

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Spine Road  
Montrose  
ANGUS  
MT30



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**  
**SPINE ROAD**  
**MONTROSE**

**MT30**

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*Illustration 1: Site location plan*

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## ***ABSTRACT***

*Angus Council commissioned Alder Archaeology to carry out a watching brief on the construction of a new road in the harbour area of Montrose, centred on NGR NO 7147 5727. This followed a Level 1 Standing Building Survey of five buildings, subsequently demolished to make way for the road and the subject of a separate report. The watching brief was conducted intermittently between 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018. All ground reduction works were monitored, although breaking and removal of tarmac were excluded from the brief. No finds or features of archaeological significance were exposed by the works.*

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Angus Council commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the construction of a new road in the harbour area of Montrose, centred on NGR NO 7147 5727. The work was undertaken intermittently between 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018, in varying but generally clear weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor all ground reduction work.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 13/01163/FULL.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of the watching brief was to monitor all ground reduction works and assess and record any subterranean archaeological remains surviving within the development area.

### **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 National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and Angus Historic Environment 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 for this development.

### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Jamie Melvin of Angus Council for his assistance and guidance throughout this project. Angus Council funded this watching brief.

## **2 Details of Work**

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

The new spine road will link the E bank of the River South Esk with the North Sea shore by providing a direct route between River Street and Ferry Street, accessing Caledonia Street and Provost Reid's Road and bypassing the warehouses in the Meridian Street - Ferry Road area. To do this, it cuts across Mill Lane, which necessitated the demolition of four buildings and alterations to a fifth.

### **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

The area of Montrose at the tip of the peninsula between the Basin and the North Sea has been inhabited since the Middle Ages and probably earlier. It lies within the historic burgh of Montrose which received its charter from King David I in c.1140; it is believed that a Norse settlement existed in the area of the harbour, and the town was sacked by a Danish army in 980. During the later Medieval period Montrose became a

significant port and trading centre with links across the North Sea to several Hanseatic towns and featured a castle and convent. In early modern times, transatlantic trade developed and the town and environs became the site of at least five linen mills, with associated warehouses and a customs house, which still stands close to the site of the survey. Mill Lane, which divides River Street from Ferry Street, featured a linen mill situated on its NE corner, according to a nineteenth century survey.

### **2.3 Archaeological Method**

All ground reduction works were monitored by an archaeologist, with the intention of recording any subterranean archaeological remains encountered. Breaking of tarmac was not monitored, as this clearly involved only inherently modern features; monitoring was subsequently conducted on the reduction of the existing road base in preparation for the new surface. Five test pits excavated into the sand layers below the road base were also monitored.

### **2.4 Results of Investigations**

Following removal of tarmac, reduction of the road base was to a formation level an average of 0.30m below the roadside kerb, penetrating only slightly into the underlying sand layers. These were generally mixed beach sand and silt, with some deposits of modern builder's sand and gravel. Modern services were found to criss-cross River Street, in particular, while the foundations of the demolished warehouses were revealed to be concrete rafts resting on the sand subsoil. The cellar of 23 River Street, a demolished Victorian cottage, was concrete floored and was left in place, voids being in-filled with modern material as part of the development works. The five test pits exposed mixed sand and silt deposits with no discernible features.

No finds or features of archaeological significance were exposed during the watching brief.

## **3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Alder Archaeology considers the terms of reference for this site to have been met and does not recommend further work in connection with the present development. Any future development not covered by the current planning permission may require additional archaeological work. However, the final decision rests with Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service, as curators of Angus archaeology.

