

6 -7 THE CROSS FORFAR ANGUS



- Archaeological Watching Brief -
Carried out 28th – 29th January 2013
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2013-7
by
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1. Background

- 1.1 The provision of a new electricity supply to Angus Council offices at 6-7 The Cross, Forfar [NGR: NO 45619 50610; NMRS No: NO45SE 217; Parish: Forfar] was subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during ground works.
- 1.2 The Conditions were applied in the context of PAN (Planning Advise Note) 2/2011, SPP and SHEP (APP/2009/4041, Condition 12 & 4093, Condition 4).
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Scottish & Southern Energy to undertake the watching brief which was carried out 28th – 29th January 2013.

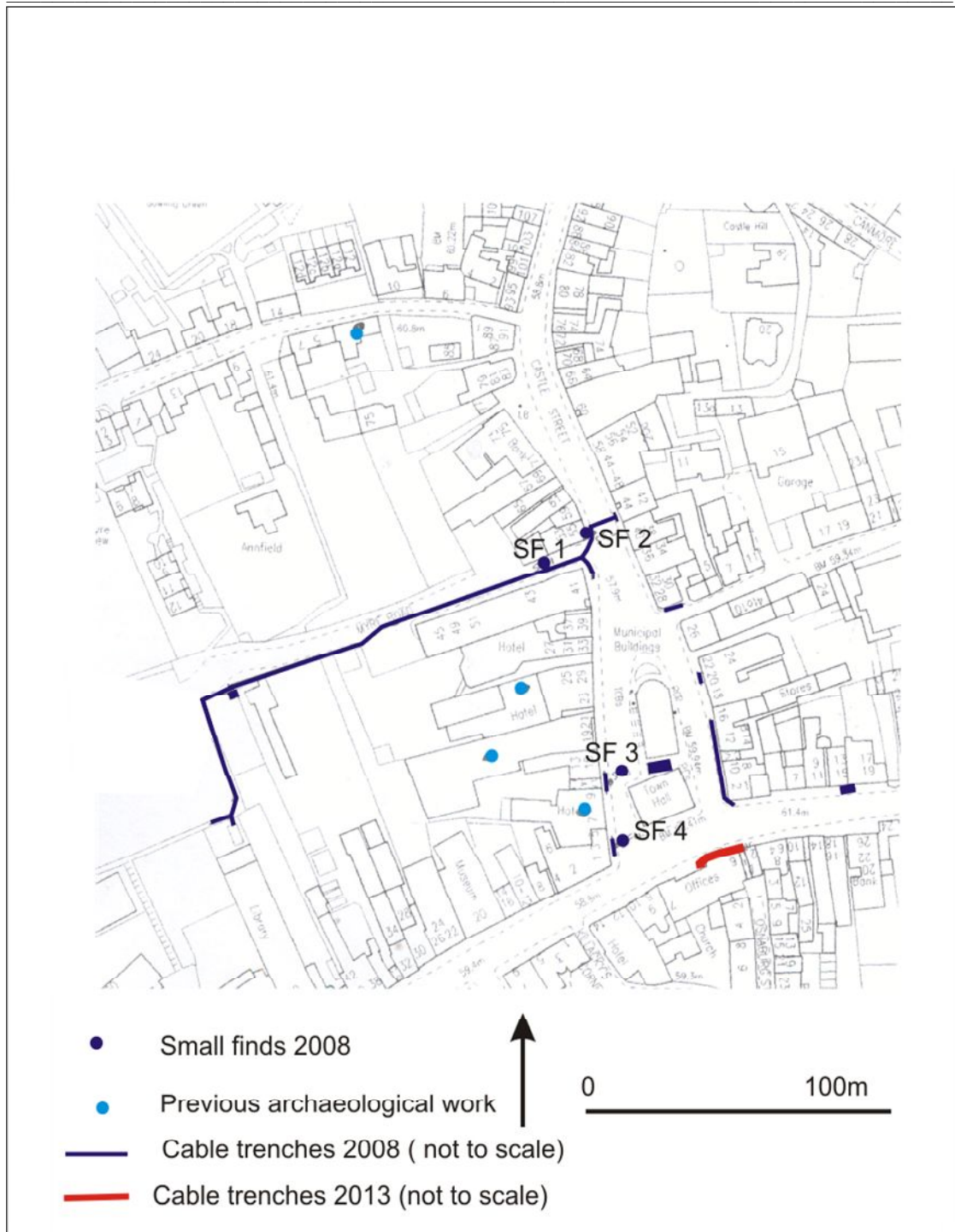
2. Historical Background

- 2.1 Forfar was an established royal centre from as early as the 11th century and probably a royal burgh from the reign of David I (1124-53). By the 13th century it was a well established and thriving burgh.

