

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at Highland Adventure Safaris, Dull, near Aberfeldy, Perth & Kinross Council having granted planning consent (reference number 08/01449/FUL) to extend the car parking area at the front of the site. The council had previously granted consent to build several holiday lodges on the north side of the site (reference number 07/00120/FUL): an evaluation, which was carried out by Scotia Archaeology in July 2008, uncovered nothing of archaeological significance in that area (Lewis 2008).

On the advice of its consultants, Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), the council imposed a condition on the second development whereby an archaeological watching brief would be undertaken during the removal of topsoil from the area designated for the new car park and its access road. The watching brief was sponsored by the site's owner, Donald Riddell, and was carried out in the context of National Planning Policy Guidelines 5 (Archaeology and Planning) by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 18th November 2008.

THE SITE

The site was centred on NGR: NN 8121 4892, to the east of the village of Dull which is 4.5km west of Aberfeldy, Perthshire. It lay on the north side of the Tay valley, to the front of the Highland Adventure Safaris' café and shop and adjacent to its existing car park. There are numerous archaeological sites and monuments, ranging from prehistoric ritual monuments to post-medieval settlements, in the vicinity, several sites having been identified within or very close to the development area. These, referenced by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and PKHT, are:

a possible house platform (perhaps an Iron Age ring fort) (NN84NW 37; MK1033), noted during a field survey in the 1970s at NN 8127 4903, on a rocky knoll to the immediate E of the development site;

a cup-marked stone and a standing stone (collectively NN84NW 1), located at NN 8130 4910 and NN 8132 4913, respectively, just N of the site; and

one of four early Christian sanctuary crosses which still stood in this area in 1842. This cross (MK1007) is believed to have been located within or very close to the site of the new car park, at NN 812 484;

a round barrow cemetery (NN84NW 53; MK1050), identified by aerial photography at NN 8130 4889, in the field between the development site and the B846 Aberfeldy to Keltneyburn road.

In addition, aerial photographs also show cropmarks to the north-west of the barrow and just south of the former location of the sanctuary cross.

The area designated for the new car park and access road was bounded on its east and south by fences, its west by the road leading up to the village of Dull and on its north by the café and shop and the existing car park. It sloped very gently down to the south.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was undertaken during the removal of topsoil from an irregular area measuring approximately 35m east/west by 10-15m wide (see accompanying plan). Excavation was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket attached to a 360° tracked excavator, the spoil being removed in stages from the area.

Topsoil varied in depth from 0.2m to 0.4m, being deepest towards the west end where it had been built up in recent times and comprised mid- to dark brown, humic loam. It gave onto glacial materials which, over most of the area, consisted of yellow, sandy clay although it included a few boulders at the west end of the site. In places, not all of the topsoil was removed. No features or deposits or archaeological significance were uncovered and no artefacts were retrieved from the site.

CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered during topsoil stripping. However, it should be noted that topsoil was retained in parts of the site and that it is possible that these areas could still conceal archaeological features.

REFERENCE

Lewis, J 2008 'Highland Adventure Safaris, Dull, Aberfeldy: archaeological evaluation, July 2008', unpublished report to Donald Riddell.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

- 1-2 The west half of the site excavated, viewed from the north
- 3-4 The west half of the site excavated, viewed from the east
- 5-6 Machine-excavation in progress
- 7 The site fully excavated, during earth-moving, viewed from the east
- 8 The site fully excavated, during earth-moving, viewed from the north-east
- 9 The site fully excavated, during earth-moving, viewed from the west
- 10 View to the west from the site
- 11 View to the east from the site