

DBFA/01



DUBTON FARM, BRECHIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

ADDENDUM TO CFA REPORT No. 1849

PLANNING REF: 09/00675/FUL

COMMISSIONED BY SCOTIA HOMES

SUMMARY SHEET

CLIENT: Scotia Homes

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NO 586 606 (site center)

ADDRESS: Dubton Farm, Brechin, DD9 6LQ

PARISH: Brechin

COUNCIL: Angus Council

PLANNING APPLICATION NO.: 09/00675/FUL

NMRS NO.: N/A

SMR NO.: N/A

OASIS NO.: headland1-242612

PROJECT MANAGER: Russel Coleman

AUTHOR: Stephen Cox

ILLUSTRATIONS: Rafael Maya-Torcelly

FIELDWORK: Kieran Boyle, Stephen Cox

SPECIALISTS: Laura Bailey, Tim Holden

SCHEDULE

FIELDWORK: December 2015

REPORT: January 2016

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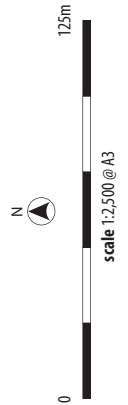
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SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Scotia Homes to undertake a programme of additional archaeological trial trenching to supplement the trial trenching carried out in November 2010 at Dubton Farm near Brechin, Angus. A total of 16 trenches were excavated, of which three contained features of archaeological significance. The features included three small undated pits, a stone spread and a large undated pit.



- KEY**
- development boundary
 - new access road
 - Headland Archaeology trial trenches (2015)
 - CFA trial trenches (2010)
 - archaeological features
 - drain
 - furrow



ILLUS 1 Trench layout

DUBTON FARM, BRECHIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

INTRODUCTION

This report represents an addendum to the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd at Dubton Farm near Brechin, Angus in 2010. A total of 16 trenches were excavated. Five trenches were located along the line of a proposed access road connecting the site to the A935. The remaining 11 were located on the crest and to the south of a gentle ridge aligned east – west across site in an area due to be landscaped. The work commenced on the 21st December 2015 and lasted three days.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the archaeological works was to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the archaeological significance and potential within the landscaping and site access areas. More specific objectives were to establish the location, extent, nature, and date of archaeological features and deposits identified within the site.

METHOD

The evaluation trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under direct supervision by the archaeologist. Excavation was undertaken in controlled spits to remove topsoil and subsoil with machine excavation terminating at the top of the natural geology or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first. Excavation of the archaeological features was continued by hand using appropriate hand tools when required, and all identified features were investigated and recorded.

An extension to Trench 2 was excavated in order to determine the extent of the large pit uncovered there.

RESULTS

16 additional trial trenches were excavated to the south of the original 2010 trenches; they measured for the most part 50m x 2m and were located to provide good random coverage across the area of the development (Illus 1). Full trench details are tabulated in Appendix 1.

The topsoil comprised dark greyish brown sandy loam 0.35m – 0.45m thick on top of mid red sandy clay natural geology which contained occasional patches of yellow or grey sand. A subsoil / B-horizon comprising mid / dark brown silty sand 0.6m thick was observed in Trenches 3 and 4. Modern field drains consisting of cobbles and slabs as well as ceramic pipes were observed in many of the trenches. Two furrows from rig and furrow cultivation were observed in Trench 9 oriented north-west – south-east. All the archaeological features observed were truncated by ploughing.



ILLUS 2 View of pit [207] looking west

TRENCH 1

A single pit [0103] was observed and recorded towards the southern end of the trench. The pit measured 0.32m by 0.28m and was 0.14m deep, and contained a dark greyish brown silt loam (0104) with rare flecks of charcoal.

TRENCH 2

Two small pits were observed and recorded towards the southern end of the trench. The southern-most pit [203] measured 0.5m by 0.32m and was 0.12m deep, and contained a dark brown silty clay loam (0204) with rare fragments of burnt bone and charcoal. 1.5m to the north-west was a similar shaped pit [0205] 0.5m in diameter and 0.1m deep, which contained a dark brown sandy clay loam (0206) with rare fragments of burnt bone and charcoal.

