



## **Evaluation Report No. 145**

**Site adjacent to 6 Castle Lane  
Portora  
Enniskillen  
Co Fermanagh**

**Licence No. AE/07/157**

**David McIlreavy**

### Site Specific Information

Site Name : Site adjoining 6 Castle Lane, Enniskillen

Townland : Portora

County : Fermanagh

Grid Ref. : IH 2224945096

SMR No. : FERM 211:84

Current Land Use : Garden

Intended Land Use : Residential

State Care : Scheduled [  ]  
Other [  ]

Excavation Licence No : AE/07/157

Planning Ref / No. : L/2006/2308/F

Dates of Monitoring : 31/08/2007

Archaeologist Present : David McIlreavy

### Brief Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site in the townland of Portora, Co. Fermanagh, as part of the planning application for a new dwelling. The development site was located within the vicinity of the historic settlement of Portora (FERM 211:84), and close to the remains of Portora 17<sup>th</sup> century house and bawn (FERM 211: 19). There are no upstanding remains of the historic settlement associated with the house and bawn. The proposed development site is located on a low rise adjacent to playing fields, and was previously a garden to the adjoining house (6 Castle Lane).

It was noted that the NE area of site was heavily planted with large shrubs and trees, and the SW area of site was covered by concrete and tarmacadam. Consequently, in consultation with the EHS: Built Heritage Caseworker for the area, only one test trench was archaeologically excavated. No features of potential archaeological interest were uncovered during the archaeological evaluation, and no further fieldwork was recommended in relation to the development of this site.

## **Type of monitoring**

Due to the heavy vegetative cover in the NE area of the proposed development site, and the concrete / tarmacadam covering in the SW area, one test trench was archaeologically excavated approximately 20 metres in length and 1 metre wide. The concrete and tarmacadam covering was broken prior to test trench excavation with a backacting mechanical excavator, fitted with a 1 metre wide toothed bucket. The test trench itself was excavated with a 1 metre wide smooth edged bucket.

## **Size of area opened**

Given the restrictions on excavation posed by the existing cover on the proposed development site, the test trench area initially comprised 20 m<sup>2</sup>. An extension was excavated at the NE end of the site where conditions allowed, comprising a 2 metre x 2 metre area to the N of the trench. Total area excavated was 24 m<sup>2</sup>.

## **Brief account of the monitoring**

### *Introduction*

The development area is located in the townland of Portora, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. The proposed development site is located on a small rise above playing fields, at the NW end of a row of modern houses (See Fig. 1). The proposed development site is sub rectangular in shape, delineated by a post fence to three sides of the area. Heavy planting of trees and large shrubs were evident to the NE of the site.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling, and was requested by Edith Gowdy (Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage) due to the proximity of the proposed development site to the historic settlement of Portora (FERM 211: 84). The proposed development site is also situated near to the historic remains of Portora 17<sup>th</sup> century house and bawn (FERM 211: 19)

The initial evaluation methodology suggested for the proposed development site was amended in conjunction with the Caseworker to take account of the heavy vegetative cover and the concrete / tarmacadam covering on part of the site. Consequently, only one test trench was excavated across the proposed development site.

### Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological supervision of one mechanically excavated test trench (Fig. 2), excavated to the glacial subsoil level. The development area was under mature heavy vegetation and had been used as a garden and driveway.

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was excavated running SW - NE, running initially for 20 metres x 1 metre. The trench was extended by approximately 4 m<sup>2</sup> at the NE end, where a break in vegetation permitted. The trench was excavated to glacial subsoil level at the NE area, a light grey brown boulder clay (Context No. 107).

Following the removal of the turf layer, a dark brown clay / loam topsoil layer (Context No. 101) was uncovered, with a depth of approximately 10cm. This layer extended for the length of the trench until it had been truncated by the concrete and tarmac driveway at the SW end of the site. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 101) layer was a light brown loam ranging in depth from 5 – 10 cm. Directly underlying the light brown loam (Context No. 102) was a dark grey clay layer (Context No. 103) approximately 3 cm in depth, overlying a light brown loam with some dark grey clay mottling (Context No. 104). This light brown loam (Context No. 104) in turn overlay a thin dark grey clay layer (Context No. 105) approximately 3-4cm in depth.

The cultivation soil consisted of a light yellow / brown clay loam (Context No. 106) with frequent tree root inclusions, approximately 20 cm in depth. This layer directly overlay the light grey boulder clay (Context No. 107). The same stratigraphic sequence was noted in the 4m<sup>2</sup> northern extension to the test trench.

At the break of slope on the development site, the dark brown loam with grey clay mottling (Context No. 103) overlay a light grey clay layer (Context No. 108) that extended in depth to at least 0.74 metres. At approximately 12 metres from the NE edge of the test trench a number of large rocks (Context No. 109) were encountered at approximately 0.65 metres below the ground surface, measuring 0.60 x 0.60 x 0.50 metres. The rocks extended for approximately 1.34 metres. The remainder of the trench was excavated to the same level due to health and safety concerns about trench access. It was noted that the light grey clay (Context No. 107) extended from the rock deposit (Context No. 108) until the end of the test trench.

