

519 KING STREET ABERDEEN



- Archaeological Evaluation -
Carried out 23rd February 2011
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2011-8
by
H K Murray & J C Murray

H K Murray BA, PhD, MIFA, FSA Scot
J C Murray BA, MIFA, FSA Scot, FMA
Hill of Belnagoak, Methlick, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB41 7JN
Telephone: (01651) 806394 e-mail: cmurray@btinternet.com

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-Archaeological Evaluation-**

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1. Background

1.1 A Planning Application (Ref No P101919) was submitted by Mr Robert Baird, and approved for the development of a site at 519 King Street, Aberdeen.

An archaeological condition was applied to this application in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN 42).

The condition required that an archaeological evaluation of the area should be undertaken. The main focus stated in the brief was the possible location of Fidler's Well shown on the 1st OS map of 1867.

1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Davidson Smith Partnership LLP on behalf of Mr Baird to undertake the work; the field element of which was carried out on 23rd February 2011.

2. Desk-top survey

2.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) through Canmore and Pastmap.

The 1st OS 25" map of Aberdeen of 1867 (published 1869), 2nd edition 1894 (1896), and 3rd edition 1906-7 (1909) and other easily available maps were consulted.

2.2 In 1867 the ground on the W side of King Street and the S side of University Road are shown undeveloped with a series of springs and shafts along the University Road frontage and the Fidler's Well at the corner, all following the line of the stream which presumably fed the mill on the E side of King Street.

The houses on the King Street frontage were built in 1901 with those on University Road a year or so earlier (pers comm A Shepherd).

In the WW2 bombing of Aberdeen, the corner of the block, comprising the present site of 519 King Street was demolished by enemy bombing.

3. The Site

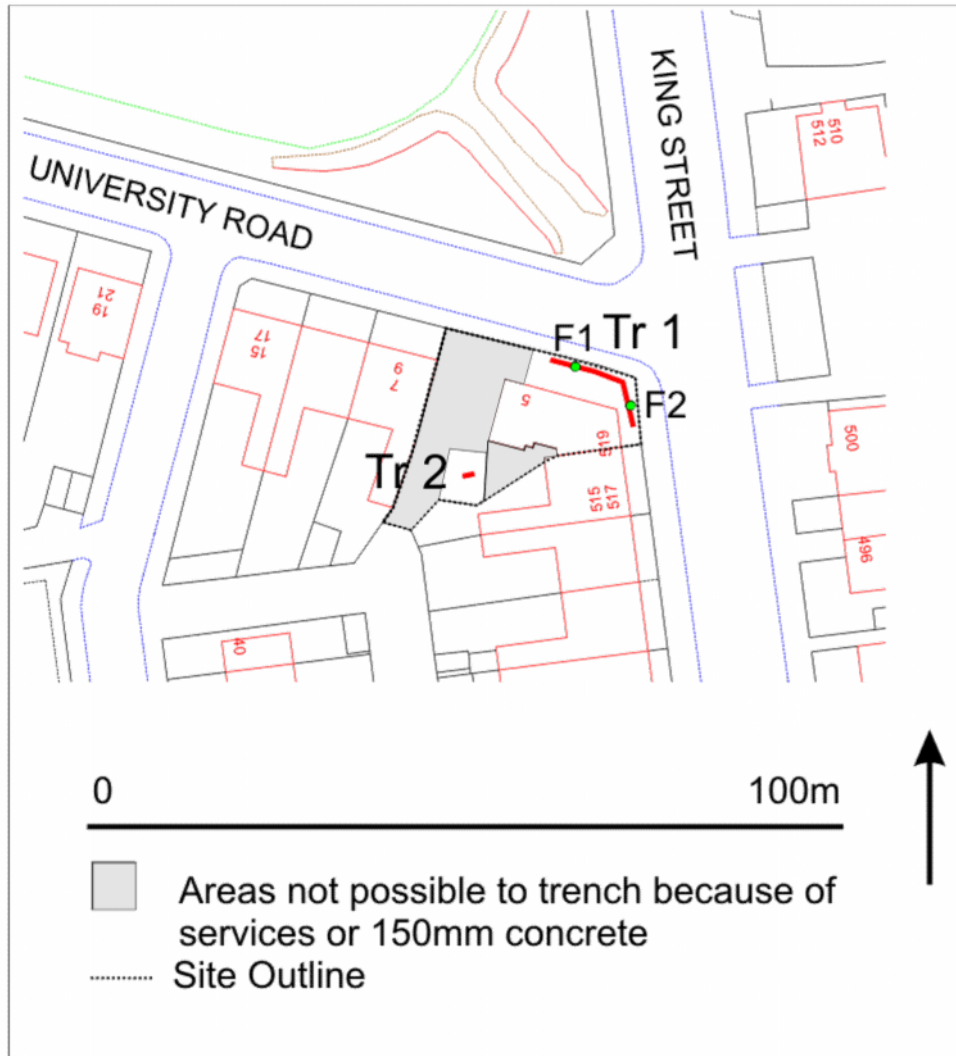
3.1 The development site is located on the corner of King Street and University Road, Aberdeen.

