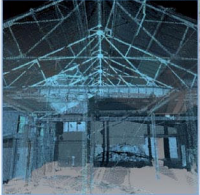
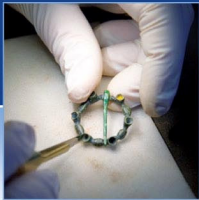


Land at Darklands, Elgin, Moray Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

AOC 23581
23rd September 2016



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Land at Darklands, Elgin, Moray Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Grant and Geoghegan,
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National Grid Reference (NGR): NJ 26953 62096

AOC Project No: 23581

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-263575

**The Moray Council Planning
Application Nos:** 14/01032/APP & 16/00805/APP

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Date of Fieldwork: 22nd September 2016

Date of Report: 23rd August 2016

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

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Summary

AOC Archaeology Group were commissioned by Grant and Geoghegan, on behalf of their client, Steve Cox Building Services, to conduct an archaeological evaluation as a condition of planning consent for a new development at Darkland, Elgin (NJ 26953 62096) (Planning Ref. No. 14/01032/APP & 16/00805/APP).

A 5% evaluation of the available 6500m² site was conducted comprising of 172 linear metres of trenching. The evaluation revealed an orange brown sand subsoil, with a lens of dark black/brown hill wash in the basins.

No significant archaeological features or finds were discovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Grant and Geoghegan, on behalf of their client, Steve Cox Building Services, to undertake an archaeological evaluation as a condition of planning consent for the construction of four detached dwellings on land at Darklands, Elgin, Moray (NGR: NJ 26953 62096; Planning Refs: 14/01032/APP & 16/00805/APP) (Figure 1). The site lies within the administrative area of the Moray Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS).

1.1.2 The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principles set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) & *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011* (2011).

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The development site at Darklands, Elgin, Moray was located at NGR: NJ 26953 62096 and lay within a field of agricultural land east of Elgin and northwest of Lhanbryde, Moray (Figure 1). It is bounded to the north east by the Darkland crossroads.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) records a flat copper axe (NJ26SE 51) *'found 4ft below the surface of the road, near the cross-roads north of St Andrews, Lhanbryde..., in digging a trench for the pipes of the Lossiemouth water supply in 1905'*. The NRHE locates the findspot within the north-western part of the proposed development, where a landscaped natural meadow is consented, although the description would suggest that it was discovered to the north beneath the public road.

1.3.2 No further sites are recorded within the consented development although a sheepfold is shown in the extreme southern tip of the site on modern mapping.

1.3.3 The NRHE records an enclosure at the southern end of the field which extends immediately south of the proposed development (NRHE NJ26SE33). No further details are provided for this enclosure although the Moray Historic Environment Record HER, records a circular crop-mark on the site (HER NJ6SE33). The Moray HER also records numerous copper or bronze artefacts being recovered from the field to the south of the development during metal detecting in the late 1990's. These finds include; six pieces of a Bronze knife or spear (HER NJ26SE 0090), a bronze ring (HER NJ26SE 0093), four pieces of bronze slag and a horse pendant (HER NJ26SE 0094), the latter of which was possibly post-medieval.

1.3.4 Further evidence of prehistoric activity is recorded east of the consented development within Crooked Wood, where the opening of a cairn revealed a cist burial containing a burial with a flint spearhead (NRHE NJ26SE 18, two locations reported); to the northeast where a possible hut circle was excavated in 1873 (NRHE NJ26SE 17/ HER NJ26SE0011) and further north at Longhill where

a Neolithic settlement (NRHE NJ26SE 3) and a Bronze Age cemetery (NRHE NJ26SE 4) were identified when a field was brought into cultivation and subsequently quarried during the 19th century (NRHE NJ26SE0003)

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 through evaluation trenching;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of archaeological mitigation, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, should significant archaeological remains be encountered that cannot be preserved *in situ*.
- iii) to prepare a final Data Structure Report and project archive.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Archaeological Evaluation

3.1.1 The evaluation was to comprise machine trenching of a 5% sample of the 6500m² development area, which equates to 325m², or 165 linear metres based on each trench being 2m in width. A contingency for a further 2% should potentially significant archaeological remains be encountered was also stipulated.

3.1.2 Excavation was to be undertaken in units/spits until the first significant archaeological horizon or natural subsoil was reached. All machine excavation was supervised by an experienced field archaeologist and according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures, and as per the methodology within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2016). All trenches were backfilled with the removed material.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All archaeological works were conducted on the 22nd September 2016. Weather conditions were mostly bright with good archaeological visibility remained good throughout.

