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## Water Main Access, High Street Perth

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Report No. 3805

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High Street, Perth  
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Fig. 2 West-facing section of Trench 1 showing surviving deposits

Fig. 3 North-facing section of deposits overlying metallised surface

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 during the cutting and capping of an existing water main beneath High Street, Perth (NGR: NO 12018 23641) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Scottish Water.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 was produced by CFA on behalf of Scottish Water. The WSI was designed to meet the requirements of Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT).

### **1.2 Background**

PKHT required an archaeological watching brief during ground-breaking works to allow Scottish Water to cut and cap an existing water main, situated below High Street, Perth (NO 12018 23641). Access to the water main was excavated to a sufficient depth for establishing a concrete thrust block against the capped pipe, prior to backfilling.

The area for excavation was located on the western corner of High Street and Watergate. It was considered that the earliest settlement for the later city would likely have centred on the Watergate, at the western bank of the River Tay where over-land and riverine routes converge (Moloney & Coleman 1997: 709). The establishment of the High Street and South Street from the 12<sup>th</sup> century saw the urban centre branch out to form its distinctive grid-iron plan. Perth's history as a thriving medieval market town emphasises the intensity of traffic flowing along these primary routes.

Substantial medieval deposits were known to survive in the immediate vicinity of the High Street. Excavations in 1992 at nearby 80-86 High Street demonstrated the considerable depth of these deposits and noted a final phase of 10 successive metallised surfaces, extending from the late medieval period to the modern level (Moloney & Coleman 1997: 730). The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1866) and subsequent editions showed little change in the High Street frontage from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As such, depending on the required depth and extent of disturbance from existing services, there was potential for archaeological deposits of a late medieval or post-medieval date to be reached.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the project were:

- To carry out a watching brief during ground breaking works in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the development area, and propose mitigation measures where necessary.
- To report on the results.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods.

### **2.2 Watching Brief**

All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

Tarmac and overburden were removed using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. The access trench was consolidated with metal shoring upon reaching the desired depth to expose the water main.

Excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, using pro forma record sheets and digital photography.

The stratification of the excavated area was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

#### **3.1 General**

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which are contained in Appendix 2. General site photos are provided in Figures 2-3.

The access trench for the water main measured 3m by 2.2m, aligned E-W along the western corner of High Street and Watergate (Fig. 1). The water main pipe was reached at a depth of 1.0-1.5m and was aligned N-S through the centre of Trench 1.

#### **3.2 Water Main Access – Trench 1**

The tarmac street surface (**001**) lay 0.54m thick atop a modern sealing deposit of light yellow sand (**002**) measuring up to 0.28m deep. The underlying profile was almost entirely truncated by disused and modern services, a cut for which extended for 1.1m of depth (**005**). This was cut into a layer of made ground (**006**) confined to the SE corner of the trench where it lay 0.85m deep, comprising mixed sandy silt with ash and charcoal inclusions (Fig. 2).

A stone wall (**007**) underlying the made ground extended 0.9m from the SE corner of the trench, aligned E-W and cut by the water main. Three courses of bonded stone blocks were exposed at 0.5m width, with concrete mortar and a rubble foundation. This overlay a 0.2m deposit of light grey sand, undisturbed by services (**008**). A 0.14m layer of dark sandy-silt refuse (**009**) lay beneath. These two lowermost contexts extended across the trench, underlying the existing services to a total depth of 1.7m. To the SE, a metalled surface of rounded cobbles (**010**) was partially exposed that likely continues throughout the trench yet lay beneath the desired depth for the remainder of the area (Fig. 3).

Both the stratigraphy and finds, discussed below, indicate that these deposits represent the accumulation and infill of material atop a former surface of the High Street, prior to the laying of foundations for the later 19<sup>th</sup> century street-front. Subsequent depositions of mixed demolition material, service intrusions and modern resurfacing are evident.

### **4. The Finds by Christina Hills**

A small number of finds were recovered from deposits **008** and **009** in trench 1. Animal bone was found in both deposits and included ribs and long bones. Two oyster shells were found in made ground **008**. One sherd of post medieval pottery with a green glaze and two scraps of leather were found in refuse **009**.

