

Norrieston Church, Thornhill, Stirling Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

AOC 23418

OASIS No: aocarcha1 - 254491

12th May 2016



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Norrieston Church, Thornhill, Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Stirling Council,
Regeneration and Development,
Allan Water House,
Kerse Road
Stirling
FK7 7SG

National Grid Reference (NGR): NN 66998 0008 (centre)

AOC Project No: 23418

Planning Application No. N/A

OASIS No. 254491

Prepared by: Stuart Wilson

Date of Fieldwork: 10th – 11th May 2016

Date of Report: 12th May 2016

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Approved by: Martin Cook **Date:** 12th May 2016
Draft/Final Report Stage: Draft **Date:** 12th May 2016

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was required by Stirling Council with respect to the replacement of a utility trench running through the grounds of Norrieston Church, Thornhill Stirling.

The line of the new utility trench ran through an area between the cemetery and main church building, an area considered to be on the boundary of the land on which the previous church stood.

The primary objective of the archaeological works was to ensure the survival and if necessary the retrieval of any human remains that would be encountered throughout the excavations.

No significant archaeological features were discovered with only a small number of modern white ceramic shards recovered and a single fragment of human disarticulated bone

No further works are considered necessary within the development area. This recommendation requires the approval of the Stirling Council Planning Officer (Archaeology).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Stirling Council to conduct an archaeological watching brief with regards to a replacement utility trench running through the grounds of Norrieston church. The proposed development lies within the administrative area of Stirling Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Dr. Murray Cook, Stirling Council's Archaeologist. A programme of archaeological works was specified by Dr Cook in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning And Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The utility trench is located immediately west of Norrieston Church, on Main Street, the A873 and is centred on NGR: NN 66998 00008 (Figure 1).

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 There is no pre-Post-Medieval archaeology known in the immediate area. Norrieston Church marks the eastern boundary of Thornhill. The village dates from the 17th century and is an early example of a feudal village (Stirling Council, 2012:5)



Figure 2- John Adair, A Mape of the countries about Stirling, 1685



Figure 3- William Roy, Military Map of Scotland, Highland, 1747-52

1.3.2 There has been a church at Norrieston since the 17th century; Adair 1685 records one in the vicinity in 1685 (Figure 2). A *Kirk of Nouiston* is recorded by Roy in 1747-52 (Figure 3) and early 18th century

gravestones have been recorded in the graveyard suggesting that the church has 18th century origins. The Ordnance Survey notes a Church and *Chapel at Ease* on the site in 1866 (Figure 2). This map suggests that the church boundary extends further west than it does today (Figure 2). The current Norrieston Church dates from 1878 and is attributed William Simpson, it can be seen in Ordnance Surveys from 1901 in its modern form with its modern boundary (Figure 3). Due to the changes seen between cartography in 1866 and 1901, there is a high possibility that an earlier church boundary and possibly human remains will be encountered during the opening of the utility trench if they have not previously been disturbed during the laying of the original cable.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- i) to safeguard the archaeological resource from any adverse impacts created by groundworks associated with the development;
 - ii) to liaise with Stirling Council and the client in the event of significant archaeological features and/or small finds being unearthed as to the most appropriate response in safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording;
 - iii) to report on the results of the watching brief.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 The archaeological works were undertaken on 10th – 11th May 2016. Weather conditions were very good allowing for excellent visibility
- 3.2 The excavations were carried out by a 360° tracked mini digger using a toothless bucket. The track dug out measured approximately 0.36 m wide and varied in depth from 0.36 m – 0.40 m when running adjacent to the church and 0.50 m – 0.60 m at the grassy area to the south of the church.
- 3.3 When running adjacent to the church the excavations revealed a thin layer of gravel over degraded tarmac which came down onto subsoil consisting of light brown sandy gravel (Plate 1). The excavations at the grassy area at the southern boundary of the church revealed topsoil 0.42 m deep overlying a deposit of gray moderately compacted clay 0.13 m deep before coming down onto the same light brown sandy gravel subsoil mentioned previously. The foundations of the southern boundary wall for the existing church were revealed during these excavations (Plate 2).
- 3.4 No archaeological features were encountered at any point during the excavations and only a single piece of human bone, a fragment of a long bone, was recovered from the topsoil. The bone was recorded before being reburied. A number of modern pottery fragments were also identified in the topsoil but were not recovered.



Plate 1: Cable track running adjacent to church.



