



POW BURN RESTORATION, RIVER SOUTH ESK, ANGUS

Report on the results of a watching brief

for EnviroCentre

16/00522/FULL

September 2016

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NGR: NO 64901 57359

Parish: Farnell

Council: Angus

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Approved by: Kirsty Dingwall – Project Manager

Summary

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd carried out a programme of archaeological works for EnviroCentre at Farnell, Angus in order to satisfy a condition of development consent. The archaeological work was carried out from 30th to 31st August 2016. A watching brief was undertaken on all ground breaking works during the creation of two overflow channels from the Pow Burn. No archaeological remains were identified during the works.

Introduction

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned to carry out a programme of archaeological works associated with the construction of two overflow channels as part of the Pow Burn restoration (Illus 1). The work was undertaken to satisfy conditions set by Angus Council for an application for development by Esk River and Fisheries Trust (16/00522/FULL).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd (2016) detailing a programme of works, which was approved by the Archaeology Service for Angus Council prior to work commencing on site.

Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in 2015 (Headland Archaeology 2015) which established that there was prehistoric activity in the area in the form of cropmarks. Immediately to the west of the location of the overflow channels, on the far side of the Pow Burn, Powmouth Settlement (SM 6400) is a Scheduled Monument cropmark which is thought to be a small unenclosed settlement.

The survival of any subsurface remains is uncertain; extensive agricultural activity in the past may have truncated archaeology, equally its location in a floodplain may mean archaeological assets were deeply buried under alluvium and therefore more protected.

Objectives

The objectives of the watching brief were to record any remains revealed by the development works and report on the results. More specifically, the objectives were to;

- Establish the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas affected by the development.
- Ensure that any significant archaeological features or deposits are fully excavated, recorded and analysed.

Methodology

Two channels were being created to the east of the existing line of the Pow Burn, within Reach 5, to facilitate overflow in the future. All ground-breaking works involving stripping of subsurface remains undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket and under direct archaeological supervision. Excavation continued until the required depth had been reached. Natural subsoil was not seen uniformly across the development, but where natural subsoil was uncovered, the areas were cleaned by hand where necessary and investigated for archaeological features.

All recording was undertaken in accordance with ClfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological watching briefs (2014) and recording of contexts was undertaken on pro-forma record cards. Digital photographs were taken and recorded in a photographic register. A graduated metric scale was visible in record shots. The extent of the works and any features of interest were recorded using a dGPS unit, linked to National Grid co-ordinates.

Results (Illus 1)

Two channels were excavated on the south-eastern bank of the Pow Burn in Reach 5; Channel 4 to the south and Channel 5 to the north. Both channels had U-shaped profiles, which deepened slightly towards the middle of their length, allowing water to pool away from the Burn.

No archaeological features or finds were identified within either channel. A full list of contexts and photographs is provided in Appendix 1 and 2.

Channel 4

Channel 4 curved to the north-west around an area of mature trees, and measured approximately 60m in length and 6m in width (Illus 2). Where the channel met the burn, it was 1m deep, reaching up to 1.5m deep at the bend in the channel. The sequence of deposits across the excavated area was uniform, with 0.2m of silty topsoil (001) overlying 0.8m to 1m of silty-clay alluvium subsoil (002). Geological subsoil was encountered at 1.5m within the bend of the channel and was a yellowish-grey very slightly silty clay.

Channel 5

Channel 5 was located 32m to the north-east of Channel 4, and ran along the edge of a ploughed field (Illus 3). Channel 5 was straighter than Channel 4, but also turned to the northwest. It had a total length of around 68m and a width of approximately 5m. As with Channel 4, the depth was around 1m where it met the Pow Burn, deepening to 1.5m in the centre of the straight section. The sequence of deposits comprised an upper layer of silty-clay plough soil (003) 0.6m thick overlying a silty alluvium subsoil (004) up to 0.7m thick. Geological subsoil was revealed at the base of the north-east bend of the channel, 1.1m from the surface and was a yellowish-grey slightly silty clay similar to that in Channel 4.

Discussion

No archaeological assets was impacted upon during the construction of the two channels. Generally, the depth of the channels meant that geological subsoil was not reached, so archaeological features or deposits may be present in the vicinity below the alluvial deposits. The watching brief effectively mitigated the impact of the creation of the two channels.

