



Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 291

**LANDS BETWEEN WELL LANE AND MOUNT CRESCENT
DEMESNE OF DOWN
DOWNPATRICK
COUNTY DOWN**

LICENCE NO.: AE/14/168

NAOMI CARVER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Lands between Well Lane and Mount Crescent

Town: Downpatrick

Townland: Demesne of Down

NISMR No. : DOW 037:028

State Care Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: 3484331 345169

County: Down

Excavation Licence No. : AE/14/168

Planning Ref. No. : S/2012/0252/F

Dates of Monitoring: 1st October 2014

Archaeologist Present: Naomi Carver

Brief Summary:

Archaeological monitoring of gate installation at either end of a proposed new footpath along an existing raised causeway (MRD 224:001). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered.

Type of monitoring:

Monitoring of post-holes for gateposts

Size of area opened:

Two post-holes approx. 1.0m x 0.5m x 0.8m

Current Land Use: Wasteland

Intended Land Use: Public footpath

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring (a watching brief) was required for the installation of a proposed new footpath in the lands between Well Lane and Mount Crescent, Demesne of Down, Downpatrick, Co. Down (S/2012/0252/F: Figures One and Two). The new footpath was installed by Down District Council with the intention of making the Mound of Down more accessible to the public. The proposed footpath with fencing and gates ran along an existing raised causeway (MRD 224:001) thought to date to the 19th century.

The archaeological surveillance was requested by Gina Baban of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) due to the proximity of a known archaeological monument – The Mound of Down.

Historical background

The application site is in proximity to the Mound of Down, a substantial earthwork in State Care (NISMR DOWN 037:028). The earthwork is oval in plan and surrounded by a large bank and ditch. The oval earthwork is thought to date to the prehistoric period and may have been remodeled into its current form by the Normans, although previous excavations at the site have failed to identify archaeological remains dating to this period.

The focus of the watching brief was the raised causeway to the north of the mound (MRD 224:001: Figure Three). The causeway is thought to date to the 19th century, as it is not shown on any Ordnance Survey maps prior to 1858-60. Investigations by Archaeological Development Services in 1997 revealed that the causeway was man-made and the artefacts recovered suggested that it was no earlier than mid-19th century. No features were found to pre-date the causeway. Local knowledge suggests that the causeway was built by the Rivers Agency as a flooding defence 30-40 years ago.

Excavation

The watching brief was carried out on 1st October 2014 and consisted of the monitoring of the excavation of post-holes for two gates at the northern (Point A) and southern (Point B) ends of the causeway. Prior to this, contractors had removed topsoil from the surface of the causeway between Points A & B (Figure Three and Plate One) down to a depth of approximately 0.1m. Plastic matting was to be laid over the topsoil to form a path. The gate at Point A was installed in the same position as an existing gate (Plate Five). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this area. The gate at Point B required the excavation of the single post-hole 1.03m long x 0.48m wide x 0.78m deep: Plates Two – Four). The topsoil consisted of light brown loamy clay overlying a light brown clay subsoil that contained angular stones. No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Conclusions & recommendations

The transformation of the existing causeway into a public footpath with access to the Mound of Down was able to proceed without impacting on archaeological remains. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is necessary. A short summary will be prepared for inclusion in the annual 'Excavations' bulletin.

Archive:

Finds: N/A

Photographs: The digital images taken during the evaluation are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: N/A

