

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork

School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology

Queen's University Belfast



Data Structure Report: No. 15.

Excavation at Glenloughan, Aghaderg,
Banbridge, Co. Down 2003

AE/03/45

On behalf of



**Data Structure Report: Glenloughan, Aghaderg, County Down
2003**

(Licence No. AE/03/45)

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(CAF DSR 015)

(Licence No. AE/03/45)

Contents

Chapter 1: Summary	1
Chapter 2: Introduction	3
Chapter 3: Excavation	7
Chapter 4: Discussion	11
Chapter 5: Recommendations for further work	12
Bibliography	13
Appendix 1: Context list	14
Appendix 2: Harris matrix	15
Appendix 3: Photographic record	16
Appendix 4: Field drawing register	18
Appendix 5: Small finds register	19
Plates	20

1 Summary

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A small scale archaeological excavation was undertaken at Glenloughan, Aghaderg, Banbridge, Co. Down (Grid Reference J 0744 4419) in advance of a proposed housing development on the Fir Tree Road, located approximately one kilometre to the northeast of Scarva.

1.1.2 The site is located immediately to the north of a well-preserved rath with an annexed addition which was excavated in 1953 (Archaeological Survey of County Down 1966, 164, no.528, fig.101; SMR No. DOW 033:005). The close proximity of the proposed housing development to the rath prompted the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage to decide that an archaeological evaluation of the building plot, prior to any construction work being undertaken, was necessary. This evaluation was undertaken by Stiofan O Cathmhaoil of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. Five machine cut trenches were excavated; however, the only artificial deposits uncovered was a stone filled, negative feature in the easternmost trench (Trench A). Following consultation, it was decided that a limited excavation would be undertaken with the objective of ascertaining the character and date of the feature.

1.2 Excavation

1.2.1 Excavation at the site duly took place on the 20th and 21st May 2003 under the direction of Philip Macdonald for the Excavation Unit of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast. Trench A, excavated by machine as part of O Cathmhaoil's evaluation (Context No.101), cut through a humic topsoil (Context No.102), an underlying silty clay loam (Context No.103) and the upper part of the underlying natural boulder clay (Context No.104). Within O Cathmhaoil's trench, a rectangular area (3.5 metres (north-south) by 2.8 metres (east-west) in size) was cleaned around the stone filled, negative feature. This cleaning revealed that the feature was c.0.35 metres wide, and ran for an exposed distance of c.2.5 metres on an approximately north-south alignment before turning towards the east where it ran for an exposed length of c.3.6 metres. The feature was filled with a deposit of stones (Context No.105) that varied in both size and shape from small to large and from sub-rounded to angular. Excavation of a short length of the feature demonstrated that it was a modern field drain. The feature, which was c.0.2 metres deep, had straight sides and an apparently roughly flat base suggesting that it was probably mechanically excavated. As a drain it had not yet silted up as a large number of air voids existed between the stones, although towards the base of the feature some silt deposits had accumulated between the

stones. The stones that made up the fill appeared to have been relatively recently quarried and a fragment of modern bottle glass (Small Find No.1003) was recovered from the fill confirming the feature's relatively recent date.

1.2.2 The cut (Context No.106) for the drain was only recognised through the truncated surface of the boulder clay (Context No.104) and study of the machine cut sections of Trench A failed to reveal any evidence that it extended through the overlying silty clay loam (Context No.103). This may be because the stony fill (Context No.105) of the drain was only deposited up to the level of the boulder clay's surface and that above this level the drain cut (Context No.106) was backfilled with redeposited soil making recognition of the cut problematic.

1.2.3 In addition to the bottle glass (Small Find No.1003) recovered from the drain's fill, only three other finds were recovered – all from the Trench A spoil heap. These were two sherds of nineteenth or twentieth century pottery (Small Find Nos.1001 and 1004) and another fragment of modern bottle glass (Small Find No.1002). In addition to the field drain, no other archaeological features or deposits were identified during the course of the excavation.

1.3 *Discussion*

1.3.1 The excavation successfully ascertained the character and date of the negative feature recognised during the evaluation of the proposed housing development site on Fir Tree Road. Excavation demonstrated that the feature was a stone filled field drain of relatively recent date. Despite the close proximity of the well-preserved rath with the annexed addition, no other features or significant archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the excavation.

