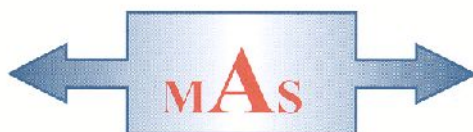


**NETHER PARK QUARRY
DRUMOAK
BANCHORY
ABERDEENSHIRE**



Archaeological Evaluation
Carried out 16th-18th September 2019
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2019-23
by
H K Murray and J C Murray

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-Archaeological Evaluation -
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1. Background

- 1.1 A Planning Application (Ref: app/2016/0257) for a variation of Condition 2 (Time Condition) to permit continued extraction for a further period of 10 years of previously approved S980001 Min for extraction of sand and gravel, associated processing plant/structures, settling pond, haul road and vehicular access onto the A93 at Nether Park Quarry, Banchory, Aberdeenshire, was approved conditionally.

An archaeological condition (No 26) was applied to this application in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, HESPS).

The condition required the developer to secure the implementation of a watching brief during any groundbreaking and development work. Following discussions with Claire Herbert, Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council in 2018, it was agreed that a fresh walkover of the site should be undertaken to review current conditions and the scale of any surface artefact distribution. This was undertaken on 9th July 2018.

- 1.2 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, HESPS), which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for archaeological work to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances

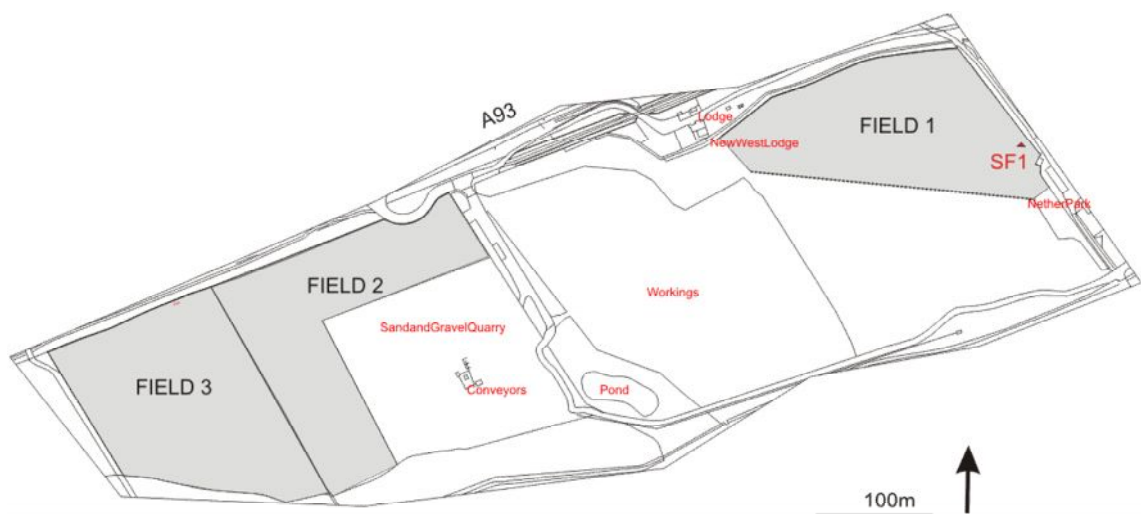
- 1.3 Following the walkover survey, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), was submitted to the Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council, and approved by them. The WSI proposed a phased archaeological trial trenching evaluation of

10-15% of each area proposed for quarrying. The outcome of each phase of the evaluations would determine the need for any further archaeological intervention, including the possibility of a monitored soil strip, and stipulate, in detail, how such interventions were to be carried out.

- 1.4 Phase 1 of the evaluation, in Field 1 (Illus 1) was undertaken in July 2018 (Murray & Murray 2018). An area of prehistoric activity was identified and full excavation was undertaken in August-September 2018 (Murray & Murray 2018A). C14 dates indicate some residual Late Mesolithic activity with a temporary Early Neolithic use of the site and one Early Bronze Age date.
- 1.5 The 2nd phase of the evaluation (Fields 2 and 3), was undertaken on 16th-18th September 2019 and is reported here.
- 1.6 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Leiths (Scotland) Ltd.

2. The Site

2.1 The area evaluated were the two western of the three fields which lie between c 100 and 500m N of a loop of the river Dee, extending between c 35 and 50m OD on the first two terraces N of the river at this point (Illus 1: Field 2 &3).



