



## Data Structure Report No. 119

### Excavations at Retreat, Cushendall, Co. Antrim

*On behalf of*





**Queen's University Belfast**

EXCAVATIONS AT RETREAT  
CUSHENDALL  
CO. ANTRIM

H 8814 1475

AE/16/149E

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**On behalf of the Heart of the  
Glens Landscape Partnership**

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# 1 Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) at Queen's University Belfast were commissioned by the Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership (HoTGLPS) to undertake a community-based archaeological investigation into a complex of remains referred to as 'Retreat Castle' (ANT 019:011; D2038 2420; Figure 1) in the uplands close to Cushendall, County Antrim, during the three-week period from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, with the programme of fieldwork directed by Brian Sloan.

The monument that was under investigation survives as a complex of ruinous buildings on a flat upland plateau, with a 'U' shaped arrangement of buildings surrounding a roughly rectangular courtyard. A series of trenches were excavated to investigate (a) the building located on the north-eastern side of the range, (b) the courtyard area, and (c) a distinct conical mound located to the north of the complex.

The complex at Retreat dates to the late eighteenth century and was constructed by Captain George Ewing. This enterprise can be viewed as part of a programme of 'Improvement' that took place in Ireland and Britain during the eighteenth century, but the venture at Retreat was one which failed, with Ewing having to sell off all his possessions in 1780 following successful legal action by his mother-in-law. The site would appear to have then fallen into ruin to the extent that the Ordnance Survey of 1832 assigned the complex an ancient designation despite it being a mere sixty years old.

## 1.2 Aims of the investigation

Prior to the current investigation little was known about the complex and its history was only vaguely understood. The current programme of work was therefore designed to improve our knowledge of the site, its origins, and how and when it became abandoned. The work was community-based and involved the direct participation of local primary school children and adult volunteers in the fieldwork.

## 1.3 Excavation

Six trenches were manually investigated during the course of fieldwork. Trench One was located in the courtyard of the complex with Trenches Two, Three, Four and Six investigating the building along the north-eastern side of the range. A further trench, Trench Five, was excavated into the top of a conical mound to the immediate north of the complex.

Trench One was excavated in the courtyard area of the complex. The trench was aligned roughly north-west/south-east and measured 8m in length by 2m in width. This trench was excavated solely by the visiting school groups under archaeological supervision and revealed a simple stratigraphic sequence with sod and topsoil overlying a roughly metalled surface. Finds from this trench included a small corpus of prehistorical lithics, along with early modern ceramics, glass, slate and carved sandstone, including a fragment of a windowsill.

Trench Two was located to the rear of the building along the north-east range near to the upstanding remains of its northern gable. The trench was aligned roughly south-west/north-east and measured 4m in length by 2m in width, with a 2m x 1m extension subsequently added to the south-east. The excavation of this trench revealed a finely laid cobbled surface with stone-lined drain and the foundations of the rear wall of the building.

Trench Three was located in the south-western end of the building and was aligned roughly north-west/south-east. The trench measured 7.6m by 2m and investigated the internal division wall between two rooms at this end of the building. The excavation of this trench revealed interesting aspects about the appearance of the house, with a hearth, blocked up doorway and wall recess being recorded, as well as evidence for the plaster on the internal walls and for floor boards. Artefacts recovered throughout the stratigraphic sequence encountered in this trench indicate that the structure was roofed with slates and had a line of glazed ridge tiles along the apex of the roof. This trench also revealed a distinct projection in the front façade wall line; a corresponding projection was found during the excavation of Trench Six. This indicates that the front façade of the building was tri-partite with the central portion set forward from the two end-sides.

Trench Four was located approximately 7m north-west of Trench Three and measured 4m by 3m. The trench was positioned halfway along the front façade of the building to investigate the location of the front doorway. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered, with the doorway and threshold being revealed as well as evidence of the internal wooden floor of the inner hall. The trench also revealed a further doorway leading into a room in the north-eastern end of the structure, and it can be suggested that a similar and corresponding doorway existed to provide access to the rooms to the south-west.

Trench Six was located approximately 7m to the north-east of Trench Four. The trench measured 3m x 2m and was positioned to investigate a corresponding projection in the front façade as that encountered in Trench Three. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered which revealed the front façade of the house as well as an internal sub-division wall.

Trench Five was excavated into the top of a conical mound that was located to the immediate north of the complex and focussed on a distinct hollow at the summit of the mound. The work revealed a curvilinear stone wall with its hollow interior filled with rubble. Artefacts retrieved from the interior included a sizeable assemblage of prehistoric lithics (residually deposited in the rubble backfill) and a single sherd of nineteenth century ceramic, indicating the general date when the feature had been filled in. The location and morphology of the structure indicates that this was a lime kiln and possibly the one on the property that is mentioned in a newspaper advertisement dating to November 1772 (Figure 7).

Following their excavation and recording all the trenches were manually backfilled and the site reinstated.

#### *1.4 Discussion*

This was a community-based investigation, with 338 school children and 71 adult volunteers taking part in fieldwork over a three-week period, and with the feedback from the schools being exclusively positive. The investigation also generated a substantial social media audience, as well as featuring on BBCNI's Radio Ulster 'Your Place and Mine' Saturday morning magazine show.

The excavation of the trenches themselves revealed a great deal of information regarding the appearance and layout of the complex. The investigation also afforded the opportunity to digitally record the monument through Structure from Motion (SfM) and aerial UAV photogrammetry.

Both the excavation and the historical documentation show that the 'improvement' enterprise at Retreat failed. Ewing's association with Cloghglass may have commenced around 1772, and he was certainly established here by 1776, but he was forced to sell-off all his interests and possessions following successful legal action by his mother-in-law in 1780, and by 1781 the property was under lease within the Boyd family. As such, Ewing's connection with Retreat lasted a decade at the most. The history of the complex following that date is unclear; the lease of 1781 demonstrates that Letitia Boyd (widow of the landlord, Samuel Boyd) had leased the property to her son Alexander in that year, but whether occupation continued within the fine house that Ewing had constructed remains unknown; what we can say, however, is that the complex had degraded to such an extent that it was assumed to be a "castle" and an antiquity by the Ordnance Survey in 1832, even though it was perhaps as little as 60 years old. Evidence revealed in Trench Three for the blocking of the doorway into the south-western room in the building might suggest, however, that some form of occupation did continue in the years immediately following Ewing's departure, but this may have been herders utilised the building for shelter for themselves and their livestock in the decades after



1780, with this end of the house perhaps reused as a byre or a barn. It is conceivable that this took place in association with the lime kiln in Trench Five being filled in to further protect livestock.

### *1.5 Recommendations*

A number of recommendations to bring this project to completion are presented in Section 5 of this report. These include an analysis of the various elements of material culture recovered during the excavation. The results obtained during the investigation at Retreat are deemed to be of great significance since the site represents a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Improvement endeavour that ultimately failed and Retreat can therefore be used as a comparator for other more successful schemes that occurred across Ireland in these decades (Forsythe 2007; Forsythe 2013). As such, the results of the excavation and historical research should be published in a peer-reviewed journal.



Figure 1: Location Map

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 General

The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queen's University Belfast were commissioned by the Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme (HoTGLPS) to undertake an archaeological investigation at Retreat Castle, near Cushendall, County Antrim (IGR D2038 2420: NISMR ANT 019:011) in the townland of Retreat/Cloghglass (Figure 2). The excavation took place between Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September and Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and was a community-based investigation which involved the participation of 11 local Primary Schools, 338 schoolchildren (P5-P7) and 71 adult volunteers over the three-week period. The excavation was directed by Brian Sloan (CAF) under Licence AE/16/71E.

Retreat Castle is a complex of ruined buildings located in an upland area overlooking the village of Cushendall and is situated in Glenballyemon, one of the nine Glens of Antrim. The site is located on a roughly flat plateau which affords panoramic views northward towards the town of Cushendall, the Antrim Coast, and Scotland. A steep scarp is present to the immediate north-west of the monument, where the ground falls sharply to meet the Ballyemon Road (B14 running between Cushendall and Ballymena). Relic spade-cultivation ridges are visible in the immediate vicinity of the monument but the surrounding area is now dominated by open grassland and bog, with the land now used for pastoral (sheep) farming. Access to the site is by a gated laneway which leads to the remains of an abandoned railway station located within a walled garden that presumably once formed part of the complex (Figure 3). The complex of structures at Retreat is located in a relatively archaeologically sterile landscape. Indeed, the monument is the only identified antiquity in the townland in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR ANT 019:011), which is somewhat surprising given its proximity to major prehistoric sites such as Tievebulliagh and Lurigethan.

In his article on the Medieval stone castles of County Antrim, published in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* in 1983, Dr Tom McNeill included Retreat Castle in his inventory of sites, but – after considering its form and design – concluded that the monument must have “acquired the title of castle as a courtesy” (McNeill 1983, 126) rather than because of its antiquity or military strength. The implication contained within McNeill's statement was that the site did not constitute a Medieval fortification; he was clearly correct in his assessment, and the evidence retrieved during the course of the current investigation indicates that this is a complex belonging to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and one associated with the “Improvement” agenda that occurred within Britain and Ireland during the period from c.1750 to c.1850. This topic is now a growing area of research within archaeology, as exemplified by Tarlow's overview of the subject for Britain (Tarlow 2007), and – at a more local level – by Forsythe (2007; 2013). The economic success of the “Age of Improvement”, particularly through agricultural reform, is one

that was highlighted and stressed by contemporary writers such as Samuel Madden (1816) and Arthur Young (Hutton 1892), and it can be suggested that Retreat is part of that story. It is also, however, fundamentally a testimony in stone to the failure of that agenda in the highlands of County Antrim. The complex originated as a grand house with an associated yard and outbuildings, but it had become abandoned and ruined by the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Figure 2: The townland of Retreat or Cloghglass. The location of complex is denoted by the blue dot, while the townland boundary is highlighted in red.*



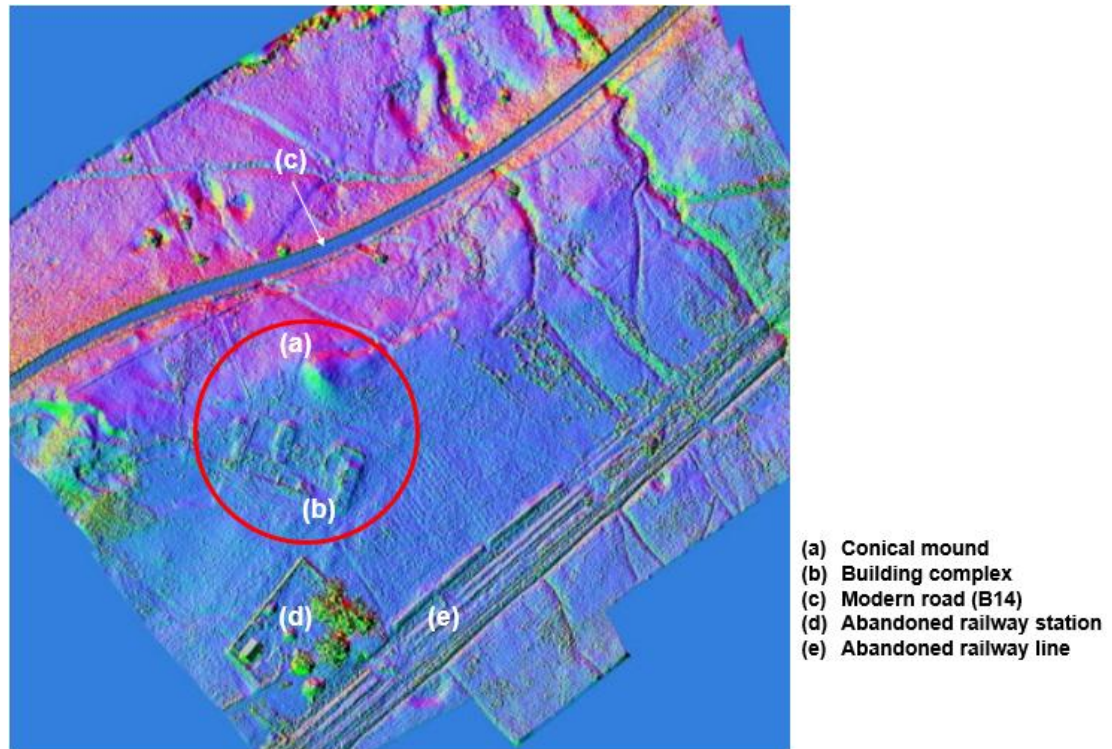


Figure 3: UAV Photographic survey of the immediate landscape surrounding "Retreat".

"Retreat Castle" was depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1832, when it was denoted as a "ruin", with the text in Gothic script. The implication of this is that the surveyors evidently *thought* that what they were recording was an antiquity; the accompanying *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* were more cautious, however, stating that this was "a dwelling house and ... a ruin of no great date" (Day and McWilliams 1992, 40). By the time that O'Lavery (1887, iv, 543) was engaged in his great study of the history and antiquities of the Diocese of Down and Connor the site still retained a degree of mystery and he was forced to make the simple statement that the history of the ruin was unknown. This situation continued to be the case through to 1976 when Charles Brett published his list of historic buildings in the Glens of Antrim on behalf of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society:

"Ruins only; but of what? Nobody seems to know. There was a gentleman's seat here belonging to a Mr Evans in 1778. This is known locally as "Ewing's Buildings", and there is an oral tradition that there was once a beacon here. A sizable stone-built two-storey building of uncertain date. In the vicinity, an incipient car's graveyard" (Brett 1976, 38).

Brett had been able to deduce the occupant of the property as Mr Evans in 1778 by the fact that its location had been marked on the Taylor and Skinner road-map published in that year, where it was denoted as "Retreat, Evans Esquire" (see Figure 6), but evidently sufficient fabric survived in the 1970s for him to be able to establish that this was a two-storey building;

the last standing fragments of walls currently at the site (Figures 4 and 5) would make it somewhat more challenging to reach such a conclusion some 40 years later!



*Figure 4: The northern gable of the dwelling house, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016*

The site is included in the NISMR and was visited by an archaeological surveyor in 1992 when it was reported as “the poorly preserved remains of a complex of structures, all of which appear to date to the post medieval period. There are at least 13 structures, either rectangular or square, in varying states of preservation ... The existing layout appears to comprise a courtyard at the NE surrounded on three sides by structures”. A sketch plan of the complex was helpfully provided (see Figure 20); the surveyor correctly noted that there were no visible traces of a castle or of any medieval features and concluded that the site appeared to be the remains of a dwelling house with associated structures, although no date was ascribed to the complex other than “post medieval”.

The background research undertaken in support of the current investigation has indicated that Retreat remains a highly intriguing – although not quite so enigmatic – site, but was this a case of Nature winning out over an ill-conceived programme of “Improvement”, poor management, bad fortune, or a combination of all these factors?



*Figure 5: The remaining sections of upstanding masonry within the interior of the dwelling house, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.*

## 2.2 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities. All site records and finds are temporarily archived with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast.

## 2.3 Credits and acknowledgements

We are particularly thankful to the excavation crew from CAF that consisted of Matthew Adams, Ruth Logue, Grace McAlister and Ruairi O'Baoill, We are also grateful to the following for their help and support during the excavation and the production of this report: Cormac McSparron (CAF), and Laura McAuley and Réamai Mathers (both Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme). Special thanks are also due to the landowner Donal McIlwaine for providing access to the site.

The school groups that took part in the excavation were: Seaview PS Glenarm, Carnlough Integrated PS, St. Marys PS Cushendall, St. Patricks and St. Brigids PS Ballycastle, Ballycastle Integrated PS, Barnish PS Ballyvoy, Gaelscoil an Chaistil Ballycastle, St. Patricks PS Loughguile, Glanaan PS, St. Ciarans PS Cushendun and St. Johns PS Carnlough. The authors are indebted to the pupils and teachers for all of their hard work and enthusiasm.



### 3 Historical Context

The townland in which the complex is located is Retreat or Cloghglass (Donnelly 1861, 789). Evidently the former name is a replacement for the latter, and an Early Modern creation, presumably associated with the “Improvement” agenda as played out in the Antrim uplands at this time and one that is echoed by the (failed) attempt to rename the coastal village at Cushendall as “Newtownglen” (see Figure 6). The placename “Cloghglass” is first encountered in the historical record in the *Ulster Inquisition* of 1635 when it is recorded as “Cloghglasse”, a name that originates in the Irish words *cloch* (stone, or stone building) and *glas* (the colour green, or sometimes the colour grey). As such the placename can be translated as “the green (or grey) stone”, or “the green (or grey) stone building”. <http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=16211>).



Figure 6: Retreat Castle, as marked on Taylor and Skinner's 1778 road-map outside the village of "Newtownglen or Cushendall".



There is no evidence, however, for a large building which might have been a castle present in the 1660s hearth rolls in this townland (Carleton 1991, 113-117) and it is only in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that the existence of such a building becomes apparent with its inclusion as a named feature on the road from Cushendall to Clogh in the Taylor and Skinner road-map of 1778 (see Figure 6). In an article published in the 1976 edition of the *The Glynn's*, Rose Emerson, a local woman then some 80 years old, reflected on the site's history:

"On up past Isbann, Barard, Tigmel and continue to the end of Gault's Road, named after the man who built it, where you can turn round and come down the other side of the glen past Retreat Station and the ruins of Ewins' buildings. These buildings were erected by a landlord's agent named Evans, but was always referred to by the glens people as Ewins. The idea of its erection was to collect grain from the farmers who had not the money to pay their exorbitant rents; but he reaped no grain from his granary as he could not keep the scourge of rats away from it. Therefore it stands ruins today never having achieved anything but the hatred and loathing of the glens people. It may be worthy of notice to say that Evans met his death at the end of Mill Street, now Main Street, Cushendall, by a missile from a slingshot (catapult). No one was ever accused of his death and the only person on the street at the time was a blind man from Ballyeamon" (Emerson 1976, 34-35).

Leaving aside the death of Mr Evans for the moment, Emerson's account is of particular interest since it explicitly links the development of the site to the actions of an improving landlord who hoped to collect grain from his tenants *in lieu* of cash rent, but the plan came to nothing, seemingly to the delight of the local population. Further elements in the story of Retreat Castle's origins, however, can be gleaned from the *Belfast Newsletter*. On 1<sup>st</sup> November 1772 an advertisement was published looking for a lime-burner to work at "Retreat" (see Figure 7).