1.4 *Recommendations*

1.4.1 The excavation of a modern field drain is not of any archaeological value. Consequently, it is recommended that publication of the excavations results, beyond a concise summary in *Excavations 2003*, is not necessary.

2 Introduction

2.1 General

2.1.1 The following report details the preliminary results of the excavation at the reputed archaeological site at Glenloughan, Aghaderg, undertaken by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University of Belfast from the 20th and 21st May 2003 (Licence No. AE/03/45). The excavation was undertaken on behalf of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage who funded the investigations. The excavation was carried out following an archaeological evaluation conducted in advance of a proposed housing development for a single dwelling on the Fir Tree Road.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 The proposed housing development on the Fir Tree Road (Grid Reference J 0744 4419) is located immediately to the north of the well-preserved rath with an annexed addition (Archaeological Survey of County Down 1966, 164, no.528, fig.101; SMR No. DOW 033:005) at Glenloughan, Aghaderg, Banbridge, Co. Down (Figure One). The close proximity of the proposed building plot to the rath prompted the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage to conduct an archaeological evaluation of the building plot prior to any construction work being undertaken. This evaluation was supervised by Stiofan O Cathmhaoil of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. Five machine cut trenches (labelled here Trenches A – E) were excavated (Figure One). The only artificial deposit that was uncovered was a stone filled, negative feature in the easternmost trench (Trench A). Following consultation, it was decided that an excavation would be undertaken with the objective of ascertaining the character and date of this feature.

2.3 Archaeological survey of the site's environs

2.3.1 The proposed housing development at Glenloughan is located within an archaeologically rich landscape dominated by a series of raths and other enclosures. Details of sites and monuments within 1500 metres of the proposed building site have been tabulated (Table One). In addition to the adjacent rath with an annexed addition (Archaeological Survey of County Down 1966, 164, no.528, fig.101; SMR No. DOW 033:005), the most significant sites are the length of the Dane's Cast which crosses Fir Tree Road c.0.7 kilometres to the south of the development site (SMR No. DOW 033:020) and the multivallate raths of Lisnavaragh (SMR No. DOW 033:006) and Lisnagade (SMR No. DOW 033:009).

Description	SMR No.	Grid Reference	References
Standing stone: Cloghmore	DOW 033:001	J06694452	
Linear Earthwork: Dane's Cast	DOW 033:020	J06654227 – J07784358	A.S.C.D. 1966, 144-146, no.430, fig.85
Enclosure	DOW 026:014	J08864491	
Enclosure	DOW 026:015	J08954572	
Enclosure	DOW 026:016	J08814559	
Enclosure	DOW 026:017	J08494529	
Enclosure	DOW 026:019	J07894492	
Enclosure	DOW 026:020	J07474498	
Enclosure	DOW 033:002	J07404464	
Rath	DOW 033:003	J08764465	
Rath	DOW 033:007	J08124410	
Rath	DOW 033:011	J07654341	
Rath	DOW 033:016	J08524310	
Rath	DOW 033:051	J08074460	
Rath: Lisnaweelan	DOW 033:008	J08334426	A.S.C.D 1966, 166
Rath: Hill Head	DOW 033:012	J08884347	
Rath with later annexe: Glenloughan	DOW 033:005	J07434404	A.S.C.D. 1966, 164, no.528, fig.101
Bivallate rath	DOW 033:014	J07434307	
Multivallate rath: Lisnavaragh fort	DOW 033:006	J08094424	A.S.C.D. 1966, 150, no.450.3, fig.90, pl.28
Trivallate rath and univallate annexe: Lisnagade fort	DOW 033:009	J08674405	A.S.C.D. 1966, 149-150, 166, nos.450.1-2, figs.89, pl.28
Castle ?	DOW 033:047	J06474366	
Complex cropmark site	DOW 033:052	J08404383	
World War II pillbox	DOW 033:054	J07054449	
World War II pillbox	DOW 033:055	J06454365	
World War II pillbox	DOW 033:056	J07364436	

Table One: Archaeological sites within 1500 metres of the 2003 Glenloughan, Aghaderg excavations

2.4 Reason for excavation and objectives

2.4.1 The aim of the excavation was to ascertain the character and date of the stone filled, negative feature identified in Trench A during the archaeological evaluation of the site. The principal objective of the excavation was to provide the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage with the information necessary for them to fully evaluate the archaeological significance of the site and assess what further mitigating action, if any, was necessary in advance of the proposed development.