4.1.2 The various data gathered from the evaluation and excavations are presented as a series of appendices:

4.2 Archaeological Evaluation

- 4.2.1 A total of 172 linear meters of evaluation trenching were excavated, evenly spaced across the development area. They comprised of seven trenches ranging from 20 to 29 m in length and 2 m wide (Figure 2). Due to onsite conditions four of the seven trenches (T1, T2, T4 and T5) were relocated from their original locations within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2016). Trenches 1 and 2 were moved slightly to the south due an overhead located along the northern boundary of the development area to allow a safety buffer zone and Trenches 4 and 5 were relocated northwards due to an already constructed access road and associated spoil heaps. The new trench locations were recorded by GPS and can be found in Figure 2.
- 4.2.2 Excavation revealed a natural subsoil of mid orange/brown sand with patches of manganese on the slope tops changing to pale yellow/white sand down slope with some stone inclusions in Trenches 6 and 7 within the south of the development area.
- 4.2.3 An agricultural plough-soil covered the site. This ranged from 0.2 m to 0.5 m in depth and contained occasional fragments of 19th and 20th century ceramics/glass.
- 4.2.4 A compact deposit of dark brown colluvium were located within Trenches 3, 4 and 7. These spreads were 0.05 m to 0.1 m in depth and were located within low lying areas within the development area. Small patches of peat were located within this B-horizon suggesting the area was previously wetter than current site conditions.