Signed: _____ Date: _____

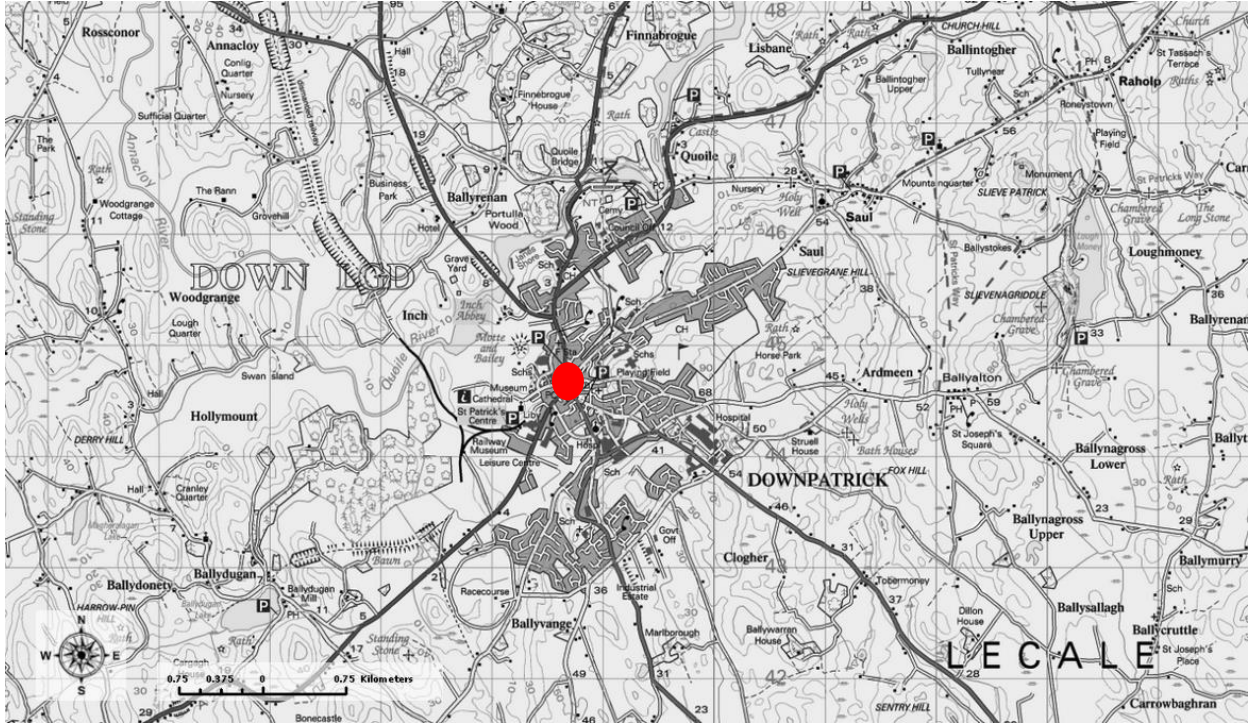


Figure One: Map of Downpatrick showing location of site (red dot)

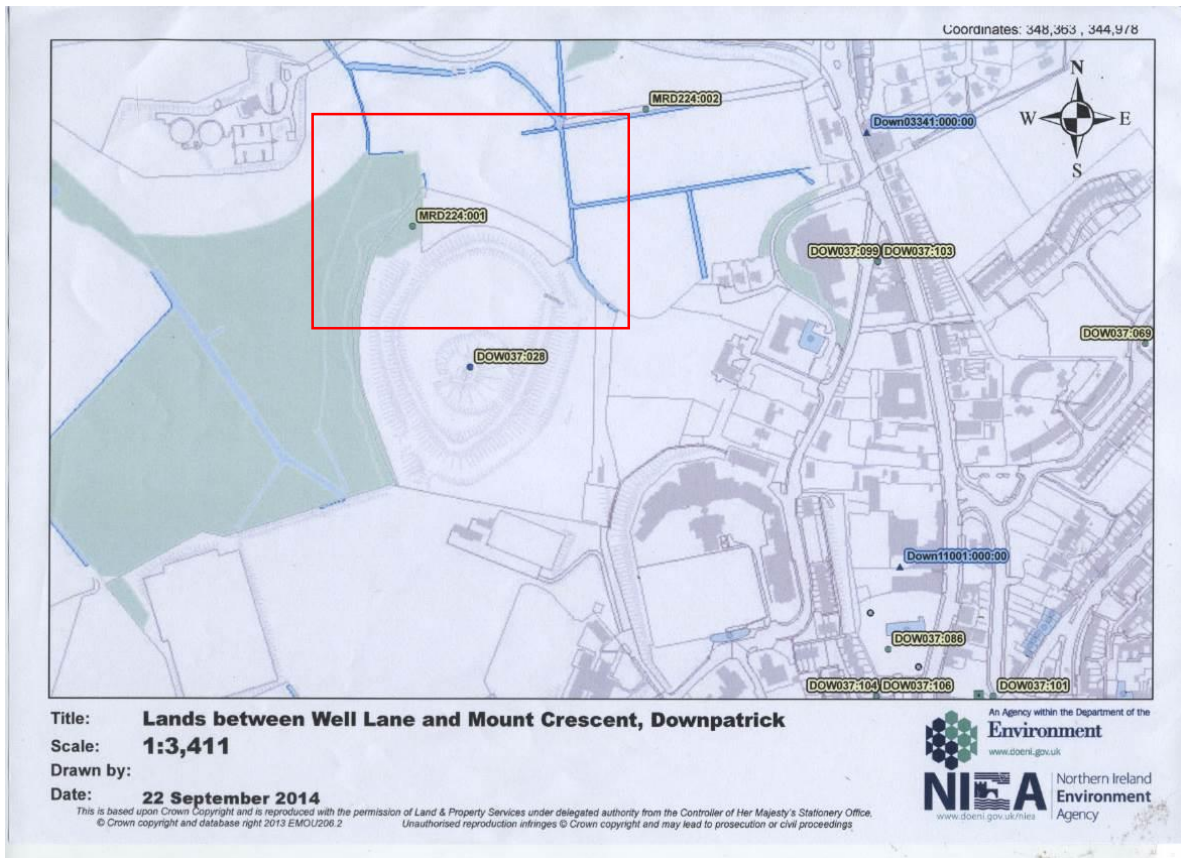


Figure Two: detailed location map showing the area of the proposed footpath (outlined in red)

