



Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

Over Cassock, Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Dumfriesshire: Archaeological Monitoring Works



by Rebecca Shaw
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1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a programme of archaeological works undertaken in respect of proposed works at Over Cassock, located near Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Dumfriesshire (Figure 1). The proposed works comprise the widening of an existing access route from 4m to 6m to allow for felling operations (Figure 2).

The proposals lie within an area recognised as being of national importance and designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) relating to Over Cassock Fort and Enclosures 40m SW of (SM ref 4723; HER ref MDG474). The monument comprises the upstanding remains of a fort and later enclosures, visible as a series of turf and stone banks and ditches and likely to date to the later prehistoric period (Figures 3a-b).



Figure 1 – location map (kindly provided by Scottish Woodlands)

As the works involved disturbance within the scheduled area, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was therefore required from Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for:

- The felling of mature trees in an area adjacent to, and partly within, the scheduled area.
- The widening of an access track across the monument from 4m to 6m
- The creation of a log bridge in the Barr Burn, which delimits the monument's western extent.
- The laying of brash matting along the above track before felling, and its removal along with the log bridge thereafter.

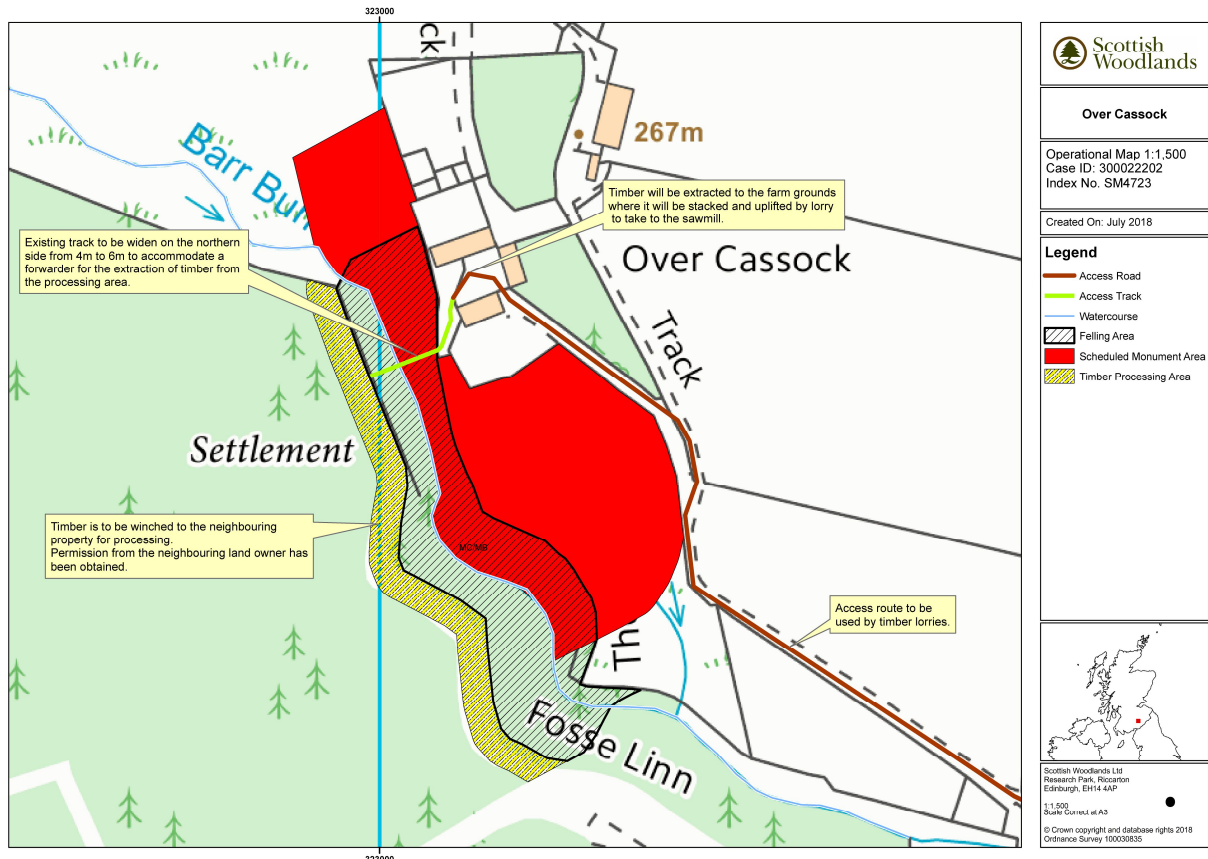


Figure 2 – map showing extent of scheduled area and location of track to be widened (kindly provided by Scottish Woodlands)

The archaeological works comprised monitoring of all ground breaking works within the scheduled area. The archaeological monitoring works were required to ensure that any impacts upon the monument were minimised and that any archaeological information was recovered and recorded to a satisfactory standard.

Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist also requested that the remains of a (mostly upstanding) old boundary wall, that would be partially removed by the proposed access route, be recorded through photography prior to (Figures 6a-c & 7a) and after removal (Figure 7b-c).

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to conditions of the Scheduled Monument Consent by Richard Reid from Scottish Woodlands.

2 Project Works

The archaeological monitoring works were carried out on the 29th January 2019 and were undertaken as agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) through a written scheme of investigation (Shaw, September 2018).

The excavation works were undertaken during moderately snowy conditions and although ground reduction works were able to be monitored the photographs are slightly compromised due to precipitation.

All works complied with the Chartered Institute for Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

3 Findings

The excavations for the access route measured 50m (approx) in length and 4m (at most) in width (Figures 4a-c & 8). In the NNE area of the N / S section the topsoil comprised a mid brown fine silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of stones [101] which measured 220mm in

depth (at most) - contained sherds of 20th century china and two iron implements. The majority of the N / S section contained a very shallow dark brown heavily rooted organic silt [103]. The subsoil comprised an orangey brown clayey silt containing small gravel like stones [104] (Figures 5c and front cover).

Within the E / W section (sloped area) the ground reduction works mainly remained within the existing topsoil with only occasional patches of subsoil visible (mostly along N edge) The topsoil comprised a mid brown fine silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of stones [101] above a pale orangey brown clay containing occasional stones [102] (where visible) (Figures 5a-b & 7b).

4 Discussion

In general the ground reduction works for the access route indicated that the majority of the N / S section had been previously cleared down to subsoil [104] to make the existing trackway. Within the E / W section the excavations mainly remained within topsoil [101] with occasional patches of subsoil [102] noted, mostly along the N edge.

Although there was potential to encounter prehistoric remains associated with the scheduled monument known as Over Cassock Fort and Enclosures no significant finds or deposits from were observed during the archaeological monitoring works.

5 Conclusion

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken on 29th January 2019 in respect of proposed works at Over Cassock, located near Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Dumfriesshire. The proposed works comprise the widening of an existing access route from 4m to 6m to allow for felling operations.

The monitored excavations revealed a mainly shallow organic silt within the N / S section of the proposed route indicating that this section had been previously cleared to form the existing trackway. Within the E / W section the subsoil was only uncovered in occasional patches, mostly along the N edge.

No significant archaeological finds or deposits were identified during the course of the monitoring works.

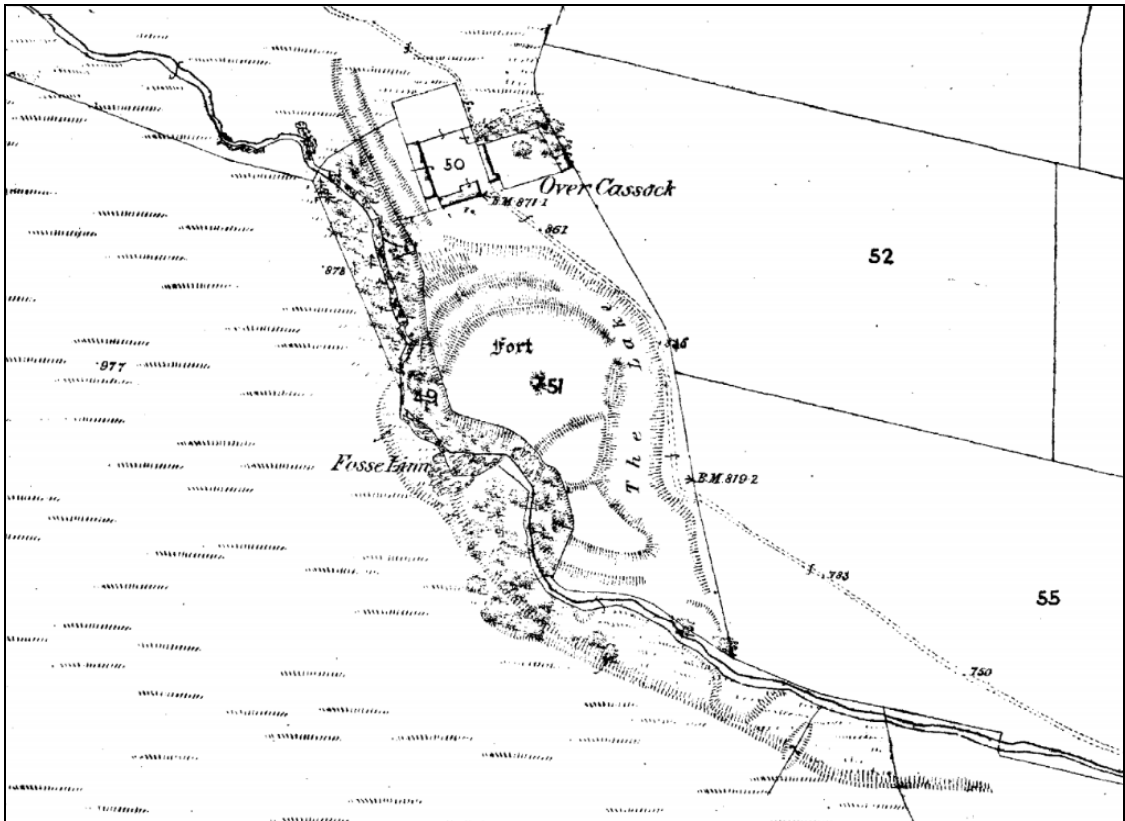


Figure 3a – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1858) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (710516694)

