
Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) FAS Archaeological Evaluation (Site 18) Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Royal Haskoning C/o 29 West Road Greshop Industrial Estate Forres IV36 2GW
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NJ 0223 5877
AOC Project No:	21607
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Date of Fieldwork:	23rd October 2012
Date of Report:	30th October 2012

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Draft/Final Report Stage:	Date:

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken in relation to Site 18 of the Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) Flood Alleviation Scheme near Greshop House, Forres.

The evaluation required the excavation of two targeted trenches across Site 18, a known crop mark (NMRS no. NJ05NW 121) thought to be a possible ring ditch. In total, 43m of trenching with combined basal dimensions of 86 m² was conducted across the crop mark area.

Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Royal Haskoning on behalf of their client Moray Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation over a known crop mark (Site 18; NMRS no. NJ05NW 121) near Greshop House, Forres. The evaluation was undertaken in order to satisfy the requirements of the local planning authority, Moray Council who are advised on archaeological matters by Aberdeen Council Archaeology Service (ACAS). The works were conducted according to the terms of a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2010) approved on behalf of Moray Council by ACAS in September 2010 and in accordance with the principles set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government 2010) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning & Archaeology* (Scottish Government 2011).

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The site is centred at NGR NJ 0223 5877 and lies in the floodplain of the River Findhorn. The crop mark was noted approximately 150m east of the River Findhorn where it is crossed by the Inverness to Aberdeen railway line (Figure 1). Greshop House is approximately 500m to the north and east. The river bank is lined with mature trees and there is a larger area of woodland to the west of Greshop House and to the north of the crop mark. The land is currently used for arable farming (Plate 1).



Plate 1 - View across crop mark area

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 An archaeological desk-based study has been undertaken as part of the project's environmental impact assessment process, '*Chapter 8: Historic Environment*' (MFAG590; AOC 2007). This work and consultation with ACAS and Historic Scotland identified a number of archaeologically significant sites and areas of interest throughout the entire Flood Alleviation Scheme.

1.3.2 The crop mark (site 18) has been identified as a possible ring ditch by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments Scotland (NMRS no. NJ05 NW 121). No other crop marks or early archaeological features have been found in the vicinity, with most of the archaeology noted in this area being related to the railway line and a 20th century airfield to the south.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:

- i) to determine and assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed development area;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The evaluation was due to consist of two machined trenches; one 20m long aligned N-S and the other 25m long aligned E-W, forming a cross through the approximate location of the crop mark. Due to the presence of a medium pressure gas main running alongside and parallel to the railway line, the N-S trench had to be shortened to allow a safe buffer between the machine activity and the service. In total, 43m of trenching with a total basal dimension of 86m² was excavated using a wheeled excavator with a bladed ditching bucket.

4 RESULTS

4.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 23rd October 2012. Overall weather conditions were dry and sunny, making archaeological visibility very good throughout the evaluation. In total 43m of trenching was opened, with Trench 1 aligned N-S and Trench 2 aligned E-W (Figure 2).



Plate 2 – East facing section of Trench 1

4.2 Topsoil/ploughed soil within the development area was a mid brown silty sand measuring 0.3m to 0.38m thick. Trench 1 identified alluvial deposits to a depth of 1.2m consisting of a pale yellow and mid brown sand overlying a mid grey clayey sand, overlying the natural orange gravel. Trench 2 identified similar alluvial deposits to a depth of 1.3m in the eastern end of the trench, whereas the western end of the trench was only 0.7m deep before encountering the natural gravel.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were identified during the evaluation. Given the depth of alluvial deposits in the eastern end of Trench 2 compared with the western end of Trench 2, as well as the sites location in the flood plain of the River Findhorn, it is most likely that the crop mark is a geological feature related to past alluvial activity as opposed to being archaeological in nature.
- 5.2 The significant balance of probability is that the site is free of archaeological material. No further archaeological works are considered necessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by the Aberdeen Council Archaeology Service (ACAS) on behalf of Moray Council.

