

**Premier Inn, Ellon Road,
Aberdeen:
Archaeological Mitigation**

Data Structure Report



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on behalf of Whitbread Ltd.

RATHMELL 
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Quality Assurance

This report covers works which have been undertaken in keeping with the issued brief as modified by the agreed programme of works. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance of Rathmell Archaeology Limited on the preparation of reports. All works reported on within this document have been undertaken in keeping with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Whitbread in support of the construction of an extension to their Aberdeen North Premier Inn (Planning Permission Ref No: P141487) on land at Ellon Road, Aberdeen. The archaeological works are designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area to the agreement of Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by Whitbread to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works.
2. Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service who advises Aberdeen City Council on archaeological matters has requested archaeological monitoring (Watching-brief Condition PAN 42, Para 35, SPP, SHEP) to manage the potential impact on archaeological remains. They have provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required on this site during development. All works and reporting will comply with Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Services *Standard for Archaeological Fieldwork*.

Historical and Archaeological Background

3. No known archaeological sites are situated directly within the development area but the potential for unknown archaeology to appear is evident from known sites that can be located within the close vicinity.
4. The main site of interest is the Mill of Mundurno (NMRS: NJ91SW 24; HB No: 15678) which is located approx. 75m east of the development area (Figures 1 and 2). The mill dates from the 19th century and consists of an L-shaped structure of granite rubble walls and a slate roof. It retains its wood and iron overshot wheel (4.16m in diameter) and has a projecting kiln with Aberdeenshire vent with pig vane (Hume 1977, 111). A dam and sluice system was in operation with the mill pond located to the northwest of the mill buildings.
5. The existence of an earlier mill structure on this site however is highlighted by documentary evidence. The Aberdeen Sherriff Court Records mentions the Mill of Mundurno as early as 1573, when the proprietor of the mill is recorded as Alexander Annand of Ouchterellon, and the possession of the mill is again mentioned in 1625 when Katherine Troupe, wife of Lawrence Gray, was renounced in favour of their son Andrew Gray. While the location of this earlier structure cannot be certain, it seems likely to have been broadly on the same site as that occupied by the 19th century mill and there is a potential for evidence of the earlier structure to survive within the development area.
6. Aside from the mill, there is also a potential for unknown prehistoric archaeology to be discovered arising from known cropmark evidence within the surrounding area. This includes a ring-ditch, 6m in diameter (NMRS: NJ91SW 21), which is situated approximately 35m to the south-southeast of the development area and linear cropmarks, 150m long following an L-shaped course (NMRS: NJ91SW 18), situated in the field immediately west of the development area.
7. Previous archaeological works have been carried out by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd in 2008, comprising a watching brief undertaken during the construction of an earlier extension which sits on ground to the immediate north-northeast of this development (Sludden 2008). No archaeological features were recovered during these works, and indeed, the area had been heavily disturbed by the prior installation of a car park. This disturbance would have removed any prior archaeological features which may otherwise have been present.
8. In contrast to this, this phase of development is situated on a greenfield area which shows no evidence of having been previously disturbed. This suggests that there remains a greater chance for the survival of earlier features.

