

Little Spott Farm, Spott, East Lothian: Archaeological Evaluation and Monitored Topsoil Strip Report

21345

May 2009



 **AOC**
Archaeology
Group

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Little Spott Farm, Spott: Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	Mr Marshall Milne
National Grid Reference (NGR):	
Evaluation	NT 653 746
Watching Brief	NT 654 750 to NT 652 749 to NT 652 747
AOC Project No:	21345
Prepared by:	Alan Duffy
Illustration by:	Graeme Carruthers
Date of Fieldwork:	April-May 2009
Date of Report:	May 2009

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

Author: Alan Duffy

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Approved by: John Gooder

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Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Edgefield Industrial Estate
Edgefield Road
Loanhead
EH20 9SY

Tel. 0131 440 3593
Fax. 0131 440 3422
e-mail. admin@aocarchaeology.com



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Abstract

AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Mr Marshall Milne to undertake an archaeological evaluation and monitored topsoil strip in advance of the construction of a new agricultural building, at Little Spott Farm, Spott, East Lothian. The work required was in response to a planning condition set by East Lothian Council, prior to the construction of a new outbuilding and access track.

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the works.

0. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 0.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Mr Marshall Milne to undertake archaeological evaluation and monitored topsoil strip works in advance of the construction of a new outbuilding and access track at Little Spott Farm, Spott, East Lothian. The works were required in response to a planning condition (planning ref: 09/00206/FUL) set by East Lothian Council (ELCAS).
- 0.2 The work was required in accordance with SSP23 (SG 2008) and PAN42 (SOEnd 1994), in order to determine the nature, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeological remains uncovered during the watching brief works.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Little Spott Farm is located approximately 2 Km to the south of Spott, East Lothian. The development proposals involve the construction of an agricultural building to the west of Little Spott Farm and associated vehicle access track to the south and south west. With the exception of the area to the east of proposed agricultural building, within which lies the environs of Little Spott Farm, both areas are bounded by agricultural farmland (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The East Lothian Council is advised on archaeological matters by Mr. Andrew Robertson of ELCAS. The work was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in SSP23 (SG 2008) and PAN42 (SOEnd 1994), and carried out in order to prevent the destruction of previously unknown archaeological remains prior to their recording. The project design was outlined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (2008) which was agreed by both the client and Mr Andrew Robertson of ELCAS.
- 1.1.3 An archaeological evaluation was required in the area of the agricultural building, whilst a monitored topsoil strip was required along the access track.

1.2 Archaeological Background

- 1.2.1 The proposed development areas at Little Spott Farm lie within a landscape rich in later prehistoric remains including many nearby forts and enclosures include. The Chesters (NMRS NT67SE2; NT 6600 7392), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 5766) comprising a circular bivallate fort, which lies to the south-east. Spott Mill (NMRS NT67SE11; NGR: NT 6539 7423), a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprises a promontory fort visible on aerial photographs as four wide ditches enclosing a tapering ridge between two streams, which is situated to the south at the junction of the Brock burn. Pleasants (Alt name Pitcox) (SAM 5671; NMRS NT67NE47; NGR: NT 6584 7548) is a double-ditched enclosure visible on aerial photographs to the north-east of Little Spott Farm. Little Spott (SAM 5829; NMRS NT67NE82; NGR: NT 6520 7534) is a roughly circular enclosure visible on aerial photographs located to the north of Little Spott Farm. The Pleasants (SAM 5673; NMRS NT67NE83; NGR: NT 6647 7566) is an enclosure visible on aerial photographs to the south-east of Little Spott Farm.

1.2.2 Two archaeological sites lie within the immediate area of the development and comprise Little Spott Pit Alignment (NMRS: NT67SE15), and Little Spott Linear Feature (NMRS: NT67SE20). Both of these sites are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs (Figures 2 and 3). Little Spott Linear Feature is situated in the north-west corner of the field in which the proposed agricultural building is to be situated. Little Spott Pit Alignment lies within the field bounded to the north by the east to west orientated part of the access track, the north to south element of which subsequently crosses an area where the pits are well defined.

2. Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- i) to determine the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains encountered within the proposed development area;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, such as excavation, post excavation analyses and publication, should significant archaeological remains be encountered that could not be preserved *in situ*.

3. Method

3.1 Archaeological Evaluation

3.1.1 The evaluation was carried out by the excavation of two parallel, linear trenches, Trenches 1 & 2. (Figure 4, Appendix 1). Each trench was excavated by a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a 1.8 m toothless ditching bucket. Overburden was removed in shallow spits down to the first archaeological horizon or natural, under constant archaeological supervision. Black and white print, colour slide and digital photographs were taken during the course of the works. (Appendix 2)

3.2 Monitored Topsoil Strip

3.2.1 The groundbreaking works for the access track (Figure 2) were carried out by the use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a 1.8 m toothless ditching bucket. The access track measured between c 3.5- 5 m in width, and a total of 520 m in length. Overburden was removed in shallow spits down to the first archaeological horizon or natural, under constant archaeological supervision. Black and white print, colour slide and digital photographs were taken during the course of the works (Appendix 2).

4. RESULTS

4.1.1 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken sporadically between the 27th April and 7th May 2009. The following should be read in conjunction with Appendices 1-2 and Figures 1 and 2.

4.1.2 The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of between 0.10-0.43 m of topsoil, overlying the natural pink clay. A series of varying aligned rubble and clay lined drains were identified running across the site.

- 4.1.3 The watching brief exercise monitored the excavation of between 0.25–0.50 m of topsoil. A series of varying aligned rubble and clay lined drains were identified running across the site.
- 4.1.4 Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were identified during the course of the either phase of the works.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1. Despite the presence of known archaeological features within the development area, the archaeological works failed to identify any significant features or artefacts. The reasons for this absence are unclear. Analogy with other heavily ploughed fields suggests that the archaeological features may simply have been truncated away in the intervening years between the Aerial Survey and the archaeological works. Alternatively, it may be that the trenches and access track were simply excavated between the individual elements of the features.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Given that the archaeological fieldwork at Little Spott Farm failed to note any significant remains, no further works are recommended.

7. REFERENCES

AOC 2009 *Little Spott Farm: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished AOC Archaeology Group client report.

SSP23 2008 Scottish Planning Policy SSP23: Planning and the Historic Environment (2008), Scottish Parliament.

SOEnd 1994 Planning Advice Note 42. Archaeology – the Planning Process and Scheduled Ancient Monument Procedures. January 1994. The Scottish Office Environment Department.

