

Cambuskenneth Abbey, Tower Orchard Garden, Stirling:

Archaeology Test Pitting Report

On Behalf of:	Central Scotland Green Network Trust Hillhouse ridge Shottskirk Road Shotts North Lanarkshire ML7 4JS
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NS 80835 93914
OASIS No:	223455
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Summary

A programme of archaeological test pitting was required by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust at Cambuskenneth Abbey, Stirling, as part of the wider project to re-create part of the Tower Orchard at Cambuskenneth Abbey. The site lies outwith the Scheduled Monument area of Cambuskenneth Abbey, although Stirling Council requested that a test pitting exercise be undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site prior to potential tree planting. From there, the Stirling Council will determine whether any further archaeological works are required prior to or during any further on-site works as part of the overall project.

The test pitting revealed a relatively uniform soil matrix across the site, with the natural only being uncovered in two of the pits. Overall the most archaeologically significant deposit was a greyish-brown sandy-silty clay deposit beneath the topsoil with a high frequency of small finds, including oyster shell, animal bone and ceramics. The pottery within this deposit varied in date from late 13th to 17th century with the highest density of pottery finds to the north side nearest to the Abbey wall, although the earliest identifiable piece was actually found in Test Pit 7, furthest from the Abbey. It is therefore likely that this subsoil is associated with the original general cultivation and maintenance throughout the post-medieval period and beyond.

Two of the test pits revealed potential building materials and a possible surface.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 A programme of archaeological test pitting was required by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust at Cambuskenneth Abbey, Stirling, as part of the wider project to re-create part of the Tower Orchard at Cambuskenneth Abbey. The site subject to the test pitting is outwith the Scheduled Monument area of Cambuskenneth Abbey, although Stirling Council requested that a test pitting exercise be undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site prior to intended tree planting. From there, Stirling Council will determine whether any further archaeological works are required prior to or during any further on-site works as part of the overall project.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Tower Orchard Garden is located to the immediate south-west of the remains of Cambuskenneth Abbey, centred on NGR: NS 80835 93914 (Figure 1).

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 Cambuskenneth Abbey was founded in the 1140s by David I and was an Augustinian abbey. It was first excavated in the 1860s by William Mackieson who also restored the free standing bell tower on the site, although the remains of the abbey are now only foundations.

1.3.2 The tower orchard here lies to the south-west of the bell tower to the south of the Abbey boundary wall and appears to have always been used as an open space or orchard/garden. The first detailed map is from the mid-18th century in Roy's map, ca. 1747 – 1755 (Figure 2). Here the site is recorded as being planted with trees. In the later First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863 also shows the orchard planted with trees. It is depicted as such throughout the later 19th century and into the 20th century as we can see on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1899 (Figure 4) and 1952 (Figure 5). The garden is now a patch of open grassland, and the intention is to rejuvenate this area with a new trees.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- i) to determine and assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed site;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, formulated with the approval of Historic Scotland and the Stirling Council, such as excavation/watching brief, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.



