

**Field to south of Loirsbank Road, Cults,
Aberdeen, AB15 9NE
Report on archaeological watching brief**



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ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover (top) location of watching brief with Loirsbank Road; facing NW; (bottom) the west end of the watching brief with up to 1.5m dumped soil (left); facing E

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SUMMARY

The watching brief took place on 20 October 2014. The area of this development is largely made up ground and the area adjacent to Loirsbank Road will not be excavated as it is already road height. The watching brief area revealed that up to 1.5m of material had been dumped on the site. Under this 0.1-0.2m of medium grey clay topsoil lay on top of a rusty brown sandy clay subsoil. No archaeological finds or features were recorded and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current development.

1 INTRODUCTION

The site lies on the south side of Loirsbank Road, Cults on the west side of new residential housing. The site is at NJ 89506 02683 (centred) at 15-20m OD and in the parish of Peterculter. A planning application P111153 was passed by Aberdeen City Council on 13 January 2012 with a standard archaeology condition (condition 1); Aberdeen City Council require a watching brief during the work.



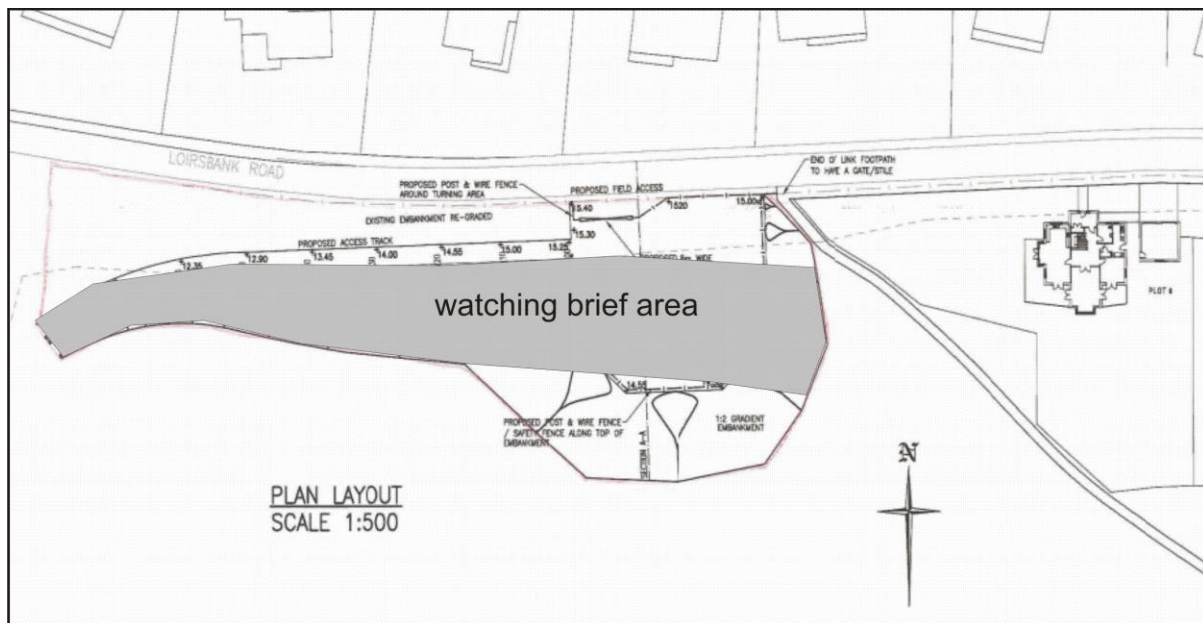
Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation took place prior to the construction of the residential development immediately to the east of the proposed development. No significant archaeological finds or features were uncovered during this work (Cameron 2011, 12). The proposed site is within fields on the First, Second and Third OS maps.
- 2.2 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within 1km of the current site, however the riverine areas and haughs along the Dee have produced large numbers of prehistoric finds between Cults and Banchory. These include flint scatters in areas such as Maryculter Bridge (NJ80SE 36).
- 2.3 On the opposite bank of the Dee a short cist (NJ80SE 28) containing an adult human skull and an urn was dug up whilst forming that part of the turnpike road which passes through the estate of Ardoe (House at NJ 8946 0167). A scheduled stone circle is also located at the NE edge of Cults (NJ80SE 25).
- 2.4 A scheduled cairn of probable Bronze Age date is located 1.2km west of the current site (NJ80SE 24). Several other cairns were situated on the ridge above (north of) Cults prior to the urbanisation of this area including two on the site now occupied by Cults Academy (NJ80SE 22, 23).
- 2.5 Several possible mottes (or early medieval castle mounds) are known in the area including Cults (NJ80SE 58), Camphill (NJ80SE 17) and to the east of the current site at Pitfodels (NJ90SW 1), all prominent positions overlooking the river Dee.
- 2.6 The site at Loirsbank lies to the south of the 'Mill of Pitfoddels (corn)' on the First Edition Ordnance Survey between the mill and Morrison's Bridge, the main crossing over the Dee in this area. Mill of Pitfoddels appears on the Pont maps of the late 16th century. 'Lorsbank' appears on Roy's maps of the mid-18th century.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief took place on 20 October 2014. The area of this development is largely made up ground and the area adjacent to Loirsbank Road will not be excavated as it is already road height. The watching brief area revealed that up to 1.5m of material had been dumped on the site. Under this 0.1-0.2m of medium grey clay topsoil lay on top of a rusty brown sandy clay subsoil. No archaeological finds or features were recorded and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current development.



Illus 2 Plan of the watching brief for the proposed agricultural access (copyright Fairhurst)

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Cameron Forbes, Forbes Homes for initiating this project, to Deryck Forbes and John Gray for their assistance on site and Judith Stones, Aberdeen City Council for her advice during the work.

5 REFERENCES

Cameron, A 2011 'Loirsbank Road, Cults, Aberdeen City (Peterculter parish), evaluation', *Discovery Excav Scot, New*, vol.12 Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England, 12.

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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS



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APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 3 First Edition OS map with approximate area of site outlined in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Kincardine Sheet III.8/12 (Banchory Devenick/combined) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1868