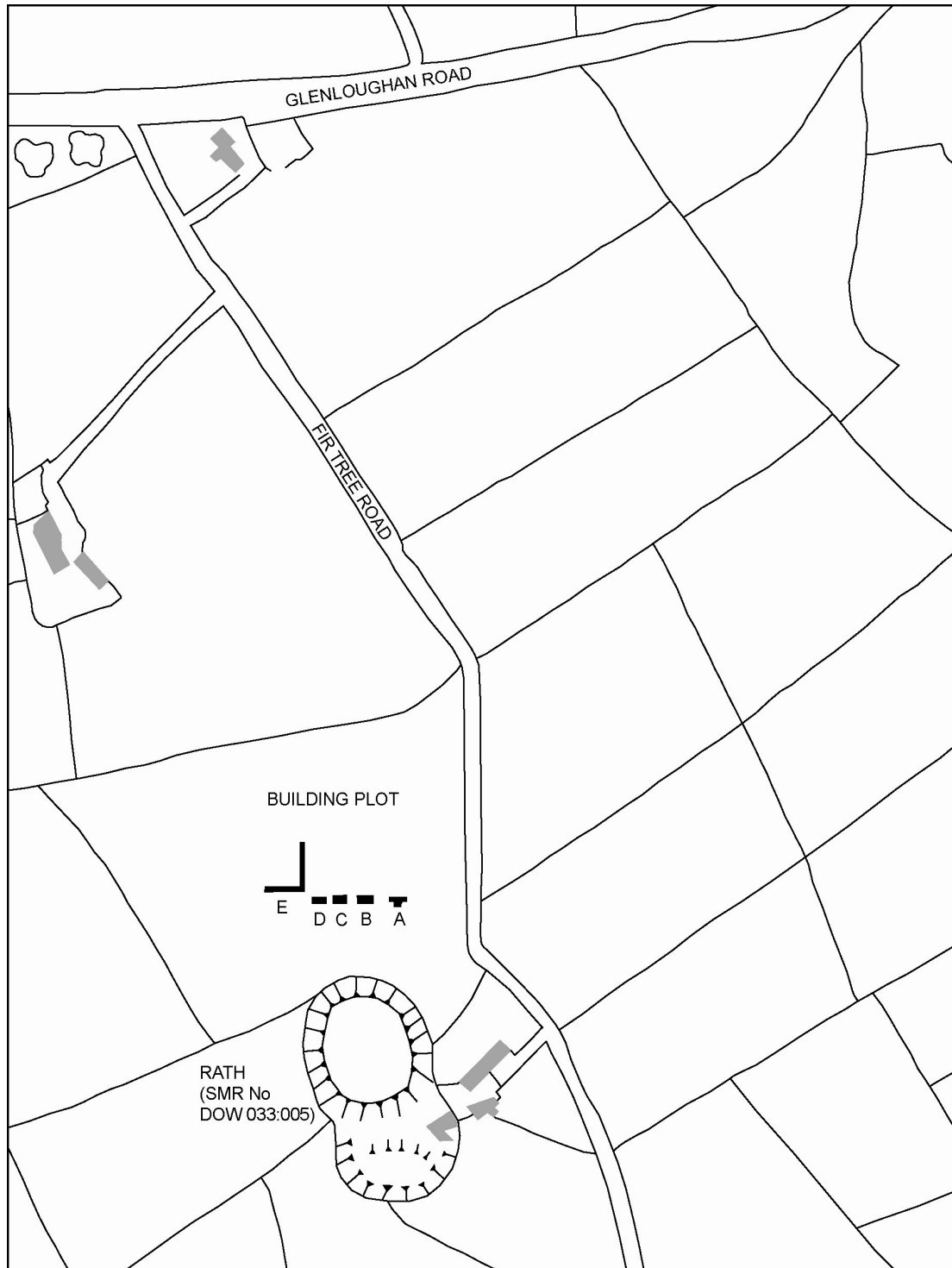


Figure One: Glenloughan, Aghaderg 2003 excavation site showing location of Trenches A - E.
Scale 1:2500.

