







**Recovery of Human Remains
Church Square,
St Andrews, Fife
Archaeological Report**

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Executive Summary

ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were contracted by Mr Martin Robertson of Scottish Water following the discovery of human bone during excavations to insert a public water fountain at Church Square, St Andrews in Fife (NGR: NO 256558 665130). ARCHAS were required to recover any further buried human bone in advance of the construction, record their presence and ensure the bone was re-buried after works were complete.

Archaeological presence and excavation began on Tuesday the 19th of January 2021 and the work was completed over four days with the bone re-interred on the 26th January 2021. Excavation revealed the disarticulated remains of one individual that had been truncated due to the initial work as the entire skeleton was lying in an east-west position across the narrow trench with the lower back and upper legs recorded and recovered across the trench. The bone was recovered and subsequently re-interred. No other archaeological features or artefacts of any date were noted. identified or recovered.

A record of the work has been deposited with the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) website hosted by the Archaeological Data Service (OASIS ID archascu1-422550).

1 Introduction

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd was contacted by Mr Martin Robertson of Scottish Water on the 18th of January 2021 to attend site at Church Square, St Andrews following the discovery of human remains close to the north west of the Church of the Holy Trinity during digging to connect a new water fountain (NGR: NO 50883 16667).
- 1.1.2 Following contact with Scottish Water on the 18th of January, ARCHAS archaeologists attended site on the 19th of January and began recovery of disturbed human remains and excavation of *in situ* remains.
- 1.1.3 Archaeological excavation was undertaken on the 19th, 20th and 21st January while the remains were re-interred on Tuesday the 26th of January by Sofia Black. The weather conditions throughout were wet, very cold and windy.
- 1.1.4 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd conform to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (hereafter ClfA) Code of conduct, and relevant Standards and Guidance documents produced by the ClfA.

