

**Plot 3, Fordoun Road, Laurencekirk, AB30 1FB
Data Structure Report (DSR)**

**Aberdeenshire Planning application APP/2016/2235 (and
revision of house type APP/2019/2257)**



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Cover: watching brief progressing; facing NW

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SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken on 21 October 2020. The topsoil was heavy grey clay 0.25-0.3m deep on pink natural clay. One NW-SE furrow 0.3m wide and 0.03m deep was recorded and modern plough scores across the whole trench. No archaeological features were recorded during the watching brief but two quartz objects were recovered from the topsoil. One is a tertiary hard-hammer flake (SF1) and the other a tertiary intermediate piece (SF2), both undiagnostic and undateable. No further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the W side of Fordoun Road N of Haulkerton Cresc. It is centred on NGR NO 71369 72098, at 55-60m OD in the parish of Laurencekirk.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Chung. An application APP/2016/2235 (and revision of house type APP/2019/2257) to Aberdeenshire Council for erection of a dwellinghouse has an archaeology condition (condition 1) for a watching brief during all groundworks.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement (HESPS) 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 2020)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments within 1km of the proposed development but there is one
- 2.2 A cropmark of a square enclosure plus possible arc of a ditch (HER NO77SW0017) occupies much of the proposed development area. It is a possible homestead moat seen on aerial photographs (Illus 10). A transcription of aerial photographs by RCAHMS in 2000 (Illus 3) revealed a number of linear features along with a series of pits in addition to the races of enclosures described. The pits are thought to be prehistoric in date, while linear features to the South are thought to be the remains of rig and furrow. Immediately SE of the proposed site on the opposite side of Fordoun Road, an area of rig and furrow was excavated and recorded in advance of a proposed housing development. Excavation of trenches revealed the remains of medieval rig and furrow cultivation initially identified from aerial photographs. Furrows that had been cut into the natural till were recorded and sampled. (NO77SW 21; Cachart 2000, 11).
- 2.3 Within the proposed development, a watching brief was maintained in September 2005 while work was carried out on two electricity poles. The poles were close to the cropmark site (NO77SW 21) but no archaeological features or finds were evident (Murray 2005, 17).
- 2.4 To the NE of the proposed development are cropmarks of a circular enclosure, field boundary, rig and furrow and possible souterrains (NO77SW 26) (Illus 7-8) 450m ESE of Mains of Haulkerton farmhouse (RCAHMS 1982, 26).
- 2.5 An evaluation was carried out by MAS in March 2012 on the site for a new Mearns Academy, followed by further excavation in April - May 2012 of features discovered at the south west end of the site. Eight evaluation trenches, all running roughly NE-SW, recorded the remains of a croft (NO77SW0066), rig and furrow, and medieval pottery associated with a possible cobbled area and occupation level. Excavation of this cobbled area recorded the remains of a small, possibly quite short lived, medieval farm. The excavated building may be the only surviving remnant of a larger group of structures which have been ploughed out by both medieval to late 18th century rig and furrow cultivation and post-improvement cultivation of the 19th and 20th centuries. Pottery from the excavation suggests the farm was in use at the end of the 13th to beginning of the 14th centuries. Details of the structure and presence of some imported pottery indicate a farm of some status, although not very wealthy. It can possibly be identified with the property in the lands of Conveth documented from the late 12th century. The building may have been in use for as little as 20 years. It is one of the rare examples in Scotland of the excavation of a rural medieval building associated with a small, apparently unenclosed manor. It is also a rare example of a probable clay walled building of this date. Subsequent rig and furrow cultivation may date from as early as the later medieval period; map evidence shows the area cultivated as rig and furrow in the 18th century. Finds from the excavation also included a flint blade of early prehistoric date, and from medieval contexts, two iron nails, two copper alloy fragments. Metal detecting as part of the evaluation recorded a silver sixpence of George V, a small brooch of probably 20th century date, and a 1915 'On War Service' badge with the number 82750K; the badges were given to men and boys who were working in vital industries (NO77SW 90; Murray 2012).
- 2.6 A First World War prisoner of war camp is listed under the name of Conveth Mains in the 1919 'List of Places of Internment' in Britain, its colonies and dominions. German soldiers, other than officers and senior NCOs, could be put to work that did not directly further the prosecution of the war. The camp at Conveth Mains was recorded as a work camp under the control of the chief camp in the Scottish

system, at Stobs. It is likely to have been an agricultural camp (NO77SW 95).

