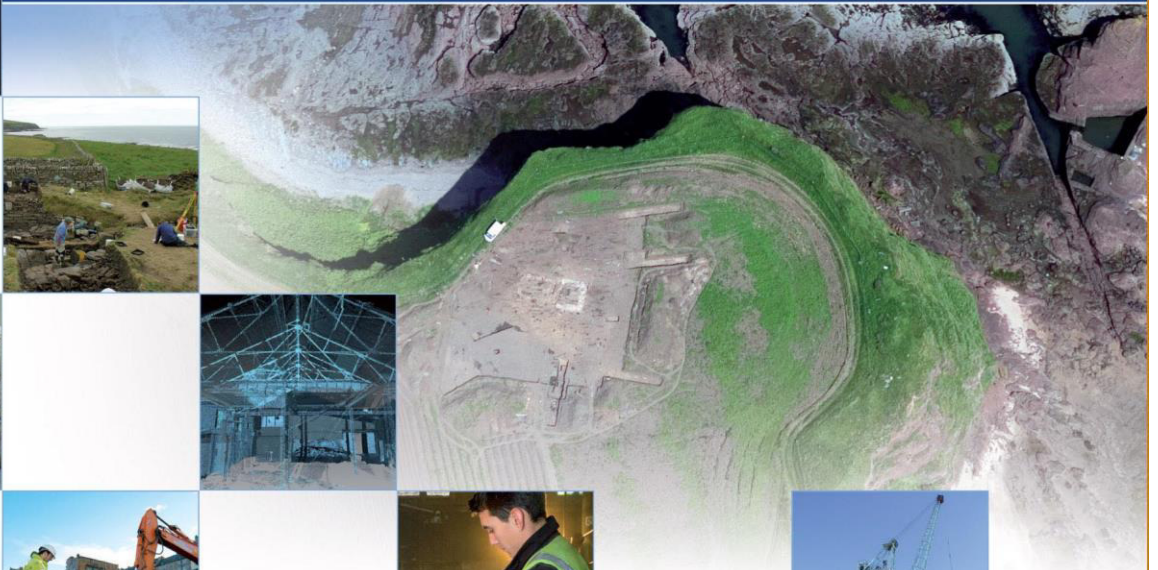


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Strathcona Road, Forres, Moray Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

AOC 23939
Planning Ref. No. 15/01446/FUL
17th October 2017



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Strathcona Road, Forres, Moray

Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Springfield Properties
National Grid Reference [NGR]:	NJ 03468 58696 (centre)
AOC Project No:	AOC 23939
Oasis No:	aocarcha1-298484
Prepared by:	Stuart Wilson
Illustration by:	Sam O'Leary
Date of Excavations	5th October 2017
Date of Report:	17th October 2017

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

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Date: 6th October 2017

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Date: 17th October 2017

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Abstract

This report presents the results of archaeological works undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at the site of Strathcona Road, Forres. Four trenches were machine excavated within the footprint of a now demolished health centre and associated car park.

The archaeological works revealed a high degree of disturbance by the foundations of the health centre building footprint requiring trenches to be extended to approximately 2m in depth.

No archaeological features were present.