2.5 *Archiving*

- 2.5.1 A copy of this report has been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. All site records and finds are temporarily archived with the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

2.6 *Credits and acknowledgements*

- 2.6.1 The excavation was directed by Philip Macdonald with the assistance of Peter Moore. For their assistance during the course of the excavation and the preparation of this report, the author is grateful to: John Davison (Queen's University Belfast), Colm Donnelly (Queen's University Belfast), Declan Hurl (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage), Libby Mulqueeny (Queen's University Belfast) and Stiofan O Cathmhaoil (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage). The illustrations were prepared by Ruth Logue of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

3 Excavation

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 The excavation consisted of a rectangular trench sited across the central part of O Cathmhaoil's easternmost machine cut trench (Trench A) which had been dug as part of his archaeological evaluation of the building plot (Figure Two). The excavation trench extended for a distance of 3.5 metres (north-south) by 2.8 metres (east-west). For the purposes of creating a convenient site grid, a site north (equivalent to true north-north-east) was established. To avoid confusion all references to cardinal directions within this report have been corrected.

3.1.2 Excavation was undertaken by hand and the context record for the site was created using the standard context recording method. A single plan (Scale 1:20) was prepared of the site following the cleaning of the machine cut surface in which the negative feature was exposed. Cleaning revealed no additional features or archaeologically significant deposits. Following photographic recording, a short length of the feature was excavated and recorded (for details of site photography see Appendix Three and for field illustrations see Appendix Four). In addition to the photography and illustration, the principal site records consisted of context sheets augmented by a supervisor's notebook which contained a register of small finds (Appendix Five). No bulk finds or samples were recovered during the course of the excavation. The unique site code used to identify the records generated during the excavation is AGH 03.

3.2 Account of the excavations

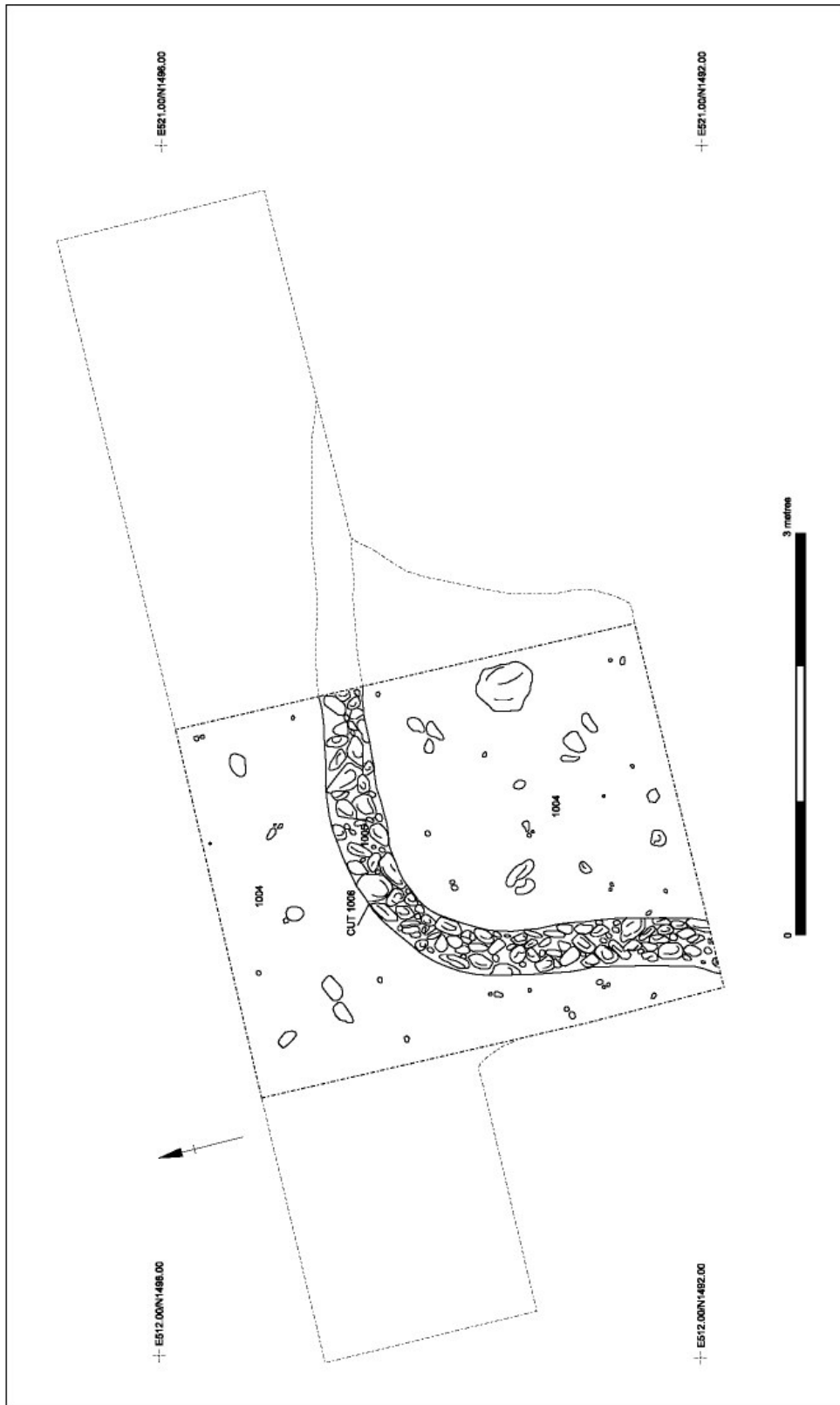
3.2.1 It is intended that the Harris Matrix for the site (see Appendix Two) is referred to whilst reading the following account of the stratigraphic sequence of the excavation.

