



**Monitoring Report No. 166**

**No. 2a Loughadian Road  
Poyntzpass  
County Down**

**AE/08/189**

Nick Beer

## Site Specific Information

*Site Address:* 2a Loughadian Road, Poyntzpass.

*Townland:* Loughadian

*SMR No.:* DOW 033:034

*State Care*   *Scheduled*   *Other* ✓

*Grid Ref:* H 0624 3950

*County:* Down

*Excavation Licence No:* AE/08/189

*Planning Ref / No.:* Q/2008/0325/F

*Date of Monitoring:* 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008

*Archaeologist Present:* Nick Beer

### *Brief Summary:*

Three test trenches were excavated to evaluate the potential impact of a proposed development of a residential dwelling on any hidden archaeological remains. The proposed development site is located 60 m to the north-east of a known 17<sup>th</sup> Century Castle (DOW 033:034). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of the three trenches.

*Type of monitoring:*

Excavation of three test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

*Size of area opened:*

Three trenches of differing lengths were excavated as determined by the case worker. Trench one measured approximately 23 m by 2 m, Trench two measured approximately 14 m by 2 m and Trench three measured approximately 11 m by 2 m.

*Current Land Use:* Green field

*Intended Land Use:* Residential dwelling

## **Brief account of the monitoring**

### Introduction

The site of the proposed dwelling is located at 2a Loughadian Road, Poyntzpass, Co. Down (fig 1). The site is situated to the East of the town of Poyntzpass, at an approximate height of 60m above sea level. The closest recorded archaeological site is a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Castle (DOW 033:034), which was 'built partly of stones and partly with earthen ramparts' (Harris 1744), although no standing remains are visible now. The application site is within the confines of the town of Poyntzpass, and the surrounding landscape consists of both pastoral and arable land, interspersed with dwelling houses. The trenches were positioned to incorporate the footprint of the proposed dwelling (fig 3), which were requested by Gail Howell (Case Officer Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage).

### Excavation

Trench 1 was positioned to the south-east of the application site, running parallel to the south east boundary fence and measured approximately 23m by 2m. The trench was aligned north-east/south-west and was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 108) (Plate 1) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.7m. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in this trench at the north eastern end (fig. 4). The stratigraphic sequence at the south western end was complicated by modern disturbance (fig. 4).

The sod and topsoil in Trench 1 (Context No. 101) consisted of a mid brown silty loam. This deposit had inclusions (approx. 15 %) of rounded and angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm) and numerous modern finds of; glass, tile, ceramic, metal and plastic. Active tree roots were also observed within the topsoil deposit (Context No. 101). The sod and topsoil (Context No. 101) had an average depth of 0.1m. The sod and topsoil (Context No. 101) in the south west lay directly above a mid-brown soil (Context No. 102).

The second deposit encountered in Trench 1 (Context No. 102) consisted of a mid-brown, loose silty loam. This deposit had inclusions (approx 15 %) of rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm), again numerous modern finds of; glass, ceramic, plastic, metal, brick and tile were encountered. The mid-brown soil deposit extended to a depth of approximately 0.6 m. Within this deposit two areas of burning were located (Context No. 103 and Context No. 106). The first burning deposit (Context No. 103) was approximately 2 m in diameter and approximately 5cm thick. It contained numerous modern finds including; glass, ceramic, metal and plastic. The second burning deposit (Context No. 106) was approximately 2 m in diameter and 5 cm thick. It also contained numerous modern finds including; glass, ceramic, tile, metal and plastic. The two burning deposits (Context No. 103 and Context No. 106) probably reflect refuse burnt during the recent construction of nearby houses.

At the south western end of Trench 1 the fill of a modern field drain was encountered (Context No. 104), approximately 15 cm wide and running approximately North/South. The field drain was filled with modern angular shale stones approximately 30 mm x 50 mm x 20 mm in size. The field drain cut (Context No. 105) into the mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 102) at approximately 40 cm below the surface. The mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 102) overlay a grey sandy deposit approximately 0.5 m in diameter (Context No. 107) which was most likely the remains of a weathered stone. The mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 102) overlay an orange sandy loam (Context No. 109) in the middle of the trench. This deposit (Context No. 109) overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 108), along with Context No's 102 and 107.

