

land at Burnside Road, Dyce, Aberdeen,  
AB21 0HZ

Evaluation for a residential development  
with a standard archaeological condition



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# **Land at Burnside Road, Dyce, Aberdeen**

## **Evaluation for a residential development with a standard archaeological condition**

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Cover Trench 5 facing SE

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### **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken after the demolition of the buildings within the site, to target the possible route of the Aberdeenshire Canal. Four trenches were excavated, covering 5% of the overall development area, and concentrating on areas not built upon. It is unlikely that any further archaeological monitoring will be required during any future groundworks on site. This is subject to advice from the Lead Curator of Local History and Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council.

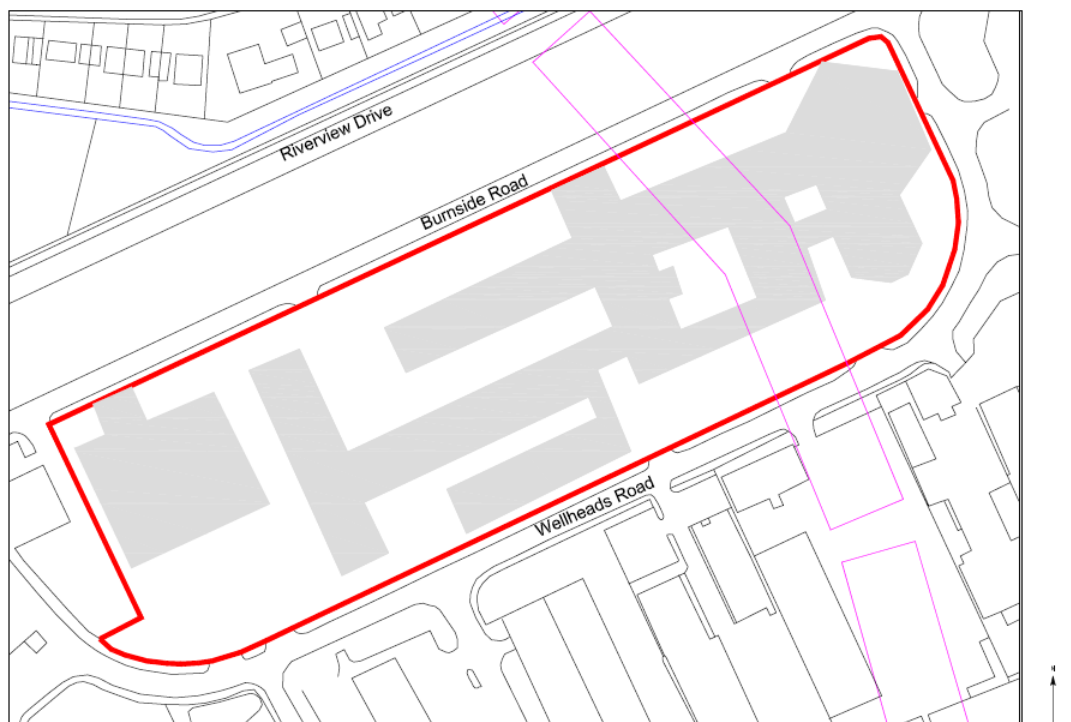
# Land at Burnside Road, Dyce, Aberdeen

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The site housed the former offices of BP, the buildings of which have just recently been demolished as part of this redevelopment. A new residential development has received conditional planning approval, of which this archaeological evaluation forms the archaeological condition. The development site is located to the south of Burnside Road and the north of Wellheads Road, within the Newhills parish just to the south of the centre of Dyce at NJ 89116 12072 at 40-50m above OD (III 1).

The work was commissioned by Scott Pettitt of Barratt East Scotland.

The evaluation took place on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN 42) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP). The archaeological written scheme of investigation (Cameron 2011), approved by the Aberdeen City Council Lead Curator of Local History and Archaeology, was adhered to in full.



III 1 : Site Boundary with Probable Line of Canal Marked in Pink and Recently Demolished Building Outlines Marked in Grey