## Appendix 1 Photographic Register (WB)

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017</b>	
001	Wharf Street, with S pavement stripped	E
002	Detail, S pavement stripped	E
003	Wharf Street, with ships in harbour.	SE
004	Wharf Street, with harbour buildings.	SE
005	Wharf Street, towards Hill Street junction, with S pavement broken up. Natural sand in foreground.	ENE
006 – 7	Detail, S pavement broken up, natural sand in foreground	ENE
008 – 10	Wharf Street, S carriageway stripped off to reveal hard core. Junction with Hill Street and River Street in distance.	ENE
011 – 12	Wharf Street. Red fencing around test pits in S pavement. Junction with Hill Street and River Street in distance.	ENE
013	Detail of first test pit. Various services cut into natural sand.	NNW
014	Detail of second test pit. Various services cut into natural sand.	ENE
015	Wharf Street. Junction with Hill Street and River Street	ENE
016	Detail of third test pit. Various services cut into natural sand.	E
017	Wharf Street. Junction with Hill Street and River Street	NNW
018	River Street, from junction with Hill Street and Wharf Street.	SE
019	River Street, from junction with Hill Street and Wharf Street. S carriageway stripped to hard core.	SE
020	River Street. S carriageway stripped to hard core. Junction with Hill Street and Wharf Street in distance.	NW
021	Detail, S carriageway stripped to hard core.	NW
022	Junction, River Street and Commerce Street.	N
023	Junction, River Street and Commerce Street. Detail of 19 <sup>th</sup> -cent warehouse.	NE
024	Junction, River Street and Commerce Street. View of 19 <sup>th</sup> -cent warehouse.	NE
025	19 <sup>th</sup> -cent warehouses along E side of River Street, SE from junction of Commerce Street.	ESE

026	Lifting S kerb along River Street NW from junction of Commerce Street	NW
027	Detail, crushed stone and hard core under road surface of River Street.	NW
028	Progressing NW, removing concrete kerb.	NW
029	19 <sup>th</sup> -cent warehouses along NE side of River Street, SE from junction of Commerce Street.	ESE
030	20th-century warehouses along SW side of River Street.	SSE
031	Looking back along River Street from Junction of America Street.	NW
032	Looking from River Street down America Street to ship in harbour.	SW
033	Detail of house on SW side, 10 and 12 River Street, E of California Street.	SW
034	House with cast iron gate arch on NE side of River Street, W of junction with Meridian Street.	E
035	Detail of cast iron gate arch.	E
036	River Street, junction with Meridian Street.	SE
037	Detail, River Street, junction with Meridian Street.	E
038	19 <sup>th</sup> -cent warehouse on SE side of Meridian Street, junction with River Street.	S
039	19 <sup>th</sup> -cent house on SE side of Meridian Street, junction with River Street.	SE
040 – 3	19 <sup>th</sup> cent Dock Buildings, derelict, junction of Meridian Street and Ferry Street. Kilmac site compound in Dock Buildings yard.	N
044	Detail, entrance to Kilmac site compound in Dock Buildings yard, E side of Ferry Street.	NE
045	Detail, interior of Kilmac site compound in Dock Buildings yard, with derelict N range of Dock Buildings.	N
	<b>26<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>	
046-47	Location shots, area of strip in River Street	NE, N
048-49	Working shots, excavating TP1	E, NE
050-51	TP1, post ex	NE, E
052-53	Working shots, excavating TP2	SW, S
054	TP2, post-ex	SW
055-56	Working shots, excavating TP3	SE, E
057	TP3, post-ex	SE
058-59	Working shots, excavating TP4	N, NE

060	TP4, post-ex	
	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>	
061-63	Location/working shots, stripping in River Street	N, NW
064	Depth of strip at River Street kerb	NE
065-68	Service trenches in road base, River Street	NE, SE
069	Overview, NW of stripped area	NW
070	Modern wall base at side of River Street	SE
071-73	Working shots, stripping River Street	N
074-75	View from stripped area to next area of stripping, River Street	S
	<b>02<sup>nd</sup> October 2017</b>	
076-77	Working NE up Hill Street from junction with Wharf Street / River Street.	NE
078-80	Detail, clean sand exposed under tarmac and whinstone rubble hard core.	NE
081-82	Detail, small area of whinstone rubble and mortar impressed in sand under hard core. In line with rectangular steel covers, but perhaps by chance.	NE
083	Detail, small area of whinstone rubble and mortar impressed in sand.	NE
084	Work area with clean sand under tarmac and whinstone rubble. Impressed rubble and mortar patch in line with lamp post.	NW
085	Detail, impressed rubble and mortar patch.	NW
086	Stripping in Hill Street complete. Machine parked.	NE
087	House at 23 River Street. Demolition in progress.	NE
	<b>10<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>	
088-90	General area shots, demolished warehouses now replaced with modern hardcore bedding from Ferry Street to River Street	W
091-94	1 Caledonia Street, frontage removed, corner reduced	E, NE, SE, S
095-96	Tarmac removed outside 23 River Street (demolished)	N
097-98	General area shots, demolished warehouses now replaced with modern hardcore bedding from River Street to Ferry Street	E
099-100	Gable end of 23 River Street, attached to adjoining warehouse	N
101-102	Gable end of adjoining warehouse, formerly incorporated within 17-19 River Street	NE



