

**Premier Travel Inn, Ellon Road, Murcar:
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Data Structure Report

by Katie Sludden

issued 14th July 2008



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 of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

Signed Date

In keeping with the procedure of Rathmell Archaeology Limited this document and its findings have been reviewed and agreed by an appropriate colleague:

Checked Date

Copyright Rathmell Archaeology Limited. All rights reserved.

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Rathmell Archaeology Limited. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify Rathmell Archaeology Limited.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Rathmell Archaeology Limited, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Rathmell Archaeology Limited for any use of this report, other than the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

Opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of Rathmell Archaeology Limited using due skill, care and diligence in preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been made.

Contents

1 Overview	4
2 Project Works	4
3 Findings: Desktop Study	5
4 Findings: Strip, Trenching and Test-Holes	8
5 Discussion	8
6 Recommendations	9
Appendix 1 – Record Summaries	10
Appendix 2 – Trench Details	13
Appendix 3 - Test Hole Descriptions and GPS Survey	13
Appendix 4 - Discovery & Excavation in Scotland	16
Contact Details	17

Figures

Fig. 1	Site Location and Excavated Areas	6
Fig. 2a to g	Site Images	7

1 Overview

- 1.1 This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological investigative works required by Whitbread Group PLC in respect of the proposed extension of the Premier Travel Inn at Mill of Mundurno, Ellon Road, Murcar (NJ 9462 1254). The archaeological works are designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within their development area to the agreement of the Aberdeen City Council.
- 1.2 The findings presented below inform on the character of any archaeologically significant features within the development area. A consideration of the appropriateness of further works is also contained below. The character of such further stages of work will need to be agreed with Aberdeen Council and the Aberdeen Keeper of Archaeology, Judith Stones.
- 1.3 The area concerned is presently a car park extending partially onto landscaped ground. The area of ground disturbance also extends to a strip for a sewer upgrade making the entire area under investigation approximately 0.2 hectares. The works commenced with several exploratory holes or pits and two trenches cut in order to characterize the sub-surface sediments within the development area. The area was then delineated with fencing and stripped of tarmac and made-up ground. The works were completed with the strip of the car park within the extension footprint.
- 1.4 Rathmell Archaeology Ltd was appointed by Whitbread Group PLC to act with regard to archaeological matters. Prior to the commencement of works a Method Statement was agreed with the Aberdeen City Council Keeper of Archaeology, Judith Stones.

2 Project Works

- 2.1 The programme of works commenced with an archaeological investigation through machine cut Test Holes and a strip of ground parallel to the existing drainage which runs along the south extent of the present buildings. Works were carried out from the 7th July to 8th July 2008. The test holes comprised five small pits dug in the south west corner near the car park and the sewer upgrade was a 160m by 4m long strip covering the old drainage cut and 2.5m of undisturbed ground beyond this.
- 2.2 Trench 1 was then placed within the car park (building footprint) to evaluate the sediments there (See Figure 1). The exploratory holes were backfilled before further works took place in order to maintain safe working conditions for other site users. The sediments in trench one suggested that the car park strip need only to reach the sediments immediately beneath the car park and only one further visit would be required to strip the tarmac surface and founds to achieve this.
- 2.2 A second visit was made on the 11th July 2008 in order to strip the car park surface. The area which was stripped to 600mm deep was parallel to the existing sewer which bisects the development footprint. This sewer was up to 1.7m deep and was left intact as there was no need to expose it. The car park was stripped to 200mm below the tarmac surface which did not reach undisturbed ground. This was left in place to form a base for machines to work from. The deeper sediments were reached through a strip which was 30m long by 2m wide by 600mm-1m deep within the building footprint parallel to this sewer. This was done to confirm the degree of truncation made by the previous site works. There were no archaeological structures encountered.
- 2.4 The entire area under investigation was a total of 0.2136 hectares. The strip and exploratory works established that the landscaping during the construction of the present Travel Inn has severely truncated the original ground surface and therefore any archaeological structures that may have existed therein. In accordance with the method statement further archaeological mitigation was deemed unnecessary now that the degree of truncation has been established and moreover the remainder of the ground intrusions would not reach the depths at which undisturbed sediments would exist.

