

Kingfisher Business Park, Murcar, Aberdeen
Report on the archaeological evaluation, building recording and
walkover survey

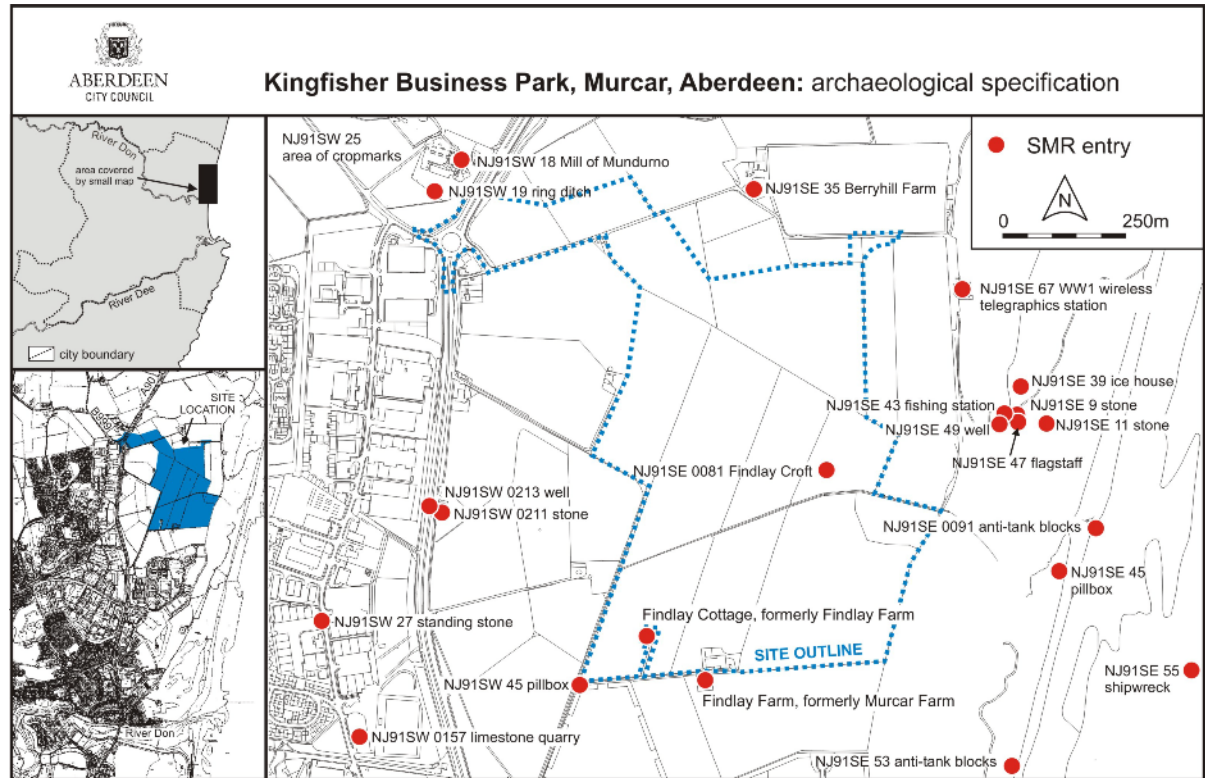


Stewart Buchanan, Alison Cameron, Cat Peters
Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit
Whitespace
60 Frederick Street
Aberdeen
AB24 5HY
(01224) 523654
alcameron@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Kingfisher Business Park, Murcar, Aberdeen

Report on the Archaeological evaluation and building recording

The area of the site (NJ95291198) is shown on the map below. It is at present open farmland. Part of Findlay Farm, which lies at the southern boundary of the development, is to be demolished to make way for the business park.



This site lies near the edge of the developed area on the northern fringe of Aberdeen, to east of Ellon Road and west of the coastline. There are very few recorded archaeological and historical sites within the boundaries of the development area, which may partly be the result of the paucity of previous archaeological work in the area. Known archaeological sites in its vicinity reflect land-use from prehistory through the medieval period and the 18th to 19th-century age of agricultural improvement to the Second World War (see attached map). The two recorded sites which lie within the development are Findlay Croft, which no longer stands, and part of Findlay Farm. Findlay Croft appears on the 1867 Ordnance survey map and also, reduced in size, on the OS map of 1901. What is now known as Findlay Farm is marked as 'Murcar' on the 1867 map, at which date there were buildings only on the south side of the track which currently bisects the farm. By the time of the 1901 map, a steading, probably the older portions of the one that still stands, had been constructed on the north side of the track and the farm had been re-named Findlay Farm. On the 1867 map the site of what is present-day Findlay Cottage, apparently with some additional buildings, now demolished, was called Findlay Farm.