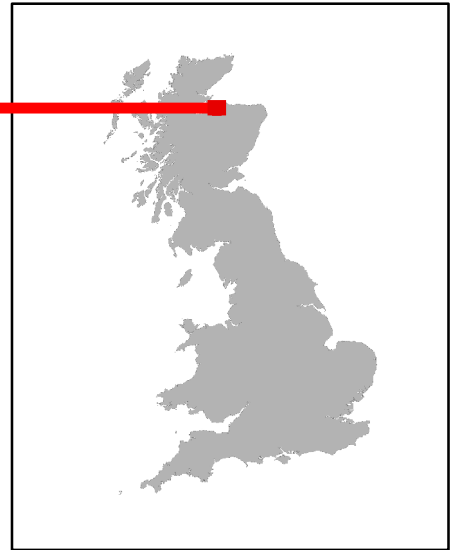
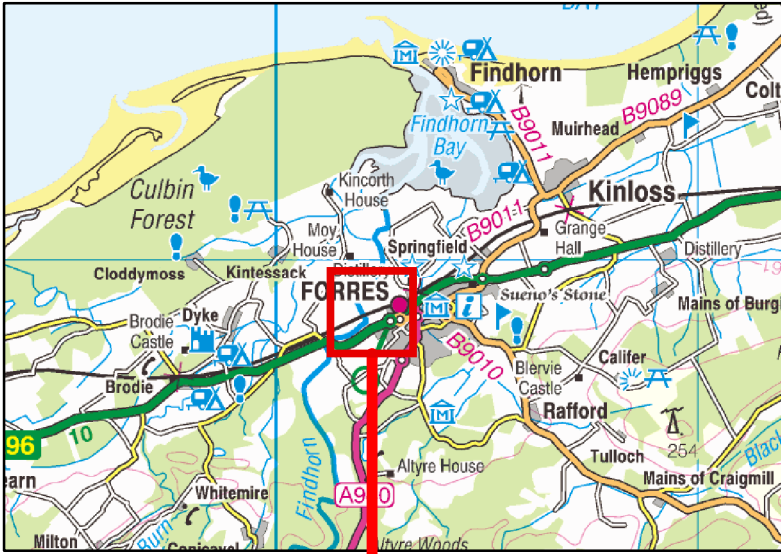
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC 2007 *River Findhorn & Pilmuir Flood Alleviation Scheme: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Chapter 8 in FAS's Environmental Statement).

AOC 2010 *Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) FAS: Evaluation (Sites 18&28) Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpubl AOC Project Design.

Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy*, February 2010.

Scottish Government 2011 *Planning And Archaeology 2/2011*.



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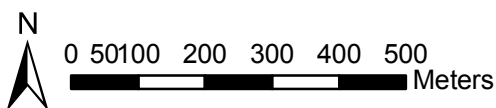
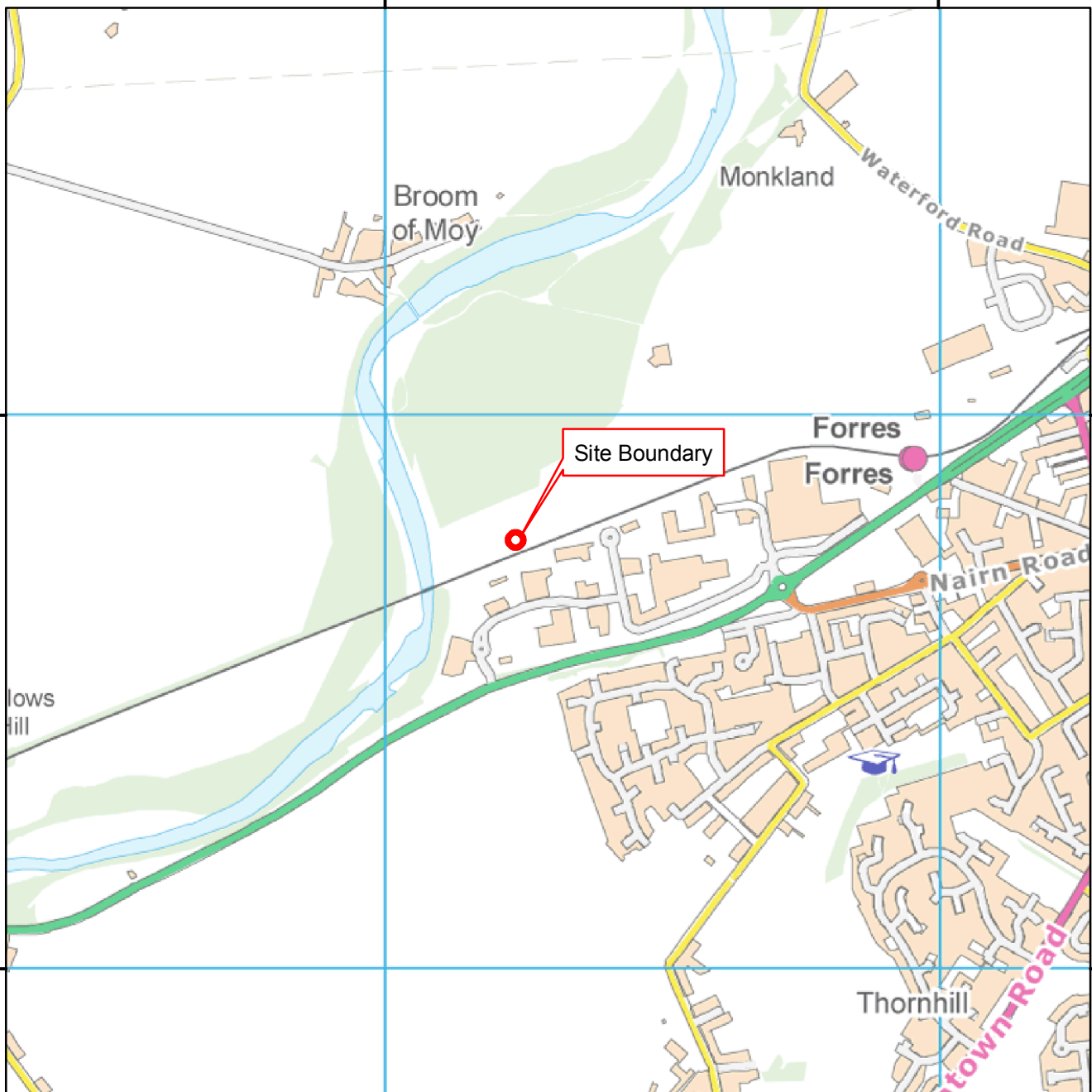


