

TBPI18-WB



THAINSTONE BUSINESS PARK, INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE

WATCHING BRIEF

PLANNING REF. APP/2015/3793 AND APP/2018/0140

commissioned by Axiom Project Services Limited

August 2019

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PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **TBPI18-WB** / NGR **NJ 76941 17805** / Parish **Kintore** / Local Authority **Aberdeenshire Council** / OASIS Ref. **headland1-351941** / Archive Repository **NRHE**

PROJECT TEAM:

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part of the **RSK** Group



PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Axiom Project Services to undertake a watching brief during a commercial development at Thainstone Business Park, Aberdeenshire. The work was carried out in response to a planning condition on an application submitted to Aberdeenshire Council. The work took place between the 21st of February and 19th of March 2019. A handful of isolated features were identified.

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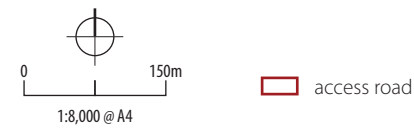
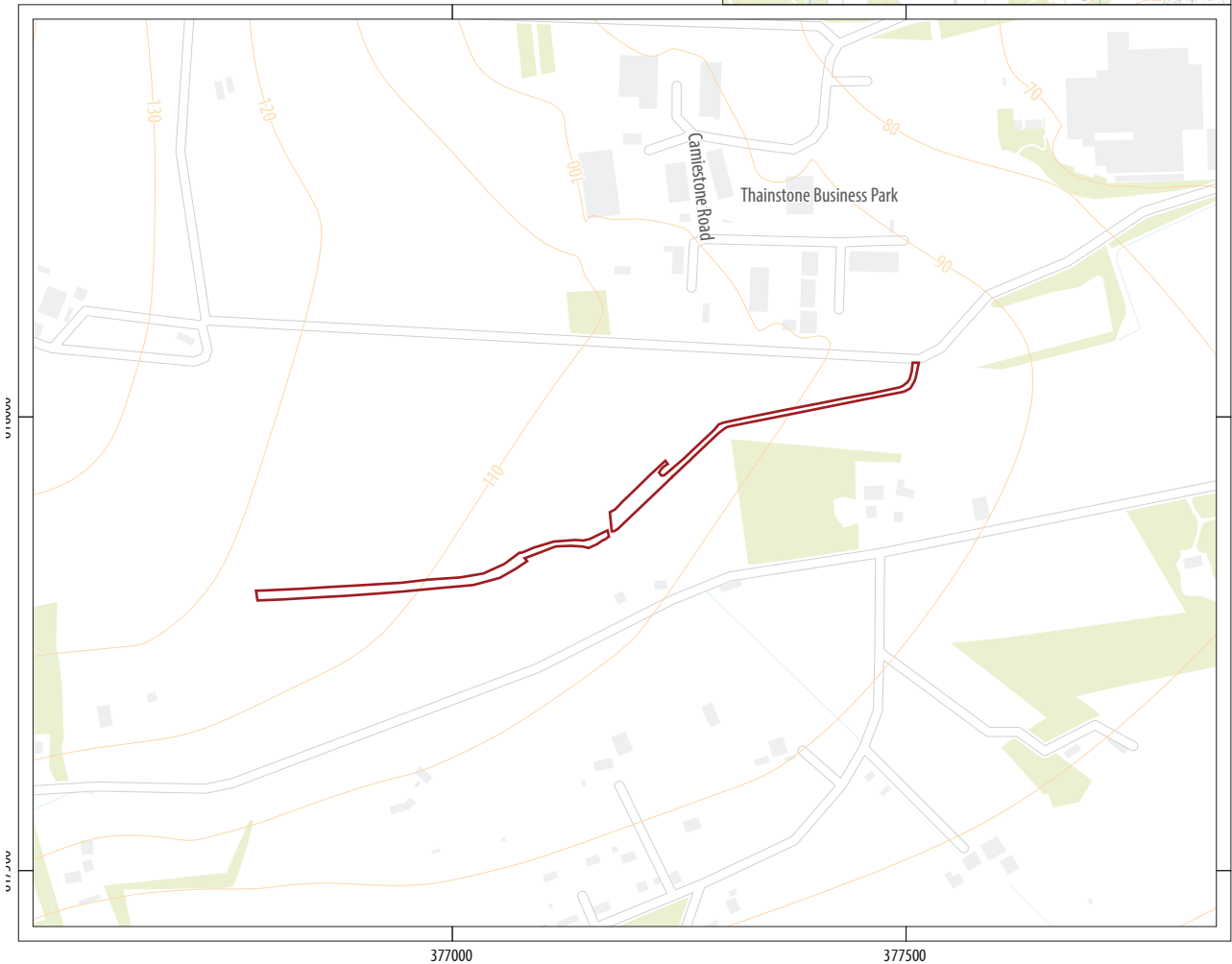
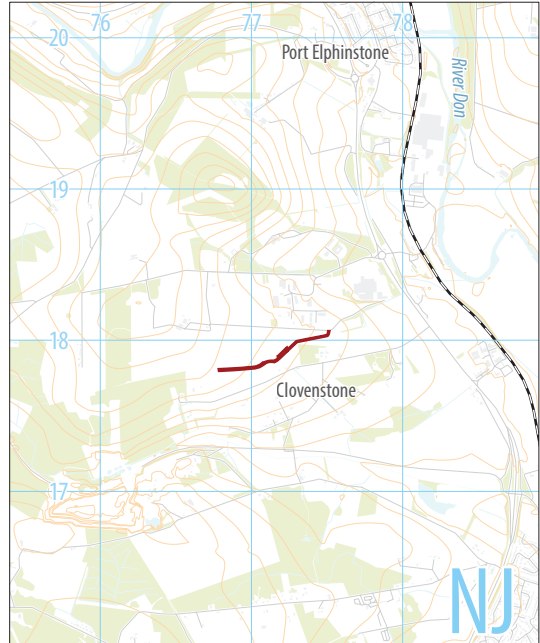
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Land west of Thainstone Business Park
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire



0 200km
1:12,500,000 @ A4



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ILLUS 1 Site location

THAINSTONE BUSINESS PARK, INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE

WATCHING BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Axiom Project Services Limited to undertake a programme of archaeological works at Thainstone Business Park, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire in connection to a new access road for a proposed commercial development. The works were undertaken in response to a condition forming part of the planning permission as set by Aberdeenshire Council (Planning Ref. app/2015/3793 and app/2018/0140). The condition states:

No works shall take place within the development site until the developer has secured the implementation of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning

Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken in accordance with the scheme.

Such a programme of works could include the following: historical research, excavation, post-excavation assessment and analysis, publication in an appropriate academic journal and archiving.

Reason: to safeguard and record the archaeological potential of the area.

In order to fulfil this condition Cameron Archaeology initially set out the objectives in a WSI which Headland Archaeology was later commissioned to undertake. This WSI set out the proposed strategy

for archaeological works to be undertaken. This report details the results of the watching brief that was undertaken between the 21st of February and the 19th of March 2019.

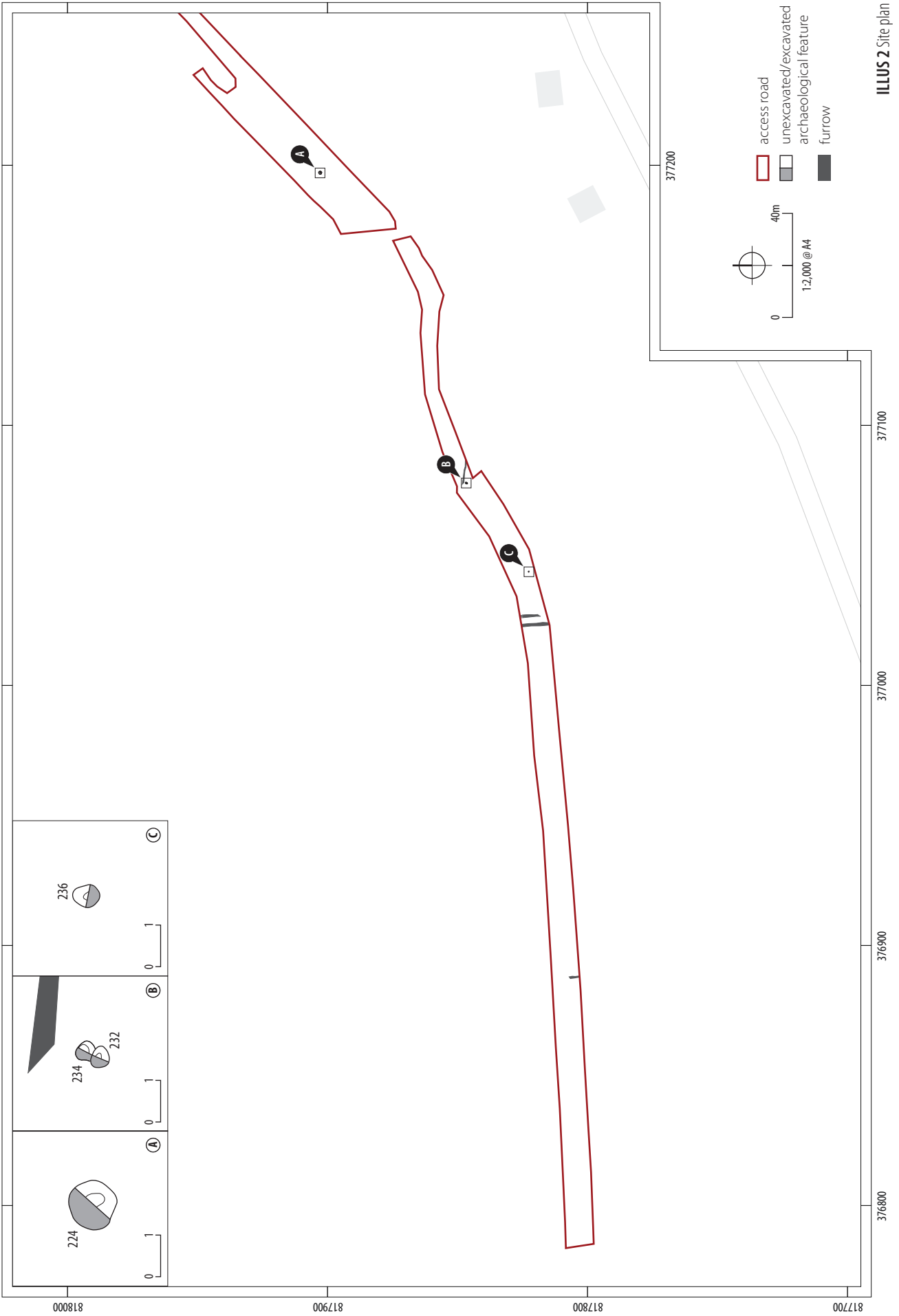
