

Archaeological Evaluation
Cushenquarter Farm
Plean
STIRLING
ST31



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
CUSHENQUARTER FARM
PLEAN**

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Illustration 1: Site location plan

Illustration 2: Trench locations

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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was conducted of a mixed site comprising open field and standing buildings in advance of the construction of four new build dwelling houses. Evidence from the Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) by William Roy indicated structures in the general vicinity, suggesting pre-modern remains might be present. Four trenches were excavated within and alongside new house footprints. Demolition rubble probably derived from the removal of several farm buildings in the 1980s was exposed. No finds or features of archaeological interest resulted. The work (site code ST31) was carried out on 19th June 2020.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Mr Tommy Frame commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the site of the construction of four new build dwelling houses at Cushenquarter Farm, near Plean. The development area is partially beneath existing farm buildings, with an area of open field, centred on NGR NS 84134 86684. The work (site code ST31) was undertaken on 19th June, 2020 in bright weather conditions. Two planning applications were covered by the work and the requirement was to evaluate an area of 20m² within each, comprising a total of four trenches. Special attention was to be paid to possible evidence of a pre-modern settlement indicated on an 18th Century map of the area (see below).

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application references 18/00847/FUL and 19/00886/FUL.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this evaluation. Copies will be sent to the client, The National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and Stirling Historic Environment Record.

1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues

This evaluation constitutes archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development.

1.5 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Murray Cook, Stirling Council Archaeologist, and Tommy Frame for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Mr Frame funded this evaluation.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

Cushenquarter Farm lies to the SE of Plean on generally flat farmland, bounded to the E by the M9 motorway, to the W by the grounds of William Simpson's Care Home (est. 1832), to the S by the access track to the farm from the A9 (Main Street, Old Plean) and to the N by a sewage treatment plant on the outskirts of Plean. The development area was on the W side of the farm on the edge of a field facing William Simpson's. Approximately three-quarters of the proposed building footprints of planning application 19/00886/FUL were beneath a standing building (a modern agricultural store) at the time of the evaluation.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

The Military Survey of Scotland by William Roy (1747-55) indicates structures in the general vicinity of the present development area. It was thought possible that subterranean remains associated with these structures might survive within the development area and could be negatively impacted by groundbreaking works.

2.3 Archaeological Method

The original evaluation plan called for four trenches, each measuring 10.00m long, one within each planned building footprint, amounting to 40.00m². However, several factors resulted in this plan having to be altered.

Firstly, the houses covered by application number 18/00847/FUL, at the S end of the site, had already been partially constructed. This was already known and it had been anticipated that the proposed trenches might have to be replaced by inspection of open founds trenches, smaller test pits within the available footprint not yet built over, trenches placed alongside instead of within the footprint or some combination of these. In the event, the founds trenches had already been mostly backfilled, so smaller test-pits of 1.60m x 1.60m (T2, T3) were excavated within each building, down to undisturbed natural sand below the founds level, while a longer trench (T4) was excavated alongside the buildings in the field to the W (this was also positioned to sample the line of a proposed access track serving both sets of houses).

Secondly, it was discovered that water and electricity services crossed the field immediately N of 18/00847/FUL and S of 19/00886/FUL; a safety buffer was allowed to avoid these, further reducing the area available for evaluation. During the excavation of T4, a GPO cable was also discovered (see below).

Thirdly, approximately three-quarters of the proposed housing area (including paved areas adjacent to the houses) of 19/00886/FUL was found to be beneath a currently standing building, a modern agricultural shed with concrete base and founds. The development plan called for the taking down of this building at a later date. Accordingly, a very limited area was available to be trenched, most of which was taken up by a single 12.00m trench, T1. This was also positioned to be alongside the proposed access track.

The total area trenched was 43.52m², slightly over the 40.00m² intended.

All excavation was conducted under close archaeological supervision by a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. All features exposed were hand-excavated to a standard sufficient to permit assessment and recording (see below).

