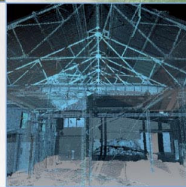
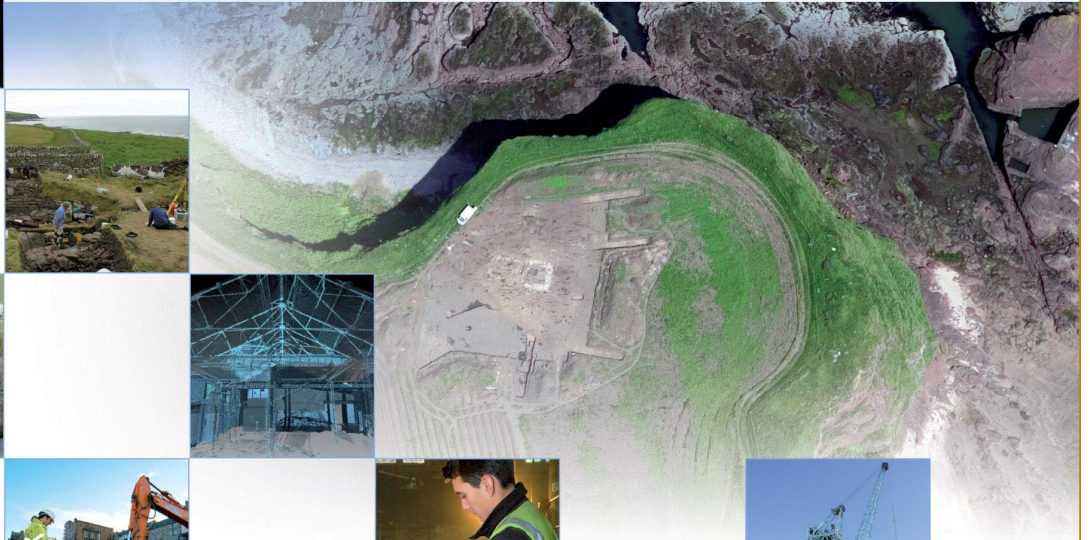
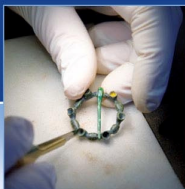


East Beechwood Farm, Inverness Post Excavation Research Design

AOC 21902
September 2011



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

East Beechwood Farm, Inverness Post Excavation Research Design

For:	Turner & Townsend
On Behalf of:	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NH 6903 4506
AOC Project No:	21902
Prepared by:	Ciara Clarke
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Abstract

The recent excavations at East Beechwood Farm, Inverness revealed numerous features of archaeological significance including several Bronze Age / Iron Age roundhouse and enclosure structures together with evidence of Neolithic activity.

Substantial structures recorded include twelve post-ring roundhouses, three rectilinear post structures and three four-posters. In addition a palisade, numerous pit groupings and isolated pits and postholes were recorded. The finds assemblage comprises Later Neolithic to Iron Age ceramics, evidence of later prehistoric metal-working along with saddle-queren fragments and other coarse stone artefacts. Bulk soil samples were taken from selected depositional contexts for the retrieval of artefactual and ecofactual material.

This excavation has added an important site to the archaeological record of the Inverness area. The evidence recovered provides a valuable opportunity to augment our current understanding about the nature, date and extent of prehistoric settlement in the region.

This post excavation research design sets out the research agenda and proposed programme of works for detailed analysis through to reporting and publication that will maximise the archaeological information potential of the site in the most efficient and cost effective way.

Introduction

A programme of archaeological works was required in advance of a proposed mixed-use development at East Beechwood Farm, Inverness. The work was instructed by Turner & Townsend on behalf of Highlands & Islands Enterprise. The scope and scale of the archaeological works was specified by Highland Council Heritage Environment Team (HCHET) in line with *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) and *Planning & Archaeology 2/2011* (2011).

The field work was carried out between April and June 2011 according to the terms of a Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2010) which was agreed by HCHET. A Post Excavation Research Design (PERD) is a requirement of the archaeological programme of works should the features and finds recovered during excavation be of archaeological significance. Given the range of features recorded during fieldwork, and the finds assemblage recovered, a programme of post excavation has been requested. This PERD sets out a research agenda for the site and outlines a proposed programme of works to analyse the data and disseminate the findings in an efficient and cost effective manner to both the academic and public domains.

This document lays out proposals for the analysis of samples and finds and the integration of these results with the excavated evidence, to produce a final report for dissemination.

The works will be funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Summary of previous works

Full details of the evaluation phases can be found in AOC (2009) and AOC (2010).

Full details of the excavation can be found AOC (2011).

