







**Castle Craig Woodland,
Peebles,
Scottish Borders
Infrastructure Works,
Archaeological Watching Brief
Data Structure Report**



November 2016

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Executive Summary

ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were commissioned by Tilhill Forestry to undertake an archaeological watching brief associated with the upgrade of a forestry track and creation of a timber stacking area within an existing forestry plantation at Castle Craig. The site lies to the west of Peebles in the Scottish Borders Council area.

The proposed stacking area is located directly adjacent to a Scheduled Monument known as the Lochurd Hills ring enclosures and mounds (SM2998). This site has been virtually subsumed within the 20th century forestry plantation, but a buffer zone of 25m was maintained around the limits of the monument and all ground breaking works nearby were monitored by the ARCHAS archaeological team.

The watching brief failed to reveal any features or artefacts of archaeological interest.

ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd recommend that the archaeological obligations on this phase of the forestry work can be accepted as having been met.

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 archascu1-269754) and with Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES), the annual publication of fieldwork by Archaeology Scotland.

1 Introduction

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were commissioned by Tilhill Forestry (contact Francis Guyver) to undertake a watching brief associated with the upgrade of an existing forestry track in Castle Craig woodland on Woolshears Hill to the west of Peebles within the Scottish Borders Council area. The site is centred on NGR: NT 13152 42242 where the proposed works comprise the construction of a turning area for vehicles and an area for stacking timber.
- 1.1.2 As part of the Application for Prior Notification and Prior Approval submitted by the client, the area was identified as potentially archaeologically sensitive by Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer Dr Chris Bowles. This is primarily due to the proximity of the development to a site known as the Lochurd Hills, ring enclosure and mounds (SM2998) which is protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This protection categorises the site as one of National Importance the curation of which is overseen by Historic Environment Scotland (hereafter HES).
- 1.1.3 Through planning application 16/00975/PN the Archaeology Officer advised that there were two potential issues relating to the development in the proximity of a Scheduled Monument:
- Upgrade works on the eastern section of the track have potential to impact upon a ring enclosure associated with, but geographically separated from the remainder of the Scheduled Monument.
 - The proposed stacking area and turning area lie in close proximity to the west side of the main body of the Lochurd Hills Scheduled Monument.
- 1.1.4 The Scottish Borders Council Archaeologist recommended that no work take place within 25m of the Scheduled Monument and that any work proposed between the two geographically separate sections of the monument should be avoided as this area may retain features associated with the Scheduled site.¹
- 1.1.5 Consultation with HES showed they did not raise any objections to the proposed works, but requested the revisions and concerns of the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer be taken into account, while the area protected by Scheduling be marked out on the ground in advance of site works.²
- 1.1.6 ARCHAS held discussions with the Scottish Borders Archaeology Officer regarding the proposed development on 12/09/16. During these discussions, the Archaeology Officer indicated that he would require a watching brief on those areas identified as archaeologically sensitive in close proximity to the Scheduled Monument.
- 1.1.7 Prior to commencing work, ARCHAS completed a Written Scheme of Investigation (hereafter WSI) in line with the requirements of the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer. This document outlined the programme of work and standards adhered to by ARCHAS. This document was accepted by the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer on 08/11/16.
- 1.1.8 The watching brief was completed by Ross Cameron on Thursday 24/11/16 in a severe frost. Despite this, conditions remained bright and dry.

¹ Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer, Consultation Response - Castle Craig Forest, South of Kirkurd Gardens, Blyth Bridge, West Linton: Upgrade of forestry road – 11/08/16

² Historic Environment Scotland, Consultation Response – Castle Craig Forest, South of Kirkurd Gardens, Blyth Bridge, West Linton: Upgrade of forestry road – 16/09/16

1.1.9 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of conduct, and relevant Standards and Guidance documents produced by the CIfA.