1.2 Site Location and Setting

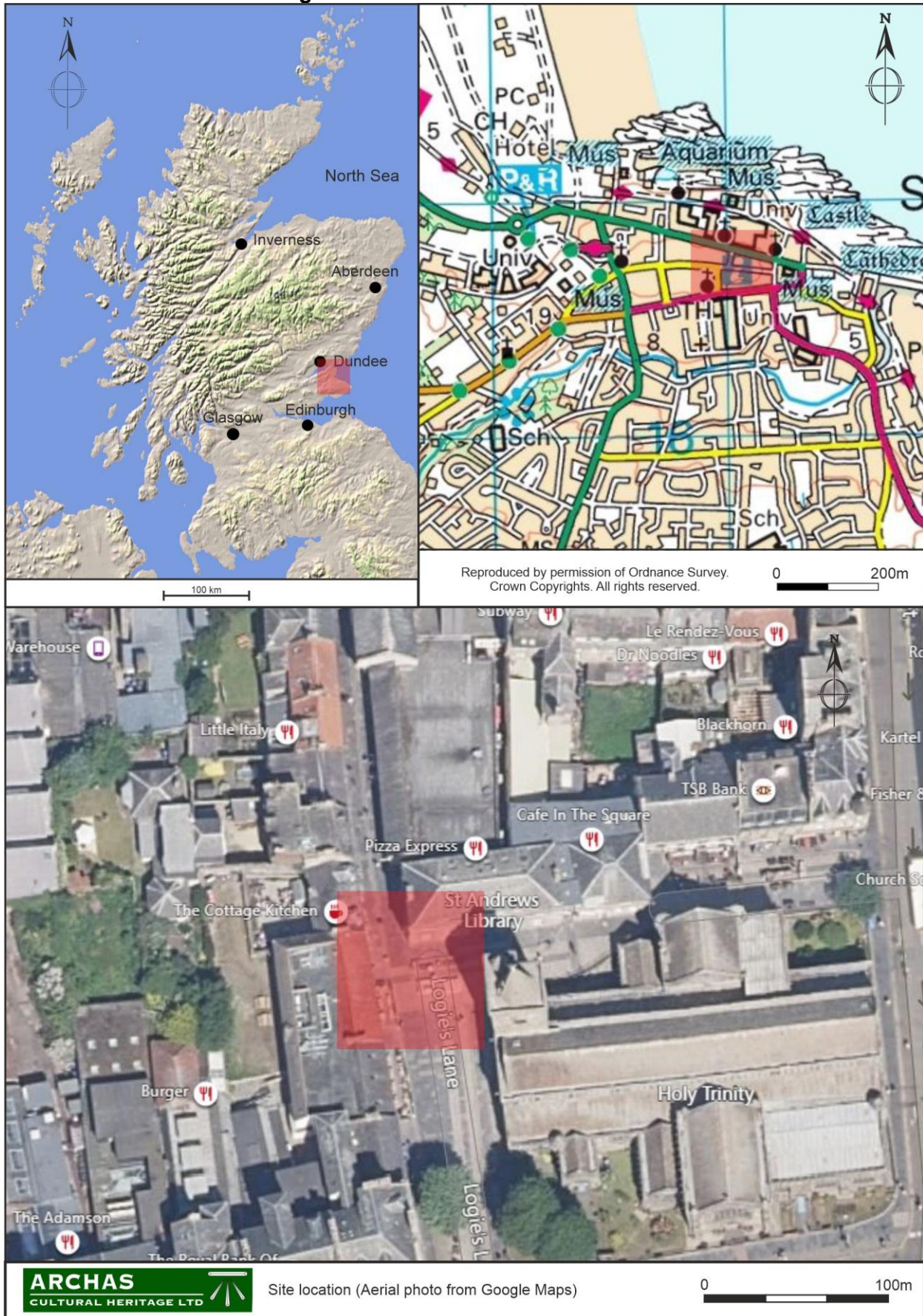


Figure 1: Site location with monitored area highlighted in red

General

1.2.1 The works lay within the boundaries of what would have been the graveyard of the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity, a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity dating from 1412, last reconstructed between 1907 and 1909 (NGR: NO 50917 16665; Ref: LB40633). The site is also directly south of the public library (NGR: NO 50895 16674; Ref: LB40885). The site is centred on NGR: NO 50883 16667.

Study Area

1.2.2 In plan, the proposed development area comprises an irregular rectangular shaped plot of land with the hall aligned north west by south east, measuring at approximately 1.10m by 0.60m (Figure 1).

Geology

1.2.3 The drift geology of the proposed development site comprises Raised Marine deposits, Devensian, clays, silts, sands and gravel. Formed up to two million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

1.2.4 The underlying bedrock geology comprises Sandy Craig formation, sedimentary rock cycles, Strathclyde group type. Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 329-337 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period.¹

¹ www.bgs.ac.uk – 19/04/21

2 Brief Archaeological & Historical Background

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Readily accessible historical and archaeological records were consulted in order to gain an understanding of the relevant history of the development area. These resources included the National Record of the Historic Environment, the Map Library as held by the National Library of Scotland and the Statistical Accounts of Scotland. Consultation of these resources for the wider area allows the archaeological team to better appreciate the likelihood of the archaeological deposits existing in the development area.
- 2.1.2 Some of the relevant sites in the surrounding landscape are discussed below. For each site, the reference with the NRHE is provided as the CANMORE ID, and followed where applicable with the reference of the WoSAS Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

2.2 Brief Historical Summary

- 2.2.1 There is frequent evidence of occupation of the general location of St Andrews from the early Neolithic through the Bronze Age to the establishment of the Medieval town. The topography and free draining soils of St Andrews providing an excellent location for settlement and occupation. This helps to explain the high frequency of Bronze Age burials and artefacts noted in CANMORE in the area around the old market and wider environs (CANMORE ID: 34313; CANMORE ID: 34315; CANMORE ID: 330100).
- 2.2.2 The proposed development site is close to the heart of Medieval St Andrews close to the site of the original market. The establishment of the present town began around 1140 by Bishop Robert on an L-shaped vill, possibly on the site of the ruined St Andrews Castle. According to a charter of 1170, the new burgh was built to the west of the Cathedral precinct, along Castle Street and possibly as far as what is now known as North Street. This means that the lay-out may have led to the creation of two new streets (North Street and South Street) from the foundations of the new St Andrews Cathedral filling the area inside a two-sided triangle at its apex. The northern boundary of the burgh was the southern side of the Scores (the street between North Street and the sea) with the southern by the Kinness Burn and the western by the West Port. The burgh of St Andrews was first represented at the great council at Scone Palace in 1357.
- 2.2.3 St Andrews and in particular the large cathedral built in 1160, was the most important centre of pilgrimage in medieval Scotland and one of the most important in Europe. Pilgrims from all over Scotland came in large numbers hoping to be blessed, and in many cases to be cured, at the shrine of Saint Andrew. The presence of the pilgrims brought about increased trade and development. Recognised as the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland, the town now had vast economic and political influence within Europe as a cosmopolitan town. In 1559, the town fell into decay after the violent Scottish reformation and the Wars of the three Kingdoms losing the status of ecclesiastical capital of Scotland. Even St Andrews University was considering relocating to the burgh of Perth around 1697 and 1698. Under the authorisation of the Bishop of St Andrews, the town was made a burgh of barony in 1614. The status of Royal Burgh was then granted as a charter by King James VI in 1620. In the 18th century, the town was still in decline, but despite this the town was becoming known for having links 'well known to golfers'. By the 19th century, the town began to expand beyond the original medieval boundaries with streets of new houses and town villas being built. Today, St Andrews is served by education, golf and the tourist and conference industry.