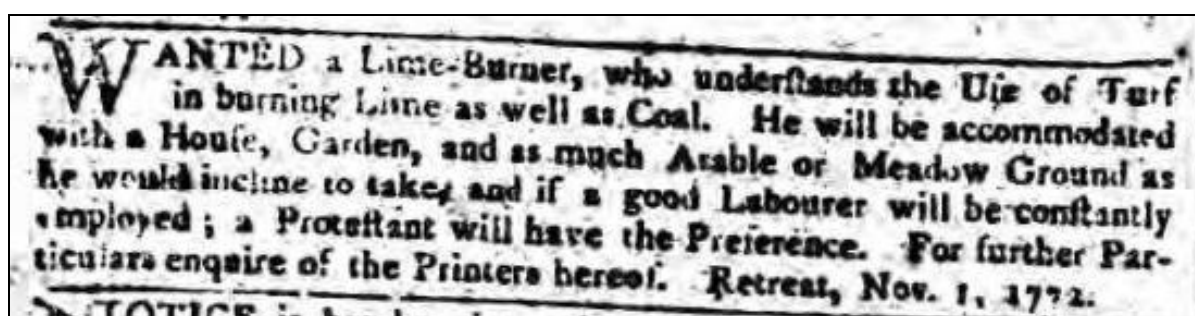


Figure 7: Advertisement in *Belfast Newsletter*, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1772

An improving landlord would view the inclusion of a limekiln on their property in similar fashion to the presence of a cornmill, to be managed in a similar fashion by a suitable tenant employed to run the concern, employing sub-tenants and workers to raise the limestone and

cut the turf or – as in this case – transport the coal required to fuel the kiln. Arthur Young in 1780 praised Irish farmers for their skill in applying burned lime to newly broken land – especially land that had hitherto been turf bog – in their efforts to make it fertile and, by consequence, productive (Crawford 2001, 55). In light of this information Emerson's oral tradition that the site was associated with grain production takes on an additional resonance, as does the advertisement's assertion that "a Protestant will have Preference". The landlord and his lead workers at Retreat may therefore have been viewed as outsiders among the incumbent (and majority Roman Catholic) population and this may have been a contributing factor to Emerson's oral tradition of local "hatred and loathing" – strange new people with strange new ideas who were trying to bring change to Ballyeamon.

A second advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter*, dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 1779, makes reference to "an excellent new house, with compleat Offices, and a good Garden wall'd in on the North and West Sides" (see Figure 8). Evidently the complex has been completed by that year, but can still be described as "new". If we interpret this to suggest that the complex was constructed in the previous decade then we might see the advertisement for a "lime-burner" in 1772 as being one of the early acts of the new landlord towards getting the land fit for improved farming activity. This advertisement also introduces us to the name of the landlord – G. Ewing – and hence Emerson's oral tradition (also reported by Brett) that the monument was known locally as "Ewin's Building". We can surmise that the "excellent new House" was a statement in stone by Ewing of his ambition to initiate and develop his lands and to introduce improving ideas to the wild landscape of north Antrim and hence the graniose new name of Retreat that he applied to his new home and its associated townland. Be that as it may, such courtesy was not adopted by the local population who simply christened it with the surname of the man who had built the complex.

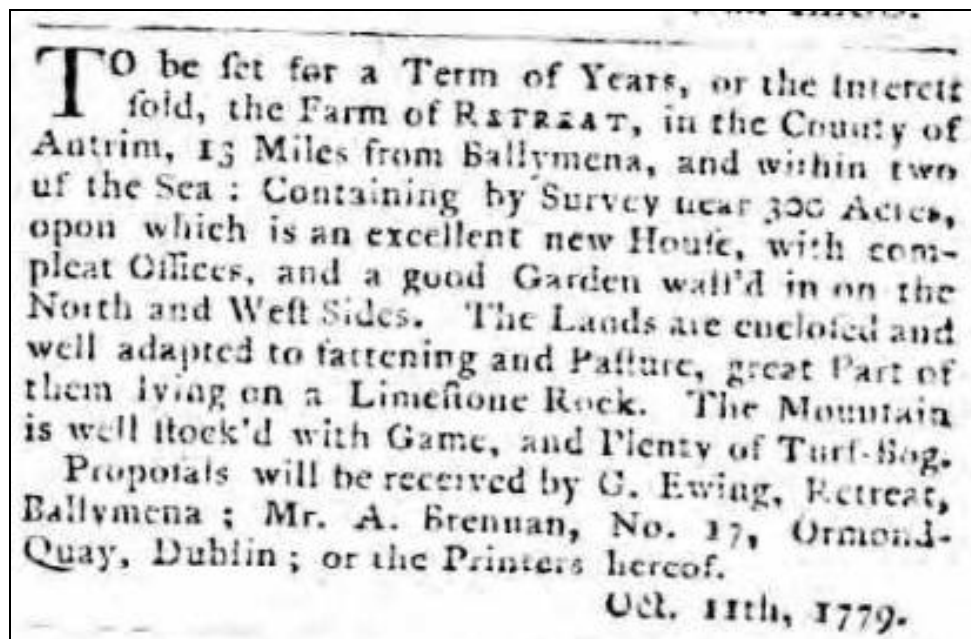


Figure 8: Advertisement in *Belfast Newsletter*, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1779

That Ewing was present at Retreat in 1777 is further confirmed by the contents of a Ballymena merchant's cashbook in the PRONI, where transactions with "Capt George Ewings Retreat" are recorded (William Roulston, pers com; see Figure 9) but Ewing's association with Retreat Castle would seem to have been coming to an end by late 1780 since an advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter* dated 27<sup>th</sup> December in that year (see Figure 10) noted that successful legal action by "Jane Grierson, Widow" had resulted in him having to sell off his "Household Goods, Implements of Husbandry and stock of Cattle, consisting of Horse, Cow and Sheep, together with a Quantity of Hay and Potatoes" in order to make resitution to her for the money owed.

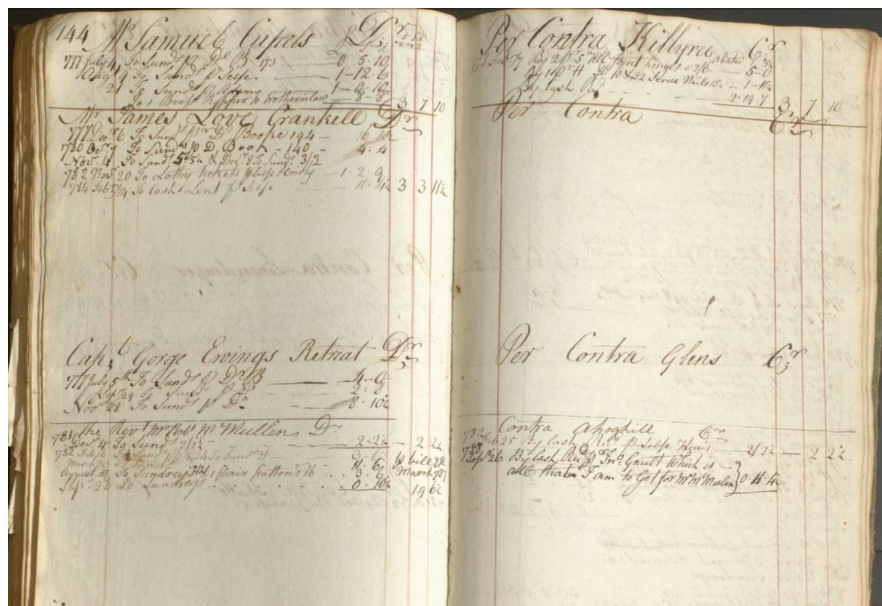


Figure 9: Ballymena Merchant's Cashbook of 1777, recording transactions with "Capt George Ewings Retreat" (William Roulston, pers com)

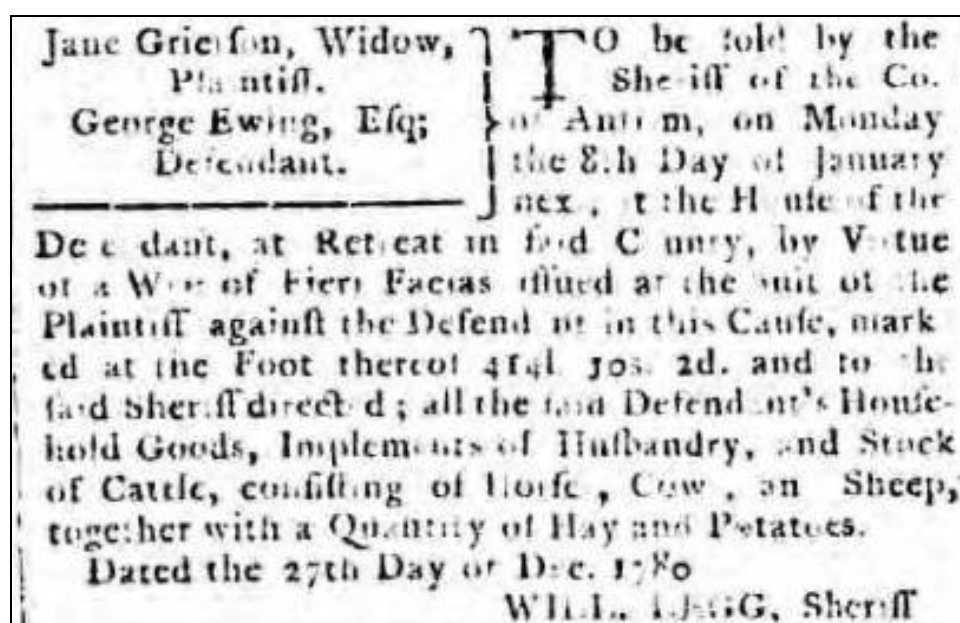


Figure 10: Advertisement in Belfast Newsletter, 27<sup>th</sup> December 1780

The story takes on a notable twist when we read that George Ewing seems to have been married to a relative of Jane Grierson, for the *Belfast Newsletter* of 28 March 1766 carried an announcement of the marriage of Lt George Ewing and Miss Ellison Grierson. Leaving aside his promotion from Lieutenant to Captain between 1766 and 1777, the two advertisements indicate that his experiment at Retreat was not going well. In 1779 he was seeking to let or sell his interest in the farm, while by 1780 he was being forced to sell-off all of his belonging. Was it the case that Ewing had been too extravagant in his expenditure? Had he bankrolled his development with his in-laws finance? And had they in turn – in the person of Jane Grierson – then decided to seek legal redress? The construction of his new house and its offices must have required significant resource and he was presumably relying on a good return in his agricultural endeavours to enable him to ensure a financial return for his efforts. There is certainly a hint in Emerson's oral tradition that the venture failed, although it would seem unlikely that this was solely the result of an infestation of rats.

Historical research indicates that Jane Grierson was George Ewings' mother-in-law and the interconnections between the two families have been demonstrated by Pollard (2000; see Figure 11). Jane Grierson was the third wife of a Scottish-born printer and publisher, George Grierson (1678-1753), who moved to Dublin in 1703 and had risen to the position of the King's Printer in Ireland; Jane had formerly been married to Francis Cromie (died 1731) and she married George on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1734, going on to have seven children with him, including Ellison (also known as Allison) who was born 18<sup>th</sup> July 1738 and baptised on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1738. Jane's father, James Blow, was also in the print business and, although based in Belfast, had a close working relationship with George Grierson in the publication of theological texts and bibles. Into this picture we now introduce George Ewing, who was George Grierson's apprentice in 1719 (Pollard 2000, 254), and who is reported in the *Belfast Newsletter* as having married George's sister Jane "Girson" in St John's Church in Dublin on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1718 (William Roulston, pers com).

Jane's stepson George Abraham Grierson took over as King's Printer after his father's death in 1753 and while her own son Boulter was underage. George Abraham, however, died in 1755 and his executor was "A. Ewing" who ran the business with Jane until 1758 when Boulter took over (Pollard 2000, 260). Evidently "A. Ewing" was Alexander Ewing, George Abraham's cousin, who in turn died in 1765. His father had died in 1764, but he seems to have had another son – Reverend George Ewing – who was born c.1720, educated in Trinity College Dublin, and became vicar of the Church of Ireland parish of Castletown-Delvin in County Westmeath for the period from 1758 to 1776 (William Roulston, pers com). Reverend George may have died in 1776, and we know he had a son Thomas who died in 1775; it is possible that Captain Ewing is another of this man's sons or that he was the

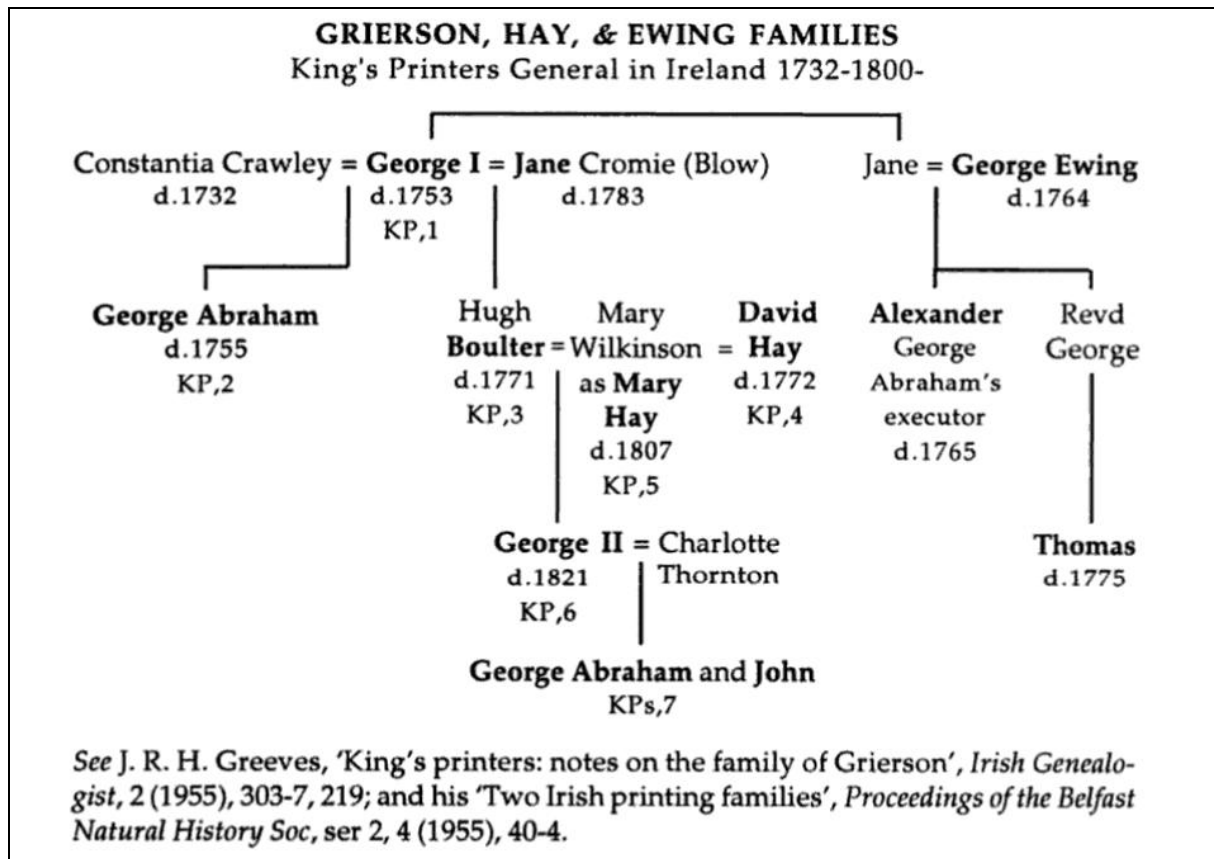


Figure 11: Family tree of the Grierson, Hay and Ewing families in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Pollard 2000, 253).

son of his brother Alexander, in which case Ellison (28 years old when she married in 1766) would have been marrying her first cousin-once-removed. The result remains the same, however, for we can be certain that Jane Grierson was Captain George Ewing's mother-in-law and that she lived in Dublin until her death in 1783 (Pollard 2000, 253). What can't be reconciled so easily, however, is how and why George and Ellison ended up on the wind-swept hills of Ballyeamon in rural County Antrim, or when exactly they moved here.

The first direct evidence that we have is to be found in the Register of Deeds in Dublin where there is a lease dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1776 between Samuel Boyd of Mount Edwards (a property on the edge of the village of Cushendall) and George Ewing of the "City of Dublin" (Figure 12). The document demonstrates that Ewing was a tenant and not the landlord of the property – that was Boyd. Significantly, the property is not called "Retreat", but the lease is for "five acres" of Cloghglass within the townland of the same name, of 250 acres extent, and at an annual rent of £35 per year. Remembering that the entry in the Register of Deeds is but a copy of the actual lease, we are told that a map accompanied the original document, and we are also informed that the former tenant was Cormac McAuley. One might see here further reason for the memory of hostility directed towards Ewing in Emerson's oral tale if it were the case that a local man lost possession of the lease from Boyd to make way for the new improving tenant! Two things present themselves from all of this. First, we have to consider





A further deed in the collection in Dublin provides us with additional evidence for Ewing's presence at Retreat. Dated to 26<sup>th</sup> March 1777, and relating to a property transaction in Dublin, he is noted as "George Ewing of Retreat, Esq" (Registry of Deeds in Dublin, Book 320, Page 456, Deed No.219623). As we have seen, however, evidently Ewing's association with Retreat was coming to an end in 1780 (Figure 10) and the Registry of Deeds provides us with insight into what happened in the aftermath of the court case. A few days short of a year following that advertisement being placed in the *Belfast Newsletter*, a new deed had been drawn up between Letitia Boyd, the widow of Samuel Boyd, and their son Alexander Boyd which confirmed the latter with the "two quarterlands of Cloghglass now also known by the name of Retreat" and "Gartaclee". The latter property is evidently Gortaclee, located on the outskirts of Cushendall and the townland neighbouring the Boyd's estate at Mount Edward. What is of note, however, is the fact that the whole townland of Cloghglass – and not just a building within that townland – is now being referenced as Retreat.

