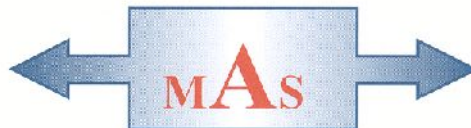


HILLHEAD OF AUQUHIRIE STONEHAVEN ABERDEENSHIRE



- Archaeological Watching Brief -
Carried out 26TH June – 4th July 2012
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-23
by
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-Archaeological Watching Brief-

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1. Background

- 1.1 A Planning Application (APP/2009/3567) was approved for the installation of three 2.3MW (92.5m high to tip) wind turbines at Hillhead of Auquhirie, Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire. An archaeological condition (Planning Condition No.23) requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the ground works for the turbine bases, was applied in the context of Scottish Planning policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP).
- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Green Cat Renewables Ltd, to undertake the work; the field element of which was carried out on 26th June – 4th July 2012.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The site lies to the SW of Stonehaven on a minor road to Auquhirie on the N side of the A90 [NGR: NO 8315 8368; Parish: Dunnottar]. It is also very near to, and to the E of, the wind turbines on Clochnahill.
- 2.2 An Early Bronze Age flat axe was found during drainage works in 1850 and is now in Montrose Museum [NGR: NO8296 8372; NMRS No: NO88SW 13]. The probable find spot is in the drainage ditch that now forms the N boundary to the field where the access track from the road and Turbine 1 are located (see Illus.2, black star)



Illus 1: Location Map, showing the site of Hillhead of Auquhirie with the location of the turbines outlined in red. Ordnance Survey Crown copyright © (2007). All rights reserved. License number (100049810)

3 Methodology

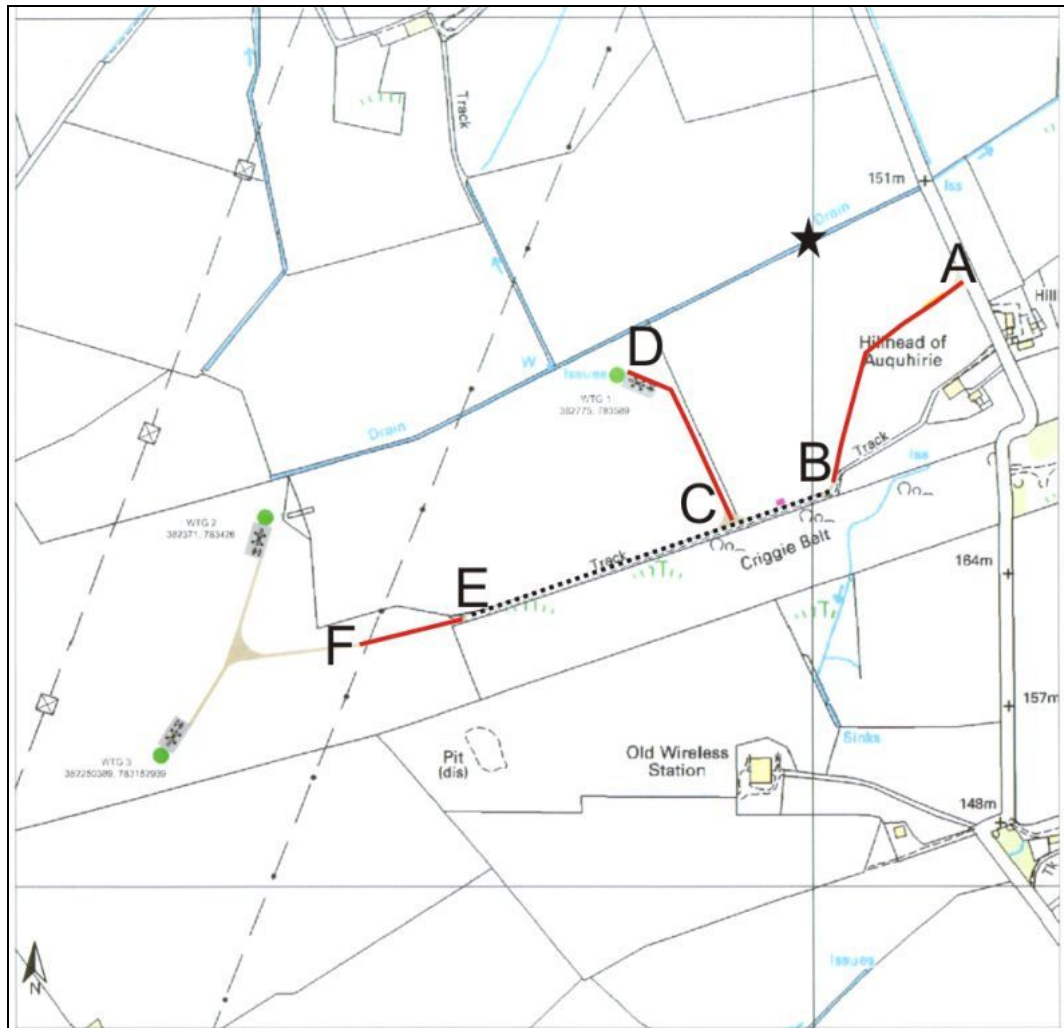
3.1 Excavations were carried out using a bulldozer and a full-slew machine with a ditching bucket. Following this, areas of potential interest were cleaned by hand.

3.2 The field was in grass at the time of recording.

4. The Work

4.1 The soil strip for the access tracks began at the roadside and progressed for c.317m SW across an open grass park to the trees at Criggie Belt. The track was 5m wide and the average depth of topsoil of 350mm overlay reddish, hard, sandy and slightly silty, stoney natural [see Illus.2, A – B].

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



Illus 2: Site Plan showing the location of the access track and turbine base observed.

- 4.2 At the E edge of Criggie Belt, the new access track joined up with an existing track running the length of Criggie Belt [Illus.2, B – E]. This section was not observed.



Illus 3: Access track, A-B, looking SW to Clochnahill.



Illus 4: Part of Access track, A-B, looking SW.

- 4.3 At the W end of Criggie Belt, the section of track from F to the overhead power lines at E was observed. Again, the track was 5m wide with an overburden of soil c.290mm deep. Beyond this point lies the corridor for the

Shell and BP oil and gas pipelines, and beyond this the wind turbines on Clochnahill.

As no archaeology was evident during the laying of the pipe lines and the installation of the turbines on Clochnahill, it was decided that, following discussions with the Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council, that a continuation of the watching brief beyond this point was not required.

- 4.4 The section of access track leading to Turbine 1 began at C, from the Criggie Belt and ran NW along the field boundary (now removed), to D. The access track was 5m wide but the depth of topsoil removed was only 290-300mm. Again, the topsoil overlay reddish hard stoney and slightly silty natural.



Illus 5: Access track C-D to Turbine 1, looking NW.



Illus 6: Soil strip over area of Turbine 1, looking NW.



Illus 7: Depth of topsoil over area of Turbine 1.

5 Results

5.1 Although the initial section of the access track and the track and base of Turbine 1 lay in reasonably close proximity to the 19th century find spot of the Early Bronze Age flat axe, no archaeological features or finds.

5.2 No archaeological features or finds were evident in the section of track, E-F.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record (on CD)

Photographic catalogue – Hillhead of Auquhirie	
Digital frame no	Content
Hillhead 1	
1-5	Access track from road, looking W to Clochnahill beyond
6-10	Details of access track
Hillhead 2	
1-6	Track to turbine 1, looking N
7	Detail of topsoil over natural
8-16	Work on soil strip over area of Turbine 1
17-19	Detail of depth of topsoil over natural
20-21	Aggregate being spread on track immediately following soil strip