- 2.7 500m north of the proposed site is the site of Castle of Haulkerton, which was probably a tower (NO77SW 1; RCAHMS 1982, 31) which stood 220m NNE of Mains of Haulkerton farm, where two stones built into the steading bear dates of 1648 and (probably) 1556. Traces of the foundations could be seen in the 19th century. Cramond (1894, 56) states that it was last used as a residence in the early 18th century, and was ruinous by 1790. Its stones were used to build dykes round Haulkerton Plantation, in Mains of Haulkerton steading, and when building the parish church (NO77SW 16; (RCAHMS 1982, 31). Halkerton was erected burgh of barony in 1612 (Pryde 1965, 65). A resistivity survey and trial excavations were carried out (by Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust) in July 1993, prior to potential development of an area of about 2ha. In the NW corner of Mains of Haulkerton Wood, under a shallow topsoil profile of c0.3m, fragmentary foundation wall remains were located cut into the natural clay. From documentary evidence, the remains correspond to the supposed location of the late medieval Castle of Haulkerton. They demonstrate that the castle was extensively robbed out in the late 18th century and also partially disturbed by 20th-century dumping. The shallow foundation remains of a possible barmkin wall were also found. Three 19th-century linear agricultural field banks were observed in the southern half of the wood (MacKenzie 1993, 39).
- 2.8 SW of the proposed development at Blackiemuir Avenue an archaeological evaluation was undertaken of an area of rig and furrow (NO77SW 97) of probable 18th-century date (Murray and Murray 2016, 25).
- 2.9 NW of Mains of Haulkerton are cropmarks of a rectilinear enclosure (NO77SW 62)
- 2.10 Farmsteads in the area include Honeyhive (NO77SW0064), Keilburn (NO77SW 66) and Conveth Mains (NO77SW0065). The 19th-century road bridge at Mains of Haulkerton (NO77SW 30) takes the Fordoun road over the Luther Water is Listed Category C. At Muir of Blackiemuir there was a building on the 2nd Edition OS map (NO77SW0072) which was probably a cottage.
- 2.11 The Aberdeen-Dundee railway line forms the south boundary of the proposed site. This intermediate station (NO77SW 40) on the Perth - Kinnaber Junction - Aberdeen (main) line of the former Caledonian Railway was opened on 1 November 1849 (by the Aberdeen Railway) and closed to regular passenger traffic on 4 September 1967. The line itself remains in regular use by passenger traffic. Following reconstruction, this station (Listed Category B) reopened to regular passenger traffic on 18 May 2009. RCAHMS surveyed the station in 2005 prior to reconstruction.
- 2.12 Laurencekirk North signal box (NO77SW 40.01) is situated about 400m NE of the station (NO77SW 40.00), on the up side of the railway. It is of brick construction with wooden upper works and the entrance is at the SW end.
- 2.13 St Lawrence's Church, Laurencekirk (NO77SW16; Listed Category B) was built on site of earlier church. In the 7th Century AD, a church dedicated to St Lawrence was said to have stood about a mile to the east of the village. Queen Margaret made a pilgrimage to it between 1073 and 1093. In the 13th Century, it was a Rectory belonging to St Andrews and was dedicated to Bishop David in 1244. No trace of this earlier church has been found. It is said that when the present church was erected in 1804, it took the place of an earlier one built in 1626 and that, when the older one was being taken down, a stone was found on which 'the figure of a man lying on a grid-iron was carved, representing, it was supposed, the martyrdom of St Lawrence'. This stone, which has been lost, may have been a Pictish monument. Some of the stones from the earlier church were inserted in the walls of



Illus 3 Furrow running top left to bottom right; facing NW

4 THE LITHIC ASSEMBLAGE

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2020, Cameron Archaeology carried out a watching brief at Fordoun Road, Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire (centred on NGR NO 71348 72084; Fig. 1) in connection with planned development in the area. During the investigation, two quartz artefacts were recovered. The purpose of the present report is to characterize the lithic artefacts briefly, with special reference to raw-materials and typo-technological attributes. From this characterization, it is sought to date and discuss the finds.

4.2 THE FINDS

Characterization

During the archaeological investigation at Fordoun Road, two quartz artefacts were recovered:

CAT 1 Tertiary *hard-hammer flake* of white milky quartz (42 x 36 x 18mm); heavily water-rolled. Recovered from location NGR: NO 71372 72113. Although the piece looks like a primary flake, the apparently abraded 'cortex' is the result of rolling after having been detached from its parent core. The piece is identifiable as a flake due to its gently curving ventral face.

CAT 2 Tertiary *indeterminate piece* of white milky quartz (18 x 13 x 4. Unstratified.

Raw material

Both pieces are of white milky quartz (Ballin 2008). This raw material forms part of all major types of rock, such as sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks. The raw material for the two pieces may have been procured through quarrying veins in bedrock, or it may have been collected from gravel sources in local rivers and burns, or even in the form of erratic pebbles or cobbles brought to the location by glaciers.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Both pieces are entirely undiagnostic and therefore undatable. The heavily rolled character of CAT 1 is somewhat mysterious. To become this abraded, the piece would have had to have been subjected to a relatively rough environment, such as the currents of a river or burn, or the tidal zone of an ocean, such as the North Sea. Most likely, this piece was brought to the location from elsewhere, for example with gravel/aggregate.



Illus 4 Tertiary *hard-hammer flake* of white milky quartz SF1



Illus 5 Tertiary *indeterminate piece* of white milky quartz SF2

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No archaeological features were recorded during the watching brief but two quartz objects were recovered from the topsoil. One is a tertiary hard-hammer flake (SF1; Illus 4) and the other a tertiary intermediate piece (SF2; Illus 5), both undiagnostic and undatable. No further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
4691-2	Soil strip NE end	SE
4693-4	Soil strip progressing	NW
4695	Soil strip progressing	SE
4696-7	Soil strip progressing	NW
4698-9	Soil strip progressing	SW
4700-3	Soil strip with furrow running top left-bottom right	NW/NE
4704-6	Soil strip complete showing plough marks in pink clay	NE
4707	Soil strip complete	ESE
4708	Soil strip complete	SE
4709	Soil strip complete	S
4710-25	SF1	
4726-35	SF2	