



*Highland Archaeology Services Ltd*

## Archaeological Monitoring at Dallas, by Forres, Moray



## Report and Recommendations

Report No. HAS0492

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**Supplementary material (to follow)**

CDROM: Digital photographs and digital copies of 35mm slides  
 This report in Adobe Acrobat pdf format  
 Original 35mm slides will be deposited with the Moray Sites and Monuments Record

## Summary

*The laying of a water main at St. Michael's churchyard, Dallas was monitored for possible archaeological evidence. The pipeline runs along the road verge adjoining the front (southern) edge of the graveyard.*

*The church itself stands on a medieval site and the churchyard contains a Scheduled market cross, said to be one of the oldest in Scotland. It was therefore possible that burials or other features of archaeological importance could extend outwith the modern churchyard boundary.*

*The contractors' trench revealed clean and undisturbed sandy silts, apart from one location opposite the entrance to the side access to the church, where there was a manhole and associated drains, and indications of a wide, almost certainly natural depression, containing a fill of rounded cobbles below layered silts. This was interpreted as a former pond or similar.*

*There are no recommendations for further archaeological work at this site.*

## Introduction:

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at St. Michael's churchyard, Dallas on the cutting of a water pipeline. It was commissioned at short notice by MacPhee Builders of Dingwall, the construction company laying the water main for Scottish Water. The main was being laid outside and parallel to the front edge of the graveyard along the road verge.

The purpose of the work was to establish whether there was any buried archaeology on site, and if so, to obtain an indication of its nature and extent. Archaeological features that would be unavoidably damaged or destroyed would be recorded and any finds recovered.

The work was carried out for Highland Archaeology Services Ltd by John Wood MIFA. The weather was dry and sunny.

The excavation trench was observed while open for the length of the churchyard and approximately 50m eastwards, along the road towards the village of Dallas. Digital photographs and 35mm slides were taken.

## Site Location and Details:

The site is centred approximately at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NJ121 518. It is within the local authority area of the Moray Council which is advised on archaeological matters by the Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service. They had requested that the construction of this section of water main should be monitored archaeologically.



**Figure 1: Site Location.**

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St Michael's church itself dates to 1793, but stands on a medieval site and the churchyard contains a Scheduled market cross, claimed by some to be one of the oldest in Scotland (NMRS NJ15SW 2). It was therefore possible that burials or other features of archaeological importance could extend beyond the modern churchyard boundary.

**Aims of the Investigation:**

To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains, and record any features or finds affected by the work.

To report the results and if appropriate to make recommendations compliant with NPPG 5 (SOEND 1994) and PAN 42 (SOEND 1994)

## **Method:**

### **Desk Based Assessment**

A full desk-based assessment was not carried out for this site. However the online versions of the Moray Sites and Monuments Record, the National Monuments Record for Scotland, and the Listed Building and Scheduled Monument records and the online edition of the first edition OS 6" map were checked. However, very little archaeological recording has been done here and these rapid checks did not indicate any recorded sites or features in this immediate area.

### **Watching Brief and photographic record**

The site was visited on 9 September 2004.

The trench, 910mm deep by 460mm wide, was cleanly cut by a back-acting mechanical excavator. It passed through completely clean and undisturbed sandy silts, apart from one location opposite the entrance to the side access to the church, where there was evidence of disturbance for a manhole and associated drains, and indications of a wide depression, almost certainly natural, containing a fill of rounded river cobbles of about 120mm diameter, below layered silts. Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service was notified of the work by telephone.

Digital photographs and 35mm slides were taken. It was not possible to clean the sections by hand, but these were nevertheless clear.

No upstanding features were noted anywhere along the trench line.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

The monitoring of the water main construction at St Michael's church Dallas was justified as the church is on a medieval site and associated buried archaeology might be expected. In the event however the work was found not to affect any features or finds of archaeological importance.

The area immediately south of the churchyard appears to have been wet meadowland along the river. The medieval and later settlement may have lain to the north or east of the present church.

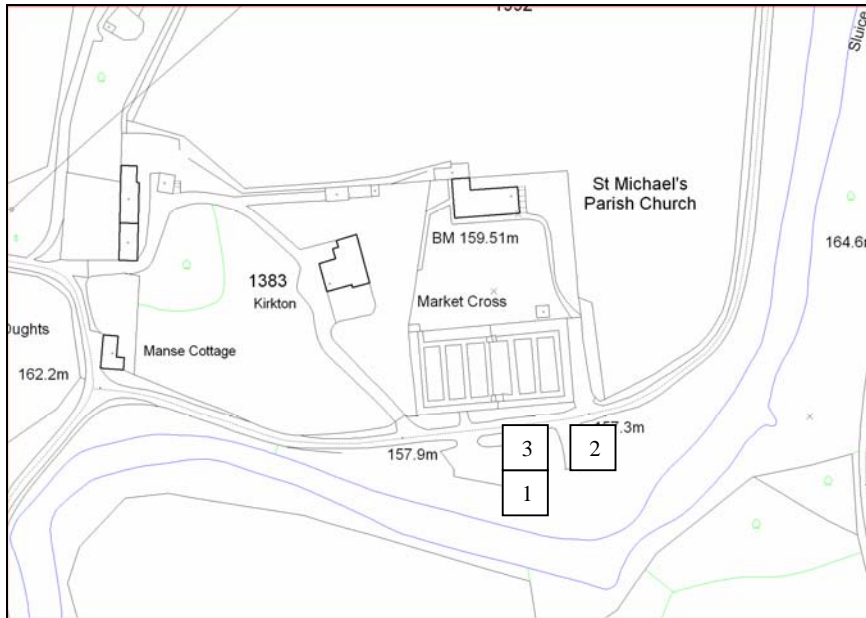
There are no recommendations for further archaeological work within this site.

### **Finds**

No finds were made.

## Photographs

Photographs were taken approximately as shown below.



**Figure 2 Photograph camera locations (approximate only)**

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**Figure 3 View north across trench to church and churchyard from [1]**



Figure 4 View west along trench from [2]



Figure 5 Disturbance for modern drain and manhole from [2]



**Figure 6** View east showing drain and manhole at path junction from [3]



**Figure 7** View east from churchyard corner from [2]





Figure 8 View west from path entrance and disturbed area along trench from [2]

## References

SOEND 1994 **National Planning Policy Guidance 5: Archaeology and Planning**

SOEND 1994a **Planning Advice Note 42: Archaeology and Planning**

[www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

[www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/archaeology/smr>