- 2.2 The town originally consisted of two main streets, East and West High Street, with Castle Street running at right angles to them to form a letter ‘T’. The presence of a royal castle, which is thought to have stood at the N end of Castle Street, would have been an important element in the town’s early development, although no trace of it now remains. In common with most Scottish burghs Forfar was not a walled town, although it appears to have had two gates or ports, one at the E end of the High Street and one at the W end. The purpose of the gates was to act as collection points for tolls on goods being sold at markets and at nights the gates could be closed during periods of curfew.
- 2.3 Many royal charters were issued from the town in the 12th century, but as these declined significantly in the 14th century, it is thought that Forfar had lost most of its former importance. A full account of the history of Forfar can be seen in Historic Forfar (Dennison & Coleman, 2000).

3. Previous Archaeological Work

- 3.1 In 2008 a number of trenches excavated during the renewal of the power supply in part of the historic town of Forfar between Myre Road and Castle Street were subject to an archaeological watching brief.
- 3.2 In the trenches at 1-5 and 9-13 Castle Street, surviving medieval soil levels were recorded which yielded small quantities of medieval pottery (Illus 1 SF3 and SF4). By contrast, the service trenches excavated on the E side of the street at 2-22 Castle Street, proved to be heavily disturbed by previous services and completely devoid of any archaeological features or artefacts (Murray, 2008).



Illus 1: Plan showing the 2008 and 2013 trenches

4. The Watching Brief

- 4.1 The trench for the new electricity cable extended for 19m along the pavement from c.1.5m W of the doorway into 6 The Cross, to the entrance into Osnaburg Street. For the most part it was 600mm wide and excavated to a general depth of 500-600mm. At the E end, at Osnaburg Street, the trench was opened up to c.3m square for connection purposes to existing electricity cables.



Illus 2: W end of trench showing existing services and stone wall, looking S

- 4.2 Below the pavement slabs was a 180mm depth of clean sand which overlay granite and stone aggregate mixed with brown soil to the full depth of the trench.
- 4.3 At the W end, a stone wall was encountered running E-W, c.1.4m N of the N wall of 6-7 The Cross. The wall was 350mm thick and extended down to the full 500mm depth of the trench [Illus3]. It is possible that the wall relates to a building that predates the current building, now Angus Council offices, but formerly the National Bank built in 1862.



Illus 3: Wall at W end of trench, looking SE

- 4.4 Excavation of the trench eastwards showed the area to have been heavily disturbed by services, including telecom ducts, street lighting conduits, gas mains and sewerage pipes [Illus 4].



Illus 4: Cable trench, looking W, showing earlier services

- 4.5 The trench terminated and was expanded to a 3m square at the entrance to the pend into Osnaburg Street. This area was also heavily disturbed by a mass of services.



Illus 5: E end of trench at Osnaburg Street, looking S

- 4.6 As the whole length of the cable trench was heavily disturbed by the installation of a range of previous services, no medieval finds or features were evident. However, as the depth of the excavation was only 500-600mm, natural was not reached, and it is therefore possible that medieval soils and features survive at a lower level.

5. Results

- 5.1 In contrast to the cable trenches excavated in 2008 on the SW side of Castle Street, due to heavy disturbance no archaeological features or finds were evident between 7 The Cross and Osnaburg Street.

7. References

Dennison, E and Coleman, R (2000) *Historic Forfar, The Scottish Burgh Survey*.

Murray, J C (2008) *Myre Road and Castle Street, Forfar DES*, Vol 9, 32

Appendix 1

Catalogue of Digital Photographs (Supplied to Archive)

2	View of trench, between 7 & 6 The Cross, looking S
3	Stone wall running E-W across the trench, looking S
4	As 3, above, looking E
6	General view of work between 6 The Cross and Osnaburg Street, looking SE
8	Detail of 5, above, looking S
9-10	View along cable trench, looking E
11-14	Views along cable trench showing existing services, looking W
15	E end of trench near entrance to Osnaburg Street
17-20	Existing services at E end of trench opposite Osnaburg Street