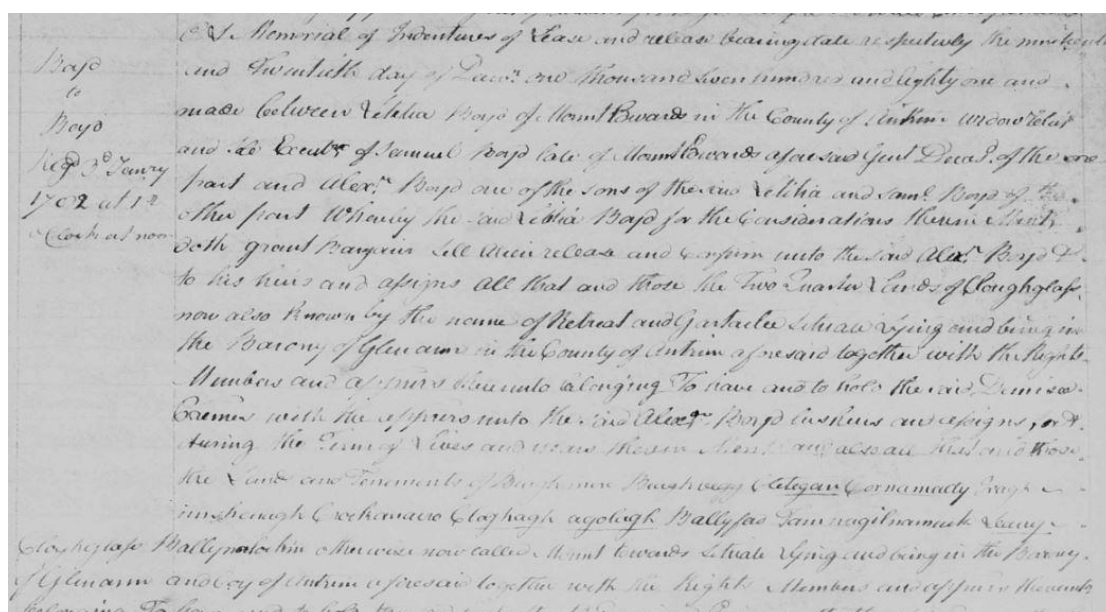


Figure 13: Copy of the lease between Letitia Boyd, Landlord, and Alexander Boyd, Tenant, relating to the lease of Cloghglass, dated 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> December 1781 (Registry of Deeds in Dublin, Book 342, Page 348, Deed No.230340)

We can now be certain that Ewing had departed Retreat by 1781 and the land had reverted to the Boyd family, but we still have to factor in the information on the Taylor and Skinner road-map of 1778, where we are informed that Retreat was occupied by "Evans Esquire". Had Ewing let the property to Evans at some point before 1779 and was he seeking to renew the letting arrangement for it in that year (Figure 8)? If Rose Emerson's oral history is consulted again, we see that Evans, however, does not feature as the tenant at Retreat Castle, but is mentioned as the land agent, presumably for Ewing, the implication being that it was possible for Ewing to have developed the property, but that it was Evans who was residing there. The statement that Evans subsequently met his death on the streets of Cushendall has not been

corroborated by any newspaper accounts, but his name remained attached to the property in 1786 when it is reported in the *Post-Chaise Companion: Or, Travellers Directory Through Ireland* that “Seven miles from Clogh, on the L is Retreat, the seat of Mr Evans”, and this is a statement that is repeated in the 1794 *Traveller’s Guide Through Ireland*. One possibility that cannot be discounted, however, is that Ewing and Evans were one and the same, especially given that there is not much difference between “Ewins” and “Evans”, as presented in Emerson’s account.

By 1832 we know that Retreat was a ruin (since that is how it was reported in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*), but the available – albeit scant – historical information might suggest that it was remained inhabited into the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the possibility that it became abandoned following the death of Mr Evans, perhaps at some point after 1794. If this hypothesis is correct then it means that the actual lifespan of the complex was indeed a modest one of perhaps as little as twenty years, and that it was constructed c.1776 and abandoned c.1794. One other issue, however, needs to be noted at this point. None of the documents presented in the previous discussion of the history associated with the complex is the term “castle” used, and it is evident that the first occasion where the term is used is by the Ordnance Survey in 1832, on their map but not in their accompanying memoir. Any such use of the term in the title of the site is therefore highly inappropriate.

By the time of the Griffith Valuation of c.1860 the landlord of the townland is listed as Edmund F. Cuppage (1809-1864). His grandmother was Mary Boyd, married to Rev. Alexander Cuppage, and evidently the Boyd’s property had transferred to Cuppage since he was resident at Mount Edwards. This property included the townland of Retreat / Cloghglass which had been leased out in two parcels, the first to Patrick O’Neill (359 acres with a herd’s house) and the second to Daniel and Bryan McAuley (49 acres with a house). While the McAuleys had two houses marked on their parcel of land, the Retreat complex – now a ruin – is located on the land held by O’Neill, and while he may indeed have had a “herd’s house” it is not marked on the accompanying Valuation map; it might have been the case that the herd’s house was in or around the ruins of the complex, or – alternatively – that it was the small house that exists in the west corner of the walled garden. The relationship between Cormac McAuley, tenant of Cloghglass prior to 1776, and Daniel and Byran McAuley, tenants in c.1860, remains uncertain, but perhaps they were related and the family had retained their connection to the townland through the course of the previous 85 years.

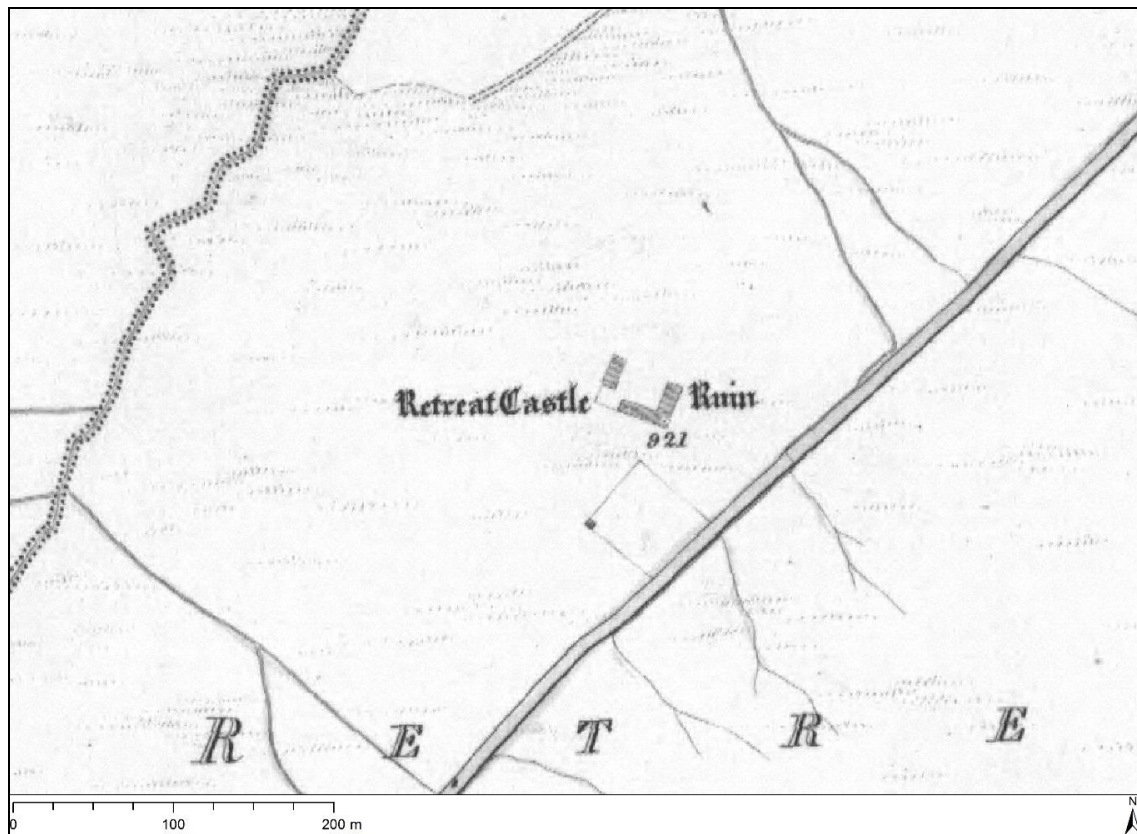
		RETREAT, OR CLOGHGLASS. (Ord. S. 10.)						
1		Patrick O'Neill,	Edmund F. Cuppage,	Herd's house and land,	359	1	0	33 0 0
2	{ a }	Daniel McAuley,	Same,	House and land,	49	1	23	0 0 0
	{ b }	Bryan McAuley,		House and land,				0 5 0
				Total,	408	2	23	51 0 0
								1 0 0
								52 0 0

Figure 14: Entry in Griffith Valuation relating to the townland of Retreat or Cloghglass



Topographic data was captured for the study area and its hinterland using Structure-From-Motion Photogrammetry (SfM) flown with an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) by David Craig of IrishSights (<https://irishsights.com/about>) on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The SfM measured survey provided digital photographs that were then used to create accurate and scaled 3D models of the landscape surfaces around the settlement, including the spade-dug cultivation ridges and the entirety of the railway embankment within the catchment area. The SfM data was also used to map the upstanding remains of the monument and to plan the layout of the house, outbuildings and walled garden. The SfM data was initially processed in PhotoScan Pro before further spatial analysis was carried out in ESRI ArcGIS. This work has therefore enabled the rapid collection of a full record of the spatial data relating to Retreat and its immediate landscape to survey-grade accuracy and this information is at the core of the following section of the report.

We certainly know that a map accompanied the original lease between Samuel Boyd and George Ewing in 1776, but its location is now unknown; likewise, an historic estate map for the property may exist within PRONI. Searches conducted to date, however, have failed to identify any cartographic sources that are earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> edition six-inch map sheet generated by the Ordnance Survey in 1832, where the site is denoted in Gothic script as “Retreat Castle” and a “Ruin” (see Figure 15). This caption suggests that the surveyors believed that what they were recording was indeed an historic monument, rather than a structure only some 60 years old. The surveyors depicted the complex as a regular courtyard albeit with the south-west corner unit seemingly blank, perhaps indicating that this corner of the unit had never been constructed or, alternatively, that it had collapsed into ruin. What we see depicted on the map tallies well, however, with the account of the property as detailed in the 1779 advertisement (see Figure 8) and we can surmise that the three ranges of buildings around the courtyard represent the locations for the “new House, with compleat Offices”. No avenue or laneway leading to the “castle” is depicted, however, although it can be surmised that this must have existed to the south-east of the complex in order that access could be gained from the main road from Clogh to Cushendall, later to become the foundation for the railway line. Indeed, there is the hint that such a lane can still be discerned from the 2014 Aerial Photograph of the site which seems to indicate a laneway running



*Figure 15: Retreat Castle, as depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map sheet of 1832.*



*Figure 16: Retreat, aerial view, 2014.*

along the outer run of the north-eastern wall of the walled garden (see Figure 12). A walled garden is also shown, with a small building in the west corner, and this reminds us of the statement made in the 1779 advertisement that the property had “a good Garden wall’d in on

the North and West Sides”, although it should be noted that the walled garden depicted on the 1832 map is actually located to the south-east of the main site.

This image of the landscape has, however, been radically altered by the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map (Figure 17) which demonstrates the changes that have been caused to the landscape by the introduction of a railway line along the route of the old Clogh to Cushendall main road, and the establishment of a new road (now the B14) to the northern side of the complex. The railway line was incorporated in 1872 and was opened in May 1875. It was primarily used for industrial purposes and served the iron mines in the area and in duration ran for some 16 miles from Ballymena to Retreat where the line terminated. The station at Retreat, however, was only for freight loading and was not for passengers. The six-inch map is dated 1857, but the presence of the railway line – opened 1875 – would suggest either that there was an earlier railway line here (perhaps for industrial purposes) that was subsequently reused as part of the Ballymena to Retreat railway line in the 1870s, or that the map was subsequently revised to take into account the creation of the railway line in the 1870s. In either case, the map depicts that the walled garden has now become the depot for the railway's “Retreat Station”, complete with two new station buildings, while the small house in the west corner of the enclosure remains *in situ*.

The major differences, however, relate to the depiction of the ruined complex at Retreat. What had been denoted as a regular three-sided courtyard framed by ranges of buildings is now depicted as a large, almost square, building along the east range, no apparent building along the south range, and a thin building with associated rear yard along the west range. How are these discrepancies between the two editions of the six-inch map sheets to be reconciled? One possibility is that the buildings in 1832 have been demolished and replaced by new constructions, but this can be immediately discounted since the surveyors have written in Gothic script, “Retreat Castle (in ruins)”; as such, this evidently is not a depiction of a new construction on the site. Alternatively, it may be the case that the depiction of the complex from 1832 is highly stylised; there was awareness that the monument comprised a series of three ranges of building surrounding a courtyard, but no detailed measurements were taken by the surveyors.

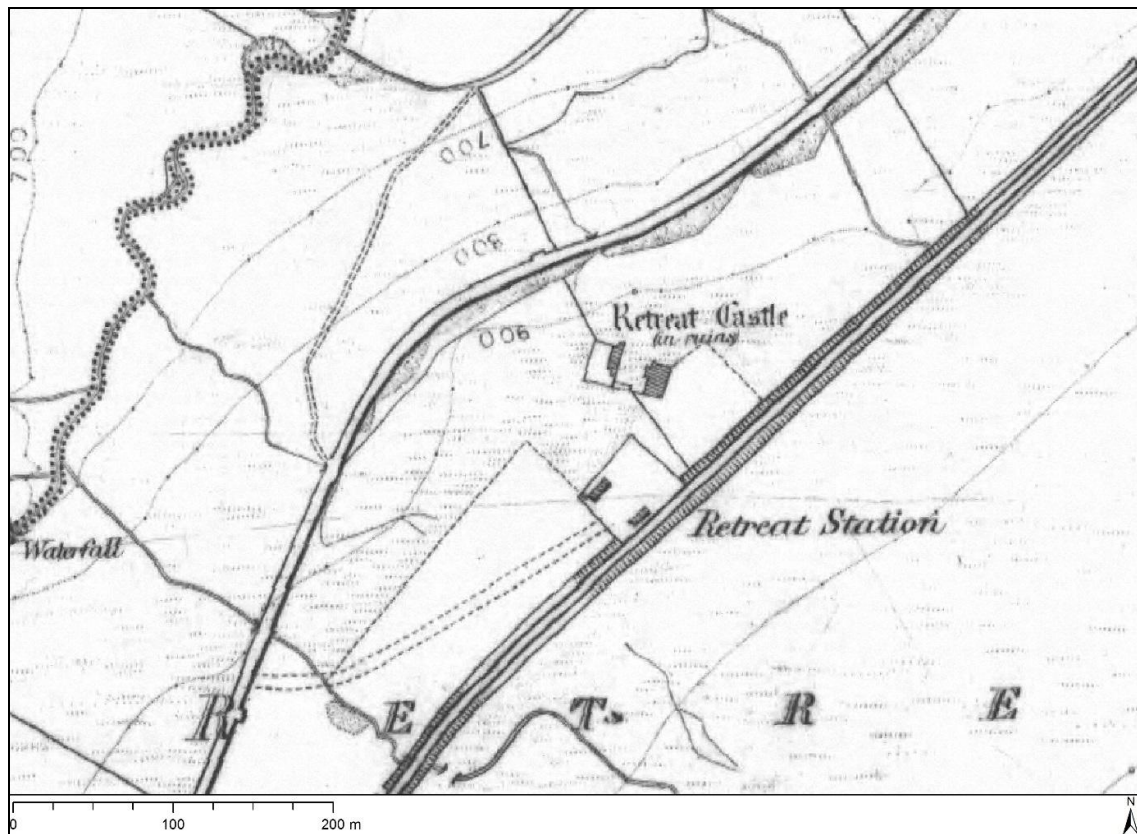


Figure 17: Retreat Castle, as depicted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map sheet of 1857.

Further deterioration in the fabric of the complex can be ascertained when the depiction from the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map sheet from 1903 is considered (Figure 18). The full layout of the courtyard is now very difficult to plot, with the large squat building on the east range evidently reduced in size and depicted as a somewhat isolated structure; the other ranges – both south and west – have now lost all building form and resemble a series of connected farmyards. The walled garden, however, remains in place, continuing to perform as an enclosure for the Retreat Station, although now subdivided into smaller internal yards, and with the western corner occupied by a large house that seemingly has replaced the buildings depicted here in 1857.



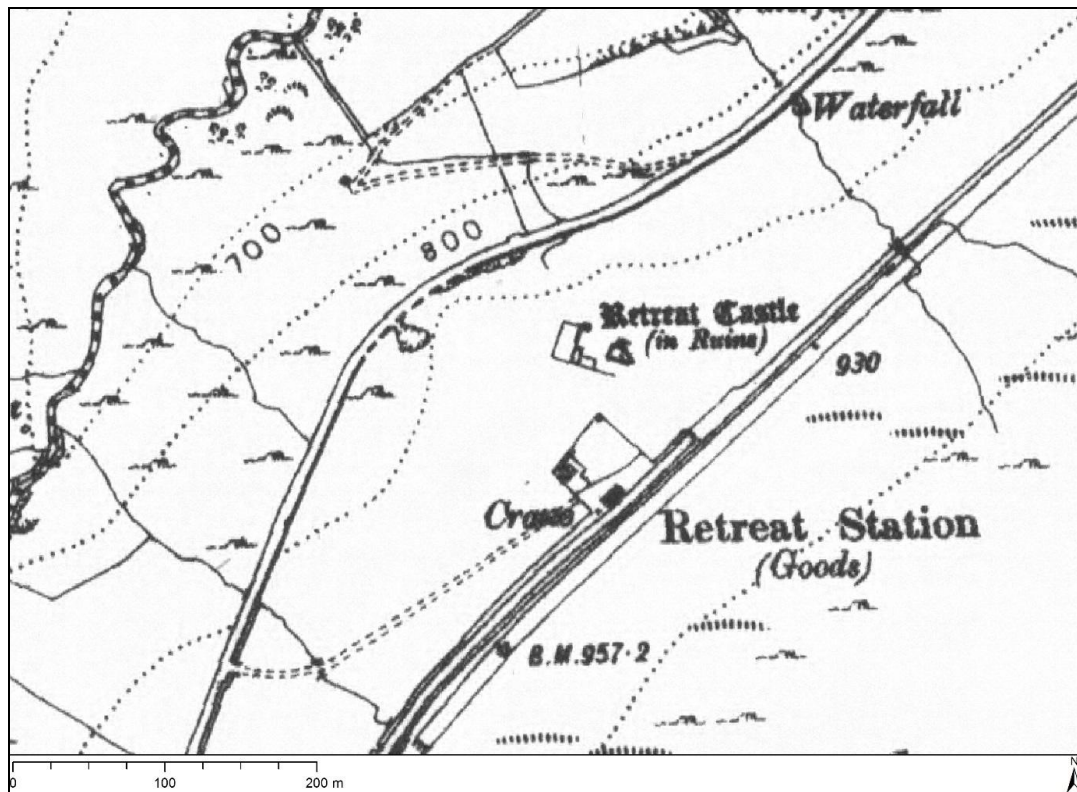


Figure 18: Retreat Castle, as depicted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map sheet of 1903.