1.2 Site Location and Setting

General

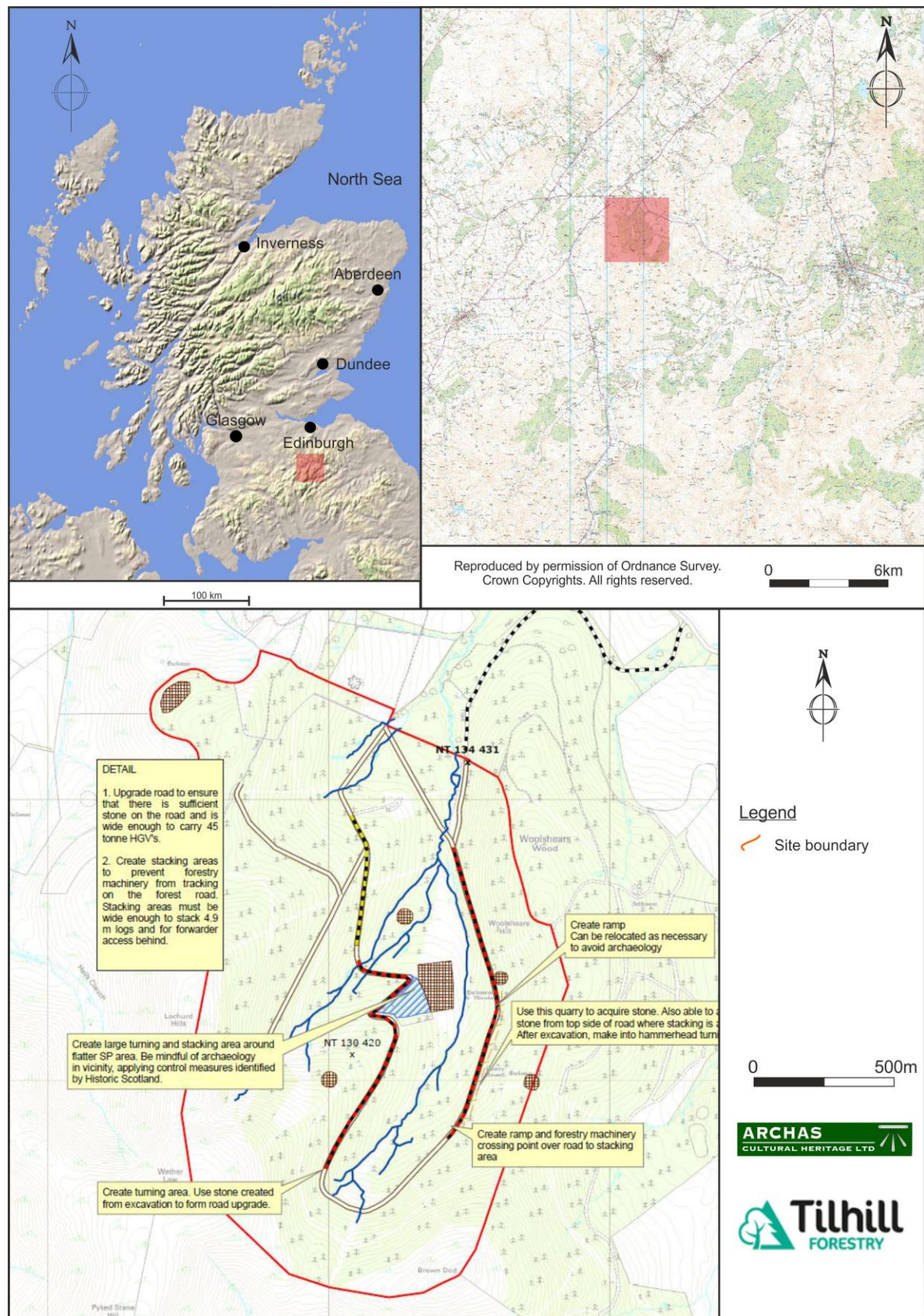


Figure 1: Site location showing the extent of the proposed development

- 1.2.1 The proposed development lies to the west of the town of Peebles in the Scottish Borders, a short distance south of the village of Blyth Bridge on Woolshears Hill (centred on NGR: NT 13152 42242). It is accessed via a forest track from the A72 at Castle Craig.
- 1.2.2 The track to be capped and updated forms a rough loop within the existing woodland with the proposed stacking area and turning area in the centre (Figure 1).

