

Kindrochit Castle  
Braemar  
Aberdeenshire  
Second Interim Report on Watching Brief

BM02



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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

**SITE NAME**

**LOCATION**

**SITE CODE**

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*Illustration 1: Site location plan*

*Illustration 2: Location of signpost base pits and courtyard*

*Fig 1: Pit 1, post-excavation, view NE*

*Fig 2: Pit 2, post-excavation, view NE*

*Fig 3: Pit 3, post-excavation, view E*

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## ***ABSTRACT***

*North-East Scotland Preservation Trust commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief and mitigation work on the site of consolidation works at Kindrochit Castle, Braemar. The castle, in ruinous condition, is a scheduled ancient monument (HS No 2583), centred on NGR NO 1512 9134. The work (site code BM02) was undertaken on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 in fine weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor de-turfing of a courtyard area and to hand-excavate three small pits to serve as the bases of information stands within the castle.*

*The work was the concluding part of an ongoing watching brief on consolidation work on the surviving castle superstructure.*

*No archaeological remains were encountered during the work.*

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

North-East Scotland Preservation Trust commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief and mitigation work on the site of consolidation works at Kindrochit Castle, Braemar. The castle, in ruinous condition, is a scheduled ancient monument (HS No 2583), centred on NGR NO 1512 9134. The work (site code BM02) was undertaken on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 in fine weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor de-turfing of a courtyard area and to hand-excavate three small pits to serve as the bases of information stands within the castle.

The work was the concluding part of an ongoing watching brief on consolidation work on the surviving castle superstructure.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area being monitored and to minimise disturbance to subterranean remains caused by the necessary insertion of information posts into the castle grounds.

### **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as an interim report on this watching brief. A final report on all aspects of work on the castle, incorporating previous evaluation and excavation reports, will all incorporate this report. Copies will be sent to the client, Historic Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record.

### **1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues**

This monitoring and mitigation work is the final part of a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development in consultation with Historic Scotland.

### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Bruce Mann and Claire Herbert of Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology, Paul Rutherford and Oliver Lewis of Historic Scotland and Stewart Urquhart of Urquhart Stonemasons for their assistance and guidance throughout this project.

## **2 Details of Work**

### **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

Kindrochit Castle is a Scheduled Monument (HS Ref No 2583), located at NGR NO 1512 9134, adjacent to the public car park and toilets in the centre of Braemar, Aberdeenshire.

The site comprises the fragmentary remains of the Castle, a late 14th century tower house incorporating earlier work. The castle occupies a strong defensive location and is

protected by the Water of Clunie to the W and by an ancient mill lade to the E. Its location had considerable strategic value, overlooking a major crossing of the Clunie.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

Previous archaeological work by Alder on the site, in conjunction with consolidation work, had exposed a number of previously unknown features, including walls and wall stubs and deposits resulting from demolition during the medieval or immediately post-medieval period in the vicinity of the courtyard area. Consolidation work had hitherto concentrated on making safe above-ground structures, but an area of courtyard remained buried beneath spoil partly resulting from excavations conducted during the twentieth century by Dr W.D. Simpson (1923, 1928, 1949). This spoil was to be removed during present work. At the same time, small rectangular pits were also to be dug at three locations within the castle, to receive the bases of information posts. Any or all of these operations might result in archaeological remains or deposits being disturbed or exposed.

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

The courtyard area was stripped of turf by hand and a sheet of geotextile material laid down before the ground was levelled by re-depositing spoil. This work was closely monitored by an archaeologist. Each of the three signpost pits was hand-dug by the archaeologist and recorded photographically.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

A ridge of bedrock was exposed on an southwest-northeast alignment within the southwest corner of the courtyard. No archaeological remains were exposed or disturbed during this phase of work.

Pit 1 (P1) was located within the courtyard 2m west of Wall Face 25 (see Illus 2) and measured 0.5m x 0.6m (E-W), 0.25m deep. P1 descended through turf into loose, re-deposited spoil containing c.30% sub-angular stones and stone fragments.

Pit 2 (P2) was located within the north-east corner of the Phase 1 remains (see Illus 2), measured 0.5m x 0.5m, 0.2m deep, and descended through recently-deposited gravel and geotextile into undisturbed yellow-orange stony subsoil.

