

ASAF



ALLOA ACADEMY, ALLOA, CLACKMANNANSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

for URS

11/00337/FULL

March 2012



HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY (UK) Ltd



ALLOA ACADEMY, ALLOA, CLACKMANNANSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

for URS

11/00337/FULL

March 2012

HA Job no.: ASAF

NGR: NS 8729 9366

Parish: Alloa

Council: Clackmannanshire

OASIS ref.: Headland1 – 119790

NMR no.: NS89SE 90

Archive will be deposited with National Monuments Record
of Scotland (NMRS)

Project Manager

Edward Bailey

Author

Donald Wilson

Fieldwork

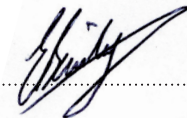
Donald Wilson, Steve Roe

Graphics

Anna Sztromwasser, Caroline Norrman

Approved by

Edward Bailey – Project Manager





Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd 2012

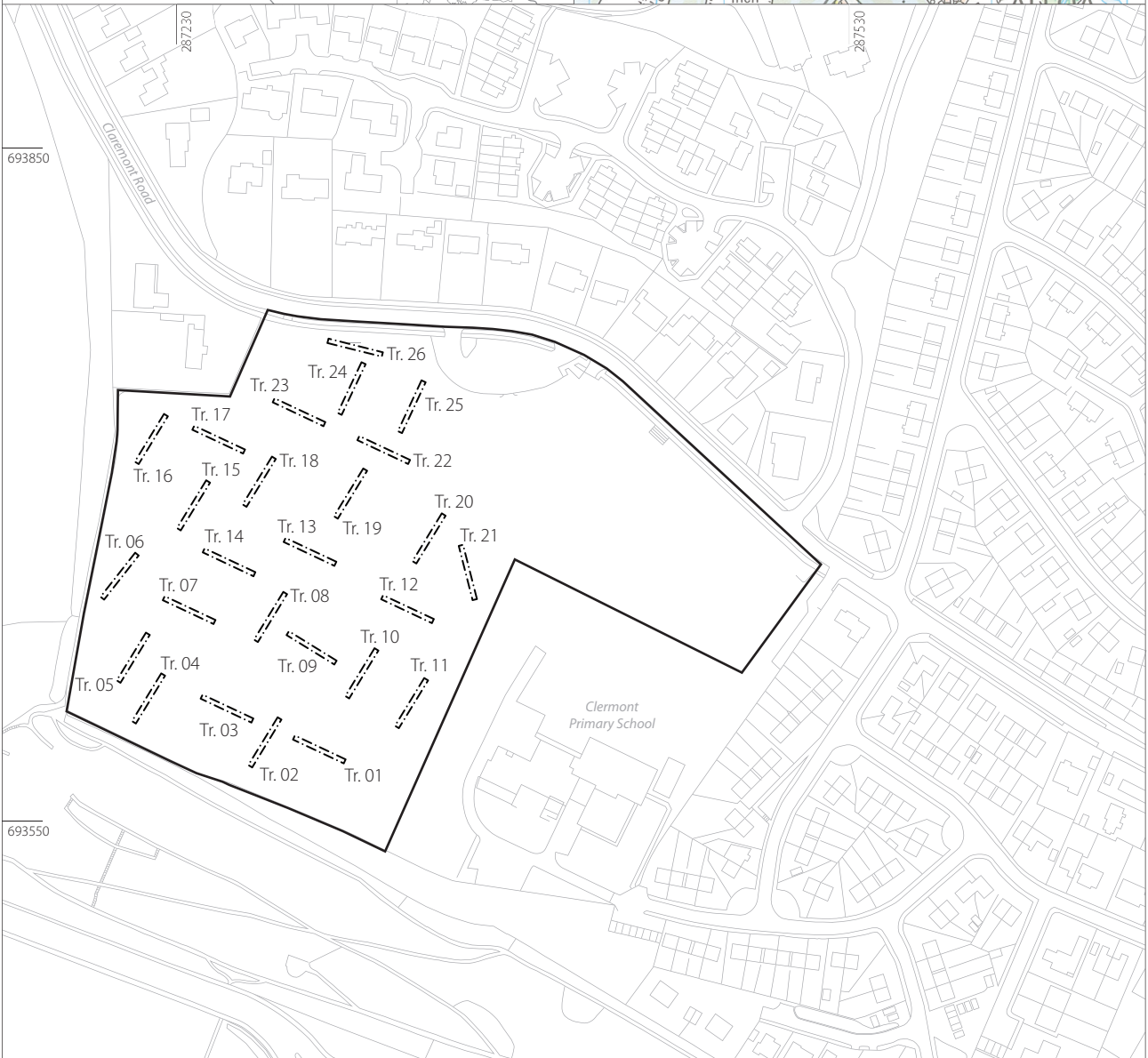
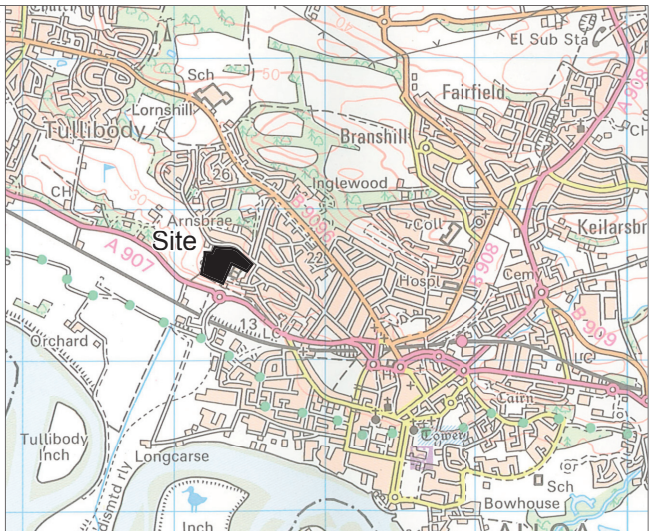
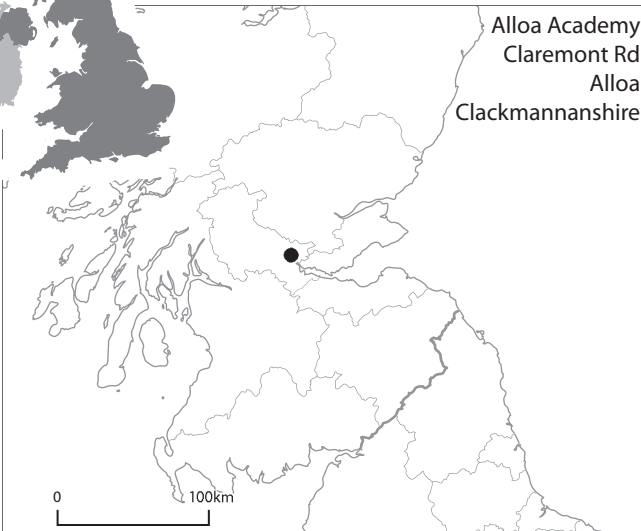
13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE
T 0131 467 7705 • F 0131 467 7706 • E office@headlandarchaeology.com
www.headlandarchaeology.com