- 2.4 These works were undertaken in keeping with the submitted Method Statement the on-site works took place on the 7th July to 11th July 2008.
- 2.5 All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

3 Findings: Desktop Study

- 3.1 No known archaeological sites are situated directly within the development area. However, given the presence of archaeological sites within its close vicinity, there is the potential for unknown archaeology to exist.
- 3.2 The main site of interest is the Mill of Mundurno (NMRS: NJ91SW 24; HB No: 15678) which is located approximately 75m east of the development area. 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.
- 3.3 The existence of an earlier mill structure on this site however is highlighted by documentary evidence. The Aberdeen Sheriff 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.
- 3.4 Aside from the mill, there is also a potential for unknown prehistoric archaeology to be discovered arising from known cropmark evidence within the area. This includes a ring-ditch, 6m in diameter (NMRS: NJ91SW 21), which is situated approximately 35m to the south-south-east of the development area and linear cropmarks, 150m long following an L-shaped course (NMRS: NJ91SW18), situated in the field immediately west of the development area.
- 3.5 Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is the acknowledged destructive process in forming the existing car park and associated services. It would appear from a brief examination of the site that the area has been landscaped for the construction of the car park. Normal procedure would be to reduce the ground by stripping the topsoil and levelling. This could potentially destroy any archaeology surviving within the area.