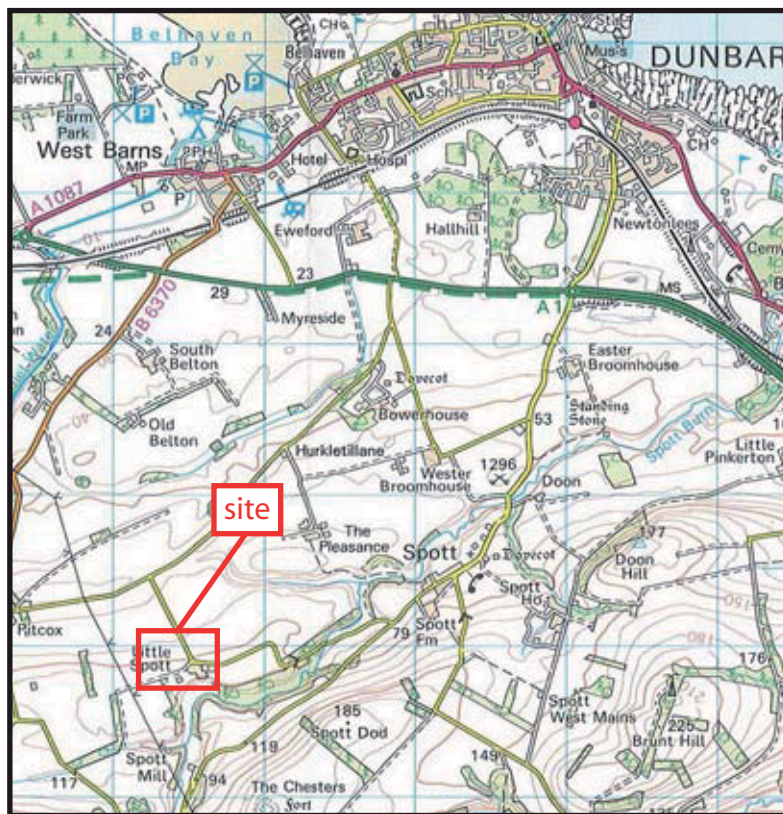
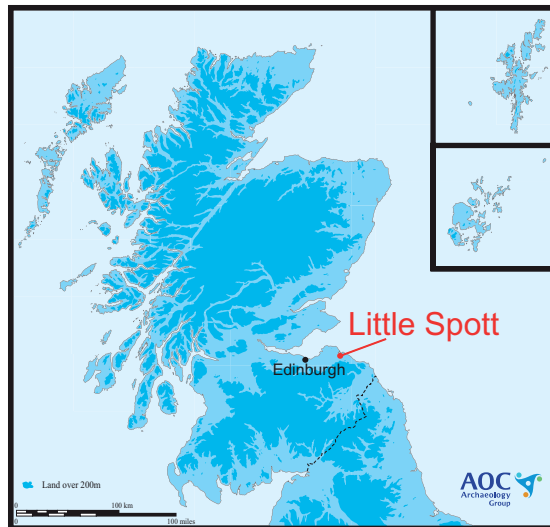


Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing
pit alignment in field with access track
watching brief



Figure 3: Aerial photograph showing pit alignment in field with access track watching brief