Illus 1 Location of site. The present report applies to the evaluation of Field 2 &3. OS map reproduced Crown Copyright. Licence 100041040

3 Methodology

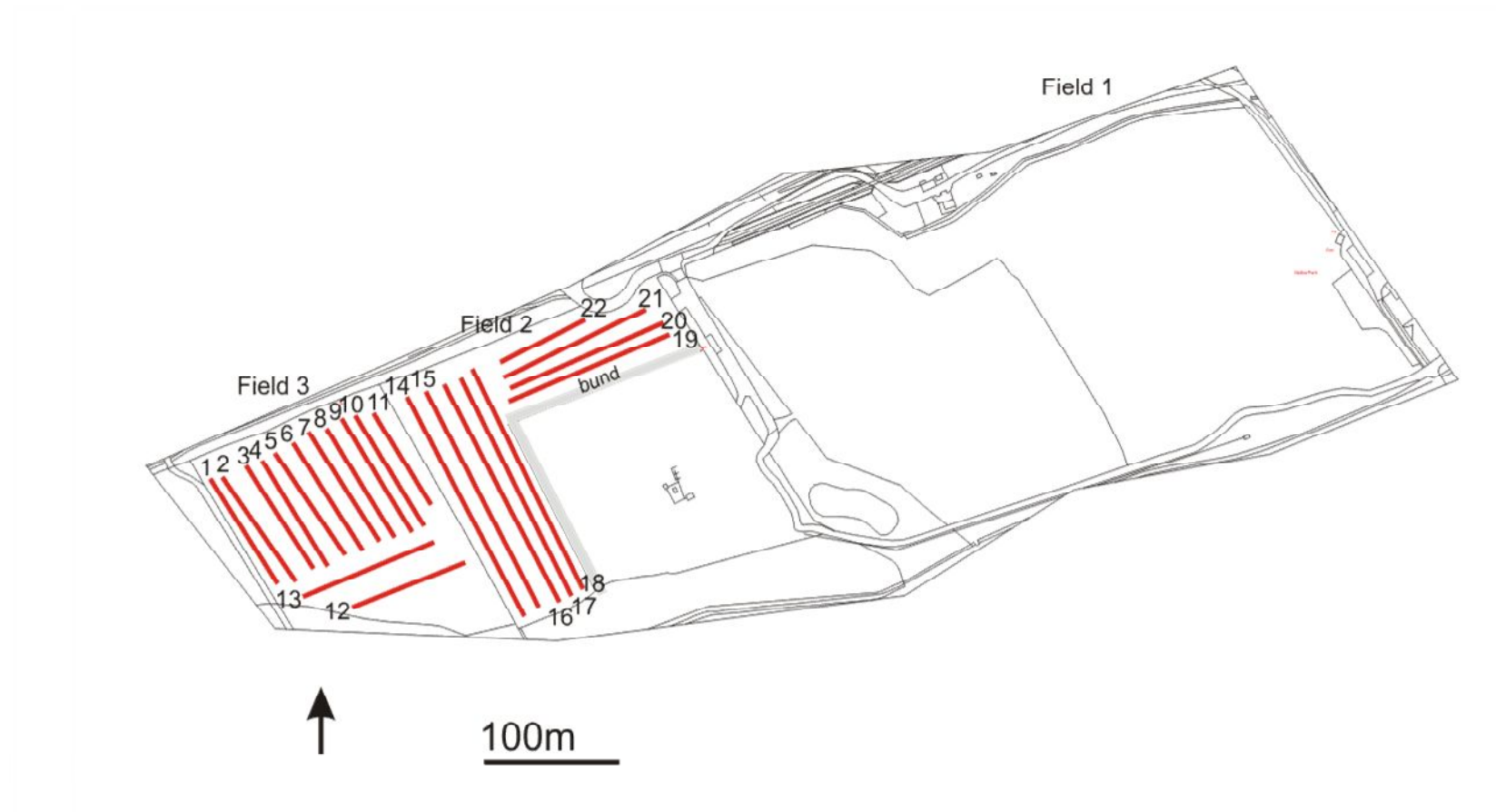
- 3.1 The cultivated topsoil was removed by a full slew excavator with a 2.2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Any possible features were cleaned and excavated by hand.
- 3.2 All mapping was done with an Ordnance Survey Aventura GPS.

4 Results of the Evaluation

Twenty-two evaluation trenches were excavated in total (Illus 3).