2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site was located in fields laid to pasture on land south of Thainstone Agricultural Centre, approximately 3km south of Inverurie, Aberdeenshire (Illus 1). The site was centred on NJ 76941 17805 and located at between 102–112m AOD. The bedrock geology comprised Aberdeen Formation – Psammite and Semipelite, metamorphic bedrock formed approximately 541 to 1,000 million years ago. This was originally sedimentary rocks formed in shallow seas later altered by low-grade metamorphism. The superficial geology is made up of the Banchory till formation – Diamicton. These were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (NERC 2018).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are three known archaeological sites within the wider proposed development. Camie's Stone (HER NJ71NE0085), a large cairn (HER NJ70NE0012; Coles 1902, 504) and the recently discovered roundhouses, souterrain and cremation cemetery (NJ 7707 1809; Wilson 2019).

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within 1km of the proposed development. This is a hillfort 0.5km from the north



ILLUS 2 Site plan



ILLUS 3 View of pits [232] and [234]

boundary known as Bruce's Camp (HER NJ71NE0060). The monument comprises a fort of later prehistoric date. It is situated on the summit of Shaw Hill, also known as Hill of Crichtie, at 170m above sea level. Near the centre of the fort, to the south of the dyke bisecting the interior, is a granite cup-marked boulder. A hoard of Iron Age metalwork was discovered on the hill in 1867, under a large stone. This included a terret (a type of harness fitting), two doorknob spear butts, 13 bobble-headed shale pins and possibly other items, now lost. Limited archaeological excavation of the monument in 2006 showed that within the interior of the fort were walls, post-holes and pits (Cook et al 2006).