Study Area

- 1.2.3 The proposed infrastructure works are located in the existing Castle Craig woodland with the stacking and turning area proposed lying within an area until recently occupied by mature woodland (Plate 1). All work to upgrade and cap the roads takes place on existing established forestry tracks.
- 1.2.4 Two areas have been identified which will require an archaeological watching brief should ground breaking works be planned in the vicinity (Figure 2) - one along the western loop of the access track and the other along the eastern. Of these, no excavation work is planned along the eastern part of the route, with the watching brief being confined to the proposed stacking and turning area in the centre of the site.



Plate 1: Pre-excitation view looking SW across the proposed development area (Photograph 012)

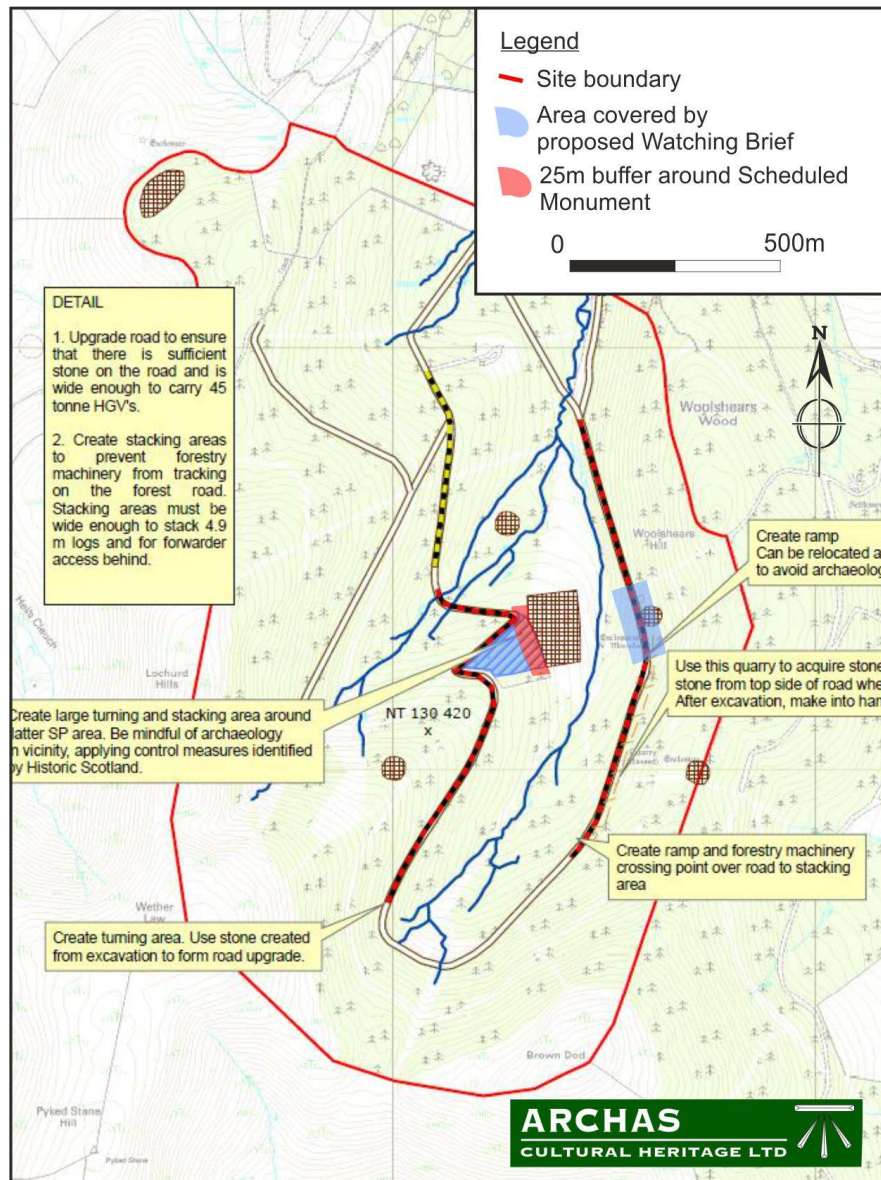


Figure 2: Extent of the proposed works with the area of the watching brief indicated in light blue. ARCHAS Ltd after Tilhill Forestry.