Overall the archaeological works to date have revealed the remains of a multiphased landscape dating from the Neolithic to the Iron Age.

The archaeological excavation was undertaken between April and June 2011. Twenty three discrete areas were topsoil stripped revealing a total of nineteen substantial structures. Twelve post ring structures, three rectilinear post structures, a palisade and three four-poster structures were excavated and sampled. In addition numerous pit groupings and isolated pits and post holes were recorded and sampled. The finds assemblage comprises later Neolithic and Iron Age ceramics, residual evidence of metal working, saddle quern fragments and other coarse stone artefacts.

Strategy

The excavation has unearthed an important dataset relating to settlement and activity in the area from the end of the 4th millennium BC, providing an opportunity to augment our current understanding of prehistoric activity in the Beechwood area. Initial interpretation indicates that the excavated remains are multi-period and are also potentially multi-phase. The overall post-excavation strategy is designed to resolve the issues presented within the excavation Data Structure Report (AOC 2011), namely to investigate the development, chronology and functions of the excavated features and deposits and to place them in their local and national contexts.

Knowledge on previous prehistoric activity in the area will be consolidated through a programme of documentary research. Together with detailed finds and environmental analysis these results will be integrated with the stratigraphic and structural information culminating in a final report which discusses results of the excavations at both local and national levels. The final report will be formatted for publication according to the specifications of the recipient journal, likely PSAS (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland*) or Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports (SAIR).

Post excavation analyses will comprise five main elements:

1. Sample processing

2. Artefact and ecofact analysis
3. Radiocarbon dating
4. Research
5. Reporting and dissemination

A single phase post excavation programme is considered appropriate to the structures recorded during fieldwork, and the associated finds assemblage.

Post Excavation Analysis

The Post Excavation programme will be commensurate with MAP 2 (English Heritage 1991). An assessment phase is not considered necessary.

The Post Excavation programme will specifically address the following

Chronology: Processing will release any remaining artefacts and ecofacts concealed within the samples. The potential for dating contexts by artefact typology, or for obtaining radiocarbon determinations from organic remains will be exploited towards elucidating the chronology of the site.

Relationships between features; function and use: On completion of sample processing the distribution and character of artefacts and ecofacts across the excavated areas can be determined. The potential for establishing relationships between various suites of features and in illuminating on-site activities will be explored. Specialist analysis of the various categories ie ceramics, daub, metal and metal working residues, lithics and stone artefacts, charred plant remains and charcoal, will be undertaken as part of the programme. Analysis of artefacts and ecofacts will be applied to interpreting the use and function of features.

Contribution to local and regional research: There is a growing body of evidence of prehistoric activity in the Inverness area eg (Cressey & Anderson 2011; Murray 2006; Cressey & Sheridan 2003; Cressey & Strachan 2003; Wordsworth 1999; Simpson 1996). Other primary sources or documents that may enhance the study of site data should also be identified. As part of the post excavation programme this evidence will be reviewed enabling the new evidence from Beechwood to be fully integrated within local and national research frameworks.

Post-excavation tasks

The following tasks will be employed during the post excavation programme.

Sample processing

Bulk soil samples were taken from over 800 contexts during the excavation in accordance with standard AOC sampling strategy. A sub-selection of these samples will be processed. The selection will be tailored to provide good geographical coverage across the site. To this end samples from each of the archaeologically productive discrete areas (23 excavated areas) will be processed. Beyond this the selection will focus on the nineteen structural features identified during excavation, where up to 30% of the contexts from each feature will be processed. All structural postholes and a proportion of the interior and ancillary features will be selected. Where negative features have complex fills the selection will prioritise primary fills. All contexts from whence artefacts have been retrieved will form part of the selection. Finally up to 30% of the contexts from the pit groupings and isolated pits and postholes will be selected. This will include all features from whence artefacts have already been recovered.

Selected samples will be processed by flotation and wet sieving to release all artefacts and ecofacts making them available for specialist analysis and dating.

Environmental analysis

Following sample processing the flots and retents will be scanned and sorted for artefacts and ecofacts. A report detailing material recovered, including tables, will be produced. Charcoal >4mm will be extracted and

identified, with results detailed in the report. Should other categories of charred macroplant remains be recovered they will be assessed and results will also be incorporated into the report.

Artefacts recovered during this process will be considered alongside hand retrieved artefacts within the same category. Artefact assemblages will be analysed by appropriate specialists as detailed below.

