



## **Monitoring Report No. 105**

**Dundrum Castle  
Dundrum  
Co. Down**

**AE/06/267**

Ruth Logue

## Site Specific Information

*Site Name:* Dundrum Castle, Dundrum

*Townland:* Dundrum

*SMR No (if applicable):* DOW 044:006

State Care  Scheduled  Other

*Grid Ref:* J40483700

*County:* Down

*Excavation Licence Number:* AE/06/267

*Planning Reference Number:* Not applicable

Central Procurement Directorate, Department of Finance and Personnel:  
Job 238564 LH order 241077

*Date of Monitoring:* 10th January 2007

*Archaeologist Present:* Ruth Logue

### *Brief Summary:*

The kiosk at the entrance to the castle site was replaced with a 3.66m x 3.05m anti vandal portacabin and archaeological monitoring of work associated with the provision of a path and services to the portacabin was required to evaluate the potential impact of the work on any previously unrecorded below-ground remains.

Monitoring of hand-dug excavation of an area 1m wide around 1.5 sides of the portacabin to accommodate a path (Trench 1); and of the excavation by mini-digger of a trench to facilitate the laying of a service pipe running from the toilet block to the portacabin (Trench 2). Nothing of archaeological significance found in Trench 1, mortared stones found in Trench 2.

*Type of monitoring:* Excavation both by hand and by mechanical back-acting mini-digger.

*Size of area opened:* An L-shaped area approximately 5m x 1m, and a trench 44.5m x 0.4m.

## **Account of the monitoring**

The monitoring took place at Dundrum Castle, Dundrum, County Down, DOW 044: 006. The castle is built on a prominent hill on the west shore of Dundrum Inner Bay. It is possible the site had been occupied during Early Christian times, but the upper ward was probably built by John de Courcy in the 1190s. The castle was captured by King John in 1210 and granted to Hugh de Lacy in 1227, it is likely that the keep dates to this period. The gate house was probably added in the 1260s and the bailey extending down the hill side later. The castle was said to be ruinous in 1333. In 1636 it was granted to Sir Frances Blundell who built the L-shaped house in the lower ward. (Figures 1 and 2)

An archaeological evaluation was requested to assess the potential impact of work being carried out at the site on any hidden archaeological remains. Monitoring of excavation took place on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007, requested by Declan Hurl, Built Heritage, on behalf of the Central Procurement Directorate, Department of Finance and Personnel.

### **Trench 1**

The wooden kiosk at the entrance to the site had been removed and replaced with an anti vandal portacabin. An L-shaped strip of soil 1m wide had to be removed along the north-eastern side of the portacabin and along half of the north-western side of the portacabin as far as its door. This was to facilitate the laying of a path to the door situated at the back of the portacabin. This soil was removed by hand. The ground at the front corner of the portacabin was flush with the path at the gate to the site leading to the castle. The ground rose to a height of 0.45m at the northern corner of the portacabin. Half of a small retaining wall at the back of the portacabin had to be removed to allow for the 1m wide path cutting.

The sod was approximately 0.03m deep and overlay a topsoil of dark brown gritty loam with a high content of stone and fragmented bedrock (Context 100). Across the site rock can be seen in places protruding through the grass. The topsoil was undercut below the sod slightly beyond the 1m width necessary for the path and the sod layer folded down over it to neaten the appearance of the edge of the path. The pathway was levelled off and covered with gravel (Plate 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was found in this trench.

### **Trench 2**

A trench (Trench 2) had to be dug from the toilet block to the portacabin to facilitate the laying of a service pipe. This trench was excavated using a mini-digger. It was 44.5m long, 0.4m wide and 0.5m deep. The trench was parallel to the boundary wall running north-west to south-east along the site, the edge of the trench nearest the wall being 1.5m from the wall (Plate 5).

A thin sod layer overlay topsoil (Context 200). As the ground between the portacabin and the toilet block was undulating subsoil (Context 201) was encountered in places in the lower lying areas. The subsoil was a yellow and orange gritty clay, with bedrock protruding in places.

Approximately 6.5m south-east of the toilet block mortared stones (Context 202) were encountered running across the trench. As the trench was just 0.4m wide and 0.5m deep only a small number of stones were visible, so it was not possible to ascertain their date or function, but there were at least 2 courses (Plate 4).

**Archive:**

*Finds:* N/A

*Photographs:* 5 digital photos, held in Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork offices

*Plans / Drawings:* N/A



Figure 1: 1:50,000 map showing Dundrum village and location of castle.

