

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Middle Drums  
Brechin  
BR13

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**  
**MIDDLE DRUMS**  
**BRECHIN**  
**BR13**

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*Illustration 1: Site location plan*

*Illustration 2: Location of Development Area*

*Illustration 3: Location of Pits for Concrete*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Alder Archaeology was commissioned by Mr John Sim to undertake a watching brief on groundworks for a potato store at Middle Drums Farm located just to the S of Brechin. The site was considered archaeologically sensitive as the farm lay only 50m to the SW of a scheduled area containing ring ditches. The watching brief (Alder site code BR13) was carried out on 16 August 2010. Some demolition had taken place and an area measuring 40 X 16m was monitored during excavations for concrete bases for steel uprights along with slight ground reduction. The excavations and ground reduction revealed natural deposits in the form of solid rock, conglomerate, gravel and cobbles at the site surface. Parts of the foundations of a recently demolished building were recorded but nothing of archaeological significance was found. The lack of archaeological features was attributed to the fact that the site had been reduced to natural deposits for the erection of farm buildings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Mr J Sim commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of the construction of a new potato store at Middle Drums Farm by Brechin, centred on NGR NO 59200 5749. Demolition had taken place and the proposed development area was an open rectangle measuring 40m NE-SW and 14.5m NW-SE having a surface of mainly natural cobbles and rock. The work (site code BR13) was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2010 in good weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor site reduction and excavation for the new build. The area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive as it lay approximately 50m to the SW of a Scheduled Ancient Monument area of cropmarks showing ring ditches.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 10/00504/FUL

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this watching brief was to monitor ground reduction and excavation to record the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area. The area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive as it lay approximately 50m to the SW of a Scheduled Ancient Monument of cropmarks showing ring ditches.

### **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this watching brief. Copies will be sent to the client, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Angus Council Sites and Monuments Record.

### **1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues**

This watching brief is the final part of a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent 10/00504/FUL for this development.

### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Mr J Sim of Middle Drums Farm for his on site assistance and Moira Greig Archaeological Officer for Angus Council for her guidance throughout this project. The watching brief was entirely funded by Mr J Sim.

## **2 Details of Work**

### **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

The site of the new potato store was centred on NGR NO 5920 5749. Demolition had taken place and the proposed development area was an open rectangle measuring 40m NE-SW and 14.5m NW-SE having a surface of mainly somewhat disturbed natural cobbles, rock and some loose brick. The SE boundary of the site was formed by a

standing building to which the new build will be attached. A partly demolished, curving wall was still standing out with but close to the NW edge of the site.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

This site has been identified as archaeologically significant because of its proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, No 6359 (SMR ref no NO55NE0025), immediately to the NNE, consisting of crop marks of a pair of late prehistoric ring ditches. Also, a stone lamp was found to the south (SMR ref no NO55NE0021).

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

The watching brief monitored the machining over an area of 580m<sup>2</sup> for the site reduction and the much deeper excavations required for concrete bases for steel uprights in order to record the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

The site surface comprised disturbed natural, with some brick and stone building material from recent demolition. A manhole and plastic drain pipes had been uncovered leading from the standing building on the E side of the site. A few 19<sup>th</sup> c pottery sherds were observed within the site surface deposit but these were not retained. Fourteen pits were machine excavated for concrete bases for upright beams. The pits were all cut into natural rock comprising mainly bedded sandstone and conglomerate. The pits varied slightly in size depending on the difficulty of excavation. The average size was 1.75 X 2m with depths varying between 0.70-1.60m. The largest pit was located at the SW corner of the site, it measured 1.80m NS and 2.40m EW and had a depth of 1.60m. Excavation here revealed hard packed conglomerate. None of the pits revealed any significant archaeological deposits or features.

At the N end of the site part of the wall foundation of a recently demolished 19<sup>th</sup> C structure was recorded on the site surface. The remains represented a 3.20m length of wall 0.27m high (1 course) and 0.87m wide of mortared, squared rubble, aligned NNE-SSW (parallel with standing building on S edge of site). This was the foundation of the W end wall of a standing that formerly adjoining the present standing structure.

No significant archaeological features were identified on the watching brief.