2.4 Results of Investigations

It was noted that a length of stone wall remained in place on an E-W alignment to the immediate E of the development area, while several of the standing farm buildings incorporated old stone walls. Anecdotal evidence from the farmer indicated that a number of old buildings were demolished and their founds removed to permit the construction of newer sheds in the 1980s. It seems quite likely, therefore, that the settlement depicted on Roy's map was partly represented by some of the older standing farm buildings, while the remainder had been replaced by the newer buildings.

T1: this was located at the N end of the site at NN 84138 86700 (N end of trench), 7.00m W of the modern shed and aligned N-S. It measured 12.00m long x 1.60m wide. 5.30m from the N end, a plastic water pipe was encountered (this fed horse troughs in an adjacent field) and a 2.00m wide baulk was left around this. The trench depth averaged 0.70m, with topsoil (101) 0.25m thick above sandy subsoil (102). In the trench base, mainly at the N end (2.00m extent) but intermittently present along the full length, were deposits of demolition rubble (103). This comprised mainly crushed tarmac and brick, with slate and glass fragments and small pieces of rubber, plastic and paper. Clearly of recent origin, this probably represented the demolition of farm buildings (and grubbing up of hard-standing), rubble from which was dumped in this field (anecdotal evidence from the present farmer). No in situ structural remains were encountered and no finds of pre-20th Century date.

T2: this was at NN 84146 86679, within the W side of the foundations of the N building of application 18/00847/FUL. It was dug through 0.50m of upcast silty sand deposited within the foundations during construction (201) and onto undisturbed sand (202) with little to no silt. It measured 1.60m x 1.60m and was 1.10m deep; this was somewhat below the foundation level of the building and it was decided not to dig deeper to avoid undermining the structure. A plastic pipe was exposed in the W side of (201). No finds or features of interest were exposed.

T3: located at NN 84146 86670, on the W side of the S building of 18/00847/FUL, this was of the same dimensions as T2. Again, no archaeological finds or features were encountered.

T4: this ran N from NN 84134 86668, at the S end of the site to the W of the newly-built foundations of the 18/00847/FUL houses. It measured 12.00m x 1.60m and averaged 0.50m deep, with topsoil (401) between 0.20m and 0.40m thick, above orange-brown glacial sand/gravel (402). Running the length of the trench base were two linear features: (403), on the E side, was found to contain a plastic-coated GPO cable, which was left in situ; (404), 0.60m to the W, was box-sectioned and found to be a steep-sided ditch 0.08m deep (into trench base) x 0.20m wide, which may have represented the base of a drainage ditch or perhaps an aborted earlier positioning of the same telecommunications cable (the features ran in parallel with one another). Both were cut into (402) and filled with sandy silt indistinguishable from topsoil (401). No finds or features of archaeological interest were exposed.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Recommendations for Further Work

Alder Archaeology consider that the evaluation was conducted correctly and do not recommend further work in association with the present development. However, the final decision ultimately rests with Dr Murray Cook, the Stirling area Archaeologist.

Appendix 1 Context Register

| <i>No:</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Trench</i> |
|------------|--|---------------|
| 101 | Topsoil, dark grey/brown sandy silt, moderately loose, occasional pebbles, 0.25m thick (average) | T1 |
| 102 | Natural subsoil, yellow-orange sand, moderately loose, occasional pebbles, 0.45m thick (average, to base of trench) | T1 |
| 103 | Dumped deposits of demolition rubble, appearing as intermittent concentrations in base of trench, predominantly crushed tarmac and brick, with fragments of stone, slate, glass, plastic and paper | T1 |
| 201 | Topsoil, upcast light brown silty sand, redeposited during house construction, loose, few inclusions, 0.50m thick | T2 |
| 202 | Natural subsoil, yellow-brown sand, moderately loose, few inclusions, 0.60m thick (to base of trench) | T2 |
| 301 | Topsoil, as (201) | T3 |
| 302 | Subsoil, as (202) | T3 |
| 401 | Topsoil, as (101), 0.20m-0.40m thick | T4 |
| 402 | Natural subsoil, orange-brown glacial sand/gravel, moderately loose, occasional pebbles, 0.10m-0.30m thick (to base of trench) | T4 |
| 403 | Linear ditch containing silty sand fill (topsoil) and plastic-coated telecommunications cable, running length of E side of trench (12.00m), 0.20m wide, 0.07m deep, steep-sided, flat base | T4 |
| 404 | Linear ditch containing silty sand fill (topsoil), running length of W side of trench (12.00m), 0.20m wide, 0.08m deep, steep-sided, flat base | T4 |

