

**Site 8, Kirkton Drive, Raith's Industrial Estate,
Aberdeen
Archaeological watching brief**



**Stewart Buchanan
Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit
Whitespace
60 Frederick Street
Aberdeen
AB24 5HY
(01224) 523654**

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Summary

In July 2008, Halliday, Fraser, Munro, on behalf of Gilcomston Investments commissioned Aberdeen City Council Archaeology Unit to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a development at Raiths Farm, Aberdeen. MTM Construction Ltd was the main contractor.

A number of modern agricultural features and improvements were encountered during the watching brief. There were no significant archaeological features. This report recommends that no further archaeological work is necessary.

Regrettably (in light of the contractors' otherwise exemplary conduct), an archaeologist was not notified and was not present during excavations on the westernmost (approx) 8% of site. This is in contravention of The Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief set out by the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council (Stones 2008).

It is impossible to say whether any archaeological features were encountered and destroyed during the unsupervised excavations. This is unacceptable from an archaeological perspective. We would recommend that the developer identifies why the contracted archaeologist was not contacted prior to these excavations, using this information to establish a methodology that ensures the developer meets their responsibilities in future.

1. Introduction and Background

In July 2008, Halliday, Fraser, Munro, on behalf of Gilcomston Investments commissioned Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Archaeology Unit to carry out An Archaeological Watching Brief on a development at Site 8, Kirkton Drive, Raiths Industrial Estate (NJ 8802 1330), Aberdeen (see fig1.). MTM Construction Ltd was the main contractor on site.

The watching brief was commissioned in direct response to a Specification for Archaeological Evaluation written by Judith Stones, Keeper of Archaeology, ACC (Stones, June 2008). This clearly sets out the parameters for the archaeological watching brief, namely, to identify and record any and all archaeological features encountered during sub-surface excavations and to take the appropriate measures to ensure that no harm comes to archaeological features that may be significant enough to be preserved *in situ*.

Stewart Buchanan was sub-contracted by the Council Archaeological Unit to carry out the archaeological work on their behalf.

Historical and Archaeological context

The following is an appraisal by the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council (as set down in a Specification for Archaeological Evaluation (April 2008)) of the archaeological and historical factors that determined the rationale behind the current work.

This site lies within an area where very little systematic archaeological investigation has taken place in the past. In 1994, a watching brief on quarry development at Mill of Dyce, around 2037 metres north-west of the present site (NGR NJ 8688 1513), uncovered evidence of possible Bronze Age features (*Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 1994, 22). About 1600m metres south-west of the current site, archaeological evaluation in 2003 at Dyce Drive (NGR NJ 8701 1206), in advance of development, recovered no archaeological features or finds. However, that work also confirmed that that area had been heavily landscaped at an earlier date, possibly during construction of Dyce Drive in the 1970s (unpublished report by Melanie Johnson, CFA, 2003: *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 2003, 12). Some 2000 metres to the west of the present site stands a well-preserved recumbent stone circle at Standingstones

(NGR NJ 8597 1323), with areas of possibly prehistoric field clearance at Bogenjoss (NGR NJ 8603 1352): while the site lies almost between two medieval churches, the 14th-century Chapel of St Mary at Stoneywood (NGR NJ 8663 1117) and the Chapel of St Fergus at Dyce (NGR NJ 8752 1541). Two important Pictish symbol stones at the latter location attest to its early origins. There are also a number of stray finds recorded from the general area within which the site lies, including a number of prehistoric flint tools, stone axes and carved stone balls.

This site lay very close to the wartime Dyce Airfield, although there is no evidence that it was disturbed by military developments. A number of traces of Second World War features and defences remain in the vicinity of the site, or are recorded nearby on the City Council Sites and Monuments Record.

2. Results

A small road and standing area constructed of hard packed chippings and covering (Approx) 12.5% of the site (see plate 1.) was located towards the north of the excavated area. These were very probably of a late 20th century provenance.



Plate 1. View west showing area of hard packed chippings.

A number of agricultural features (aligned roughly E-W) were exposed during the excavations. These comprised modern field drains and plough marks, as well as evidence for modern agricultural furrows).