The rocks (Context No. 108) were removed by mechanical excavator revealing a modern ceramic storm water pipe (broken). The lack of water pressure did not indicate that the pipe was in use at the time of excavation. The trench was not excavated to any further depth that the disturbed storm water pipe due to concerns about disturbance of other in situ services.

No artefacts were recovered from the test trench.

### *Interpretation*

The stratigraphy encountered in the test trench indicated a series of leveling deposits that had been built up on the side of the low rise. The composition of the deposits in the NE extremity of the trench would indicate that thin clay layers (Context Nos. 103



and 105) had been used as stabilizing deposits for the main body of brown loam (Context No. 104). The light grey clay deposit (Context No. 108) encountered in the remainder of the test trench is considered to be dumped material, possibly from the leveling of the playing field area directly facing Castle Lane. The rocks deposited around the storm drain pipe are presumably to prevent significant movement of the pipe and to provide some degree of protection. It is not considered that the stratigraphy relates to unrecorded archaeological deposits.

### **Recommendations**

It is not thought that the scale and location of development will impact significantly upon previously unrecorded archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out. No further publication is recommended, except for a short summary should be prepared for the annual *'Excavations'* bulletin.

TABLE 1

Context No.	Description
101	Dark brown clay loam topsoil
102	Light brown loam
103	Dark grey clay
104	Light brown loam with clay mottling
105	Dark grey clay
106	Light yellow / brown clay loam
107	Light grey boulder clay
108	Light grey clay
109	Rock deposit surrounding storm water pipe



Plate 1      General shot of the proposed development site showing the concrete and tarmac covering to the SW area of the test trench area. Looking NE.





Plate 2

General shot following excavation to the light grey brown boulder clay (Context No. 110), at NE extremity of the test trench.





Plate 3 Section shot at NE end of test trench, showing the thin dark grey clay layers (Context Nos. 103 and 105), acting as stabilizing deposits for the brown loam layer (Context No. 104). Looking SE.





Plate 4      Showing the light grey clay deposit (Context No.108) revealed at the break of slope. Looking SW.





Plate 5      Showing the rock deposit (Context No. 109) on either side of the ceramic storm water pipe (visible to left of picture). Looking SE





Plate 6      General shot of test trench indicating the slope on site. Furthest extent of the rock deposit (Context No. 109) is indicated by the ranging rod to the right of picture. Looking SE.