Radiocarbon dating

Dating is vital to unravelling the truncated, multiperiod remains recorded and sampled at Beechwood. Artefact typology can provide broad date ranges but radiocarbon dating often refines this information and can elucidate phasing of complex feature groups. Where there are no artefacts it is the only reliable way of dating features. In order to gain a good understanding of the sequencing of activities at Beechwood a comprehensive radiocarbon dating programme is essential. The final selection of material for dating is very much dependent on the results of the sample processing programme but dating will focus on the identified structures and in establishing phasing and sequencing. Radiocarbon dating will ideally be undertaken in 2 stages. The strategy adopted will be to obtain dates from single entity material, ideally unabraded charcoal fragments >4mm. A single date will be sought from contexts where charred material is abundant (5g or more). Where charred material is more residual at least 2 dates per context will be sought, or where the context is part of a suite of features representing remains of a single structure (eg an arc of post holes from a roundhouse) at least 2 dates will be sought from the feature. This will minimise the risk of erroneous dates going undetected. Subject to the recovery of sufficient dating material the programme will aim to date at least 6 of the roundhouses, at least 2 of the four-posters, at least 2 of the rectilinear enclosures, the palisade and a selection of the isolated pits and postholes.

Documentary Research

Documentary research of published and grey literature on prehistoric activity in the area will be undertaken, focussing on the excavation area and the immediate hinterland. This will provide a setting for the results of the excavation and will facilitate a more thorough interpretation of the excavated features and the objects recovered in line with local and national research agendas.

Artefact Conservation

All artefacts will be assessed by AOC's in-house conservation team. Small corroded metal objects will be X-Rayed. Measures will be taken to stabilise artefacts as necessary and investigative cleaning of metal objects will be undertaken to aid specialist identification as required.

Artefact analyses

During excavation ceramic sherds were recovered from 14 contexts (2080, 2283, 2307, 2354, 2356, 2463, 2354, 2463, 3027, 3009, 3060, 3219, 6002, 12016); Metal artefacts were recovered from 2 contexts (1120,3212) along with 1 unstratified copper alloy object; daub was recovered from 3 contexts (1076, 2272, 32120); metal working debris/slag was recovered from 9 contexts (1106, 1076, 1262, 1104, 1068, 1032, 2071, 2274, 2272); stone artefacts were recovered from 2 contexts (2088, 3286), along with 2 saddle querns; a single unstratified flint scraper was also recovered. See Finds Register, Appendix 4 of excavation DSR for details (AOC 2011). The artefacts recovered during evaluation will also be considered.

Additional objects may be recovered during sample processing.

Each of these material types will be recorded and catalogued by the relevant specialists. They will be examined in terms of material, form, function and date a short interpretive report will accompany the catalogue. Their analysis will assist in the interpretation of the function of the features whence they came as well as providing supplementary dating evidence as appropriate.

Illustrations of objects will be at the recommendation of the various specialists.

Specialists to be employed are as follows:

TASK	SPECIALIST
Ceramic and daub	A MacSween
Environmental evidence	J Robertson
Metal and metal-working debris objects	A.Heald/Mike Roy
Conservation	P.Greaves
Lithics and stone	R Engl
Documentary Research	R Engl
Radiocarbon dating	SUERC

Reporting and presentation

On completion of the Post Excavation programme the information from the documentary research and artefact/ecofact analysis will be integrated with the stratigraphic records to produce a final interpretive report.

Some site plans and sections have already been produced for the Data Structure Report. However, it is possible that these will need to be revised in the light of the new evidence obtained during the post-excavation programme. Additional illustrations, as designated by the artefact specialists, will also be required.

It is anticipated that the final report will be up to 15 pages in length and will consist of a presentation of the excavated evidence integrated with the documentary and archival research, the results of the specialist analyses and a discussion which places the site in its local and national context.

Dissemination

The final report will be formatted in line with the requirements of the journal *PSAS or SAIR*. On completion the article will be submitted for the next journal submission deadline.

Archiving and finds disposal

Upon completion of the final report and its submission for publication the site record and finds will be archived. The fieldwork records will be submitted to the archive of the National Monuments Record according to currently prescribed standards. Finds disposal will be arranged through the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP).

Timetable

We anticipate that works could be completed within 12 months of commission. At this stage a draft publication would be submitted to the journal. Publication is at the discretion of the recipient journal and subject to their timescale. It often takes *circa* one year from first submission to publication.

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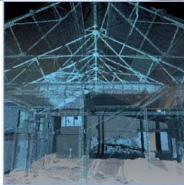
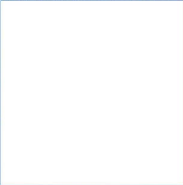
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East Beechwood, Inverness Post Excavation Analysis

Section 2: Costs

TASK	Cost
TOTAL	

Note: All prices are exclusive of VAT and valid for 3 months from date of issue.



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