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Site location and description	1
1.3	Objectives	1
2.	EVALUATION	2
2.1	Methodology	2
2.2	Recording	3
2.3	Reporting and archive	3
3.	RESULTS	3
4.	DISCUSSION	4
5.	REFERENCES	4
5.1	Bibliographic references	4
5.2	Cartographic references	4
6.	APPENDICES	5
6.1	APPENDIX 1 – Site registers	5
	<i>Trench register</i>	5
	<i>Context register</i>	5
	<i>Photographic register</i>	5
6.2	Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland	7

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Illus 1</i>		viii
	<i>Site location</i>	
<i>Illus 2</i>		2
	<i>1st edition Ordnance Survey (1857)</i>	
<i>Illus 3</i>		3
	<i>General view of the evaluation area</i>	
<i>Illus 4</i>		4
	<i>North facing view of Trench 10</i>	
<i>Illus 5</i>		4
	<i>Example of the metal finds recovered during metal detecting</i>	



viii

Reproduced using 2007 OS 1:50,000 Landranger Series no. 58 and digital data. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Licence no. AL 100013329.

Scale 1:3,000 @ A4



Illus 1
Site location

ALLOA ACADEMY, ALLOA, STIRLING

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology conducted a programme of archaeological trial trenching on disused playing fields to the rear of the former Alloa Academy, Alloa, Clackmannanshire in February 2012. This was required as part of the planning application for a new housing development.