References

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*.

Headland Archaeology Ltd 2015 *Pow Burn Restoration, River South Esk, Angus: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Unpublished Client Report.

Headland Archaeology Ltd 2016 *Pow Burn Restoration, River South Esk: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished Client Report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Register

Context Number	Area	Description
001	Channel 4	Topsoil within Channel 4
002	Channel 4	Alluvium subsoil within Channel 4
003	Channel 5	Plough soil within Channel 5
004	Channel 5	Alluvium subsoil within Channel 5

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Photograph Number	Direction Facing	Description
001	N	Pre-stripping of Channel 4
002	N	Area cleared of vegetation for Channel 4
003	N	Area cleared of vegetation for Channel 4
004	NE	Beginning of stripping at north end of Channel 4
005	S	First strip of Channel 4
006	N	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
007	SW	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
008	SW	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
009	S	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
010	SE	Modern land drain through alluvium in Channel 4
011	SE	Modern land drain through alluvium in Channel 4
012	SE	Modern land drain through alluvium in Channel 4
013	SW	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
014	SW	Mid-excavation of Channel 4
015	N	End of stripping at south end of Channel 4
016	SW	Soil profile within Channel 4
017	SW	Soil profile within Channel 4
018	NE	Complete excavation of Channel 4
019	NE	Complete excavation of Channel 4
020	NE	Complete excavation of Channel 4
021	NE	Complete excavation of Channel 4
022	N	Complete excavation of Channel 4
023	N	Complete excavation of Channel 4
024	E	Complete excavation of Channel 4
025	NW	Complete excavation of Channel 4
026	N	Complete excavation of Channel 4
027	NE	Start of stripping for Channel 5
028	NE	Removal of vegetation and laying out route of Channel 5
029	S	Mid excavation of Channel 5
030	SW	Mid excavation of Channel 5
031	E	Mid excavation of Channel 5
032	NE	Mid excavation of Channel 5
033	SW	Mid excavation of Channel 5
034	W	Complete excavation of Channel 4

035	W	Complete excavation of Channel 4
036	NE	Complete excavation of Channel 5
037	S	Complete excavation of Channel 5
038	W	Complete excavation of Channel 5
039	W	Complete excavation of Channel 5
040	NW	Complete excavation of Channel 5
041	NNW	Complete excavation of Channel 5
042	W	Complete excavation of Channel 5
043	S	Straight strip of Channel 5 (completed excavation)
044	E	Complete excavation of Channel 5
045	NW	Complete excavation of Channel 5

