

CFA Archaeology Ltd

archaeological consultants

Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

Intpretation, Design & Display

Finds/ Environmental Analysis

Field Evaluation & Excavation

Historic Building Recording

Site & Landscape Survey

Geophysical Survey

**Birsley Brae, Tranent,
East Lothian**


Archaeological Monitored Topsoil Strip

Report No. 1754

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in February 2010 at Birsley Brae, Lammermoor Gardens, Tranent (NGR: NT 395 727), during groundbreaking works associated with a housing development. The work was commissioned by Ms Lesley Grigg.

1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the project was produced by CFA for East Lothian Council. It is based upon documents provided by Arcade Architects and the planning conditions imposed by Andrew Robertson, the East Lothian Council Archaeology Officer. A monitored topsoil strip was required.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The development consisted of a single plot housing development, in previously grassed derelict land.

1.2.2 The site lies in close proximity to a cist (SMR site MEL50; NMRS site NT37SE 20) found in 1878 at Birsley Quarry to the east of the development site.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (monitored topsoil strip) to monitor and ensure that the footprint of the new build structure is cleared of topsoil, and other modern overburden, to identify either undisturbed natural subsoil or archaeological features (whichever comes first).
- To establish whether the cists findspot at Birsley Quarry has any surviving remains extending into the development site
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through excavation and recording, and produce a report on them.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.
- 2.1.2 Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods, principally by drawing, photography and completion of standard recording forms.

2.2 Desk-based Assessment

- 2.2.1 The historic map collection held by the National Library of Scotland (NLS) was examined for information on pre-recent land use within the proposed development area. The maps examined included the Ordnance Survey 6" map editions, together with other readily available cartographic information.
- 2.2.2 The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and Historic Scotland's 'Pastmap' (<http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/PASTMAP/Map>) web site were consulted to obtain information on known archaeological sites within the proposed development area.

2.3 Monitored Topsoil Strip

- 2.3.1 The removal of topsoil was carried out using a 360° tracked midi-excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. The removal of topsoil was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. All further works required to fulfil the terms of the brief were carried out by hand.
- 2.3.2 All on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by photography and completion of standard CFA record forms.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Desk-based assessment

- 3.1.1 The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) does not record any sites within the proposed development site.
- 3.1.2 The site lies in close proximity to a cist findspot (SMR site MEL50; NMRS site NT37SE 20), found in c.1878 at Birsley Quarry to the east of the development site during topsoil stripping for quarrying operations. A short cist containing a male inhumation was recorded, along with a Bronze Age food vessel urn found in close proximity to the cist.
- 3.1.3 There are several findspots in the local area, including a post-medieval coin hoard (SMR site MEL57; NMRS site NT37SE 27).
- 3.1.4 Cropmarks have been recorded in the vicinity of the site, including a possible enclosed settlement (SMR site MEL59; NMRS site NT37SE 29) on the flank of Falside Hill to the west of the development site, with external linear features present.
- 3.1.5 The site of the proposed development is located within a previously industrial landscape that had been mined for coal since at least the medieval period. To the west of the development lies a medieval coal mine (SMR site MEL99; NMRS site NT37SE 66), which is a Scheduled Monument (SM no. 3352).
- 3.1.6 On Roy's map (1747-55) there are three buildings (possibly four) to the west of the development site and named Bursley, with the surrounding fields shown as agricultural land with rig-and-furrow. On Forrest's map of 1802 there is a group of three rectangular buildings named Birsly, with a quarry marked to their north-west and a coal gin to their south. Capen Hall Colliery lies to the east. An additional solitary rectangular building is shown on Thomson's map of 1822. The three grouped rectangular buildings are named Berslie on Greenwood et al's map of 1825 and the fourth building is no longer present.
- 3.1.7 The Ordnance Survey First Edition map (1854) shows two small rectangular buildings, one of which is marked 'ruin', in close proximity to the development site and a number of old quarries and old coal pits are shown surrounding the site. By the date of the Second Edition map (1898), a railway branchline from Preston passes close by to the east of the site, likely relating to the collieries in the area, and three buildings are shown. This branchline is shortened by 1903 and no longer runs past the site, although the buildings are still present.

3.2 Monitored Topsoil Strip

- 3.2.1 Topsoil depth across the stripped area ranged from 0.05m thick on the west to 0.5m thick on the east. The underlying orange silt natural substrate was undulating with bands filled with topsoil.
- 3.2.2 The stripping of the topsoil revealed a small modern machine cut pit measuring 1m by 0.5m by 0.1m filled with topsoil.
- 3.2.3 A water pipe was recorded on the west side of the stripped area as per the utility service plans.
- 3.2.4 No other finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The monitored topsoil strip has shown that there were no further cist burials and no other archaeological features or deposits within the area of the proposed development.
- 4.2 The project archive, comprising of 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 East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.3 A summary statement of the results of this evaluation shall be submitted for the publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, which will be sufficient to disseminate the results of this watching brief (Appendix 2).

