

Archaeological evaluation Fisheries Research Service, Victoria Road, Aberdeen



Alison Cameron
Assistant Archaeologist
Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit
Whitespace
60 Frederick Street
Aberdeen
AB24 5HY
(01224) 523654
alcameron@aberdeencity.gov.uk
4 March 2009

Archaeological evaluation, Fisheries Research Service, Victoria Road, Aberdeen

Introduction

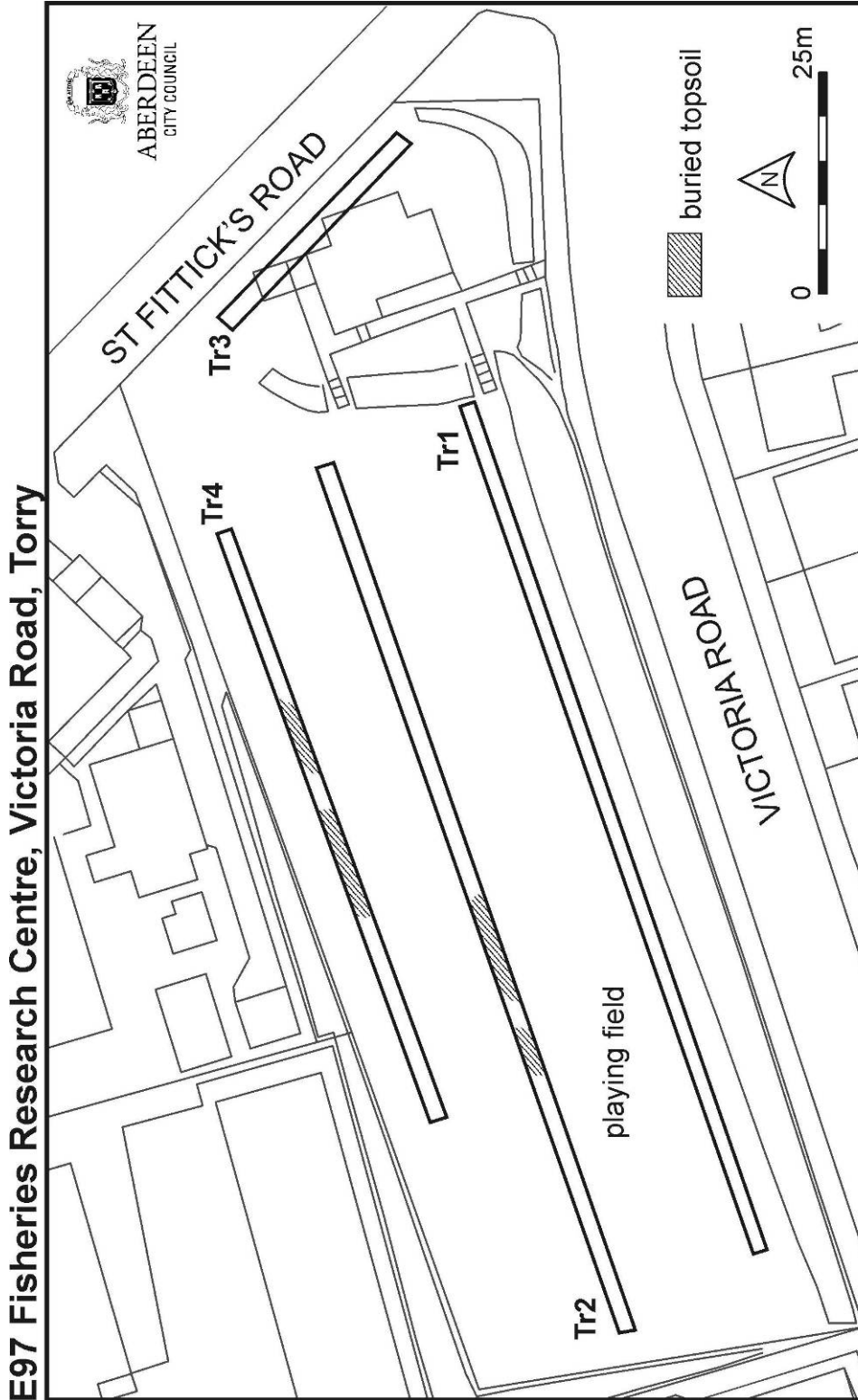
Although there are no known archaeological sites within the boundaries of the presently proposed development, the area in general is rich in historic features, while little archaeological excavation or survey has taken place. The site of the medieval village of Upper Torry and the subsequent development which later became known as Old Torry lay to the north west, while the now-ruined church of St Fittick, 420 metres south-east of the present site, is in origin 13th-century in date. Medieval and later remains were excavated in 2004 to north-west of the church, while traces of rig and furrow on Balnagask golf course attest to early cultivation in that area. In addition, Balnagask Motte, which lies 118 metres to south-west, is thought to be a possible medieval timber castle site. Both the motte and St Fittick's Church are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. A Pictish silver chain was found in the Bay of Nigg area in the 18th century and is now in Marischal Museum, Aberdeen: it is thought to date from about the 7th century AD, but its exact findspot is not known. A prehistoric saddle quern is built into the front garden wall of the now abandoned Kirkhill Farm, and was probably discovered during ploughing in the area in the 19th or 20th century.