Interpreting the layout of the complex from the Ordnance Survey maps is not without its difficulties but we do know from the advertisement in 1779 (see Figure 8) that the property comprised a dwelling house with “compleat Offices”; these units are evidently what are being depicted on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps and can be considered alongside plans for “improved” farm complexes such as the example produced by William Greig in c.1820 as part of his report on the Gosford Estate in County Armagh (Thompson and Tierney 1976, 234-235). Greig’s plan has been studied by Alan Gailey (1984, 229-232; see Figure 19); the farmyard was to be laid out around a courtyard, framed on three sides by ranges of buildings. On one side the range should contain a pigsty and pig-yard, a car (or cart) house, and a potato house, while on the opposite side there should be provision for a cow house, a barn, and a stable. The third range in the complex was to be the location of the dwelling house, while the central area was to be used as the midden. Greig’s drawings (Thompson and Tierney 1976, 234) that accompany the plan, however, reveal that all of these buildings – even the dwelling house – should be rather plain, functional, one-storey units. The depiction of Retreat in the first edition Ordnance Survey map might suggest that the complex was an “improved” farmyard of a type advocated by men such as Greig, but the subsequent depiction of the site in the second edition map forces us to question whether this was actually the case. The large, almost square, building that is shown along the east range may have been a grand house, while the thin building with its rear yard along the west range may have been the “compleat Offices”, containing the elements – stables, barn and carriage house – associated with a great house, but not necessarily those belonging to an agricultural establishment.

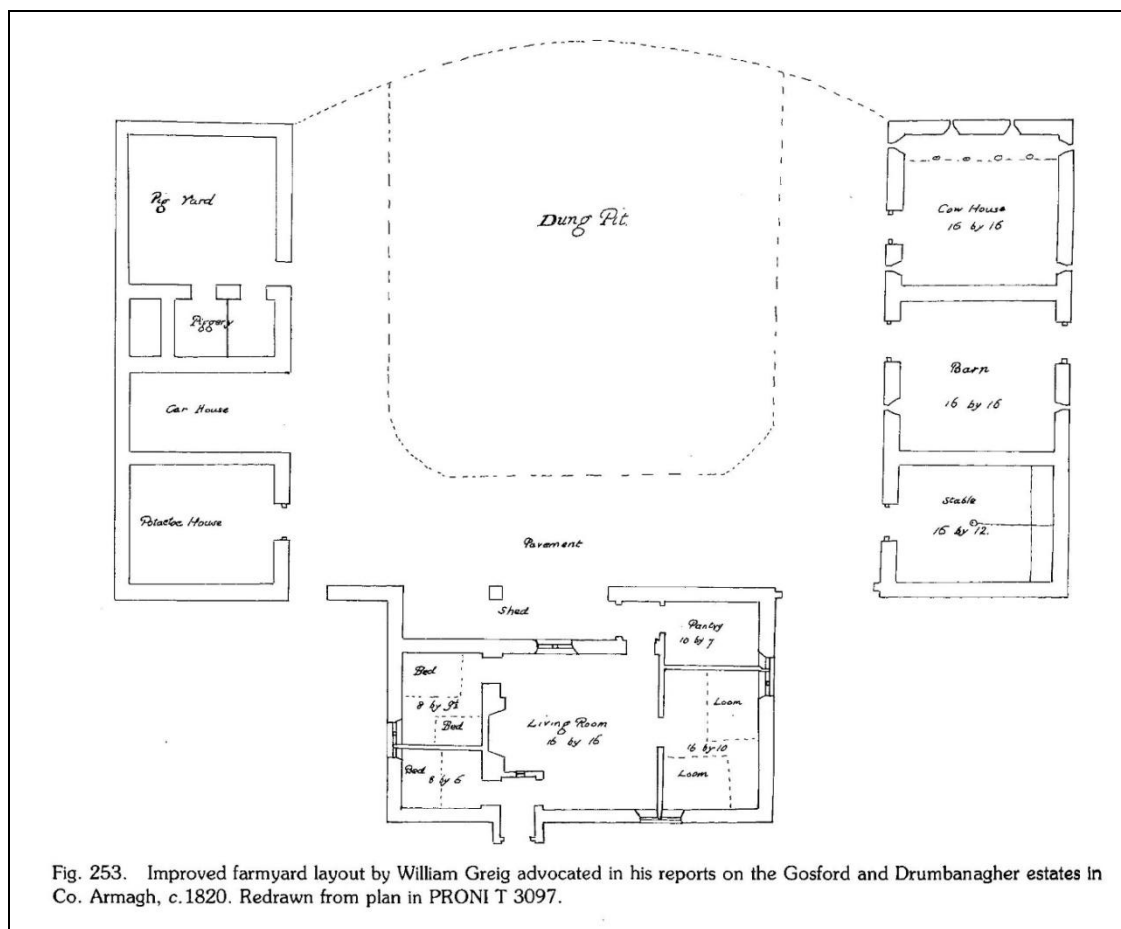
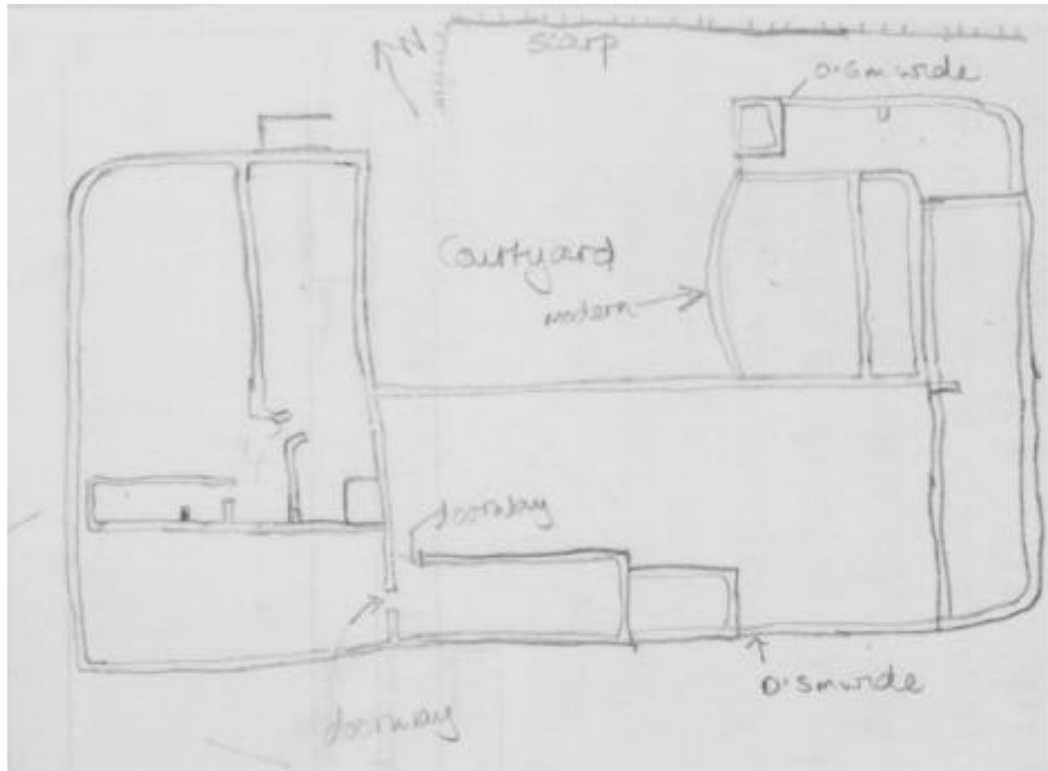


Figure 19: William Greig's plan of an "improved" farmyard, c. 1820.

The entry in the NISMR for the site notes that the complex comprises 13 separate units. An attempt has been made to chronologically differentiate the elements, with the "older parts of the complex" at the east and at the north-northwest, while the other features are of relatively later date". Using the directional information contained in a sketch-plan within the file (see Figure 20), this would suggest that both the east range and the northern sector of the western range are the newer elements of the complex, with the southern range the oldest section of the monument. This conclusion, however, remains moot; it is certainly the case that no such differentiation could be visually identified during a fieldwork and there is no supporting evidence for any chronological differences between the units at the complex.



*Figure 20: Sketch-plan of the complex drawn in 1992 and contained in the NISMR*

The results obtained during the SfM survey conducted in August 2016 (see Figure 21 and 22) suggest that the complex is of a single period of construction and this compliments the information obtained during the cartographic study and there is a degree of correlation with the details included in the 1992 sketch-plan. For example, the five units that comprise the east range can all be observed in the SfM survey; it is not the case, however, that they constitute five separate units and it can be suggested that they actually represent the internal division of space within a single large dwelling house.

## **5. Account of the excavation**

### *5.1 Introduction*

A total of six trenches were manually excavated during the three-week programme of excavation, work which revealed archaeologically significant features and deposits including wall foundations, structural features and floor surfaces associated with the dwelling house (Trenches Two, Three, Four and Six) and the courtyard (Trench One). A further trench (Trench Five) was opened to investigate a conical mound located to the north-west of the upstanding remains of Retreat Castle. Excavation of this trench ceased following the identification of the mound as the remains of a lime kiln.

### *5.2 Methodology*

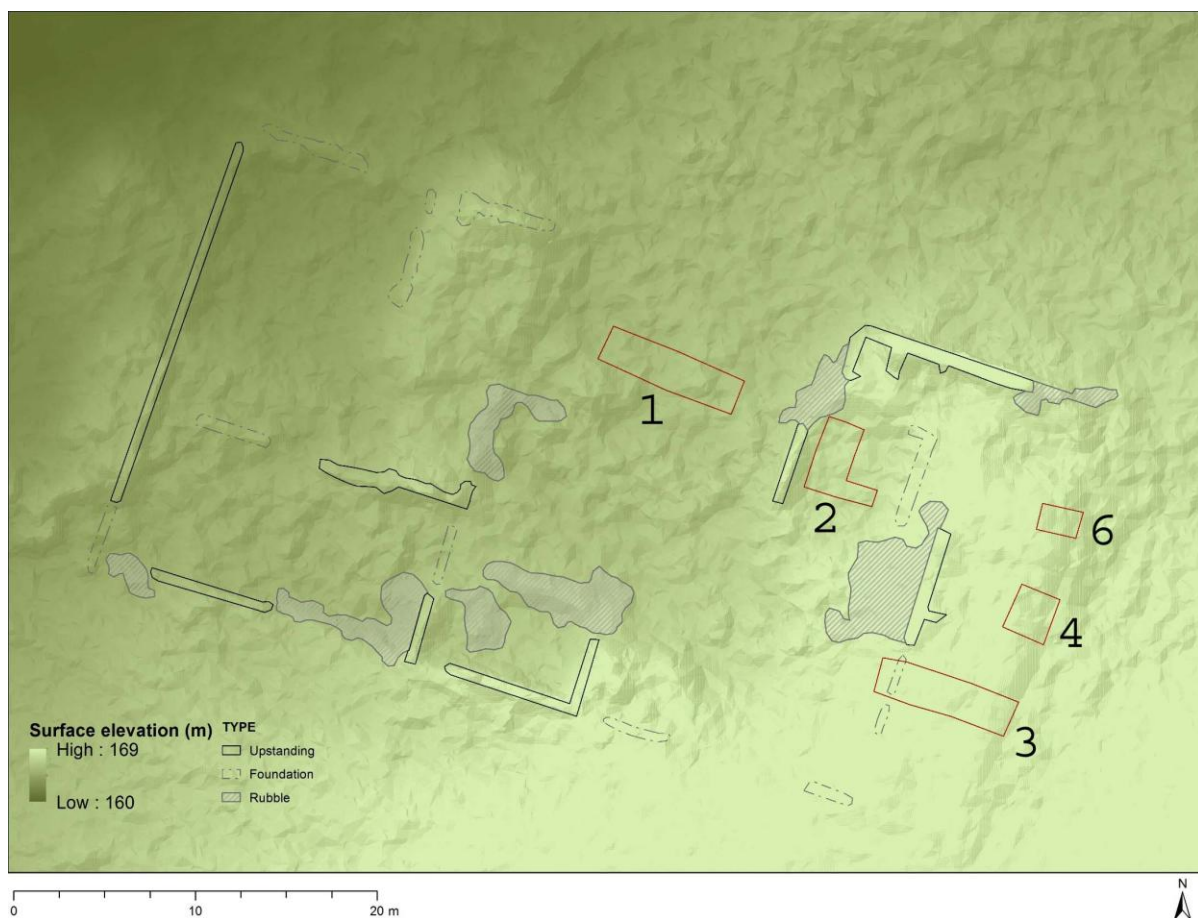
The archaeological features were recorded using the standard recording system. The list of contexts is reproduced as Appendix One, and the field drawing register that was generated during the excavation is reproduced as Appendix Three. The remainder of the site records are reproduced as the Soil Sample Register (Appendix Four) and the Finds Register (Appendix Five).

It is intended that the Harris matrices for each trench (Appendix Two) are referred to when reading the stratigraphic sequences encountered.

### *5.3 Trench One*

Trench One was located in the central courtyard area, measured 8m x 2m and was orientated roughly north-west/south-east. The trench was manually excavated with the assistance of the visiting school groups and volunteers. Excavation of this trench ceased following the removal of the topsoil (Context No.102) and the exposure of a roughly metalled surface (Context No. 103). A varied artefact assemblage was recovered including items associated with the use and abandonment of the complex as well as a number of probable prehistoric finds. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered with the sod and topsoil (Context Nos. 101 and 102 respectively) overlying the rough metalled surface (Context No. 103) which was laid directly on the subsoil (Context No. 104), encountered at an average depth of 0.35m below the modern ground surface.





*Figure 21: Location of five of the six trenches excavated at Retreat during September 2016. The sixth trench focused on the nearby lime kiln*

The sod layer (Context No. 101) consisted of active grass and reed roots within a matrix of mid to dark brown silty clay. On the whole this deposit (Context No. 101) was an average of 0.15m thick and was removed to reveal the topsoil (Context No. 102). The topsoil deposit (Context No. 102) consisted of a sticky, dark grey-brown clay loam. This deposit became increasingly damp as the excavation progressed due to the clay component of the deposit retaining water. The topsoil (Context No. 102) was on average 0.2m thick although decreased in thickness to 0.13m in the eastern side of the trench. It is probable that rubble from the dwelling house that is present in this general area of the site has effected the build-up of topsoil in this end of the trench. This deposit (Context No. 102) exhibited frequent inclusions of small to medium angular and sub-angular stones (ranging in length from 40mm – 100mm) as well as infrequent inclusions of charcoal and clinker. A variety of artefacts were recovered from this deposit (see Appendix Five of this report) which show activity dating to the early modern period as well as residually deposited prehistoric artefacts in the form of flint and porcellanite fragments. The removal of the topsoil (Context No. 102) revealed a rough metallated surface (Context No. 103).

The metallised surface (Context No. 103) was present across the entire length of the trench although appeared somewhat patchy, and clearly does not represent a concerted effort to lay a level and well-constructed surface as that which was encountered in Trench Two (see below). The stones comprising the surface (Context No. 103) varied in length from 0.05 to 0.2m, and it appears both angular and rounded stones were selected for incorporation. The deposit of stones (Context No. 103) varied in thickness of 0.05 to 0.12m and constituted a single layer of stones sitting directly on the surface of the geological subsoil (Context No. 104).

Excavation ceased at the metallised surface, although the opportunity was taken to explore the relationship of the surface and the underlying subsoil. Removal of some of Context No. 103 revealed that it was sitting directly on the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 104) which consisted of a gravel rich reddish brown clay. No features were observed cutting the subsoil (Context No. 104) where it was exposed and the trench was backfilled following recording.



*Figure 22: The rough metallised surface (Context No. 103) revealed in Trench One, looking north. The deposit shows that the stones incorporated into this surface were not sorted but would have provided a firm working surface rather something that was aesthetically pleasing (as in Trench Two). Also visible are patches of the subsoil where the stone metalling is at its thinnest.*

#### 5.4 Trench Two

Trench Two was positioned to the rear of the dwelling house and was located to investigate the layout of the structure. Initially it was thought that the trench was positioned outside of the house,



within an enclosed yard, evidenced by the foundations of walls to the immediate east and west. It became obvious, however, that this was not the case, and the trench was found to be located within the interior of the building. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered during the excavation of this trench which consisted of sod (Context No. 201), directly overlying a deposit of rubble (Context No. 203) which in turn lay over a finely laid cobbled surface (Context No. 202). A drain (Context No. 204) running roughly north-east/south-west was encountered along the western side of the cobbled surface (Context No. 202) and the foundations of a wall (Context No. 205) bounded the cobbled surface at the eastern end; this wall lines up directly with a stump of wall that protrudes from the upstanding gable of the house. The remains of a disturbed cobbled surface (Context No. 206) was encountered to the east of this wall, similar in appearance to the main cobbled surface (Context No. 202). An exploratory investigation of the cobbles showed them to be pressed directly onto surface of the underlying subsoil (Context No. 207).



*Figure 23: Trench Two looking east. The foreground of the picture shows the finely constructed cobbled surface (Context No. 202) as well as the foundations of an internal wall within the house (Context No. 205) The gentle slope to the surface of the cobbles which directed water into the drain (Context No. 204) which runs roughly north-east/south-west across the cobbles (Context No. 202).*

The sod layer (Context No. 201) consisted of active grass roots within a friable dark grey brown silty loam. The deposit varied in thickness from a maximum of 0.1m in the western end of the trench (where it was revealed to be sitting directly on the cobbled surface Context No. 202) to a minimum of 0.06m in the eastern end (where it was revealed to be directly above a mixed

demolition layer Context No. 203). The sod layer was stratigraphically above a mixed demolition deposit (Context No. 203).