The archaeological work

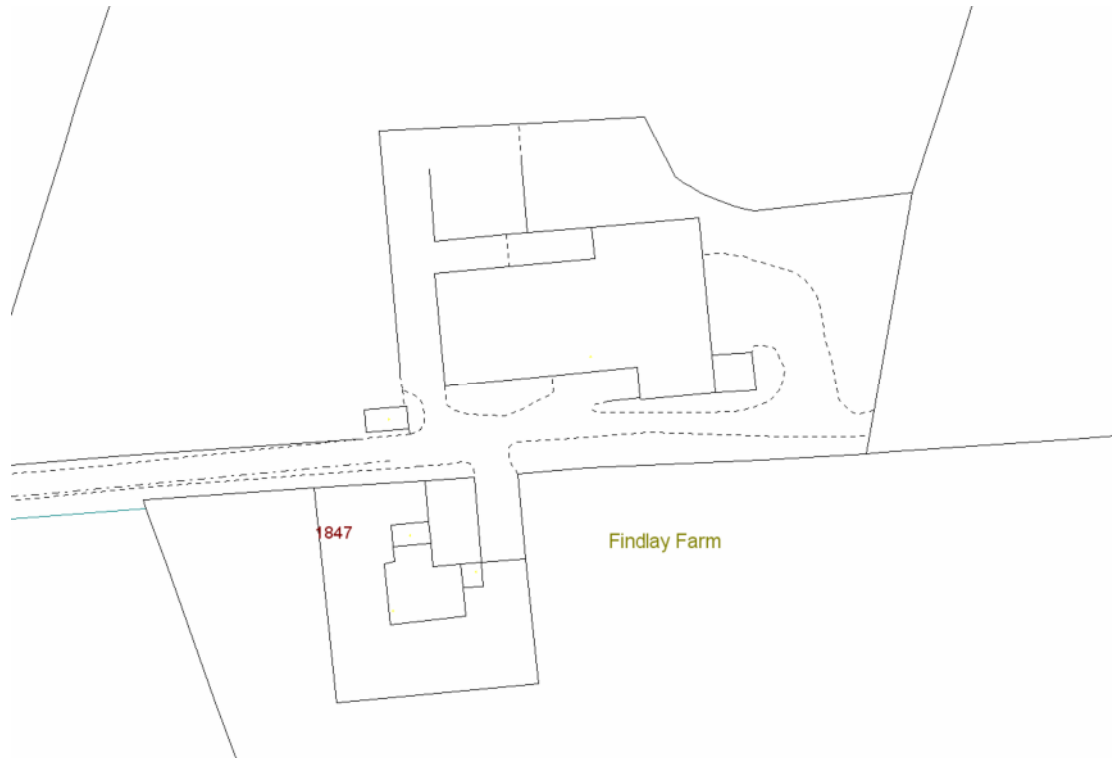
The archaeological work at this site was composed of three types of work – a walkover survey, a standing building survey and a field evaluation.

Walk-over Survey

A walkover survey was carried out by Stewart Buchanan between 9 September and 17 October 2008. A visual inspection of the entire development area was undertaken and no additional sites of archaeological interest noted.

Standing Building Survey

Alison Cameron and Cat Peters carried out the English Heritage Level 3 Historic Buildings Survey of the agricultural buildings north of the current Findlay Farm on 15-16 September 2008. These buildings were constructed between 1867 and 1901 (below).