Illus 2 Field 3, looking SW.



Illus 3 Plan of the Fields 2 & 3 evaluation showing location of trenches (red). OS map reproduced Crown Copyright. Licence 100041040

Field 3

Field 3 sloped down from the N end towards the river at the S. The S end slightly leveled out along the river terrace, with a steep bank down to the river, just beyond the field boundary. It was in grass at the time of the evaluation, with rushy scrub at the S end of the field (Illus 2).

Trench 1

GPS NW end:NO76468/97004 SE end:NO76521/96926

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 95m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW : 400mm SE : 350mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney gravel at S end, finer more compact natural at higher N end.

Features None

Trench 2

GPS NW end:NO76481/97013 SE end:NO76533/96931

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 100m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 250mm SE : 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney gravel at S end, finer more compact natural at higher N end.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
1	NO 76500/96982	N/S field drain

Trench 3

GPS NW end:NO76499/97011 SE end:NO76548/96936

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 89m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW : 300mm SE : 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney gravel at S end, finer more compact natural at higher N end.

Features None

Trench 4

GPS NW end:NO76509/97019 SE end:NO76558/96938

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 101m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE: 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over compact clay, less stoney

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
2	NO 76558/96938 to NO76518/97008	N/S field drain



Illus 4 Trench 4, looking S. Drain (2)

Trench 5

GPS NW end:NO76519/97025 SE end:NO76572/96946

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 83m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE: 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney natural at lower S end with medium gravel in sandy clay, on the higher slope the natural was more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features None

Trench 6

GPS NW end:NO76531/97032 SE end:NO76583/96950

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 88m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 350mm SE : 500mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney at lower S end with medium gravel in sandy clay natural, higher slope natural more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features None

Trench 7

GPS NW end:NO76543/97037 SE end:NO76595/96956

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 99m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE : 350mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney at lower S end with medium gravel in sandy clay natural, higher slope natural more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
3	NO 76543/97037 to NO76570/96994	N/S field drain

Trench 8

GPS NW end: NO76555/97042 SE end: NO76608/96959

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 99m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE : 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney natural at lower S end with medium gravel in sandy clay, on the higher slope the natural was more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features None

Trench 9

GPS NW end: NO76567/97048 SE end: NO76619/96964

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 82m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE: 400mm Localised dip in natural to 600mm depth between 14 and 22m from S end.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stoney at lower S end with medium gravel in sandy clay natural, higher slope natural more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features None

Trench 10

GPS NW end:NO76576/97051 SE end:NO76630/96969

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 101m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE : 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over bouldery gravel at S and on the higher N slope the natural was more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
4	NO 76612/96991 to NO76605/97005	N/S field drain

Trench 11

GPS NW end:NO76590/97053 SE end:NO76638/96981

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 86m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 400mm SE: 500mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over bouldery gravel at S and higher N slope natural more compact sandy clay with fewer stones.

Features None

Trench 12

GPS E end:NO76660/96944 W end:NO76575/96909

Orientation: E/W Length: 86m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 400mm W: 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly gravel

Features None



Illus 5 Trench 12, looking W

Trench 13

GPS E end:NO76637/96958 W end:NO76539/96917

Orientation: E/W Length: 98m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 400mm W : 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly gravel, stonier at E end.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
5	NO 76629/96956	N/S field drain

Field 2

Field 3 was L-shaped, the W half being along the same slope as Field 3, but the E half lying E/W along the upper terrace. It was in grass at the time of the evaluation.

Trench 14

GPS NW end:NO76615/97065 SE end:NO76702/96901

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 182m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE : 300mm. Up to 500mm in dip between 20 and 40m from S.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly loose gravel at S, finer sandier to N

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
6	NO76647/97003	N/S field drain
7	NO76645/97007	N/S field drain
8	From NO76639/97020 to NO76624/97045	NW/SE stone field drain along trench



Illus 6 Field 2,W area with trenches 14-18, looking S

Trench 15

GPS NW end:NO76630/97070 SE end:NO76715/96907

Orientation: NW/SE Length:159m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW:300mm SE : 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly loose gravel at S, finer sandier to N

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
9	NO76659/97013	N/S field drain

Trench 16

GPS NW end:NO76642/97075 SE end:NO76728/96912

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 184m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE: 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly loose gravel at S, finer sandier to N