Figure 2: Extract from Roy's map, ca 1747 - 1755

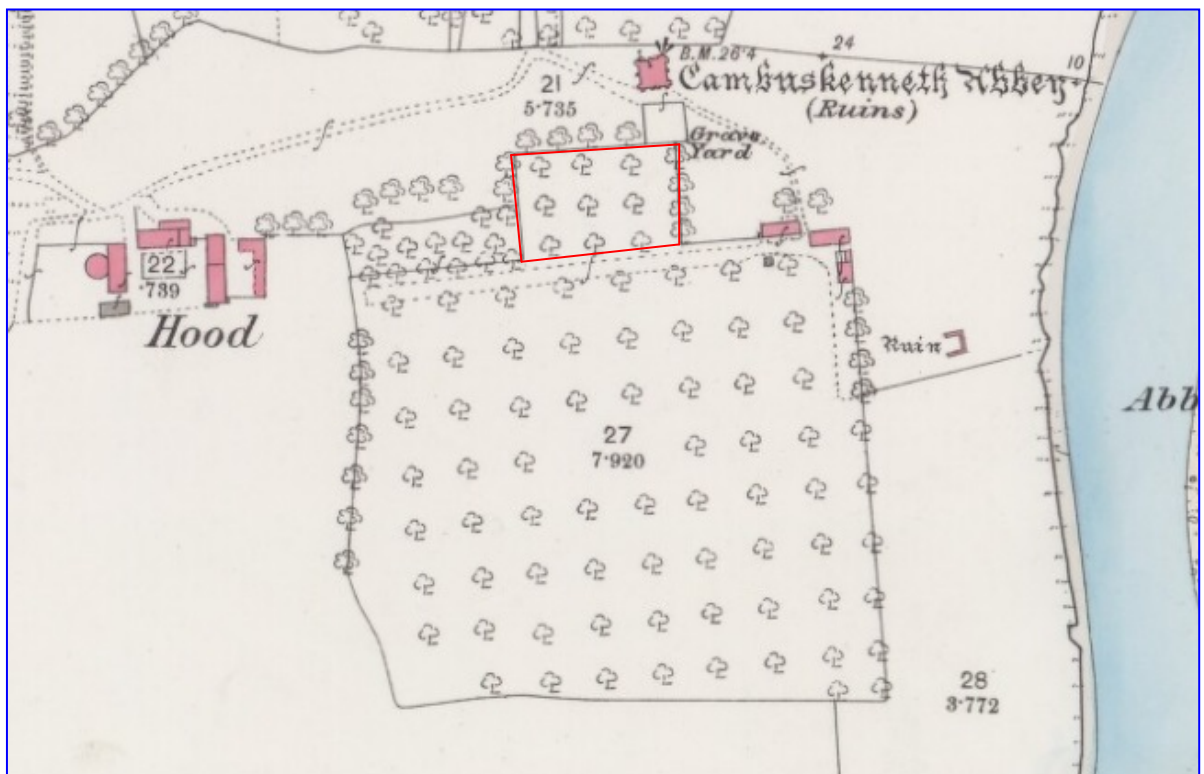


Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1863

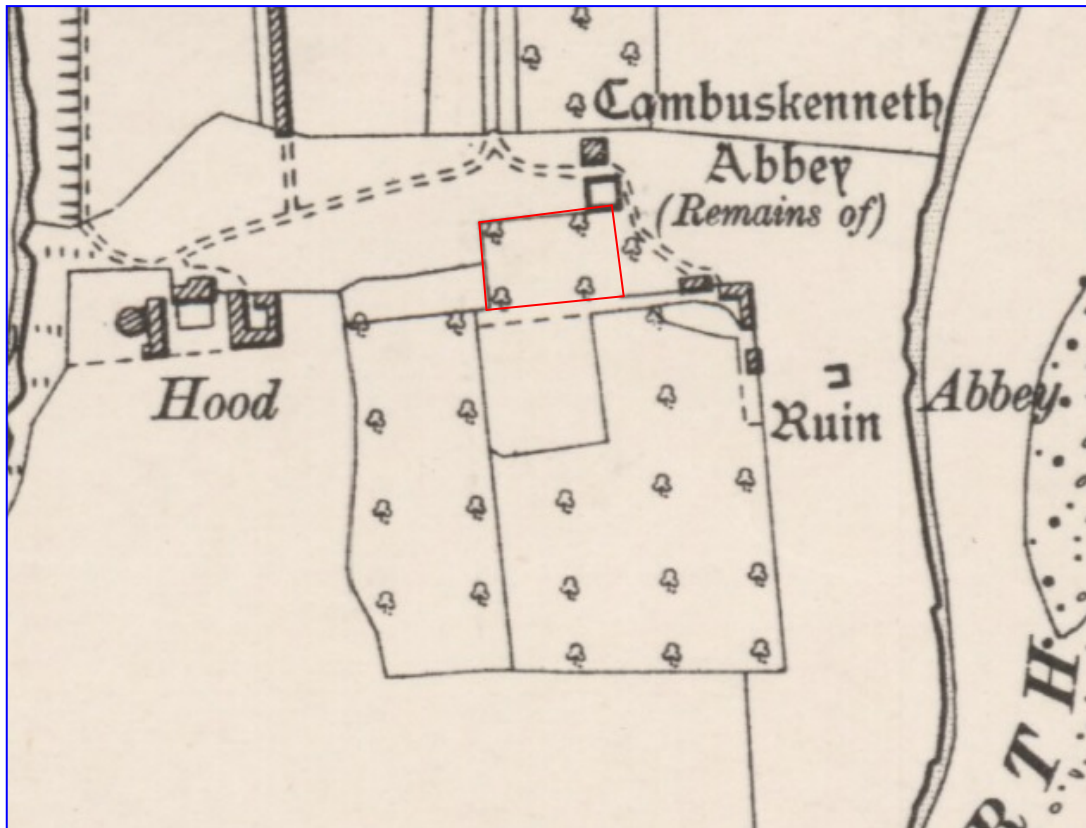


Figure 4: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1899

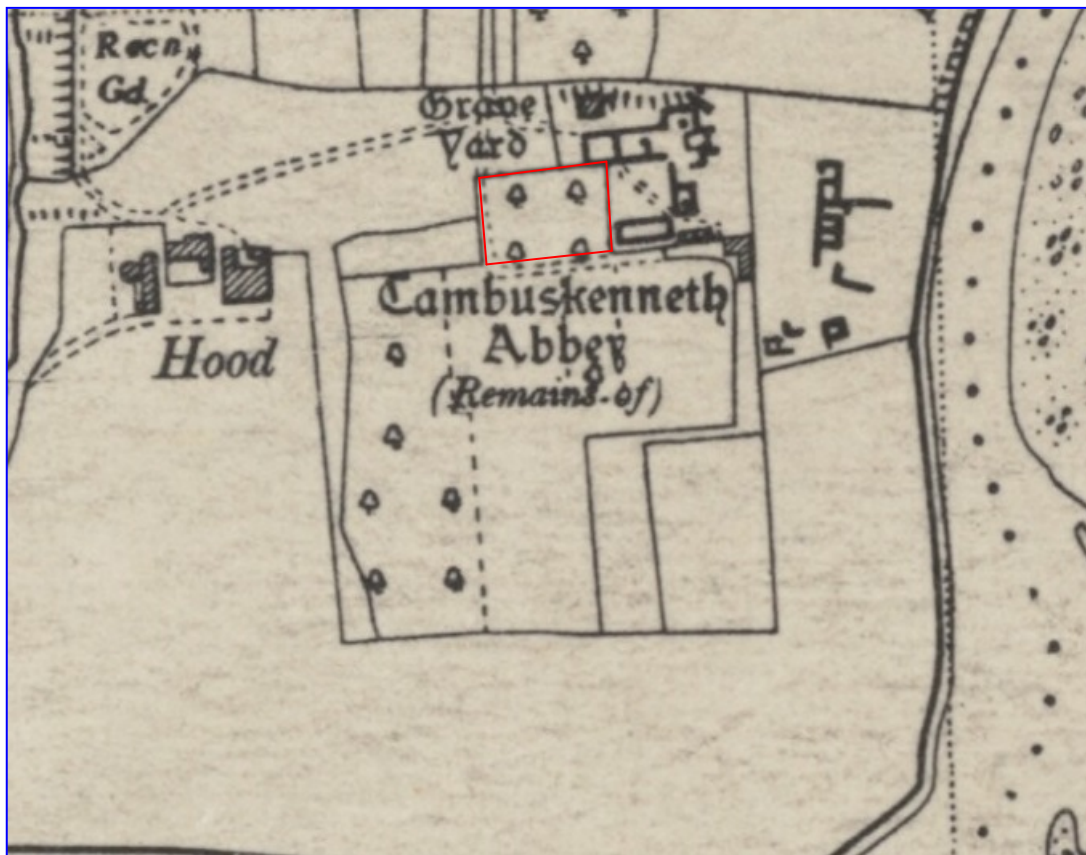


Figure 5: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1952

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The work was carried out to the detailed specifications of a Project Design written by AOC Archaeology and approved by Mr Murray Cook of the Stirling Council in September 2015. The test pitting was undertaken between 9th – 10th September 2015 and consisted of the excavation of 7 test pits within the grounds of the orchard. Originally, 10 test pits were planned, although, in agreement with Murray Cook of Stirling Council, given the relatively uniform nature of the soil matrix across the site and the relative spread of test pitting it was decided that 10 would be in excess of the requirements considering the relevant archaeological layers identified.
- 3.2 All 1m x 1m test pits were excavated by hand and were positioned in a dispersed pattern to best identify the range of survival of material throughout the site (Figure 6). The spoil was metal detected and sieved through.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The test pits revealed a relatively uniform soil matrix across the site. All test pits revealed a topsoil of approximately 0.2m - 0.3m in depth overlaying a compact greyish-brown sandy-silty clay subsoil.
- 4.1.2 The greyish-brown sandy-silty clay subsoil contained various finds ranging from green-glazed oxidised reduced ware to bone and oyster shell as well as some metal finds (see Appendix 4). As would be expected the test pits closest to the abbey boundary wall (1 – 4) contained the higher density of finds, becoming fewer the further moving southwards. This layer would appear to be part of the original medieval orchard layer given its consistency across site and proclivity of possible medieval pottery. Perhaps the most intriguing find is that from Test Pit 7, a clay figurine that would appear to be of a porcine nature (Plates 1 & 2).