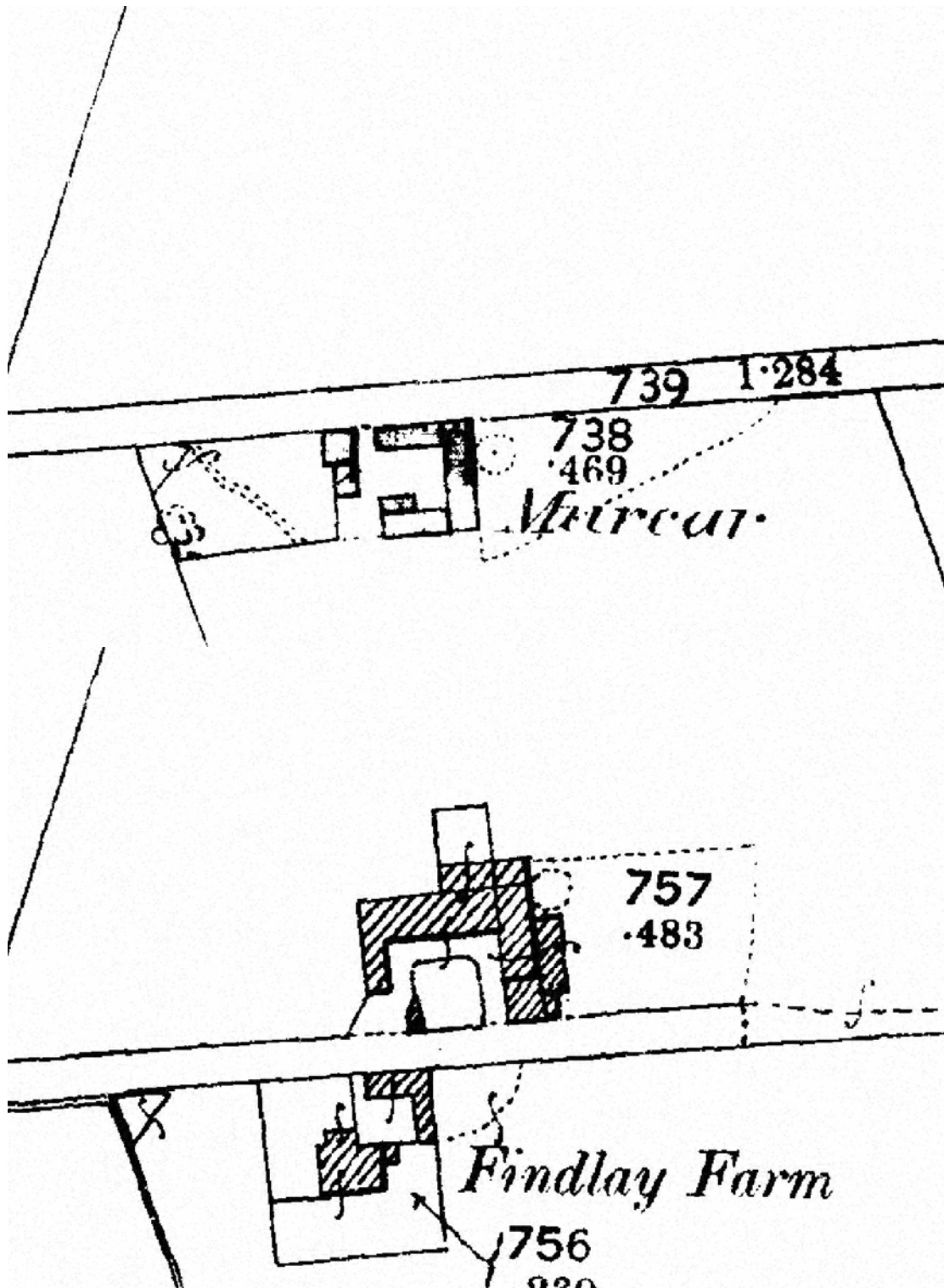


2008 Ordnance Survey map of Findlay Farm agricultural buildings (top)

The survey showed at least three phases of development of the buildings from cottages and an open-sided barn, enclosure of this barn and conversion of the cottage and other buildings into a dairy, and the addition of hay storage buildings in the late 20th century.



Phase 1 agricultural building (centre), infilled barn wall (left) and straw and hay storage (right)



1867 (top) and 1901 (bottom) Ordnance Survey map of Findlay Farm.