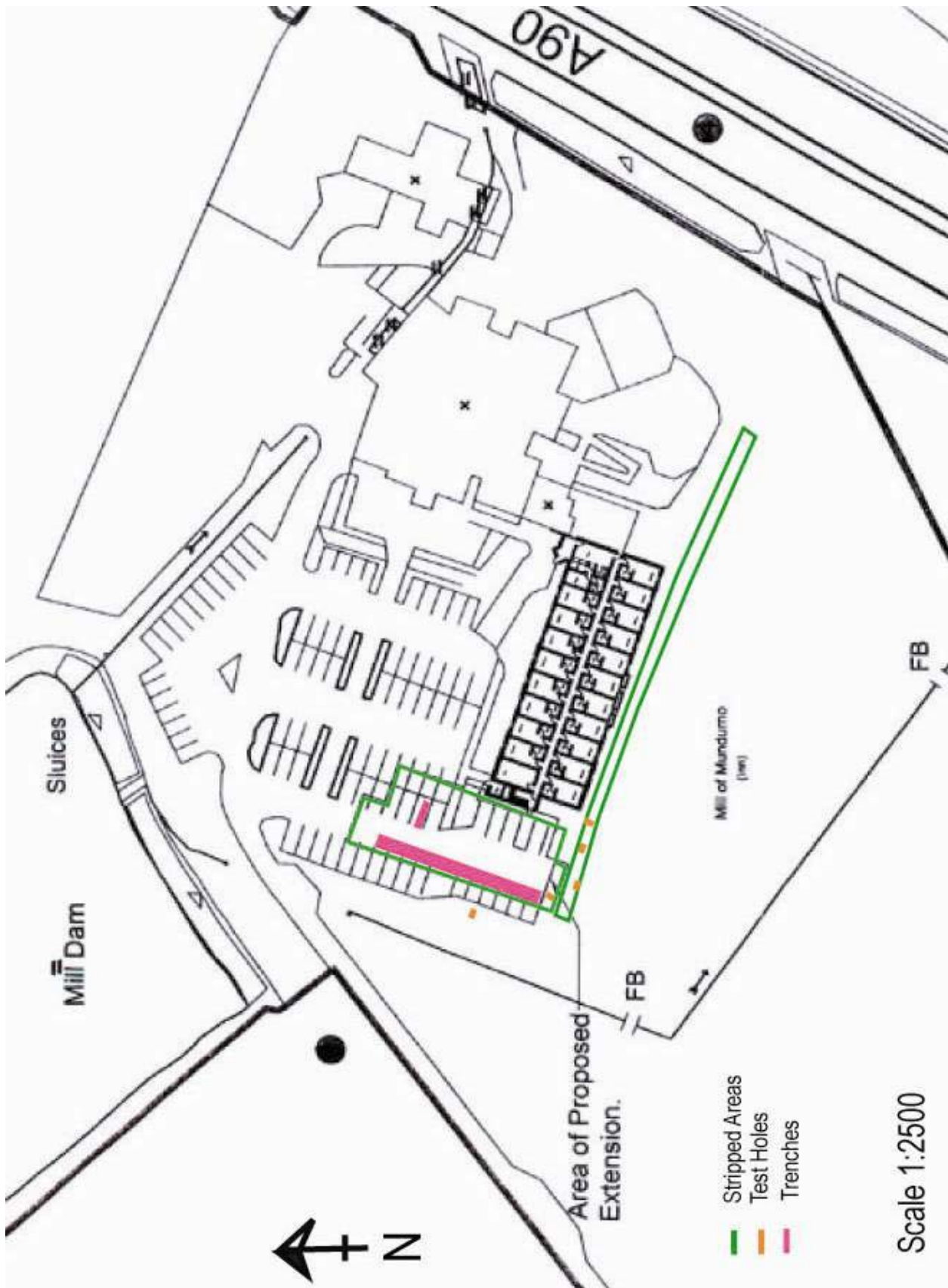


Figure 1: Site Location and Excavated Areas.



Figure 2a: Pre-Ex of Car Park



Figure 2b: Post-Ex Drainage Strip



Figure 2c: Test Hole Section



Figure 2d: Test Hole Section



Figure 2e: Trench 1 with Section



Figure 2f: Trench 2 with sewer in background



Figure 2g: Trench 2 Sample Section

3 Findings: Strip, Trenching and Test Holes

- 3.1 The watching brief comprised of two visits to observe the cutting of 5 test-holes, one exploratory trench, a long strip for drainage and a strip of the development footprint within the car park. The ground-works took place between the 7th and 11th July 2008. There had been one trench cut before the arrival of an archaeologist on site on the 7th April 2008 (See figure 1). This was done however to locate pre-existing services located within the development area. It is unlikely that these disturbed any underlying archaeology since the ground was already disturbed by the emplacement of these services during the construction of the existing Inn.
- 3.2 The test holes were completed in order to evaluate the make up of the underlying sediments so that potential depths for construction purposes could be gauged as well as identifying the depth at which archaeological deposits may survive. This was a difficult task with changeable sediments surrounding the building footprint suggesting initially possible buried topsoil surviving up to 1.1m beneath the present ground surface. This in turn suggested that archaeological structures may survive under this topsoil. A trench was then placed within the building footprint in order to address the problem of the depths at which excavations should reach in order to inform on the archaeological structures therein. This trench revealed that the possible buried topsoil did not exist within the car park and therefore was likely to be a deposit relating to the seepage of water over a long period of time, or possibly an indicator of continuous flooding of the site.
- 3.3 The test holes were each 400mm wide by 1.8m long by up to 1.8m deep displaying topsoil which was on average 200mm deep. This topsoil sat on either natural sands (008) or on made up ground (007) up to a depth of 400mm. The Trench cut into the car park was 3.8m by 0.6m by 1.5m deep with tarmac at a depth of 150mm on made up ground (007) up to a depth of 300mm. The drainage strip was on average 4m wide by 160m long running west to east along the south side of the Travel Inn. The topsoil was on average 200mm deep along the drainage strip displaying relatively little disturbance along this stretch. The car park strip was roughly 2m wide by 30m long and displayed the same stratigraphic sequence as that of Trench 1 but was dug to a depth of 600mm onto natural sandy gravel (013) to confirm the absence of archaeological deposits.
- 3.4 No features or finds were recovered during the course of the excavation. The only features encountered were all modern active services relating to the present Travel Inn and its' infrastructure. All Test holes and Trenches were cleaned, examined and recorded according to the terms of the Method Statement.