The natural subsoil in Trench 1 (Context No. 108) consisted of a grey/beige sandy clay. Numerous small and medium sized rounded stones were observed protruding from the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 108). Small patches of grey and green were apparent within the subsoil but these appeared to be the remains of weathered stones. There were no features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

The stratigraphic sequence at the north-eastern end was much simpler as no modern disturbance was encountered. The topsoil deposit (Context No. 101) overlay an orange-brown sandy loam deposit (Context No. 110) with occasional stone inclusions. The orange-brown sandy loam deposit extended to a depth of 0.5 m and overlay an orange sandy deposit (Context No. 111). The orange sandy deposit (Context No. 111) extended to a depth of 0.7 m, where the natural subsoil (Context No. 108) was encountered.

Trench 2 was positioned approximately 2m north-west of Trench 1. The trench was aligned north-east/south-west and was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 205) (Plate 2) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.7m. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in this trench (fig. 5).

The sod and topsoil in Trench 2 (Context No. 201) consisted of a dark brown silty loam. This deposit had infrequent inclusions of rounded and angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm) and active tree roots were observed within it. The deposit also contained numerous modern finds including; metal, glass, ceramic, tile, brick and plastic. The sod and topsoil (Context No. 201) had an average depth of 0.1m. The sod and topsoil (Context No. 201) lay directly above a mid-brown soil (Context No. 202).

The mid-brown soil in Trench 2 (Context No. 202) consisted of a mid-brown, loose silty loam (analogous to Trench one's Context No. 102). This deposit had frequent inclusions of rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm) and active tree roots were observed within it. The deposit also contained numerous modern finds including; metal, glass, ceramic, tile, brick and plastic. The mid-brown deposit (Context No. 202) extended to a depth of 0.6 m.

In the middle of Trench 2 the fill of a modern field drain was encountered (Context No. 203), approximately 15 cm wide and running approximately North/South, analogous to Context No. 104 in Trench 1. The field drain was filled with modern angular shale stones approximately 30 mm x 50 mm x 20 mm in size. The field drain cut (Context No. 204) into the mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 202) at approximately 40 cm

below the surface. The mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 102) overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 205).

The natural subsoil in Trench 2 (Context No. 205) consisted of a grey/beige sandy clay. Numerous small and medium sized rounded stones were observed protruding from the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 205). Small patches of grey and green were apparent within the subsoil but these appeared to be the remains of weathered stones. There were no features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 3 was positioned approximately 2 m north-west of Trench 2. The trench was approximately 11 m by 2 m. The trench was aligned north-east/south-west and was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 305) (Plate 3) which was encountered at an average depth of 1 m. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in this trench (fig. 5).

The sod and topsoil in Trench 3 (Context No. 301) consisted of a dark brown silty loam. This deposit had infrequent inclusions of rounded and angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm) and active tree roots were observed within it. The deposit also contained numerous modern finds including; metal, glass, ceramic, tile, brick and plastic. The sod and topsoil (Context No. 301) had an average depth of 0.1m. The sod and topsoil (Context No. 301) lay directly above a mid-brown soil (Context No. 302).

The mid-brown soil in Trench 2 (Context No. 302) consisted of a mid-brown, loose silty loam (analogous to Trench one's Context No. 102 and Trench two's Context No. 202). This deposit had frequent inclusions of rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 30 x 30 x 40mm) and active tree roots were observed within it. The deposit also contained numerous modern finds including; metal, glass, ceramic, tile, brick and plastic. The mid-brown deposit (Context No. 302) extended to a depth of 0.5 m. Within this deposit a single area of burning was located (Context No. 303). The burning deposit (Context No. 303) was approximately 0.5 m in diameter and approximately 5 cm thick. It contained numerous modern finds including; glass, ceramic, metal and plastic.

Below the mid-brown soil deposit (Context No. 302) an orange sandy clay deposit was encountered (Context No. 304). Within this deposit modern finds of plastic, ceramic and glass were encountered. This deposit extended to approximately 1 m deep where the natural subsoil (Context No. 305) was encountered.

The natural subsoil in Trench 3 (Context No. 305) consisted of a grey/beige sandy clay. Numerous small and medium sized rounded stones were observed protruding from the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 305). Small patches of grey and green were apparent within the subsoil but these appeared to be the remains of weathered stones. There were no features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Three fragments of black ware 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century pottery were recovered from this evaluation, two fragments from Context No. 110, in Trench 1 and a single fragment from Context No. 202, in Trench 2. No features of archaeological significance were noted during the evaluation. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out at the development site. No publication is required, apart from a short summary in the annual bulletin of excavations.