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
10	NO76688/96993	Red burnt patch on natural c. 400mm with black spread to 900mm. Depth c30mm. No associated artefacts or pieces of charcoal.
11	NO76669/97024	NE/SW drain across trench with 12 running into it
12	N)76642/97074	N/S drain

Trench 17

GPS NW end:NO76654/97075 SE end:NO76738/96915

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 187m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE : 400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly loose gravel at S, finer sandier to N

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
13	NO 76702/96982	Patchy charcoal staining in natural. No artefacts or pieces of charcoal
14	NO76695/96998	E/W wide field drain
15	NO76659/97064 to NO 76656/97068	N/S field drain

Trench 18

GPS NW end:NO76664/97085 SE end:NO76746/96921

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 182m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: NW: 300mm SE: 350mm. At c 77m from S end deepens to c 600mm for a dip, quite leached- possible water channel.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over pebbly sand.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
16	NO76707/96998 to NO76704/97006	Charcoal staining. No artefacts. It appears to be covered by redeposited natural and appears like modern material covered in.

Trench 19

GPS E end:NO76809/97110 W end:NO76689/97060

Orientation: E/W Length: 130m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 300mm W : 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over compact sand, some pebbles.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
17	NO76693/97061	N/S field drain.
18	NO76749/97086	N/S field drain
19	NO76758/97090	N/S field drain
20	NO76769/97094	N/S field drain

Trench 20

GPS E end: NO76806/97118 W end: 76692/97067

Orientation: E/W Length: 116m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 300mm W: 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over compact sand, some pebbles.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
21	NO76786/97107	N/S field drain
22	NO76778/97103	N/S field drain
23	NO76771/97099	N/S field drain
24	NO76746/97089	N/S field drain
25	NO76741/97087	N/S field drain
26	NO76736/97085	Small charcoal spread. No artefacts.
27	NO76715/97075	N/S field drain

Trench 21

GPS E end:NO76792/97127 W end:NO76686/97076

Orientation: E/W Length: 121m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 300mm W: 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over compact sand, some pebbles.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
28	NO76715/97091	N/S field drain
29	NO76731/97090	N/S field drain
30	NO76745/97104 to NO76748/97108	NW/SE field drain
31	NO76763/97114 to NO 76775/97119	E/W field drain

Trench 22

GPS E end:NO76747/97121 W end:NO76685/97089

Orientation: E/W Length: 65m Width: 2.2m

Depth above natural: E: 300mm W: 300mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over compact sand, some pebbles.

Features

No	Grid ref	Comment
32	NO76728/97110	N/S field drain
33	NO76718/97105 to NO76709/97102	E/W field drain
34	NO76702/97099	N/S field drain



Illus 7 Field 2, Trench 21 looking E

6 Finds

Modern finds

A small amount of 19th-20th century china, redware and bottle glass was noted in the topsoil. This was regarded as the result of midden manuring and was not retained.

Prehistoric finds

None. The complete absence of any flint was surprising, so, at the end of the evaluation, the spoil heaps were all checked again but without result.