Plate 1: Test Pit 7, detail of the porcine figure



Plate 2: Test Pit 7, detail of the porcine figure

- 4.1.3 It was agreed in the original Project Design that the test pits would generally be excavated to a depth of around 0.50m - 0.75m. Test Pit 1 was excavated 0.66m in depth and exposed the natural mid greyish-orange clay subsoil (103) beneath the subsoil (102) with some evidence of bio-turbation (Plate 3). Test Pit 2 was excavated through the subsoil and (202) and did not identify the natural deposit, the finds becoming less frequent deeper into this layer (Plate 4). Test Pit 3 was excavated to a depth of 0.50m, as the amount of tree roots in the pit became a hindrance to the excavation. This identified the same subsoil as seen in Test Pits 1 & 2.



Plate 3: Test Pit 1, general post-excitation view



Plate 4: Test Pit, 2, general post-excitation shot showing subsoil layer in the south-facing section

- 4.1.4 Test Pit 4 reached a depth of c. 0.3m before coming onto feature [403] (Plate 5). This consisted of a stone arrangement of two large stones (0.30m in size) packed with small-medium stones (c.0.05m - 0.1m in size). The arrangement was aligned on a north/south coming from the direction of the existing road into the area. It is possible that this is part of a surface leading through the original orchard. In the interests of preserving what archaeology remained, given the restrictions of the excavation method, the excavations stopped here and the feature was recorded.



Plate 5: Test Pit 4, detail of stones [403]

- 4.1.5 Test Pit 5 revealed a mortar like deposit (503) at ca. 0.45m in depth beneath the subsoil (502) (Plate 6). The deposit was of a very stony compaction with moderate inclusions of degraded sub-rounded stones. This overlay (504) a very stony deposit in a loose, lightish brown beige silty layer. The presence of a mortar-like deposit could suggest some sort of ancillary building work in this area, however there is little that could be revealed given the size of the test pit. It was also excavated to the natural clay greyish-orange subsoil (Plate 5). Test Pits 6 & 7 were excavated to a depth of 0.60m and 0.43m respectively, confirming the presence of the subsoil layer beneath the topsoil.



Plate 6: Test Pit 5, general post-excitation shot showing natural clay (505)

5 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 A preliminary examination of the pottery sherds was undertaken by George Haggerty, pottery specialist, at AOC offices on 23rd September 2015. The results give a broad early – late medieval date range for the subsoil deposit beneath the topsoil encountered in every test pit. In Test Pit 1, the green-glazed sherds were late medieval green-glazed ware dating to ca. 16th century (Plate 7). Additionally, the larger piece identified in the same context looked to be a piece of high quality roof furniture, although the date could not be confirmed (Plate 8). In Test Pits 3 & 6, the pottery was identified as post-medieval oxidised ware dating to the ca. 17th century (Plate 9). In Test Pit 7, however, the furthest test pit from the Abbey wall, a nice piece with decorative relief was identified as a much earlier ca. late 13th century piece, possibly from a decorative jug (Plate 10). In the same context, another ca. 17th piece of oxidised ware was also identified.
- 5.2 Given the results of the test pit exercise in Section 4 and the brief examination of the pottery evidence above, we can identify that there is a relatively uniform deposit running across the site with a density of medieval pottery dating from late 13th – 17th century associated with it. The highest density of pottery finds were unsurprisingly to the north side nearest to the Abbey wall, although the earliest identifiable piece was actually found in Test Pit 7, furthest from the Abbey. It is therefore likely that this subsoil is associated with the original general cultivation and maintenance throughout the post-medieval period and beyond. The abundance of animal bones – which looks on first inspection to mostly be sheep bones - indicates that the

area was used for animal grazing in the recent past. The possible feature seen in Test Pit 4 identified that there may also have been some remains of formal laid-out gardens of some kind, although the restrictions of the test pit exercise means that further investigations would be needed to confirm this.