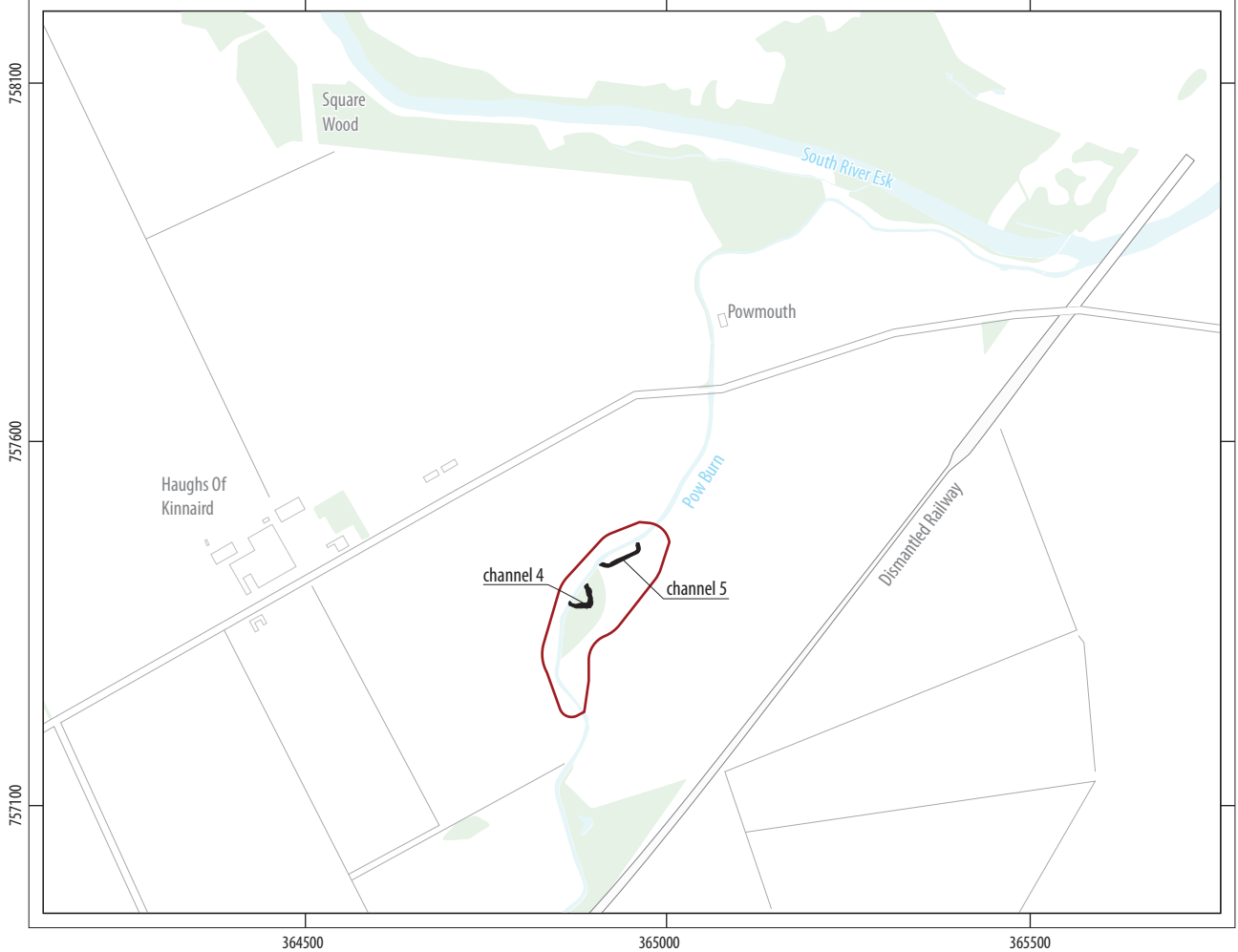
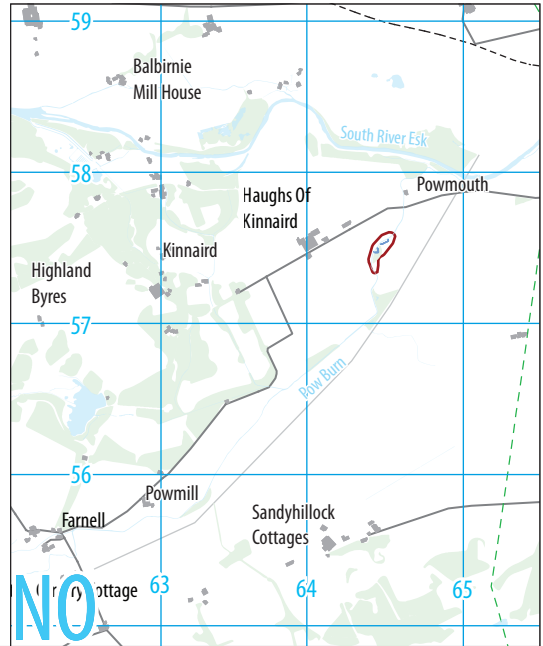
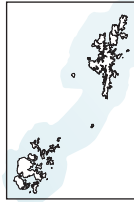
Appendix 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Pow Burn Restoration, River South Esk
PROJECT CODE:	PRSE15
PARISH:	Farnell
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Suzanne McGalliard
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	-
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	-
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	-
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 64901 57359
START DATE (this season)	30/08/2016
END DATE (this season)	31/08/2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	-
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook a watching brief to monitor the construction of two overflow channels on the south-eastern side of the Pow Burn. The works only revealed natural geology over small portions of the channels, but no archaeological features were identified during the works.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	-
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	RCHAMS
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	EnviroCentre
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	-
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Headland Archaeology, 13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE
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PRSE/03
 Pow Burn Restoration
 River South Esk
 Farnell
 Angus

0 200km
 1:10,000,000 @ A4

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0 20m
 1:1,000 @ A4

KEY
 [Red outline] Reach 5 boundary
 [Black line] channel

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ILLUS 2 Channel 4 facing east **ILLUS 3** Channel 5 facing north-east