Approximately 120m to the west of the proposed development is the site of Camie's Grave (NJ71NE 4), the site of a cist, supposed to be the burial place of a Danish leader who was killed nearby. The cist was opened a few years before 1867. Coles reported that he saw a cist cover and one of its supports but there is now no trace (Coles 1902, 504).

To the north of the proposed development is the Cloven stone (NJ71NE 77) a single standing stone which has several large natural boulders surrounding it which have been incorporated into a field boundary.

To the south of Fullerton to the east side of the A96 is the remains of a stone circle (NJ71NE 14). Only one of the standing stones survives but it was thought that it originally included seven stones. A cist inhumation and evidence of cremation urns were recorded during

investigation of the site (Coles 1901). More recent investigation of the pottery recovered from this site suggests early Iron Age activity also taking place here (Kilbride-Jones 1935).

There is a flanged bronze axe from Bogfur (NJ71NE 235; north west of the development site) in Marischal Museum, Aberdeen (ABDUA: 19649) and Inverurie Museum hold 28 leaf-shaped flint arrow-heads (Accession nos. 150–76; NRHE: NJ71NE 58), 5 barbed and tanged flint arrowheads, a flint pick, a flint blade, a flint scraper and 2 stone whorls, all are from Fullerton to the east.

Archaeological investigations were carried out to the east of the development site in 2002 in advance of proposed re-development in Thainstone Industrial Estate. The evaluation (HER NJ71NE0176) and subsequent excavation (see HER NJ71NE0151) here revealed the remains of a roundhouse (in the form of a post-ring structure), two hearths or ovens to the south-west and a four-post structure to the south-east (Murray and Murray 2006). Finds included flint flakes and a scraper, a crucible fragment and a Guido class 13 glass bead.

Radiocarbon dating of two of the primary structural posts gave dates of cal BC 30 – cal AD 130 (Beta-181169) and cal BC 40 – cal AD 120 (Beta-181170). A date for one of the repair posts was cal AD 90–260 (Beta-181171), suggesting that the structure was in use for at least 50–80 years. A four-poster beside the building gave a date of cal AD 60–240 (Beta-181172). Two small external hearths may have been used in metalworking, as XRF analysis of a crucible fragment yielded traces of copper and tin.



ILLUS 4 North facing section of pit [236]

To the north of the proposed development is Thainstone House (NJ71NE 90) the remains of a designed landscape dating to the 17th to the 19th centuries. The landscape appears to have been laid out c.1840 when Thainstone House was extensively modified by Simpson, who also added the east lodge (Aberdeenshire HER online).

A phase of archaeological evaluation by trial trenching undertaken in early 2018 was carried out by Cameron Archaeology (2018) and comprised 77 trenches totalling a 7% sample of the development area. During this work, eight concentrations of archaeological features were identified within four separate fields. These features included at least two circular structures (Trench 17 and Trench 33) plus evidence of hearths, charcoal-filled pits and pits with slag (Trench 19). Only two flints were recovered and four sherds of prehistoric pottery. As part of the subsequent mitigation works six areas were targeted for monitored topsoil stripping. This was carried out by Cameron Archaeology in July 2018. Later excavations carried out by Headland Archaeology targeted areas of archaeology identified in the evaluation. These excavations revealed five urned cremations, two double ring-ditches roundhouses, a souterrain, a post-ring roundhouse and several large pits. The urned burials are thought to be Bronze Age in date and the roundhouses are reminiscent of Late Bronze Age structures. The post-ring structure is possibly Iron Age and associated with the souterrain, this being a typical Iron Age feature.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the watching brief included:

- › to mitigate the loss of the archaeological resource by creating a record of the features and deposits present by monitoring of all topsoil stripping associated with the access road.

5 METHODOLOGY

In line with the requirements set out by Aberdeenshire Council an archaeological watching brief on all topsoil stripping associated with the access road was carried out. The watching brief included all ground reduction work associated with the access road, including temporary works.

The main contractor undertook all topsoil stripping in spits using a flat bladed ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision.

The monitoring strategy provided information on any previously unrecorded features of archaeological interest at risk from ground works associated with the access road. Archaeological features exposed during the monitoring were recorded according to normal excavation methodology.

5.1 RECORDING

All recording followed ClfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological excavation (ClfA 2014). All contexts were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro-forma record cards with digital photography used to record all archaeological features with a graduated metric scale clearly visible.