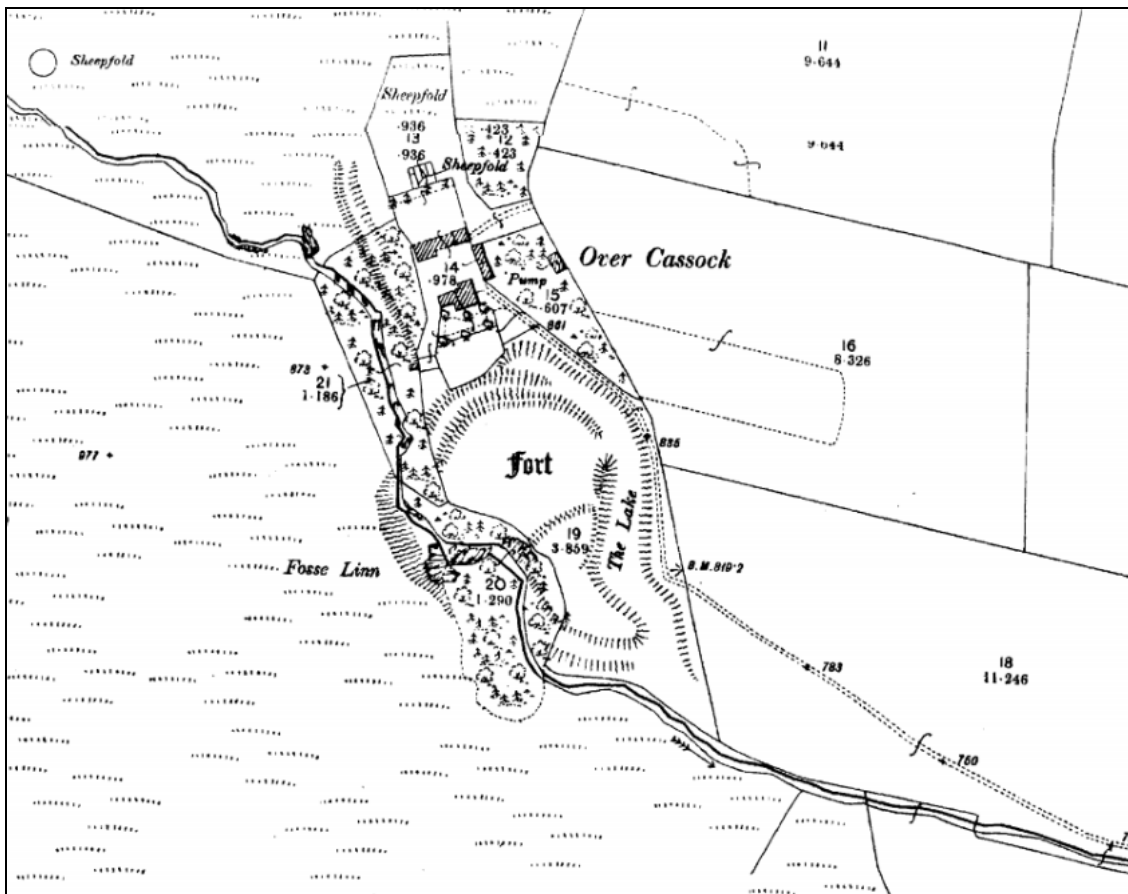


Figure 3b – 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1899) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (710516694)



Figure 4a – pre-ex image of N / S section (from N)



Figure 4b – pre-ex image of E / W (looking upslope) (from W)



Figure 4c – pre-ex image of E / W (looking downslope) (from W)



Figure 5a – post-ex image showing subsoil [102] in E / W section (from SSW)



Figure 5b – post-ex image of E / W section (looking upslope) (from W)



Figure 5c - post-ex image of northernmost end of N / S section (from S)



Figure 6a - old boundary wall (N end)



Figure 6b - old boundary wall (middle section)



Figure 6c - old boundary wall (S end)



Figure 7a - section of boundary wall to be removed



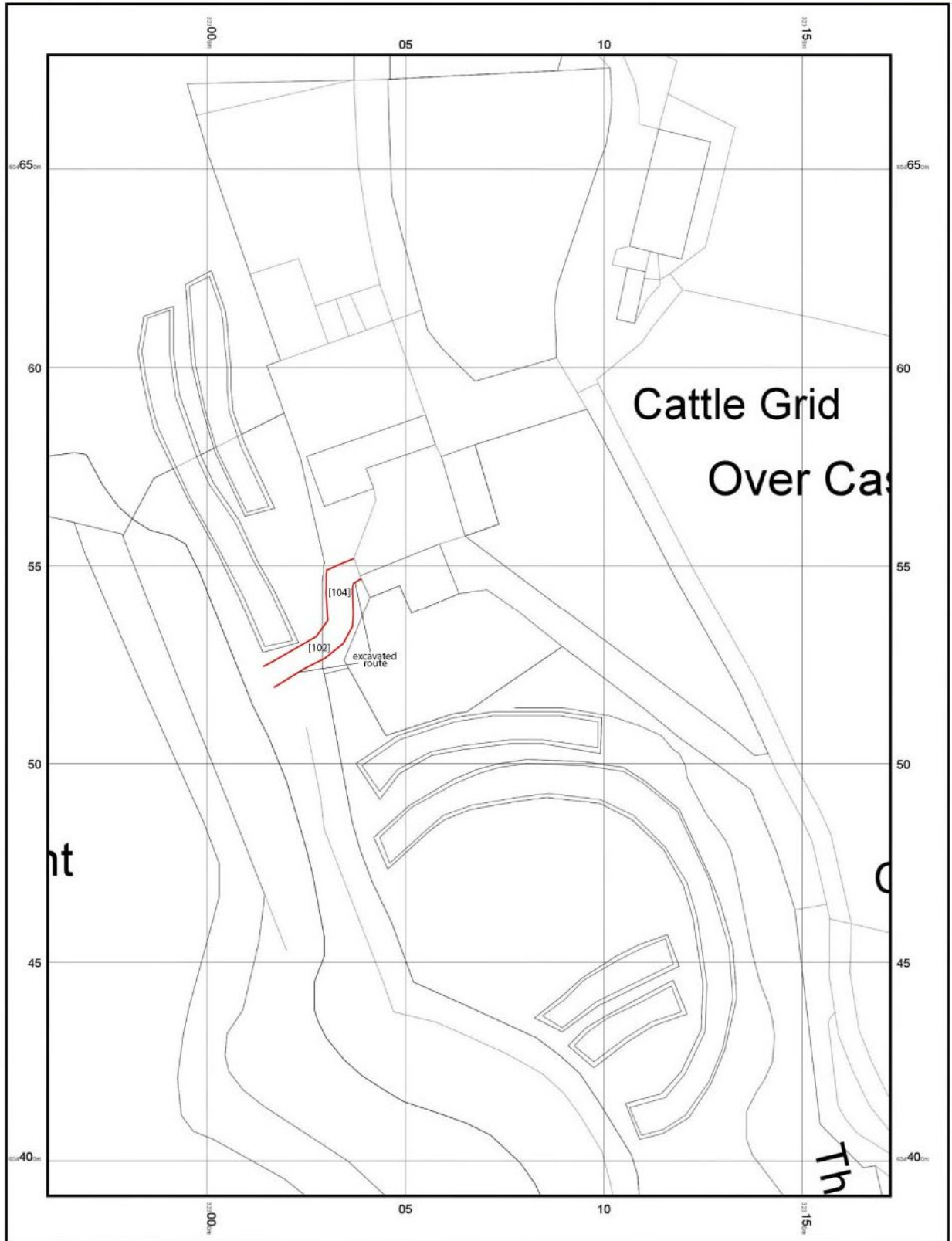
Figure 7b - boundary wall after felling (kindly provided by Richard Reid)