Pit 3 (P3) was located within the south-east corner of the Phase 1 remains, 1m from the apex (see Illus 2) and measured 0.6m x 0.4m (N-S), 0.2m deep, descending through recently-laid gravel and geotextile into moderately compact brownish-grey silt, c.10% pebbles.

No archaeological finds or remains were exposed during the excavation of the pits.



Fig 1: Pit 1, post-excavation, view NE



Fig 2: Pit 2, post-excavation, view NE



Fig 3: Pit 3, post-excavation, view E

### **3 Interpretation**

No archaeological remains were encountered, suggesting the courtyard area had been previously stripped of relict ground surfaces or other deposits of archaeological significance during earlier phases of work on the site, most probably Simpson's excavations. The three signpost bases were found to descend through either re-deposited spoil or undisturbed natural subsoil and contained no archaeological material.

### **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Alder considers this phase of work to have been successfully implemented and does not recommend further work on the site. However, the final decision ultimately rests jointly with Historic Scotland and Bruce Mann, the Aberdeenshire area Archaeologist.

## Photographic Register

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
0009-10	Working shot, spreading geotextile within courtyard area	NNW
0011-14	WF52, post-removal of spoil	ENE
0015-19	WF52	SSW
0020	Working shot, dumper	SSW
0021-24	Location shot, WF52	SSW
0025-26	Location shot, WF52	E
0027-30	WF25, with post-spoil removal (geotextile in place)	ENE
0031-32	Working shot, raking spoil over geotextile	SW
0033-36	WF51, under geotextile	ENE
0037-39	Location shot, Pit 1, within geotextile	N
0040-43	Pit 1, post-excavation	WNW
0044-47	Pit 1, post-excavation	ENE
0048	Location shot, Pit 1	ENE
0049-56	Pit 2, post-excavation	ENE
0057-58	Subsoil in Pit 2	ENE
0059-61	Location shot, Pit 2	N
0062-65	Location shot, Pit 3	E
0066-69	Pit 3, post-excavation	E
0070-72	Location shot, SW corner of courtyard, pre-topsoil strip	SW
0073-74	Working shot, topsoil strip	SW
0075-80	Bedrock ridge within newly-stripped area of courtyard	WSW
0081-82	Bedrock ridge within newly-stripped area of courtyard	SE



## Appendix 1 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	Location of pits 1-3	1:50

## Appendix 2 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

### 2.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

### 2.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

### 2.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

### 2.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

### 2.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

### 2.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

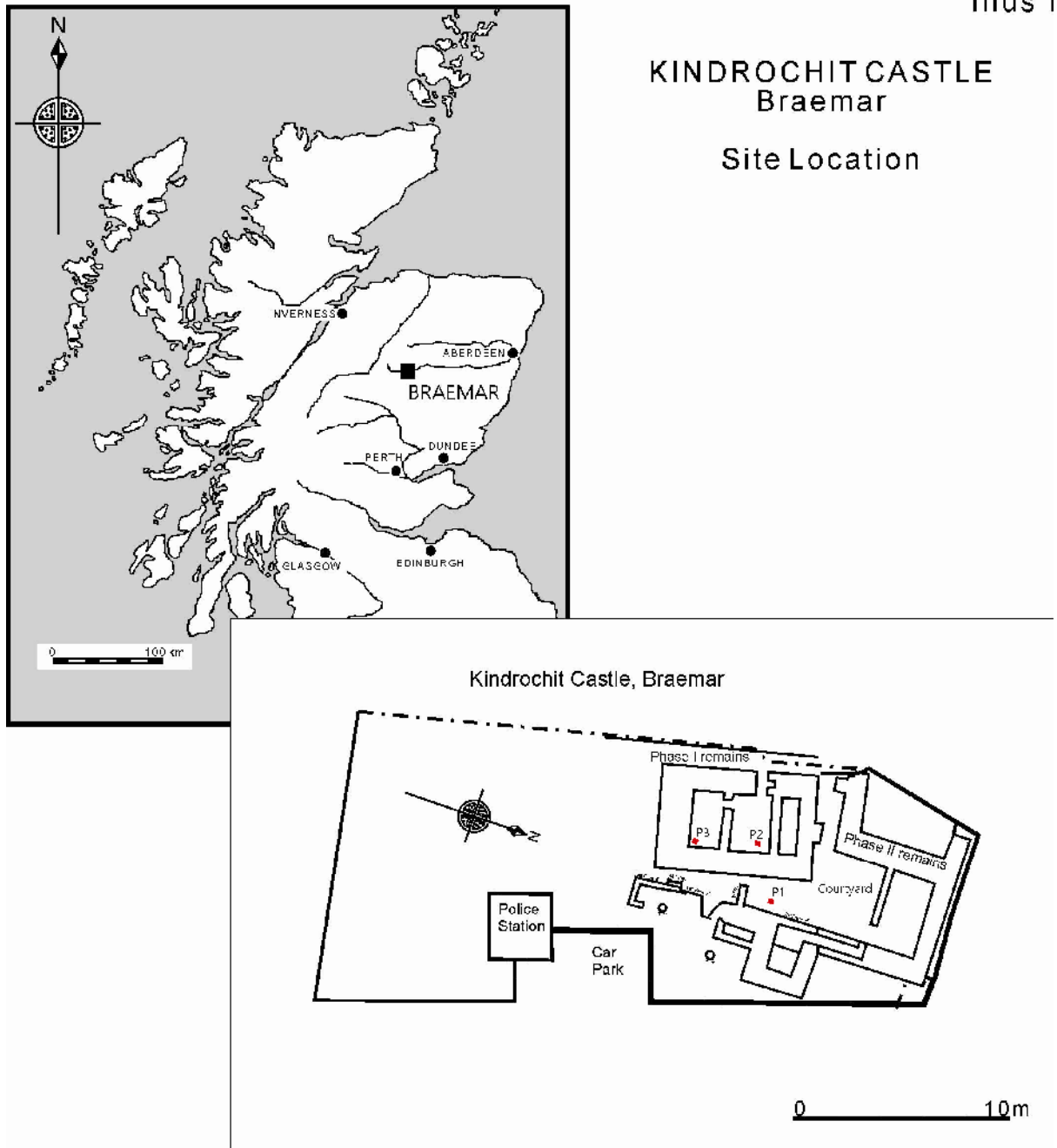
Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy that conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertake Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