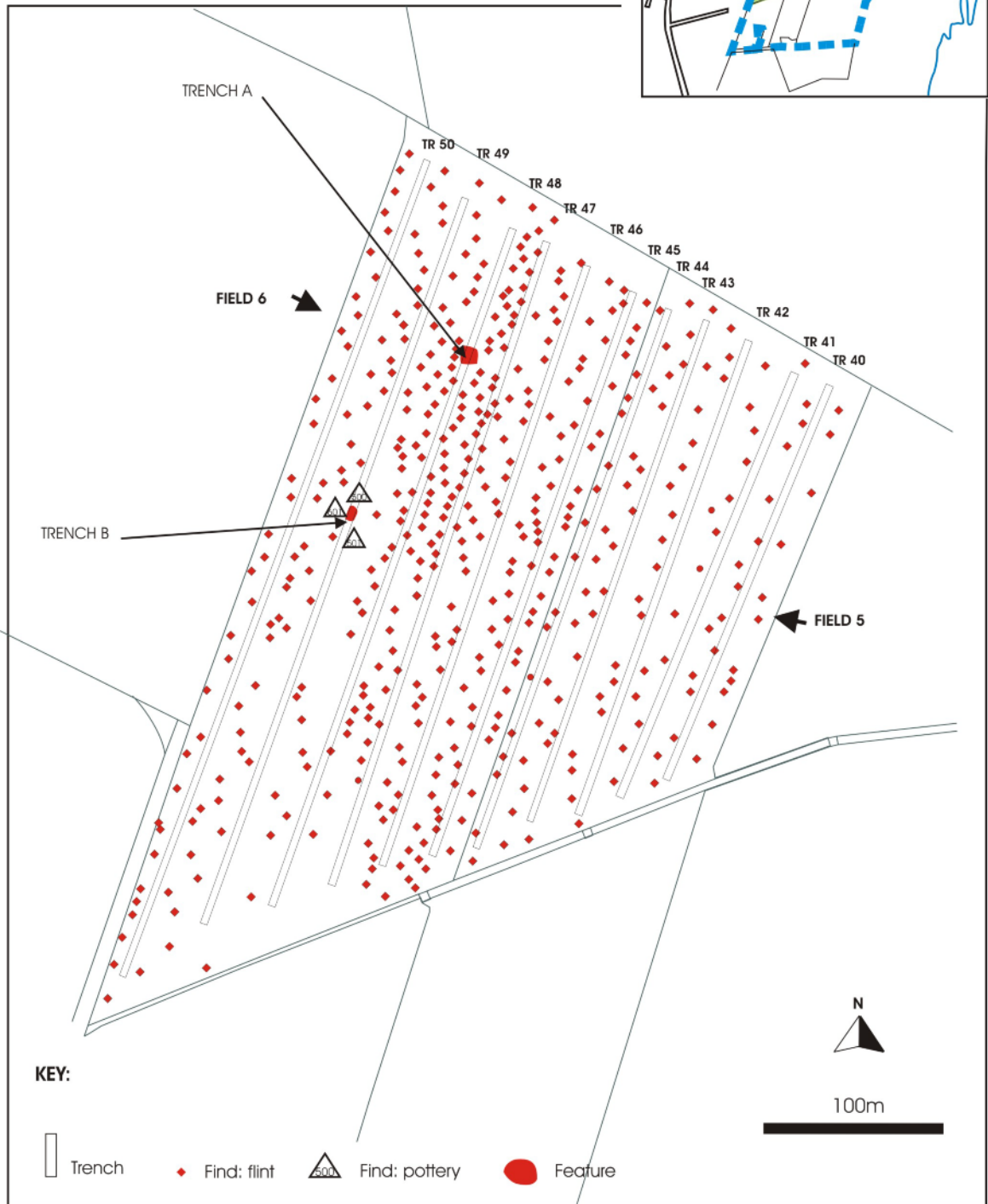


Original cottage (left foreground) was eventually converted with the barns behind and right, to a dairy

Field Evaluation



Kingfisher Business Park
Archaeological Evaluation
Fields 5 & 6





The field evaluation was carried out by Stewart Buchanan, Cat Peters and Alison Cameron between 9 September and 17 October 2008. 84 trenches were excavated, with a 2m wide ditching bucket, to natural subsoil; three areas were opened out when features were revealed; the trenches amount to just over 9% of the 369,420m quoted on Site Phasing Plan (supplied by Alan Rae).

Two areas (Trenches A and B) contained features which have been identified but not excavated. The third area which was opened out was at the location of Findlay Croft, recorded on the 1867 Ordnance Survey map. No evidence of that croft was recorded. The other two areas opened up included Trench A (near the north of Trench 48), a group of at least 9 cut features. This site is on a shallow south-facing slope. One shallow pit was half-sectioned (AA); it was 13cm deep and contained three flints (SF 351, 352 and 353).

Trench B (half way along Trench 49) consisted of a large spread of material 2.8 x 1.8m in size (AJ). A slot through it revealed it was 37cm deep with at least three layers. Finds included the rim of a grassmarked vessel, possibly dating to the 6th-8th century AD. A sherd of medieval redware pottery (undiagnostic) and a lump of slag were found on the upper surface of the top layer of this feature.



Rim of pottery vessel with grassmarking, possibly 6-8th century AD, from Pit 1

840 flints were found during excavation and fieldwalking. These were mainly found within the ploughed fields; the lack of finds within the unploughed fields does not indicate that flints are not present in these fields but that they are more difficult to detect in those areas.