Figure 7c - boundary wall after felling (kindly provided by Richard Reid)



Over Cassock



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The representation of road, track or path is no evidence of a boundary or right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.

50m
Scale 1:1250 North

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Centre Coordinates: 323066,604535
Production Date: 25/02/2019 10:10:16

Figure 8 – map showing excavated area

References

<i>Documentary</i> SOEn	2010	Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). <i>Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SOEn	2011	<i>PAN 2/2011</i> , Planning & Archaeology Scottish Office Environmental Department.
HES	2016	Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016
<i>Cartographic</i> Ordnance Survey	1858	1 st Edition OS Map, Dumfriesshire (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey	1899	2 nd Edition OS Map, Dumfriesshire (1:2500)

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Richard Reid from Scottish Woodlands for provision of mapping and post felling photographs and thanks also to HES for undertaking their site during inclement conditions.

Appendix 1: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Topsoil	Mid brown fine silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of stones which measured 220mm in depth (at most) - contained sherds of 20th century china and two iron implements.
102	Subsoil	Pale orangey brown clay containing occasional stones
103	Topsoil	Very shallow dark brown heavily rooted organic silt.
104	Subsoil	An orangey brown clayey silt containing small gravel like stones.

Photographic Record

N o.	Di sc No	Print No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	1	General pre-ex image of N / S section	N	29/01/19
2	1	2	General pre-ex image of E / W section - looking upslope	W	29/01/19
3	1	3	General pre-ex image of E / W section - looking downslope	E	29/01/19
4	1	4	General post-ex image showing subsoil [102] - on slope in E / W section	SSW	29/01/19
5	1	5	General post-ex image of E /W section - looking upslope	W	29/01/19
6	1	6	General pre-ex image of northernmost section	S	29/01/19
7	1	7	General post-ex image of N / S section	S	29/01/19
8	1	8	Old boundary wall (I) - N end	-	29/01/19
9	1	9	Old boundary wall (II) - middle section	-	29/01/19
10	1	10	Old boundary wall (III) - S end	-	29/01/19
11	1	11	General post-ex image looking across to E / W section from W side of burn	W	29/01/19

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dumfries & Galloway Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Over Cassock, Eskdalemuir
PARISH:	Eskdalemuir
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

Data Structure Report - Over Cassock, Eskdalemuir

TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological monitoring works
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NT 2303 0453
START DATE (this season)	29 th January 2019
END DATE (this season)	29 th January 2019
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	<p>A programme of a archaeological monitoring works was undertaken in respect of proposed works at Over Cassock, located near Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Dumfriesshire. The proposed works comprise the widening of an existing access route from 4m to 6m to allow for felling operations.</p> <p>The monitored excavations revealed a mainly shallow organic silt within the N / S section of the proposed route indicating that this section had been previously cleared to form the existing trackway. Within the E / W section the subsoil was only uncovered in occasional patches, mostly along the N edge.</p> <p>No significant archaeological finds or deposits were identified during the course of the monitoring works.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	018017
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Scottish Woodlands
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	Report Historic Environment Scotland Archives and Dumfries & Galloway Council SMR.

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