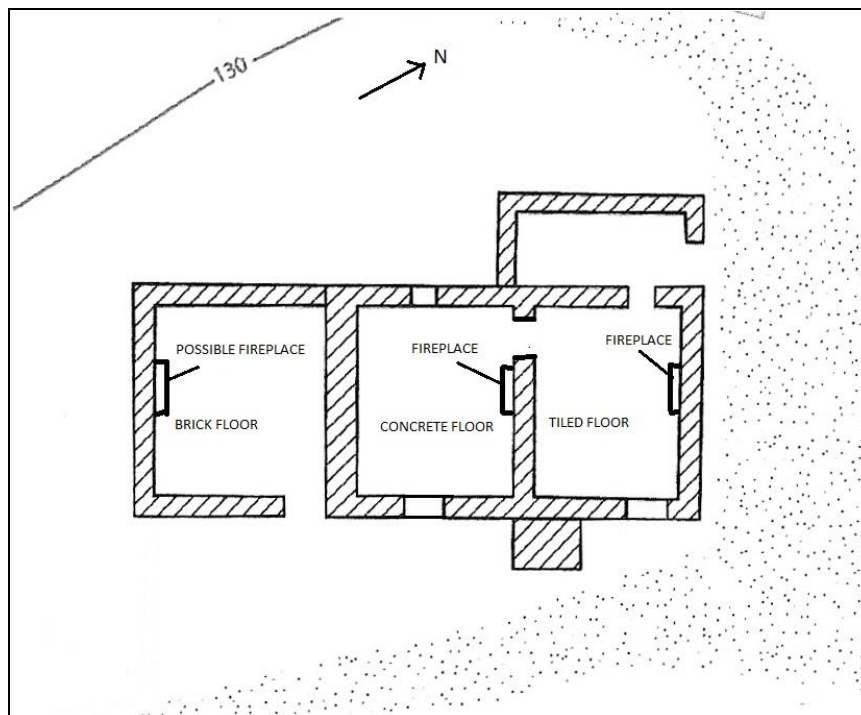


Figure 03: Revised plan of vernacular house

Appendix 1: Field Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Scale	Type	Date	Description
1	1:20	Plan	20/01/09	Plan of vernacular house



Plate 01: View of building remains before removal of rubble, looking south-west



Plate 02: View of building remains before removal of rubble, looking north-east



Plate 03: South-west room after removal of rubble, looking south



Plate 04: Centre room after removal of rubble, looking south



Plate 05: North-east room after removal of rubble, looking north, showing remains of iron fire grate



Plate 06: Iron winding handle recovered from north-east room