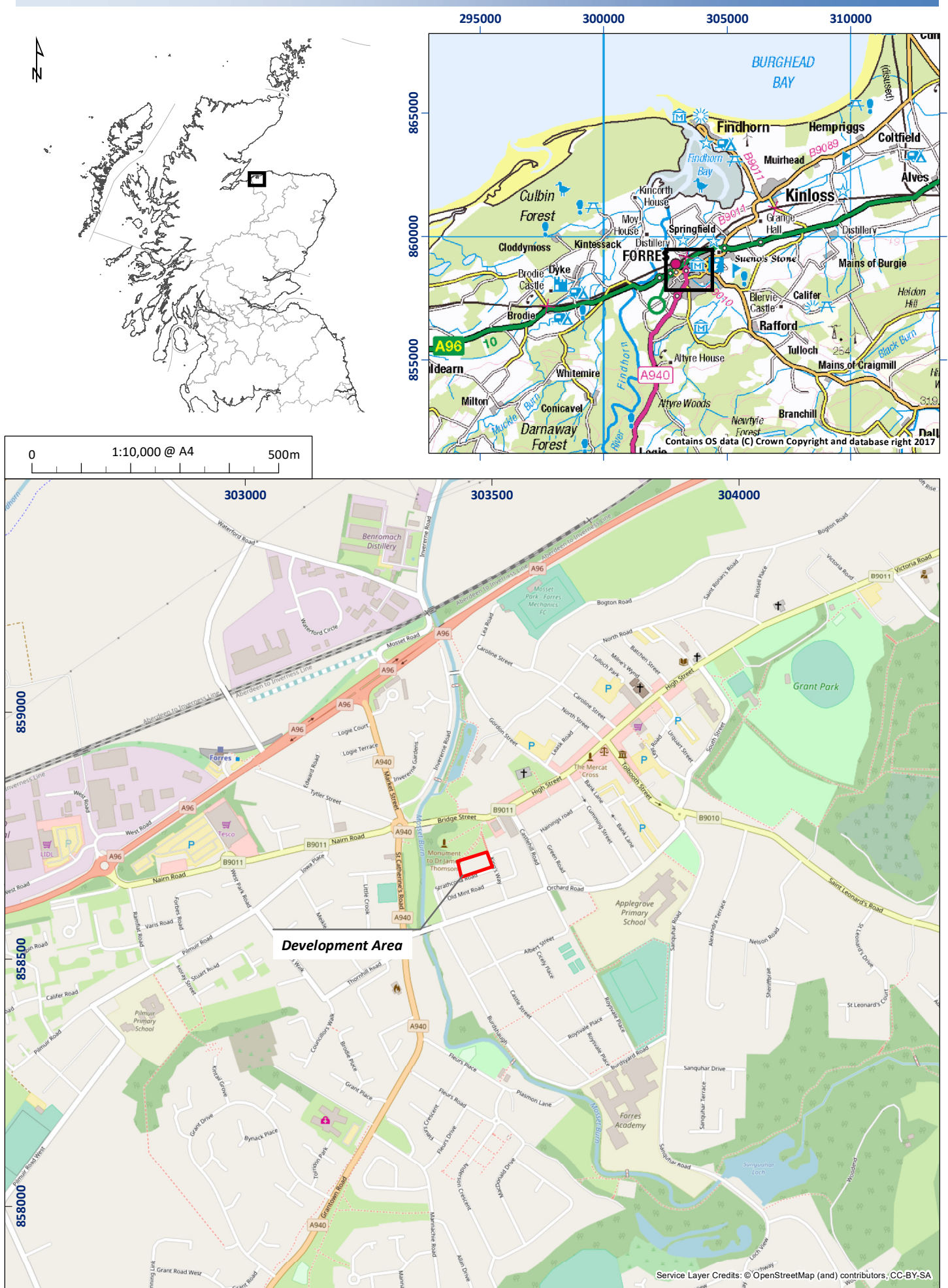


Figure 1: Site location plan



Figure 2: Trench location plan

01/23939/DSR/02/01

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A programme of archaeological works was required by Springfield Properties in respect to a proposed redevelopment of a site off Strathcona Road, Forres, Moray (Planning Ref. No. 15/01446/FUL). The proposed development lies within the administrative area of Moray Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Aberdeen Council Archaeology Service, ACAS. A programme of archaeological works was specified by ACAS in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning And Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.
- 1.2 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken on 5th October 2017.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The development area lies to south of the High Street within the centre of Forres, Moray. The proposed development is centred on NJ 03468 58696 (Figure 1 & 2). The southern boundary is formed by Strathcona Road with the western boundary marked by Brig Wynd. The eastern side of the development area is delineated by street King's Way and the northern portion by public footpath Hill Lane. The northern boundary fronts onto a public park.
- 2.1.2 The site was previously occupied by a health centre and associated car park.

2.2 Archaeological background

- 2.2.1 The site lies within the core of the historic town of Forres, close to the site of Forres Castle (HES database NJ05NW 18, HER No. NJ05NW0017). The Royal Castle of Forres stood at the west end of the High Street beside the Burn of Mosset, where its foundations were found during tree planting before 1882. During its history it was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, the earliest destruction allegedly being AD 850 by the Norsemen. In the 14th century it was greatly strengthened, by thick walls and a keep with flanking towers, and was held by the Dunbar's of Westfield from then until the 17th century, when it is thought to have fallen into decay. David II was in residence in AD 1367. Nothing now remains above ground level and little is known of the form of the castle and its extent beyond the foundations which are marked out. It is thought to have been an oblong building, 250 feet by 82 feet, with towers on the west.
- 2.2.2 In 1712, Provost Dawson commenced a town-house in the centre of the mound. It was not completed and was leveled when the town of Forres acquired the site from Sir Alexander Grant. The site is presently a flat-topped hill within a larger landscaped public park and there is nothing to be seen to indicate the former existence of a castle. A monument, (HES database NJ05137) to Dr James Thomson of Cromarty who cared for Russian wounded after the Battle of Alma, 1854, but exhausted

by this labour, died himself now sits on the mound. The monument is C-Listed (Listed Buildings No. 31722) and is 65' foot high obelisk of polished Peterhead granite on stepped base.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 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 development area through 10% evaluation trenching;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, such excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered;
- iii) to prepare a final Data Structure Report and project archive.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The development area consisted of a brownfield site measuring approximately 0.19ha, 1,900m² in size. The required 10% evaluation could not be met due to the presence of two drains aligned roughly north to south through the car park as well as the presence of an 8 tonne mini excavator. As a result, though only 160m² of the required 190m² was excavated, suitable coverage of the site was achieved.