Geology

- 1.2.5 The superficial drift geology across the proposed development comprises Till, Devensian - Diamicton. These deposits can be dated to the Quarternary Period 2 million years ago and are characteristic of a local environment previously dominated by Ice Age conditions.
- 1.2.6 The underlying bedrock geology is predominatly from the Leadhills Supergroup – Wacke. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 444 million to 467 million years ago in the Ordovician Period. This is crossed by bands of Mudstone from the Lower Hartfell Shale Formation and the Glenkin Shale Formation both also dateable to the Ordovician Period. The bands of mudstone surround isolated strata of Crawford Group Chert.³

³ www.bgs.ac.uk –16/11/15

2 Background

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 The primary archaeological concern raised by the proposed infrastructure works is their proximity to the Scheduled Monument known as Lochurd Hills, ring enclosures and mounds (SM 2998, CANMORE ID: 50085) in the centre of the forest road loop, where the stacking and turning area is proposed.
- 2.1.2 The National Monuments Record of Scotland (hereafter NMRS) and The Scottish Borders Council Historic Environment Record (hereafter HER) were consulted in order to assess recorded sites in the immediate locality. The presence and density of known sites in the vicinity of proposed development can be a good indicator as to the levels of historic occupation and the likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving within the development site.
- 2.1.3 A selection of historic and current aerial images were also consulted as well as readily available historic maps.

2.2 Summary Historic Background

General

- 2.2.1 The sites identified in proximity to Castle Craig Wood predominantly fall into two wide categories - Prehistoric occupation and post-medieval agricultural use of the land.

Prehistoric

- 2.2.2 The Lochurd Hills Scheduled Monument comprises a group of four, turf banked ring enclosures with no entrances, with two small barrows alongside. These were recorded by the Ordnance Survey in 1912, by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) in 1967 and again by RCAHMS in 2000. However, subsequently the area has been extensively planted with some of the sites preserved within small buffer zones in the now mature woods.
- 2.2.3 Another Nationally Important Scheduled Monument is located at the NW edge of the forest. Known as Gallowberry Wood Fort (SM3007, CANMORE ID: 50144) this site can be roughly dated to the Iron Age.
- 2.2.4 The Woolshears Hill scooped settlement (CANMORE ID: 50078) to the east of the eastern loop of the roadway was Scheduled until November 1994. It is now obscured by thick forestry plantation.
- 2.2.5 Further evidence of Prehistoric occupation within and in the environs of the Castle Craig Wood are to be found at the site of an Iron Age palisaded enclosure destroyed by planting (CANMORE ID: 50079) and the cropmark of a ring enclosure (CANMORE ID: 50129) close to the Gallowberry Wood Fort.

Post-medieval Agricultural Landscape

- 2.2.6 A building is recorded within the area of the Lochurd Hills Scheduled Monument in the 19th century while cultivation terraces (CANMORE ID: 50101) have also been recorded general area of the site. These are thought to have been destroyed by the forestry plantation.
- 2.2.7 A circular sheepfold has also been recorded in the southern part of the Castle Craig Wood (CANMORE ID: 50082).

2.3 Map Regression

Pre-Ordnance Survey Maps

- 2.3.1 The early, pre-Ordnance Survey maps fail to show any indication of occupation within the proposed development boundary.
- 2.3.2 William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland from c.1750 is generally considered the first map to show terrain and occupation levels to any degree of accuracy. This map clearly shows the development area south of Kirkurd as wholly devoid of occupation.
- 2.3.3 The map 'Peebles-Shire' by John Thomson and William Johnson was produced in 1821. It shows the site in reasonable detail to a good level of accuracy. No features are noted within the site boundary, which is shown as devoid of trees.