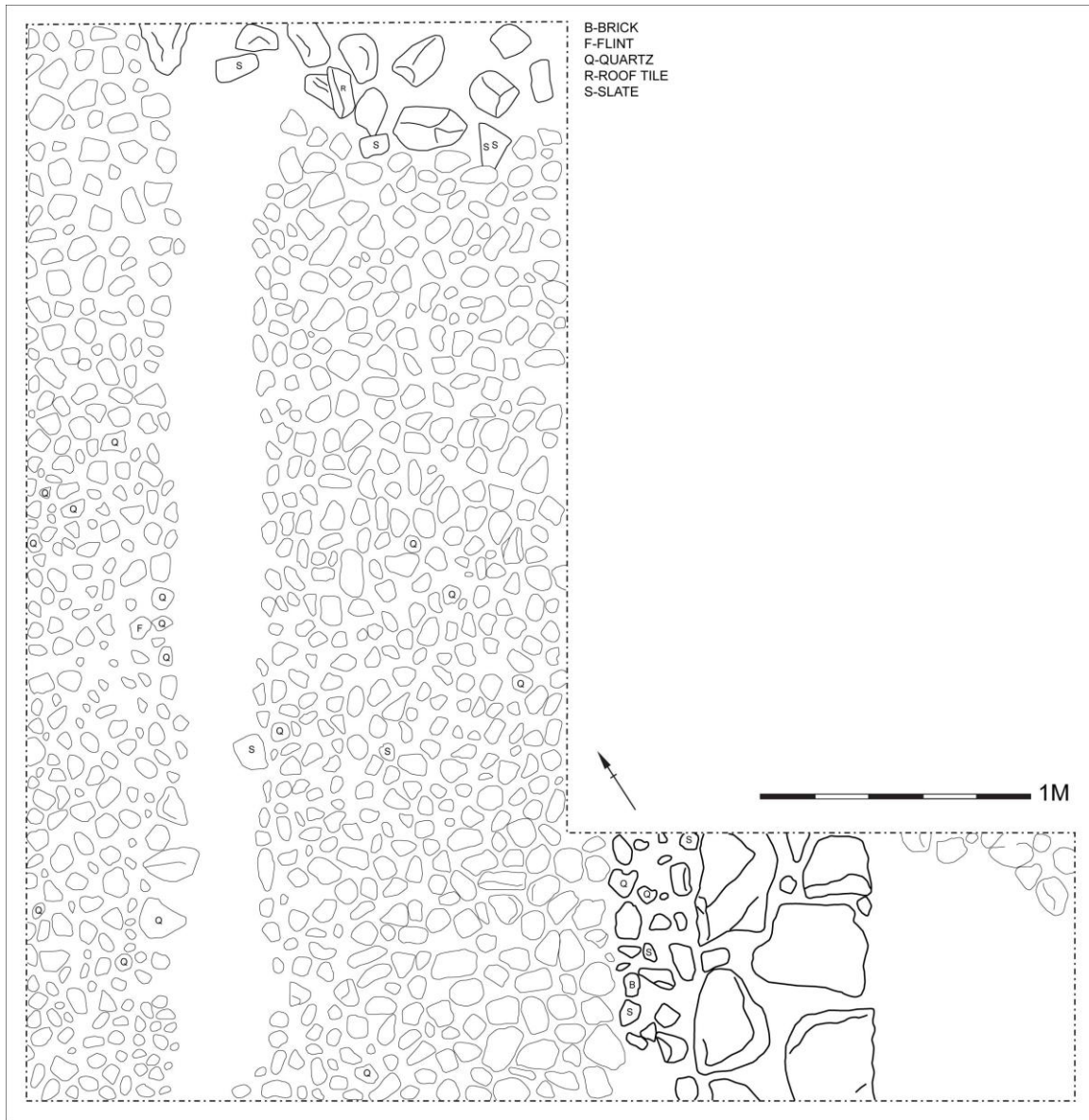


*Figure 24: The 2m x 1m extension to Trench Two showing (left to right); the disturbed cobbled surface (Context No. 206) with underlying geological subsoil (Context No. 207); wall foundations (Context No. 205); and cobbled surface (Context No. 202) looking south-east.*

Following the removal of the sod (Context No. 201) and the identification of the cobbled surface (Context No. 202), the trench was extended to the south-east. This extension measured 2m x 1m and was intended to investigate the relationship between the cobbled surface (Context No. 202) and the visible foundations of the wall within the house (Context No. 205). Removal of the sod in this extension revealed the extent of the wall (Context No. 205) and a disturbed cobbled surface (Context No. 206). The foundation of the wall (Context No. 205) was comprised of two rows of angular rocks (averaging 0.35m in length) set directly on the surface of the subsoil (Context No. 207). The wall ran roughly north-east/south-west and averaged 0.6m thick. Minimal mortar was observed as having survived, with the gaps in the rocks being infilled with small angular stones. To the immediate east of this wall (Context No. 205), a layer of disturbed cobbling (Context No. 206) was encountered which sat directly on the subsoil (Context No. 207). These cobbles (Context No. 206) survived in the northern corner of the trench extension, although it was evident that further cobbles associated with this surface had been removed (Figure 26). The cobbles averaged 0.1m in length and consisted of rounded quartzite beach pebbles. The portion of this surface (Context No. 206) is similar in appearance to the main cobbled surface (Context No. 202)



and it is evident that the surface has been laid directly on the subsoil (Context No. 207) and not bedded in mortar.



*Figure 25: Post-excavation plan of Trench Two.*

The mixed demolition layer (Context No. 203) consisted of a dark grey-brown gritty and silty loam with frequent inclusions of medium to large sized angular stones that varied in length from 0.08m to 0.15m). In addition, there were also brick fragments and a whole and fragmentary roofing slate retrieved. Patches of crumbly mortar were observed throughout this deposit (Context No. 203) which varied in thickness from 0.25 to 0.3m. Artefacts recovered included a number of glazed ceramic sherds, roofing slate, animal bone and corroded iron objects. The demolition deposit was

thickest in the north-eastern end of the trench and gradually thinned out towards the south-west. Removal of the demolition deposit (Context No. 203) revealed the cobbled surface (Context No. 202) in full.

The cobbled surface (Context No. 202) exhibits well sorted rounded stones, which range in size from 0.05m to 0.12m in length. The cobble stones appear to be derived from water rolled beach pebbles, with rounded quartzite stones being the most prevalent type. Exploration of the cobbles found them to be set directly onto the natural subsoil with no bedding layer evident. A well-constructed drain (Context No. 204) ran the length of this cobbled surface and its construction adds an aesthetically pleasing effect to the cobbled surface (Context No. 202). The drain was 0.28m at the top and gently slopes to a width of 0.06m at its base. The base of the drain is lined with white quartzite pebbles with the sides consisting of rounded beach pebbles set in a herringbone pattern.



*Figure 26: Post-excavation view of Trench Two showing detail of the cobble surface (Context No. 202) and drain (Context No. 204), looking south-east.*

### 5.5 Trench Three

Trench Three was located in the southern end of the complex to investigate the south-eastern end of the dwelling house. The trench measured 7.6m by 2m and was orientated roughly north-west/south-east. The trench revealed a relatively simple stratigraphic sequence with walls, a floor surface and a hearth being encountered. There was also evidence that a doorway and recess



had been blocked following the abandonment of the house. Artefacts recovered from this trench include a number of roof slates, glazed roof tiles, pottery fragments, iron nails and wall plaster. The excavation revealed interesting insights into the layout of the house, as well as insights into how it may have been laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



*Figure 27: View of Trench Three during its excavation, showing the thick deposit of mortar (Context No. 303), looking west.*

The sod in this trench consisted of active grass roots within a dark brown clay loam (Context No. 301) and was an average of 0.1m thick and directly overlay a deposit of demolition detritus (Context No. 302). The demolition deposit (Context No. 302) undulated in thickness from 0.3m to 0.45m and consisted of red brick fragments, sub-angular and angular stones as well as mortared lumps of masonry. Removal of the sod (Context No. 301) in the north-western end of the trench revealed a topsoil deposit (Context No. 310) that had built up against the rear wall of the internal room (Context No. 307).

The topsoil in the north-western end (Context No. 310) consisted of a mid-brown grey clay silt and was investigated by a narrow sondage against the outer face of the wall (Context No. 307). This deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.72m when the foundation course of the wall (Context No. 307) was encountered. The topsoil (Context No. 310) was of a gravelly consistence and contained occasional medium sized angular stones, brick and charcoal fragments. Frequent mortar flecking was noted through this deposit which was relatively uniform throughout, and yielded fragments of a glass bottle as well as the occasional struck flint. No floor surface was

encountered during the excavation of this sondage, although it is conceivable that this has been robbed out and re-used, as was encountered during the excavation of Trench Two.



*Figure 28: Exploratory sondage into topsoil (Context No. 310) that has banked against the external face of wall (Context No. 307), looking east. NB: Scale = 0.5m.*

Removal of the demolition deposit revealed an episode of re-use within the structure. This took the form of rubble blocking up an alcove (Context No. 311) made in the internal division wall of the room (Context No. 305) and a blockage of a doorway leading into the south-western wing of the house (Context No. 312). In both cases these deposits (Context Nos. 311 and 312) consisted of large angular blocks of basalt that averaged 0.3m in length.





*Figure 29: Rubble fill deposit (Context No. 312) that blocked access to the south-western most wing of the structure, looking north-east. NB: scale = 0.5m.*

Neither of these deposits were mortared together, although some of the stones had traces of mortar adhering to them, suggesting they originated from the demolition of the walls of the house. It is unclear as to the function of these blockages, or indeed the date they were made. However, it is probable that they relate to an attempt to more effectively manage the building, perhaps for the housing of livestock, following the abandonment of the dwelling house.



*Figure 30: View of rubble fill deposit (Context No. 312) blocking the doorway, looking south-west. Also visible is the floor surface (Context No. 308) with the ephemeral impression of floor boards. NB: Scale = 0.5m.*

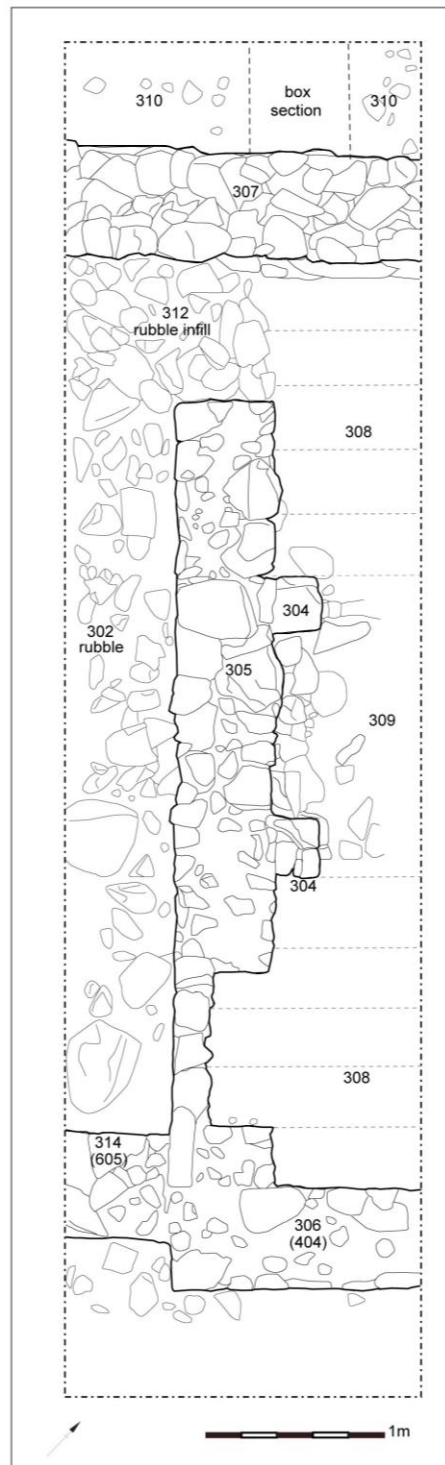


Figure 31: Post-excavation plan of Trench Three. The grey dashed lines depict the impression of floor-boards.

Stratigraphically beneath the episodes of blocking was a relatively thick layer of a mortar rich deposit (Context No. 303). This deposit (Context No. 303) was a light yellowish white in colour and compact in nature. The thickness of this layer varied with the maximum being 0.24m. Frequent inclusions of brick fragments, slate and large chunks of render were noted throughout this deposit, which was confined to the interior of the room investigated (6.2m north-west/south-east x 1.15m south-west/north-east). Removal of the mortar deposit (Context No. 303) revealed aspects of the structure of the houses including walls (Context Nos. 305, 306, 307 and 314), as well as a fireplace and hearth (Context Nos. 304 and 309 respectively) and a floor surface (Context No. 308).

The front façade of the house in this trench is represented by a stretch of wall (Context No. 306). This wall corresponds with the short stretch of wall encountered in the excavation of Trench Four (Context No. 404). This wall (Context No. 306) was 1.4m long (south-west/north-east) and an average of 0.6m thick. It stood at a height of 0.7m (5-6 courses of mortared blocks) from the floor surface of the room (Context No. 308). The wall (Context No. 306) was constructed of roughly dressed sub-angular basalt blocks (average size 0.14m x 0.38m) bonded together with a creamy white mortar.

The front façade of the house (Context No. 306) was set forward 0.25m from the front wall of the south-western wing (Context No. 314). This segment of wall (Context No. 314) was again 0.6m wide and traced for a length of 0.6m (south-west/north-east), although it continues beyond the limits of the trench. It was comprised of roughly dressed sub-angular basalt blocks bonded together with a creamy white mortar. No stratigraphic relationship between this wall (Context No. 314) and the front façade wall (Context No. 306) although it is probable they represent the same episode of construction. The opposite side of the room is represented by a north-east/south-west aligned wall at the north-western end of the trench (Context No. 307). This wall is comprised of roughly dressed sub-angular basalt rocks, bonded together with a creamy white mortar. Again this wall (Context No. 307) is consistent in width to the other walls of the house and measured 0.63m thickness. Prior to the excavation of this trench, this portion of wall (Context No. 307) was buried beneath the sod (Context No. 301), although it continues to the north-east where it is upstanding to a height exceeding 2m. The blocked doorway (Context No. 312) separates this wall (Context No. 307) with a north-west/south-east aligned internal division wall (Context No. 305) (Plate 8).





*Figure 32: Alcove in wall (Context No. 305) following removal of blockage (Context No.311), looking south-west. NB: Scale = 0.5m*

The north-west/south-east aligned internal division wall (Context No. 305) revealed interesting aspects on the layout of this room of the house. The wall was 5.4m long and averaged 0.63m thick. It survives to a maximum height of 0.9m from the floor surface (Context No. 308) and is comprised of roughly dressed basalt blocks. The wall appears to have been constructed on a foundation of brick, as these were visible along the basal course at floor level. An alcove (Plate 9) had been constructed into this wall (and later blocked by Context No. 311) which measures 1.1m in width by 0.5m in depth. It is unclear what this alcove might have accommodated although it is possible that a desk or bookcase would have been positioned here when the house was in use. Roughly halfway along this wall (Context No. 305) at a distance of approximately 2m from the front (Context No. 306) and rear (Context No. 307) walls of the room was an intact fireplace and hearth (Context No. 304 and 309 respectively) (Plate 10).



*Figure 33: Fire-place (Context No. 304) showing mortared hearth area (Context No. 309), looking south-west. NB: Scale = 2m.*

The fireplace (Context No. 304) is represented by two upstanding plinths of stone and brick that project from the inner face of the internal division wall (Context No. 305). They are tied into the main body of the division wall (Context No. 305) and represent the same building episode as the other walls investigated in this trench. The plinths are approximately 1.1m apart and survive to a height of 0.5m from the floor surface (Context No. 308). The space between these plinths appears to be a jumble of mortared rubble, and it is probable that this is the rubble core of the internal division wall (Context No. 305). The base of the fireplace (Context No. 304) is constructed of brick and sandstone slabs and it is probable that this represents the base of the chimney, although no opening for the chimney in the wall was encountered. A thin deposit of ash and charcoal was encountered at the base of the fireplace, representing the last fire to have been lit in this position. Immediately in front of the fireplace (Context No. 304), a mortared layer of heat-cracked sandstone slabs (Context No. 309) was encountered. This feature measured 1.57m (north-west/south-east) by 0.8m, although it is apparent that it continues to the north-east beyond the limits of the trench. This feature (Context No. 309) represents the hearth associated with the fireplace and is constructed of slabs of sandstone (0.06m thick) set into a flat mortared surface. Charcoal flecks and staining were noted amongst the sandstone slabs, probable a result of the repeated cleaning of the fireplace when it was in use.

The floor surface in Trench Three consisted of a compact mid-reddish brown gravelly clay (Context No. 308). This is a similar surface to what was encountered during the excavation of

Trench Four (Context No. 407) indicating the same floor was present throughout the house. A number of discreet south-west/north-east depressions were visible in the surface of this deposit (Context No. 308) and these are interpreted as being the bedding for floor boards that were removed following the abandonment of the house. A number of square-sectioned nails recovered from the clean-up of this surface (Context No. 308) testifies to the presence of these floorboards.

Following the recording of the features identified, the trench was manually backfilled and the area re-instated.

## 5.6 *Trench Four*

Trench Four was located between Trenches Three and Six at a distance of approximately 12.5m from each. The trench measured 3m by 2m and was located to investigate the main doorway into the structure, as well as the hall. The surrounding area of the trench is uneven ground, a distinct topographical hump suggesting buried walls was noted. The excavation of this trench revealed the threshold of the doorway, the internal surface of the 'hall' as well as evidence of another doorway leading into the northern eastern wing of the house. A simple stratigraphic sequence was revealed in Trench Four, with excavation ceasing following the exposure of the walls and surfaces associated with the house.

The sod layer (Context No. 401) was present across the trench. It consisted of active grass roots within a mid-brown silty loam and was an average 0.08m thick. Removal of the sod (Context No. 401) revealed a layer of mixed demolition material (Context No. 402) which was on average 0.22m thick. This deposit (Context No. 402) consisted of angular stones and rocks, patched of mortar and brick fragments within a mid-brown silty loam matrix. The demolition deposit (Context No. 402) overlay a deposit of mortar (Context No. 403) mirroring the stratigraphic sequence encountered in the other excavated trenches associated with the house (Trenches Three and Six).



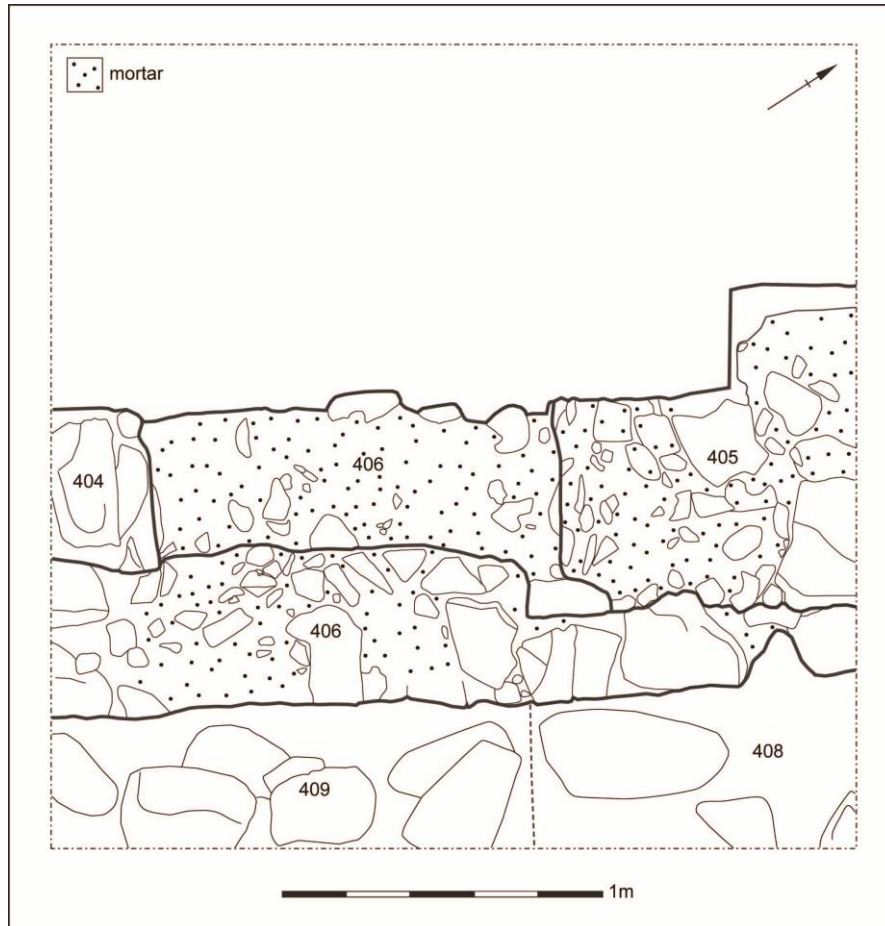


*Figure 34: Post-excavation view of Trench Four looking south-east. This shot shows the doorway and threshold, as well as the remnants of the wooden floor (a similar deposit to that encountered in Trench Three – Context No. 308).*

The mortar deposit (Context No. 403) was a yellow beige colour, consisted of degraded mortar and wall plaster, and had frequent inclusions of brick fragments, roofing slate and corroded iron throughout. The deposit (Context No. 403) varied in thickness from 0.33m in the north-eastern end of the trench and thinning to approximately 0.1m in the southern end. Removal of this deposit revealed the doorway into the house (defined by walls Context Nos. 404 and 405), the threshold (Context No. 406) and the floor surface (Context No. 407). Also revealed was a possible section of gravel path (Context No. 408) and the large stone foundations of the entrance (Context No. 409).