SCALE: 1:1250 at A4

### III 1 Location plan

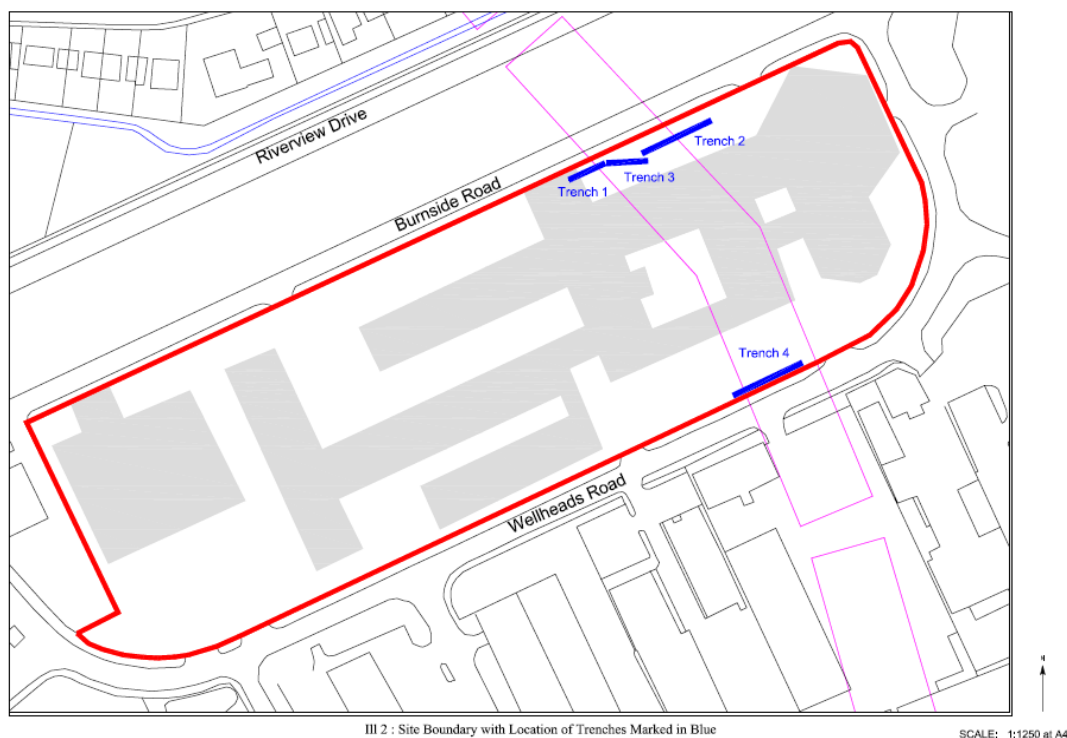
## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential. The line of the Aberdeenshire Canal is thought to run across the site, based on previous archaeological observations in the vicinity (Cameron 2001, Buchanan 2005, Cameron 2005 and Cameron forthcoming), and on the surviving canal milestones and half milestones, one of which lies just to the south of the development site. It survives in this area of its route, and not others, because the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line used the route when it was established. The railway took a diverging course in this area of Dyce, and it is an important surviving element of Aberdeen's industrial past, providing quick and easy passage for a number of key goods such as coal, meal, salt, wood and granite. Barges also carried passengers.

It is this the probable presence of the Aberdeenshire Canal that has necessitated the archaeological evaluation.

### 3 THE EVALUATION

The evaluation took place on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011. It consisted of an excavation area of up to 5% using a JCB with toothless ditching bucket. Due to the high level of disturbance through basement buildings across the site, and in accordance with the written scheme of investigation (Cameron 2011), the trenches were located at the periphery of the site, close to the line of Wellheads Road and Burnside Road in order to attempt to locate the line of the canal (III 2).



#### III 2 Location of evaluation trenches

##### Trench 1

The trench was located at the northern edge of the site, and was the westernmost trench, aimed at encountering the western part of the Aberdeenshire Canal. It was 2m by 13m in size and the maximum depth reached was 1.2m (III 3). A mid red-brown silty deposit was observed with brick, kerb and concrete inclusions. Across much of the western half of the trench, a 1.3m wide dark feature was encountered, which extended to beyond the depth of the trench. This seemed to head to a manhole observed just to the north of Trench 3. It is likely to have been a sewer, and was not subjected to further investigation. Its abrupt end could be explained by its entrance into the pre-existing building at this point, shown in III 2, and the mixed silty deposit is likely to represent backfill from the demolition of basements and the backfilling of the area with the debris. No archaeological features were encountered in this trench.



III 3 Photograph showing Trench 1, facing north-east

### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 was also located at the northern edge of the site, and was targeted at the eastern part of the Aberdeenshire Canal. The trench measured 2m by 19m and reached a maximum depth of 1.2m (III 4). The trench revealed a rubble hardcore averaging 0.3m in depth, which overlay a narrow black hardcore surface 0.02m in thickness, which overlay a mid-brown silty sand, 0.5m in thickness. A narrow linear feature was observed in this layer, 0.4m thick comprising stone in a thick black silty deposit. This was only 0.4m thick, and was likely to relate to earlier drainage. Beneath this, a natural deposit of yellow silty sand was revealed which sat on bedrock at the base of the trench. The mid-brown silt sand layer was likely to be backfill from the excavation of the field drain, which ran the length of the trench, from the centre of the western end, to the north-eastern corner of the eastern end. No other features were encountered in Trench 2.



