

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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**Residential Development  
Gallows Knowe  
Crossgates  
Fife  
Archaeological Evaluation**

**Report No. 3301**

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Commissioned by	Miller Homes
Date issued	May 2015
Version	1
Oasis No.	N/a
Planning Application No	15/01222/FULL
Grid Ref	NT 1524 8897

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

### **Residential Development Gallows Knowe Crossgates Fife Archaeological Evaluation**

**Report No. 3301**

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in May 2015 for a residential development at Gallows Knowe, Crossgates, Fife (NGR: NT 1524 8897) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Miller Homes.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 11 May 2015 covering this programme of works was produced by CFA on behalf of Miller Homes. The WSI was approved by the Fife Council Archaeologist.

## **1.2 Background**

Miller Homes has registered a planning application (Ref. No. 15/01222/FUL) for a residential development at Gallows Knowe, Crossgates, Fife. This development consists of the construction of 137 dwelling-houses along with vehicular access, landscaping, and other associated engineering operations. As a pre-determination measure for the application, an archaeological trial trenching evaluation was undertaken of two small hillocks situated within the proposed development area which were considered to potentially represent the site of a medieval gallows.

A Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CFA in September 2014 (Hickman 2014) did not identify any cultural heritage sites within the application area and concluded that the archaeological potential within the area is considered to be low. However, the name 'Gallows Knowe' appears to be one of some antiquity and derives from a gallows or place of execution on a small rise or hill. This name may date back to medieval times (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century) when the lord of every barony had the right to hold court and implement either incarceration or execution. Every medieval barony had a gallows site and these were generally located at the summit of hillocks or other highly visible locations. With two small hillocks being present within the application area, it was considered possible that one of these may have been the site of a medieval gallows and that the remains of executed criminals may still be present.

The application area consisted of improved farmland which contained a grass crop for silage making. Both hillocks were situated towards the southern end of the application area immediately to the north of the B925. A third and considerably larger hillock with its summit situated on the opposite side of the B925 extended slightly into the application area. Examination of early OS map editions suggests that the original road skirted round the southern edge of this hillock, but the current B925 bisects its northern edge. There is a ruined church and cemetery situated at the summit of this hillock. It is likely that it is this larger hillock, outwith the application area, to which the name 'Gallows Knowe' applies.

## **1.3 Objectives**

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to explore the hypothesis that one of the two hillocks within the application area was the site of a gallows and that burials may therefore have been present.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance.

### **2.2 Evaluation**

Seventeen trenches were excavated, with a combined total area of c.1200m<sup>2</sup> (just over 10% of the area covered by the two hillocks; Fig.1). A single trench (Trench 8) was excavated along the base of a third hillock, which was largely situated on the opposite side of the B925, but extended slightly into the application area.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed by a tracked 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench positions were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled.

## **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

### **3.1 General**

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2. A summary of the trenches excavated is contained in Appendix 3. Examples of excavated trenches are shown in Figs. 2-4.

### **3.2 Trial Trenching**

The soil deposits across most of the evaluated area consisted of 0.2m to 0.7m of grey-brown silt topsoil (**001**) overlying natural (**002**) which varied from vivid orange sand to mottled grey sandy-clay. Bedrock outcrop was identified at the summit of the westernmost of the two hillocks, while the summit of the easternmost hillock was considerably stonier than further downslope. Slopewash deposits of between 0.2m and 0.3m in thickness were identified at the downslope ends of Trenches 6, 8 and 14 and field drains of the rubble type were identified within Trenches 1, 6, 8 and 14. No evidence was identified to suggest that this was the site of a medieval gallows and no other features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were identified.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

An archaeological trial trenching evaluation was carried out on two small hillocks at Gallows Knowe, Crossgates, Fife, in order to try to determine if either of them represented the site of a medieval gallows. The trial trenching uncovered a number of rubble field drains relating to 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural improvements but there were no features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.