The front façade of the structure is represented by two short stretches of wall (Context Nos. 404 and 405) which correspond to walls investigated in Trenches Three and Six (Context Nos. 306 and 604 respectively). Context No. 404 was in the southern end of the trench and was exposed for a length of 0.36m (north-east/south-west). This section of wall was 0.58m thick and survives to a height of 0.5m above the floor surface (Context No. 407). The wall was comprised of regular dressed basalt blocks (average length 0.35m) bonded with a creamy white mortar. The wall (Context No. 404) had a rubble core of brick fragments and rounded stones that were mortared together. A space of 1.3m exists between this wall (Context No. 404) and the other side of the entrance (Context No. 405) which would have been occupied by the door into the structure.





*Figure 35: Post-excavation plan of Trench Four*

Context No. 405 represents the opposite side of the doorway to Context No. 404 and corresponds to Context No. 604 which was encountered during the excavation of Trench Six. The wall (Context No. 405) was exposed to a length of 0.95m (south-west/north-east) and averaged 0.6m in thickness. The wall survives to a height of 0.35 above the floor surface in this trench (Context No. 407). The outer face of the wall (Context No. 405) consists of dressed angular basalt blocks and brick bonded together with a creamy white mortar. A short return of the wall is visible at the northern end of this wall and this represents a doorway into a room to the north.

The two stretches of wall physically overlay the threshold (Context No. 406) into the structure. This feature consisted of a collection of brick, rounded and angular stone and broken sand stone slabs, firmly mortared together to create a relatively flat surface. It is likely that a sandstone slab would have sat directly upon this surface and that this has been removed and re-used elsewhere (a shattered length of sandstone slab was visible mortared into the base of Context No. 404). The threshold (Context No. 406) had a maximum length of 1.5m (north-east/south-west) and width of 0.96m (north-west/south-east).

The floor surface encountered in the north-western portion of the trench (Context No. 407) consisted of a mid-reddish brown gravelly clay (similar to the floor deposit encountered in Trench Three – Context No. 308). As with Trench Three, discreet south-west/north-east depressions were noted indicating the presence of floor boards.

Only a small area of the exterior of the structure was investigated in this trench. A discreet compact patch of small angular stones and clay (Context No. 408) was encountered in the north-eastern corner of this trench. This deposit (Context No. 408) measured 0.8m (north/south) by 0.4m (east/west) and was an average of 0.04m thick. Occasional brick fragments were noted, otherwise this deposit was relatively sterile. It is possible that this represents a path providing access to the doorway, although the restrictive size of the trench must render this interpretation tentative at best and it is only through further fieldwork will this be realised. Removal of the gravel deposit revealed the large angular stone foundation of the entrance into the house (Context No. 409).

The foundation deposit (Context No. 409) consisted of large angular rocks (average size 0.37m x 0.28m x 0.25m) and brick fragments. These have not been regularly set in a coherent pattern, nor are they mortared together. Frequent voids were noted amongst the stones, and a confident interpretation of the deposit is problematic due to the restrictive nature of the trench at this point. This deposit (Context No. 409) was not completely excavated, although a visual inspection noted at least two courses of angular rocks are present. Following the recording of the trench, it was manually backfilled and the area re-instated.

## *5.7 Trench Five*

Trench Five was the only trench excavated outside the immediate area of the farm complex. The trench was located to the north of the complex, aligned south-west/north-east and measured 2.6m x 1m. The trench was positioned to investigate a conical mound that was out of character with the rest of the Retreat landscape. Excavation of this trench ceased at a depth of 0.6m following the identification of the mound as representing a probable filled in lime kiln.

The mound is conical in shape with a distinct hollow at its summit. It is positioned at the top of a steep slope that leads to the modern B14 road between Cushendall and Ballymena. At the base of this mound, a berm with a tapering width (ranging from 1.5m – 5.5m) provides an easy access into the heart of the farm complex. The mound is interpreted as being a lime-kiln and probably associated with an advertisement in the Belfast Newsletter (dated 1772 – Figure 7) which called for

a lime burner to be employed at Retreat. However, further excavation and survey in this area of the site might elaborate on this interpretation.



*Figure 36: The hollow at the summit of the conical mound looking north-west.*

The sod layer in Trench Five (Context No. 501) consisted of active grass roots in a light brown sandy loam matrix. The sod layer (Context No. 501) averaged 0.08m thick and was removed to reveal a thin topsoil layer (Context No. 502) in the western portion of the trench and a dark brown silty loam (Context No. 503) in the eastern portion. No stratigraphic relationship between these two deposits was recognised during the course of the excavation of this trench. The topsoil (Context No. 502) consisted of a light to mid brown sandy loam. The deposit was relatively thin, averaging 0.04m in thickness, and was removed to reveal the structure of the kiln (Context No. 505). The dark brown silty loam (Context No. 503) was the upper 'fill' of the hollow in the top of the mound. This deposit contained a high occurrence of charcoal flecking as well as frequent inclusions of small angular stones (average length 20mm). The excavation of this deposit produced numerous flint flakes (for a fuller discussion see Section 4 of this report). The silty loam deposit (Context No. 503) ranged in thickness from 0.05m – 0.22m and its removal revealed a firm orange brown clay (Context No. 504).

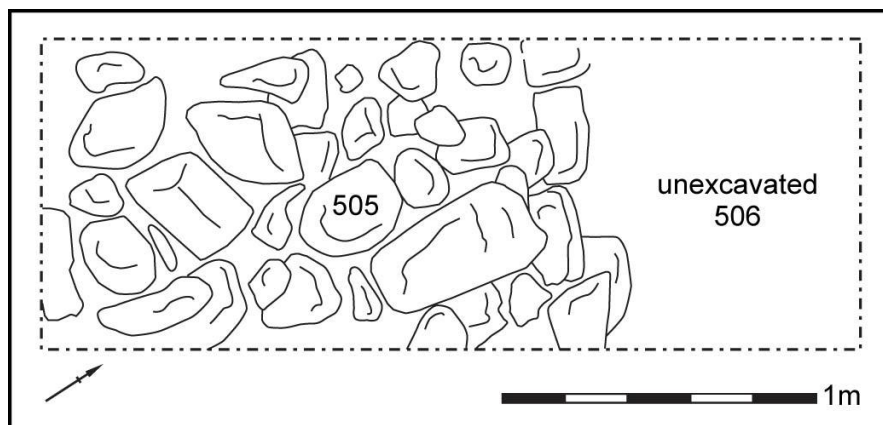


Figure 37: Post-excavation plan of the proposed lime kiln.

The orange brown clay deposit (Context No. 504) varied in thickness from 0.05m – 0.18m and was relatively compact. This deposit exhibited frequent inclusions of small and medium angular stones (ranging in length from 20mm – 50mm) as well as the occasional charcoal flecking. This deposit (Context No. 504) had the appearance of re-deposited subsoil, and it is probable that both this (Context No. 504) and the overlying deposit (Context No. 503) represent the deliberate in-filling of the kiln structure, perhaps to keep livestock from falling in (this could possibly explain the presence of numerous flint artefacts from Context No. 503 which has possibly been re-deposited here from other areas in the vicinity).

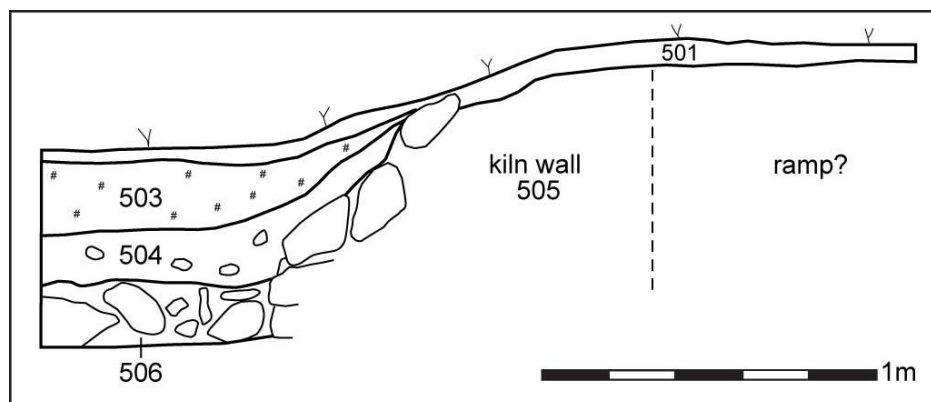


Figure 38: North-west facing section of Trench Five

Stratigraphically beneath the clay deposit (Context No. 504) a deposit of large angular stones (Context No. 506) was encountered. This deposit (Context No. 506) consisted of large angular and sub-angular rocks (upwards of 0.4m in length) within a loose sandy clay matrix. Numerous voids were noted in this deposit (Context No. 506) which was not fully excavated due to the size of trench and the unstable nature of the various deposits filling the structure. The excavation of this deposit



(Context No. 506) produced a single sherd of nineteenth century white glazed ceramic indicating that this structure was filled in after the farm complex had gone out of use.



*Figure 39: Detail of the structure of the kiln (Context No. 505), looking south-west (scale = 0.5m).*

Excavation ceased at this level due to the restricted size of the trench and potentially unstable nature of the voided stone deposit (Context No. 506). Following the recording of the trench, it was manually backfilled and area re-instated.

#### **5.8 Trench Six**

Trench Six was located in the north-eastern end of the house structure and was positioned to investigate if a similar 'kink' in the wall that was encountered in Trench Three was present in this area (reflecting the supposed symmetry of the structure. The trench measured 3m by 2m and was orientated roughly north-west/south-east. The excavation of the trench revealed the presence of wall foundations, as well as a distinct kink that mirrors that encountered in Trench Three. This indicates that house would have had a central façade that was set forward approximately 0.3m

from the side rooms of the structure. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered, with the excavation ceasing following the recording of the wall foundations.



*Figure 40: Post-excavation view of Trench Six looking north. This picture illustrates the proximity of Trench Six to the upstanding north gable wall of the dwelling house.*

The sod layer in Trench Six (Context No. 601) consisted of active grass roots within a mid-brown silty clay loam. The sod was present across the entire trench and averaged 0.09m thick. Stratigraphically beneath the sod layer (Context No. 601) was a relatively thin deposit of mixed demolition debris (Context No. 602). This deposit averaged 0.2m thick and was comprised of whole and fragmented bricks, angular stone and roofing slate fragments within a greyish brown sandy loam. The removal of the demolition deposit revealed a layer of buff/beige lime mortar (Context No. 603). This was a similar stratigraphic sequence to that encountered in the other trenches excavated in the house area with sod overlying a mixed demolition deposit which in turn overlies a mortar rich deposit.

The mortar rich deposit in Trench Six consisted of a compact light yellowish beige sandy mortar (Context No. 603). The deposit (Context No. 603) contained numerous fragments of red brick, small angular stones and slate fragments. Although not fully excavated in this trench, a small exploratory cutting in the north-western corner of the trench showed the deposit (Context No. 603) to be 0.3m thick and overlying a gritty mid brown stony surface which was identified in Trenches Three and Four as representing the floor surface of the house.





*Figure 41: Post-excavation view of Trench Six, looking south-west. This picture shows the lower courses of the front wall of the house (Context Nos. 604/605) as well as an internal dividing wall (Context No. 606).*

Stratigraphically beneath the mortar rich deposit (Context No. 603) the tops of walls (Context Nos. 604, 605 and 606) were exposed (Plate 41). These represent the front façade wall of the house (Context No. 604), the front wall of the north-eastern wing (Context No. 605) and an internal division wall (Context No. 606). All of these walls were bonded together indicating they represent the same episode of construction. The front façade wall (Context No. 604) was exposed for a length of 0.96m (south-west/north-east) and was an average of 0.8m thick. The wall was excavated to a depth of 0.43m when the excavation of this trench ceased, and no foundation was encountered at this depth. The wall (Context No. 604) was constructed of large angular basalt blocks (average size 0.5m x 0.26m x 0.26m) along the external face of the wall, and although partially obscured by mortar, it appears to have a rubble core made up small angular stones and brick fragments.

The purpose of the location of this trench was to investigate if the front façade had a similar corner projection as to what was encountered in the excavation of Trench Three. The excavation of Trench Six did indeed reveal this feature (between walls Context Nos. 604 and 605) indicating that the façade of the house is symmetrical. Context No. 605 was exposed to a length of 0.5m (south-west/north-east) and averaged 0.85m thick. The wall was exposed to a depth of 0.5m before excavation in this trench ceased.



*Figure 42: Post-excavation plan of Trench Six.*

The internal division wall (Context No. 606) corresponds with the internal wall investigated in Trench Three (Context No. 305), and it is conceivable that this two would have had a fireplace along its length, beyond the limit of this trench. The wall (Context No. 606) was aligned roughly north-west/south-east, was a maximum of 0.63m wide (north-east/south-west) and was exposed to a length of 1.2m (north-west/south-east). The wall (Context No. 606) carries on beyond the limit of the excavation. The wall was constructed by angular blocks of basalt (average size 0.2m x 0.1m x 0.07m) bonded together by a creamy white lime mortar. Plaster/render adhered to the south-western face of this wall which was exposed to a height of roughly 0.5m. Excavation of this trench ceased following the identification and recording of these walls, and was subsequently backfilled.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Introduction

The investigation at Retreat was highly successful as a community-led enterprise, with over 300 local school children being given the opportunity to participate in the excavation and survey of the site. The excavation revealed tantalising insights into the layout of the house and complex, as well as identifying a previously unknown lime kiln associated with activity at the site during the late eighteenth century. A varied artefact assemblage was encountered which includes a number of prehistoric and early modern items. As Retreat was a relatively short-lived enterprise it provides the opportunity to closely tie-in the date ranges of the various ceramic types recovered.

### 6.2 *The failure of Improvement*

The archaeological and historical evidence indicates that Retreat is a late eighteenth-century complex associated with the “Improvement” agenda that occurred within Britain and Ireland during the period from c.1750 to c.1850. Many of the improvements in agricultural techniques and the layout of farmsteads were already in operation from the end of the seventeenth century, although it was through the next century, especially after c.1760 that this process was accelerated (Horn 1982, 313). Landowners recruited suitable efficient tenant farmers who could act as an example to others and who might boost production levels on an estate. In his work on the agricultural improvement in England, Kerridge states that landowners relied on their tenants to take advantage of ideas that then offered them greater returns on their work (Kerridge 1974, 134-136).

The question arises as to why the endeavour at Retreat failed? An article published in the 1976 edition of *The Glynnys*, Rose Emerson puts forward the view that the site was overrun with rats and that the enterprise achieved nothing but the contempt of the local populace. To what extent this is correct is debatable, although it is conceivable that the endeavour was not thought upon favourably by the local people. The late 18<sup>th</sup> century was generally a contentious period in Ireland, culminating in the rebellion of 1798, and undoubtedly a Dublin-based Protestant family, albeit one with connections to Belfast, establishing itself in a predominantly Catholic community and looking to improve the region and its people may have met with derision if not hostility, particularly when the McAuley family had their lease ended perhaps to facilitate the development. The physical location of Retreat may also have been a factor with the ground unsuitable for growing grain (Donal McIlwaine *pers comm*). Whether the weather, the altitude, the land, or indeed the rats had a hand to play in Ewing's failure, however, it would seem that the end came

about because of his poor financial situation. Did his mother-in-law seek legal redress on an unfulfilled marriage settlement? One wonders had Ellison died and was this the reason why her mother brought the case against Ewing? It would be difficult to believe that Jane Grierson would seek to have her daughter's husband made destitute if Ellison were still at his side, but then we know that she was a somewhat formidable business woman, more than capable of falling out with family members; in 1759 her son Hugh Boulter Grierson ended a one-year old partnership with Jane to go into business on his own, possibly after some argument with his mother (Griffith 2007, 73-74).

### 6.3 *The house*

The archaeological investigations at Retreat revealed aspects regarding the lay-out of the house. A central façade sat forward from the side wings, as evidenced by the layout of the walls encountered in both Trenches Three and Six. The roof of the structure was slated with a brown-glazed earthenware ridge tiles along its apex. This undoubtedly made the house stand out from the other buildings in the complex and, indeed, within the local area. Its position looking out onto the main Cushendall to Ballymena road would have ensured that any passerby would know that this was the home of a refined and progressive gentleman of no mean circumstance.

The excavation in Trench Three investigated the area at the rear of the house and revealed a splendid cobbled surface with associated stone-lined drain. We can surmise that this was the kitchen and scullery area of the building, while the excavated evidence indicates that the rooms to the front of the house had floorboards. When the detail of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1857 is considered (Figure 17) it depicts the building as a square house, and the excavated evidence would now indicate that this is accurate. The upstanding section of wall (see Figure 5) in the centre of the ruined building represents the remains of the principal internal wall in the house, dividing the ground floor residential units to the east from the utilitarian units, with the kitchen area, to the west. At first floor level would have been the bedrooms and we might envisage the completed structure to resemble the grand house at Church Hill (or Churchill) House in Fenit, at Tralee Bay in County Kerry (Craig 2006, 184).





