

RTSL11/001



# LAND AT TOWNFOOT STEADING, ROBERTON, SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

*Watching brief*

*for Tinto Construction Ltd*

CL/11/0009

June 2011

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Parish: Wiston & Roberton

Council: South Lanarkshire

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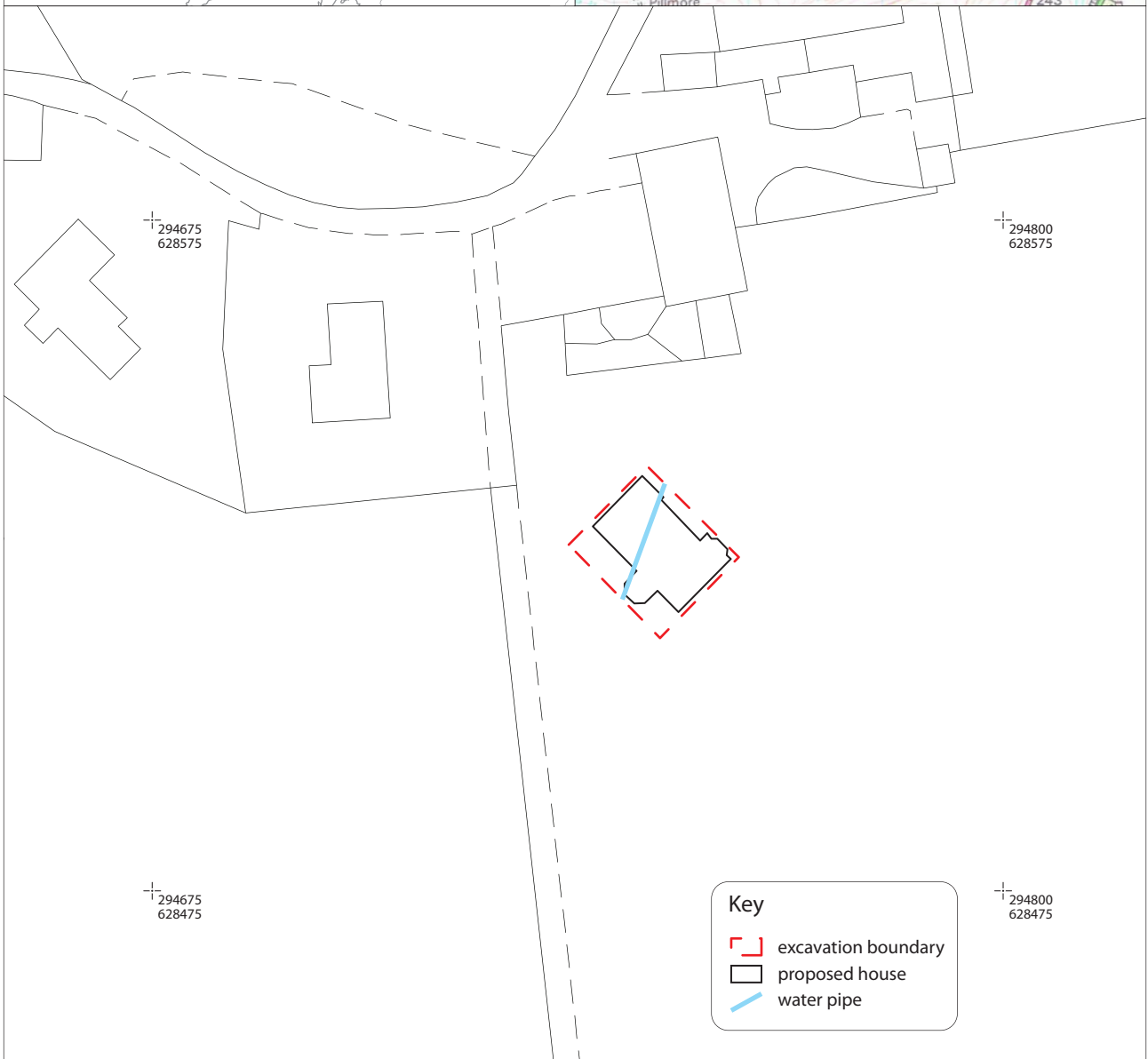
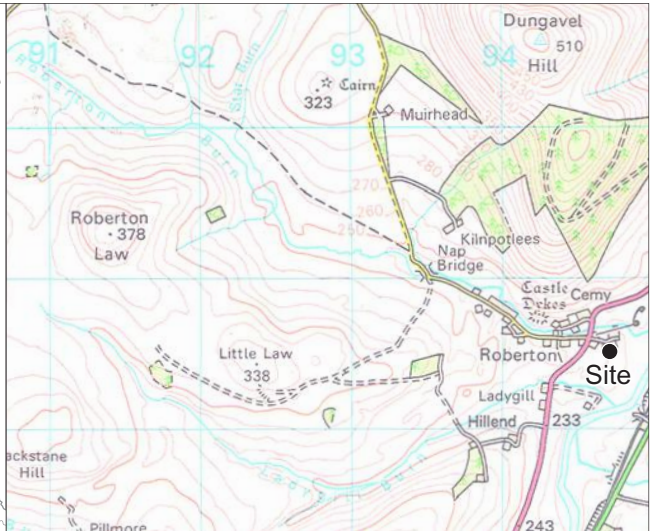
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Townfoot Steading  
Roberton  
South Lanarkshire