The evaluation

Four trenches (Plan 1) were excavated by Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit between 2-3 March 2009. Trench 1 contained 25cm topsoil on top of natural subsoil which had been scarped; presumably when the playing field was laid out, natural subsoil was moved from the south of the site lowering the ground level. The ground level in Trenches 2 and 4 had been raised by 0.3-1.3m with the laying of very compact layers of natural subsoil and loams over the entire area. Two areas of buried topsoil in the centre of the site (Plan 1) indicated areas in which topsoil had not been removed from the site prior to the rise in level to create the playing field. Trench 3 at the extreme east of the site revealed that the pavilion (Plan 1) had disturbed most of the soil levels in this area of the site.

A number of stone drains consisting of a channel filled with loose stones, and more modern ceramic drains were recorded. These are detailed in archive and indicate that this land was farmed before its use as a playing field.

Very few finds were recovered, none in a stratified archaeological layer. One fragment of flint was recovered from topsoil but this could have been brought into the site when levels were raised. A 1911 George V commemoration token in a case was also recovered from topsoil.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Aberdeen City Council - 10023401 - 2009

Plan 1 Trenches excavated showing areas of buried topsoil

Recommendations

No further archaeological work is required at this site during the current development.

APPENDIX 1

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES CENTRAL AREA MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

FRS/FVA Marine Laboratory, Victoria Road, 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 NJ95850526) is shown on the attached map. It occupies a corner location bounded to the south by Victoria Road and to east by St Fittick's Road. To north and west it adjoins the FRS Marine Laboratory buildings.

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

Although there are no known archaeological sites within the boundaries of the presently proposed development, the area in general is rich in historic features, while little archaeological excavation or survey has taken place. The site of the medieval village of Upper Torry and the subsequent development which later became known as Old Torry lay to the north west, while the now-ruined church of St Fittick, 420 metres south-east of the present site, is in origin 13th-century in date. Medieval and later remains were excavated in 2004 to north-west of the church, while traces of rig and furrow on Balnagask golf course attest to early cultivation in that area. In

addition, Balnagask Motte, which lies 118 metres to south-west, is thought to be a possible medieval timber castle site. Both the motte and St Fittick's Church are scheduled monuments. A Pictish silver chain was found in the Bay of Nigg area in the 18th century and is now in Marischal Museum, Aberdeen: it is thought to date from about the 7th century AD, but its exact findspot is not known. A prehistoric saddle quern is built into the front garden wall of the now abandoned Kirkhill Farm, and was probably discovered during ploughing in the area in the 19th or 20th century.

The present site has been undeveloped land for most of its history. From map evidence it appears that it became a playing field some time after 1959, with a pavilion at its eastern end. During the process of creating the playing surface a considerable amount of landscaping seems to have occurred. The pavilion was demolished after 2001, leaving a raised area of ground at the eastern end of the site.

Further information is available from Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit (01224) 523658: judiths@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

4.0 Requirement for Work - 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 7% of the development area will be sampled. 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.

It should be noted that a report by Grampian Soil Surveys in 2005 provides information about a series of 17 trial pits which were excavated on the site in that year. That report also identified possible areas of light contamination in the area of the former pavilion. A further trial pitting exercise took place in 2007 (report by Ian Farmer Associates), the report on which also mentions contamination. The archaeological contractor must be aware of this issue and may, in discussion with the Keeper of Archaeology, require to tailor the trial trenching procedure accordingly.

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.

6.0 n/a

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.

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 (Nicholas Holmes, 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 current local and national planning policies. 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.

November 2008.