III 4 Photograph showing Trench 2, facing south-west

### **Trench 3**

Trench 3 was 2m by 13.5m located on an approximate east to west alignment and aimed at breaching the gap between Trenches 1 and 2, to assess the canal's existence. The same linear feature noted from Trench 1 was seen to extend into the western edge of Trench 3. A pink sand was also observed at the centre of the trench on a north-south alignment, which appeared to lead to another manhole just to the north of Trench 3, and was likely to relate to sewerage systems. The depth of the trench was not extended beyond 1.2m and no archaeological features were encountered



III 5 Photograph showing Trench 3, facing west

#### **Trench 4**

Trench 4 was 2m by 25m and orientated north-east to south-west and aimed at targeting the Aberdeenshire Canal entering the site to the south. A grey stoney silty sand 0.75m deep was observed, overlying an orange-brown silty sand with grey clay inclusions and rock at the base of the trench (Ill 6). A pipe was encountered running the width of the trench, 3.5m from the western edge of the trench, and a second, 7.9m from the edge. 14m from the western edge, a tarmac surface was revealed beneath the grey stoney silty sand 0.08m thick with an orange-brown silty sand beneath. This extended to the eastern edge of the trench, and must be a tarmac surface for the pre-existing BP offices. Trees and undergrowth stopped the trench from being continued any further eastwards, as well as the 5% evaluation target being reached, though it is unlikely that the canal was missed. The sources revealed it being at least 5.6m in width (Cameron 2011, 3) and it is more likely that traces of it within this development site have been destroyed by earlier redevelopment of the area.



Ill 6 Photograph showing Trench 4



## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This report forms the final part of the archaeological condition imposed on this redevelopment. As no traces of the Aberdeenshire Canal was recovered, it is likely that it had already been destroyed, if this was its original route, and no further archaeological work is likely to be necessary. The final decision on such matters rests with the Lead Curator of Local History and Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council.

## 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Scott Pettitt, Barratt East Scotland and Judith Stones, Aberdeen City Council.

## 6 REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Day 1: 12<sup>th</sup> December

Photograph Number	Title
1	Opening Trench 1
2	Opening Trench 1
3	Western extent of Trench 1
4	Western extent of Trench 1
5	Western extent of Trench 1
6	Western extent of Trench 1
7	Western extent of Trench 1
8	Western extent of Trench 1
9	Trench 1 under excavation
10	Trench 1 under excavation
11	Trench 1 under excavation- linear feature
12	Trench 1 under excavation- linear feature
13	Trench 1 under excavation- linear feature
14	Trench 1 under excavation- linear feature
15	Western extent of Trench 1
16	Western extent of Trench 1
17	Western extent of Trench 1
18	Trench 1 completed
19	Trench 1 completed
20	Trench 1 completed
21	Trench 1 completed
22	Opening Trench 2
23	Opening Trench 2
24	Trench 2 under excavation- linear feature
25	Western extent of Trench 2
26	Western extent of Trench 2
27	Trench 2 completed facing north-east
28	Trench 2 completed facing north-east
29	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
30	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
31	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
32	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
33	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
34	Trench 2 completed facing south-west
35	Trench 3 completed facing west
36	Trench 3 completed facing west
37	Trench 3 completed facing west
38	Trench 3 completed facing west
39	Trench 3 completed facing east
40	Trench 3 completed facing east
41	Trench 3 completed facing east
42	Trench 3 completed facing east
43	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
44	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
45	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
46	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
47	General location shots of Trenches 1-3

<b>Photograph Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
48	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
49	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
50	General location shots of Trenches 1-3
51	General location shot of Trench 4
52	General location shot of Trench 4
53	General site shot
54	General site shot

**Day 2: 13<sup>th</sup> December**

<b>Photograph Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Opening Trench 4
2	Opening Trench 4
3	Western extent of Trench 4
4	Western extent of Trench 4
5	Western extent of Trench 4
6	Western extent of Trench 4
7	Trench 4 under excavation
8	Trench 4 under excavation
9	Trench 4 facing south-west
10	Trench 4 facing south-west
11	Trench 4 facing north-east
12	Trench 4 facing north-east
13	Trench 4 complete facing north-east
14	Trench 4 complete facing north-east
15	Trench 4 complete facing east
16	Trench 4 complete facing west
17	Trench 4 complete facing west
18	Trench 4 complete facing south-west
19	Trench 4 complete facing south-west
20	Trench 4 complete facing south-west
21	Trench 4 complete facing south-west