Ordnance Survey Maps

- 2.3.4 The Ordnance Survey completed their first survey of the Castle Craig area and Woolshears Hill in 1856, publishing the first edition in 1859. The 25 inch to 1 mile Peebles Sheet XII.1 (Kirkurd) map shows most of the development area, well in advance of the current forestry plantation on Woolshears Hill. The area of the Scheduled Monument is clearly identified by the presence of a small walled forestry plantation (Figure 3). This plantation is still visible today and forms the basis of the area identified for the proposed stacking and turning area.

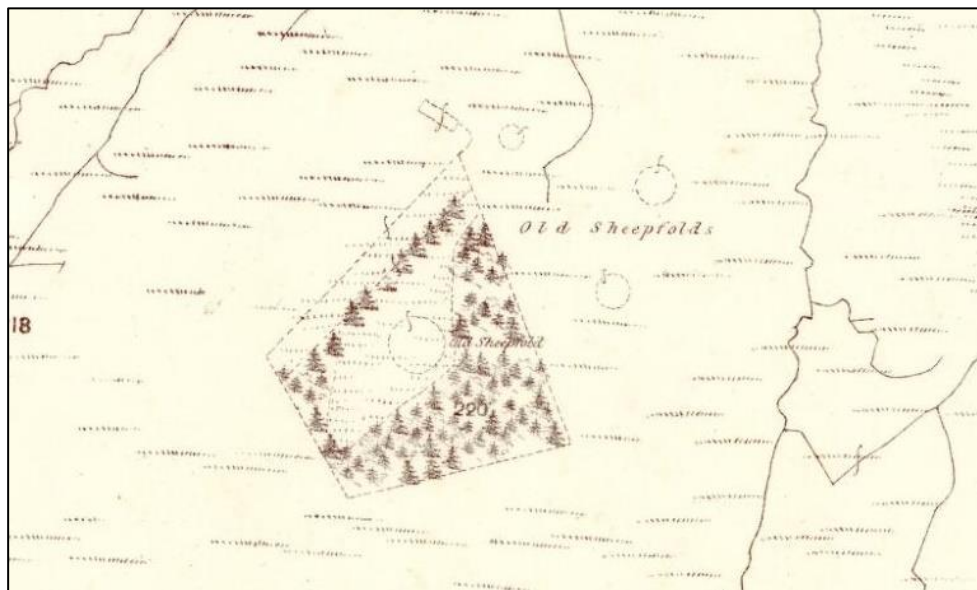


Figure 3: The area of the proposed stacking and turning area as shown on the 1st edition 25 inch to 1 mile Peebles Sheet XII.1 (Kirkurd) from 1856-9. Note the presence of the circular features marked 'old sheepfolds'. NLS

- 2.3.5 The turf banked ring enclosures and barrows of the Lochurd Hills Scheduled Monument are clearly shown, marked here as 'Old Sheepfolds' (Figure 3).
- 2.3.6 Subsequent editions of the OS maps continue to show the circular features, marked as sheepfolds.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 The watching brief as required by Scottish Borders Council involved the monitoring of *all* ground breaking works within the areas defined in Figure 2. In practice this involved the excavation of the stacking and turning area along the western loop of the forest track.
- 3.1.2 The limits of the Scheduled Monument are clearly marked by the presence of a timber post and wire fence. The trees within the proposed stacking area had already been felled prior to arrival on site, so a buffer one of c.25m was marked from the limit of the Scheduled Monument, clearly defining the area available for excavation.
- 3.1.3 Ground-breaking works were undertaken by the contractor using a 14 tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.20m wide toothless ditching bucket. As the mature trees across the site had already been felled, it was necessary to remove the stumps with a toothed bucket in advance of topsoil stripping.