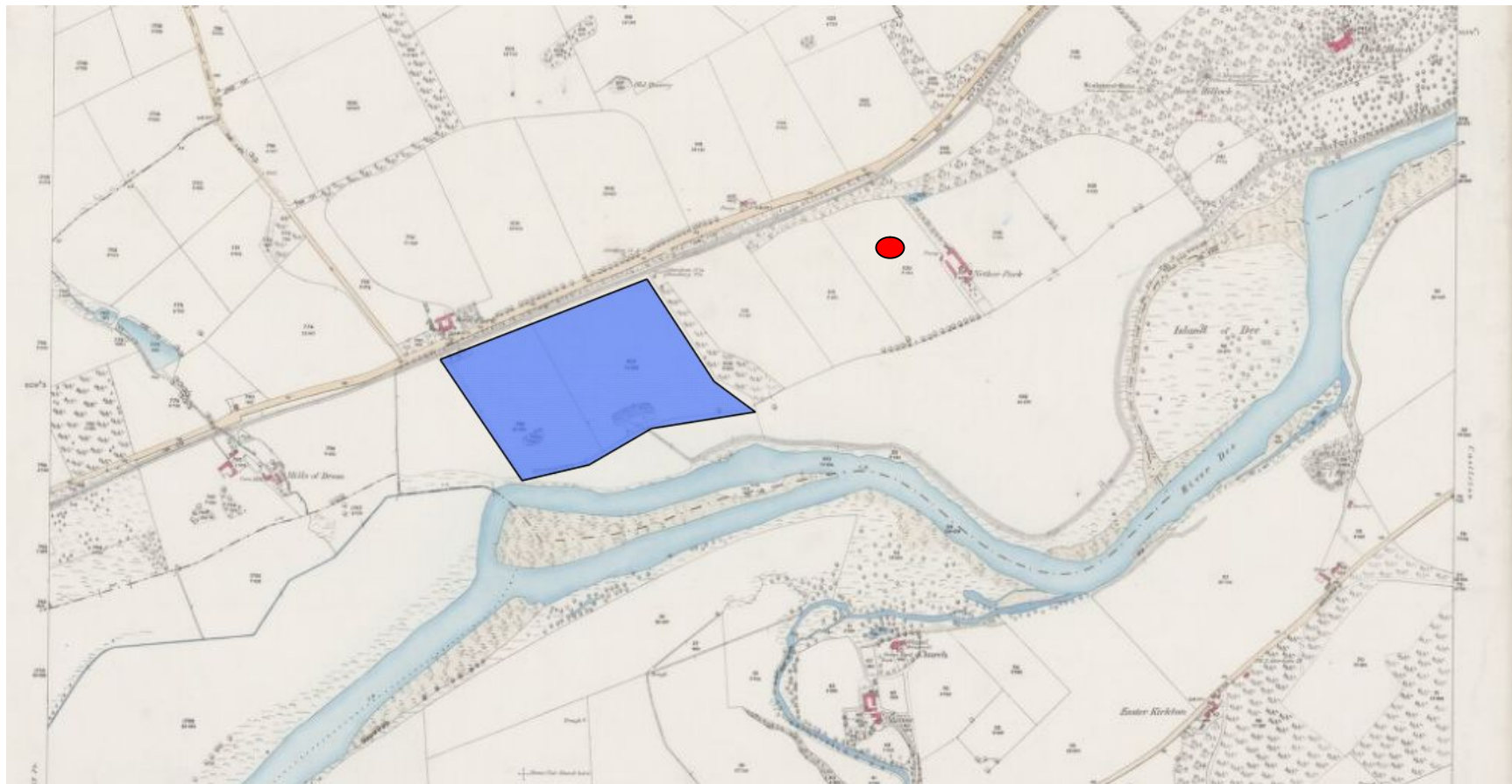
7 Discussion

Prior to the evaluation, there was a strong expectation that there would be evidence of prehistoric activity, at least in terms of an artefact scatter. Although it is possible for

individual flints to escape observation, the total lack is surprising. However, the very ephemeral appearance of the features excavated in 2018 may indicate that ‘settlement’ on the site was of a temporary and short-lived nature- possibly only a matter of a night or two.

