

LBT04

**Laigh Braehead, Thorntonhall
East Renfrewshire:**

A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological
Excavation and Other Works

Client: Cala Homes (West) Ltd

16th February 2004

Laigh Braehead, Thorntonhall, East Renfrewshire: A Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation

1. INTRODUCTION

Cala Homes (West) Ltd have received planning consent for a residential housing development at Laigh Braehead, Thorntonhall, East Renfrewshire. A programme of archaeological work to ensure that any archaeological issues are properly dealt with was considered necessary by West of Scotland Archaeology Service who are advising East Renfrewshire Council as Local Planning Authority. A negative suspensive condition was, therefore, attached to the planning consent.

An initial evaluation was the first stage in this programme of works and was undertaken in January 2004 (Headland Archaeology 2004). The evaluation identified a probable cremation urn burial at the N end of the site located on the top of a distinct knoll. Trenching around the burial, which comprised a small pit containing a plough-damaged urn, indicated that the burial was isolated and was not contained within a ditched enclosure or cemetery. No other features were identified within the rest of the development which comprised three fields currently in use as pasture. The SE corner of the development was not available for intrusive investigation due to the presence of both overhead and underground live services. The farm buildings also occupying this part of the site were also in use and not investigated during the initial evaluation.

It has not proved possible to preserve the knoll within the proposed development and outline proposals for mitigation were therefore set out in the evaluation report. The scope of the further archaeological work required as mitigation has since been discussed with Dr Carol Swanson, West of Scotland Archaeology Service. In summary, the further works comprise the following:

- Topsoil stripping of the knoll and excavation of all features exposed
- More detailed desk-based research on the Laraghbeg farmstead
- Rapid assessment of the Laraghbeg farm buildings
- More detailed recording of the farm buildings and below ground deposits should the farmstead be found to predate the mid to late 18th C.
- Monitoring of ground disturbance in the area where live services prevented trenching during the initial evaluation
- Analysis and reporting of the results of any further work
- Archiving of the project records and finds

This document is submitted by Headland Archaeology Ltd, on behalf of the developer Cala Homes (West) Ltd, as a Written Scheme of Investigation for the further archaeological works required in light of the results of the evaluation and in accordance with the planning condition. The WSI is submitted to WoSAS for approval prior to any development or further archaeological work being undertaken. The further works, including any analysis and reporting requirements, are being funded by Cala Homes (West) Ltd.

2. METHODOLOGY

LARAGHBEG FARMSTEAD

The Laraghbeg farmstead is to be demolished prior to the redevelopment of the site. Further works are required to determine the date of origin and development of the farmstead. The works will be staged with a review of the documentary sources and a rapid buildings assessment being undertaken first. Should the results suggest a pre-mid-to-late 18th C date for any of the farm buildings, the works may progress to a second stage of more detailed building recording in tandem with a fuller investigation of associated below ground deposits.

The initial data gathering exercise will focus on the Laraghbeg farmstead, the results of which will inform the building assessment in the field. Sources to be consulted will include information held by the National Map Library and Scottish Records Office. The buildings assessment will largely comprise an EDM and (digital) photographic survey.

A report will be prepared on the results of this initial stage of assessment and should the results necessitate further work, a method statement for those works will be submitted to WoSAS for approval prior to any further archaeological works or development commencing.

TOPSOIL STRIPPING OF THE KNOLL

The cremation burial (still to be excavated) was found on the crest of a knoll at the N end of the development. Trenching around the burial suggests this is an isolated burial with no evidence for other burials or an enclosing ditch. The ground falls away quickly from the burial spot to the S and is bounded by the boundaries of the development to the N. This leaves an area c 50 x 30m that may contain more burials or other features.

Topsoil stripping will be undertaken by a 360° tracked excavator which will be equipped with a toothless bucket. Topsoil and overburden will be stripped under direct archaeological supervision down to the uppermost archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying subsoil whichever is encountered first. Once the full area has been stripped, it will be hand cleaned as appropriate. Once all potential archaeological features have been identified, the additional resources required to fully record and excavate all exposed features will be secured. The monitoring of the initial stripping will be undertaken by a team of a Supervisor and one Assistant.