Plate 1 - General view of Trench 2

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The proposed development site was subject to a full and comprehensive archaeological evaluation in which no significant archaeology was found only natural colluvium. No further archaeological works are deemed necessary within the development area. This recommendation will require the approval of Aberdeen City Council Archaeology Service on behalf of Moray Council.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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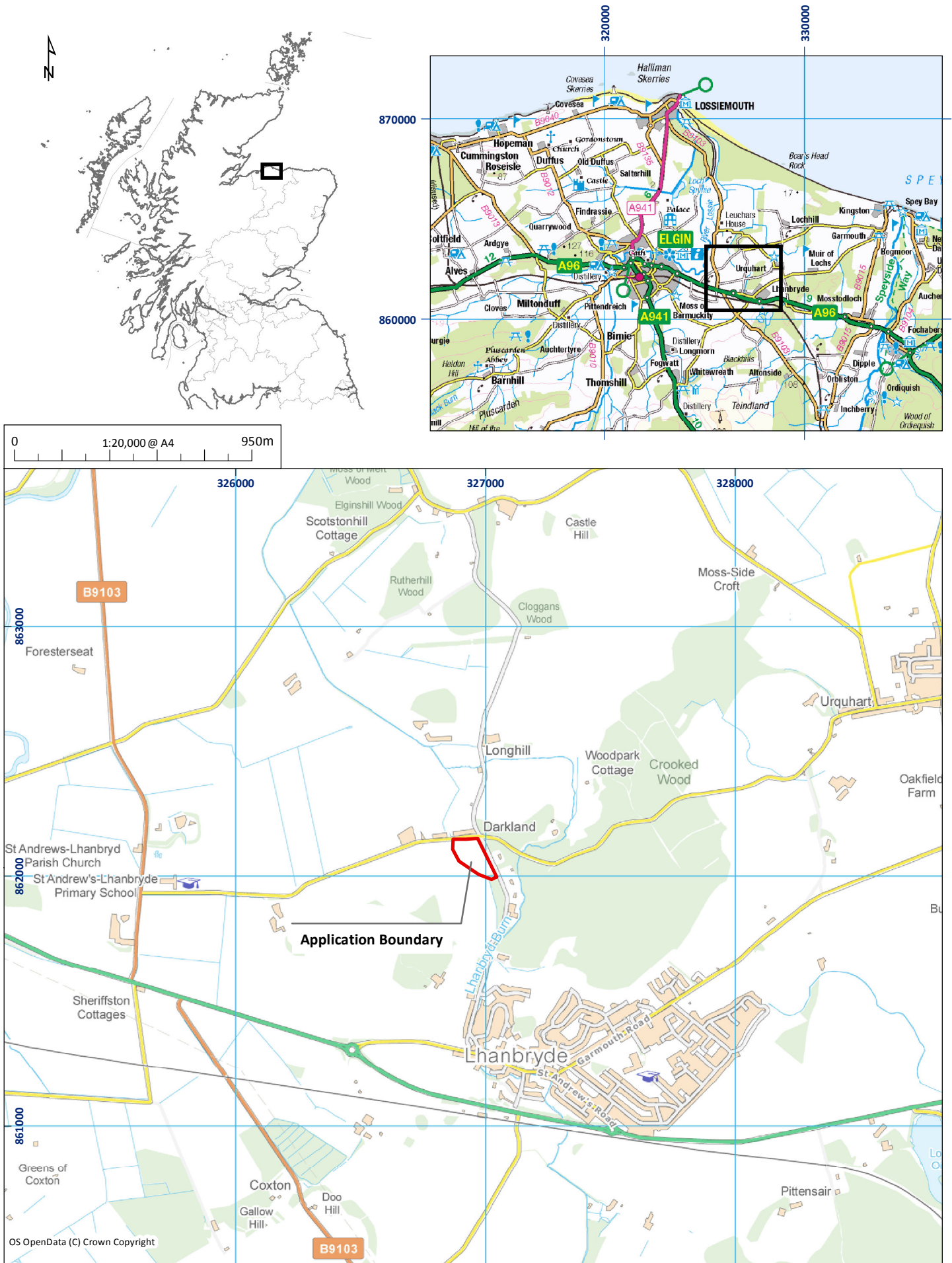
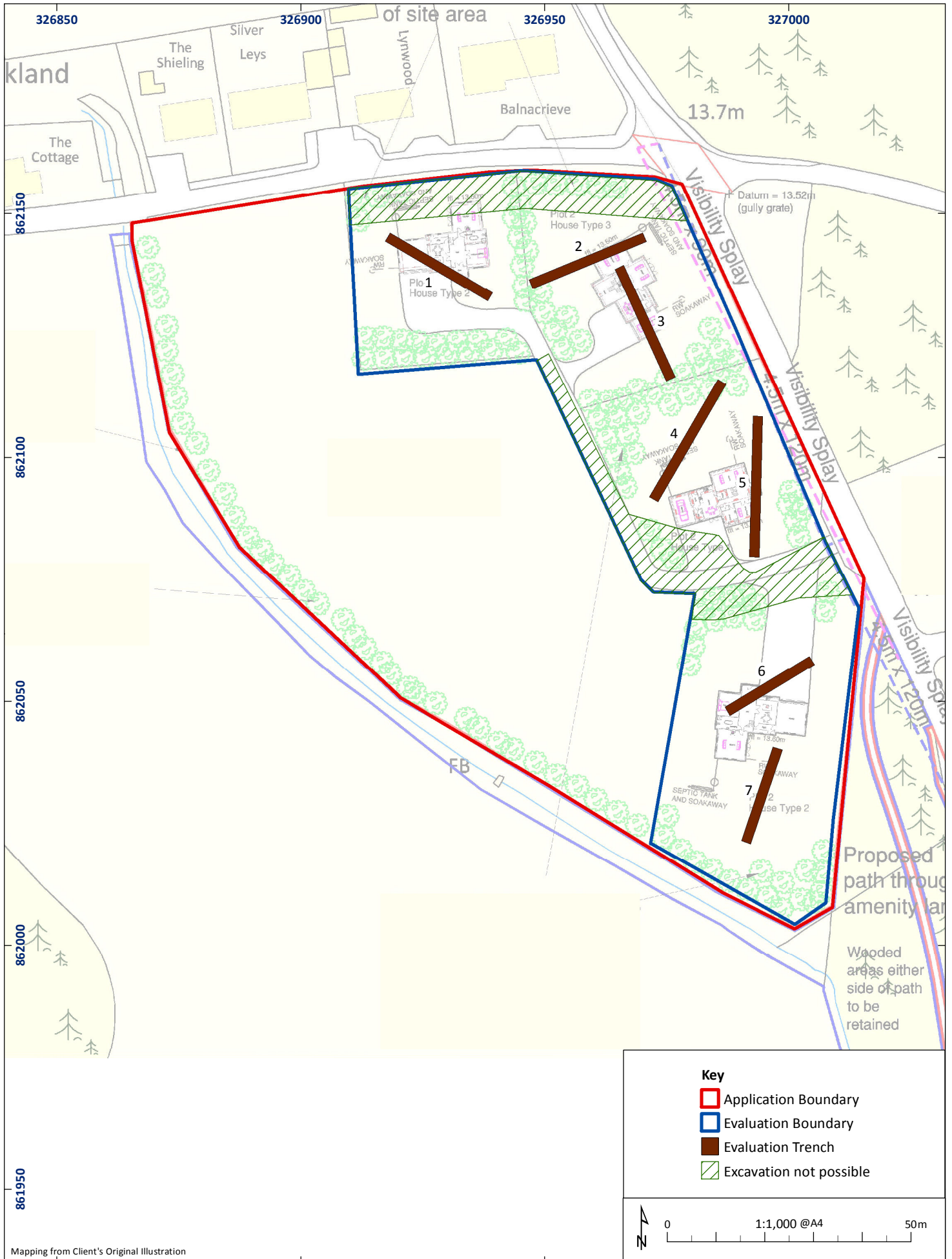