Plate 2: Cable track through grassy area at southern boundary

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 No further archaeological works are deemed necessary within the development area. This recommendation will require the approval of the Planning Officer (Archaeology) for Stirling Council.

6 REFERENCES

Scottish Planning Policy SPP23. *Archaeology and Planning*. Scottish Government 2014.

Scottish Government 2011 *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011*

Stirling Council, 2012. Thornhill-Character Appraisal. Available at:-
http://www.stirling.gov.uk/__documents/temporary-uploads/economy,-planning-_and_-regulation/con-area-appraisals-2012/thornhill-ca-appraisal.pdf (Accessed on 20/04/2016)

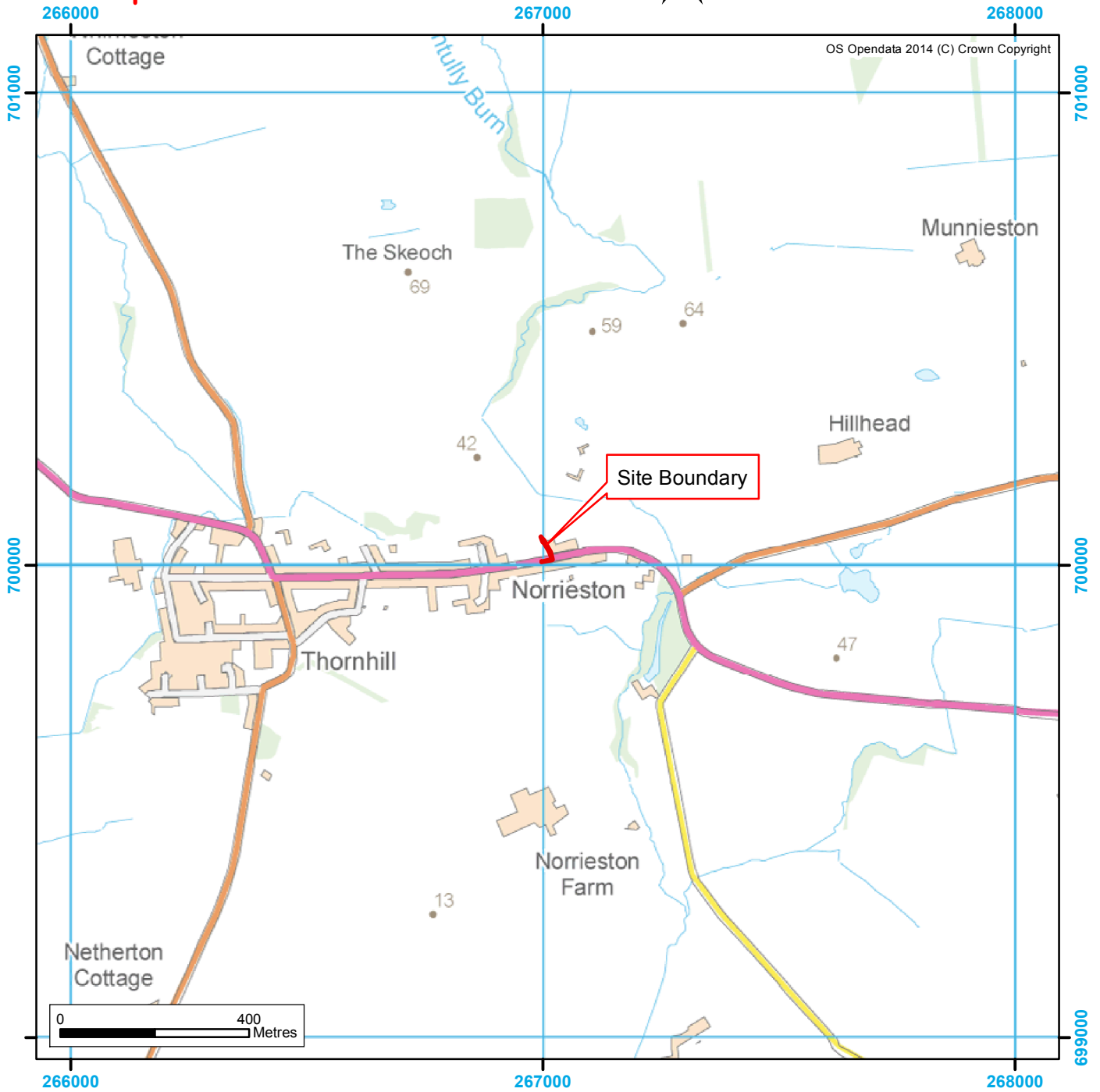
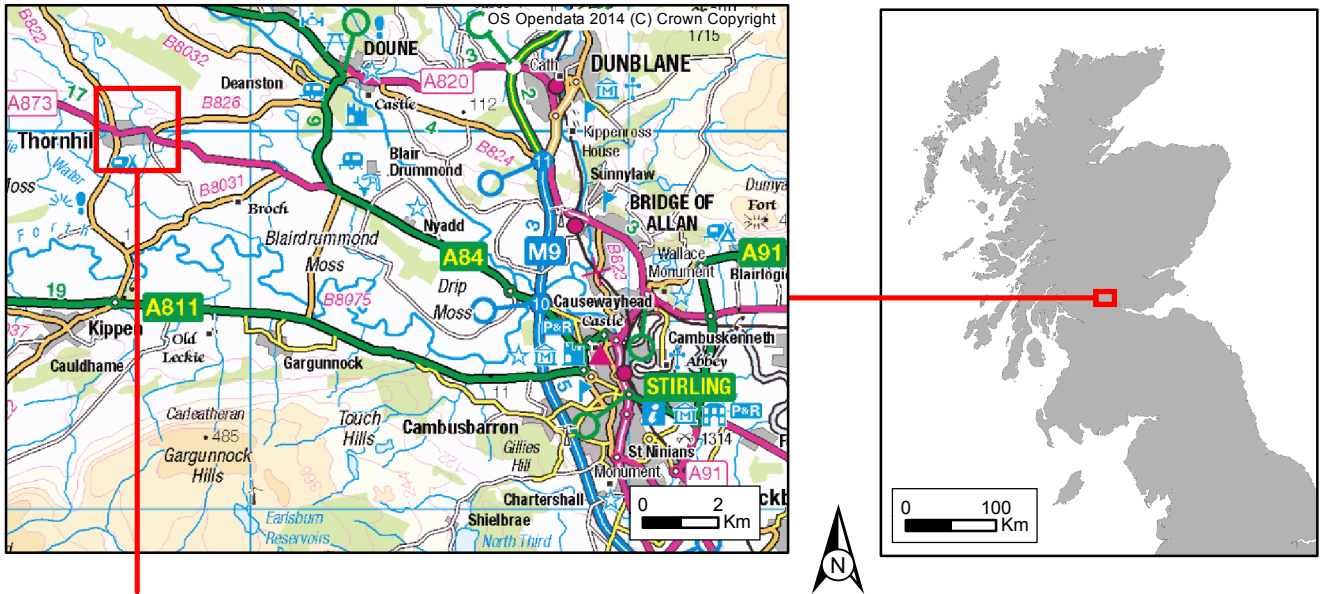