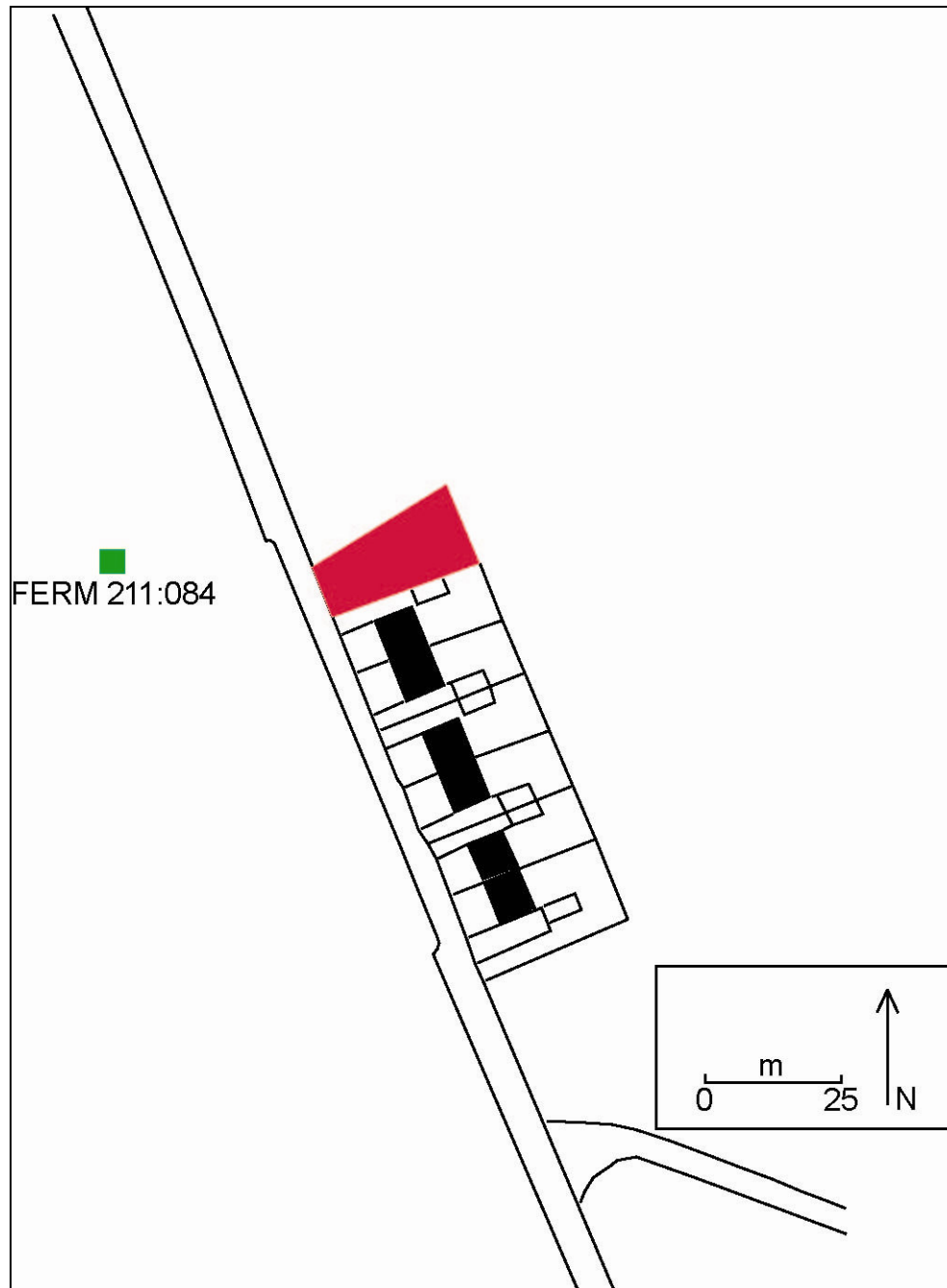


Fig. 1 Castle Lane, Portora, showing the development site in red, and the location of Portora historic settlement as designated by the NISMR.

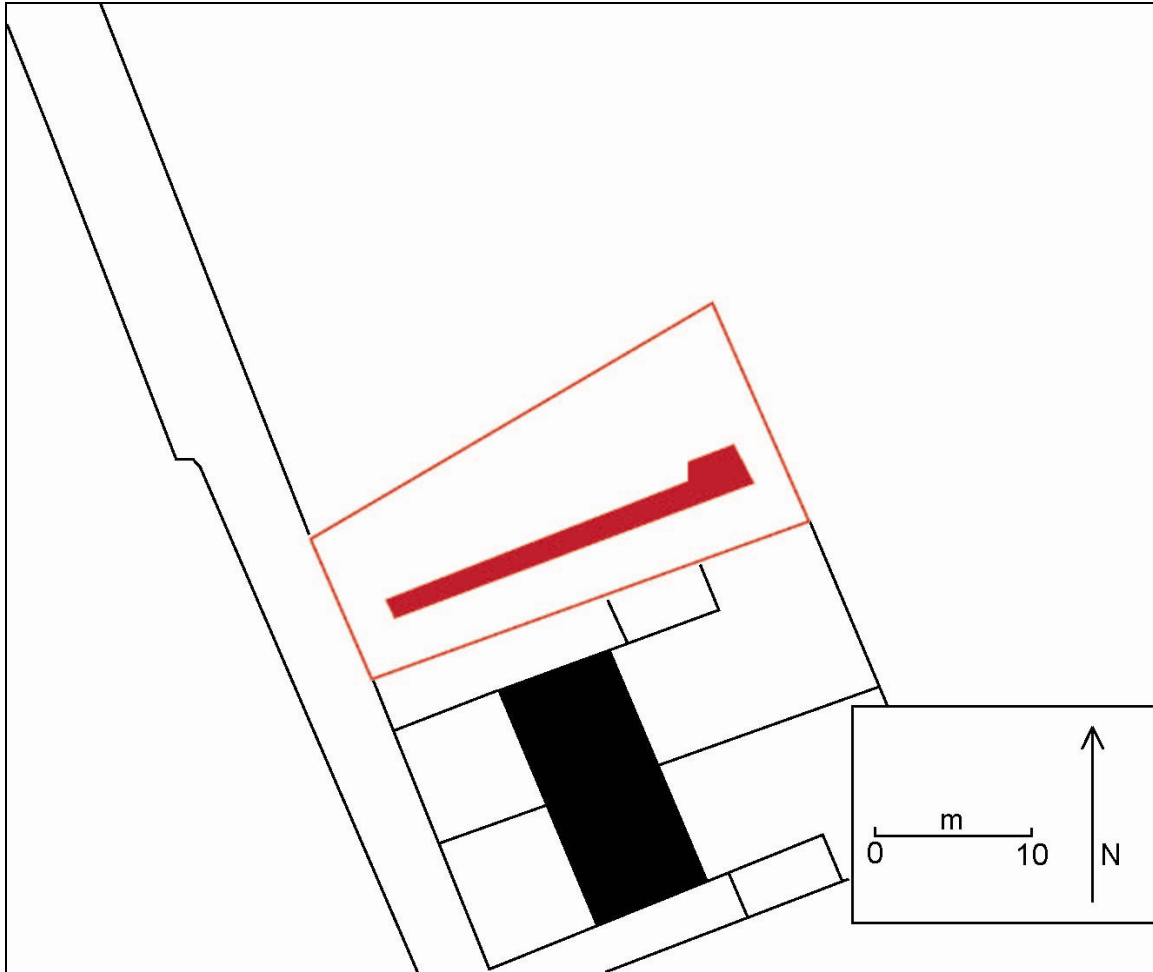


Fig. 2 Close up of development site, showing the test trench excavated as part of the evaluation.