4.2 A JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to excavate four trenches within the development area. These included three on the site of the original building and one in the car park. These trenches were excavated to the natural sub-stratum or first archaeological horizon, which ever was encountered first. All trenches were backfilled at the end of the archaeological works

5 RESULTS

5.1 The archaeological works were undertaken on the 5th October 2017 in mostly fine weather ensuring excellent visibility. The depth of the trenches coupled with unstable sides prevented safe access and egress.



Plate 1: Post-excavation view of Trench 2

- 5.1.1 The evaluation revealed deep deposits throughout the site. The upper layers consisted of a layer of demolition material measuring between 0.4m and 0.6m. This lay over a deposit of made ground measuring between 0.3m and 0.6m (Plate 1). This was found to overly a thin layer of peat between 0.1m and 0.2m thick that represented a buried topsoil. This lay over the natural sub-stratum, which consisted of a mid grey sandy gravel.
- 5.1.2 The foundations of the previous health centre were evident within Trenches 1 and 3, as well as Trench 2 to a lesser extent, and had created high levels of disturbance; as already noted by the extensive layers of demolition material and made ground.



Plate 2: Post excavation shot of trench 4

- 5.1.3 In Trench 4 (Plate 2), an undisturbed topsoil consisting of around 1.10m of mid brown peaty clay overlay the sub-stratum. No archaeological features were present.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The archaeological evaluation at Strathcona Road revealed no archaeological features.
- 5.2 No further archaeological works are recommended. This will require confirmation from ACAS.

6 REFERENCES

- AOC (2017) '*Strathcona Road, Forres, Moray: Written Scheme of Investigation*'. Unpublished
- Scottish Government *2014 Scottish Planning Policy*.
- Scottish Government *2011 PAN 2/2011 Planning And Archaeology*.

APPENDIX 1: Evaluation Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	20 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	NNW-SSE
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	1.10 m to 2.10 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	Buried peat topsoil
<i>Subsoil</i>	Dark grey sandy gravel
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	20 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	NE-SW
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	1.80 m to 2.09 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	Buried peat topsoil
<i>Subsoil</i>	Dark grey sandy gravel.
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	20 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	WNW-ESE
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.30 m to 0.51 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	Buried peat topsoil
<i>Subsoil</i>	Dark grey sandy gravel
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 4

<i>Dimensions</i>	20 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	NNW-SSE
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	1.09 m to 1.12 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Mid grey clay
<i>Finds</i>	Dark grey sandy gravel

APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

Digital Images

Frame	Trench	Description	From	Date
1	-	Pre ex shot of site	S	05/10
2	-	Pre ex shot of site	S	05/10
3	-	Test pit dug prior to works	S	05/10
4	-	Test pit dug prior to works	S	05/10
5	1	Modern foundations	W	05/10
6	1	Modern foundations	SW	05/10
7	1	Modern foundations	W	05/10
8	1	Post ex shot of trench 1	SE	05/10
9	1	Post ex shot of trench 1	SE	05/10
10	2	Buried foundations in trench 2	SW	05/10
11	2	Buried foundations in trench 2	SW	05/10
12	2	Post ex shot of trench 2	SE	05/10
13	2	Post ex shot of trench 2	SE	05/10
14	3	Modern foundations in trench 3	W	05/10
15	3	Post ex shot of trench 3	E	05/10
16	3	Post ex shot of trench 4	E	05/10
17	4	Exposed water main in trench 4	E	05/10
18	4	Post ex shot of trench 4	S	05/10
19	4	Post ex shot of trench 4	S	05/10
20	-	8 tonne machine left on site	S	05/10
21	-	Active drain/waste water running through car park	S	05/10
22	-	Bore hole 1/3 on site at Northern boundary	W	05/10
23	-	Bore hole 2/3 on site at Northern boundary	W	05/10
24	-	Bore hole 3/3 on site at Northern boundary	W	05/10

APPENDIX 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Moray Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Strathcona Road, Forres, Moray: Archaeological Evaluation
PROJECT CODE:	23939
PARISH:	Moray
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Stuart Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S)	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NGR: NJ 03468 58696
START DATE (this season)	05/10/17
END DATE (this season)	05/10/17
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>This report presents the results of archaeological works undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at the site of Strathcona Road, Forres. Four trenches were machine excavated within the footprint of a now demolished health centre and associated car park.</p> <p>The archaeological works revealed a high degree of disturbance by the foundations of the health centre building footprint requiring trenches to be extended to approximately 2m in depth.</p> <p>No archaeological features were present.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	To be confirmed
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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