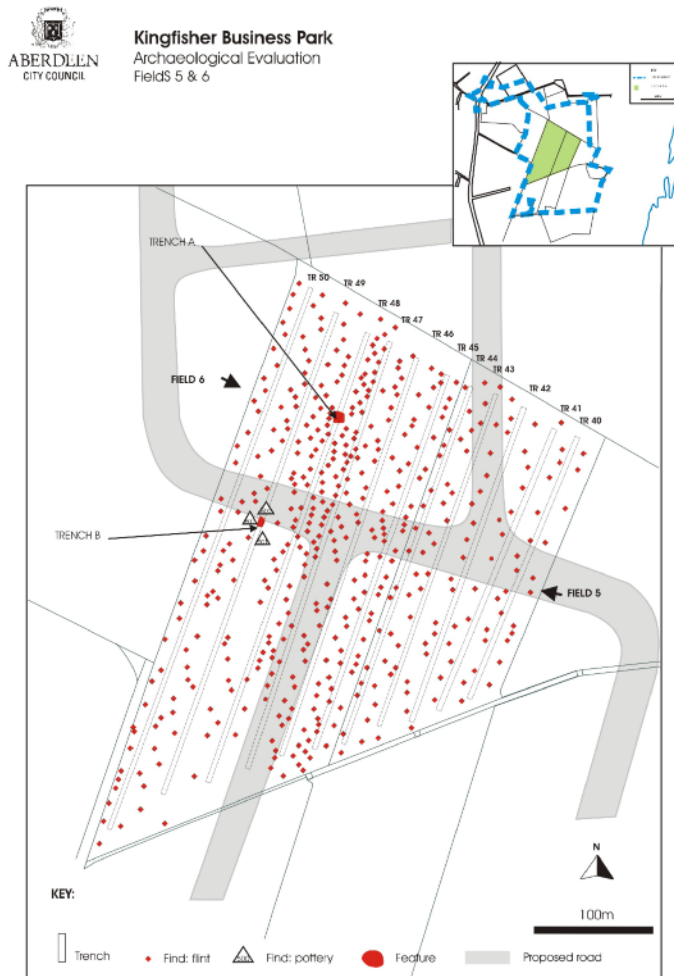
The majority of the flints were found in Fields 5 and 6 (see below) and they were clustered around Trench A.



Flint knife, Small Find 1

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the archaeological features discovered at this site, and the number of flints, this report recommends that all areas to be disturbed during the current development be subjected to archaeological work. It is understood (Alan Rae pers com) that one of the roads planned for the site runs through near Trench A and through Trench B (below). These sites must be the subject of an archaeological excavation if this is the case. However, it should be noted that the final decision on that matter rests with the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Kingfisher Business Park, Murcar, Aberdeen, Specification for Archaeological Evaluation, Judith Stones

Appendix 2

List of contexts recorded during the evaluation

Appendix 3

Thumbnails of photographs

APPENDIX 1

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES CENTRAL AREA

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Kingfisher Business Park, Murcar, Aberdeen

Specification for Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

This specification outlines the historic importance of this area and indicates the works which will be required to ensure that historic and archaeological features are evaluated, and where necessary recorded and protected during development work.

1.0 Site Location and Description

The area of the site (NGR NJ 9529 1198) is shown on the enclosed map extract. It is at present open farmland. Part of Findlay Farm, which lies at the southern boundary of the development, is to be demolished to make way for the business park.

2.0 Planning Background

The request for this archaeological evaluation 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).

National Planning Policy Guideline 18, Planning and the Historic Environment, paragraph 52 states that 'in cases of demolition or significant alteration of historic buildings, structures or streetscape, planning authorities are encouraged to make it a condition of consent that applicants arrange suitable programmes of recording features that would be destroyed in the course of the proposed works...'