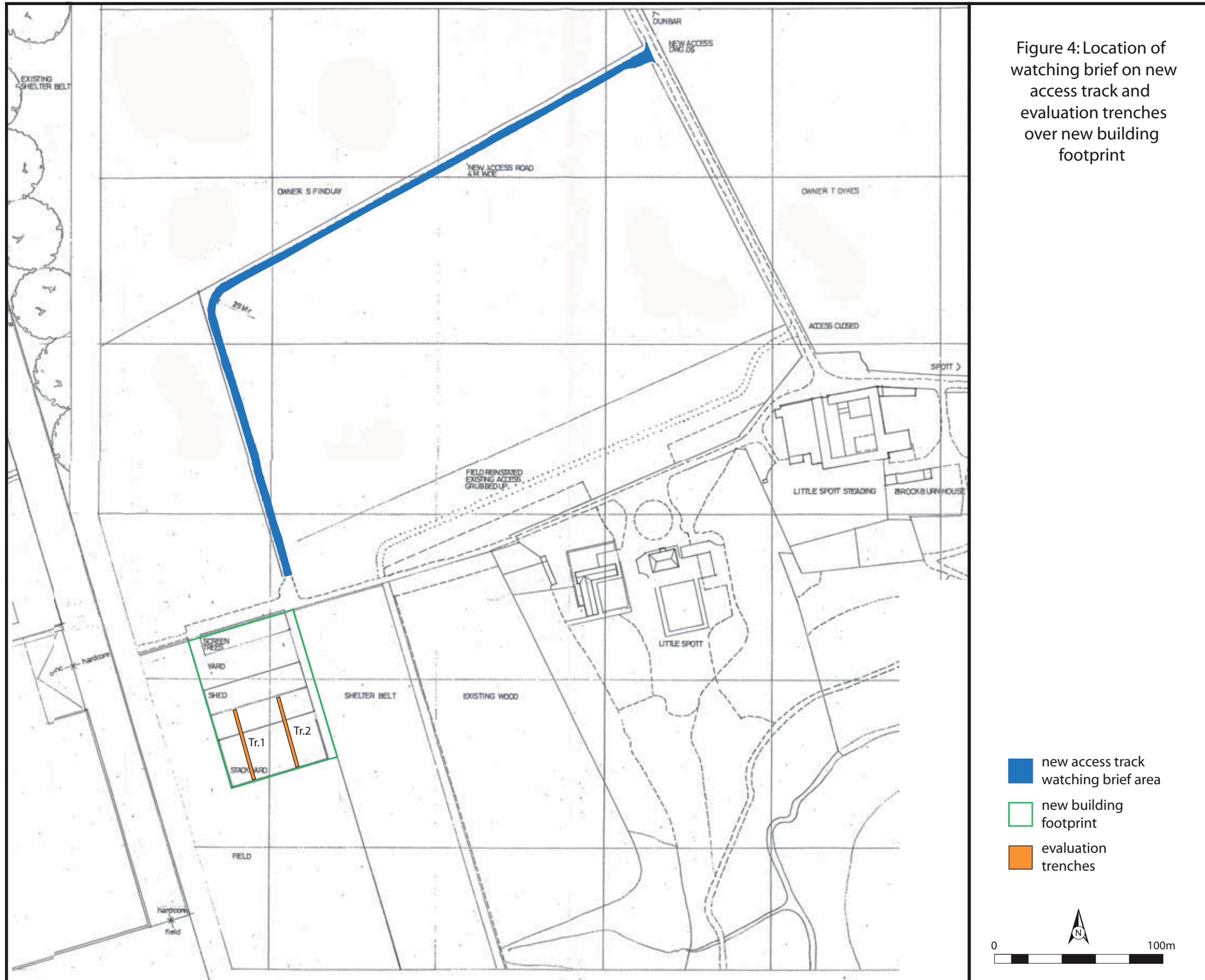


Figure 4: Location of watching brief on new access track and evaluation trenches over new building footprint

APPENDIX 1: EVALUATION TRENCH RECORDS

Trench 1

Dimensions	43 m by 1.8 m
Total Area	77.4 m ²
Orientation	NW-SE
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.10 m and 0.43 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	Occasional fragments of modern pottery.

Trench 2

Dimensions	42 m by 1.8 m
Total Area	75.6 m ²
Orientation	NW-SE
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.08 m and 0.42 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	None

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Colour Slide and Black & White Print – Film No.1

Shot No.	Description	From
1-2	Registration shots	-
3-4	Trench 1	NE
5-6	Trench 2	NE
7-8	Trench 2 - west facing section,	W
9-10	General shot after backfilling	N

Colour Slide and Black & White Print – Film No.2

Shot No.	Description	From
1-2	Registration shots	-
3-4	East – West element of access track	E
5-6	East – West element of access track	W
7-8	North - South element of access track	N
9-10	North - South element of access track	S

APPENDIX 3: *DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND* REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Little Spott Farm, Spott, East Lothian
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21345
PARISH:	Stenton (East Lothian)
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alan Duffy
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT67SE15 and NT67SE20
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Pit Alignment and Linear Feature (cropmarks)
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	Evaluation: NT 653 746; Watching Brief: NT 654 750 to NT 652 749 to NT 652 747
START DATE (this season)	27 th April 2009
END DATE (this season)	7 th May 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Mr Marshall Milne to undertake archaeological evaluation and monitored topsoil strip works at Little Spott Farm, Spott, East Lothian. The work required was in response to a planning condition set by East Lothian Council, prior to the construction of a new outbuilding and access track. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the works.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Marshall Milne
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	C/o AOC Archaeology Group
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Alan.Duffy@aocarchaeology.com



AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead EH20 9SY
tel: 0131 440 3593 | fax: 0131 440 3422 | e-mail: edinburgh@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com