

## **CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

May 2007

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Author: Date

Approved by: Date

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**Author: Ross White BSc AIFA**

Illustrations: Ross White BSc AIFA

Editor: Melanie Johnson MA PhD AIFA FSA Scot

CFA Archaeology Ltd  
Old Engine House  
Eskmills Park, Musselburgh  
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131-273 4380

Fax: 0131-273 4381

Email: [cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

**Shore Road,  
Airth:  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Report No. 1319**

## **CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Methodology	3
3.	Archaeological Results	4
4.	Conclusion and Recommendations	5

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Context Register	9
Appendix 2	Photograph Register	9
Appendix 3	Samples Register	10
Appendix 4	Field Drawings Register	10
Appendix 5	Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry	11

## **Illustrations**

Fig 1	Site and Trench Location Plans	6
Fig 2	North-east Facing Section of Trench 1	7
Fig 3	Trench Plans	8

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation at the Crown Hotel, Shore Road, Airth (NGR NS 89898 87643) (Fig. 1). The evaluation was carried out by CFA Archaeology (CFA) on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007, and was requested by Geoff Bailey, Keeper of Archaeology for Falkirk Council, in response to a planning application for a residential development. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the evaluation was produced by CFA and approved by Geoff Bailey prior to the fieldwork.

### **1.2 Background**

- 1.2.1 The site is located off Shore Road in Airth, to the north of the Crown Hotel (Fig. 1). Currently the application area is surfaced with hardcore and patches of tarmac, and is used as a car park.
- 1.2.2 No prior invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place on this site.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 Work was conducted with regard to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Practice and Standards. Recording of all elements was carried out following established CFA procedures, principally by drawing, photography and by completing standard record forms.
- 2.2 All machine excavation was undertaken by a back-acting JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Surface layers and overburden were removed to reveal either the subsoil surface or the surface of the first significant archaeological horizon.
- 2.3 Features of potential archaeological interest were excavated in order to establish their likely date, nature, extent and condition. All such excavation was conducted by hand.
- 2.4 In accordance with discussions with Geoff Bailey, two trenches with a total area of 33m<sup>2</sup> (5% of the application area) were excavated. The trenches were located in the north-east corner of the site due to the presence of live utility services to the south and a container in the north-west corner of the site.
- 2.5 The trial trenches were backfilled on completion of excavation and their positions surveyed using industry standard surveying equipment.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 3.1 Context numbers are shown in bold and parentheses and are listed in Appendix 1.

#### *Trench 1*

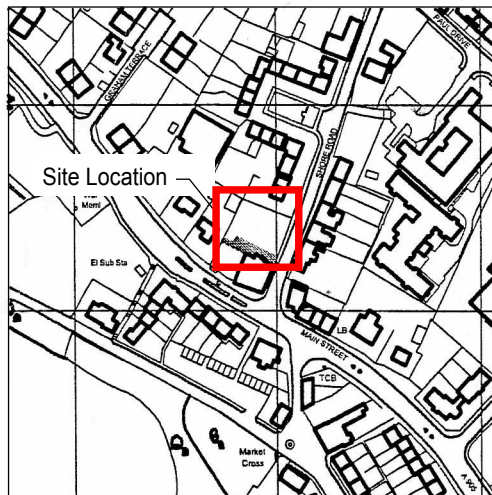
- 3.2 Trench 1 was aligned north-west to south-east. It measured 10m x 1.8m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m (Fig. 2). Below the car park surface of hardcore and tarmac (**100**), there was a deposit of demolition debris (**101**) with a maximum depth of 0.6m. This demolition layer sealed the foundations (**104**) and concrete floor (**105**) of a building. A deposit of red blaes and rubble (**110**) lay below (**105**), presumably as levelling for the building's floor. Below this was a deposit of well compacted dark greyish black silty clay (**106**), up to .07m deep, which may have been the original topsoil as two red clay field drains were identified within this deposit. Below this was the natural subsoil, a yellow, hard compacted, fine grained silty clay.
- 3.3 A linear ditch cut (**107**) was identified in the subsoil at the south-east end of the trench, 1.2m below the surface of the car park (Fig. 2 and 3). It measured approximately 1.5m wide and ran almost parallel with Shore Road. The ditch was slightly concave based with gently sloping sides and measured a maximum of 0.25m deep. The primary fill of the ditch was a light grey, hard compacted silty clay (**109**) and this lay below a deposit of bluish grey, hard compacted silty clay with frequent inclusions of coal fragments (**108**).
- 3.4 The natural subsoil rose up to the north-west, suggesting that the Shore Road side of the application area has been built up by over a metre to level out the ground.