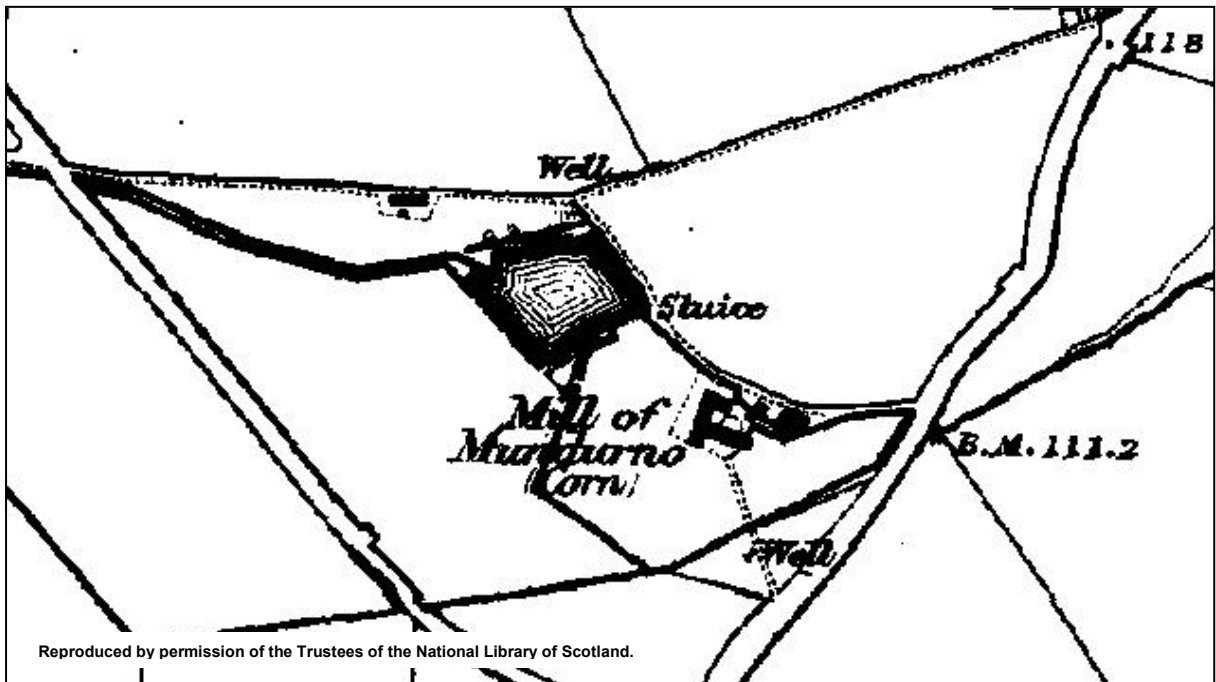


Figure 1: Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1869

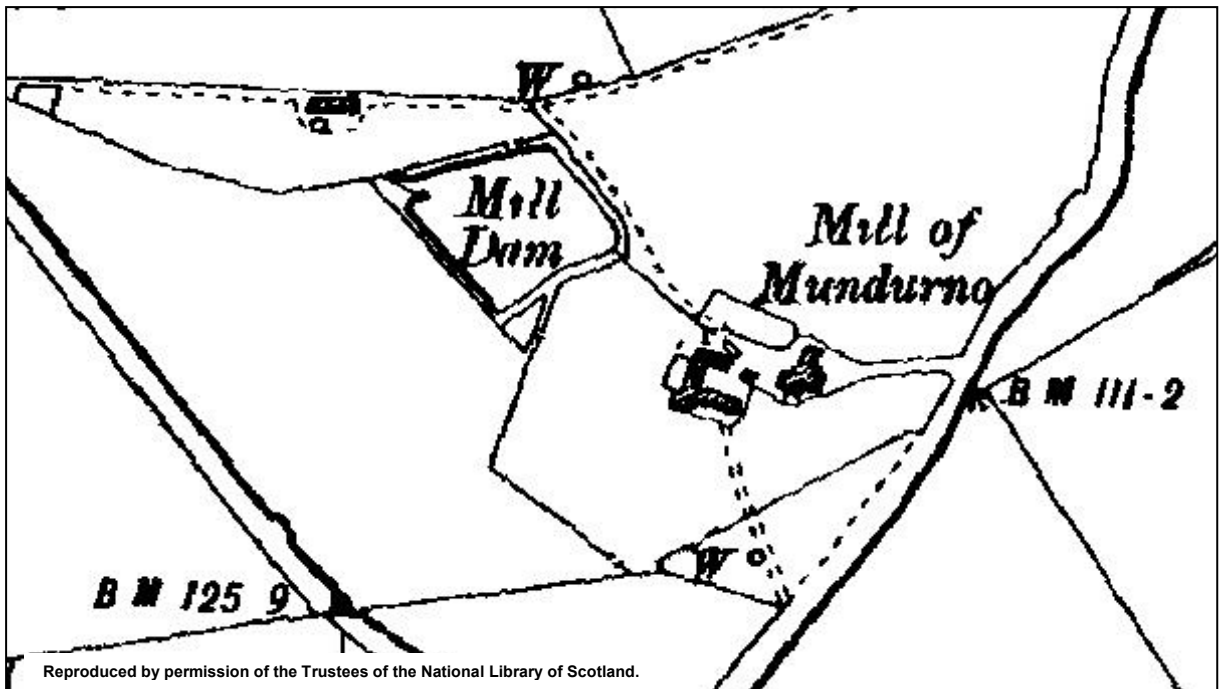


Figure 2: Extract from 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 1902