103-106	Concrete floor in cellar below gable of 23 River Street	E
107-109	Working shots, stripping below tarmac outside 17-19 River Street (demolished)	E
	<b>27<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>	
110-111	New cut into sand/silt mix, E edge of Ferry Street/Caledonia Street junction	N
112-116	Sand below bedding, Ferry Street	W, SW, S
117-118	Formation level, Caledonia Street	E

## Appendix 2 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

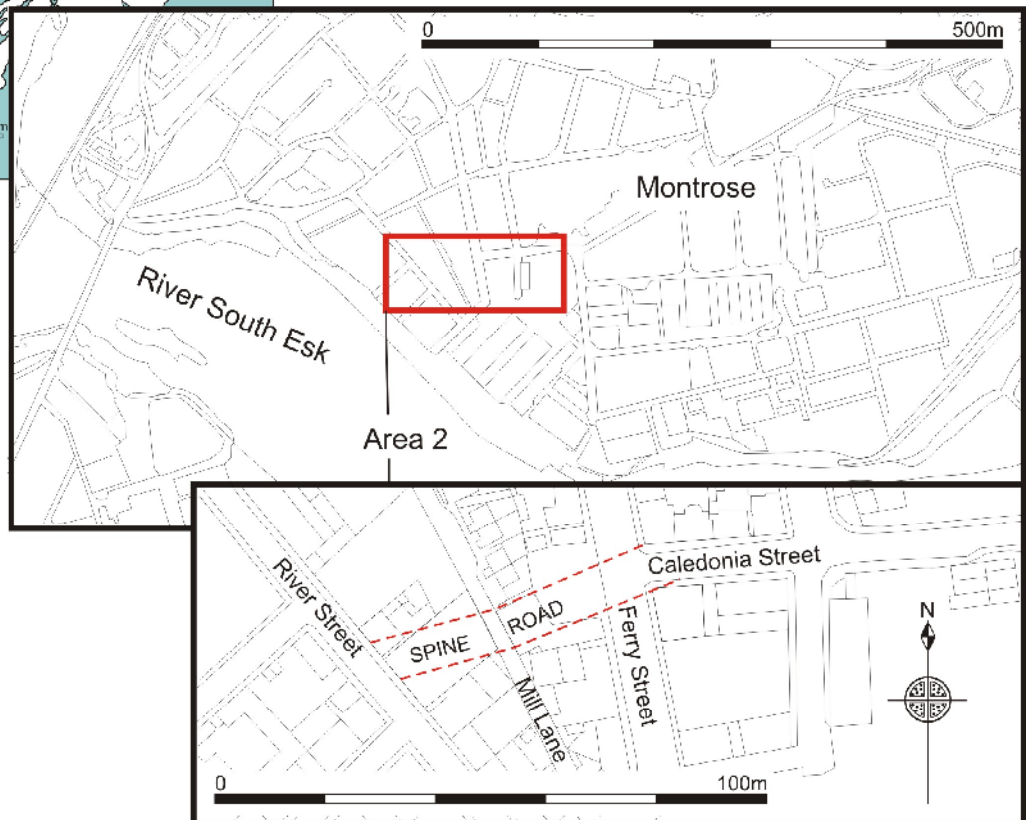
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Spine Road Montrose
PROJECT CODE:	MT30
PARISH:	Montrose
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	C Fyles
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	WB
RCAHMS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Demolished warehouses, cottage, residential and industrial
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Site centred on NO 7147 5727
START DATE	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2017
END DATE	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	SBR

MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Following the demolition of four vacated standing buildings and alterations to a fifth, a watching brief was maintained on the construction of a new road in the harbour area of Montrose. All ground reduction works were monitored. No finds or features of archaeological significance were exposed.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Angus Council
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	-
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	HES/NRHE (intended)
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Illus 1

Spine Road Montrose  
Archaeological Watching Brief  
Site Location



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