Appendix 2 Photographic Register

| <i>Image No</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>View</i> |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| 001 | Location shot, old stone wall in farmyard to E of site | N |
| 002-4 | Location shots, new house foundations, old wall and new shed | W, NW |
| 005 | Location shot, house founds at S end of site | W |
| 006-8 | Location shots, views from NW corner of site | SE, S |
| 009-12 | Location shots, views from SW corner of site | NE, N |
| 013 | Location shot, T1, pre-ex | S |

| | | |
|--------|--|-------|
| 014-19 | Working shots, excavating T1 | S |
| 020-21 | Location shots, T2, pre-ex | W, NW |
| 022-23 | Working shots, excavating T2 | W |
| 024-27 | T2, post-ex | W, N |
| 028 | Location shot, T3 | S |
| 029-31 | Working shots, excavating T3 | W |
| 032-34 | T3, post-ex | W |
| 035-36 | Location shots, T4, pre-ex | N |
| 037 | Working shot, excavating T4 | N |
| 038-39 | Cable track (403) and ditch (404) in T4 | N |
| 040 | Working shot, excavating T4 | N |
| 041-43 | T4, post-ex | N, S |
| 044-45 | GPO cable exposed in track (403), base of T4 | E |
| 046 | Box section through ditch (404), S end of T4 | W |
| 047 | S-facing profile of ditch (404) | N |
| 048 | Location of box-section | N |
| 049-50 | Sample W-facing section of T4 | E |
| 051-52 | T1, post-ex | N |
| 053 | Baulk left for water pipe, mid-T1 | W |
| 054-56 | Patches of rubble spread (103), base of T1 | N |
| 057-58 | W-facing section, N end of T1 | E |
| 059 | E-facing section, N end of T1 | W |

Appendix 3 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

| | |
|---|--|
| LOCAL AUTHORITY: | Stirling |
| PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: | Cushenquarter Farm |
| PROJECT CODE: | ST31 |
| PARISH: | Plean |
| NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: | C Fyles |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION: | Alder Archaeology Ltd |
| TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: | Evaluation |
| NMRS NO(S): | |
| SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): | Settlement (map evidence) |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS: | None |
| NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) | NS 84134 86684 |
| START DATE (this season) | 19 th June 2020 |
| END DATE (this season) | 19 th June 2020 |
| PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.) | None |
| MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields) | An evaluation was conducted of a mixed site comprising open field and standing buildings in advance of the construction of four new build dwelling houses. Evidence from the Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) by William Roy indicated structures in the general vicinity, suggesting pre-modern remains might be present. Four trenches were excavated within and alongside new house footprints. Demolition rubble probably derived from the removal of several farm buildings in the 1980s was exposed. No finds or features of archaeological interest resulted. The work (site code ST31) was carried out on 19 th June 2020. |
| PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: | None |
| CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: | - |
| SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: | Mr T. Frame |
| ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR: | Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX |
| EMAIL ADDRESS: | director@alderarchaeology.co.uk |
| ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited) | HES (intended) |

Appendix 4 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

4.1 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.