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

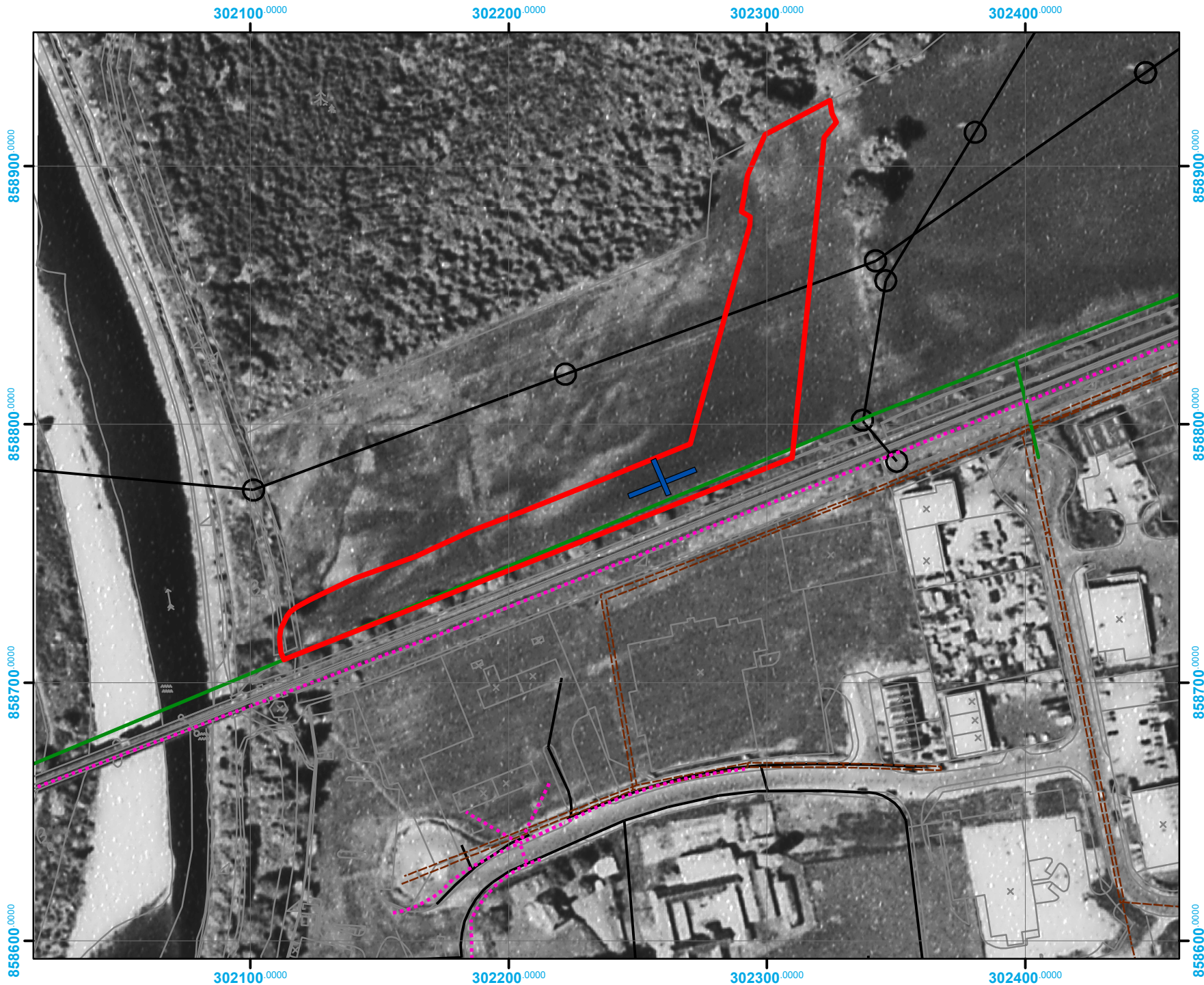
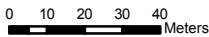