NGR: NJ 94220 07970 (centre of site). Parish: Aberdeen

3.2 Part of the site (shown grey on illus 2) could not be trenched because of live services, a small area at the back of the King Street frontage was also not trenched because of the difficulty of breaking 150mm thick concrete without damaging the walls of the site.



Illus 1 General view of site looking S



Illus 2 Plan of site (Grey shading shows areas where no evaluation could be undertaken).
(Ordnance Survey ©CrownCopyright 2011. Ref No 1012072)

4. Methodology

- 4.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated (Illus 2)
Topsoil was removed using a JCB with a 500mm wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper CX.

5. The evaluation trenches.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was particularly aimed at attempting to locate the Fidler's Well on the corner at the King Street side.

Orientation: N/S turning to run E/W, following the line of the corner.

GPS S end 394233,807968; corner 394231,807974; W end 394222,807977

Length: 16.5m Width: 500mm

Stratigraphy. On the King Street frontage to the S of F2 there was natural sand below c 300mm of tar and sub-base. Between F2 and F1 on the University Road frontage there was a layer of c 400mm garden earth below the tar and sub-base, the sand in this area had sloped down towards the corner. W of F1 on the University Road frontage there was stone and brick rubble c 400mm below c 300mm tar and sub-base.

F1 A stony scatter c 1.5m wide crossed the trench just above natural. This is likely to have been a path to one of the destroyed properties.

F2 GPS 394234,807971. A cut c 600-800mm wide and up to 400mm deep ran NNE/SSW across the trench and was cut into the natural sand. The fill was the same as the garden earth extending between F2 and F1. Although this feature appears to be near the position of the Fidler's Well it is difficult to interpret it as relating to it.



Illus 3 F2, looking S

Trench 2

Orientation ENE/WSW

GPS E end: 394211,807961

Length:2m Width 500 mm

Stratigraphy. This trench was excavated to a depth of 1m. This comprised c 700mm of dirty sand below tar and sub-base. At a depth of 1m there was a compact blue/grey layer which appeared to comprise ash/cinder with some degraded iron. This was emitting a very unpleasant gas-like smell and it was decided not to excavate the trench deeper on Health and Safety grounds.

The trench lay just outside the footprint of the bombed house on University Road and may have been related to bombing debris. Three bombs fell on King Street, one on this site, one by the Esso garage and a third - which did not explode – near the present site of Lidl's. The unexploded bomb was taken to Black Dog and destroyed by controlled explosion; it comprised granulated rubber, phosphorus and petroleum jelly (pers comm Stuart McRae).



Illus 4 Location of trench 2 in relation to scar of bombed building visible on house behind



Illus 5 Trench 2 section

6. Results

The well was not located and may be below the footprint of the building. Other features such as the rubble, garden earth and the pathway F1 are likely to relate to the buildings destroyed in WW2.

7. Impacts and Mitigations

Impacts None

Mitigations If the well is located below the footprint of the building during demolition then the Archaeology Service, Aberdeen City Council, or Murray Archaeological Services Ltd, must be informed immediately so that it can be recorded.

This does not preclude the possibility of other chance finds or archaeological discoveries outwith the evaluation trenches. Should such chance finds occur, then the Archaeology Service, Aberdeen City Council, or Murray Archaeological Services Ltd, must be informed immediately so that an appropriate archaeological response can be formulated and agreed by all parties concerned

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

Photographic catalogue	
Digital frame no	Content
1-4	Site looking S from N side of University Road
5-6	Trench 1 beside King Street, looking S. Survey pole at F2
7-10	Details of F2
11	Trench 1 beside University Road, looking W
12-16	F1 looking E
17-18	Detail of F1
19-22	General views to Trench 2, looking S
23-24	Trench 2 looking W to scar of bombed building on gable of house in University Road
25-28	Details of Trench 2