Plate 7: Test Pit 1, detail of green glazed medieval pottery (ca. 16th century), Find #12 (102)



Plate 8: Test Pit 1, detail of possible roof furniture, Find #12 (102)



Plate 9: Test Pit 6, detail of base post-medieval oxidised ware sherd from a possible bowl or jug (ca. 17th century), Find #6 (602)



Plate 10: Test Pit 7, detail of green-glazed pottery sherd (ca. late 13th century), Find #2 (702)

- 5.3 It is recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during the planting of the trees to retrieve any further archaeological finds during the excavation prior to the tree planting. Although the possibility of there being any features (such as paths, evidence of structures) appears to be low, any feature of that kind identified during the watching brief can be noted and recorded, or alternatively left *in situ* and the tree planting slightly adjusted to avoid it.

6 REFERENCES

6.1 Bibliographical references

AOC Archaeology 2015 *Cambuskenneth Abbey, Tower Orchard Gardens, Stirling: Archaeological Test Pitting Written Scheme of Investigation*. Method Statement.

6.2 Cartographic references

1747 -1755	William Roy	<i>Military Map of Scotland</i>
1863	Ordnance Survey	<i>Perth and Clackmannan Clackmannanshire Sheet CXXXIX.1</i>
1899	Ordnance Survey	<i>Stirlingshire Sheet XVII.NE</i>
1952	Ordnance Survey	<i>Perth and Clackmannan Sheet CXXXIX</i>

Cambuskenneth Abbey, Tower Orchard Gardens, Stirling: Archaeological Test Pitting Appendices

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Digital Photographic Record

<i>Ref No</i>	<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Taken From</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	-	Registration	-	9/9/15
2-5	-	General shots of site	Various	9/9/15
6	2	Plan shot of Test Pit 2	S	9/9/15
7	2	Oblique shot of Test Pit 2	S	9/9/15
8	2	S-facing section of Test Pit 2	S	9/9/15
9	2	Detail shot of S-facing section of Test Pit 2	S	9/9/15
10	1	N-facing section of Test Pit 1	N	9/9/15
11-12	1	Oblique's of Test Pit 1	N	9/9/15
13-14	-	Working shots	W	9/9/15
15	4	Oblique of [403]	NE	9/9/15
16	4	Detail of [403]	NE	9/9/15
17	4	E-facing section of Test Pit 4	NE	9/9/15
18	4	Oblique of Test Pit 4	E	9/9/15
19	-	Working Shot	W	10/9/15
20	3	S-facing section of Test Pit 3	S	10/9/15
21	3	Oblique of Test Pit 3	W	10/9/15
22-23	6	E-facing section of Test Pit 6	E	10/9/15
24	6	Post-excavation plan of Test Pit 6	E	10/9/15
25	6	Post-excavation plan of Test Pit 6	NE	10/9/15
26				10/9/15
27-28	5	General post-excavation plan of Test Pit 5	N	10/9/15
29-30	5	General post-excavation plan of Test Pit 5	S	10/9/15
31-32	5	Detail of W-facing section of Test Pit 5	W	10/9/15
33-34	5	Detail of E-facing section of Test Pit 5	E	10/9/15
35-36	5	General post-excavation view after removal of (504)	N	10/9/15
37-39	-	General shots after reinstatement	Various	10/9/15
40-41	7	E-facing section of Test Pit 7	E	10/9/15
42-43	7	Post-excavation plan of Test Pit 7	E	10/9/15
44-45	7	Post-excavation detail of stony deposit/surface	E	10/9/15

APPENDIX 2: TEST PIT REGISTER

TP1

Size: 1.10 m x 1.10m
Depth Excavated: 0.66m
Features: None

TP2

Size: 1.00m x 1.00m
Depth Excavated: 0.75m
Features: None

TP3

Size: 1.00 x 1.00m
Depth Excavated: 0.50m
Features: None

TP4

Size: 1m x 1m
Depth Excavated: 0.50m
Features: Stone arrangement/cobbled surface [403]

TP5

Size: 1m x 1m
Depth Excavated: 0.60m
Features: Mortary deposit (503)

TP6

Size: 1.00m x 1.00m
Depth Excavated: 0.60m
Features: None

TP7

Size: 1.00m x 1.00m
Depth Excavated: 0.43m
Features: Possible surface [703]