Project Works

9. The programme of mitigation consisted of the archaeological monitoring of the stripping of an area for the site compound and excavation of foundation trenches for the building extension (Figure 3). Works were undertaken by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd and consistent with the terms described in the Written Scheme of investigation (Williamson 2015). Monitoring, recording and excavation were carried out in conjunction with the terms of this document.
10. Monitoring of the compound stripping was undertaken between the 5th and 7th May 2015 and monitoring of the foundation trench between the 11th and 13th May 2015. Excavations were carried out by an 18 ton Caterpillar 316E tracked excavator and by hand.
11. Any potentially significant archaeological features, structures or deposits encountered were recorded by the archaeologist on site, using Rathmell Archaeology Ltd standard methods. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers with bulk finds collected by context.
12. All works complied with Aberdeenshire Council Archaeological Services *Standard for Archaeological Fieldwork*, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statement.

Findings

13. The development area is located in a greenfield plot of land directly to the southwest of the standing Mill of Mundunno Premier Inn hotel building.
14. The first stage of archaeological monitoring works covered the machine stripping an area to lay a surface for the future compound required during the construction of the building extension (phase 1). The area of the compound measured approximately 66m in length and 25m wide (Figure 4a & 4b). The stripping in this area revealed the depth of the topsoil (001) as 320mm, and showed that it was formed of a mid-brown moderately compacted sand and soil mixture with frequent bioturbation. Beneath this topsoil (001) were a loose to moderately compacted, light brown sand with infrequent medium (150-200mm) sub-angular stones (002) and a deposit similar to (001) with very infrequent small (10-70mm) sub-angular stones and both rubble and ceramic field drains (003).
15. Between the two stages of groundbreaking works, a large culvert had to be constructed to bridge the burn and allow access to the building development site from the compound for the machine excavator (Figure 5a).
16. The second stage of works involved monitoring the excavation of the foundation for the building extension. In total four strips were excavated at 7-8m in length and 25m wide which were terraced to provide platforms for the piling machines. As Strip 1 and 2 were dug at a greater depth than Strip 3 and 4, it is assumed that what was found in the deeper strips would also be present in the more shallow strips.
17. Strip 1 (Figure 5b) revealed the depth of the topsoil (004) as 800mm, and showed that it was formed of loosely compacted, mid-brown sandy silt with frequent bioturbation, infrequent medium (100-300mm) sub-rounded and sub-angular stones and very frequent modern construction detritus (Figure 6a). Beneath this topsoil (004) were a very wet and compacted dark grey sandy clay with no inclusions (005) and a wet and very compacted dark brown sandy clay with small (10-70mm) sub-rounded and sub-angular stones (006) (Figure 6b).
18. Strip 2 (Figure 7a) revealed the depth of the topsoil (004) as 800mm with a large modern pit cut into it and filled with modern construction detritus (Figure 7b). Beneath this topsoil (004) was a moderately compacted, yellow/grey sand with small (10-70mm) sub-angular stone inclusions.
22. No significant archaeological features were recorded during the course of the excavation works for extension of the hotel.