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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



0 50m

**Illus 1**  
Site location

# LAND AT TOWNFOOT STEADING, ROBERTON, SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

## Watching brief

*Headland Archaeology Ltd undertook monitoring of machine-cleaning of a stripped area for a single house plot on land at Townfoot Steading, Roberton on behalf of Tinto Construction Ltd. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) on behalf of the local planning authority, in order to satisfy a condition (no. 14) of planning consent.*

*The development site was located in the immediate vicinity of cropmarks indicative of prehistoric settlement, while two Scheduled Ancient Monuments of medieval date are sited nearby (SAM 2596 & 8775).*

*An area of approximately 22m by 16m was stripped of any remaining topsoil and the underlying geological deposits cleaned to allow identification of any surviving archaeological features. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned to carry out archaeological monitoring of machine-cleaning of an area already partially stripped of topsoil in advance of construction of a dwelling at Townfoot Steading, Roberton, South Lanarkshire. The work was carried out in order to satisfy a condition of planning consent (no. 14) and adhered to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) on behalf of the local planning authority.

### 2. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The development site (NGR: NS 9480 2880) is located on a parcel of land at the eastern extent of Roberton (Illus 1). It is bounded to the north by a farm shed and sheep pens and to the west by a residential bungalow. The ground slopes gently eastwards towards the River Clyde and was under pasture immediately prior to stripping (Illus 2). The British Geological Survey classifies the bedrock geology of this area as 'Leadhills supergroup – Wacke', comprising grey-wackes, shales, silt-stones and mud-stones with conglomerates. The superficial geology comprises river terrace deposits of gravel, sand, silt and clay.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development footprint lies within the historic settlement of Roberton, erected Burgh of Regality in 1631. It lies in the environs of two scheduled monuments; the medieval remains of Castle Dykes earthwork (SAM 2596) and The Bower of Wandel tower (SAM 8775) lie approximately 400m west and east of the development, respectively. A number of probable prehistoric features have also been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the development: several ditched enclosures identified on oblique aerial photographs lie to the northeast and west (WOSAS site ID: 10433; 14679). A trial-trench evaluation carried out by CFA Archaeology in 1999 for a neighbouring house plot did not reveal any archaeological features (Suddaby 1999).

### 4. AIMS & METHODS

The aim of the archaeological works was to ensure the development area was fully cleared of topsoil and underlying geological deposits cleaned sufficiently to allow for the identification and recording of any archaeological features that would be affected by construction.



***Illus 2***

N facing shot showing site and topography towards River Clyde prior to monitored groundworks

2



***Illus 3***

SE facing shot of site showing topsoil still present



**Illus 4**

N facing section showing soil profile

Initial site inspection established that over much of the site topsoil had only been partially removed during unmonitored work (Illus 3). Where this was the case, the remainder of the deposit was excavated down to the underlying geological deposits. In areas completely stripped of topsoil, the geological deposits were carefully scraped clean to allow for identification of any surviving archaeological features.