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

This site lies near the edge of the developed area on the northern fringe of Aberdeen, to east of Ellon Road and west of the coastline. There are very few recorded archaeological and historical sites within the boundaries of the development area, which may partly be the result of the paucity of previous archaeological work in the area. Known archaeological sites in its vicinity reflect land-use from prehistory through the medieval period and the 18th to 19th-century age of agricultural improvement to the Second World War (see attached map). The two recorded sites which lie within the development are Findlay Croft, which no longer stands, and part of Findlay Farm. Findlay Croft appears on the 1867 Ordnance survey map and also, reduced in size, on the OS map of 1901. What is now known as Findlay Farm is marked as 'Murcar' on the 1867 map, at which date there were buildings only on the south side of the track which currently bisects the farm. By the time of the 1901 map, a steading, probably the older portions of the one that still stands, had been constructed on the north side of the track and the farm had been re-named Findlay Farm. On the 1867 map the site of what is present-day Findlay Cottage, apparently with some additional buildings, now

demolished, was called Findlay Farm. Further information is available from Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit (01224) 523658: judiths@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

4.0 Requirement for Work

The archaeological work at this site must initially be composed of three types of work – a walkover survey, a standing buildings survey and a field evaluation. It is possible that further specific archaeological work will be necessary following the field evaluation and walkover. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that all archaeological work associated with this development, including post-excavation analysis and publication, is completed to the satisfaction of the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council.

4.1 Walk-over Survey

A visual inspection of the entire development area must be undertaken by an archaeologist who must prepare accurate written and drawn records of any features which are identified in that process.

4.1 Standing Building Survey

A survey of any standing structures which are to be demolished or altered as a result of the development, notably the steadings and bothy at the present Findlay Farm, must be made to at least the standard of an English Heritage Level 3 Historic Buildings Survey.

The archaeologist who undertakes the survey must also observe the demolition in progress to ensure that any additional features revealed at that stage are recorded.

4.2 Field Evaluation

The archaeological potential of the site must be tested in the field by a series of trial trenches. The layout and location of the trenches are to be agreed in advance by the archaeological contractor and the Keeper of Archaeology, but it is anticipated that 10% of the development area will be sampled. The sampling area should include the site of Findlay Croft and the areas around Findlay Cottage where some buildings of the former Findlay Farm appear, from the 1867 Ordnance Survey map, to have been located. The purpose of the evaluation process is to establish the location, condition, depth and date of any archaeological features and deposits which may survive on the site – and to determine to what extent they are in danger of being affected by the development.

5.0 Further Work

Following the fieldwork exercise, a written evaluation of the archaeological potential of the site must be produced, along with a suggested strategy for final investigation, recording and protection of any significant features. This final investigation or protection strategy must be acceptable to the planning authority and its implementation, including all fieldwork, post-excavation and publication requirements, 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 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 Field Evaluation

- 10.1 An appropriate machine must be used to minimise damage to underlying archaeological deposits
- 10.2 All machine work must be carried out under the direct supervision of an archaeologist acceptable to the planning authority and the Keeper of Archaeology.
- 10.3 All excavation, both by machine and by hand, must be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be worthy of preservation *in situ*.
- 10.4 Any human remains which are encountered must initially be left *in situ*. Their removal will be a matter of discussion with the Keeper of 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 archaeological work 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 of Archaeology. The possibility of random inspections should not be excluded.

13.0 Reporting Requirements for Field Evaluation

Provision must be made for:

- 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 fieldwork
- 13.4 Preparation of plans, sections and finds drawings to publication standards.
- 13.5 The sorting and analysis of records and the production of a written report on the work, published in a manner appropriate to its scale.
- 13.6 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.
- 13.7 Copies of all 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 provided.

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 evaluation 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 brief, can be obtained from the Keeper of Archaeology, Whitespace, 60 Frederick Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5HY Tel (01224) 523658.

17.0 Conclusion

The archaeological work is to be carried out in compliance with this brief and in the context of NPPG 5 and NPPG 18. The selection of any contractor will be subject to approval of the Keeper of Archaeology. Work should be carried out in close liaison with the Keeper of Archaeology.

July 2008.

APPENDIX 2

Feature	Trench	Layer	Size	Description	Finds
AA	48	2	80cm diameter	Light grey brown silty sand, gravels and small stones	
AB	48	3	85 diameter	Not excavated	
AC	48	4	60 diameter	Not excavated	
AD	48	5	50 diameter	Not excavated	
AE	48	6	50 x 40cm	Not excavated	
AF	48	7	2.1 x 1m	Not excavated	
AG	48	8	1.4 x 0.8m	Not excavated	
AH	48	9	2.6 x 1.55m	Not excavated	
AI	48	10	1 x 0.65m	Not excavated	
AJ	49	11	2.8 x 1.8m	Dark brown sandy loam	Pottery SF500, Slag SF501, Pottery SF601
AJ	49	12	2.8 x 1.8m	Black firm silty loam	
AJ	49	13	2.8 x 1.8m	Light grey brown sandy silt	