**References:**

Harris, R. 1744. *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down*. A. Reilly, Dublin.



**Archive:**

*Small Finds:*

- 1, Blue and white pottery, Context No. 102
- 2, Modern glass, Context No. 110
- 3, Modern glass, Context No. 110
- 4, Black ware pottery, Context No. 110
- 5, Black ware pottery, Context No. 110
- 6, Modern white ceramic, Context No. 110
- 7, Modern glass, Context No. 202
- 8, Modern glass bottle, Context No. 202
- 9, Black ware pottery, Context No. 202
- 10, Modern white ceramic, Context No. 202
- 11, Blue and white pottery, Context No. 304

*Photographs:*

6 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

*Plans / Drawings:* n/a

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

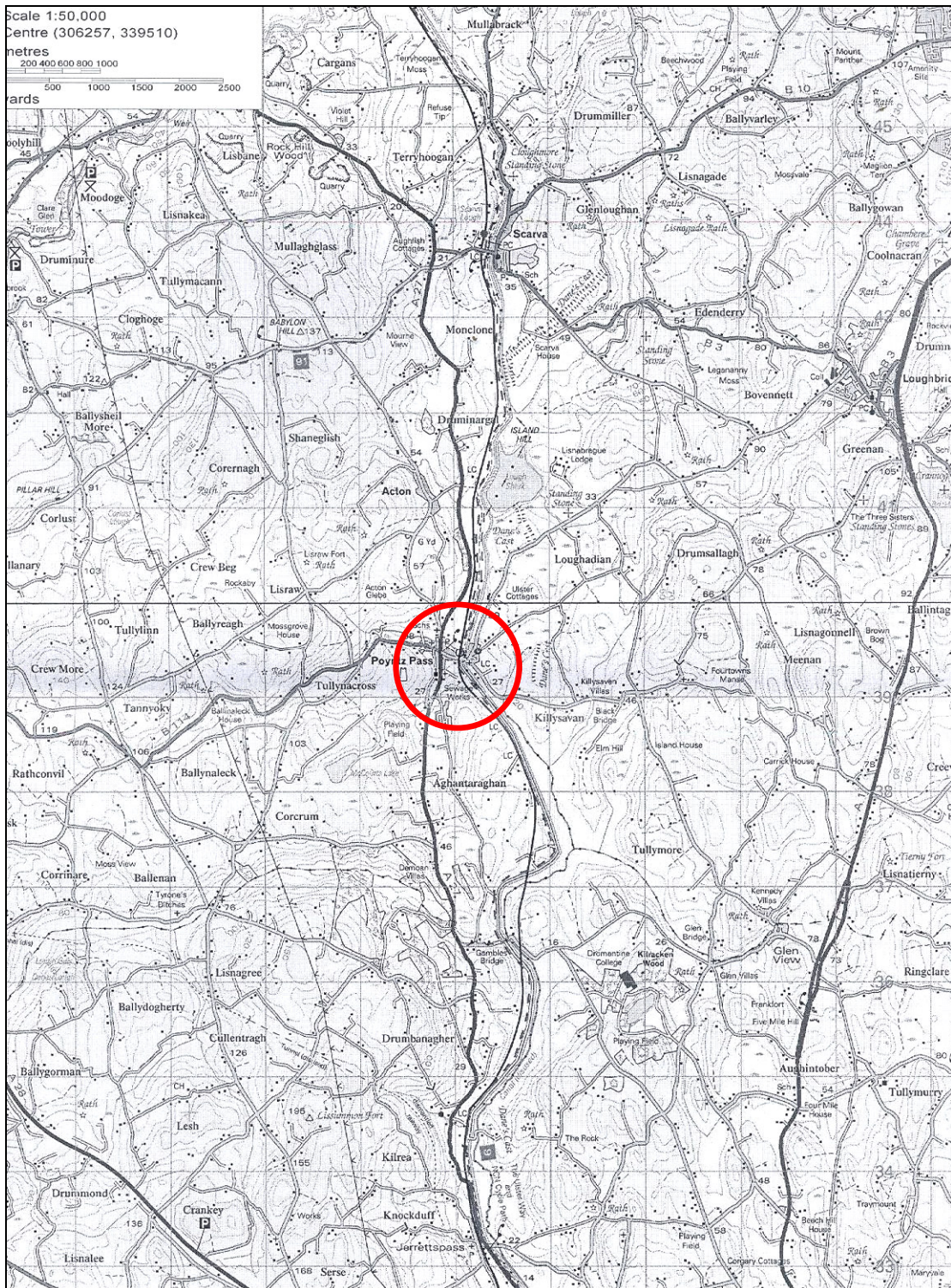


Fig. 1: General location map showing Poyntzpass town (circled in red).