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Norrieston Church, Thornhill, Stirling

Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report

Section 2: Appendices

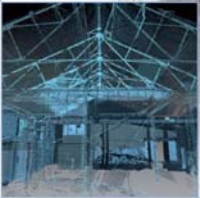
APPENDIX 1: Photographic Record

Digital Photographs

No.	Description	Taken From
1	New cable trench	SE
2	New cable trench	S
3	Stripping of turf adjacent to southern boundary wall	SE
4	Foundations of southern boundary wall	N
5	Foundations of southern boundary wall	N
6	Foundations of southern boundary wall	N
7	Foundations of southern boundary wall	NE
8	Track running north towards church	S
9	Track running north towards church	S
10	Foundations of southern boundary wall with 2 m ranging rod	N
11	Close up of foundations of southern boundary wall	S
12	Continuation of concrete foundations for wall in cemetery	S
13	Continuation of concrete foundations for wall in cemetery	NW
14	Bone fragments retrieved from topsoil	N/A
15	Bone fragments retrieved from topsoil	N/A

APPENDIX 2: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Stirling Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Norrieston Church
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 23418
PARISH:	Thornhill
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Stuart Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S)	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NN 66998 00008
START DATE (this season)	10 th May 2016
END DATE (this season)	11 th May 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was required by Stirling Council with respect to the replacement of a utility trench running through the grounds of Norrieston Church, Thornhill Stirling.</i></p> <p><i>The line of the new utility trench ran through an area between the cemetery and main church building, an area considered to be on the boundary of the land on which the previous church stood.</i></p> <p><i>The primary objective of the archaeological works was to ensure the survival and if necessary the retrieval of any human remains that would be encountered throughout the excavations.</i></p> <p><i>No significant archaeological features were discovered with only a small number of modern white ceramic shards recovered and a single fragment of disarticulated human bone</i></p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	---
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