## 5. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the cutting and capping of an existing water main beneath High Street, Perth (NO 12018 23641). An access trench was excavated to the desired depth of 1.7m, uncovering an area largely truncated by disused and modern services. A bonded stone wall partially survived at the south-east corner of the trench, overlying mixed sandy-silt deposits. An underlying compact metalled surface was partially exposed in the south-east corner, undisturbed by existing services and preserved *in situ* by the present programme of works. Sparse finds of post-medieval pottery, leather scraps, oyster shell and animal bone indicate the accumulation of refuse atop this former street surface prior to the later 19<sup>th</sup> century street frontage foundations.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Perth & Kinross Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

## 6. REFERENCES

Moloney, C. & Coleman, R. 1997. The development of a medieval street frontage: the evidence from excavation at 80-86 High Street, Perth, in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 127: 707-82

### *Cartographic*

Ordnance Survey First Edition. 1866. *Perthshire, Sheet XCVIII* (6 inches to one mile)

Ordnance Survey Second Edition. 1901. *Perthshire, Sheet XCVIII.5* (25 inches to one mile)

Ordnance Survey 1932 Edition. 1932. *Perth and Clackmannanshire, Sheet XCVIII.5* (25 inches to one mile)

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

| Shot No. | Summary description of subject                           | Facing |
|----------|--|--------|
| 001      | Mid-ex working shot of Trench 1                          | W      |
| 002      | Location shot of Trench 1                                | NW     |
| 003      | Working shot of stone wall {007}                         | S      |
| 004      | Working shot of stone wall {007}                         | S      |
| 005      | W-facing section of Trench 1                             | E      |
| 006      | N-facing section of Trench 1                             | S      |
| 007      | N-facing section of Trench 1                             | S      |
| 008      | N-facing section of wall + metalled surface              | S      |
| 009      | N-facing section of wall + metalled surface              | S      |
| 010      | N-facing section of wall + metalled surface with shoring | S      |
| 011      | General shot of services + shoring, post-excavation      | W      |

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

| Context | Fill of | Trench | Description   |
|---------|---------|--------|---|
| 001     |         | 1      | Tarmac surface (0.54m)  |
| 002     |         | 1      | Modern sealing deposit - light yellow sand (0.28m)                                |
| 003     | 005     | 1      | Service aggregate   |
| 004     | 005     | 1      | Service trench infill - mid brown silty sand                                      |
| 005     |         | 1      | Cut for modern services   |
| 006     |         | 1      | Made ground - ashy sandy silt (0.84m)   |
| 007     |         | 1      | Concrete mortar-bonded stone wall, E-W, rubble foundation (SE corner of Trench 1) |
| 008     |         | 1      | Light grey sand deposit, mixed made ground (0.2m)                                 |
| 009     |         | 1      | Dark grey brown silt refuse (0.14m)   |
| 010     |         | 1      | Compact metalled surface, rounded cobbles   |