The evidence from the evaluation indicates that neither of the two hillocks within the application area is the site of a medieval gallows. A considerably larger hillock on the southern side of the B925 (Fig.5) is more likely to have been the location of Gallows Knowe; the rerouting of the B925, moved the road from its historic position skirting the southern edge of Gallows Knowe, to its current route cutting through the northern edge of this hillock. Despite the rerouting a number of maps continued to label 'Gallows Knowe' to the north of the B925 rather than to the south. It is considered that the topography of this hillock makes it much more likely to have been a gallows site, as it is a more prominent landmark, with a flat summit where there would have been sufficient space to carry out executions and dispose of the dead. That summit is now occupied by Mossgreen Cemetery and the ruins of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Mossgreen Church. Remains related to any gallows that was present are likely to lie beneath the cemetery and church.

No further work is recommended in relation to this development. However, it is recognised that the final decision on any mitigation required lies with the Fife Council Archaeologist.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Fife Council Sites and Monuments Record.

#### **5. REFERENCE**

Hickman, S, 2014, *Gallows Knowe, Crossgates, Fife: Desk-Based Assessment*, CFA Data Structure Report No. 3212

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

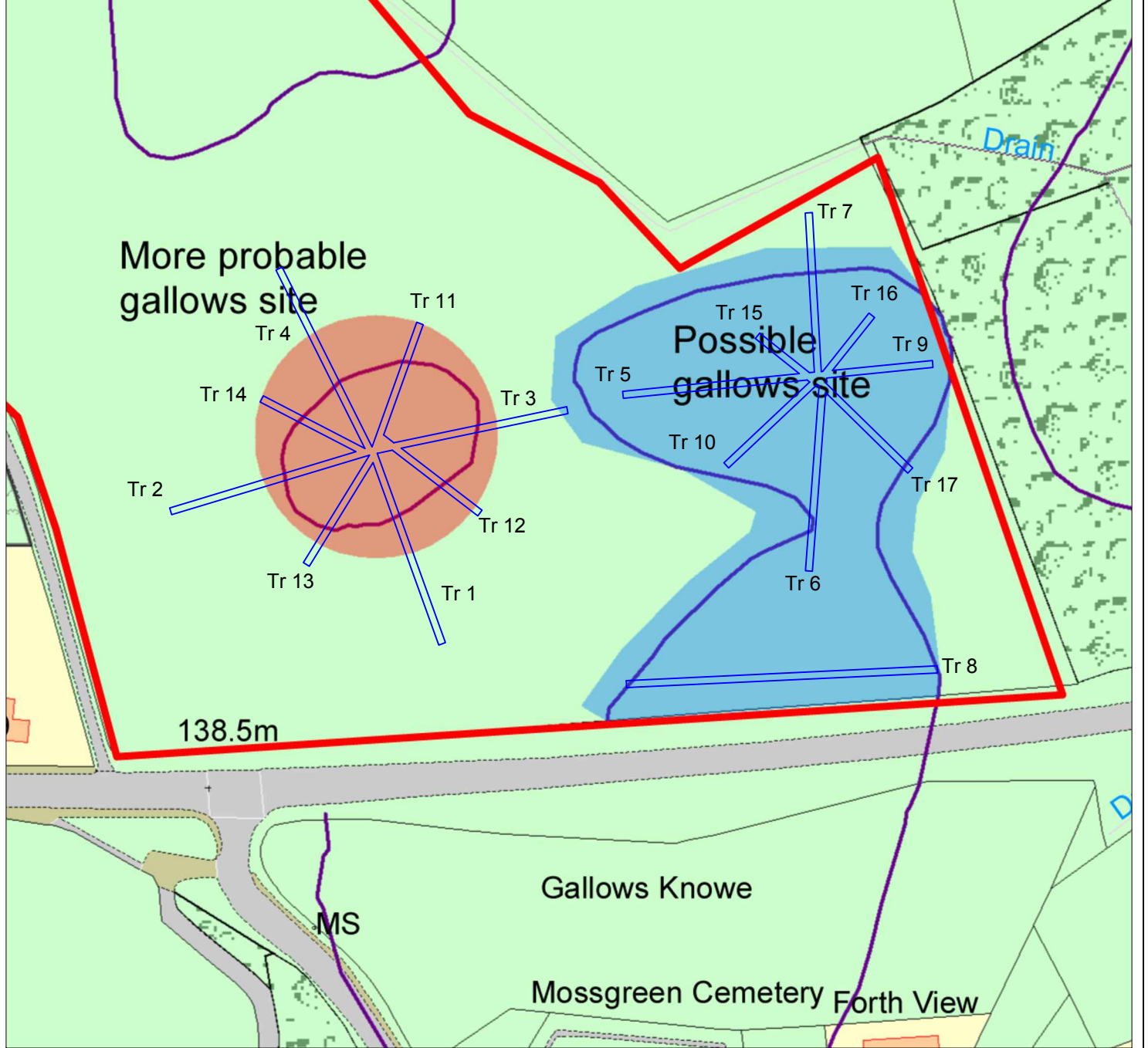
Photo Number	Contexts/Description	Taken From
1	Tr 1 General shot	NNW
2	Tr 2 General shot	ENE
3	Tr 3 General shot	WSW
4	Tr 4 General shot	SSE
5	Tr 5 General shot	East
6	Tr 6 General shot	North
7	Tr 7 General shot	South
8	Tr 8 General shot	West
9	Tr 9 General shot	West
10	Tr 10 General shot	NE
11	Tr 11 General shot	SW
12	Tr 12 General shot	NW
13	Tr 13 General shot	NE
14	Tr 14 general shot	SE
15	Tr 15 general shot	SE
16	Tr 16 general shot	SW
17	Tr 17 general shot	NW
18	General shot from easternmost hillock towards summit on third hillock (Gallows Knowe) on opposite side of B925	North
19-23	General views of excavated hillocks from third hillock (Gallows Knowe) on opposite site of B925	South