5. REFERENCES

Cartographic

Forrest, W 1802 *Haddingtonshire*.

Greenwood, C, Fowler, W & Sharp, T 1825 *Map of the County of Haddington*.

Ordnance Survey 1854 1st Edition, Haddingtonshire, Sheet 8, 1:10,560.

Ordnance Survey 1898 2nd Edition, Haddington, Sheet 33.

Ordnance Survey 1903 3rd Edition, Haddington Sheet 33.

Roy, W 1747-55 *Military Survey of Scotland*, Maps C.9.b 8/5d.

Thomson, J & Johnson, W 1820 *Haddington*.

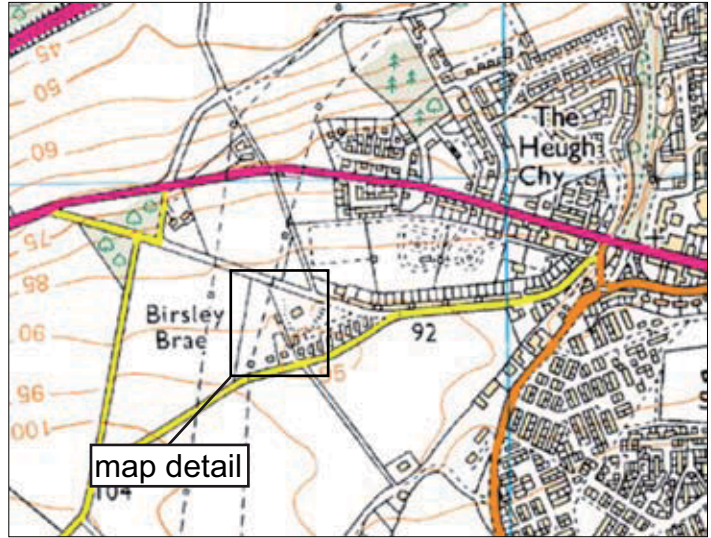
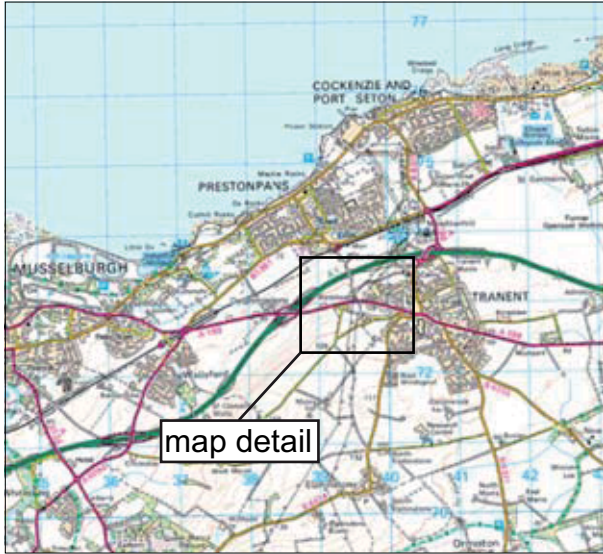
APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Digital Images

Shot	Description	From	Conditions
1	Site under excavation	E	Sunny
2	Site under excavation	S	Sunny
3	Post Excavation	W	Sunny
4	Machine Dug Pit	S	Sunny
5	Post Excavation	W	Sunny
6	Post Excavation	NE	Sunny
7	Water Services	S	Sunny

APPENDIX 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Birsley Brae, Tranent
PROJECT CODE:	BIRS
PARISH:	Tranent
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Gary Savory
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Desk-Based Assessment and Monitored Topsoil Strip
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR	NT 395 727
START DATE (this season)	22-02-10
END DATE (this season)	23-02-10
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A monitored topsoil strip was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd in February 2010 at Birsley Brae, Tranent prior to the development of a single-plot house. No archaeological features or deposits were discovered.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	N/A
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	East Lothian Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record



- Key:
- existing buildings
 - proposed development area
 - proposed new building footprint



Fig. No: 1 Revision: A Client: Lesley Grigg

Title: Site location map

Project: Birsley Brae, Tranent



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Scale: 1:1250@A4

Drawn by: GC

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Fig. 2 View of site from west



Fig. 3 View of site from east

Key:	Fig. No:	2-3	Revision:	A	Client:	Lesley Grigg	 CFA CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD 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				
	Title:										
	Project:	Birsley Brae, Tranent									
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