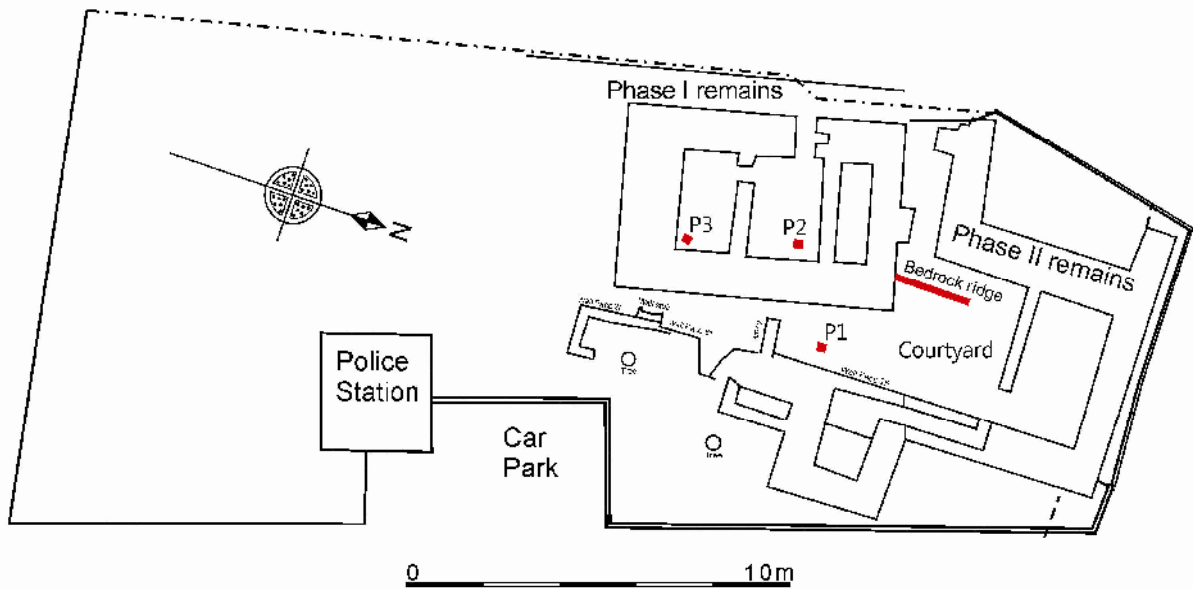
If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.

Illus 1



Illus 2

Location of signpost base pits and courtyard



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