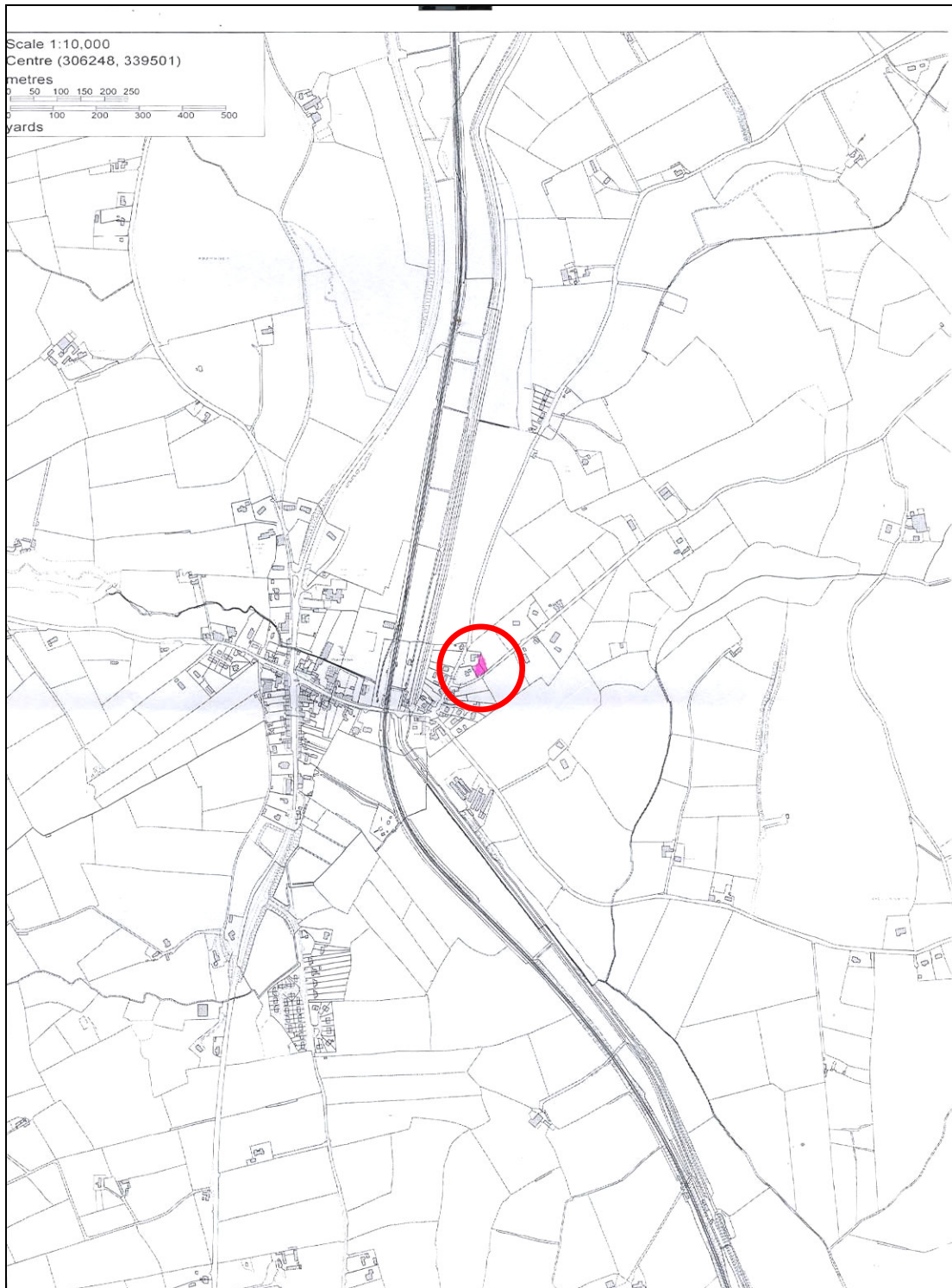


Fig. 2: Detailed location map showing application site (highlighted in pink, circled in red).