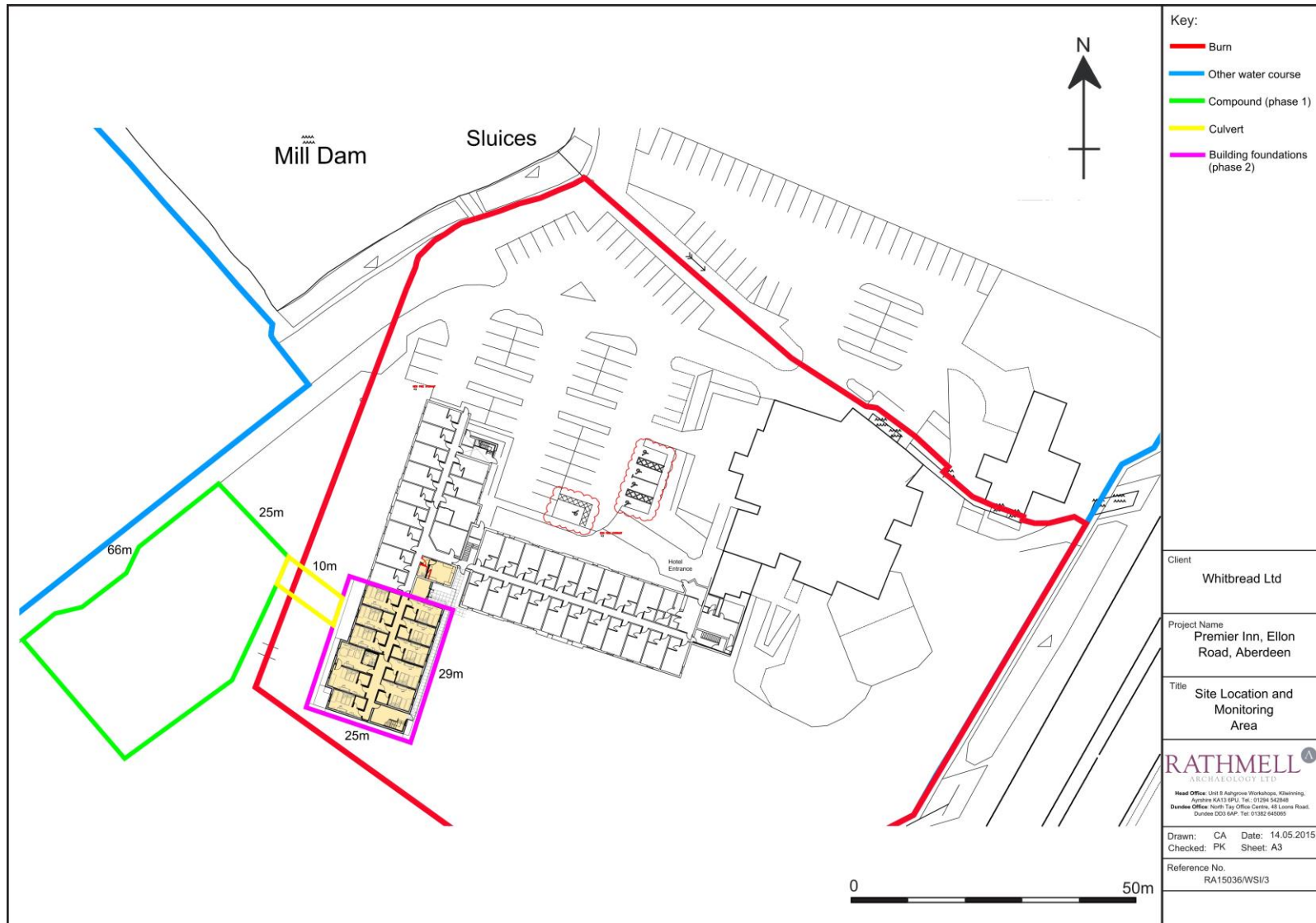


Figure 3: Areas of monitoring and excavation



Figure 4a: Working shot of completed area stripping at S end (phase 1)



Figure 4b: Working shot of completed area stripping at N end (phase 1)



Figure 5a: Working shot of culvert construction (phase 1)



Figure 5b: Working shot of excavation in strip 1 (phase 2)



Figure 6a: South facing section of strip 1 (phase 2)



Figure 6b: W end of strip 1 showing (005) and (006) (phase 2)



Figure 7a: South facing section of strip 2 (phase 2)



Figure 7b: Working shot of excavation in strip 2 (phase 2)

Discussion

19. In the immediate and wider landscape there are a number of sites that have been recorded representing archaeological activity from the Prehistoric up to the Post Medieval periods. However during each stage of monitoring works no significant archaeological features were uncovered.
20. The only anthropic features recorded were in the form of rubble-filled and ceramic drains, present in both phase 1 & 2, and a pit filled with modern construction detritus in phase 2. The field drains are considered to represent late 18th to 19th century agricultural activity and would have been inserted during a period when the landscape across much of Scotland was under a regime of 'improvement'. The modern pit was most likely dug during the initial construction of the hotel.

Recommendations

21. The archaeological mitigation works did not reveal any significant archaeological material from within the development area. Those features that were revealed are considered to be of recent origin.
22. As such it is the recommendation of Rathmell Archaeology Ltd that no further works are appropriate. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service on behalf of Aberdeen City Council.

Conclusion

23. A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried over two intermittent stages between 5th and 7th May 2015 and 11th and 13th May 2015 on behalf of Whitbread Ltd of the construction of an extension to their Aberdeen North Premier Inn (Planning Permission Ref No: P141487) on land at Ellon Road, Aberdeen. This Data Structure Report covers the monitoring works requested by Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service who advise Aberdeen City Council on archaeological matters.
24. In the course of the archaeological monitoring no significant archaeology was uncovered; only one feature relating to agricultural improvement was recorded representing 18th to 19th century activity.