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Trench	Description
001	All	Topsoil consisting of grey-brown silt
002	All	Natural (vivid orange sand/beige sand/mottled brown sandy-clay)
003	6, 8, 14	Dark-brown silty sand subsoil under 001

## APPENDIX 3: Summary of Excavation Results

Trench Number	Trench Size	Depth of Deposits	Features
1	50x1.8m	0.3-0.4m	1 rubble field drain
2	50x1.8m	0.35-0.7m	N/A
3	50x1.8m	0.3m	N/A
4	50x1.8m	0.3-0.4m	N/A
5	50x1.8m	0.3m	N/A
6	50x1.8m	0.3m-0.65	1 rubble field drain
7	40x1.8m	0.3-0.4m	N/A
8	80x1.8m	0.3-0.6m	1 rubble drain/1 stone hole
9	30x1.8m	0.3m	N/A
10	30x1.8m	0.2-0.4m	N/A
11	30x1.8m	0.3-0.4m	N/A
12	30x1.8m	0.3-0.35m	1 rubble field drain
13	30x1.8m	0.25-0.3m	N/A
14	30x1.8m	0.3-0.5m	N/A
15	20x1.8m	0.25-0.3m	N/A
16	20x1.8m	0.3m	N/A
17	30x1.8m	0.3m	N/A



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Title:  
**Location map and Trench Plan**

Project:  
**Gallows Knowe, Crossgates**

Fig No:	1	Report:	3301	Drawn by:	SW	CKD:	MK	Date:	20/05/2015
Client: <b>Miller Homes</b>									
Scale: 1:1500 <span style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">  </span> Trench Location									

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Fig. 2 - Trench 3 from west



Fig. 3 - Trench 4 from south



Fig. 4 - Trench 5 from east



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Fig.5 - Gallows Knowe from easternmost of evaluated hillocks



Fig. 6 - Westernmost evaluated hillock from Gallows Knowe



Fig. 7 - Easternmost evaluated hillock from Gallows Knowe



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Project: Gallows Knowe, Crossgates					