*Figure 43: Church Hill (or Churchill) House near Fenit in County Kerry. A mid-18<sup>th</sup> century building, the front façade is similar to how the house at Retreat would have appeared, with a central unit containing the doorway projecting forward from the main façade.*



*Figure 44: Church Hill (or Churchill) House near Fenit, County Kerry*

The fireplace encountered in Trench Three would indicate that the dwelling house at Retreat had internal chimneys and there is no evidence for fireplaces having been located in the northern (certainly) or southern (probably) gables of the building. Consequently, we can hypothesise that – like Church Hill – it would have been under a hipped roof with the chimney stacks centrally positioned. This trench also revealed decorative detail as the internal walls revealed still had the remnants of plaster and/or render adhered to its surface. Preserved wood was encountered along the base of the internal wall surfaces and this could represent a skirting board. The recovery of several square-sectioned nails from the basal stony clay deposit (Context No. 308) indicates that the room had a wooden floor laid directly on this surface. Indeed, discreet lines noted in this surface when encountered in both Trench Three (Context No. 308) and Trench Four (Context No. 404) could represent where the floorboards had become pressed into this surface. A number of roofing slates (both complete and fragmentary) were recovered during the excavation. These have undergone a visual examination by geologist Dr. Ian Meighan (formerly of QUB). The absence of mica crystals within the slates preclude them from having originated in Scotland, while the light to mid grey colouring suggests that they did not originate in Wales either. As such, and without XRF analysis (see Section 5), the probable source for the roofing slates was in County Down. The presence of thumb-impressed brown glazed ridge tiles is interesting and provides a picture of how the apex of the roof of the house might have looked.

The organisation of the complex becomes much more apparent when the digital data captured during the SfM survey is used to create a 3D model of the site (see Figure 45 and 46). The courtyard, marked (b) on Figure 46, with three ranges of buildings set out around it to the south, east and west sides, is square and measures some 20 m (from north to south) by 20 m (from east to west). The east range comprises a large building that comprises the dwelling house, denoted as (a) on Figure 46. To the west side is a long substantial building, denoted as (c) in Figure 46, which can be interpreted as a stable and/or barn unit. To the rear of this building is a walled enclosure (dii), which links with a further walled enclosure to the south (di); it was noted above, there are difficulties in aligning the “good Garden wall’d in on the North and West Sides” (as described in the 1779 advertisement – see Figure 8) with the walled garden depicted on the 1832 Ordnance Survey map since the latter is actually located away to the south-east of the main site. While there still remain orientation difficulties for “di” (it is located to the south and not the north side of the complex) it can be suggested that it is actually these two elements in the complex – di and dii – that represent the walled garden mentioned in the 1779 advertisement. The final element of the complex is (b), along the southern side of the enclosure. Although reduced to foundations, the presence of a fireplace in the east gable of the building would suggest that this was a habitation. As such, it can be interpreted as a small house perhaps used as a residence for servants working within the Ewing’s household.



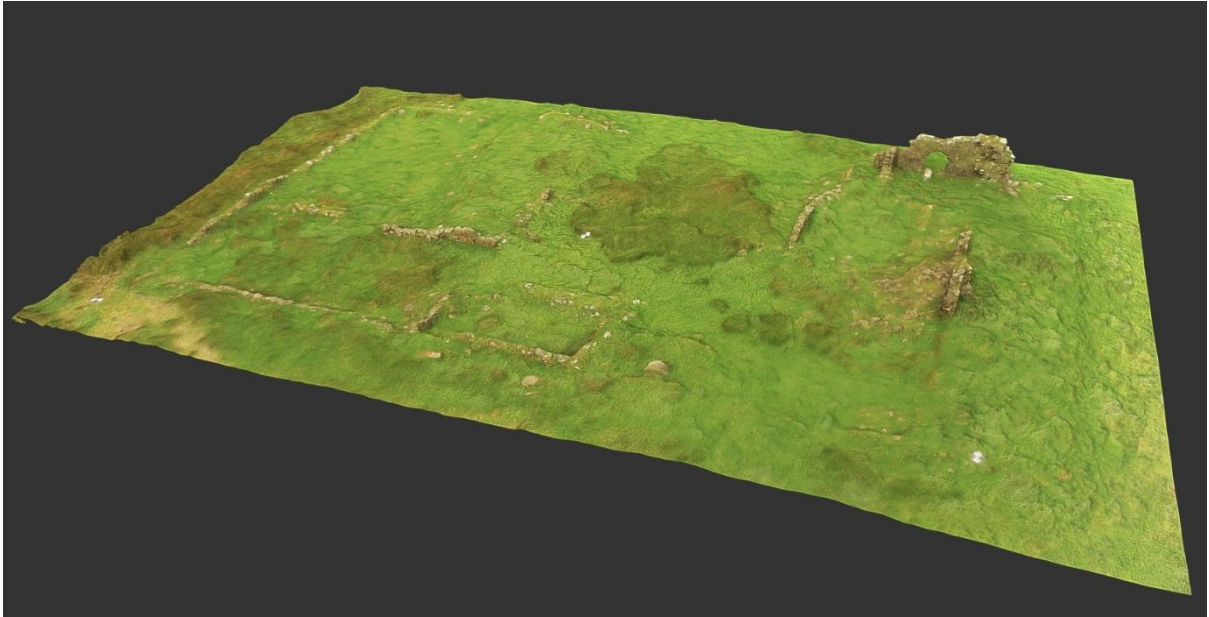


Figure 45: Screen-grab from 3D model created from digital data captured during SfM survey, August 2016.

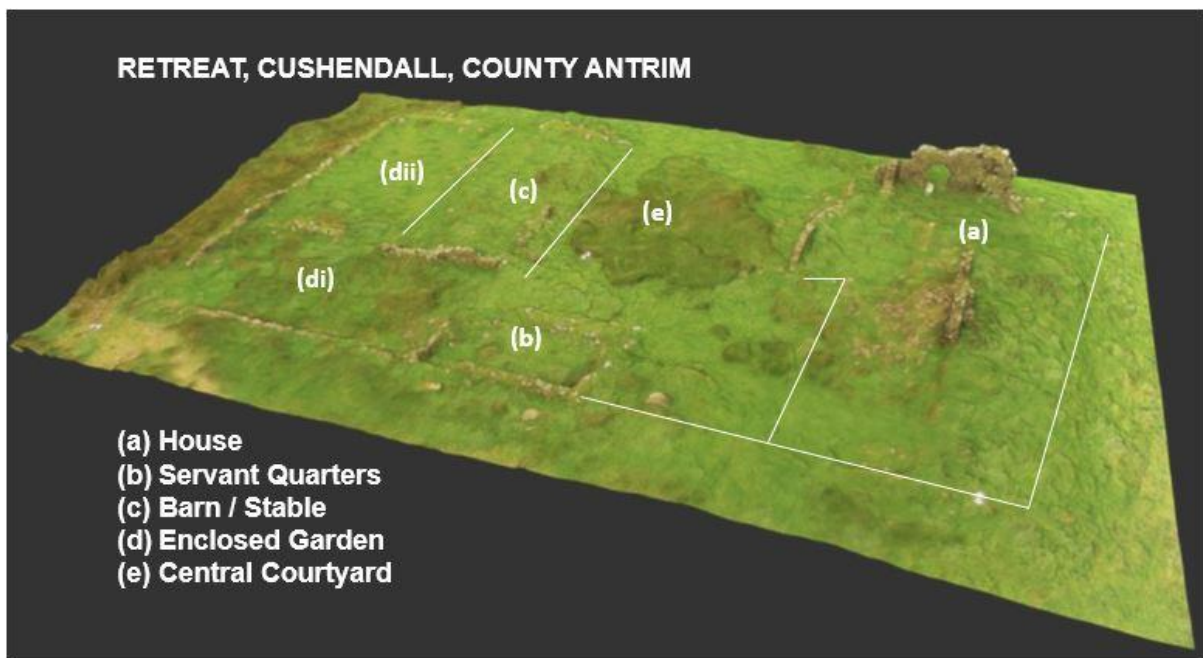


Figure 46: Annotated screen-grab from 3D model created from digital data captured during SfM survey, August 2016

#### 6.4 The artefact assemblage

A varied artefact assemblage was recovered during the excavation at Retreat. This includes a number of items relating to the use and demise of the complex in addition to a corpus of prehistoric lithic artefacts.

The prehistoric material is comprised exclusively of flint and porcellanite artefacts. These include elements of cores, flake debitage and modified tools. As a whole, the assemblage is relatively undiagnostic, although the reduction strategies evident on some of the flake debitage component suggests the bulk of the activity dates to the Middle Neolithic (c. 3600 BC). This interpretation is based on the presence of di-hedral and *chapeau-de-genarm* striking platforms indicating the production of hollow scrapers. It is not recommended, however, that the lithic assemblage is subject to further analysis due to its recovery from exclusively early modern features and deposits and thus must be considered to be residually deposited.

The glazed ceramics have undergone analysis by Ruairi O'Baoill (CAF) with the full specialist report reproduced as Appendix 7 of this report. The pottery assemblage comprises 249 sherds and represents both personal and utilitarian ceramic types. Fragments of *Pearlware*, *Staffordshire Slipware*, *transfer-printed* and *creamware* plates are all represented and broadly date to c.1750-1850. It is likely that these were utilised as tableware and are of probable English in origin. A number of sherds of glazed earthenware were likely acquired locally and were used in the kitchen for storage of perishable food items. What is also of note is the restricted nature of the chronology associated with the ceramic artefact assemblage; there was nothing discovered to suggest any residential presence at the location before 1750, while we can be confident that the vast majority of the material belongs to the period when Captain Ewing was living here.

#### 6.5 The lime kiln (Trench Five)

The feature investigated in Trench Five is interpreted as representing the remains of a lime kiln. This is of particular importance to the understanding of the Retreat landscape, especially given the historical association of the advertisement for a lime burner to be employed (Figure 7). It is physical evidence of the early industrialisation of the area, and along with the house should be viewed as evidence of the Improvement agenda being played out on this upland landscape.

Lime is an important resource, exploited mortar production and as an alkali to neutralize acidic soils (Williams 1989, 3). In Ireland it is thought to have been first used for building and related uses in the mid-1st millennium AD (during the early medieval period) whilst the practice of adding lime to soil began later and was carried out through the 12th – 17th centuries (O'Sullivan and Downey 2005, 21). By the 18th and early 19th centuries, however, lime was used extensively, to such a level that the lime kiln is Ireland's most numerous and widely distributed industrial monument (Rynne 2006, 157). It has been estimated that there may have been 250,000 or more

lime kilns in Ireland at that time, given that there is likely to have been one for every cluster of three or four landowners (O'Sullivan and Downey 2005, 21). The ruinous kilns which can be found dotted around the countryside, are for the most part, the remnants of rural agricultural practices of the 18th and 19th century. Although two different types were used – the intermittent flare kiln and the continuous draw kiln – most of the field monuments are of the latter type (Rynne 2006, 158). Although primarily employed as an alkali to neutralize acidic soils quicklime was also used for a variety of other purposes, including the production of lime based mortar, as a disinfectant in the farmyard, as a slug repellent and as frost protection for stored potatoes (Rynne 2006, 157; Sleeman 1990, 95). Lime also had uses beyond the farm, for example, as a flux in blast furnaces, in the purification of town gases, in the production of bleaching powder, in the tanning process and in civil engineering works and was produced for these purposes on a larger, more continuous scale, generally in towns and at ports (Rynne 2006, 157, 159).

Due to the exploratory nature and diminutive size of Trench Five, it is not readily apparent which classification the Retreat kiln falls under, and it is only with further investigation that this might be realized. Suffice to say, the wide berm at the base of the kiln is curious. At 5-7m in width, it was certainly wide enough to accommodate a horse and cart, with the gradient of the berm providing easy access into the centre of the complex. It is also possible that this berm accommodated a small structure utilized to keep the finished quicklime dry. It is only through further investigation that this will be teased out.



*Figure 47: The wide berm along the base of the conical mound that leads to the centre of the farm complex. At this point the berm is in excess of 5m wide but thins to approximately 1.5m closer to the base of the mound.*

When constructed and when under use, the kiln would certainly have provided an impressive statement of Improvement agenda at Retreat and would have been undoubtedly visible from the

road that lay to the east of the complex. The traveler making their way into Cushendall from Ballymena along this road in the 1770s would have been greeted with an impressive view of a substantial country residence and its associated lime kiln set back slightly from the house. Further proof, if further proof were indeed needed, of the reforming and progressive occupant of this country seat.



## **7. Recommendations for further work**

### *7.1 Introduction*

A number of recommendations are made that will be required to bring this project to completion through publication. These include analysis of the artefact assemblage recovered during the fieldwork.

### *7.2 Artefact assemblage*

A diverse and extensive range of artefacts was recovered in the excavation of the various trenches (see Appendix 5 for further details). It is recommended that these are studied by the relevant specialists to further our understanding of what activity the material culture present on site represents.

Prehistoric activity is represented by a small corpus of flint and porcellanite artefacts. A cursory examination carried out by the author suggests that the bulk of this material is Middle Neolithic in date on account of the presence of hollow scraper production technology. Given that these were residually deposited in surfaces and features of apparent 18th-century date it is not recommended that a formal catalogue and analysis of the lithic artefacts is prepared. However, their presence suggests a degree of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site, and this should be held in account if further fieldwork is to be carried out in the vicinity of Retreat.

A number of glazed pottery fragments, fragments of roof tiles and clay pipe stems were recovered. These are exclusively early modern in date and relate to the use of the complex and the period immediately following its abandonment. As such, the assemblage should be forwarded to a ceramic specialist with a view to the preparation of a formal catalogue and report.

A number of perforated roofing slates and handmade bricks were recovered from the trenches, particularly those associated with the dwelling house (Trenches Three, Four and Six). It is recommended that a sample of these are subjected to XRF analysis in an effort to find out the source of the raw material of these objects and to see if they were procured locally or imported.

The results of the investigation are deemed to be of great significance. Both the archaeological investigation and historical research into the site have revealed a wealth of information

associated with this hitherto neglected site. As such, it is proposed that the results are compiled for inclusion the international peer-reviewed *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*.

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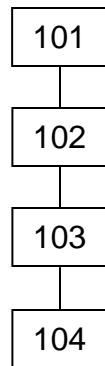
## Appendix One: Context Register

Trench	Context No.	Description
1	101	Sod
	102	Topsoil
	103	Rough metalled surface
	104	Natural geological subsoil
2	201	Sod
	202	Cobbled surface
	203	Mixed demolition deposit
	204	North-west/south-east aligned drain
	205	Foundation course of rear wall of structure
	206	Disturbed cobbled surface
	207	Natural geological subsoil
3	301	Sod
	302	Mixed rubble deposit
	303	Thick mortar deposit
	304	Hearth
	305	Internal division wall
	306	Front façade wall of structure (equivalent to Context No. 404)
	307	Rear wall of room
	308	Floor surface
	309	Mortared sandstone slabs in front of hearth
	310	Topsoil banked against wall Context No. 307
	311	Later blockage of alcove
	312	Later blockage of door and entrance into south-western most room
	313	Void
	314	Front façade wall of south-eastern wing of structure (equivalent to Context No. 606)
4	401	Sod

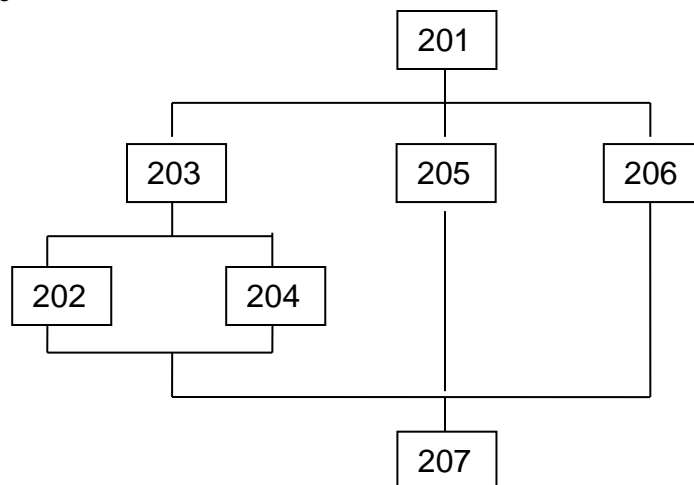
	402	Mixed demolition deposit
	403	Thick mortar deposit
	404	Front façade wall of structure (equivalent to Context No. 306)
	405	Front façade wall of structure (equivalent to Context No. 604)
	406	Threshold
	407	Floor surface
	408	Gravel surface exterior to front façade of structure. Possibly path surface
	409	Large angular rock foundation of doorway
5	501	Sod
	502	Pockets of topsoil directly above stone structure of kiln Context No. 505
	503	Charcoal rich loam
	504	Charcoal rich clay deposit
	505	Stone super-structure of kiln
	506	Large angular stone deposit with voids
6	601	Sod
	602	Mixed rubble deposit
	603	Thick mortar deposit
	604	Front façade wall of house (equivalent to Context No. 405)
	605	Front façade wall of north-eastern wing (equivalent to Context No. 314)
	606	Internal division wall