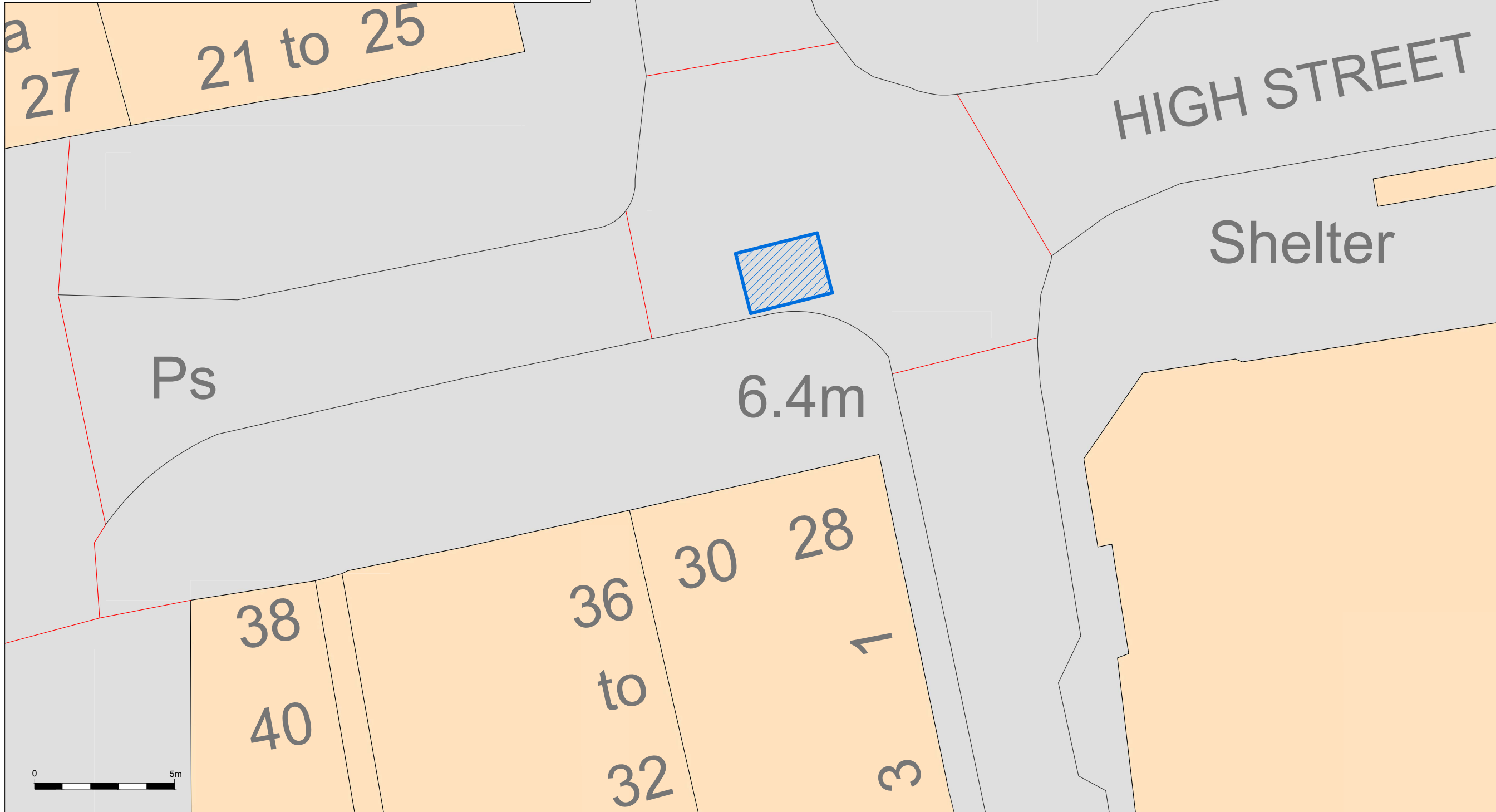
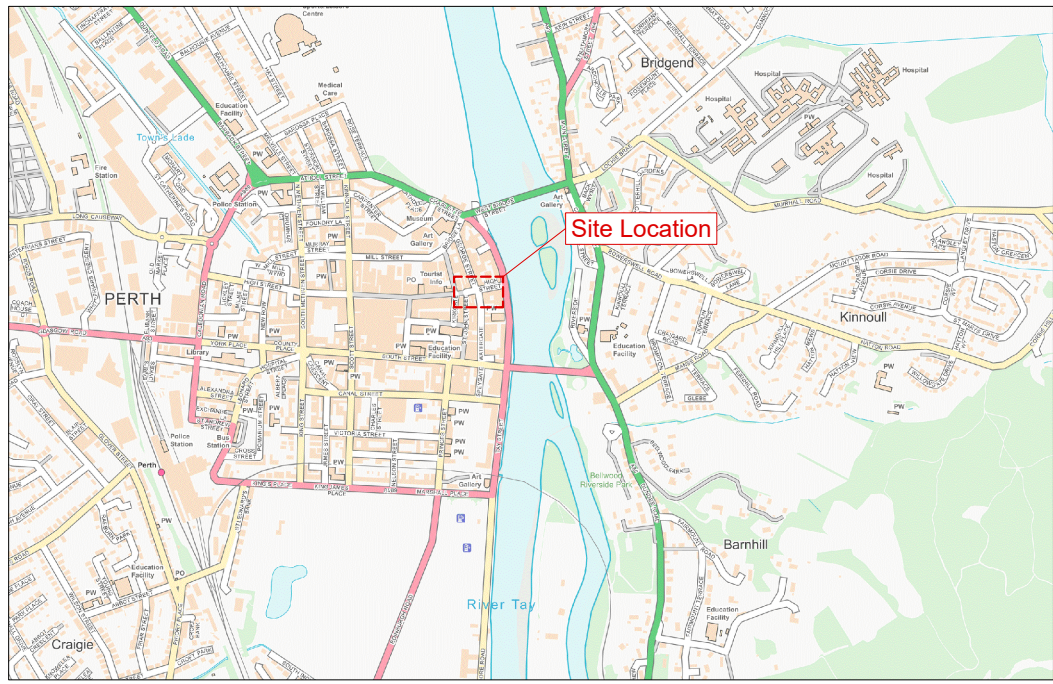
## APPENDIX 3: Finds Quantification