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT REGISTER

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	101	Topsoil
1	102	Greyish brown sandy silty clay
1	103	Light greyish brown sandy –silty clay – likely interface between (102) and (104)
1	104	Degraded sandstone layer
2	201	Topsoil
2	202	Mid-grey sandy-silty clay, compact – frequent inclusions of charcoal
2	203	Light grey-orange sandy silt
3	301	Topsoil
3	302	Mid grey sandy-silty clay
4	401	Topsoil
4	402	Mid grey Silty-clayey sand
4	403	Stone arrangement, possible cobbled surface
4	404	Lighter greyish clayey sandy silt
5	501	Topsoil
5	502	Light brown compact deposit with abundance of charcoal flecks
5	503	Mortary deposit, very stone compaction, moderate inclusions of degraded sub-rounded stones
5	504	Only in N side of trench, stone deposit in a loose lightish brown beige silty deposit
5	505	Compact homogenous dark beige clay with moderate charcoal flecks, possibly natural
6	601	Topsoil
6	602	Mid-high grey brown silty clay, quite compact
7	701	Topsoil
7	702	Mid grey silty-sandy clay, ceramic and bone inclusions
7	703	Light grey to beige brown silty clay includes lots of stones– possible surface

APPENDIX 4: FINDS REGISTER

<i>Find No.</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	701	Various	Various small finds including ceramic pig figurine, five animal bone fragments and three large teeth fragments, one large fe object some small fragments of orange/red ceramic material, four sherds of glazed pottery (three white glaze, one red) and partial fragment of clay pipe
2	702	Various	Fragments of animal bone and teeth, three sherds of green glazed pottery, one of which has a decoration in relief, and a larger diagnostic base sherd, two more pieces of plain ceramic fragments
3	703	Ce	Ceramic sherd
4	302	Various	Two fragments of animal bone and one animal tooth; two pieces of ceramic, one of which may come from a pot or vessel; fragments of oyster shell; small fragment of clay pipe stem
5	402	Various	Two fragments of animal bone, two animal teeth, six fragments of plain red ceramic, three glazed pottery sherds two of which have a pearl glaze, and a small fragment of thin coloured glass
6	602	Various	2 oyster shell fragments, four ceramic fragments including a base sherd, animal bone, one fe nail and a fragment of clay pipe stem, two green-glazed pottery sherds
7	601	Various	Four fragments of animal bone, various fragments of plain unglazed ceramic and 7 sherds of glazed pottery fragments, none diagnostic, white green and red
8	103	Various	Majority of finds from this context are animal bone fragments and a tooth; 12 fragments of red ceramic pottery sherds, including two diagnostic pieces; fragments of oyster shell
9	202	Various	Mostly animal bone finds, including several teeth; fragments of ceramic building material and also at least two large diagnostic pieces of pottery; 3 iron nails, 2 small fragments of oyster shell
10	502	Various	12 fragments of animal bone, 3 small fe nails, four fragments of oyster shell
11	501	Ce	Four sherds of glazed pottery (white and red), not diagnostic
12	102	Various	By far the largest haul of animal bone came from this trench, including teeth, also five fe nails, 6 oyster shells and an abundance of glazed and unglazed pottery fragments, including one large ribbed diagnostic piece of a vessel.

APPENDIX 5: DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND (DES) ENTRY

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Stirling Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Cambuskenneth Abbey, Tower Orchard
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 23162
PARISH:	Stirling
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Steven Watt
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Test Pitting
NMRS NO(S)	NS89SW 4
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Orchard/Garden
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Possible floor surface, various small finds
NGR	NS 80835 93914
START DATE	9 th September 2015
END DATE	10 th September 2015
PREVIOUS WORK	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:	<p>A programme of archaeological test pitting was required by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust at Cambuskenneth Abbey, Stirling, as part of the wider project to re-create part of the Tower Orchard at Cambuskenneth Abbey. The site lies outwith the Scheduled Monument area of Cambuskenneth Abbey, although Stirling Council requested that a test pitting exercise be undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site prior to potential tree planting. From there, the Stirling Council will determine whether any further archaeological works are required prior to or during any further on-site works as part of the overall project.</p> <p>The test pitting revealed a relatively uniform soil matrix across the site, with the natural only being uncovered in two of the pits. Overall the most archaeologically significant deposit was a greyish-brown sandy-silty clay deposit beneath the topsoil with a high frequency of small finds, including oyster shell, animal bone and ceramics. The pottery within this deposit varied in date from late 13th to 17th century with the highest density of pottery finds to the north side nearest to the Abbey wall, although the earliest identifiable piece was actually found in Test Pit 7, furthest from the Abbey. It is therefore likely that this subsoil is associated with the original general cultivation and maintenance throughout the post-medieval period and beyond.</p> <p>Two of the test pits revealed potential building materials and a possible surface.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Unknown (possible watching brief)
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Central Scotland Green Network Trust
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
EMAIL ADDRESS:	admin@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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