A site plan including all identified features and area of excavation was recorded digitally. The site plan was accurately linked to the National Grid and heights to AOD. Digital recording was undertaken using a differential GPS that allowed data checking while in the field.

This report is in line with ClfA standards & guidance and includes all relevant specialist assessments of excavated material.

5.2 REPORTING AND ARCHIVES

The results of the works are presented below. A summary has been prepared for submission to Discovery & Excavation in Scotland (Appendix 2) and the OASIS database (headland1-351941).

The project archive was compiled in accordance with the guidelines published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (2014). The documentary and digital archive will be submitted to National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE) within six months of completion of all work on this project.

6 RESULTS

A small number of archaeological features were uncovered during this watching Brief (Illus 2). The recording system as outlined above, continued the numbering system used during the excavation

undertaken between August and September 2018 (Wilson 2019). A full list of contexts can be seen in Appendix 1.

The topsoil in this area (221) was generally uniform across the whole access road and comprised mid-brown sandy silt between 0.25 and 0.35m thick overlying the geological subsoil (222). The latter consisted of pinkish-brown sand and gravel with frequent rounded stones and occasional outcrops of sandstone bedrock.

Shallow pit [224] was located in the north-east of the access road (Illus 2a). It measured 1.2m in diameter and 0.12m deep. It was filled by (223), a plastic black peat with a loose consistency and moderate medium sized stone inclusions. Pit [232] was located further west along the access road. It measured 0.48m long, 0.4m wide and 0.23m deep and was filled by (233), a compact mid-greyish-brown silty coarse sand with a gradual deposit interface and rare small poorly sorted stone inclusions, redeposited natural was visible throughout (Illus 2b). This pit cut shallow pit [234] that was located to the north-west. It measured 0.52m in length, 0.38m in width and 0.06m in depth and was filled by (235), a loose dark greyish-black silty fine sand with a clear deposit interface (Illus 2b & 3). The final pit exposed during stripping was [236] that measured 0.5m long, 0.45m wide and 0.24m deep. It was located along the south-east of the access road and was filled by (237), compact mid-brownish-grey silty fine sand with a clear deposit interface, rare medium poorly sorted stone inclusions and redeposited natural visible throughout (Illus 2b & 4).

A small number of furrows were uncovered where there were natural depressions in the landscape. They ran from the north to the south showing the agricultural use of the landscape. Modern field drains were also uncovered running north-west to south-east.

7 DISCUSSION

Prior to this watching brief, it was already known that Thainstone had been the location of Iron Age occupation and Bronze Age activity. This activity was focused to the north of the area targeted by this watching brief. During previous evaluations (Cameron 2018) and excavations (Wilson 2019) dense activity was uncovered to the area north of the access road however the concentration dwindled further to the south. The archaeology uncovered during the course of this watching brief were all isolated features with no artefactual or ecofactual finds recovered with which to provide a date, they do not indicate intensive occupation of this area.

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9 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Appendix 1.1 Context register

CONTEXT	AREA	DESCRIPTION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
221	Access road	Topsoil	–	–	0.25–0.35
222	Access road	Geological Natural	–	–	–
223	Access road	Fill of shallow sub-circular	1.2	1.2	0.12
224	Access road	Cut of shallow sub-circular depression with gently sloping sides, a pointed base and not perceptible breaks of slope.	1.2	1.2	0.12
225	Access road	Fill of stone hole [226]	–	–	–
226	Access road	Stone hole	–	–	–
227	Access road	Fill of pit [228] comprised firm dark brown fine	0.9	0.8	0.16
228	Access road	Cut of pit with an irregular shape, irregular sides and a flat base. The irregular shape suggests it is a stone hole.	0.9	0.8	0.16
229	Access road	Mixed primary fill of drain [230]	–	–	–
230	Access road	Drain	–	–	–
231	Access road	Secondary fill of drain [230]	–	–	–