Figure 1: Site location plan

01/DSR/23581/01/01



Mapping from Client's Original Illustration

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

01/DSR/23581/02/01

**Land at Darklands, Elgin, Moray:
Archaeological Evaluation
Data Structure Report**

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	24 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	48 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NW to SE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam with rare 19 th /20 th century white ceramic – 0.25-0.35 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	-
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Mid orange brown sand at NW end of trench on the top of a slope, transitioning to pale yellow/white sand at SE as the elevation lowers
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	25 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	50 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	SW to NE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam – 0.3-0.35 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	-
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Pale yellow/white loose sand with rare patches of manganese
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	25 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	50 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	N to S
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam with rare 19 th /20 th century white ceramic and glass – 0.3-0.45 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	Dark black/brown compact silty sand colluvium with small patches of peat 0-12 m from S end within a natural hollow between two rises in the landscape – 0.05 m in depth
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Pale grey/white sand
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 4

<i>Dimensions</i>	28 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	56 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	SW to NE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam with rare 19 th /20 th century white ceramic and glass – 0.2-0.4 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	Dark black/brown compact silty sand colluvium with small patches of peat in a hollow at the break of slope 4 m from the NE end – 1-1.5 m wide and 0.05 m in depth
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	E-W orientated plough scar
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Mid orange brown sand with patches of manganese at SW end of trench on the top of a slope, transitioning to pale yellow/white sand at NE as the elevation lowers
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 5

<i>Dimensions</i>	29 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	58 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NE to SW
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam – 0.25-0.6 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	-
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Mid orange brown sand with 8 m long area of mixed manganese 7 m from SW end
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 6

<i>Dimensions</i>	20 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	40 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	SW to NE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam – 0.3-0.35 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	-
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Pale yellow/orange loose sand with occasional small stones and rare stone holes
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 7

<i>Dimensions</i>	21 m by 2 m
<i>Total Area</i>	42 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NNE to SSW
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Dark brown loose sandy loam – 0.3-0.5 m in depth
<i>B-Horizon Make-up</i>	Dark black/brown compact silty sand colluvium with small patches of peat – 0.05-0.1 m in depth
<i>Significant Features</i>	No significant archaeology
<i>Other Features</i>	-
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Pale grey/yellow loose sand with frequent small stones
<i>Finds</i>	None

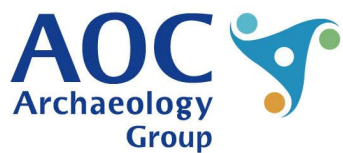
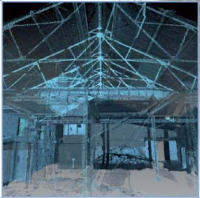
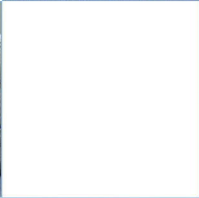
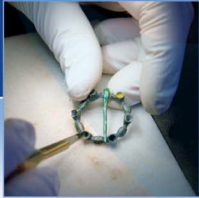
APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

Colour Digital:

No.	Area	Description	Taken From
1-5	-	Registration Shot	Var.
6	T1	Post-excavation Trench 1	SE
7	T2	Post-excavation Trench 2	NE
8	T3	Post-excavation Trench 3	S
9-10	T4	Post-excavation Trench 4	NE
11	T5	Post-excavation Trench 5	NE
12	T6	Post-excavation Trench 6	SW
13	T7	Post-excavation Trench 7	SSW
14-15	-	Post-excavation closing shots of site	Var.

APPENDIX 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Moray Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Land at Darklands, Elgin, Moray
PROJECT CODE:	23581
PARISH:	St Andrews-Ihanbryd
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alexander Wood
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 26953 62096
START DATE (this season)	22 nd September 2016
END DATE (this season)	22 nd September 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (inc DES)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p><i>AOC Archaeology Group were commissioned by Grant and Geoghegan, on behalf of their client, Steve Cox Building Services, to conduct an archaeological evaluation as a condition of planning consent for a new development at Darkland, Elgin (NJ 26953 62096) (Planning Ref. No. 14/01032/APP & 16/00805/APP).</i></p> <p><i>A 5% evaluation of the available 6500m² site was conducted comprising of 172 linear metres of trenching. The evaluation revealed an orange brown sand subsoil, with a lens of dark black/brown hill wash in the basins.</i></p> <p><i>No significant archaeological features or finds were discovered.</i></p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Grant and Geoghegan
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology Group, 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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