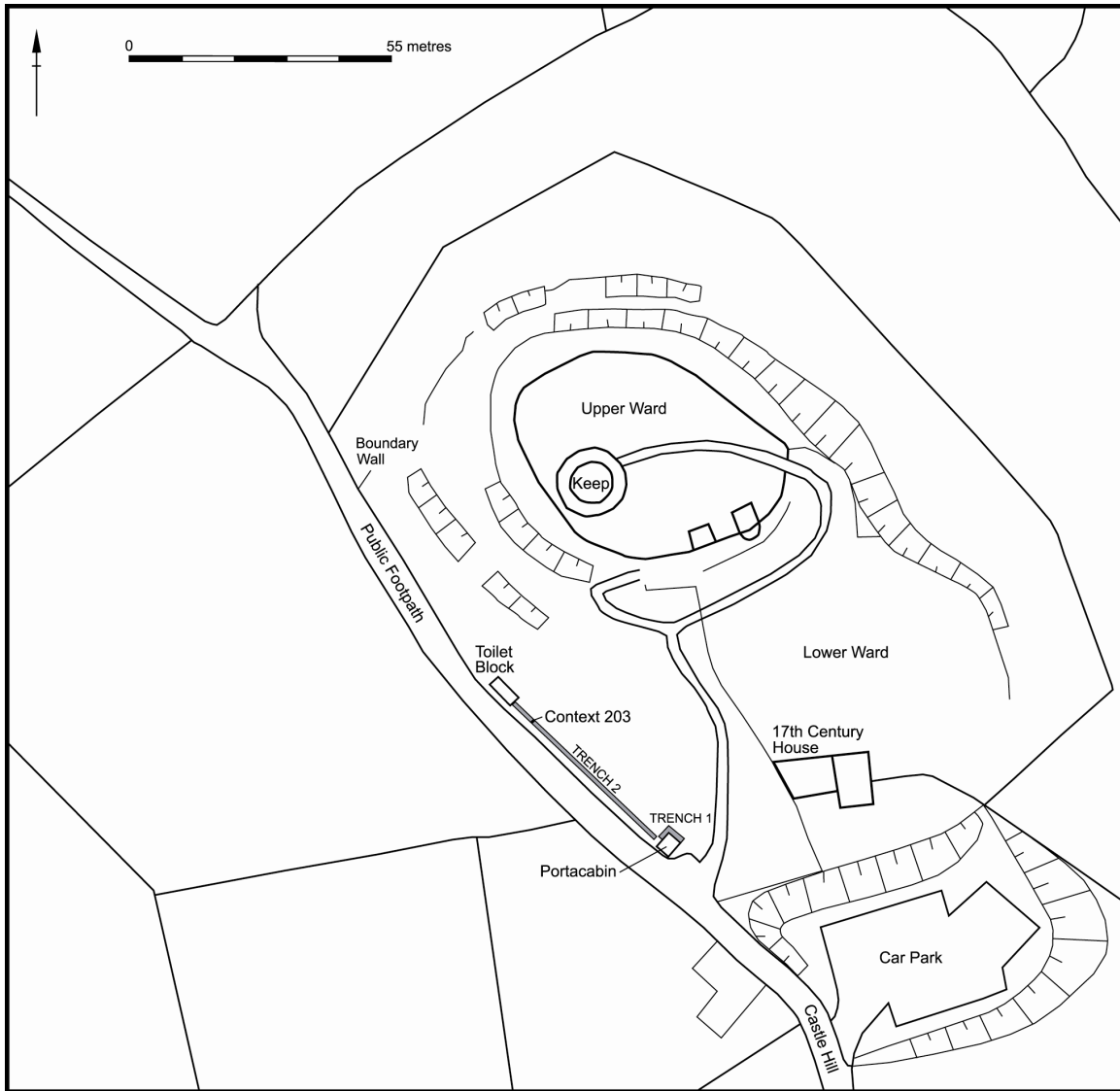


Figure 2: Plan of castle showing location of trenches.



Plate 1: Photo showing new portacabin, boundary wall and toilet block, looking north-west.



Plate 2: Trench 1 on north-east side of portacabin after excavation and laying of gravel.



Plate 3: Boundary wall looking north-west towards toilet block.



Plate 4: Mortared stones (Context 202) in Trench 2.



Plate 5: Trench 2, looking south-east.