APPENDIX 2



Tr 1 facing E



Tr 1 W end facing N



Tr 1 W end facing W (1)



Tr 1 W end facing W



Tr 1 gas detector cover - no longer in use



Tr 1 facing W (1)



Tr 1 facing W (2)



Tr 1 facing W (3)



Tr 1 facing W



Tr 1 AA (1)



Tr 1 AA



Tr 1 facing NW (1)



Tr 1 facing NW (2)



Tr 1 facing NW



Tr 1 facing N (1)



Tr 1 facing N



Tr 1 previous trial pit uncovered



Tr 1 facing W (1)



Tr 1 facing W (2)



Tr 1 facing W (3)



Tr 1 facing W



Tr 1 from window during site induction (1)



Tr 1 from window during site induction



Tr 2 W end facing E (1)



Tr 2 W end facing E (2)



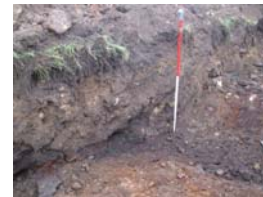
Tr 2 W end facing E (3)



Tr 2 W end facing E



Tr 2 buried topsoil in centre of trench (1)



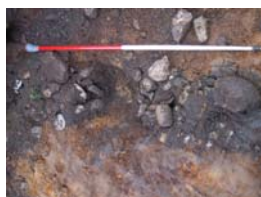
Tr 2 buried topsoil in centre of trench (2)



Tr 2 buried topsoil in centre of trench



Tr 2 AC (1)



Tr 2 AC (2)



Tr 2 AC (3)



Tr 2 AC



Tr 2 centre (1)



Tr 2 centre (2)



Tr 2 centre (3)



Tr 2 centre (4)



Tr 2 centre (5)



Tr 2 centre (6)



Tr 2 centre (7)



Tr 2 centre (8)



Tr 2 centre



Tr 2 E end facing E (1)



Tr 2 E end facing E



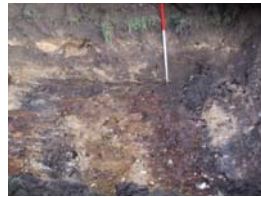
Tr 2 facing W



Tr 2 central area facing W (1)



Tr 2 central area facing W



DSCF3450



DSCF3451



Tr 2 AF (1)



Tr 2 AF (2)



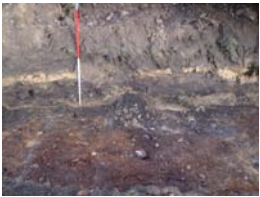
Tr 2 AF (3)



Tr 2 AF



Tr 2 AG (1)



Tr 2 AG (2)



Tr 2 AG (3)



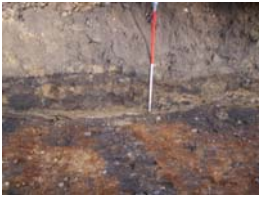
Tr 2 AG (4)



Tr 2 AG



Tr 2 central area facing E



Tr 2 AG detail (1)



Tr 2 AG detail



Tr 2 facing W AF foreground



Tr 2 AH excavated (1)



Tr 2 AH excavated (2)



Tr 2 AH excavated (3)



Tr 2 AH excavated (4)



Tr 2 AH excavated (5)



Tr 2 AH excavated



Site showing Tr 3 right foreground



Tr 3 facing N (1)



Tr 3 facing N (2)



Tr 3 facing N (3)



Tr 3 facing N



Tr 3 AI (1)



Tr 3 AI (2)



Tr 3 AI



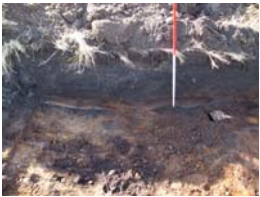
Site from Tr 3 facing W



Tr 3 AJ



Tr 3 AK



Tr 3 central



Tr 3 facing S



Tr 3 facing S (1)



Tr 3 facing S



Site showing locations of Tr 1 and 2



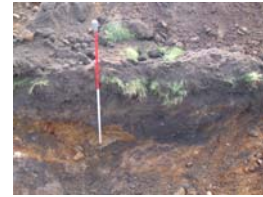
Tr 3 facing harbour



Tr 3 AL (1)



Tr 3 AL



Tr 4 E end



Tr 4 AM foreground



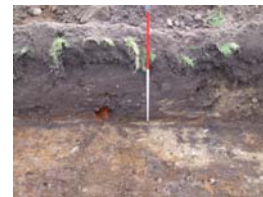
Tr 4 ceramic drain E end



Tr 4 ceramic drain E end (1)



Tr 4 ceramic drain E end (2)



Tr 4 ceramic drain E end (3)



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural (1)



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural (2)



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural (3)



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural (5)



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural



Tr 4



Tr 4 AN (1)



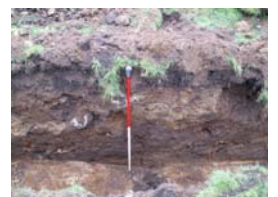
Tr 4 AN (2)



Tr 4 AN (3)



Tr 4 AN (4)



Tr 4 AN



Tr 4 from W end facing E (1)



Tr 4 from W end facing E



Tr 4 from E end facing W



Tr 4 central area buried topsoil above natural (4)