## Appendix Two: Harris Matrices

*Trench One*

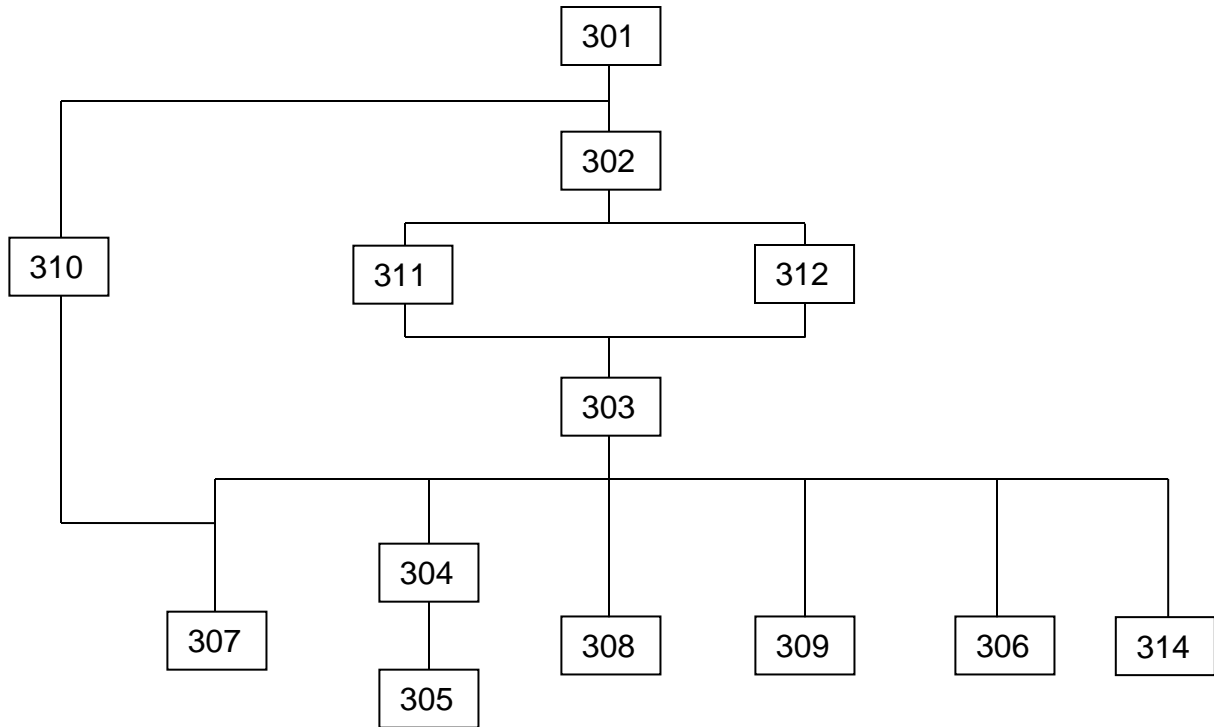


*Trench Two*

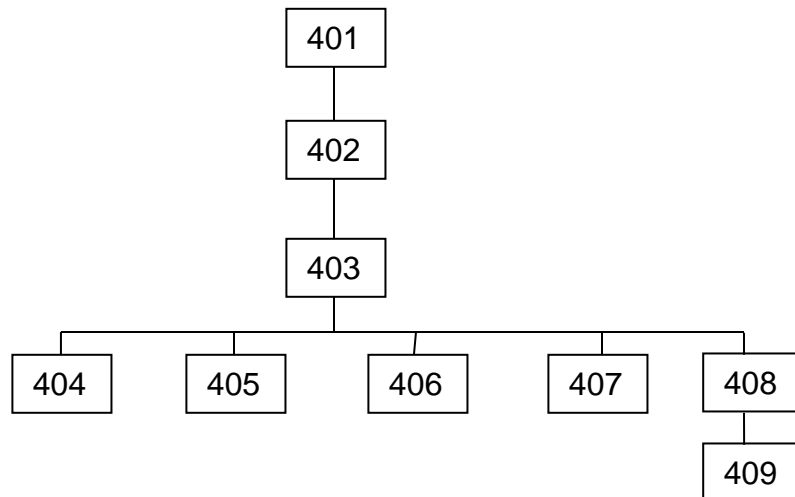




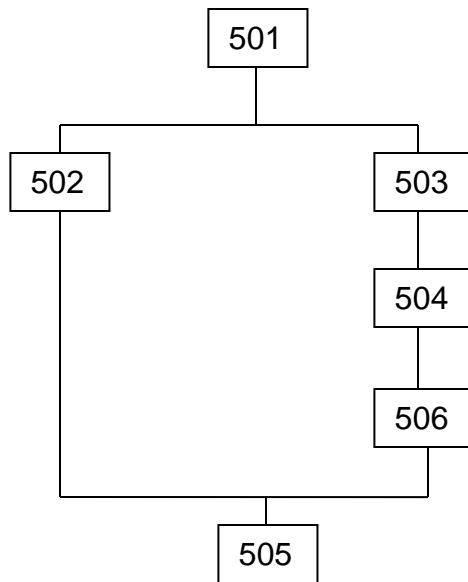
*Trench Three*



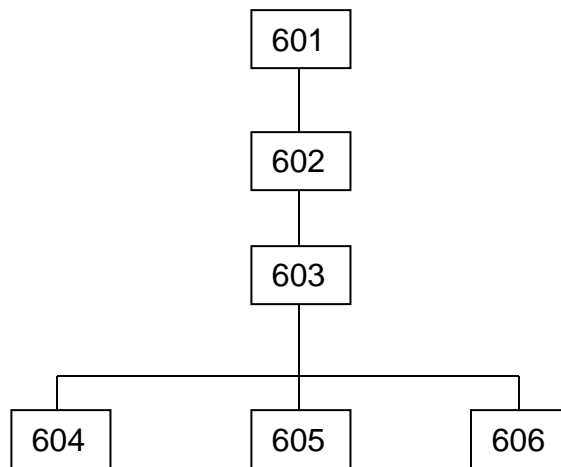
*Trench Four*



*Trench Five*



*Trench Six*



### Appendix Three: Field drawing Register

Drawing #	Sheet #	Trench	Type	Scale	Detail
1	1	2	Plan	1:20	Post-excavation plan
2	1	2	Section	1:20	North-east facing section
3	2	3	Plan	1:20	Post-excavation plan
4	2	5	Plan	1:20	Post-excavation plan
5	2	5	Section	1:20	South-west facing section
6	3	6	Plan	1:20	Post-excavation plan
7	3	4	Plan	1:20	Post-excavation plan

#### **Appendix Four: Sample Register**

*\*The excavation did not encounter and deposits or features suitable for the retrieval of micro/macro-fossils and radiocarbon dating.*



## Appendix Five: Finds Register

### Corroded metal:

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
1	102	4	1 nail present
3	Below sod	1	-
3	303	2	Nails
2	203	7	-
3	303	2	Nails
2	203	1	Nail
3	303	4	Nails
3	303	3	Nails
3	310	1	Nail
1	Topsoil	1	Corroded iron
2	203	1	Nail
6	603	2	Nails
6	603	1	Nail
4	403	12	Nails
3	303	25	Nails
2	201	5	Corroded iron

### Brick:

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
3	Below sod	2	1 shard, 1 larger incomplete sample
1	102	2	-
3	Below sod	1	-
2	203	1	-
1	102	8	-
6	602	2	Complete samples
3	303	3	-
4	402	1	-
1	102	2	-
2	201	2	-
4	402	1	Incomplete sample
2	203	2	-
2	203	1	-
2	203	12	-
2	203	3	-
1	102	5	-
1	102	30	-

**Roof tile:**

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
4	402	22	-
2	201	1	Glazed ceramic
1	Topsoil	1	-
4	403	3	-
3	310	1	-
3	303	4	-
3	302	4	-
3	303	5	-
3	Below sod	8	-
2	203	6	-
3	303	5	-
2	203	22	-
2	203	8	-
6	603	12	-
3	302	9	-

**Sandstone:**

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
1	102	1	Fragment of windowsill
3	303	5	-
1	102	23	-
1	102	5	-
1	102	9	-
6	602	2	-
2	203	1	-
1	102	5	-
2	203	4	Complete samples present
2	203	3	-
2	203	2	-
3	303	1	-
4	403	2	-

**Plaster:**

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
4	402	3	-
6	603	4	-
2	203	1	-
3	303	1	Nail attached to plaster
4	403	3	-
3	303	2	-
3	303	2	-

3	303	11	-
3	303	16	Originates from internal wall surface

**Slate:**

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
1	102	1	Perforated
4	402	1	-
2	203	4	One piece perforated
2	204	1	-
1	102	135	-
1	102	1	-
1	102	1	Perforated
2	203	2	1 piece perforated
2	201	2	-
2	203	9	4 perforated, 2 with nail heads attached
3	301	5	3 perforated
1	Topsoil	1	-
6	603	2	-
1	102	193	1 piece perforated

**Glass:**

Trench (TR)	Context No. (C.)	No. of pieces	Comments
1	102	8	-
6	603	8	Window glass
3	303	1	-
3	303	1	Window glass
2	203	6	-
2	203	3	-
3	Below sod	3	-
3	310	9	-
2	201	4	-
1	Topsoil	1	-
2	203	17	-
2	203	2	Lid and base of glass inkwell

**Pottery:**

<b>Trench (TR)</b>	<b>Context No. (C.)</b>	<b>No. of pieces</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4	402	2	Clay pipe stem
1	102	1	-
4	402	1	-
1	102	25	Remains of ceramic mug and plates
1	102	1	-
1	102	1	-
5	506	1	Ceramic
2	201	3	-
2	203	1	Clay pipe stem
2	202	1	Clay pipe stem
1	102	3	-
2	204	45	-
2	203	36	-
2	203	16	Remains of mug included
1	102	3	-
1	Topsoil	3	-
1	102	1	-

**Stone:**

<b>Trench (TR)</b>	<b>Context No. (C.)</b>	<b>No. of pieces</b>	<b>Comments</b>
6	603	2	Limestone
2	203	6	Limestone
1	102	3	Porcellanite
1	102	4	Porcellanite
1	102	1	Porcellanite
1	102	1	Quartzite
1	102	16	Quartz
1	102	5	Quartz
1	102	2	Flint
6	603	1	Flint
1	102	29	Flint
2	203	1	Flint
1	102	26	Quartz
1	102	1	Quartz
4	403	1	Flint
1	102	1	Flint Scraper
1	102	1	Flint Scraper
1	102	1	Porcellanite
1	Topsoil	30	Flint
2	203	1	Flint
3	310	1	Flint
2	201	1	Burnt flint
1	102	18	Flint
1	102	2	Flint
1	102	2	Porcellanite
1	102	44	Flint

1	102	22	Flint
2	203	4	Quartz
2	203	11	Flint
1	102	25	Flint
5	504	87	Flint
1	102	51	Flint, cores present
1	102	1	Flint scraper
1	102	1	Porcellanite

**Animal bones/teeth:**

<b>Trench (TR)</b>	<b>Context No. (C.)</b>	<b>No. of pieces</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	102	2	Animal Bones
4	402	4	Animal Bones
3	303	2	Animal Bones
3	303	1	Animal Tooth
4	403	6	Animal Bones
2	203	2	Animal Teeth
3	303	11	Animal Bones
2	203	4	Animal Bones, remains of jaw
2	203	2	Animal Teeth
2	203	9	Animal Bones
2	203	7	Animal Teeth

**Miscellaneous/other:**

<b>Trench (TR)</b>	<b>Context No. (C.)</b>	<b>No. of pieces</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2	201	1	Cobblestone/hammer stone?
3	303	5	Wood
4	403	9	Wood, one piece has nail attached, another has a wooden peg attached
3	303	2	Wood, with nails attached
1	102	1	Penny
1	101	1	Possible Coat Button



## Appendix Six: Photographic Register

DSCN#	Trench	Detail	Direction
9344	2	TR 2, pre-ex	North-West
9345	2	TR 2, pre-ex	North-West
9346	2	TR 2, pre-ex	North-West
9347	1	Working shot	-
9348	1	Working shot	-
9349	1	Working shot	-
9350	2	Exposure of cobbles Cxt. 202	
9351	1&2	Working shot	-
9352	-	Working shot	-
9353	-	Working shot	-
9354	2	Cxt. 202	
9355 - 9372	-	Schools Carnlough & Seaview PS	-
9373	3	Working shot	-
9374	3	Working shot	-
9375	3	Working shot	North-West
9376	3	Working shot	South-West
9377	3	Working shot	North-West
9378	3	Working shot	North-West
9379	3	Working shot	South-East
9380	3	Working shot	South-East
9381	3	Working shot	North-East
9382	3	Working shot	North-East
9383	3	Working shot	North-East
9384	3	Working shot	North-East
9385 - 9410	-	Saturday Open Day	-
9411	-	Ballycastle Int. PS	-
9412	-	Ballycastle Int. PS	-
9413 - 9417	-	Ballycastle Int. PS	-
9418	-	Working shot	-
9425	3	After removal of Cxt. 302	West
9426	3	After removal of Cxt. 302	West
9427	3	North-East facing section	South
9428	3	Possible structural detail	South-West
9429	3	Possible structural detail	South-West

9430	3	Mortar deposit Cxt.303	East
9431	3	Mortar deposit Cxt.303	East
9432	-	Action shot of Gaelsciol in hut	-
9433	-	Action shot on site	-
9434	2	Helen Wilson – Volunteer	-
9435	2	Helen Wilson – Volunteer	-
9436	2	Cobbles	South-West
9437	2	Cobbles	North-West
9438	2	Cobbles	North-East
9439	3	Fireplace	South-West
9440	3	Fireplace	South-West
9441	3	Fireplace	West
9442	3	Fireplace	West
9443	3	Fireplace	North-East
9444	3	Fireplace	North-East
9445	3	Fireplace	South-east
9446	3	Fireplace	South-East
9447	1	Working shot	-
9448	3	Fireplace	Looking South-West
9449	4	Doorway following removal of Cxt.402	North
9450	4	Doorway following removal of Cxt.402	South
9451	4	Doorway following removal of Cxt.402	North-West
9452	4	Detail of doorway	-
9453 - 9456	3/4	Working shots from various angles	-
9457 - 9458	4	TR 4 showing mortar deposit Cxt. 403	North-East
9459 - 9460	4	TR 4 showing mortar deposit Cxt. 403	West
9461- 9462	4	TR 4 showing mortar deposit Cxt. 403	South-East
9463 - 9464	4	TR 4 showing mortar deposit Cxt. 403	East
9465 - 9482	5	Possible lime kiln	-

## Appendix Seven – Report on the ceramic assemblage (Ruairi O'Baoill CAF)

### *Introduction*

A total of six trenches were excavated at Retreat during September 2016. Trench One was located across the area presumed to be the courtyard, while Trench Two was located within one of the western rooms at the rear of the dwelling house. Trench Three straddled the long spine wall dividing the eastern and western rooms within the house and a section of the eastern front façade. Trench Four was located across the main doorway in the eastern façade, while Trench Six was located further north and straddled both the front wall of the house and one of its internal walls. Trench Five was excavated across a portion of the infilled 18th century limekiln, located to the north-west of the complex.

### *The ceramic assemblage from Retreat*

A total of 249 fragments of ceramics were recovered from all of the six excavated trenches. These consisted of 159 sherds of pottery and 90 fragments of glazed roof tile (Tables 1 and 2).

### *Pottery*

Trench No.	Context	Description	Quantity
1	102 topsoil	19 fragments of Creamware from at least two different vessels. Fragment of raised floral design on one fragment identical to that one single fragments from both Tr 2, C. 203 and Tr 2, C. 204. 10 fragments of a blue and white Pearlware plate. Four of the rim sherds, with floral design, and three body sherds join. One body sherd has the word ...ROSE or ROSE painted on it. 6 fragments of a Creamware? cup joining together to make a fragmentary profile from rim to base. White glaze with two parallel but uneven lines of blue running around the rim and either side of the lower portion of the upper handle springer. Glaze very degraded. 1 rim fragment of Spongeware bowl. Flaw in glaze on internal surface. Blue floral and linear design on exterior face. 1 rim fragment of Creamware vessel with external bevelled ridge.	39

		1 fragment of Black Glazed earthenware. ?Staffordshire.	
		1 half fragment of heavy porcelain vessel- 19thC telegraph or telephone insulator. This joins to other half which was recovered from Tr 2, C.203.	
2	201 sod	Two sherds of Pearlware and a sherd of Transfer printed earthenware	3
2	203 Demolition	<b>46</b> sherds of Creamware pottery, of which: 44 have a dull yellow glaze—plate/dish fragments- glazed both sides- 1 piece has feather edged design and 2 have a white glaze- both base fragments from different small bowls.  7 sherds of yellow glazed Earthenware- glaze badly abraded- red clay fabric-glazed on internal surface only.  1 fragment of Spongeware vessel- red and black decoration on white glaze- fragment of springer of handle- ?Scottish.  2 small fragments of ?Staffordshire slipware. 7 sherds of north Staffordshire brown glazed pottery- heavy crock storage vessel? 1 small fragment of blue and white gravel ware-19thC? 1 half fragment of heavy porcelain vessel- 19th C telegraph or telephone insulator. Joins to other half which was recovered from Tr 1, C.102.	65
2	204 Fill of drain = 203	<b>44</b> fragments of Creamware- at least three different vessels including a plate and (?chamber) pots. Two different types of feather-edged design, one of which is identical to that on a sherd in C. 203. Some fragments fit together.  1 small fragment of ?Staffordshire slipware.  Assemblage in C. 204 is very similar to that in C.203 and the Creamware fragments in both layers might be from the same vessels.	45

3	302 Demolition	1 body fragment of Black-glazed earthenware vessel. Internal face badly damaged and no surviving glaze but probably was glazed internally.	1
3	303 Mortar depoit/ Demolition. Below 302	2 body fragments of Black-glazed earthenware vessels. Glaze on external surfaces only.	2
3	310 top soil outside building	1 body fragment of Brown-glazed earthenware vessel.	1
4	402 Demolition	1 body fragment of Creamware vessel (plate?).	1
4	403 Mortar deposit under 402	1 body fragment of Black-glazed earthenware vessel.	1
5	506 Infilling of kiln	1 rim sherd of white porcelain vessel. Badly degraded black shadow of internal painted floral design but all colouration now gone.	1
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>159</b>

*Table 1. Pottery recovered from the 2016 excavation at Retreat, County Antrim.*

#### Roof Tiles

Trench No.	Context	Description	Quantity
2	201 Sod	Small fragment of light-brown glazed ridge tile	1



2	203 Demolition	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles, several large, including two fragments of thumb-impressed decorated ridge tiles.	25
3	302	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles, including two fragments of thumb-impressed decorated ridge tiles.	19
3	303	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles, including one fragment of thumb-impressed decorated ridge tile. Many of the examples from this context have heavy accretions of mortar adhering to them.	12
4	402	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles. Some of the examples from this context have heavy accretions of mortar adhering to them and one has a partial, crude, peg hole in it.	22
4	403	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles.	2
6	603 Mortar	Fragments of brown-glazed roof tiles.	9
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>90</b>

*Table 2. Roof tile fragments recovered from the 2016 excavation at Retreat, County Antrim.*

### *Discussion*

The pottery recovered from the Retreat excavation was a mixture of the personal and the utilitarian and, as such, reflects the status of the people living and working at the complex. The Pearlware, Staffordshire slipware, Transfer-Printed Earthenware and Creamware plates, platters and bowls are clearly tablewares that were used by the occupants of 'big house' at Retreat. These types of popular ceramic wares were produced from c1750 to c1850, and were probably made in English potteries, being brought from Dublin to Retreat by Ewing. The Black, Brown and Yellow-Glazed earthenwares are more utilitarian wares and would have been used for the collection and storage of liquids such as milk. They may have been produced in one of the local town, perhaps Cushendall or Ballymena. Most of the ceramics, apart from those recovered from topsoil and the fill of the drain in Trench 2 (C. 204) were retrieved from the demolition layer that was universal horizon across the site (C. 203= C. 302/C.303 = C.402/C.403 =C. 603) after the

complex went out of use. In fact, all but one of the 90 glazed roof tile fragments were also derived from his horizon. A proportion of pottery recovered from the site also clearly dates from 19th creation of the railway halt at Retreat and also the later use of the surrounding farmland for keeping cattle and sheep after the fine house at Retreat had become abandoned c1800. Much of the later 19th century ceramics recovered from site - the Spongeware, perhaps of Scottish origin, and the fragment of porcelain insulator - were recovered from Trench 1 perhaps suggesting that although Retreat no longer existed as a gentleman's residence, the abandoned buildings were still being used for agricultural purposes. The change in land use in the 19th century in the immediate environs of the Retreat may explain the single fragment of porcelain in the layer infilling the lime kiln (C. 506), where deep holes were being filled in to protect livestock.

The brown glazed earthenware roof tiles, some of which have thumb-impressed decoration on the crests, are very impressive and indicative of a high status building. In a landscape where most of the buildings would have been roofed with thatch, the roof of the main dwelling house at Retreat would have stood out from the rest.



*Figure 48: Grazed ridge-tile and perforated roofing slate retrieved during the excavation from Trench 3*