| Trench | Context | Find type   | No. | Wt (g) | Notes                | Spotdate |
|--------|---------|-------------|-----|--------|----------------------|----------|
| 1      | 008     | Animal bone | 5   | 149    | Ribs and 1 long bone |          |
| 1      | 008     | Shell       | 2   | 19     | Oyster               |          |
| 1      | 009     | Animal bone | 4   | 115    | 1 rib and long bones |          |
| 1      | 009     | Pottery     | 1   | 8      | Green glazed         | Post med |
| 1      | 009     | Leather     | 2   | XX     | Scrap and strip      |          |



## APPENDIX 4: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>   | Perth & Kinross  |
| <b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>   | Water Main Access, High Street, Perth  |
| <b>PROJECT CODE:</b>  | SWPE   |
| <b>PARISH:</b>  | Perth  |
| <b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>   | Oliver Rusk  |
| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>  | CFA Archaeology Ltd  |
| <b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>  | Watching Brief   |
| <b>HES NO(S):</b>   | None   |
| <b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>NGR</b>  | NO 12018 23641   |
| <b>START DATE</b> (this season)   | 8 October 2018   |
| <b>END DATE</b> (this season)   | 9 October 2018   |
| <b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)  | None   |
| <b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b><br>(May include information from other fields) | <p>An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the cutting and capping of an existing water main beneath High Street, Perth (NO 12018 23641). An access trench was excavated to the desired depth of 1.7m, uncovering an area largely truncated by disused and modern services. A bonded stone wall partially survived at the south-east corner of the trench, overlying mixed sandy-silt deposits. An underlying compact metallised surface was partially exposed in the south-east corner, undisturbed by existing services and preserved <i>in situ</i> by the present programme of works. Sparse finds of post-medieval pottery, leather scraps, oyster shell and animal bone indicate the accumulation of refuse atop this former street surface prior to the later 19<sup>th</sup> century street frontage foundations.</p> <p>The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Perth &amp; Kinross Council Sites and Monuments Record.</p> <p>A summary statement will be submitted for publication in <i>Discovery and Excavation in Scotland</i> (Appendix 3) and will also be reported on through <i>OASIS Scotland</i>.</p> |
| <b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>  | None   |
| <b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>   | Scottish Water   |
| <b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>   | The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ   |
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| <b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b><br>(intended/deposited)                                     | Archive to be deposited in HES. Reports lodged with local SMR.   |



**Key:**  
 Site location  
 Trench location

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Title:  
**Location plan of Trench 1**

Project:  
**Water Main Access, High Street,  
 Perth: Archaeological Watching  
 Brief**

Client:  
**Scottish Water**

Scale at A3:  
**1:150**

|                 |                |                     |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Drawn by:<br>CA | Checked:<br>SW | Date:<br>16/10/2018 |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|

|                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Report No:<br>3805 | Fig. No:<br>1 |
|--------------------|---------------|





Fig. 2 - West-facing section of Trench 1 showing surviving deposits



Fig. 3 - North-facing section of deposits (008-009) overlying metallised surface

Project:  
Water Main Access, High Street, Perth: Archaeological Watching Brief



Client:  
Scottish Water

|                    |                |                   |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Drawn by:<br>CA    | Checked:<br>SW | Date:<br>16/10/18 |
| Report No:<br>3805 |                | Fig. No:<br>2-3   |



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