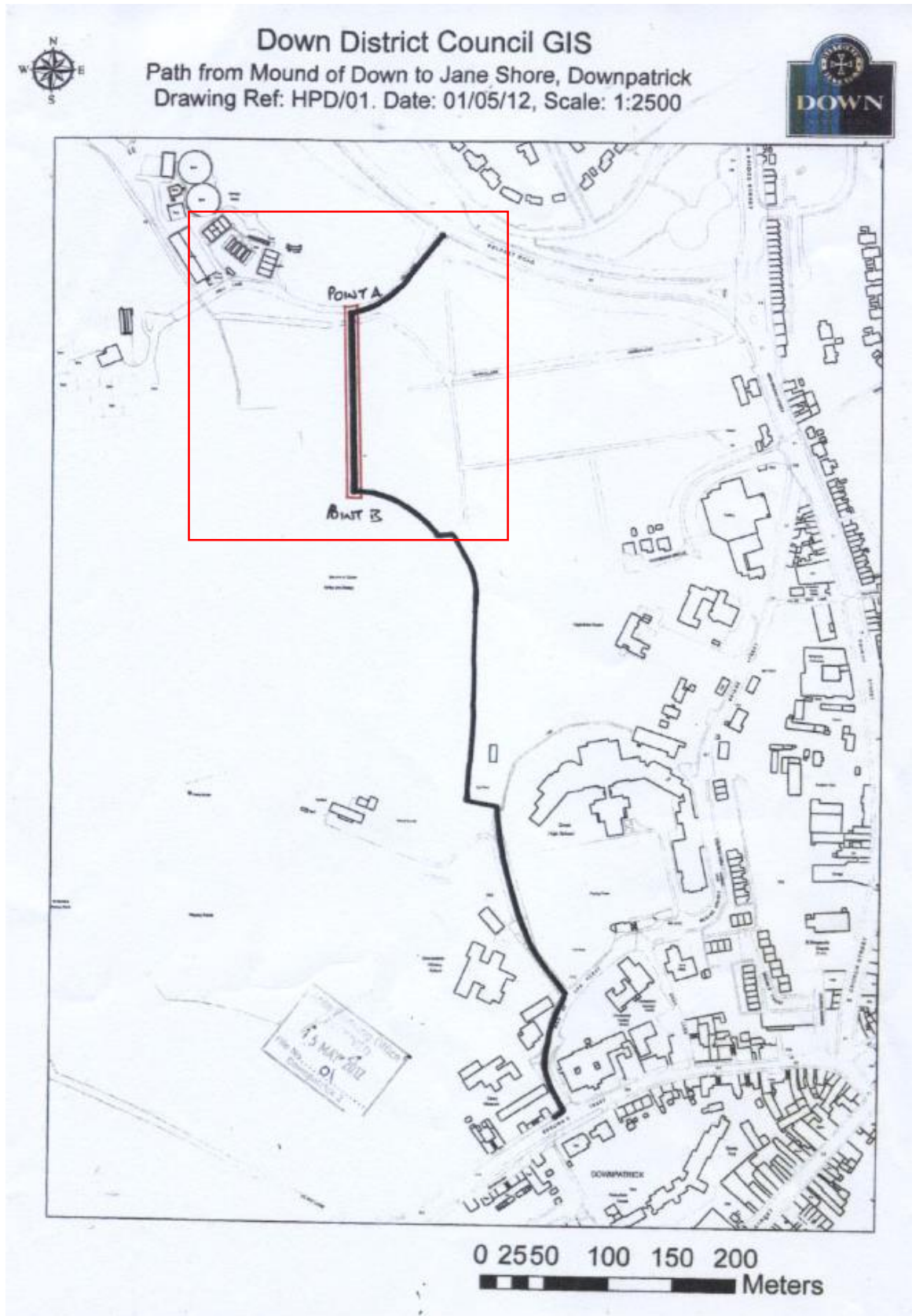


Figure Three: Site plan showing the proposed footpath and gate locations (Points A and B)



Plate One: The causeway, looking north towards Point A



Plate Two: Monitoring the gate installation at Point B, looking west



Plate Three: The post-hole at Point B, looking south



Plate Four: The post-hole at Point B looking south towards the Mound of Down



Plate Five: The finished gate at Point A