In total 26 trenches were excavated totalling 650 linear meters. Although no features or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded during the works a significant number of tile field drains and plough scores were recorded. In conjunction with the trial trenching the trench locations and subsequent arisings from these trenches were subject to a rapid metal detector scan. A total of 18 ferrous objects were recovered although these were all considered to be 19th century or later in date.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by URS to carry out a programme of archaeological works as part of the planning application for a new housing development. This comprised an intrusive evaluation of the site by means of trial trenching. The land comprised disused playing fields to the rear of the former Alloa Academy. The work was carried out over two days in February 2012 in wet and overcast conditions.

The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design prepared by URS (2012) and approved by the Planning Officer (Archaeology) of Stirling Council.

1.2 Site location and description

The site occupies the disused playing fields of the former Alloa Academy and is located approximately 1 mile to the west of Alloa town centre (NGR: NS 8729 9366) (Illus 1). The site is part of a larger development area that includes the former Alloa Academy (now demolished) measuring approximately 4.5 hectares and that is bounded to the north by Claremont Road, to the west by Breahead Golf Course, to the east by Claremont School and to the south by wooded scrubland over a steep bank leading down to the A907.

The development area comprised a large flat area of short cut grass with gentle sloping to the northern and western

edges (Illus 3). A brief search of the National Monuments Records indicate only one known archaeological site in the area; a prehistoric shell midden (NMR: NS89SE 90) recorded on the edge of Breahead Golf course. This was dated to BC 4365–4246 (1 σ cal). Historic mapping of the site (Illus 2) indicates that the majority of the proposed development area has remained undeveloped until the construction of Alloa Academy in the mid 20th century. The academy itself was located in the north-east corner of the development area, the rest becoming the school playing field. The site seems to have remained as school playing fields throughout this later period and there is no evidence that it was developed during the previous 200 years.

The solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous passage Group Formation. These typically comprise a sequence of mainly sandstones and fireclays. This is overlain by Glacial till which generally comprises sandy clay with irregular bands of sand and gravel in the till (URS 2012).

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological trial trench evaluation was to:

- identify the presence/absence of buried archaeological remains;
- determine the nature, depth, extent, character and date of any archaeological deposits or features encountered;



Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Illus 2

1st edition Ordnance Survey (1857)

2

- determine the condition or state of preservation of any archaeological deposit or feature encountered;
- determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present;
- determine the significance of any archaeological remains present; and
- to aid in the design of a suitable mitigation strategy, where this is necessary and appropriate.

2. EVALUATION

2.1 Methodology

In total 26 linear trial trenches were excavated across the site. Trial trenching covered approximately 7.5% of the site and totalled to 1,300m² of trench or 650 linear metres (x2 metres wide). These trenches were laid out according to an indicative trench plan produced by URS and agreed with the Planning Officer (Archaeology) for Stirling Council and were designed to provide comprehensive coverage across the site. The trenches were positioned

using a Trimble G6 differential GPS allowing an accuracy of $\pm 100\text{mm}$ of the specified trench location.

A 360° mechanical digger, equipped with a 2m wide flat bladed ditching bucket, was used to remove modern overburden and/or topsoil in level spits under archaeological control. Excavations continued until clean geological sediments, significant archaeological deposits or structures were encountered or until the limit of safe excavation was reached. Only trenches less than 1 m deep and considered safe were entered by site staff. No stepping or shoring of trenches took place during this phase of work.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. On completion of machine excavation, all faces of the trenches that required examination or recording were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in each of the trenches. All possible features were investigated. All the trenches were backfilled but not re-surfaced.

The excavations were also subject to a rapid metal detector scan by an experienced operator. The arising from the trenches was also scanned for metal objects.



Illus 3

General view of the evaluation area

3

2.2 Recording

All aspects of the recording were undertaken in accordance with the codes of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008, 2010).

All trenches were given individual numbers, a full detailed description of each trench can be found in Appendix 1. All contexts were given an individual number and recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. A full list of these can be found in Appendix 1. Colour transparencies, monochrome negative photographs and digital photographs were taken; a graduated metric scale was clearly visible. A full list of these can be found in Appendix 1. An overall site plan was recorded using GPS survey and related to the National Grid. OD levels for the present ground surface were approximately 35m across the site.

