

Archaeological Walkover Survey  
Castle Law  
Abernethy  
PERTH & KINROSS

AE21



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WALKOVER  
SURVEY  
CASTLE LAW  
ABERNETHY**

**AE21**

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*Illustration 1: Site location plan*  
*Photographs: 3, 5, 13, 35, 52, 91*

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**ABSTRACT**

*The proposed site of a new general purpose shed and route of associated access track were surveyed prior to construction. The route ran along the E slope of Aytoun Hill, on the summit of which is located the fort of Castle Law (SM2477). The shed location was on the lip of a large, disused stone quarry below the hillfort, which effectively screened the development from the monument. Outlying quarry buildings were noted. No other archaeological remains were encountered.*

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

G D Planning, on behalf of Mr Kyle Gordon, commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological walkover survey of the route of a new access track and site of a new general purpose shed at Castle Law, Abernethy. The proposed development area is on the steeply sloping hillside below a prehistoric fort, with the proposed location of the new shed centred on NGR NO 18368 15264. The work (site code AE21) was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, in fine weather conditions. The requirement was to walk along the entire proposed route of the track and visit the proposed site of the new shed, paying particular attention to any surface remains possibly associated with the fort.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological conditions on development application references 20/00850/PAA and 20/00851/PAA, covering the construction of the track and erection of the shed, respectively.

### **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 and, if necessary, recommend mitigation measures to protect them.

### **1.3 Reporting**

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

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

This walkover survey constitutes archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological conditions on the planning consent for this development.

### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Garry Dimeck of G D Planning for his assistance and guidance throughout this project. K G Contracts funded this survey.

## **2 Details of Work**

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

The site lies immediately E/NE of Castle Law hillfort, located on a rocky promontory at the E end of Aytoun Hill, overlooking the confluence of the rivers Earn and Tay to the SW of Abernethy village. The road between Abernethy and Strathmiglo passes N-S through the valley immediately E of the site, with Drumcairn Road branching off from this to the SW just S of Drumcairn Farm, due E of the hillfort.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

Castle Law is a scheduled monument (SM2477). The small, oblong hillfort has twice been excavated, most recently in 2017 as part of the Tay Landscape Partnership project. Radiocarbon dates recovered from the fort indicate an Iron Age occupation of the site. It was thought possible that historic quarrying (MPK8298) along part of the proposed route may not have entirely destroyed outlying remains associated with the fort, which might therefore be impacted by the proposed new road and shed.

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

An archaeologist, equipped with a digital camera and handheld gps device, walked over the whole of the proposed route of the new road, ending at the proposed location of the new shed. Photographs were taken of the general location and setting and any features of interest, the grid references of which were also recorded.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

The location of the new shed (02) was around NGR NO 18368 15264, which had been partially cleared of gorse bushes and trees for the purpose. This was on the E/SE lip of a large, disused quarry (03). This appears in the NRHE database (Canmore) as NO11NE 125, located at NO 1835 1528. The quarry was a large, steep-sided, scooped depression in the hillside, measuring c.30.00m SW-NE x c.35.00m NW-SE. Visible as a roughly horseshoe-shaped rocky cliff, it was entirely unaffected by the proposed development and, moreover, screened the shed location from the hillfort, which lay above it to the NW. Below and to the SE of the quarry at NO 18479 15215 lay a massive concrete platform (01) with the remains of brick walls and, towards the quarry, a thick concrete blast wall. These clearly represented the remains of quarry buildings, of probable twentieth century date. They are included in the NRHE record for the quarry.

No other archaeological remains were present along the proposed route of the new access track, as far as its junction (04) with the existing track at NO 18576 15538, close to the junction of the Strathmiglo road and footpath to Castle Law hillfort.

## **3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

**3.1** The quarry and associated buildings will not be impacted by the proposed works. The hillfort of Castle Law is entirely unaffected, with the new shed not visible from the summit and most of the route of the track similarly screened by the steepness of the hillside.

### **3.2 Recommendations for Further Work**

Alder Archaeology consider the walkover survey to have been conducted correctly and do not recommend further work in connection with the present development. However, the final decision ultimately rests with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust.

## Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Ruined quarry buildings at NO 18479 15215, concrete platform with brick wall remnants and nearby concrete blast wall
02	Location of new shed at NGR NO 18368 15264, small plateau on E/SE lip of quarry, to SW of Drumcairn Farm
03	Disused stone quarry NO11NE 125 at NO 1835 1528. Horseshoe-shaped cliff c.30.00m SW-NE x c.35.00m NW-SE, with outlying grassed-over mounds of blast rubble, below and to SE of Castle Law fort SM2477
04	NE end of new access track, junction with existing track at NO 18576 15538

## Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
1-4	Ruined quarry buildings (01), brick wall	WSW
5-6	Location shots, Castle Law hillfort behind quarry buildings	W
7-10	Location shots, S edge of site	NE, N, NW
11-12	Ruined quarry buildings (01), brick wall	SW
13-24	Location of shed (02)	NW, W, E, SE, N, NE, SW
25-34	Quarry (03)	W, SW, NW, S, N
35-37	Quarry (03), mounds of blast rubble	N
38-45	Location shots, hills to E and S of site	E, SE, NE
46-48	Location shot, Abernethy from S end of track	N
49-50	Location shot, Castle Law hillfort from S end of track	W
51-57	Overview of mid-section of track route from c.50.00m above and to W	E, SE, S
58-60	Location shot, Castle Law hillfort from track route mid-section	W, SW
61-63	General views from track route mid-section	NW, N, NE
64-66	Location shot, Abernethy from track route mid-section	NE