Plate 2: Working shot looking NW showing the stripping of topsoil adjacent to the buffer around the Scheduled area (Photograph 017)

- 3.1.4 All mechanical excavation work was monitored by a qualified ARCHAS Ltd archaeologist under watching brief conditions until undisturbed natural subsoil became apparent or the area was cleared as having no archaeological deposits. During excavation soil was removed gradually in spits of c.0.10m.
- 3.1.5 The methodology agreed with the contractor meant that the site would be divided into transects of around 15-20m wide, aligned roughly north to south. The mechanical excavator would track across this area, removing the tree stumps under archaeological supervision. These would be placed on the eastern edge of the transect.
- 3.1.6 Once the transect was clear of timber, the mechanical excavation would begin using the toothless bucket. Once the archaeologist was happy that each transect contained no archaeological deposits, this area was recorded and the spoil excavated from the next transect was placed atop the area cleared by the first.

- 3.1.7 Records were compiled on ARCHAS Ltd pro forma context sheets of all stratigraphic soil layers identified during the excavations.
- 3.1.8 A comprehensive photographic record was maintained of all ground breaking works on site.

4 Results

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 A description of stratigraphic layers excavated is provided below. Detail of the contexts encountered can be viewed in Appendix A. All context numbers for layers and features are recorded in bold within curved parentheses (**xxx**).
- 4.1.2 It was anticipated that the presence of a mature forestry plantation across the area to be monitored would have caused significant disruption to the underlying subsoil both through the ploughing and planting process, and through the growth and spread of the tree's root networks.
- 4.1.3 Perhaps as a result of the timber felling and tree stump removal, the topsoil (**001**) proved to be shallow, consisting of <0.25m loosely compact, heavily organic dark to mid brown loam.
- 4.1.4 The natural subsoil comprised moderately compact mid orange brown sandy gravel (**002**). On the whole this was relatively undisturbed, with little evidence of disruption caused by ploughing during planting. However, as anticipated, there were large areas of disturbed natural caused by bioturbation the removal of tree stumps. All of these darker areas were investigated and none proved to be archaeological.



Plate 3: Looking SE across a transect (Photograph 027)



Plate 4: Looking SE across a transect (Photograph 038)

5 Summary and Discussion

5.1. General

- 5.1.1 It is clear that the area now occupied by the Castle Craig Woodland is one which is rich in prehistoric archaeological features and the potential for such deposits to have existed in the area of the proposed development was considered high.
- 5.1.2 However, this area was planted in the second half of the 20th century, and while the disruption caused by this planting was not as clear as may have been anticipated, it is possible that the planting will have removed any archaeological features that had existed in this area.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts (either *in situ* or *ex situ*) were recorded during the watching brief at Castle Craig.

6 Recommendations

6.1. General

- 6.1.1 Archaeological monitoring during excavation of the proposed stacking area at Castle Craig Woodland failed to reveal any indication of pre-existing or disturbed archaeological deposits.
- 6.1.2 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage do not recommend any further archaeological mitigation with regards to the current development and believe the archaeological obligations have been met.
- 6.1.3 Whilst ARCHAS can provide recommendations as to any future work on site, the final decision for any further archaeological mitigation rests with the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer on behalf of Scottish Borders Council.

Acknowledgements

ARCHAS Cultural Heritage would like to thank Francis Guyver of Tilhill Forestry for commissioning us to undertake the work. Francis and Tilhill Forestry have our gratitude for their understanding and for their commitment to protecting the archaeological resources of Castle Craig.

The mechanical excavator was operated by Ian Thomson. Ian was highly skilled and made the watching brief prompt and painless.

Our thanks also go to Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer Dr Chris Bowles. Chris was generous both with his time and his advice during the completion of the project.

