

# Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT  
TO  
MR PETER CAMPBELL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
AT  
DULL FARM, ABERFELDY**

**EXCAVATION  
JULY 2012**

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## INTRODUCTION

Perth & Kinross Council has granted Mr Peter Campbell of Dull Farm, Aberfeldy planning consent to erect a dwelling house within a small field on the east side of the village of Dull (Planning Reference number 11/02092/IPL). On the advice of its archaeological advisers, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), the council attached a condition whereby an evaluation be carried out prior to the development in order to assess whether any archaeological remains survive on the site.

This work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) whose contents were based on the requirements set out in PKHT's Terms of Reference, the scheme being agreed by PKHT and approved by the planning authority before work commenced on site. The WSI described a programme of works whose implementation was intended to mitigate any actions that might damage the surviving archaeological record during the proposed development. The results of the evaluation could have formed the basis of a subsequent programme in which a larger area is investigated or the surviving record is preserved *in situ*.

## THE SITE

The development site is centred on NN 80772 49077, on the east side of Dull, a small village some 5km west of Aberfeldy, Perthshire. Dull was the site of a monastic settlement as early as the 7th century and, on the evidence of fragments of several early Christian stones and cross slabs retrieved from within and around the village, continued as a prominent religious site for many centuries.

It was once thought that the remains of the early ecclesiastical site were located in a field to the south-east of the development area but excavations in the 1960s failed to find any evidence to support this assumption and it is quite likely that the early medieval foundation lies beneath the modern village.

The house is to be sited centrally within a small pasture field measuring some 40m square, on the north side of the Tay valley, the ground sloping gently both to the south and the east. A detached garage will stand to the north of the house, access to both structures being along a drive leading off the village road. There will be a septic tank towards the south-west corner of the field although its location will be slightly different from that shown in the WSI because an underground power line passes close to its original intended position.

## THE EVALUATION

The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of a series of trenches, designed to uncover at least 6% of the development plot. It measures approximately 42m north/south by 38m east/west giving an overall area of some 800m<sup>2</sup>. The arrangement of trenches is shown in the appended site plan, the total area excavated being some 107m<sup>2</sup>, approximately 13% of the plot.

Trenches were concentrated within those areas most likely to be disturbed during the proposed development, particularly the house footprint.

Individual trench sizes were as follows.

Trench 1	8.6m east/west by 2m wide
Trench 2	8.0m east/west by 2m wide
Trench 3	10.4m east/west by 2m wide
Trench 4	8.7m east/west by 2m wide
Trench 5	7.1m north/south by 2m wide
Trench 6	6.0m north/south by 2m wide
Trench 7	9.2m north/south by 1m wide.

Topsoil of dark brown, humic loam was about 300mm deep over most of the area, deepening to 400mm in places but only 200mm deep where bedrock or large boulders came close to the surface. Although the field has been in pasture for a few years, it had been ploughed regularly until fairly recent times and the soil quality is good.

The topsoil overlay glacial till of orange silt with many stones, some of them very large, with occasional outcrops of bedrock protruding through both the subsoil and topsoil. The presence of many large boulders made excavating narrow trenches difficult and, with the exception of Trench 7, all trenches were opened to their agreed maximum width of 2m.

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered, only a few stone voids and other natural features, one of them yielding several sherds of modern bottle glass. No artefacts predating the 20th century were retrieved during the excavation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The complete absence of features and deposits of archaeological interest within any of the trenches suggests that little or nothing of significance will be disturbed during the proposed construction of the house and ancillary structures. Nevertheless, Dull remains a site of great archaeological and historical importance and one where the remains of early and high medieval remains may yet survive.

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## **PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD**

The photographs listed below are contained within the digital site archive and are not reproduced in the report itself.

- 1 Trench 1, viewed from the east
- 2 Trench 1, viewed from the west
- 3 Trench 2, viewed from the west
- 4 Trench 2, viewed from the east
- 5 Trench 3, viewed from the east
- 6 Trench 3, viewed from the west
- 7 Trench 4, viewed from the west
- 8 Trench 4, viewed from the east
- 9 Trench 5, viewed from the north
- 10 Trench 5, viewed from the south
- 11 Trench 6, viewed from the north
- 12 Trench 6, viewed from the south
- 13 Trench 7, viewed from the north
- 14 Trench 7, viewed from the south
- 15 The site, viewed from the south-west
- 16 The site, viewed from the south-east
- 17 The site, viewed from the north-east
- 18 The site, viewed from the north-west