A large pit [0207] (Illus 2) was observed and recorded towards the north of the trench. It measured 3.05m by 1.75m and was 0.55m deep. It had been cut into a patch of natural yellow sand. It contained a sterile basal fill of mid yellowish brown silty sand (0208) 0.15m thick, which was overlain by a mid greyish brown silty sand (0209) with occasional charcoal flecks. The base of the pit coincided with the upper level of red sandy clay natural geology

TRENCH 8

A layer of stones (0803) was observed and recorded in the centre of Trench 8. The stones were unworked but appeared to have been laid on their horizontal axes to form a flat but uneven surface. The layer measured 2.2m by 1.8m and was 0.15m thick.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Laura Bailey and Tim Holden

Two 10 litre samples taken during archaeological works at Dubton Farm near Brechin, Angus were received for palaeoenvironmental assessment. The site comprised four pits. The samples were from the fills (0204) and (0209) of pits [0203] and [0207] respectively. The aims of the assessment were to assess the presence, preservation and abundance of environmental remains in the samples. The environmental remains are quantified in Tables 1 and 2.

METHOD

Bulk samples were subjected to flotation and wet sieving in a Siraf-style flotation machine. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 250 µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. All samples were scanned using a stereomicroscope at magnifications of x10 and up to x100. Identifications, where provided, were confirmed using modern reference material and seed atlases including Cappers et al. (2006).

RESULTS

Results of the assessment are presented in Table 1 (Retent samples) and Table 2 (Flot samples). Material suitable for AMS (Accelerated Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dating is highlighted in the tables.

WOOD CHARCOAL

A small amount of heavily fragmented, abraded, wood charcoal was present in both samples in varying quantities. Where possible, the charcoal was identified as oak or non-oak.

CEREAL GRAIN

A hulled barley grain (*Hordeum vulgare*) was present in the fill (0204) of pit [0203], together with a well-preserved rye grain (*Secale cereale*) and a highly vesicular and broken, indeterminate cereal grain.

A heavily abraded wheat grain (*Triticum* sp.) was present in the fill (209) of pit [207].

HAZELNUT SHELL

A small amount (<0.1g) of hazel nutshell was present in both samples.

OTHER CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

A sheep's sorrel nutlet (*Rumex acetosella*) and a brome grass seed (*Bromus* sp.) were recovered from the fill (0209) of pit [0207]. Sheep's sorrel is commonly found growing in acidic soil in heaths, grassland and cultivated land (Stace 1991).

BURNT BONE

A small amount (<1g) of indeterminate, heavily fragmented, burnt bone was present in the fill (204) of pit [0203].

DISCUSSION

The palaeoenvironmental evidence offers some insight into site economy. The presence of nutshell and cereal grains suggest that wild resources were being exploited and that cereals may have been cultivated in the vicinity. Rye was introduced to Britain during the Roman period and only became a significant crop during the medieval period (Dickson 2000). However, given that only a single rye grain was recovered, it is possible that it may have been an accepted contaminant of a cereal crop.

It is likely that the charred plant remains were incidentally incorporated into negative features and do not relate to their function.

DISCUSSION

The archaeological features were located in trenches in the western part of the landscaping area. The three pits [0103], [0203] and [0205] are similar in shape and size and are probably contemporary with each other. They are interpreted as pits excavated to contain waste material and although no datable material was recovered from their fills they are likely to be prehistoric. This is not contradicted by the paleo-environmental evidence. Trenches 5 and 3 nearby did not contain any similar features and Trench 16 was located between Trenches 1 and 2 in order to determine whether there were any more pits but revealed only natural geology.

Pit [0207] was located in a shallow patch of yellow sand natural and its excavators had stopped when they encountered red sandy natural. It is interpreted as a pit dug to extract this sand, and is of unknown date.

The stone layer in Trench 8 was only 0.3m below the present ground level and appeared to be laid within the topsoil. It is interpreted as being the result of stone clearance, and is most likely modern in date.

CONCLUSION

The lack of any archaeological features within the trenches closest to Trenches 1 and 2 indicate that the pits are isolated features, possibly associated with the prehistoric settlement activity to the north. No further work is recommended.

REFERENCES

Cappers RTJ, Bekker, RM & Jans, JEA 2006 *Digital seed atlas of the Netherlands* Barkhuis Publishing and Groningen University Library, Groningen.

Stace, C 1991 *New flora of the British Isles* Cambridge University Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

APPENDIX 1.1 TRENCH REGISTER

TR	Orientation	Dimensions (m)	Max. D (m)	Details
01	N-S	50 x 2	0.55	Dark brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.45m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil with one small pit at the southern end of the trench.
02	NW-SE	50 x 2	0.6	Dark brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.45m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil with a patch of yellow sand. Two small pits were observed at the southern end and one large pit towards the northern end of the trench.
03	NE-SW	50 x 2	1.1	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying mid / dark brown silty sand loam subsoil (0.35 – 1) in the southern half of the trench. The natural geology was red sand / sandy clay. No archaeology was observed.
04	NW-SE	50 x 2	1.2	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying dark brown silty sand loam subsoil (0.35 – 1.1), which overlay red sand / sandy clay. The topsoil was more shallow to the east. No archaeology was observed.
05	N-S	50 x 2	1	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.5m) overlying red sand natural subsoil with patches of orange sand. No archaeology was observed.
06	NW-SE	50 x 2	0.7	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
07	NW-SE	50 x 2	0.6	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.4m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil with patches of grey sand. No archaeology was observed.
08	E-W	25 x 2	0.5	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.7m) overlying red sand natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
09	NE-SW	26 x 2	0.4	Dark greyish brown silty sand loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red silty sand natural subsoil, with two plough furrows at the north-east end of the trench.
10	N-S	50 x 2	0.7	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.4m) overlying red silty sand natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
11	N-S	50 x 2	0.8	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
12	NE-SW	50 x 2	0.5	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil

TR	Orientation	Dimensions (m)	Max. D (m)	Details
				with patches of grey sand. No archaeology was observed.
13	N-S	50 x 2	0.45	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sand natural subsoil with patches of grey sand. No archaeology was observed.
14	N-S	50 x 2	0.45	Dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sand natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
15	NW-SE	60 x 2	0.55	Dark brown sandy loam topsoil (0 – 0.4m) overlying red sand natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.
16	N-S	16.5 x 2	0.5	Dark greyish brown sandy loam (0 – 0.35m) overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil. No archaeology was observed.

APPENDIX 1.2 CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	TR	Description
0101	01	Dark brown sandy loam - topsoil
0102	01	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
0103	01	Cut of small pit
0104	01	Fill of small pit
0201	02	Dark brown sandy loam - topsoil
0202	02	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
0203	02	Cut of small pit
0204	02	Fill of small pit [0203]
0205	02	Cut of small pit
0206	02	Fill of small pit [0205]
0207	02	Cut of large pit
0208	02	Secondary fill of pit [0207]
0209	02	Primary fill of pit [0207]
0301	03	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
0302	03	Mid / dark brown silty sand loam
0303	03	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
0401	04	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
0402	04	Dark brown silty sand loam - subsoil
0403	04	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
0501	05	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
0502	05	Red sandy clay, with patches of orange sand- natural subsoil
0601	06	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
0602	06	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
0701	07	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
0702	07	Red sandy clay, with patches of grey sand - natural subsoil
0801	08	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil

Context	TR	Description
0802	08	Red sand - natural subsoil
0803	08	Layer of stones
0901	09	Dark greyish brown silty sand - topsoil
0902	09	Red silty sand - natural subsoil
0903	09	Fill of furrow
0904	09	Cut of furrow
1001	10	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
1002	10	Red silty sand - natural subsoil
1101	11	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
1102	11	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
1201	12	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
1202	12	Red sandy clay - natural subsoil
1301	13	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
1302	13	Red sand, with patches of grey sand - natural subsoil
1401	14	Dark greyish brown sandy loam - topsoil
1402	14	Red sand - natural subsoil
1501	15	Dark brown sandy loam - topsoil
1502	15	Red sand - natural subsoil
1601	16	Dark brown sandy loam - topsoil
1602	16	Red sand - natural subsoil