Bibliography

Documentation

Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer, Consultation Response - Castle Craig Forest, South of Kirkurd Gardens, Blyth Bridge, West Linton: Upgrade of forestry road – 11/08/16

Historic Environment Scotland, Consultation Response – Castle Craig Forest, South of Kirkurd Gardens, Blyth Bridge, West Linton: Upgrade of forestry road – 16/09/16

Online

www.bgs.uk
www.canmore.org.uk
www.historicenvironment.scot
www.nls.uk

Appendix A Context Register

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Initial</i>
001	Deposit	Loosely compact heavily organic dark to mid brown loam.	D: <0.25m	Topsoil disrupted by forestry works	24/11/16	RC
002	Deposit	Moderately compact mid orange brown sandy gravel	-	On the whole, relatively undisturbed but with evidence for bioturbation and tree stump removal	24/11/16	RC

Appendix B Photographic Register

<i>Image No.</i>	<i>Direction Facing</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Initials</i>
001	SE	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	15/09/16	RC
002	SW	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	15/09/16	RC
003	S	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	15/09/16	RC
004	N	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	15/09/16	RC
005	S	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	15/09/16	RC
006	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	15/09/16	RC
007	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	15/09/16	RC
008	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	15/09/16	RC
009	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	15/09/16	RC
010	S	(001)	Working shot - Removing tree stumps	24/11/16	RC
011	N	(001)	Working shot - Removing tree stumps	24/11/16	RC
012	SW	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	24/11/16	RC
013	N	(001)	Working shot - Removing tree stumps	24/11/16	RC
014	N	(001)	Working shot - Removing tree stumps	24/11/16	RC
015	N	(001)	Working shot - Stripping topsoil	24/11/16	RC
016	NW	(001)	Working shot - Stripping topsoil	24/11/16	RC
017	N	(002)	Working shot - revealing subsoil (002)	24/11/16	RC
018	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 1	24/11/16	RC
019	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 1	24/11/16	RC
020	NE	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 1	24/11/16	RC
021	SE	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 1	24/11/16	RC
022	SE	-	Pre-excavation view of WB area	24/11/16	RC
023	SE	(002)	Working shot - stripping transect 2	24/11/16	RC
024	SW	(002)	Working shot - stripping transect 2	24/11/16	RC
025	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 2	24/11/16	RC
026	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 2	24/11/16	RC
027	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 3	24/11/16	RC
028	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 3	24/11/16	RC
029	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	24/11/16	RC
030	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	24/11/16	RC
031	-	-	Working shot - Scheduled area within buffer zone	24/11/16	RC
032	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 4	24/11/16	RC
033	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 4	24/11/16	RC
034	W	(002)	Working shot - stripping transect 5	24/11/16	RC
035	NW	(002)	Working shot - stripping transect 5	24/11/16	RC
036	NW	(002)	Working shot - stripping transect 5	24/11/16	RC
037	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 5	24/11/16	RC
038	S	(002)	Post-excavation view of transect 5	24/11/16	RC

Appendix C

Provisional Discovery and Excavation Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Scottish Borders Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Castle Craig Woodland
PROJECT CODE:	250
PARISH:	Kirkurd
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Ross Cameron
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT 14 SW 17
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	n/a
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS
START DATE (this season)	24/11/16
END DATE (this season)	24/11/16
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were commissioned by Tilhill Forestry to undertake an archaeological watching brief associated with the upgrade of a forestry track and creation of a timber stacking area within an existing forestry plantation at Castle Craig. The site lies to the west of Peebles in the Scottish Borders Council area.</p> <p>The proposed stacking area is located directly adjacent to a Scheduled Monument known as the Lochurds Hills ring enclosures and mounds (SM2998). This site has been virtually subsumed within the 20th century forestry plantation, but a buffer zone of 25m was maintained around the limits of the monument and all ground breaking works nearby were monitored by the ARCHAS archaeological team.</p> <p>The watching brief failed to reveal any features or artefacts of archaeological interest.</p> <p>ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd recommend that the archaeological obligations on this phase of the forestry work can be accepted as having been met.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Tilhill Forestry
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	ARCHAS Cultural Heritage LTD Suite B2 Laws Close 339-343 High Street Kirkcaldy KY1 1JN
EMAIL ADDRESS:	ross.cameron@archas.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION	NMRS and Scottish Borders Council HER (intended)