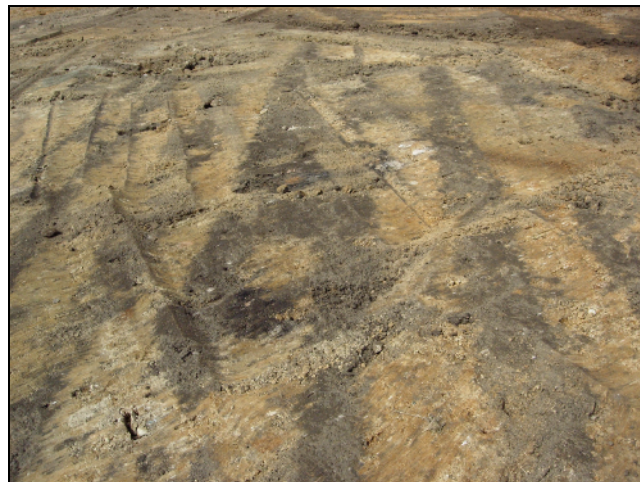


Plate 2. View west showing modern agricultural furrows.

The surviving furrows appeared to be spaced at intervals of 2.5m (see plate 2). Fragments of late 19th/early 20th century pottery were encountered regularly within the furrows; it is probable that these features date from this time.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

A number of modern agricultural features and improvements were encountered during the watching brief. There were no significant archaeological features. This report recommends that no further archaeological work is necessary.

An archaeologist was not notified and was not present during excavations on the westernmost (approx) 8% of site. This is in contravention of The Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief set out by the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council (Stones 2008).

It is impossible to say whether any archaeological features were encountered and destroyed during the unsupervised excavations. This is unacceptable from an archaeological perspective. We would recommend that the developer identifies why the contracted archaeologist was not contacted prior to these excavations, using this information to establish a methodology that ensures the developer meets their responsibilities in future

4. References

Aberdeen City Council (April 2008). *The Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief, Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council.*

IFA (1999) *By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.*

5. Acknowledgements

Jan Dunbar (Illustrations, fig 1.) and Alison Cameron, ACC Archaeology Unit.

6. Appendix I. Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL, NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES CENTRAL

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Site 8 Kirkton Drive, Raiths Industrial Estate, Aberdeen Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

This specification gives an outline of the archaeological value of this site and indicates the works which will be required to determine the preservation or recording of any surviving archaeological deposits.

1.0 Site Location and Description

The site (NJ 8802 1330) lies just outside the eastern perimeter of Aberdeen Airport and is currently open ground. The proposed development takes the form of an industrial warehouse and associated office with car parking.

2.0 Planning Background

The request for this watching brief is made in the context of National Planning Policy Guideline no 5, Archaeology and Planning, which states that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed. In paragraph 14, planning authorities are advised that they should ensure that archaeological factors are fully considered in both the development planning and development control processes. Paragraph 16 urges planning authorities to regard archaeological remains as a finite and often highly fragile resource vulnerable to needless or thoughtless damage or destruction. Paragraph 25 states that the implications of development proposals for ancient monuments and their settings should be considered at the outset of the development control process. It is appropriate for planning authorities to request, where appropriate, the prospective developer to arrange for archaeological fieldwork and ensure that relevant information on the cultural heritage is taken into account in any environmental assessment that may be necessary (paragraph 24).

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

This site lies within an area where very little systematic archaeological investigation has taken place in the past. In 1994, a watching brief on quarry development at Mill of Dyce, around 2037 metres north-west of the present site (NGR NJ 8688 1513), uncovered evidence of possible Bronze Age features (*Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 1994, 22). About 1600m metres south-west of the current site, archaeological evaluation in 2003 at Dyce Drive (NGR NJ 8701 1206), in advance of development, recovered no archaeological features or finds. However, that work also confirmed that that area had been heavily landscaped at an earlier date, possibly during construction of Dyce Drive in the 1970s (unpublished report by Melanie Johnson, CFA, 2003: *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 2003, 12). Some 2000 metres to the west of the present site stands a well-preserved recumbent stone circle at Standingstones (NGR NJ 8597 1323), with areas of possibly prehistoric field clearance at Bogenjoss (NGR NJ 8603 1352); while the site lies almost between two medieval churches, the 14th-century Chapel of St Mary at Stoneywood (NGR NJ 8663 1117) and the Chapel of St Fergus at Dyce (NGR NJ 8752 1541). Two important Pictish symbol stones at the latter location attest to its early origins. There are also a number of stray finds recorded from the general area within which the site lies, including a number of prehistoric flint tools, stone axes and carved stone balls.