5 Discussion

- 5.1 No archaeological features were noted during onsite works. Indeed the original ground surface seems entirely truncated due to the construction of present Inn and car park. It seems unlikely that any remains of ancillary structures relating to the Mill of Mundurno would have survived this event or any prehistoric archaeological structures unless they were of monumental scale. If this was the case it would not have gone unnoticed in the archaeological record with the noted crop-marks near the development area.
- 5.2 The area was likely reduced and flattened to at least 400mm-600mm below the level of the original ground surface removing the original topsoil and probably a portion of the subsoil. The likelihood of archaeology surviving anywhere within the development area is remote in the extreme.
- 5.3 No archaeological features were uncovered anywhere on site and no finds were recovered.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The archaeological works failed to identify any features of archaeological significance. Consequently, we recommend that there are no grounds to consider archaeology at risk from this development. Hence we consider that no further archaeological mitigation works are necessary in the event that planning consent is granted for this development.
- 6.2 The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rests with the Keeper of Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council. Confirmation that the above recommendations are acceptable should be sought from these bodies.

Appendix 1: Record summaries

Context Summaries

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Car Park drainage	Topsoil	Dark grey and brown crumbly humic silt with young crops growing on the surface. Consistent across site; between 300-500mm in depth.	Topsoil
002	- Car Park drainage	Made-up ground?	Pinkish brown stony sand with pink clay lenses up to 1.1m deep under topsoil.	Thought to be made up ground but with insertion of Trench 1 is likely to be natural subsoil. If it does lie on buried topsoil then the area built up is restricted to the very west margins of the car park.
003	TH 2	Subsoil	Disturbed? Sandy layer with yellow and grey mixed sands and some stony inclusions. Same as 007? From 150mm and up to 750mm deep.	Disturbed natural and levelled mixed deposit. May represent working layer for construction of current Buildings. Possible levelling deposit.
004	TH 1	Subsoil?	1.1m to 1.3m deep. Blue gray crumbly clay and sand. Restricted to TH 1.	Possible Buried topsoil.
005	TH 1 + 4	Subsoil	Dark grey moderately compact sand, coarse and wet. 1.3 to 1.8m deep in TH 1.	Natural subsoil.
006	TH 4	Subsoil	Very pure but coarse compact yellow sand. Found at 500mm and up to 1.3m deep.	Natural Subsoil originally thought to be levelling deposit but compaction and purity suggests natural origins.
007	TH 4	Subsoil	Very compact grey and yellow sandy gravels at 200mm deep. Possibly the same as (003).	Disturbed natural and levelled mixed deposit. May represent working layer for construction of current Buildings. Possible levelling deposit.
008	TH 4	Subsoil	Red Brown Coarse sand, dry, 300-500 deep. Moderate compaction	Possible levelling deposit over natural sand.
009	TH 4	Subsoil	Very dark brown wood and organic material possibly remains of an ancient root system and surface mulch. Very dry, found at 1.4m and up to 1.6m deep.	Buried topsoil or young peat formation? Dies out toward s the east in TH 5. May relate to (004)
010	TH 4	Subsoil	Grey blue sand, wet and coarse but pure. Found at 1.6m deep.	Natural Subsoil
011	TH 5	Subsoil	Grey compact sticky clay found at 1.4m deep.	Boulder Clay
012	TR 1	Subsoil	Grey coarse sandy gravel with mixed stone inclusions.	Natural Subsoil
013	TR 2	Subsoil	Mixed sandy mid brown and orange gravels cut by services. Found at up to 600mm deep.	Natural subsoil
014	TR 1	Surface	Tarmac, 150mm deep.	Surface of car park, modern.

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawer	Date
01	01	TH 1	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section NW Facing	KS	07/07/08
02	01	TH 2	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section W Facing	KS	07/07/08
03	01	TH 3	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section SE Facing	KS	07/07/08
04	01	Drainage Strip	Section	1:10	Measured Sketch Section S Facing	KS	07/07/08
05	01	TH 4	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section SE Facing	KS	07/07/08
06	02	TH 5	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section NNW Facing	KS	08/07/08
07	02	TR 1	Plan	1:50	Measured Sketch plan showing dimensions	KS	08/07/08
08	02	TR 1	Section	1:20	Measured Sketch Section N Facing	KS	08/07/08
009	03	TR 2	Section	1:100	Measured sketch plan of Trench 2 showing dimensions	KS	11/07/08
010	03	TR 2	Plan	1:10	E Facing section of Trench 2	KS	11/07/08