3.2.2 Initially, the dimensions of O Cathmhaoil's Trench A (Context No.101) were recorded. Trench A was c.8.8 metres long (east-west) by c.1.6 metres (north-south) wide. Trench A contained a southward extension located between c.1.9 metres and c.6.0 metres from the western end of the trench. This near rectangular-shaped extension extended for a maximum distance of c.2.8 metres to the south of the main trench (Figure Two). Trench A had been cut to a maximum depth of c.0.4 metres through a humic topsoil (Context No.102), an underlying silty clay loam (Context No.103) and the upper part of the underlying natural boulder clay (Context No.104).

3.2.3 The humic topsoil consisted of a mid brown, sticky and hard, loam (Context No.102) which varied in depth from 0.06 to 0.10 metres. Underlying the topsoil was a light brown, slightly

sticky and plastic, silty clay loam (Context No.103) which varied in thickness from 0.20 to 0.25 metres. The silty clay loam contained a number of rounded to subangular small stone inclusions and the occasional trace of grass roots. The underlying natural boulder clay (Context No.104) had a mottled orange and grey colour, a large number of small to large, rounded to angular stone inclusions, and a hard, sticky and plastic consistency. The surface of the boulder clay had been truncated to a depth of c.0.10 metres during the excavation of Trench A.

- 3.2.4 Within Trench A, a rectangular area of excavation, 3.5 metres (north-south) by 2.8 metres (east-west) in size, was cleaned around the stone filled, negative feature (Context No.106). This cleaning revealed that the feature was c.0.35 metres wide, and ran for an exposed distance of c.2.5 metres on an approximately north-south alignment before turning towards the east where it ran for an exposed length of c.3.6 metres (Figure Two; Plates Two and Three). The feature was filled with a deposit of stones (Context No.105) that varied in both size and shape from small to large and from sub-rounded to angular. Excavation of a c.0.95 metre length of the feature demonstrated that it was a modern field drain (Plate Three). The feature, which was c.0.2 metres deep, had straight sides and an apparently roughly flat base suggesting that it was probably mechanically excavated. As a drain it had not yet silted up; a large number of air voids existed between the stones, although towards the base of the feature some dark brown silt deposits had accumulated between the stones. The stones that made up the fill (Context No.105) appeared to have been relatively recently quarried and a fragment of modern bottle glass (Small Find No.1003) was recovered from the fill confirming the feature's relatively recent date. Excavation of the drain was hampered because it kept filling with water quicker than it could be bailed out. Consequently, only a sketch section of the excavation cutting across the feature was drawn.
- 3.2.5 The cut (Context No.106) for the drain was only recognised through the truncated surface of the boulder clay (Context No.104) and study of the machine cut sections of Trench A failed to reveal any evidence that the drain's cut extended through the overlying silty clay loam (Context No.103). This may be because the stony fill (Context No.105) of the drain was only deposited up to the level of the boulder clay's surface and that above this level the drain cut (Context No.106) was backfilled with redeposited soil making recognition of the cut problematic.
- 3.2.6 In addition to the field drain, no other features or archaeologically significant deposits were identified during the course of the excavation.



3.3 *Artefactual assemblage*

- 3.3.1 In addition to the bottle glass (Small Find No.1003) recovered from the drain's fill, only three other finds were recovered – all from the Trench A spoil heap. These were two sherds of nineteenth or twentieth century pottery (Small Find Nos.1001 and 1004) and another fragment of modern bottle glass (Small Find No.1002).