#### *Trench 2*

- 3.5 Trench 2 was aligned north-west to south-east. It measured 10m x 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.25m. Below the car park surface of hardcore and tarmac (**200**), there was a 0.7m deep layer of demolition rubble (**201**). This sealed a deposit of dark greyish black silty clay (**202**), which also contained two red clay field drains running north-west to south-east. This deposit sat on the natural yellow clay subsoil and also sealed the continuation of the Trench 1 ditch cut (**203**) (Fig. 3). The ditch was again linear in plan and measured 1.6m wide. A primary fill of light grey, sticky but hard compacted silty clay with no inclusions (**205**) was identified, with a secondary fill of bluish grey, hard compacted silty clay with frequent inclusions of coal fragments (**204**).
- 3.6 The natural subsoil again rose to the north-west, but began to dip towards the extreme north-west end of the trench.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The evaluation at the Crown Hotel, Shore Road, Airth has uncovered evidence of a concrete-floored building fronting onto Shore Road and an earlier ditch. The building was evidently in use until quite recently due to the amount of modern debris mixed in with the demolition layers, but no firm date could be ascertained from the evaluation as to when it was built.
- 4.2 The linear ditch identified in both trenches (**107** and **203**) did not yield any dating evidence. It is possibly a boundary ditch of late or post-medieval date due to the high coal content in the ditch fill (**108** and **204**). The area around Shore Road developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, so this boundary ditch could relate to this expansion.
- 4.3 It is probable that the ditch continues to the south-west of Trench 1 towards the Crown Hotel, and it is also possible that further foundations of modern buildings, similar to the foundations of (**104**), survive on the site. CFA recommends that no further archaeological work needs to take place on the site prior to development due to the recent occupation of the buildings, and the fact that the ditch (**107** / **203**) probably represents a boundary marker that is unlikely to yield any further significant archaeological information. However, requirements for further archaeological investigation in advance of development will be decided by Geoff Bailey, Keeper of Archaeology for Falkirk Council.
- 4.4 A brief summary of the archaeological results will be submitted for inclusion in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and is included in Appendix 5.
- 4.5 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans, and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland on completion of the project.



Key:



= Trial Trench



= Development Area

Fig. No:

1

Revision:

0

Client:

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Title:

Site and Trench Location Plans



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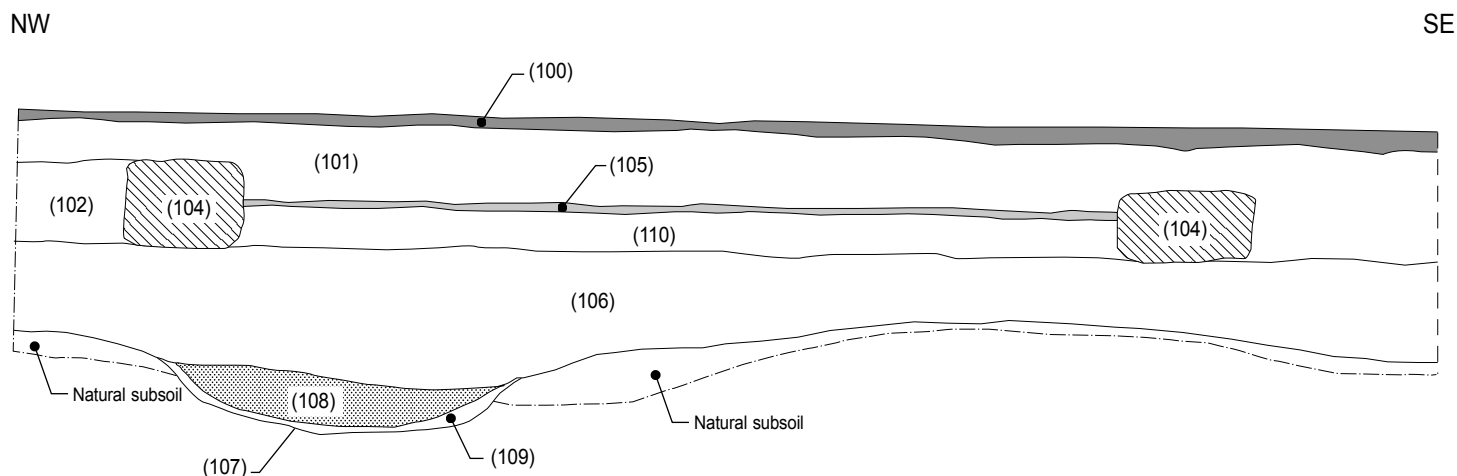
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e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk  
w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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Key:

Fig. No:

2

Revision:

0

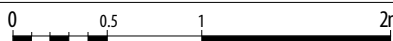
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Title:

North-east facing section of Trench 1

scale 1:40



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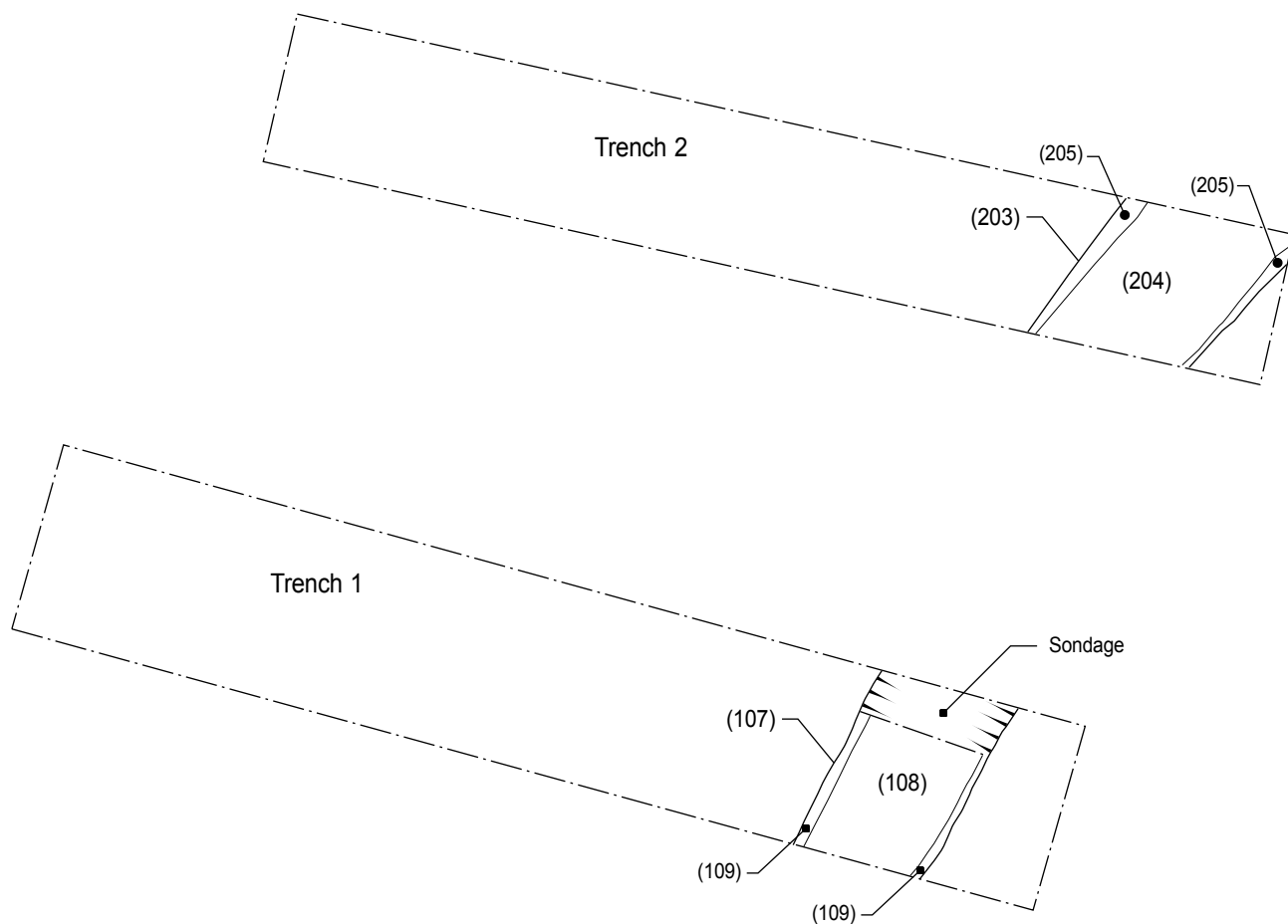
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Key:

