

**Report on watching brief  
Laurencekirk Business Park, AB30 1EY**



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## SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at Laurencekirk Business Park during groundworks for industrial units. Traces of historic ridge and furrow cultivation and stone field drains were uncovered but no significant archaeological remains were discovered. It is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed development site (Illus 1&2) is located on the north edge of the town of Laurencekirk, centred on NGR NO 7188 7183 at 75-80mOD on gently sloping ground. It is bounded on its northeast and northwest sides by an unclassified road, by the existing Laurencekirk Business Park on its southwest, and a grassed area on its southeast side.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Morrison Construction for Aberdeenshire Council. Planning Application (Ref No APP/2015/2991) was approved to erect 5 No. Business Units with Associated Yard Areas and Car Parking with the requirement for a watching brief during the soil strip (Herbert 2016).
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.

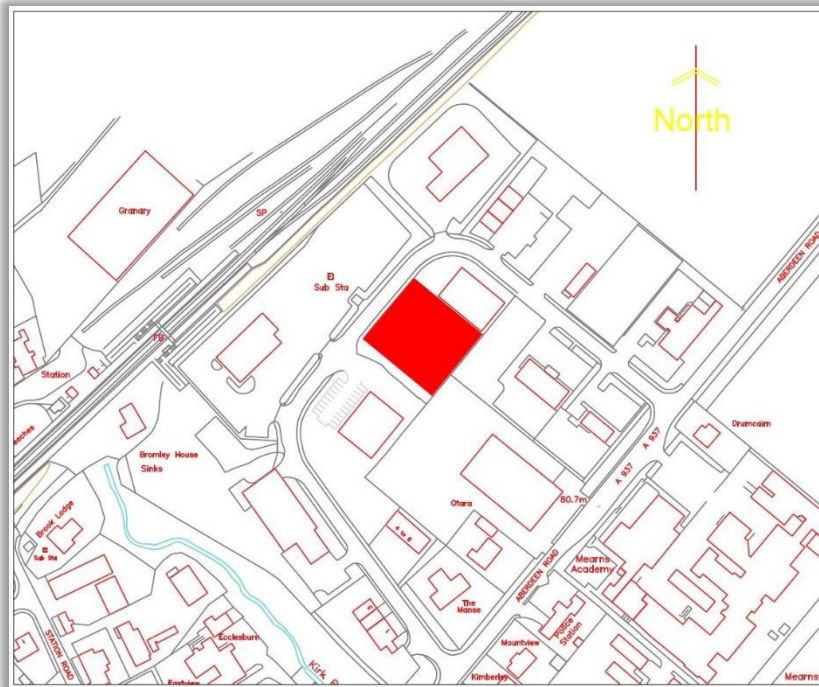


Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016)