4.2 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*.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

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

4.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

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

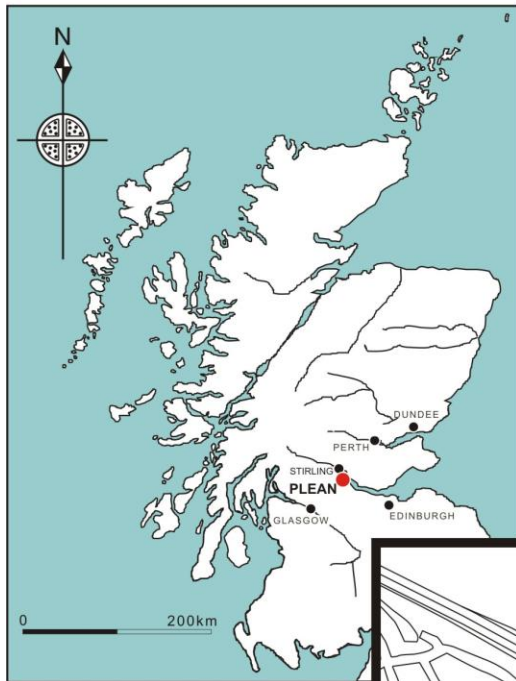
Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy that conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertake 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.

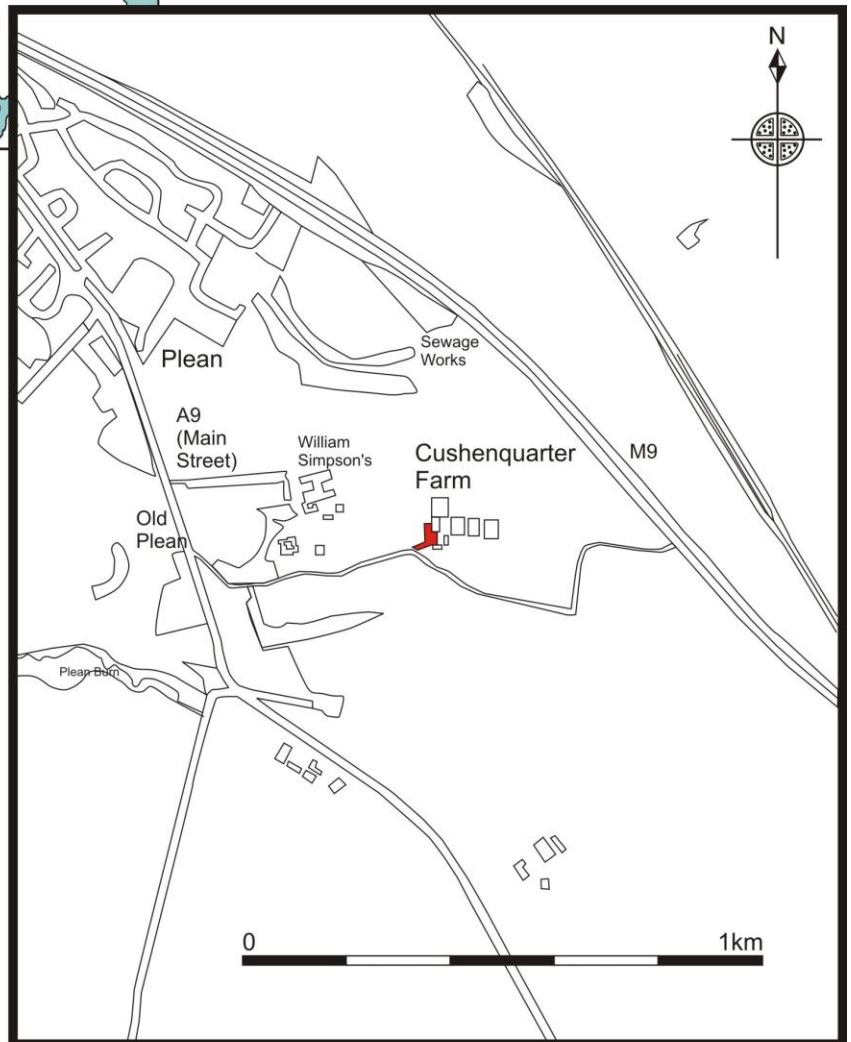
Illus 1



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Cushenquarter Farm, Plean

Site Location

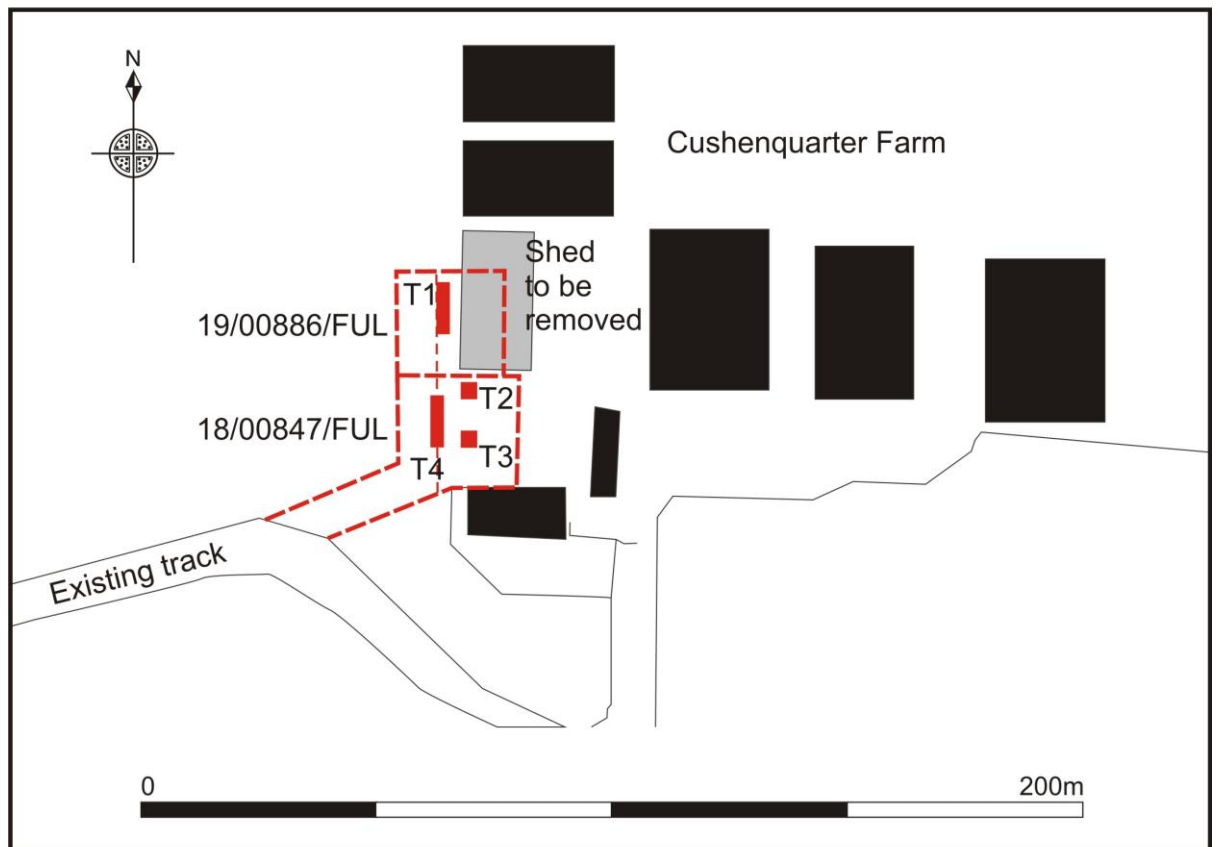


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Illus 2

Trench locations



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