This site lay very close to the wartime Dyce Airfield, although there is no evidence that it was disturbed by military developments. A number of traces of Second World War features and defences remain in the vicinity of the site, or are recorded nearby on the City Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Further information is available from Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit (01224 523658).

4.0 Previous Archaeological Work

There has been no previous archaeological work at this site.

5.0 Requirement for Work – Walkover and Watching Brief

An archaeologist must walk over the site before any development commences, to identify and record any features which are visible. If any significant features are identified, they must be reported immediately to the Keeper of Archaeology, in order that a mitigation strategy to protect them from damage, or preserve them through excavation, can be formulated.

In addition, an archaeologist must be present during the topsoil scraping at this site. The archaeologist must observe work in progress and record any features or finds which are uncovered. Any finds of major significance must be reported immediately to the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council.

6.0 Watching brief and Further Work

Following the watching brief, a written report on the work must be produced, with appropriate illustration by means of plans, photographs and standard listings of finds. Should major finds be made, which cannot be adequately protected during the development process or recorded during the watching brief, then the report must include a suggested strategy for final investigation, recording and protection of any archaeological deposits which have been identified. This final investigation or protection strategy must be acceptable to the planning authority and its implementation must be secured by the developer.

7.0 Timetable

A timetable must be agreed for the various stages of work so that provision can be made for monitoring by the Keeper of Archaeology.

8.0 Staff Structure

A list of key project staff with qualifications and experience will be submitted by the archaeological contractor. The use of unwaged staff will not normally be acceptable.

9.0 Health and Safety /PLI

Such concerns and responsibilities are primarily a matter for the archaeological contractor who must submit evidence of conformity to the Health and Safety at Work Act and possession of public liability insurance to Aberdeen City Council.

10.0 Watching Brief

The exact strategy is yet to be agreed in detail, but work should conform to the following guidelines.

10.1 Excavation must be done in such a way as to minimise damage to archaeological deposits.

10.2 All excavation must be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be worthy of preservation *in situ*.

10.3 Any human remains which are encountered must initially be left *in situ*. Their removal will be a matter of discussion with the Keeper, Archaeology (who must be notified within 12 hours of their discovery) and will comply with the provisions of Scots Law.

11.0 Recording Systems

These must be specified and should include the structure for site record.

12.0 Monitoring Arrangements

It is necessary for the planning authority to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the watching brief in order to ensure the proper execution of the specification and therefore conformity to the brief. Stages at which monitoring is appropriate will be agreed between the archaeological contractor and the Keeper, Archaeology. The possibility of random inspections should not be excluded.

13.0 Reporting Requirements

Provision must be made for:

- 13.1 Written reports on the watching brief and on any further archaeological work which is required thereafter.
- 13.2 Specialist examination of animal and human bone and of any preserved or organic material.
- 13.3 Specialist conservation and examination of artefacts found during the archaeological work.
- 13.4 Preparation of plans, sections, reconstructions and finds drawings to publication standards.
- 13.5 The sorting and analysis of records and the production of a full report on the work.
- 13.6 Publication in a manner appropriate to the scale of the work.
- 13.7 The preparation of a catalogued archive and its deposition in the City Council's Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record of Scotland within six months of the end of the fieldwork.
- 13.8 Copies of the reports should be sent to the Keeper of Archaeology, the applicant and the planning authority. A brief survey of results should be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, along with the appropriate fee. An OASIS report must also be submitted.

14.0 Small finds

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and Bona Vacantia and reported by the archaeological contractor to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel (Dr Alan Saville, National Museums of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD) for disposal to an appropriate museum.

15.0 Timescale

The written watching brief report must be produced within four weeks of the end of the field work.

16.0 Further Information

Additional information about the site, or this specification, can be obtained from the Keeper of Archaeology, Whitespace, 60 Frederick Street, Aberdeen AB24 5HY Tel (01224) 523658.

17.0 Conclusion

The walkover and watching brief work is to be carried out in compliance with this specification and in the context of NPPG 5. The selection of any contractor will be subject to approval of the Keeper, Archaeology. Work should be carried out in close liaison with the Keeper, Archaeology.

April 2008