Figure 2: Evaluation Trench Locations

Legend

- trench
- proposed bund
- BT service
- gas service
- gravity pipe service
- electricity service
- OS plan



Cartographic data derived from OS OpenData, Crown Copyright

Project No.:	21607
Date:	06.11.12
Scale at A4:	1:2,000



(c) AOC Archaeology 2010

Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) FAS: Archaeological Evaluation (Site 18) Data Structure Report

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	15.0 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	30 m ²
<i>Orientation</i>	N-S
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.38 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	1 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Pale yellow and mid brown sand @ 0.38 m onto a mid grey clayey sand @ 0.8 m onto orange gravel @ 1.2 m
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	28 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	56 m ²
<i>Orientation</i>	E-W
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.38 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.7 m to 1.3 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	East end - Pale yellow and mid brown sand @ 0.38 m onto a mid grey clayey sand @ 0.7 m onto a mid brown clayey sand with lenses of pale yellow sand @ 0.9 m onto orange gravel @ 1.3 m; West end - Pale yellow and mid brown sand @ 0.3 m onto a mid to dark brown clayey sand @ 0.49 m onto orange gravel @ 0.7 m
<i>Finds</i>	None

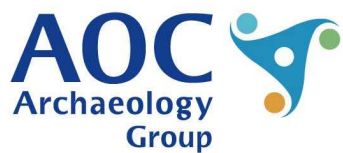
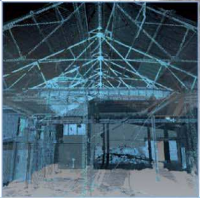
APPENDIX 2: Photographic Record

Digital Photographs

Frame	Description	From	Date
1	E-facing section of Trench 1 – North end	E	23/10/12
2	E-facing section of Trench 1 – South end	E	23/10/12
3	Working shot trench 2	E	23/10/12
4	General shot of field	W	23/10/12
5	S-facing section of T2 – West end	S	23/10/12
6	T2 post-ex	W	23/10/12

APPENDIX 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Moray Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) FAS: Archaeological Evaluation (Site 18)
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21607
PARISH:	Forres
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Kevin Paton
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S)	NJ05NW 121
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Possible Ring Ditch (Crop mark)
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 0223 5877
START DATE (this season)	23 rd October 2012
END DATE (this season)	23 rd October 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in relation to the Forres Flood Alleviation Scheme near Greshop House, Forres.</p> <p>The evaluation required the excavation of two targeted trenches across a known crop mark (NMRS no. NJ05NW 121) thought to be a possible ring ditch. In total, 43m of trenching with combined basal dimensions of 86 m² was conducted across the crop mark area.</p> <p>Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	---
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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