Previous Work

2.2.3 Human remains were uncovered in the area along the north edge of the Parish Church on a number of occasions from 1982 to 2003. Most recently, excavation was carried out between September and October 1991 for Fife Regional Council, who were carrying out environmental improvements within what had been the medieval burgh ground of Holy Trinity Church. The earliest evidence on the site consisted of the stone foundations of a building fronting on to South Street, which had been demolished by 1410 to make way for Holy Trinity Church. The area excavated within the former cemetery revealed 101 articulated skeletons and a large quantity of disarticulated human bone. Five earlier street surfaces were also revealed under the present road surface in South Street. Later, excavations during refurbishment of the library in July and August 2003 revealed 70 articulated human skeletons and significant quantities of disarticulated skeletal material from the graveyard of the parish church of the Holy Trinity. The graveyard is known to have been active between AD 1410-1600.

A horizon of construction material, including industrial ceramic and slag, was identified pre-dating the graveyard soil. The origin of these materials is uncertain, although they may well have derived from the AD 1400 construction of the church. These sediments all overlay natural sands and gravels. All the human skeletal material was cleared from the areas affected by the refurbishment of the public library.

2.3 Map Regression

General

2.3.1 Historic maps held by the National Library of Scotland were consulted in order to chart the development history of the site and to note those areas which may be worthy of archaeological investigation.

Early Mapping

2.3.2 One of the best sources of cartographic information prior to the genesis of the Ordnance Survey is William Roy's 'Military Survey of Scotland' from c.1750. The map from 1747-52 (Figure 2) clearly shows St Andrews as a bustling town. However, the map lacks detail of the buildings. All other early maps lacked detail relevant to the small area off Church Square under consideration here.



Figure 2: Extract from William Roy's Highland 'Military Survey of Scotland from c.1750 showing the approximate location of development area highlighted in black. © The British Library Board. All Rights Reserved (Roy Military Survey of Scotland)

Ordnance Survey Maps

2.3.3 The Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile 1st edition, Fife, Sheet 12, Surveyed: 1854, Published: 1855 map Church street (includes Market Street, South Street, and Holy Trinity Church) show the site surrounded by the same buildings it is today (Figure 3). The map displays the location of the development area in relation to The Parish Church of the Holy Trinity.



Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 6'' to the mile, Sheet 12 (1855) with the development site outlined in red

2.4 Conclusions

- 2.4.1 ARCHAS Ltd were requested to recover the human remains exposed during the development works for a new drinking fountain installed by Scottish Water in the area of Church Square (NGR: NO 50884 16668), as well as any subsequent remains that may have been uncovered later. The remains were associated with the burial ground of the nearby Parish Church of the Holy Trinity. Previously, human remains were discovered during various development works along the north edge of the church Burial ground between 1982 and 1990 (CANMORE ID: 34347, NGR NO 50917 16665).

3 Monitoring Results

3.1 Watching Brief Methodology

- 3.1.1 The watching brief as required by the planning condition involved the monitoring of all ground-breaking works associated with the proposed development and all human remains to be recovered by hand, and to be re-interred accordingly at the end of the project.
- 3.1.2 All ground-breaking works were undertaken by the contractor using a mechanical excavator fitted, where possible, *with a toothless ditching bucket*. All human remains and artefacts were excavated and recovered by hand.
- 3.1.3 This mechanical excavation work was monitored by a qualified ARCHAS archaeologist under watching brief conditions until:
- any archaeological horizons were noted;
 - human remains were exposed; or
 - undisturbed natural subsoil is apparent; or
 - the depth of the development impact (excavation) was reached.

3.2 Excavation Results

- 3.2.1 Monitoring and recovery (Plate 1-6) took place between the 19th and 21st of January 2021. The reinternment of the remains took place on the 26th of January 2021 (Plate 7). ARCHAS were called in after Scottish Water contractors uncovered disarticulated human remains (Plate 2).



Plate 1: Street-view of development area with slot location indicated with a red arrow.