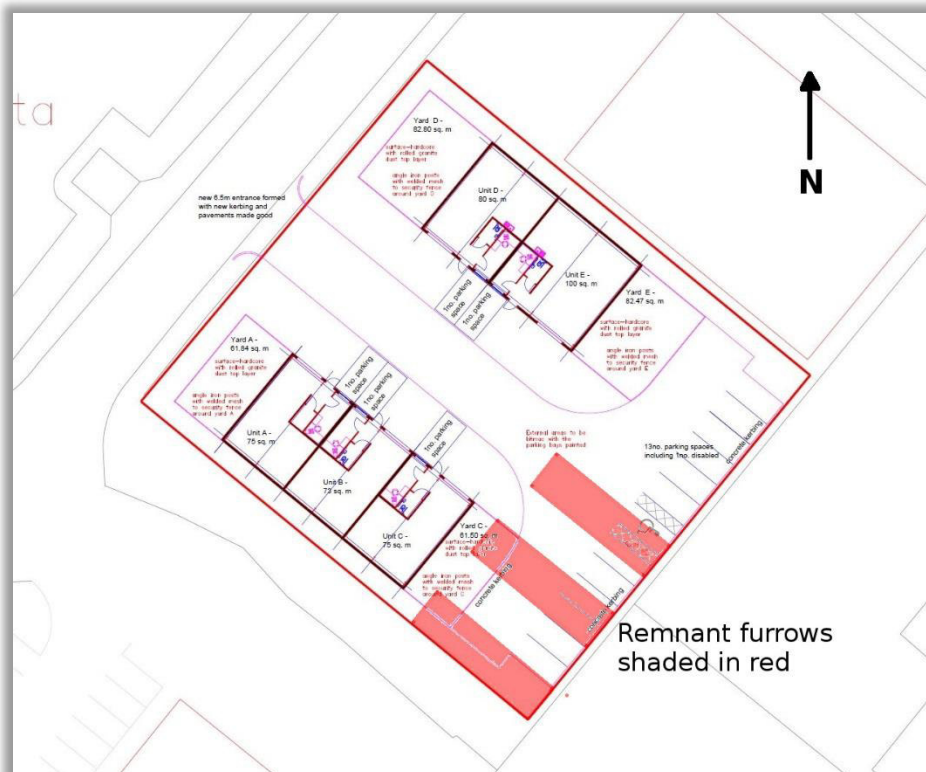


## 2 BACKGROUND

While no archaeological features have been recorded within the proposed development site itself, Laurencekirk as a settlement has a long history and therefore the potential is present for evidence of earlier periods of settlement to survive below the present ground level. It is also located a short distance to the SW of NO77SW0085, the site of a possible medieval manor.



Illus 2 Location of proposed development within Laurencekirk Business Park (Copyright TCD Architects)



Illus 3 Watching brief area with furrows shaded in red (Copyright TCD Architects)

### 3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was carried out between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 during the topsoil removal phase of the project (Illus 3). A 20-ton excavator was used with a 1.8m wide bladed ditching bucket in conjunction with a bulldozer employed to move spoil after the freshly cleared area was inspected by the archaeologist. Any potential archaeological features were then hand-cleaned and closely inspected by the archaeologist.



Illus 4 Remains of furrow in centre (L-R marked by ranging rod); facing SW

### 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While faint traces of historical agricultural activity were visible as the remains of three truncated furrows (Illus 4) in the southern portion of the development area in addition to a stone-filled field drain in the eastern portion and a small number of modern ceramic sherds dispersed throughout the undisturbed portion of the site, no other archaeological finds or features were visible. The NW edge of the site revealed recent and substantial soil disturbance visible as a redeposited reddish-brown silty clay subsoil underlying or mottled within a dark brown topsoil. This area contained modern refuse such as plastic sheeting and fragments of concrete paving slabs within the topsoil/subsoil layers, in addition to sections of non-live electrical cable.

### 5 REFERENCES

Herbert, C. 2016, *Scope and framework of an archaeological brief at Laurencekirk Business Park*.

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Morrison Construction for commissioning this project and to Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service for her advice during the work.

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## APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo No.	Direction Facing	Comments
DSC_5446-61		Soil strip NE edge of site with field drain and dumping
DSC_5464-71		Soil strip SW edge of site
DSC_5472-73	SW	Soil strip SE edge of site with furrow
DSC_5474	SE	Soil strip SE edge of site with furrow
DSC_5465-79		Soil strip SE edge of site with furrows
_DSC4319	NW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4320	NW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4321	W	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4322	W	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4323	NW	Stone field drain in E quadrant of site
_DSC4324	NW	Stone field drain in E quadrant of site
_DSC4325	W	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4326	SW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4327	SW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4330	NW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4331	NW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4332	W	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4333	--	Modern concrete paving slab fragment in disturbed topsoil/subsoil layer
_DSC4334	NW	General view of disturbed topsoil/subsoil layer
_DSC4335	NW	General view of disturbed topsoil/subsoil layer
_DSC4336	E	General site view of eastern half of site after soil strip completion.
_DSC4338	NW	Soil strip in progress
_DSC4339	N	General site view after bulk of site was stripped.

_DSC4340	N	General site view after bulk of site was stripped.
_DSC4341	NE	Soil strip in progress during late winter snowfall
_DSC4342	SE	General site view during late winter snowfall
_DSC4343	NE	Soil strip in progress during late winter snowfall
_DSC4344	NE	Soil strip in progress during late winter snowfall
_DSC4346	N	General site view during late winter snowfall
_DSC4347	NNE	General site view during late winter snowfall
_DSC4348	N	General site view during late winter snowfall
_DSC4349	SW	Soil strip in progress during late winter snowfall
_DSC4350	NW	Soil strip in progress during late winter snowfall
_DSC4353	SE	General site view - nearing completion of soil strip
_DSC4354	SW	General site view - nearing completion of soil strip
_DSC4355	SW	General site view - nearing completion of soil strip
_DSC4356	W	General site view - nearing completion of soil strip
_DSC4357	W	General site view - nearing completion of soil strip