2.3 Reporting and archive

The results of the works are presented below. A summary report has been prepared for submission to Discovery

& Excavation in Scotland (Appendix 2) and the OASIS database – Headland1 – 119790.

The complete project archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) within six months of the completion of the project. The records (paper and digital) will be archived according to best practice guidelines set out by the Archaeological Archiving Forum.

3. RESULTS

A total of 26 trenches were excavated (see Illus 1) amounting to an approximate 7.5% sample of the area under investigation. A summary of relevant results is presented below. The trenches were positioned in order to provide an equal coverage across the site.

The topsoil (001) across the site was fairly homogeneous comprising very dark greyish brown fine silt with moderate small stone inclusions. Very occasionally small fragments of 19th/20th century pottery was noted within



Illus 4

North facing view of Trench 10

4. DISCUSSION

A small number of the trenches included variable depths of subsoil. This subsoil included 19th/20th century pottery fragments and probably represents modern infilling of depressions in the natural till in order to create a level surface (possibly at the time it became a school playing field). The numerous field drains and plough scores along with the small assemblage of 19th/20th century ferrous objects suggest the area had been utilised for agricultural purposes prior to this. No significant archaeology or artefacts were recorded.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Bibliographic references

- IfA 2008 *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading).
- IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading).
- URS 2012 *Alloa Academy, Alloa: Specification for Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation (Project No. 47061506)*. Leeds.
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *Alloa, Braehead*, <<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/117453/details/alloa+braehead/>> accessed 22 February 2012.

5.2 Cartographic references

- 1887 Ordnance Survey, *Sheet 39*.

4

this material but not collected. The topsoil measured between 0.25 and 0.35m deep across the site mainly lying directly over the natural glacial till (003) that comprised stone rich clayey sand deposits. A small number of the trenches (mainly across the central and western end of the area; Tr5–Tr8, Tr10, Tr11, Tr16 and Tr17) included variable depths of subsoil (002) up to a maximum of 0.7m (Tr17). This comprised a thin layer of yellow stone rich clay over dark grey compact sand with frequent charcoal flecks. This compact grey sand included occasional 19th/20th century pottery fragments.

A significant number of tile field drains were also recorded across the site (Illus 4) with an equal mixture of both wide and narrow bore drains identified. No predominant alignment was recorded for these drains although they were recorded on the *pro forma* trench record sheets. A number of N–S aligned plough scores were also noted in a number of the trenches. No other features or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded within the excavated trenches.

The results of the rapid metal detector scan produced a mixture of poorly preserved 19th century and modern metal finds from 10 of the trenches (Tr5, Tr10, Tr11, Tr12, Tr17–Tr21) with 18 artefacts recovered (Illus 5).



Illus 5

Example of the metal finds recovered during metal detecting

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

Trench register

Tr no.	Size	Orientation	Max depth	Description
1	25m x 2m	E-W	0.3m	2x field drains recorded.
2	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded all aligned E-W
3	25m x 2m	E-W	0.3m	2 x field drains recorded
4	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded plus occasional N-S aligned plough scores
5	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	3 x field drains recorded
6	25m x 2m	N-S	0.5m	3 x field drains recorded
7	25m x 2m	E-W	0.55m	4 x field drains recorded
8	25m x 2m	N-S	0.5m	6 x field drains recorded
9	25m x 2m	E-W	0.5m	8 x field drains recorded
10	25m x 2m	N-S	0.5m	4 x field drains recorded
11	25m x 2m	N-S	0.6m	4 x field drains recorded
12	25m x 2m	E-W	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded
13	25m x 2m	E-W	0.25m	2 x field drains recorded
14	25m x 2m	E-W	0.3m	3 x field drains recorded
15	25m x 2m	N-S	0.35m	3 x field drains recorded
16	25m x 2m	N-S	0.4m	2 x field drains recorded
17	25m x 2m	E-W	1.0m	3 x field drains recorded
18	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded
19	25m x 2m	N-S	0.35m	4 x field drains recorded
20	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded
21	25m x 2m	NW-SE	0.3m	1 x field drain recorded
22	25m x 2m	E-W	0.25m	8 x field drains recorded
23	25m x 2m	E-W	0.45m	2 x field drains recorded
24	25m x 2m	N-S	0.3m	4 x field drains recorded
25	25m x 2m	N-S	0.4m	4 x field drains recorded
26	25m x 2m	E-W	0.3m	Mixed modern material recorded at the W end of the trench