References

Documentary

Hume, J.R. 1977 *The Industrial Archaeology of Scotland, 2. The Highlands and Islands*, London

Sludden, K. 2008 *Premier Travel Inn, Ellon Road, Murcar: Archaeological Watching Brief, Data Structure Report*, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Williamson, C. 2015 *Premier Travel Inn, Ellon Road, Aberdeen: Archaeological Mitigation*, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey	1869	<i>6-inch 1st Edition, Aberdeenshire, Sheet LXVI</i>
Ordnance Survey	1902	<i>6-inch 2nd Edition, Aberdeenshire, Sheet LXVI.SE</i>

Appendix 1: Registers

Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Phase 1	Deposit	Moderately compacted, mid brown sand and soil mix with frequent bioturbation	Topsoil
002	Phase 1	Deposit	Moderately to loosely compacted, light brown sand with infrequent medium (150-200mm) sub-angular stones	Subsoil
003	Phase 1	Deposit	Similar to (001) with very infrequent small (10-70mm) sub-angular stones and field drains.	Subsoil
004	Phase 2	Deposit	Loosely compacted, mid brown sandy silt with frequent bioturbation, infrequent medium (100-300mm) sub-rounded and sub-angular stones and modern construction detritus.	Topsoil
005	Phase 2	Deposit	Very wet and compacted dark grey sandy clay with no inclusions.	Paleochannel
006	Phase 2	Deposit	Wet and very compacted dark brown sandy clay with small (10-70mm) sub-rounded and sub-angular stones.	Subsoil
007	Phase 2	Deposit	Moderately compacted, yellow/grey sand with small (10-70mm) sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural

Photographic Register

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	1	Pre-excavation of development site	E	05/05/15
02	2	Pre-excavation of development site	E	05/05/15
03	3	Pre-excavation of development site	NW	05/05/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
04	4	Pre-excavation of development site	W	05/05/15
05	5	Working shot of area stripping (phase 1)	N	05/05/15
06	6	Working shot of area stripping (phase 1)	W	06/05/15
07	7	Working shot of waterlogged deposit (003) (phase 1)	W	06/05/15
08	8	Working shot of area stripping at N end (phase 1)	W	06/05/15
09	9	Working shot of waterlogged deposit (003) (phase 1)	W	06/05/15
10	10	Working shot of completed area stripping at S end (phase 1)	N	06/05/15
11	11	Working shot of completed area stripping at N end (phase 1)	S	06/05/15
12	12	Working shot of installed field drain (phase 1)	W	07/05/15
13	13	Working shot of completed area stripping at S end (phase 1)	NW	07/05/15
14	14	Working shot of road and culvert construction (phase 1)	W	07/05/15
15	15	Working shot of culvert construction (phase 1)	NW	07/05/15
16	16	Shot of rubble field drain (phase 1)	S	07/05/15
17	17	Working shot of ceramic field drain (phase 1)	S	07/05/15
18	18	Working shot of surface laying (phase 1)	NW	11/05/15
19	19	Working shot of culvert construction (phase 1)	NW	11/05/15
20	20	Pre-excavation of development site (phase 2)	SW	12/05/15
21	21	Working shot of excavation in strip 1 (phase 2)	E	12/05/15
22	22	Working shot of excavation in strip 1 (phase 2)	SW	12/05/15
23	23	South facing section of strip 1 (phase 2)	S	12/05/15
24	24	W end of strip 1 showing (005) and (006) (phase 2)	W	12/05/15
25	25	W end of strip 1 showing field drain in (006) (phase 2)	NW	12/05/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
26	26	Working shot of excavation in strip 1 (phase 2)	W	12/05/15
27	27	Working shot of excavation in strip 1 (phase 2)	W	13/05/15
28	28	Working shot of excavation in strip 2 (phase 2)	E	13/05/15
29	29	South facing section of strip 2 (phase 2)	S	13/05/15
30	30	Working shot of excavation in strip 2 (phase 2)	E	13/05/15
31	31	Working shot of excavated areas in strip 1 and 2 (phase 2)	NE	13/05/15
32	32	Working shot of excavated areas in strip 1 and 2 (phase 2)	SE	13/05/15

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