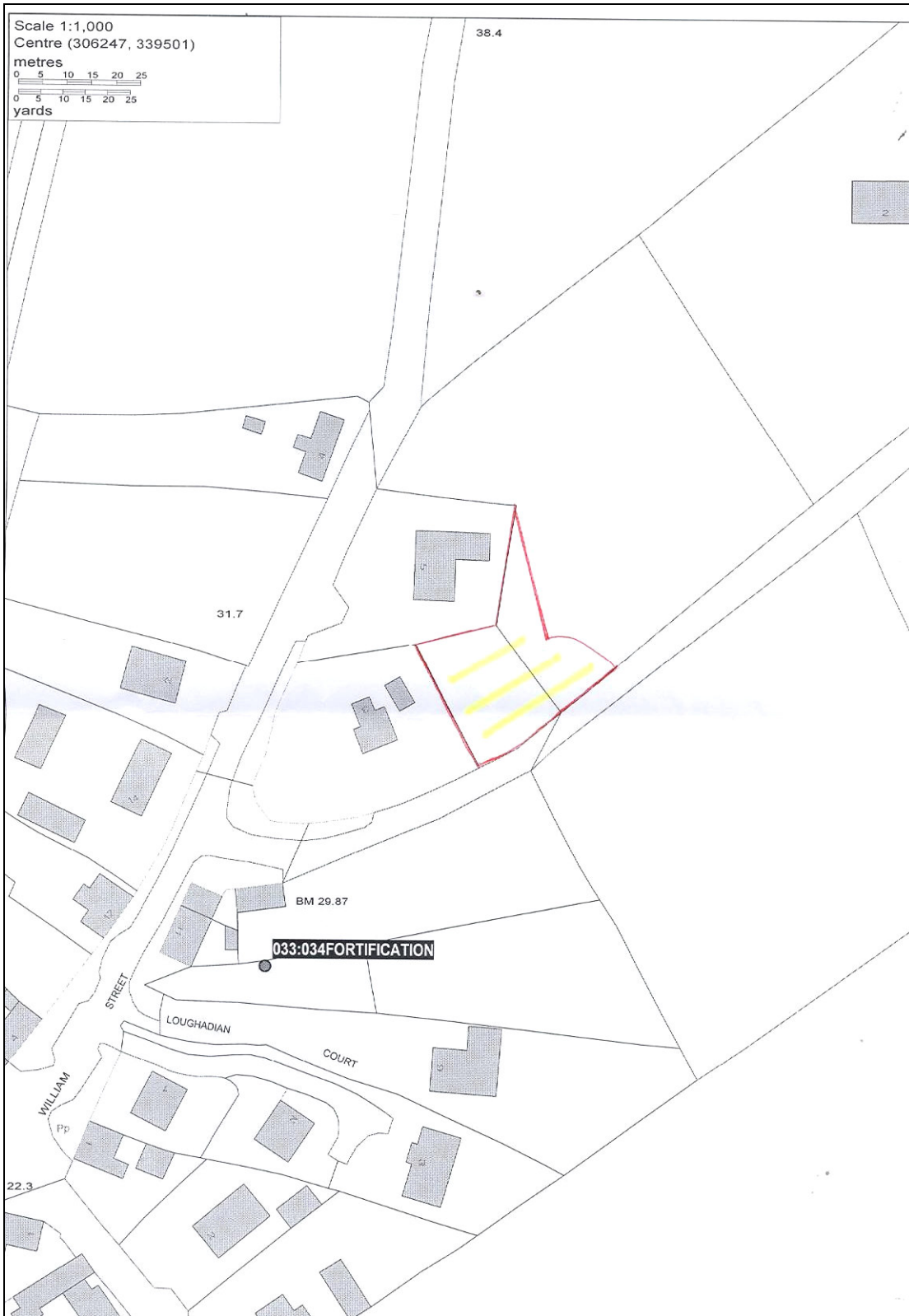


Fig. 3: Detailed location map showing positions of three trenches.



Plate 1: Trench 1 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 108), looking south-west.



Plate 2: Trench 2 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 205), looking south-west.