CONTEXT	AREA	DESCRIPTION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
232	Access road	Cut of sub-circular pit with steep sides, a rounded base and gradual breaks of slope. Cuts pit [234].	0.48	0.4	0.23
233	Access road	Fill of pit [232] comprised compact mid-greyish-brown silty coarse sand with a gradual deposit interface and rare small poorly sorted stone inclusions. Dumped	0.48	0.4	0.23
234	Access road	Cut of shallow sub-circular pit with gently sloping sides, a flat base and gradual breaks of slope. Cut by pit [232].	0.52	0.38	0.06
235	Access road	Fill of pit [234] comprised loose dark greyish-black silty fine sand with a clear deposit interface.	0.52	0.38	0.06
236	Access road	Cut of sub-circular pit with gently sloping sides, a rounded base and gradual breaks of slope.	0.5	0.45	0.24
237	Access road	Fill of pit [236] comprised compact mid-brownish-grey silty fine sand with a clear deposit interface and rare medium poorly sorted stone inclusions. The fill contains redeposited natural suggesting rapid infilling.	0.5	0.45	0.24

Appendix 1.2 Photo register

PICTURE NO	FACING	DESCRIPTION
TBPI-463	NE	W part of recently stripped road corridor before second scrape.
TBPI-464	SW	W part of recently stripped road corridor before second scrape.
TBPI-465	NE	E part of recently stripped road corridor before second scrape.
TBPI-466	SW	Excavated area with
TBPI-467	NE	Excavated area with
TBPI-468	NE	Finished part of access road.
TBPI-469	SE	Stones (221) in pit [222], pre-ex.
TBPI-470	SE	Stones (221) in pit [222], fully exposed.
TBPI-471	E	Stones (221) in pit [222], fully exposed.
TBPI-472	W	Base of large
TBPI-473	—	Drilled hole in fragmented stone from (221).
TBPI-474	—	Drilled hole in fragmented stone from (221).
TBPI-475	N	Large
TBPI-476	NW	C [224] pre-excitation.
TBPI-477	NW	C [224] half sectioned.
TBPI-478	NW	Section across C
TBPI-479	W	C [228] pre-excitation.
TBPI-480	E	Main drain (229).
TBPI-481	W	Main drain (229).
TBPI-482	NW	Rubble drain (230) running into (229).
TBPI-483	SE	Rubble drain (230) running into (229).

PICTURE NO	FACING	DESCRIPTION
TBPI-484	NNW	Drain (231) running into (229).
TBPI-485	SSE	Drain (231) running into (229).
TBPI-486	SW	C [226] half sectioned.
TBPI-487	SW	Section across C
TBPI-488	W	C [226] half sectioned.
TBPI-489	W	Section across C
TBPI-490	W	Clay drainpipe exposed in main drain (229).
TBPI-491	SW	E third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-492	W	Middle third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-493	SW	W third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-494	NE	W third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-495	E	Middle third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-496	NE	E third of re-cleaned area to the W.
TBPI-497	NW	Cut of pits [232] and [234]
TBPI-498	NW	Cut of pits [232] and [234]
TBPI-499	S	Cut of pit [236]
TBPI-500	S	Cut of pit [236]
TBPI-501	NW	Furrow
TBPI-502	NW	Cut of pits [232] and [234]
TBPI-503	NE	General shot of stripped area
TBPI-504	SW	General shot of stripped area

APPENDIX 2 DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND ENTRY

LOCAL AUTHORITY: Aberdeenshire Council

PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: Thainstone Business Park, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire/ Watching Brief

PROJECT CODE: TBPI-WB

PARISH: Kintore Kintore

NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: Aisling Fitzpatrick

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Headland Archaeology Ltd

TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: Watching Brief

NMRS NO(S): N/A

SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): N/A

SIGNIFICANT FINDS: N/A

NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) NJ 76941 1780

START DATE (this season): 21.02.2019

END DATE (this season): 19.03.2019

PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.) Evaluation by Cameron Archaeology Jan 2018/Excavation by Headland Archaeology (Wilson 2019)

MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Axiom Project Services to undertake a watching Brief during a commercial development at Thainstone Business Park, Aberdeenshire. The work was carried out in response to a planning condition on an application submitted to Aberdeenshire Council. The work took place between the 21st of February and 19th of March 2019. A handful of isolated features were identified

PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: N/A

CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: Illus 1 Site location/Illus 2 Site plan/Illus 3 View of pits [232] and [234]/Illus 4 North facing section of pit [236]

SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: Axiom Project Services Limited

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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended): NRHE



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