The groundworks were carried out using a JCB fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket, operating under continuous archaeological supervision.

## 5. RESULTS

An area approximately 22m by 16m was stripped down to geological deposits, which were then scraped clean. The exposed geological deposits were interpreted as glaciofluvial in origin and comprised light brown gravels, shale lenses and frequent sub-round and sub-angular stone inclusions. The inclusions ranged in size from pebbles to large stones 0.5m in length. A modern water-pipe trench cut these deposits; it was 0.3m in width and aligned NE-SW (Illus 1). The topsoil sealing the pipe trench and natural geology was on average 0.4m in depth and comprised dark brown clayey silt with frequent sub-round stone inclusions (Illus 4).

No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed during the programme of works.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The development area would appear to be in a suitable location for human settlement; on raised, relatively well-draining ground near a watercourse. This is attested by its close proximity to recorded cropmarks that indicate prehistoric activity and the visible, scheduled, remains of medieval sites. Despite this potential, no archaeological features were observed.

Although the area had been partially stripped of topsoil prior to monitoring, this does not appear to have disturbed any archaeology. The excavations revealed a relatively thin topsoil which was homogenised (well-mixed by ploughing and bioturbation) across the site. As agricultural activity has not built up the soil profile, it is likely that there has been some erosion of soils down slope towards the River Clyde. Ploughing through this shallow soil would have caused truncation of any archaeological features. However, it appears likely that archaeological features were never present on this small site.





## 7. APPENDICES

### 7.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

#### *Context register*

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<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Dark brown clayey silt topsoil, 0.4m depth
002	Natural – light brown gravels, shale lenses and frequent sub-round and sub-angular stone inclusions
003	Linear cut for modern water pipe, 0.3m wide
004	Backfill of [003], mixed deposits of natural and topsoil with occasional modern ceramics

#### *Photographic register*

Colour slides, colour print and digital.

#### *Film 1*

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<b>Shot no.</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	–	ID shot
2	E	Pre-stripped area of house plot
4 3	E	Working shot of excavations
4	S	N facing section showing soil profile
5	N	Post-ex shot of stripped area
6	N	N facing shot showing site and topography towards River Clyde
7	E	Shot of access road with scale

Site notes comprise 1 side of A4.

## 7.2 Appendix 2 – DES entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	South Lanarkshire
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME</b>	Land at Townfoot Steading, Roberton, South Lanarkshire
<b>PROJECT CODE</b>	RTSL11
<b>PARISH</b>	Wiston & Roberton
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S)</b>	Alistair Robertson
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION</b>	Headland Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S)</b>	n/a
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S)</b>	n/a
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	n/a
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NS 9480 2880
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	25th May 2011
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	25th May 2011
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION (may include information from other fields)</b>	<p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken of the machine cleaning of a pre-stripped area in response to a planning condition for the proposed development of a single house plot on land at Townfoot Steading, Roberton.</p> <p>The proposed development site is in the immediate vicinity of cropmarks identified on aerial photographs, indicative of prehistoric settlement, while two Scheduled Ancient Monuments of Medieval origin are sited nearby (SAM 2596 &amp; 8775).</p> <p>An area 22m by 16m was stripped of the remaining topsoil and the underlying subsoil scraped to expose any surviving archaeological features. The topsoil comprised 0.4m of dark brown clayey silt, with frequent stone inclusions. Underlying that was geological deposits of light brown gravels, shale lenses and frequent sub-round and sub-angular stone inclusions. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed during the programme of works. If features were present within the development area, their removal does not appear to be a result of the partial stripping of the site prior to archaeological monitoring, but may be due to ploughing activity in shallow topsoil.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK</b>	None
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/ deposited)</b>	Report to be lodged with WOSAS and NMRS
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY</b>	Tinto Construction Ltd
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS</b>	n/a
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR</b>	Headland Archaeology Ltd 13 Jane St Edinburgh EH6 5HE
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