## **3 Interpretation**

- 3.1** The watching brief revealed only natural deposits of sandstone and conglomerate and part of a 19<sup>th</sup> century recently demolished building. The natural rock was very close to the surface and the site would not have favoured construction of any of the features

identified nearby within the Scheduled area to the NE of the farm. If any early archaeological features were ever present on this site they must have been eradicated by the construction the farmstead in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 4.1 Alder Archaeology concludes that the watcing brief was sucessful in that it varified the fact that no significant archaeology had survived on the site and was probably never present.

### **4.2 Recommendations for Further Work**

As the groundworks for the new potato store have now been concluded and nothing of archaeological significance was identified no further archaeological work is required for this development.

## **5 References**

*Middle Drums Farm. Brechin Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation* Alder Archaeology 2010

## Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Deposit, comprising cobbles and large pebbles in matrix of coarse gravel, some brick, projections of natural sandstone, surface of footprint of new build after demoliton and slight yard reduction, 0.10-0.15m thick
02	Deposit, natural rock, comprising, conglomerate, and weathered sandstone
03	Deposit, surface of courtyard outwith building footprint, compacted broken rock and cobbles in matrix of sandy silt, 0.30m thick over natural rock
04	Structure, part of foundation remains of N end of demolished 19 <sup>th</sup> C building 0.27m high (1 course) mortared, squared rubble with some cement on upper surface 3.20m long and 0.87m wide, aligned NNE-SSW (parallel with standing building on S edge of site)

## Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
01	General of stripped site surface	NNE
02	General of area of new build	NE
03	General of area of new build	S
04	General of curving wall adjacent to site	SE
05	General of site	SE
06	General of site	NE
07	Detail , excavation for new build, showing nature of natural fractured sandstone, 02	E
08	General location of excavation	NNE
09	Detail excavation for new build, showing nature of natural fractured sandstone, 02	NE
10	General of excavations	NE
11	Detail of wall 04	SSE
12	Detail of wall 04	NNW
13	Detail of wall 04	NE
14	General location of wall 04, with curving wall in background	NE

15	General of site with excavations	S
16	Detail of site	S
17	Detail of with excavation against standing wall site N end	SE
18	General location of excavation against standing wall site N end	E
19	Excavation mid N edge of site	NE
20	Detail of excavation corner W end N edge of site	NE
21	General of excavation, NW corner of site	NE
22	Detail of excavation, SW corner of site	NE
23	General of excavation SW corner of site	NE
24	General leveling of site	NE
26	General leveling of site	N

### Appendix 3 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	Location of excavation, context notes, general notes	1:200



## Appendix 4 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Watching Brief at Middle Drums Farm, Brechin
PROJECT CODE:	BR13
PARISH:	Brechin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Ray Cachart
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	Scheduled Ancient Monument, No 6359 (SMR ref no NO55NE0025), immediately to the NNE, consisting of crop marks of a pair of late prehistoric ring ditches. Also, a stone lamp was found to the south (SMR ref no NO55NE0021).
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Ring ditches to the NE of the farm
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Development site centred on NO 59017 57499
START DATE	16 August 2010
END DATE	16 August 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None known
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Alder Archaeology was commissioned by Mr John Sim to undertake a watching brief on groundworks for a potato store at Middle Drums Farm located just to the S of Brechin. The site was considered archaeologically sensitive as the farm steading lay only 50m to the SW of a scheduled area containing ring ditches. The watching brief (Alder site code BR13) was carried out on 16 August 2010. Some demolition had taken place and an area measuring 40 X 16m was monitored during excavations for concrete bases for steel uprights along with slight ground reduction. The excavations and ground reduction revealed hard natural deposits in the form of solid rock, conglomerate, gravel and cobbles at the site surface. Parts of the foundations of a recently demolished building were recorded but nothing of archaeological significance was found. The lack of archaeological features was attributed to the fact that the site had been reduced to natural deposits for the erection of farm buildings in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Developer

CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	None
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	<a href="mailto:Director@AlderArchaeology.co.uk">Director@AlderArchaeology.co.uk</a>

## Appendix 5 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

### 5.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

### 5.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

### 5.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

### 5.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

### 5.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

### 5.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy and conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertakes Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.