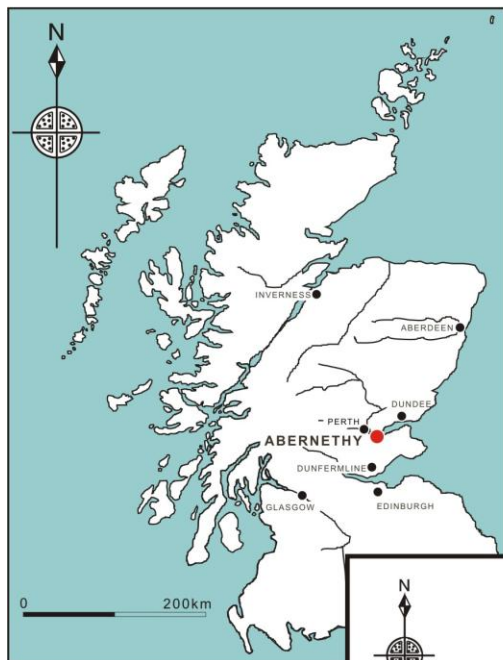
67	Tay Estuary from track route mid-section	NE
68	Location shot, Drumcairn Farm from track route mid-section	SE
69	Gate at N end of track route	W
70	E end of footpath to Castle Law	W
71-72	Location shot, Castle Law hillfort from N end of track route	SW
73-74	N end of track route (04)	SW
75	Location shot, Castle Law hillfort from (04)	SW
76-78	NW loop of track route	E
79	Location shot, Abernethy from NW loop of track route	N
80-81	NW loop of track route	E
82-83	Location shots, Strathearn from NW loop of track route	NW, N
84-85	Location shots, Abernethy from NW loop of track route	NE
86	Location shot, Tay Estuary from NW loop of track route	NE
87-95	Overview above quarry (03) and shed location (02) from Castle Law summit	SE
96-97	Location shot, Abernethy from Castle Law summit	NE
98-100	Location shots, Strathearn from Castle Law summit	NW, N, NE
101	Location shot, Moncrieffe Hill from Castle Law summit	NNW

## Appendix 3 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Perth & Kinross
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Castle Law
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	AE21
<b>PARISH:</b>	Abernethy
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	C Fyles
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Walkover survey
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NO11NE 12, 125
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Hillfort, quarry
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NO 18368 15264
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	Excavation (DES vol.18, 19)
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	The proposed site of a new general purpose shed and route of associated access track were surveyed prior to construction. The route ran along the E slope of Aytoun Hill, on the summit of which is located the fort of Castle Law (SM2477). The shed location was on the lip of a large, disused stone quarry below the hillfort, which effectively screened the development from the monument. Outlying quarry buildings were noted. No other archaeological remains were encountered.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	-
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	K G Contracts Ltd
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)



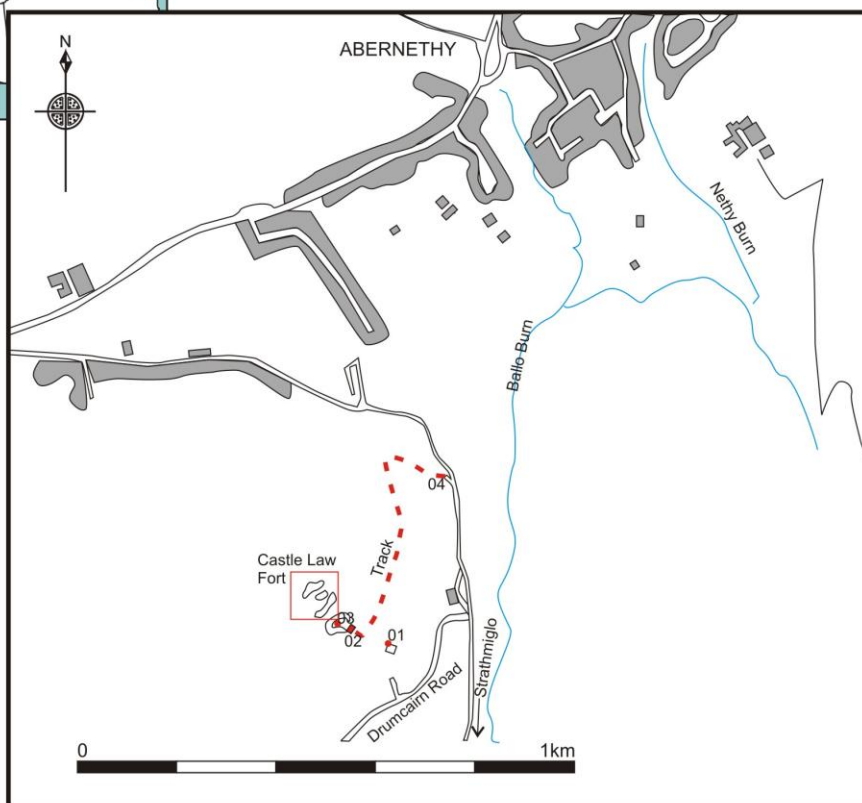
Illus 1



### Castle Law, Abernethy

### Site Location

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*Quarry buildings (01)*



*Quarry buildings and hillfort*



*Shed location (02), in front of quarry*



*Blast rubble mounds in quarry (03)*



*Drumcairn Farm, from above track*



*View above quarry from hillfort*