Plate 2: Beginning of motoring slot with two bone fragments visible on the right-hand side.

3.2.2 After the initial machine excavation, the slot was excavated by hand and more remains were uncovered (Plate 3). Using delicate excavation tools and dental tools, a human pelvic bone was exposed along with parts of two associated leg bones (Plate 4-5).



Plate 3: Remains visible in slot.



Plate 4: Human remains in situ.



Plate 5: Human remains in situ.

- 3.2.3 During the excavation, a number of various disarticulated bones were recovered such as rib fragments, single humerus, two tibias, two partial femurs, pelvic bone and sacrum (Plate 4-5), metacarpals, and phalanges. It was not possible to determine whether or not all of the bones recovered belonged to a single or multiple individuals, as the remains were heavily truncated during the initial works.
- 3.2.4 After the remains were lifted, the desired depth of the slot was reached and no more excavation commenced, leaving a clean surface of compacted grave back-fill (Plate 6).
- 3.2.5 The remains were gathered in a black plastic bag with descriptive labels placed on the inside and outside to assist in future identification. The bag was carefully placed in the area of the slot where the remains were originally discovered and then covered with the pre-existing grave back-fill (Plate 7-8). It was agreed between ARCHAS and the contractors that the back-fill will be sealed with a layer of concrete.



Plate 6: Post-ex shot of slot after removal of remains.



Plate 7: Remains re-interred, pre-backfill.



Plate 8: Remains re-interred and drinking fountain installed.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The archaeological monitoring at Church Square saw the successful recovery and re-internment of a disarticulated human skeleton. No other remains or artefacts were exposed during the excavation and the remains were appropriately labelled for any future interference.
- 4.1.2 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd recommend that the proposed development be allowed to proceed and the planning condition be discharged.

Bibliography

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www.pastmap.org.uk
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Cartographic References

Maps consulted during the cartographic regression include:

Early Mapping

Date	Cartographer	Map
1750	Sir William Roy (c.1747-c.1752)	Military Survey of Scotland'

Ordnance Survey

Date	Cartographer	Map
1854-55	Ordnance Survey	Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile 1st edition, Fife, Sheet 12, Surveyed: 1854, Published: 1855

Appendix A Photographic Register

Image No.	Direction Facing	Trench	Context	Description	Date	Initials
001	N	1	-	Pre excavation	24/01/2018	AR
002	N	1	-	Pre-excavation	24/01/2018	AR
003	N	1	-	Working Shot	24/01/2018	AR
004	N	1	-	Septic tank removed	24/01/2018	AR
005	N	1	-	Septic tank removed	24/01/2018	AR
006	N	1	-	Working Shot	24/01/2018	AR
007	N	1	-	Working Shot	24/01/2018	AR
008	N	1	-	Working Shot	24/01/2018	AR
009	N	1	-	Working Shot	24/01/2018	AR
010	N	1	-	Post Excavation	24/01/2018	AR
011	N	1	-	Post Excavation	24/01/2018	AR
012	N	1	-	Post Excavation	24/01/2018	AR

Appendix B Provisional Discovery and Excavation Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Fife
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	334 Church Square
PROJECT CODE:	334
PARISH:	St Andrews and St Leonards
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alastair Rees and Sofia Black
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	n/a
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	n/a
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Human remains
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 50884 16668
START DATE (this season)	19/01/2021
END DATE (this season)	21/01/2021
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were contracted by Mr Martin Robertson of Scottish Water following the discovery of human bone during excavations to insert a public water fountain at Church Square, St Andrews in Fife (NGR: NO 256558 665130). ARCHAS were required to recover any further buried human bone in advance of the construction, record their presence and ensure the bone was re-buried after works were complete.</p> <p>Archaeological presence and excavation began on Tuesday the 19th of January 2021 and the work was completed over four days with the bone re-interred on the 26th January 2021. Excavation revealed the disarticulated remains of one individual that had been truncated due to the initial work as the entire skeleton was lying in an east-west position across the narrow trench with the lower back and upper legs recorded and recovered across the trench. The bone was recovered and subsequently re-interred. No other archaeological features or artefacts of any date were noted. identified or recovered.</p> <p>A record of the work has been deposited with the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) website hosted by the Archaeological Data Service (OASIS ID archascu1 – 419718).</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Scottish Water
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd 1 Begg road Kirkcaldy KY2 6HD
EMAIL ADDRESS:	alastair.rees@archas.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION	NMRS and and Fife Archaeological Council (intended)