Plate 3: Trench 3 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 305), looking south-west.

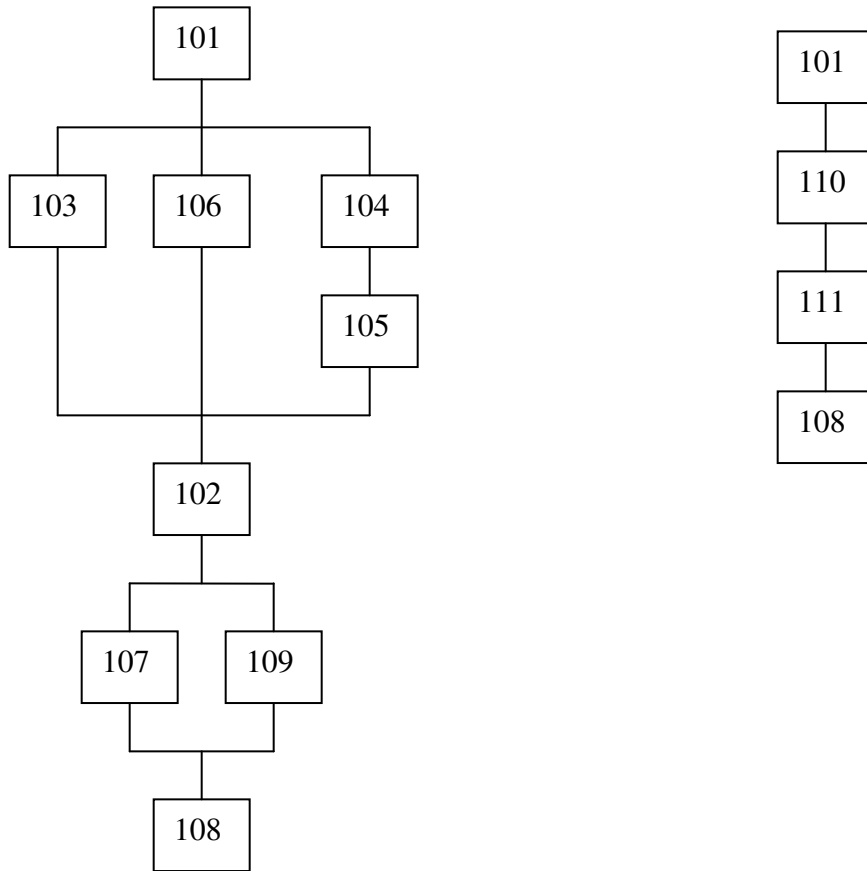


Fig. 4: Harris matrix for Trench 1 deposits south-west end (left) north east end (right)



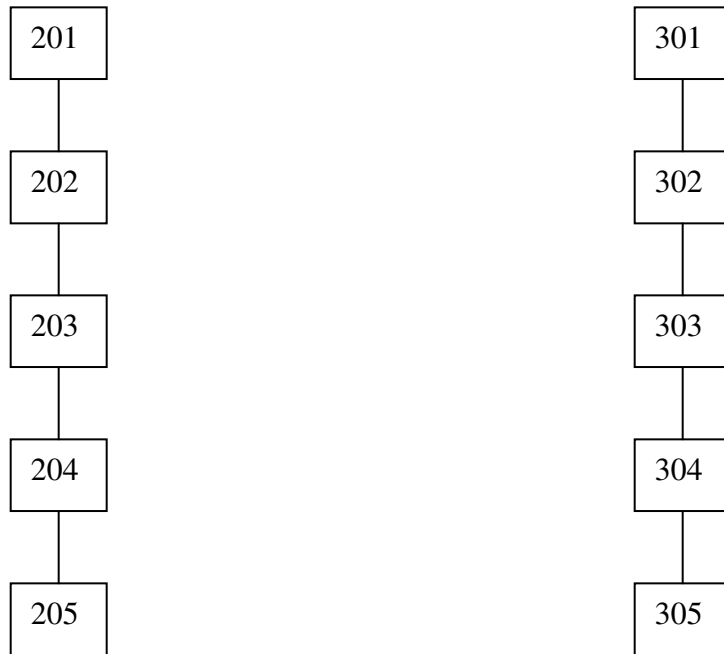


Fig. 5: Harris matrices fro Trench 2 (left) and Trench 3 (right)