Photographic record

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
1	1	36	1	28	1	General Shot Car Park	N	07/07/08
2	1	35	1	27	2	General Shot Test Hole 1	W	07/07/08
3	1	34	1	26	3	NW Facing Section Test Hole 1	NW	07/07/08
4	1	33	1	25	4	General Shot Test Hole 2	S	07/07/08
5	1	32	1	24	5	W Facing Section Test Hole 2	SW	07/07/08
6	1	31	1	23	6	General Shot Test Hole 3	S	07/07/08
7	1	30	1	22	7	SE Facing Section Test Hole 3	E	07/07/08
8	1	29	1	21	8	General Shot Service Trench in Car Park	W	07/07/08
9	1	28	2	20	9	General Shot Drainage Strip	S	07/07/08
10	1	27	2	19	10	Post Ex Drainage Strip	W	07/07/08
11	1	26	2	18	11	General Shot Test Hole 4	S	07/07/08
12	1	25	2	17	12	SE Facing Section of Test Hole 4	SSE	07/07/08
13	1	24	2	16	13	General Shot Car Park	N	07/07/08
14	1	23	2	15	14	General Shot Test Hole 5	W	08/07/08
15	1	22	2	14	15	N Facing Section Test Hole 5	N	08/07/08

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
16	1	21	2	13	16	General Shot Trench 1 in Car Park	WNW	08/07/08
17	1	20	2	12	17	N Facing Section of Trench 1	N	08/07/08
18	1	19	2	11	18	General Shot Trench 1 with Hotel	WNW	08/07/08
19	1	18	2	10	19	General Close up of Trench 1	W	08/07/08
20	1	17	2	9	20	General Shot Drainage Strip	E	08/07/08
21	1	16	2	8	21	General Shot Trench 2	S	11/07/08
22	1	15	2	7	22	General Shot Trench 2 and car park Strip	S	11/07/08
23	1	14	2	6	23	General Shot Trench 2 and car park Strip	N	11/07/08
24	1	13	2	5	24	E Facing Section Trench 2 South End	E	11/07/08

Appendix 2: Trench Details

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
01	East to West	3.8m long by 0.6m wide by up to 1.5m deep	80-150mm deep Tarmac	Made up ground of mixed sandy gravel (007) over red brown sand (008) at a depth of 300mm. This sits on a yellow pure but coarse natural sand at 440mm deep and extends up to 850mm where a grey natural sandy gravel (012) extends to 1.5m deep.	Upper deposits consist of modern Tarmac and founds for car park up to 300mm deep.	None	None.
02	North to south	1.8m by 24m by 1m deep.	N/A	Made up ground (007) and (003) up to a depth of 600mm on mixed sandy brown gravels (013). This remains at depths up to 1m.	Truncated by modern activity- lots of services, lighting, sewer etc. Ground level seems to have been reduced here beyond depths of 400mm (natural sand) to 600mm.	None	None

Appendix 3: Test Hole Descriptions and GPS Survey

Test Hole	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
01	East to West	400mm wide by 1.8m long by 1.8m deep	150mm	Pinkish gravel (002) up to a depth of 1.1m. This sits on coarse natural sand (005) at 1.3m	None	None	None.
02	North to South	400mm wide by	150mm	(003) disturbed sands and gravel at 150mm –	None	None	None

Test Hole	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
		1.8m long by 0.81m deep		600mm deep on natural yellow sand (006) at 600mm deep up to 810mm.			
03	Northwest to southeast	400mm wide by 1.8m long by 0.21m deep.	120mm	Mixed disturbed sand (003) from 120mm up to 210mm deep on natural yellow sands (006)	Encountered modern hydro-electric cable and ceased excavation.	None	None
04	North to south	400mm wide by 1.8m long by 1.75m deep	200mm	Grey gravels (007) from 150mm-300mm deep on red brown sand (008) 300mm-500mm deep. This sits on natural yellow sand (006) up to 1.45m deep. This sits on an organic mulch (009) at 1.45m, 150mm deep up to 1.6m where natural grey sand (010) is found up to 1.75m deep.	None	None	None
05	East to west	400mm wide by 1.8m long by 1.8m deep	200mm	Mixed sandy gravels (007) from 200mm-600mm on red brown sand (008). This is from 600mm-800mm deep sitting on natural yellow sand (006) from 800-1.3m deep. Under this is (010) thin mulch (1.3m to 1.4m) which sits on boulder clay (011) from 1.4m to 1.6m deep.	None	None	None