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The excavation successfully ascertained the character and date of the negative feature recognised during O Cathmhaoil's evaluation of the proposed housing development site on Fir Tree Road. Excavation demonstrated that the feature was a stone filled field drain of relatively recent date. Despite its relatively elevated position the field in which the building plot is sited is poorly drained (Plate Four), probably as a result of the close proximity of the relatively impermeable boulder clay to the ground surface. Consequently, the presence of a field drain at the site is not surprising.
- 4.2 Despite the close proximity of the well-preserved rath with the annexed addition, no other features or significant archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the excavation.

5 Recommendations for further work

- 5.1 The excavation of a modern field drain is not of any archaeological value or interest. Consequently, it is recommended that publication of the excavations results, beyond a concise summary in *Excavations 2003*, is not merited. No additional post-excavation research or other resources will be necessary to produce the summary report.

Bibliography

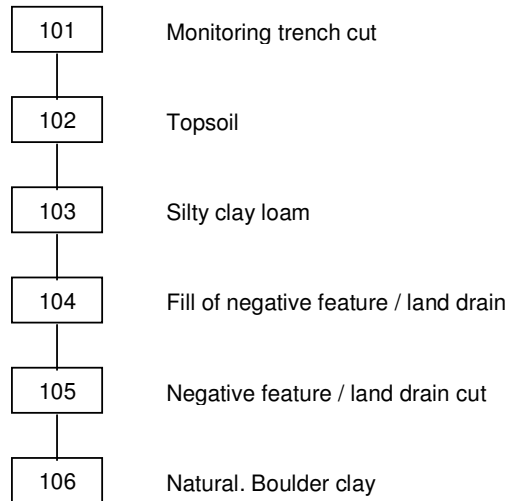
Archaeological Survey of County Down. 1966. *An archaeological survey of County Down*, HMSO, Belfast.

Appendix One: Context List

Context No. Description

1001	2003 archaeological monitoring trench cut
1002	Topsoil
1003	Silty clay loam
1004	Natural. Boulder clay
1005	Fill of negative feature / land drain (1006)
1006	Negative feature / land drain cut (filled by 1005)

Appendix Two: Harris Matrix



Appendix Three: Photographic Record

Film One: Sensia Fujichrome 200.

2nd May 2003

- 30 Negative feature / land drain (106) following archaeological evaluation (looking north)
- 31 Negative feature / land drain (106) following archaeological evaluation (looking east)
- 32 Negative feature / land drain (106) following archaeological evaluation (looking west)
- 33 Negative feature / land drain (106) following archaeological evaluation (looking northwest)
- 34 General shot of Trench A following archaeological evaluation (looking west)
- 35 Adjacent rath with annexed addition (SMR No. DOW 033:005) (looking southwest)
- 36 Adjacent rath with annexed addition (SMR No. DOW 033:005) and Trench A (looking southwest)
- 37 Interior of adjacent rath with annexed addition (SMR No. DOW 033:005) (looking north)

Film Two: Sensia Fujichrome 400.

20th May 2003

- 1 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking south)
- 2 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking south)
- 3 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking north)
- 4 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking north)

21st May 2003

- 5 Water filled Trench B demonstrating poor drainage (looking southwest)
- 6 Water filled Trench B demonstrating poor drainage (looking northwest)
- 7 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking south)
- 8 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking south)
- 9 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking south)
- 10 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking north)
- 11 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking north)

- 12 Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation following cleaning of truncated boulder clay (104) (looking north)
- 13 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 14 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 15 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 16 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 17 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 18 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)
- 19 Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)

Appendix Four: Field Drawing Register

<i>Drawing No.</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	1:20	Plan	Plan of negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation

Appendix Five: Small Finds Register

<i>Small Find No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Easting</i>	<i>Northing</i>	<i>Height (uncorrected)</i>
1001	Pot sherd (modern)	U/S	-	-	-
1002	Glass fragment (modern)	U/S	-	-	-
1003	Glass fragment (modern)	105	-	-	-
1004	Pot sherd (nineteenth century)	U/S	-	-	-



Plate One: Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking north)



Plate Two: Negative feature / land drain (106) prior to excavation (looking south)



Plate Three: Negative feature / land drain (106) following excavation (looking south)



Plate Four: Trench B showing poor drainage of site (looking northwest)