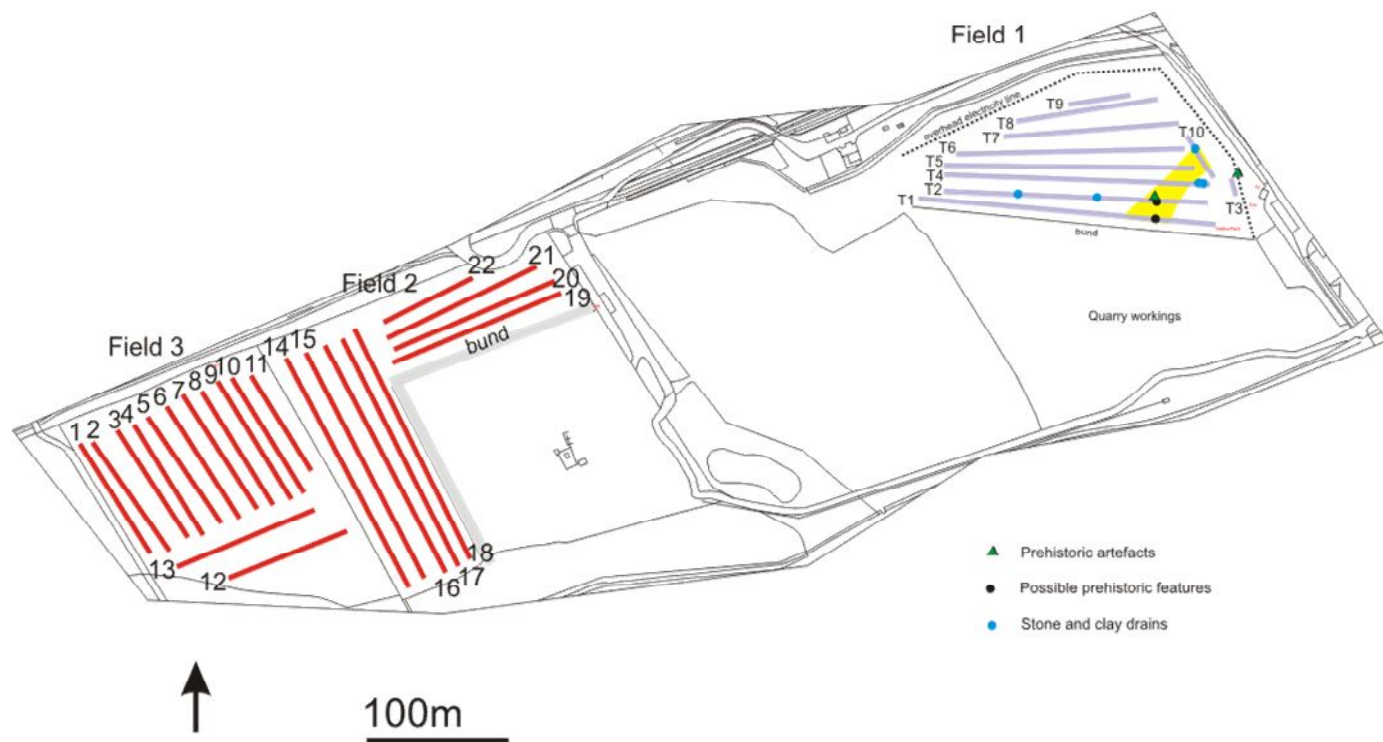
The explanation of the difference in the two areas may be in regard to ease of landing. Although the river will have changed considerably since the prehistoric period, the 25”/mile map of 1864 (Illus 8-10) shows the river beside the 2019 evaluation is braided, suggesting it is fairly active in this area and the very steep bank of the terrace below (S) of the 2019 evaluation area indicates that this has been true over a long period. This possibly suggests that in the prehistoric period this may have been a more difficult area to beach boats and land. This hypothesis needs to be checked with a specialist in geomorphology.

Later agricultural activity is demonstrated by the, probably 19th-century, stone field drains. Some patchy areas of burning may also have been related to modern agricultural practise; there was no indication of an early date.



Illus 8 Aberdeenshire 25"/mile XCIVa.4 (Combined)
Survey date: 1864 to 1865 Publication date: 1892

Blue indicates 2019 evaluation. Red dot is approximate area of prehistoric activity excavated in 2018.



Illus 9 Plan of the 2019 evaluation in relation to the evaluation and area of prehistoric activity in Field 1, excavated in 2018



Illus 10 The 2019 evaluation trenches (red) superimposed on an air photograph of the site (www.google.co.uk)

8 Impacts and Mitigations

8.1 Impacts None

8.2 Mitigations

8.2.1 There are no mitigations regarding the area of the 2019 evaluation.

8.2.2 This does not preclude the possibility of chance finds or archaeological discoveries outwith the evaluation trenches. Should such chance finds occur, then the Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire 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.

8.3 Publication

Now that all three fields of the quarry extension have been evaluated, full publication of the results of the area excavated in 2018 will be undertaken and will incorporate the results of the two phases of evaluation.

8 References

Murray, H K & Murray, J C 2018 Nether Park Quarry, Drumoak, Banchory, Aberdeenshire: Archaeological Evaluation. MAS 2018-16. Unpublished client report.

Murray, H K & Murray, J C 2018A Nether Park Quarry, Drumoak, Banchory, Aberdeenshire: Archaeological Excavation, interim summary report. MAS 2018-16A. Unpublished client report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record (photographs supplied to Aberdeenshire sites and monuments record).

Digital frame number	Content
1-2	Trench 4 looking S
3	General view field 3, looking SW
4-6	Trench 4, looking S. Drain (2)
7	Field 3, general view looking SW
8-9	Field 3 looking S. Trench 11
10	Field 3, looking W
11-15	Trench 12, looking W
16-19	Trench 13 looking E
20	Field 2 looking S
21	Field 2, looking E
22-23	Field 2 looking S
24	Fields 2 and 3 looking W
25-26	Field 2, trenches 19-21, looking E
27-30	Field 2, trench 21 looking E