GPS Survey (+/- 3m Accuracy)

Waypoint Id	NJ	BNG	Description
154	94608	12498	Test Hole 4
155	94607	12507	Test Hole 2
156	94604	12515	Test Hole 1
157	94618	12496	Test Hole 3
158	94606	12497	Limits of Excavation Drainage
159	94607	12502	Limits of Excavation Drainage
160	94615	12499	Limits of Excavation Drainage
161	94623	12495	Limits of Excavation Drainage
162	94632	12493	Limits of Excavation Drainage
163	94639	12490	Limits of Excavation Drainage
164	94647	12489	Limits of Excavation Drainage
165	94654	12486	Limits of Excavation Drainage
166	94662	12484	Limits of Excavation Drainage
167	94670	12482	Limits of Excavation Drainage
168	94677	12480	Limits of Excavation Drainage
169	94683	12479	Limits of Excavation Drainage
170	94683	12474	Limits of Excavation Drainage
171	94675	12475	Limits of Excavation Drainage
172	94669	12479	Limits of Excavation Drainage
173	94662	12482	Limits of Excavation Drainage
174	94653	12486	Limits of Excavation Drainage
175	94645	12488	Limits of Excavation Drainage
176	94638	12489	Limits of Excavation Drainage
177	94630	12491	Limits of Excavation Drainage
178	94621	12492	Limits of Excavation Drainage
179	94614	12497	Limits of Excavation Drainage
180	94612	12500	Test Hole 5
181	94619	12526	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
182	94623	12527	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
183	94671	12505	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
184	94667	12491	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
185	94662	12492	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
186	94659	12486	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
187	94621	12505	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
188	94623	12510	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
189	94623	12510	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
190	94625	12517	Corner of Premier Travel Inn
191	94629	12531	Car Park Strip
192	94626	12520	Car Park Strip
193	94621	12515	Car Park Strip
194	94619	12505	Car Park Strip
195	94609	12527	Car Park Strip
196	94603	12509	Car Park Strip
197	94614	12540	Car Park Strip Trench 2 South End
198	94613	12530	Car Park Strip Trench 2 North End

Appendix 4: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeen City Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Premier Travel Inn, Ellon Road, Murcar
PARISH:	Old Machar
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Katie Sludden
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NMRS: NJ91SW 24; HB No: 15678
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Mill of Mundunro
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 9462 1254
START DATE (this season)	7 th July 2008
END DATE (this season)	11 th July 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in respect to the extension of a Premier Travel Lodge at Ellon Road, Murcar. This monitoring included an archaeological presence on site during the clearance of 0.2136 hectares comprising a car park and a sewer upgrade along the southern limit of the present Inn. The site works revealed no artefactual material or archaeological features. The area had been heavily disturbed by the construction of the present Premier Travel Inn.
PROJECT CODE:	RA08020
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Whitbread Group PLC
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	10 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
E MAIL:	contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to Aberdeen City Council and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Contact Details

Rathmell Archaeology can be contacted at its Office or through the web:

Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

10 Ashgrove Workshops

Kilwinning

Ayrshire

KA13 6PU

www.rathmell-arch.co.uk

t.: 01294 542848

m.: 07817 334907

f.: 01294 542849

e.: contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk

The Aberdeen City Council Keeper of Archaeology can be contacted at their office or through the web:

Aberdeen City Council Museums and Galleries (Keeper of Archaeology)

Whitespace

60 Frederick Street

Aberdeen AB24 5HY

t.: 01224 523658

f.: 01224 523666

e.: judiths@aberdeencity.gov.uk

End of Document