APPENDIX 1.3 DRAWING REGISTER

Drawing	Scale	Description
1	01:10	North and east facing sections of north-east quadrant of pit [207]
2	01:10	South and west facing sections of south-west quadrant of pit [207]
3	–	Photos 37 - 54 taken of stone layer 803 for photogrammetry

APPENDIX 1.4 PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Photo	Direction	Description
01	–	ID Shot
02	N	General view of Trench 1
03	S	General view of Trench 1
04	E	Trenching in the moonlight on the shortest day of the year
05	N	South facing section of pit [0103]
06	S	General view of Trench 3
07	N	General view of Trench 3
08	E	General view of Trench 4
09	W	General view of Trench 4
10	NW	South-east facing section of furrow [0904]
11	SE	General view of Trench 9
12	NE	General view of Trench 9
13	NW	General view of Trench 15
14	SE	General view of Trench 15
15	NE	View of cobble drain in Trench 15

Photo	Direction	Description
16	NW	General view of Trench 7
17	SE	General view of Trench 7
18	NW	General view of Trench 6
19	SE	General view of Trench 6
20	S	General view of Trench 10
21	N	General view of Trench 10
22	S	General view of Trench 11
23	SE	View of stone drain with vertical slabs in Trench 11
24	N	General view of Trench 11
25	S	General view of Trench 12
26	N	General view of Trench 12
27	S	General view of Trench 13
28	N	General view of Trench 13
29	S	General view of Trench 14
30	N	General view of Trench 14
31	N	General view of Trench 5
32	S	General view of Trench 5
33	N	General view of stone layer [0803]
34	W	Close-up of stone layer [0803] in topsoil
35	W	General view of Trench 8
36	E	General view of Trench 8
37		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
38		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
39		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
40		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
41		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
42		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
43		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
44		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
45		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
46		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
47		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
48		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
49		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
50		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
51		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
52		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
53		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
54		Photogrammetry of feature in Trench 8
55	S	General view of Trench 16
56	N	General view of Trench 16
57	S	North facing section of pit [0205]
58	SW	North-east facing section of pit [0203]
59	W	General view of pit [0207]
60	S	North facing section of pit [0207]

Photo	Direction	Description
61	NW	South facing section of pit [0207]
62	E	General view of pit [0207]
63	SE	General view of Trench 2
64	NW	General view of Trench 2
65	E	General site view
66	S	General site view

Appendix 1.5 Sample register

Sample	Context	Size (litres)	Description / Reason for sampling
500	0104	5	Charcoal flecks - Environmental information, finds retrieval
501	0204	5	Charcoal flecks and fragments of burnt bone - Environmental information, finds retrieval
502	0206	10	Charcoal flecks and fragments of burnt bone - Environmental information, finds retrieval
503	0208	10	Secondary fill of pit - environmental information, finds retrieval
504	0209	10	Primary fill of pit - environmental information, finds retrieval

Appendix 2 DES Form

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Dubton Farm, Brechin, Angus
PROJECT CODE:	DBFA
PARISH:	Brechin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Stephen Cox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	–
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 58675 60345
START DATE (this season)	21 st December 2015
END DATE (this season)	23 rd December 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	DES Vol. 12, p29
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Headland Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological trial trenching to supplement the trial trenching carried out in November 2010 at Dubton Farm near Brechin, Angus. A total of 16 trenches were excavated, of which three contained features of archaeological significance. The features included three small undated pits, a stone spread and a large undated pit. These are interpreted as isolated features which do not require further mitigation.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	–
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	–
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Scotia Homes
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH5 6HE
EMAIL ADDRESS:	steve.cox@headlandarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	RCAHMS