Fig. No: **3**

Revision: **0**

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Title: **Trench Plans**

0 2.5 3m



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 The Old Engine House  
 Eskmills Park  
 Musselburgh  
 East Lothian, EH21 7PQ  
 t: 0131 273 4380  
 f: 0131 273 4381  
 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk  
 w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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## APPENDIX 1 – Context Register

Context No.	Trench No.	Description
<b>100</b>	1	Hardcore and tarmac surface of car parking area
<b>101</b>	1	Demolition layer, rubble, metal, glass etc.
<b>102</b>	1	Black loose sand with frequent inclusions of modern demolition debris. Located between building front and Shore Road
<b>103</b>	1	Line of red bricks between <b>104</b> and <b>102</b> , 1 course high and wide, purpose unclear
<b>104</b>	1	Foundations for building. Small cobbles to large boulders bonded with a coarse yellow sandy mortar cement
<b>105</b>	1	Concrete floor of building
<b>106</b>	1	Dark greyish black silty clay, well compacted, fine grained, possibly fluvially derived. Occasional coal inclusions, but no lithic inclusions.
<b>107</b>	1	Cut for ditch. Runs parallel with Shore Road, slightly concave base, shallow sloping sides, 0.25m deep, linear in plan
<b>108</b>	1	Secondary fill of ditch. Bluish grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay. >40% inclusions of coal fragments
<b>109</b>	1	Primary fill of ditch. Light grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay with no inclusions
<b>110</b>	1	Red blaes and rubble, levelling for concrete floor <b>105</b>
<b>200</b>	2	Hardcore and tarmac surface of car parking area
<b>201</b>	2	Demolition layer, rubble, metal, glass etc.
<b>202</b>	2	Dark greyish black silty clay, well compacted, fine grained, possibly fluvially derived. Occasional coal inclusions, but no lithic inclusions.
<b>203</b>	2	Cut for ditch. Runs parallel with Shore Road, slightly concave base, shallow sloping sides, 0.25m deep, linear in plan
<b>204</b>	2	Secondary fill of ditch. Bluish grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay. >40% inclusions of coal fragments
<b>205</b>	2	Primary fill of ditch. Light grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay with no inclusions

## APPENDIX 2 – Photograph Register

Photo No.	Description	Taken From	Conditions
1	Film Register	-	-
2 – 3	Plan shot of foundations <b>104</b> pre-excavation	SE	Bright
4 – 5	NE facing section of Tr. 1 at SE end showing build up on top of natural clay	NE	Bright
6 – 7	SW facing section of ditch <b>107</b>	SW	Bright
8 – 9	Post-excavation shot of sondage in ditch <b>107</b>	SE	Dull
10 – 11	Plan shot of ditch <b>203</b> at SE end of Trench 2	SE	Bright
12 – 13	SW facing section of Trench 2, middle part	SW	Bright
14 – 15	SW facing section of Trench 2, SE end	SW	Bright

### APPENDIX 3 – Samples Register

Sample No.	Context	Trench	Sample Size
1	<b>108</b>	1	5l
2	<b>109</b>	1	5l
3	<b>108</b>	1	5l

### APPENDIX 4 – Field Drawings Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description
1	1	1:20	Plan	Plan of foundations <b>104</b> before excavation
2	2	1:20	Plan	Plan of Trench 1 showing ditch <b>107</b>
3	3	1:20	Section	North-east facing section of Trench 1
4	4	1:20	Plan	Plan of Trench 2 showing ditch <b>203</b>

## APPENDIX 5 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Falkirk Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Shore Road, Airth
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	AIRT
<b>PARISH:</b>	Airth
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Ross White
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NS 898 876
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	10 May 2007
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	10 May 2007
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of a housing development next to the Crown Hotel on Shore Road, Airth. Two 10m long trenches were excavated on the site. Trench 1 revealed the remains of the foundations for a modern building which would have fronted onto Shore Road. The remains consisted of mortar cemented foundations and a concrete floor surrounded by demolition rubble. These remains were identified 0.4m below the surface of the site. In the south-eastern end of both trenches a ditch was identified. It measured approximately 1.8m wide and ran parallel with Shore Road. The ditch was latterly filled with a bluish grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay with frequent inclusions of coal. The primary fill was a light grey, sticky, hard compacted silty clay with no inclusions. No dateable artefacts were retrieved from the ditch and it is suggested that the remains represent a late- or post-medieval boundary ditch. Both trenches encountered the natural subsoil at c. 1.2m below the site surface.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Murdoch Smith & Co. Ltd
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland Falkirk Council Sites and Monuments Record