

Project Code: ANSI15

Date: Jan 2015

**Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological  
monitoring of groundworks for road upgrade at  
A96- Inveramsay Rail Bridge.**

Client: Atkins

Headland Archaeology Ltd

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Atkins (the client) have commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks in response to a planning condition on a programme of road upgrade to the A96 at Inveramsay Rail Bridge. The condition was placed by Aberdeenshire Council and is identified in Vol 3, Part 2, Section 4.4.4.7 of the Contract:

*...The archaeological contractor will be required to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief during the topsoil strip for the embankment.*

*The contractor shall ensure that the archaeological contractor carrying out the onsite watching brief during topsoil strip for the embankment is allowed sufficient time to carry out the work to the standards required by the Institute for Archaeologists.*

*The contractor will ensure that the archaeological contractor secures the approval of the Aberdeenshire Archaeological Officer at each stage of the archaeological works, including preparation of the WSI and post-excavation requirements...*

This method statement takes into account relevant IfA Standards and Guidance.

## 2. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The site extends to 1.45 km on the north and east side of the A96 at Inveramsay Rail Bridge (NGR: 373440, 825490). From the north, the Scheme commences on the existing A96 approximately 300 metres west of the bridge; the alignment then moves towards the River Urie before crossing the railway and running parallel to the existing road before rejoining the existing A96 just south of the junction with the U18C unclassified road.

The superficial geology of the area consists of made ground recorded at the existing bridge, along the railway and beneath the road embankment. Alluvial deposits comprising gravel, sand and silt river terrace deposits underlie organic and peaty silt and clay deposits in certain areas. This is recorded to a depth of between 0.4 and 1.45m. Areas of glacial till and glacio-fluvial deposits were also recorded across the site. The solid geology of the site comprises Dalradian age metasedimentary rocks of the Ordovician and Aberdeen formation era.

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Environmental Statement (URS 2013) identified no known heritage assets within the development boundary. The closest designated asset is a Scheduled Ancient Monument located approximately 700m to the southwest: a stone circle known as the Mains of Balquhain (reference no. 3961). The boundary of the Battle of Harlaw (fought on 24th July 1411) lies within 100m to the east of the development and has been identified on the Inventory of Battlefields as a site of national significance.

In the wider area, there is cropmark evidence for prehistoric activity while a large temporary Roman camp located to the northwest at Durno along with a Roman Road attest to significant activity in this period. The late 15<sup>th</sup> century Pitcaple Castle lies 1km west of the development site. The waterlogged nature of the site itself would not be attractive for settlement and therefore the archaeological potential is considered as low.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES**

In line with planning guidelines (NPPG 5) the main objective of the archaeological works is to preserve by record any archaeological remains exposed and threatened by the proposed works.

#### **5. METHOD**

##### *5.1 Archaeological monitoring*

Groundworks undertaken for the road construction will be carried out by an excavator fitted with toothless ditching bucket, under the direct supervision of a monitoring archaeologist. A ratio of 1 archaeologist per machine will be maintained.

If significant archaeological features, artefacts or deposits are encountered the monitoring archaeologist will halt machine excavation in the affected area. Sufficient time will be afforded for an appropriate amount of cleaning and recording of any exposed archaeological remains (typically 1 hour per feature).

##### *5.2 Complex or unexpected archaeological remains*

In the event that complex or unexpected deposits are encountered that would require significant stoppage time (for example, burials or medieval buildings), Headland will immediately contact the client and Aberdeenshire Archaeological Officer to agree an appropriate response. No works will be undertaken in the vicinity of such remains until a strategy is agreed.

##### *5.3 Recording*

All recording will follow IfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological monitoring. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples will be given unique numbers. All recording will be undertaken on pro forma record cards.

A plan of the development area in relation to the National Grid will be supplied by the client. Significant archaeological features will be recorded on this plan by use of hand measurements where appropriate. Where this is deemed inaccurate or inefficient significant features will be recorded by digital survey using a dGPS or total station and related to the National Grid. Where appropriate, sections through individual features will be drawn by hand at an appropriate scale and hand drawn plans of complex contexts, features and structures will be completed where required.

All archaeological features, structures and deposits will be digitally photographed and a graduated metric scale will be clearly visible. All photographs will be recorded by individual number and will include information on the contexts shown and direction taken.

A site diary will be maintained by the monitoring archaeologist and will include details of hours on site, liaison, meetings and site visits.

##### *5.4 Finds and sampling*

Any artefacts retrieved during the excavations will be catalogued and will be subject to standard Treasure Trove procedures. Small finds will be 3D located where appropriate. Bulk

finds will be collected by context. Finds will be processed and stored appropriately, according to established archaeological guidelines. Any organic artefacts that are retrieved during the excavation will be stored in appropriate conditions and assessed by a qualified archaeological conservator as a part of this contract. A finds assessment and report will be included in the data structure report.

Archaeological deposits will be sampled systematically in accordance with Headland Archaeology Ltd standard environmental sampling practice. Bulk samples, up to 40 litres if possible, will be taken for wet sieving and flotation. A representative proportion of these samples will be processed and analysed with the results included in the data structure report.

### *5.5 Reporting and archive*

On completion of the monitoring, Headland will produce a site archive and an archive report that includes all relevant specialist assessments of excavated material. An online OASIS report will be completed and will be accompanied by a pdf report and boundary file. A summary report will be submitted for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation Scotland.

Final report contents and format will be in line with IfA standards & guidance and curator requirements. Copies of the report will be sent to the client for onward transmission to the local planning authority. Draft technical reports if no remains of significance are identified will be submitted within 4 weeks of the completion of fieldwork. Draft extended reports, if significant remains are encountered (ie incorporating specialist assessment), will be submitted within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork.

The project archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines published by the Institute for Archaeologists on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (July 2007). The documentary and digital archive will be submitted to RCAHMS within six months of completion of all work on this project. All finds will be reported to the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel, which will determine the ultimate destination of the material archive. Once this is determined, and within three months, arrangements will be made with the specified museum for transfer of material and title.

### *5.6 Post-excavation analysis and publication*

Depending on the results of the monitoring, Aberdeenshire Archaeological Officer may deem further post-excavation analysis and publication of results necessary to fulfill the planning condition. If this is the case the data structure report will be accompanied by a proposal for any such further works.

## **6. SCHEDULE AND STAFFING**

Alistair Robertson will manage the work for Headland Archaeology. An experienced Archaeologist will carry out the archaeological monitoring. Any necessary assistants will be suitably qualified.

The work schedule is to be confirmed by the client.

## **7. LIAISON**

Headland Archaeology will maintain close contact with the client's representatives and all significant findings will be reported immediately. Aberdeenshire Archaeological Officer will be kept informed of progress and will be afforded access to the site for monitoring purposes; this will require prior arrangement with the main contractor.

Main contractors should receive a copy of this WSI in order to ensure that they are aware of the requirements of Aberdeenshire Archeological Officer.

## **8. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

A risk assessment will be prepared and be available to the client or main contractor for inspection. All Headland site workers will read both the risk assessment and this WSI.