Context register

Context no.	Description
001	A soft very dark brown sandy silt with moderate small stone inclusions and very occasional fragments of 20th century pottery. Formed the topsoil across the site between 0.25m and 0.35m deep.
002	A compact but fairly soft mid-grey clayey silt with very occasional small stone inclusions and moderate charcoal fleck inclusions. Measured between 0.10 and 0.7m deep below the topsoil. Only recorded in some areas of the site sat above the natural
003	A natural glacial till that comprised orange and orange/brown stone rich clayey sand deposits with lenses of more sand rich deposits.

Photographic register

Frame no.	B&W Print no.	C/S no.	Direction	Description
001	36\1	36\2		Film 1 ID shot
002	35\1	35\2	N	General site shot
003	34\1	34\2	NW	General site shot
004	33\1	33\2	W	Tr 1
005	32\1	32\2	S	Tr 2
006	31\1	31\2	W	Tr 3
007	30\1	30\2	N	Tr 4
008	29\1	29\2	NE	Tr 5
009	28\1	28\2	N	Tr 6
010	27\1	27\2	W	View of Tr 6 E facing section
011	26\1	26\2	E	Tr 7
012	25\1	25\2	N	Tr 8
013	24\1	24\2	E	Tr 9
014	23\1	23\2	N	Tr10
015	22\1	22\2	N	Tr 11
016	21\1	21\2	W	Tr 12
017	20\1	20\2	W	Tr 13
018	19\1	19\2	W	Tr 14
019	18\1	18\2	N	Tr 15
020	17\1	17\2	NE	Tr 16
021	16\1	16\2	E	Tr 17
022	15\1	15\2	N	View of Tr 17 S facing section
023	14\1	14\2	S	Tr 18



Frame no.	B&W Print no.	C/S no.	Direction	Description
024	13\1	13\2	N	Tr 19
025	12\1	12\2	S	Tr 20
026	11\1	11\2	SW	Tr 21
027	10\1	10\2	W	Tr 22
028	9\1	9\2	W	Tr 23
029	8\1	8\2	N	Tr 24
030	7\1	7\2	N	Tr 25
031	6\1	6\2	W	Tr 26
032	5\1	5\2	W	General site shot post-ex
033	4\1	4\2	NW	General site shot post-ex
034	3\1	3\2		View of metal finds
035	2\1	2\2		View of metal finds

6.2 Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Clackmannanshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Archaeological Evaluation at Alloa Academy, Alloa
PROJECT CODE:	ASAF12-001
PARISH:	Alloa
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Donald Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	none
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	none
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	none
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 8729 9366
START DATE (this season)	February 2012
END DATE (this season)	February 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref)	none
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>Headland Archaeology conducted a programme of archaeological works on the site of Alloa Academy, Alloa, Clackmannanshire in February 2012. This was required as part of the planning application for the construction of a new residential housing.</p> <p>In total 26 trenches were excavated totalling 650 linear meters. Although no features or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded during these works a significant number of tile field drains were recorded. In conjunction with the trial trenching the trench locations was subject to a rapid metal detector scan with the subsequent arisings from these trenches also scanned. A total of 18 ferrous objects were recovered although these were all considered to be 19th century or modern in date.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Unknown
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	–
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	URS, Leeds
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	13 Jane Street Edinburgh EH6 5HE Scotland
EMAIL ADDRESS:	donald.wilson@headlandarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	NMRS



Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd 2012

North East

13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE

T 0131 467 7705 • F 0131 467 7706 • E office@headlandarchaeology.com

North West

10 Payne Street, Glasgow G4 0LF

T 0141 354 8100 • F 0141 332 9388 • E glasgowoffice@headlandarchaeology.com

Midlands & West

Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NZ

T 0143 236 4901 • F 0143 236 4900 • E hereford@headlandarchaeology.com

South & East

Technology Centre, Stanbridge Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 4QH

T 01525 850 878 • E leighton.buzzard@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com