MONITORING OF GROUND DISTURBANCE IN THE AREA OF LIVE SERVICES

The SE part of the development was unavailable during the initial evaluation due to the presence of both overhead and underground live services. After these services have been disconnected, ground disturbance in this area will be monitored as a watching brief. The timetable for this will be discussed with Cala Homes but is likely to be some way off

RECORDING

Headland Archaeology Ltd uses the Museum of London Recording Manual, copies of which will be available for consultation on site. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples will be given

unique numbers. Bulk finds will be collected by context. Colour transparencies and black and white photographs will be taken. An overall site plan will be recorded at an appropriate scale, with 1:20 plans of any individual features identified. Sections/elevations will be drawn at 1:10. Small finds will be 3D plotted where appropriate. All recording will be undertaken *on pro forma* record cards. Survey recording will be related to the National Grid.

Recording of Burials

The cremation burial encountered in the evaluation was accurately located and left in situ. It had clearly been plough damaged with the base of the urn broken and displaced. Plough soil has therefore accumulated within the upturned urn. There is no benefit, therefore, in block lifting this urn. Instead, the fill of the pit within which the urn is placed will be half-sectioned around the urn in order to assess the condition of the urn itself and the nature and complexity of the fills. Soil samples will be taken from regular spits as a control. The section through the pit will then be drawn at 1:10. The fills in the remaining half of the pit will be sampled and excavated guided by the information derived from the section. The urn will then be removed and soil samples taken from below the urn.

Other burials may be encountered. If so, each burial will be individually assessed and an excavation strategy implemented. This may comprise block-lifting if considered appropriate.

SAMPLES AND ARTEFACTS

Archaeological deposits will be sampled systematically in accordance with Headland Archaeology Ltd standard environmental sampling practice. Bulk samples, a minimum of 10 litres but up to 30 litres if possible, will be taken if appropriate for wet sieving and flotation. Bulk samples will be taken from any waterlogged deposits present for assessment of organic remains. Any artefacts that are retrieved during the excavation will be stored in appropriate conditions and assessed by a qualified archaeological conservator as part of this contract.

3. REPORTING

A Data Structure Report will be submitted to the client within one month of the completion of the fieldwork and subsequently to West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Should significant archaeological remains be encountered, the Data Structure Report will contain proposals for more detailed analysis and reporting considered necessary to satisfy the planning condition. Two copies of the report, plus a digital version, will be submitted to West of Scotland Archaeology Service. The Data Structure Report will include the following:

- An 8-figure grid reference and site location plan
- A concise, non-technical summary of the results.
- A description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and outline of the results obtained.
- Such mapped information considered necessary to enhance the clarity of the report
- Recommendations for any further work considered necessary.
- Plans and sections at an appropriate scale showing the location and position of deposits and finds located.

- A list of, and dates for, any finds recovered and a description and interpretation of the deposits identified.
- A description of any environmental or other specialist work undertaken and the results obtained.

A summary report will also be submitted to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland on completion of all fieldwork.

4. ARCHIVING

On completion of all archaeological work, the archive will be prepared for submission to The National Monuments Record of Scotland. Any finds will be submitted to the Treasure Trove Panel.

5. RESOURCES AND TIMETABLE

The project will be managed for Headland Archaeology by Russel Coleman who will liaise with the client, and their agents, and West of Scotland Archaeology Service. The initial topsoil stripping of the knoll will be undertaken by a Supervisor and one Site Assistant over a three day period. Once the area has been stripped more staff will be added to deal with features exposed. Unless other burials come to light, the work will take one week to complete including topsoil stripping. The Project Supervisor will be Liz Jones who undertook the initial assessment. Liz will be on-site from Monday 23rd February and in her absence Kelly Clapperton will monitor the initial topsoil strip. The proposed start date for the stripping is Wednesday 18th February 2004. The buildings assessment will be undertaken during the week beginning 23rd February 2004.

Palaeoenvironmental aspects of the project will be assessed by Dr Tim Holden and Dr Stephen Carter who will be available to advise on-site if required. Sample processing, if appropriate, will be undertaken by experienced technicians, under the supervision of Dr Holden. Coleman, Carter and Holden are full members of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists*. Headland Archaeology Ltd abides by the Codes of Conduct of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists* of which it is a Registered Organisation (RAO 40). The company has all the necessary technical and personnel resources for the satisfactory completion of the investigation.

Headland Archaeology Ltd is fully indemnified and all necessary insurances can be presented on request. All of Headland's work is undertaken in accordance with current H&S legislation. A risk assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork.