Holiday Pods, Castlecraig, Nigg

Archaeological Watching Brief
Final Report

December 2023

AOC Project Number: 70527

AOC Archaeology Group

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Final Report

On Behalf of:	**Castlecraig Farms c/o Stephen Whiteford**
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Prepared by:	**L. Stirling**
Illustrations by:	**L. Stirling**
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Author: L. Stirling	**Date: 4th December 2023**
Approved by: Mary Peteranna	**Date: 8th December 2023**
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Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
The Old Estate Office
Rosehaugh Estate
Avoch
IV9 8RF

Tel. 01463 819 841
Mob. 07972 259255
E-mail inverness@aocarchaeology.com

AOC Archaeology Group

www.aocarchaeology.com

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Abstract

This report details the findings of the archaeological watching brief and subsequent post-excavation analysis carried out at on a development for holiday pods at Castlecraig Farm, near Nigg. The watching brief was required due to the proximity of the North Sutor Battery (SM13570) and the potential for prehistoric archaeological remains.

The watching brief was carried out between 22nd February and 19th March 2021 during which a total of 22 archaeological features were identified. The features comprised 14 pits, 5 firepits, 1 posthole, and 2 linear features.

Radiocarbon dates from recovered environmental material have provided archaeological evidence for two periods of activity: the middle Bronze Age and the early medieval period. The Bronze Age firepit contained fired clay fragments and charcoal suggestive of a possible timber-built structure. One of the early medieval firepits contained a large quantity of oat caryopses, indicating an association with grain processing/storage. Other pits on the site also showed evidence of cooking activities but could not be attributed specifically to either period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of new holiday pods at Castlecraig Farm, Nigg (Highland Council planning reference 20/01775/FUL).

1.2 The Site is located within the administrative area of Highland Council, which was advised on archaeological matters by the Highland Council's Historic Environment Team (HET). A watching brief had been required in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) (now superseded by National Planning Framework 4 (2023)) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains present within the investigation area.

1.3 The watching brief was carried out in February and March 2021 during which a total of 22 archaeological features were identified. The features comprised 14 pits, 5 firepits, 1 posthole, and 2 linear features. Radiocarbon dates have provided evidence for archaeological remains associated with two periods: the middle Bronze Age period and the early medieval period.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1. The development site is located on land to the southeast of Castlecraig Farm, approximately 3km southeast of the village of Nigg (NH 8225 6920) (**Figure 1**). It lies on improved open ground on the steep hillside of North Sutor on the north side of the Cromarty Firth. The overall development comprised excavation of two areas for holiday pods, Site 1 and Site 2, an access track and a cable trench (**Figure 2**). As of the date of this report, only works for the access track, cable trench, and the Site 1 area (Plots 1-4) have been developed.

2.2 The development site is located in close proximity to significant World War 1 and 2 naval gun emplacements on the North Sutor (Scheduled Monument 13570). While the main concentration of naval installations sits within the scheduled area, there are also several other outlying military sites located along the coastline in both directions.

2.3 The development site, which comprised improved agricultural land is located within a landscape with potential for prehistoric and later sub-surface remains to survive. On the north side of Hill of Nigg, lie the remains of two Iron Age forts at Easter and Wester Rarichie (SM5215; SM4781; Hatherley 2014). The Tarbat peninsula is also well known for its early medieval remains, such as the ecclesiastical site at Portmahomack (Carver 2016) and the carved stones at Hilton of Cadboll (SM90320; Jones 2003), Nigg (SM1680), and Shandwick (SM1674). The remains of a medieval motte and bailey castle is also known at Dunskeath (SM3319), just 1.5km along the coast from Castlecraig. The castle is recorded as being first fortified in 1179 by William I of Scotland.

Figure 1: Site location plan

04/70527/DSR/01/01

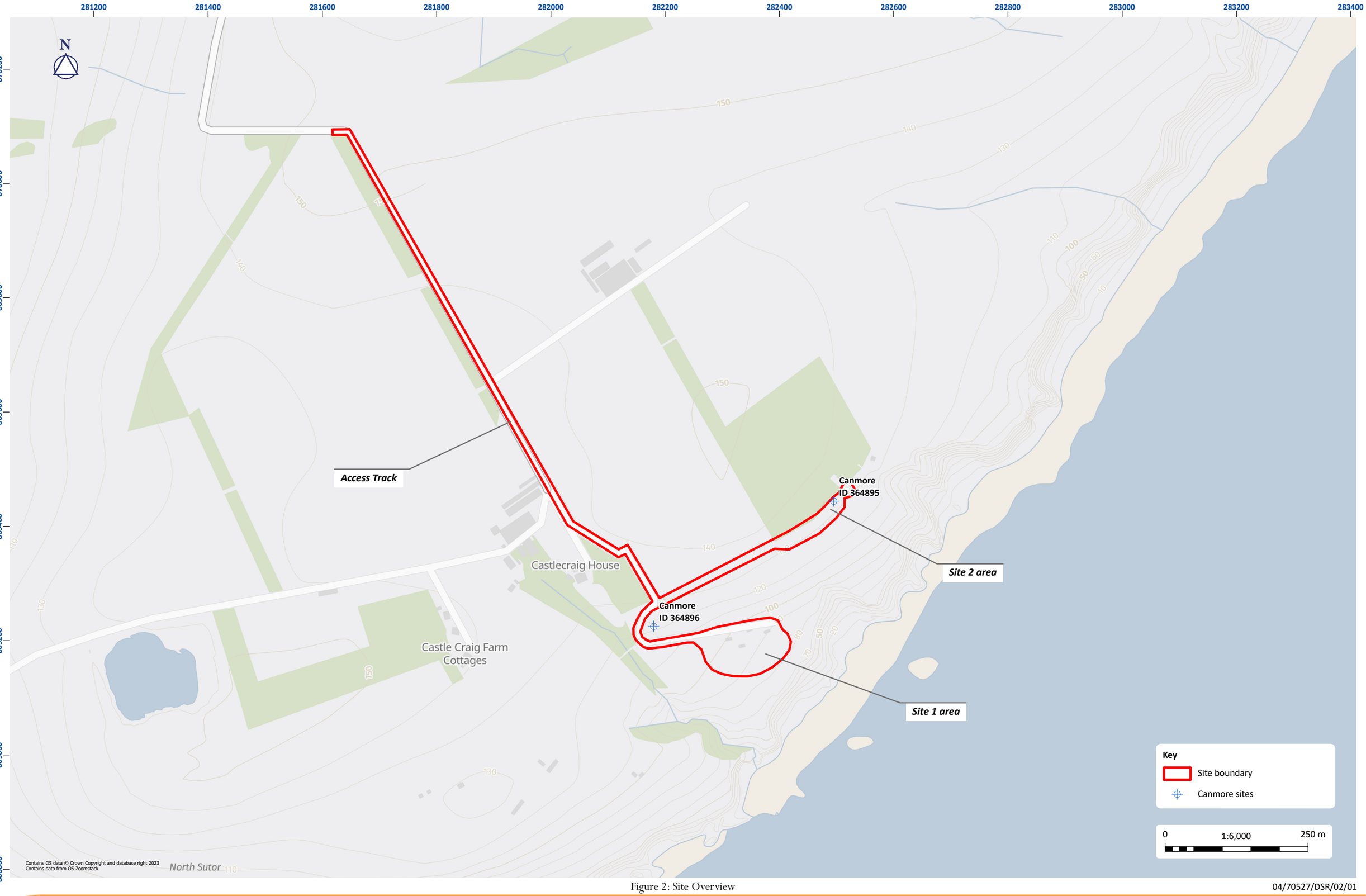

Figure 2: Site Overview

04/70527/DSR/02/01

3.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 A desk-based assessment had been conducted prior to commencement of the works in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation. This included a full check of all available historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps was conducted using the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER), the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), Ordnance Survey Name Books, Historic Environment Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland, statistical accounts and other available records, literary sources, or online resources.

3.2 Cartographic Sources

3.2.1 Historic maps were consulted online via the National Library of Scotland collections (NLS 2021). Castlecraig was noted as a named place on historic maps in the early 19th century while detail of the development area was first shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition maps. The following map sheets were consulted:

a) Aaron Arrowsmith, Map of Scotland, 1807
This map depicted *Castle Craig* as a small settlement on North Sutor.

b) John Thomson, Atlas of Scotland, 1832
This map depicted *Castle Craig* as a small settlement on North Sutor (**Figure 3**).

c) Ordnance Survey 25-inch 1st edition
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire Sheet LXVII.2 & LXVII.6
Surveyed: 1871-2 Published: 1873
This map depicted the buildings of Castlecraig farm. The development area is shown as a mixture of open improved fields and rough open ground.

d) Ordnance Survey 6-inch 1st edition
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire Sheet LXVII
Surveyed: 1871-2 Published: 1880
This map depicted similar detail to the 25-inch map series (**Figure 4**).

e) Ordnance Survey 25-inch 2nd edition
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire Sheet LXVII.2 & LXVII.6
Surveyed: 1904 Published: 1906
There was little change shown from the 1st edition map.

f) Ordnance Survey 6-inch 2nd edition
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire Sheet LXVII
Surveyed: 1904 Published: 1907
There was little change shown from the 1st edition map.

g) Ordnance Survey National Grid maps
NH86NW – A
Surveyed/Revised: Pre-1930 to 1959 Published: 1959
There was little change shown to the development area, however the naval installations were depicted on the hillside across the river from the development site (**Figure 5**).

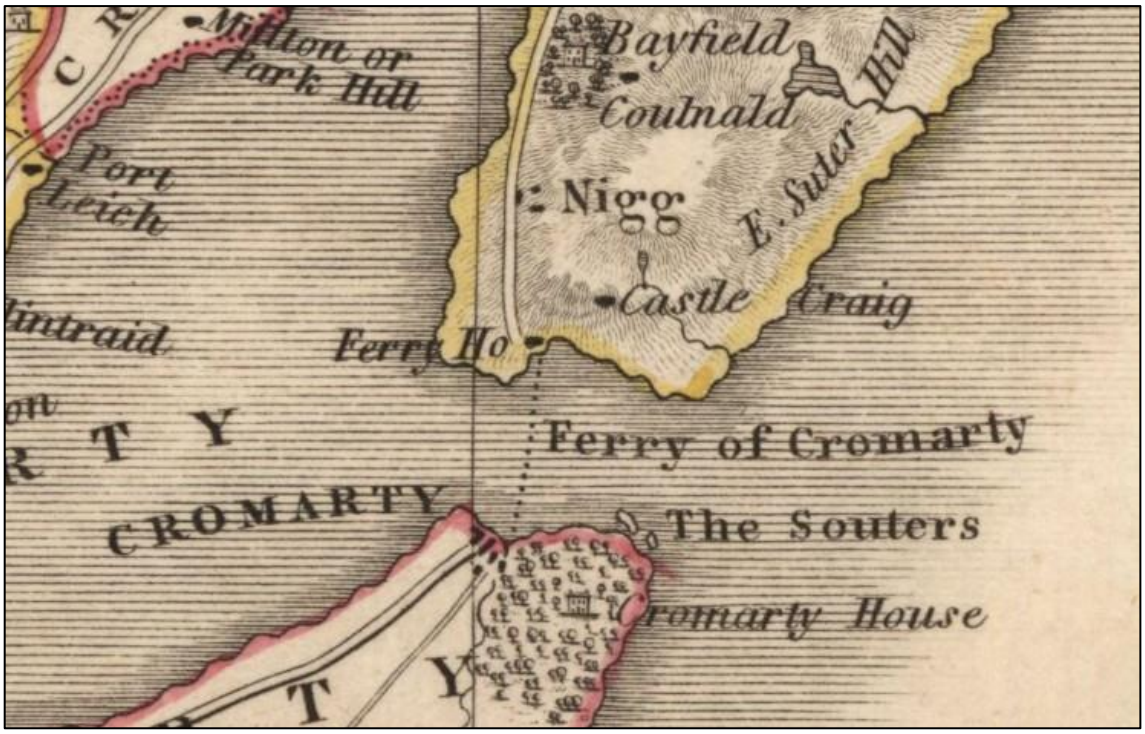

Figure 3: Excerpt from Thomson's Atlas of Scotland, 1832 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

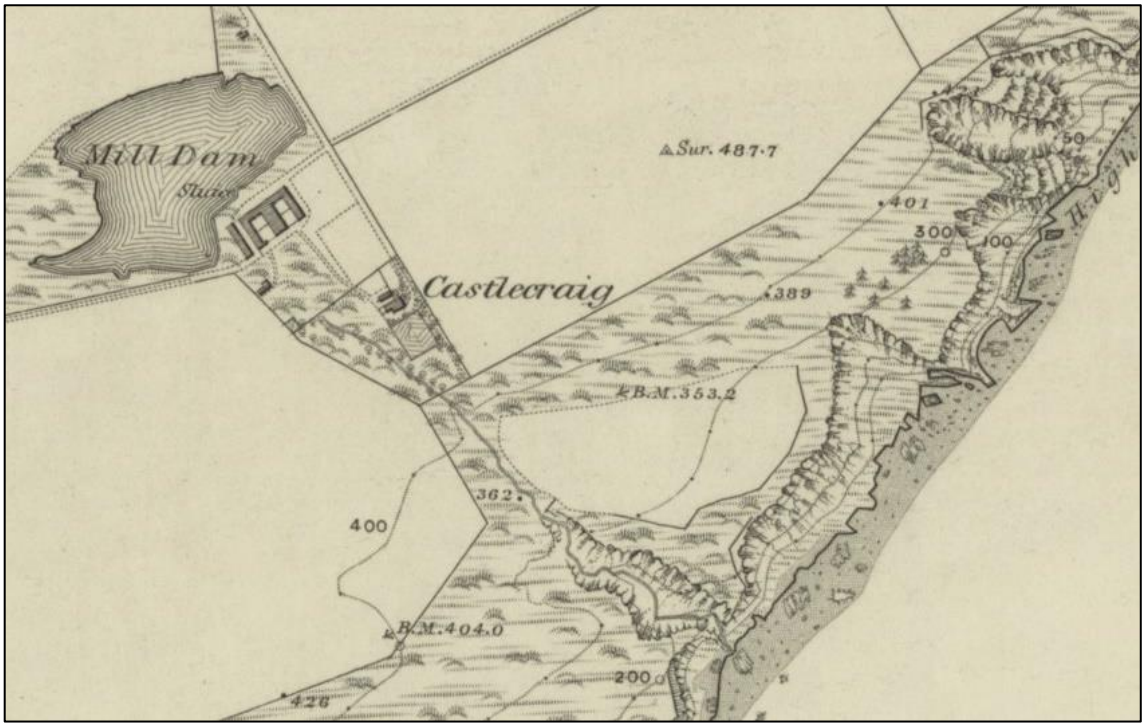

Figure 4: Excerpt from Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, 1871-2 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

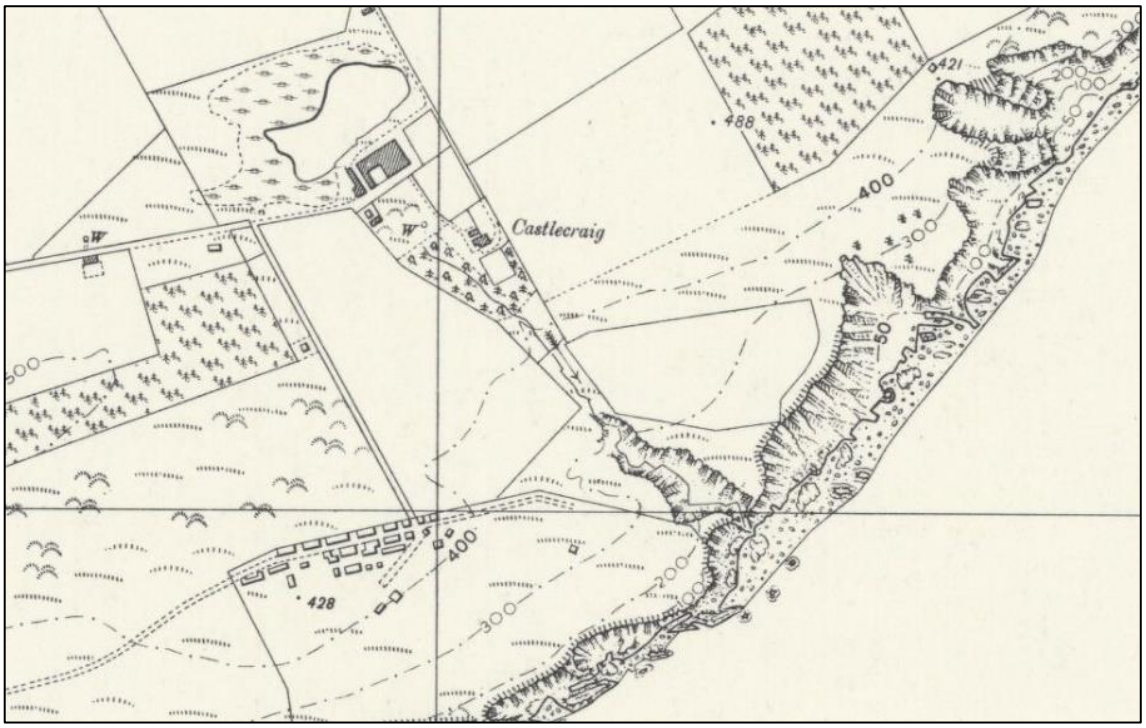

Figure 5: Excerpt from Ordnance Survey National Grid maps, pre-1959 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

3.3 Historic Environment Sources

3.3.1 The Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER) and the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE, via Canmore) were consulted online and showed several known sites recorded in a 1km area surrounding the development site. Most of the sites comprised individual buildings associated with the North Sutor Battery (SM13570), which is located on the coast around 200m to the southwest of the development. The following description of the site comes from the Scheduled Monument Record (HES 2021):

> *The monument is the remains of four coastal artillery batteries with associated accommodation camps and ancillary structures. Construction began in 1913 and the site was used in both the First and Second World War. It is visible as an extensive series of concrete and timber structures, hut bases and earthworks. The battery is located on the Nigg peninsula, lying between 10m and 135m above sea level overlooking the Cromarty Firth.*
>
> *The site comprises two First World War 9.2 inch gun emplacements, four First World War 4-inch quick-firing (QF) gun emplacements, two Second World War 6-inch gun emplacements, three battery observation posts, four magazines, at least three engine houses, one First World War Defence Electric light (DEL) emplacement, two Second World War searchlight emplacements, one subterranean operations block, two "half" pillboxes, an unrotated projectile (UP) rocket battery, and at least 20 other accommodation, storage and maintenance buildings in varying degrees of survival. Together with the*

batteries at South Sutor, it forms part of the defences of the Cromarty Firth in both world wars. The site was abandoned in the inter-war period and finally closed in 1956.

3.3.2 Other military installations, including a Counter-Bombardment Battery Observation Post (MHG35182) and a Radar Station (MHG34271) were located along the coast to the northwest of the site.

3.3.3 Two sites were recorded within the development area in the NRHE: the remains of a military road associated with the North Sutor Battery (Canmore ID 364895) were located along the southeast side of the conifer plantation adjacent to the development; and the remains of a building attached to an enclosure (Canmore ID 364896) were located around 150m southeast from Castlecraig House.

3.3.4 The other notable site is the remains of Dunskeath Castle (SM3319) located approximately 1.5km west of the development site. The castle comprised the remains of a motte, visible as two semi-circular earthwork ditches and ramparts with an earthen mound in the interior.

3.4 Other Sources

3.4.1 The development site is located in the historic parish of Nigg, which is written about in the Statistical Accounts of Scotland. The Old Statistical Account (County of Ross and Cromarty, Vol. XIII, 1794) makes mention of Dunskeath Castle and notes that the adjoining farm is named Castle Craig on its account. The New Statistical Account (County of Ross and Cromarty, Vol. XIV, 1845) also makes mention of Castlecraig with regards to livestock management. It says that 'In the rocks of Castlecraig, there are upwards of 100 goats, feeding on the herbs, which no other quadruped can approach.'

3.4.2 The place name of *Castlecraig* is listed in the Ordnance Survey Name Books (Scotland's Places 2021), which correspond to the 1st edition maps. The site is described as: 'A Substantial farmstead Consisting of a neat, modern residence, with outbuildings, &c., attached. Situate about 1/2 mile N.E. [North East] of the North Sutor'.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

4.1 The *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists* (CIfA) defines an archaeological watching brief as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons...where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive' (2020).

4.2 The aims of the archaeological works were:

i) To identify any archaeological remains within the proposed development area prior to the destruction of any significant material
ii) To excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
iii) To sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating
iv) To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development
v) To undertake any and report upon any required post-excavation analysis to conclude the archaeological programme

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Groundworks were completed over the access track, cable trench, and the northern part of Site 1 (camping pod plots 1 – 4) (**Figure 2**). An archaeological watching brief was undertaken whereby topsoil stripping was monitored using a mechanical excavator fitted with a straight edged bucket in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Highland Council *Standards for Archaeological Work* (2012) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (2022) and undertaken per the methodology reported upon in the Data Structure Report (Stirling 2021).

5.2 The development area covered two areas: the northern field, which had been previously under barley crop; and the southern field, which had been used predominantly for pasture (**Plates 1, 2**). The access track measured approximately 5m wide and was excavated through the north field from the Castlecraig Farm buildings, along the east side of a wooded area next to Castlecraig House until it reached the gate to the south field (**Plate 3**). Within the south field, the access track zig-zagged down the steepest part of the slope and ran eastward towards the location of the camping plots (**Plate 4**). The track respected the location of the building and enclosure (Canmore ID 364896), which survived as a low earthwork (**Plate 5**).

5.3 Four camping pod plots were excavated at the east end of the access track, each a rectangular plot measuring between 12m – 20m across with a short access track linking them to the main track (**Plates 6 - 8**). The cable trench measured approximately 5m wide and was excavated from the farm buildings at the north side of the north field. It followed the field boundary along the southwest side of the conifer plantation until it reached the

south field (**Plate 9**), where it turned to run southwest along the boundary between the two fields (**Plate 10**). The final section of cable trench dropped down the steep part of the slope towards the access track (**Plate 11**).

5.4 All uncovered features of archaeological significance were excavated, recorded and sampled. A subsequent programme of post-excavation analysis was carried out following the fieldwork, comprising the processing of environmental samples and assessment of retrieved ecofacts and artefacts. A series of radiocarbon dates were also obtained from relevant samples.

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 The watching brief was carried out in February/March 2021, during which 22 archaeological features were identified across the access track and house plot areas (**Figures 6-9)** (see Appendices 1-4 for excavation data registers). Radiocarbon dating was undertaken on samples from four features (**Table 1**). The features comprised pits, firepits, and linear features and interpreted as three groups: middle Bronze Age activity, early medieval activity, and undated features.

6.1.2 The topsoil across the north field comprised dark greyish-brown clayey sand, forming ploughsoil between 0.3m-0.5m deep. In the south field, which lay on a steep incline, topsoil comprised a dark reddish brown silty sand with depths varying between 0.1m-0.4m. Subsoil across the area comprised a pale reddish-yellow, loose, silty sand with frequent stones and outcrops of natural bedrock.

6.2 Middle Bronze Age Features

6.2.1 Firepit [022] was found within the turning circle area of the access track. It comprised an irregular-shaped pit up to 2m long with three fills (**Plates 12-13**). The upper fill (019) comprised reddened and burnt sandy silt and ash material, partly mixed with the material below. A sample of alder charcoal from this layer provided a radiocarbon date of 1614-1505 cal BC (95.4% probability, SUERC-111925), placing it within the middle Bronze Age. A small quantity of fired clay fragments were retrieved from this fill, all of which were heavily abraded and amorphous in shape (Appendix 4). One of the largest fragments displayed a possible shaped surface with a withy impression.

6.2.2 The middle fill (020) of pit [022] contained the remains of several intact burnt timbers, which may have formed the remains of small timber posts though they were scattered throughout the fill with no apparent structure. The lowest fill (021) comprised a dark grey silty sand with indistinct edges that appears to have been disturbed by the burnt timbers. Environmental analysis of this pit identified macroplant remains of six hazelnut shell fragments and one complete hazelnut, as well as charcoal from oak, hazel roundwood and alder roundwood.

6.2.3 The function of this pit was unclear, but the presence of fired clay and burnt timbers indicates the presence of a possible withy and clay-built superstructure, which could have been part of a wattle screen associated with a furnace or grain-drying kiln, though the lack of grain retrieved from the feature suggests the latter interpretation is unlikely. The collapse of this structure into the pit may explain the mixed nature of the fills. The charcoal remains represent the fuel debris from the burning event, however, several roundwood pieces were also recovered, which may relate to the possible withy structure. The presence of hazelnut shells indicates that these were collected as a wild resource on the site during the Bronze Age.

6.3 Early Medieval Features

6.3.1 Firepit [018], also located in the turning circle area, comprised a sub-circular pit up to 0.85m wide and 0.1m deep and contained three fills (**Plate 14**). The upper and lower fills, (015) and (017) consisted of a charcoal-rich layer formed entirely of oak charcoal, with a sterile sandy lens (016) between them, suggesting the pit had been reused. Both of the upper and lower fills also contained 71 cereal caryopses, almost all of which were oat. A radiocarbon date from an oat caryopsis recovered from the basal fill produced a date of 1030-1158 cal AD (95.4% probability, SUERC-111921), which places it within the early medieval period. The presence of burnt fuel in the form of oak charcoal and food waste in the form of oat caryopses indicates this pit was most likely used as a cooking pit.

6.3.2 Two further fire-pits located within the adjacent area of Plot 1 also produced evidence for early medieval period activity. Firepit [049] comprised a wide shallow pit measuring 1m by 0.7m and 0.05m deep. It contained a mixed pale yellow-grey silty sand (050) with frequent charcoal flecks and chunks (**Plate 15**). A sample of hazel charcoal from this pit provided a radiocarbon date of 990-1122 cal AD (95.4% probability, SUERC-111926). Firepit [051] consisted of a similar sub-rectangular pit measuring 1.27m by 0.84m and 0.06m deep (**Plate 16**). Hazel charcoal fragments formed over 50% of the fill (052) and included some larger wood pieces. Hazel charcoal from this pit provided a radiocarbon date of 896-1026 cal AD (95.4% probability, SUERC-111927).

6.4 Undated Features

6.4.1 A group of ten pits and another possible firepit were located in the Plot 2 area, as well as two other pits in Plot 1 (see Appendix 1 for full details of the individual contexts). The pits varied in size between 1.24m and 0.35m across and all were generally very shallow with only a few deeper than 0.1m, suggesting they had been heavily truncated (**Plates 17 - 29**). Most of the pits had been affected by animal burrowing.

6.4.2 In general, the fills of these pits consisted of dark black or greyish brown, silty sand, with occasional small stones. Most of the pits contained occasional charcoal flecks, with the pits tending towards either a dominance of hazel roundwood or a dominance of oak fragments. Some of the pits also contained very small numbers of hazelnut shells.

6.4.3 The lack of diagnostic characteristics and stratigraphic relationships, as well as the highly truncated nature of the features, makes interpretations of this group difficult. The charcoal and macroplant assemblages recovered from these features bear similarities

to both the dated Bronze Age and early medieval firepits. It is not possible to attribute these features to a specific time period, and it is also possible that the archaeological remains uncovered represent an overlapping picture of both Bronze Age and early medieval occupation.

6.4.4 Posthole [004] was located at the north side of the wooded area next to Castlecraig House. It comprised a circular cut with a steep sided profile, measuring 0.5m diameter and 0.5m deep (**Plate 30**). Natural bedrock formed part of the feature edge. Small finds of a metal nail and ceramic sherd were found near the surface of the fill, potentially residual infill after removal of the post. The date of the post-hole was unclear, but the feature is indicative of the presence of post-defined structure in the area.

6.4.5 Further along the access track near the gate between the fields, two pits, and a linear ditch were identified. Pit [010] comprised a sub-circular cut up to 1.05m across and 0.25m deep (**Plate 31**), while pit [012] consisted of a smaller pit 0.6m diameter and 0.12m deep (**Plate 32**). The fills of both pits comprised dark brown sandy silt with charcoal of predominantly hazel roundwood, with some alder roundwood and oak fragments. Pit [012] also contained a hazelnut shell, as well as several fire-cracked cobbles and heat-affected rock fragments, with evidence of sooting indicating they were directly exposed to fire (see Appendix 5). Fire-heated stones were commonly used in cooking practices in prehistory, either as heated stones placed into water to boil it, or as hot stones used to line oven-like features (Ballin Smith 1994: 210; Curle 1939: 91).

6.4.6 The ditch [008] measured 0.7m wide and was aligned NW-SE (**Plates 33-35**). There were several large stones angled throughout the fill, though partially displaced and a single oat caryopsis and two hazelnut shells were recovered. The feature, which had been heavily disturbed by tree roots and animal burrowing, represents an uncertain interpretation. The charcoal and macroplant remains have likely become reworked into the fill from the nearby pits – or may relate to contemporary infill of material at the time of use.

Lab Code	Feature No.	Context No.	Material/species	Uncal (BP)	Calibrated 1-sigma (68.2%)	Calibrated 2-sigma (95.4%)	Delta^{13} C%	Description	Provisional phasing
SUERC-111921	**18**	**17**	Cereal caryopses: Oat	956±21	1037-1150 cal AD	1030-1158 cal AD	-26.8	**Oat grain from firepit**	Early medieval
SUERC-111925	**22**	**19**	Charcoal roundwood: Alder	3286±24	1607-1510 cal BC	1614-1505 cal BC	-29.3	**Alder charcoal from firepit**	Middle Bronze Age
SUERC-111926	**49**	**50**	Charcoal roundwood: Hazel	1017±24	995-1031 cal AD	990-1122 cal AD	-27.2	**Hazel charcoal from firepit**	Early medieval
SUERC-111927	**51**	**52**	Charcoal roundwood: Hazel	1064±24	977-1022 cal AD	896-1026 cal AD	-26.7	**Hazel charcoal from firepit**	Early medieval

Table 1. Radiocarbon dates

6.5 Summary of Post-excavation Analysis

6.5.1 A series of post-excavation analyses were carried out on material recovered from the features. Radiocarbon dating from four features has indicated a period of activity in the middle Bronze Age represented by one large pit feature, with a date of 1614-1505 cal BC. Three other firepits have produced a close group of early medieval dates, spanning 896 – 1158 cal AD (Table 1; Appendix 3).

6.5.2 Fired clay fragments retrieved from the Bronze Age firepit showed that all the fragments were heavily abraded and generally amorphous. The largest fragment displayed a possible deliberately shaped surface with a rounded withy impression, although due to the small size of the fragment, the interpretation was not definitive and cannot be used to determine the type of structure that it might have once formed a part. The full results of the fired clay analysis can be found in Appendix 4.

6.5.3 Specialist analysis was also carried out on the fire-cracked stone fragments retrieved from pit [012]. These indicated sooting and cracking consistent with their use in cooking practices associated with heat, fire, and water. While this feature was undated, such cooking practices involving the heating of stones to boil water or bake food have been present throughout prehistory and the medieval period. The full results of the fire-cracked stone analysis can be found in Appendix 5.

6.5.4 Environmental analysis was carried out on the charred macroplant remains and charcoal assemblage retrieved from the features across the site (Appendix 6). Charcoal from oak, hazel and alder was found in several features, with oak being the dominant species in the Bronze Age firepit while the early medieval assemblage was split more evenly between oak and hazel. It would appear that broadly the same species were in use during both periods of activity on the site, suggesting that native and locally available species were used.

6.5.5 Hazelnut shells were found within several of the features, suggesting that these were used as a wild resource by those using the site. The hazelnut remains were found in greatest quantities in the Bronze Age feature, including one complete hazelnut. Hazelnuts were used a wild resource throughout prehistoric periods from the Mesolithic, and while they tend to be found in greater quantities on earlier prehistoric sites, they were utilised throughout later periods as both food and kindling.

6.5.6 The cereal assemblage from the features was formed almost entirely of oat and came almost exclusively from the early medieval firepit [018]. It likely represents residual food waste from cooking as there was no evidence for crop processing at the site. Oat was an economically important crop in the medieval period across Scotland and it is likely that it was being cultivated in the nearby area when the site at Castlecraig was in use.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The archaeological watching brief at Castlecraig discovered several significant areas of archaeological features. Targeted post-excavation analysis was able to identify one Bronze Age firepit and a group of features dating to the early medieval period.

7.2 Bronze Age pit features are commonly found on sites across the Highland, and the presence of such activity at Castlecraig has provided substantial evidence for this period. With only one feature dated to the Bronze Age, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the nature of activity at this time, but the feature itself does provide evidence for a possible structure and that there is potential for other Bronze Age features to survive in the area.

7.3 The group of early medieval features found on the site ties into wider research that has been carried out on the Tarbat peninsula over the last few decades, where highly significant archaeological results have been uncovered. Excavations at Portmahomack have revealed a series of overlying elite and ecclesiastical centres spanning the early medieval period (Carver 2016). This site, along with the monumental carved stones found across the peninsula (Jones 2003), is thought to have been part of a large-scale monastic estate during the early medieval period, which likely encompassed the whole peninsula. The Tarbat peninsula is also thought to have formed an important aspect of the early medieval kingdom of *Fortriu* (Hatherley 2014). While much of the research into the early medieval settlement in this area has been focused on the elite and monumental sites (e.g. Portmahomack, Hill of Nigg forts, carved stones) the results from Castlecraig provide an important glimpse into a possible associated area of settlement at this time.

7.4 While no further development works on the site at Castlecraig are currently known, it is recommended that any further groundbreaking in this area is subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring and mitigation.

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Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845. Accessed on 15th April 2021 at https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home

Plate 1: General view of the north field, facing southwest

Plate 2: General view of the south field, facing north

Plate 3: Topsoil stripping for access track in the north field

Plate 4: Topsoil stripping for access track in the south field

Plate 5: Record shot of building and enclosure (Canmore ID 364896)

Plate 6: Overview of Plot 1, facing north

Plate 7: Overview of Plot 2, facing northwest

Plate 8: Overview of Plot 3, facing south

Plate 9: Topsoil stripping for cable trench in north field, facing northwest

Plate 10: Topsoil stripping for cable trench in south field, facing southwest

Plate 11: Topsoil stripping for cable trench over slope in south field, facing northwest

Plate 12: Mid-excavation of firepit [022]

Plate 13: Post-excavation of firepit [022]

Plate 14: SW-facing section of firepit [018]

Plate 15: SE-facing section of firepit [049]

Plate 16: SE-facing section of firepit [051]

Plate 17: SSE-facing section of pit [023]

Plate 18: S-facing section of pit [025]

Plate 19: ESE-facing section of pit [027]

Plate 20: SE-facing section of firepit [029]

Plate 21: S-facing section of pit [031]

Plate 22: W-facing section of pit [033]

Plate 23: SSE-facing section of pit [035]

Plate 24: NNW-facing section of pit [037]

Plate 25: SE-facing section of pit [039]

Plate 26: SE-facing section of pit [041]

Plate 27: E-facing section of pit [043]

Plate 28: SW-facing section of pit [047]

Plate 29: SE-facing section of pit [053]

Plate 30: W-facing section of posthole [004]

Plate 31: S-facing section of pit [010]

Plate 32: S-facing section of pit [012]

Plate 33: Overview of ditch [008] and pits [010] and [012]

Plate 34: Mid-excavation of ditch [008], facing north-northwest

Plate 35: SSE-facing section of ditch [008]

Plate 36: Pre-excavation of gully [014], facing northeast

Plate 37: SW-facing section of gully [014]

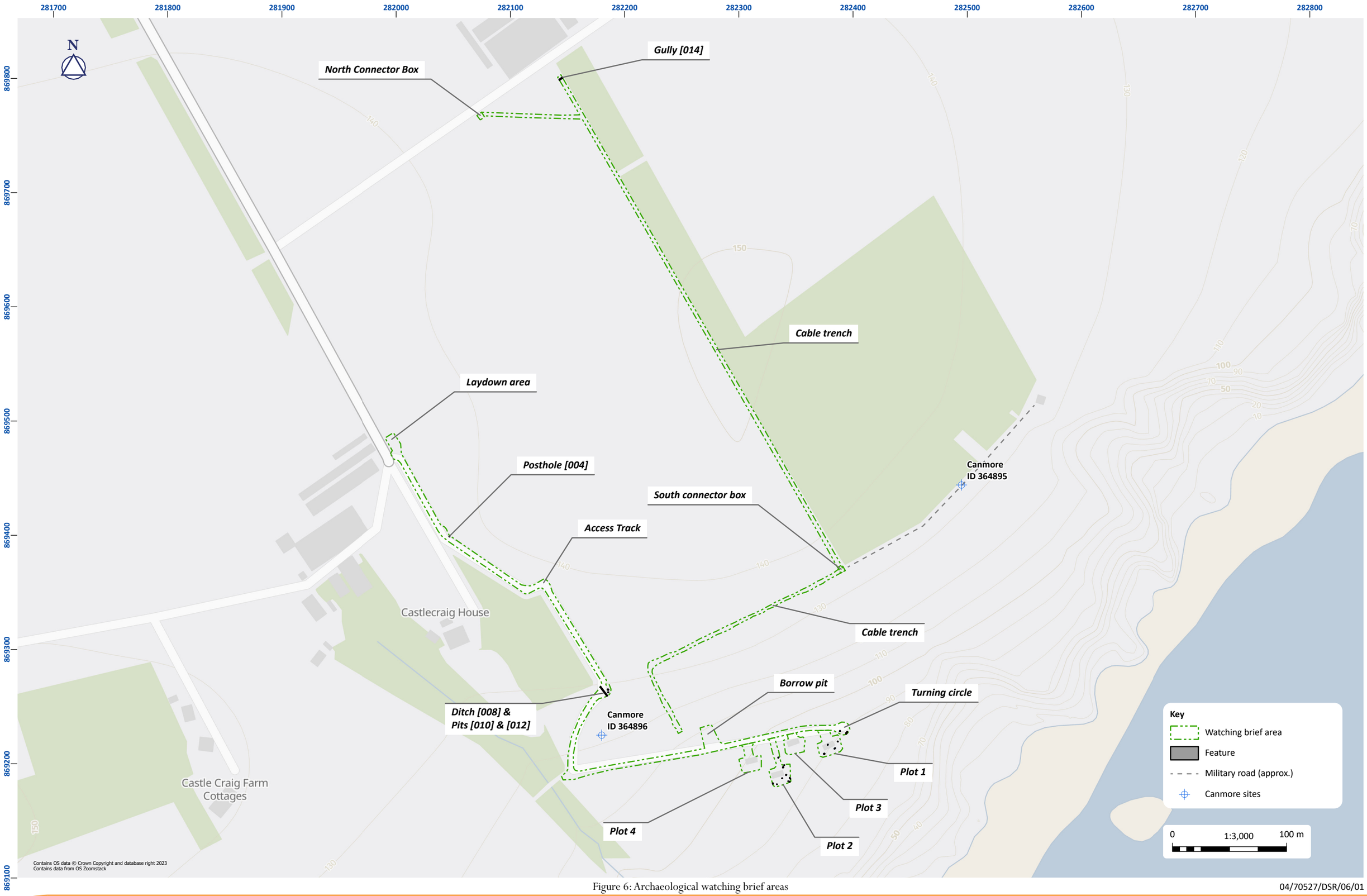

Figure 6: Archaeological watching brief areas

04/70527/DSR/06/01

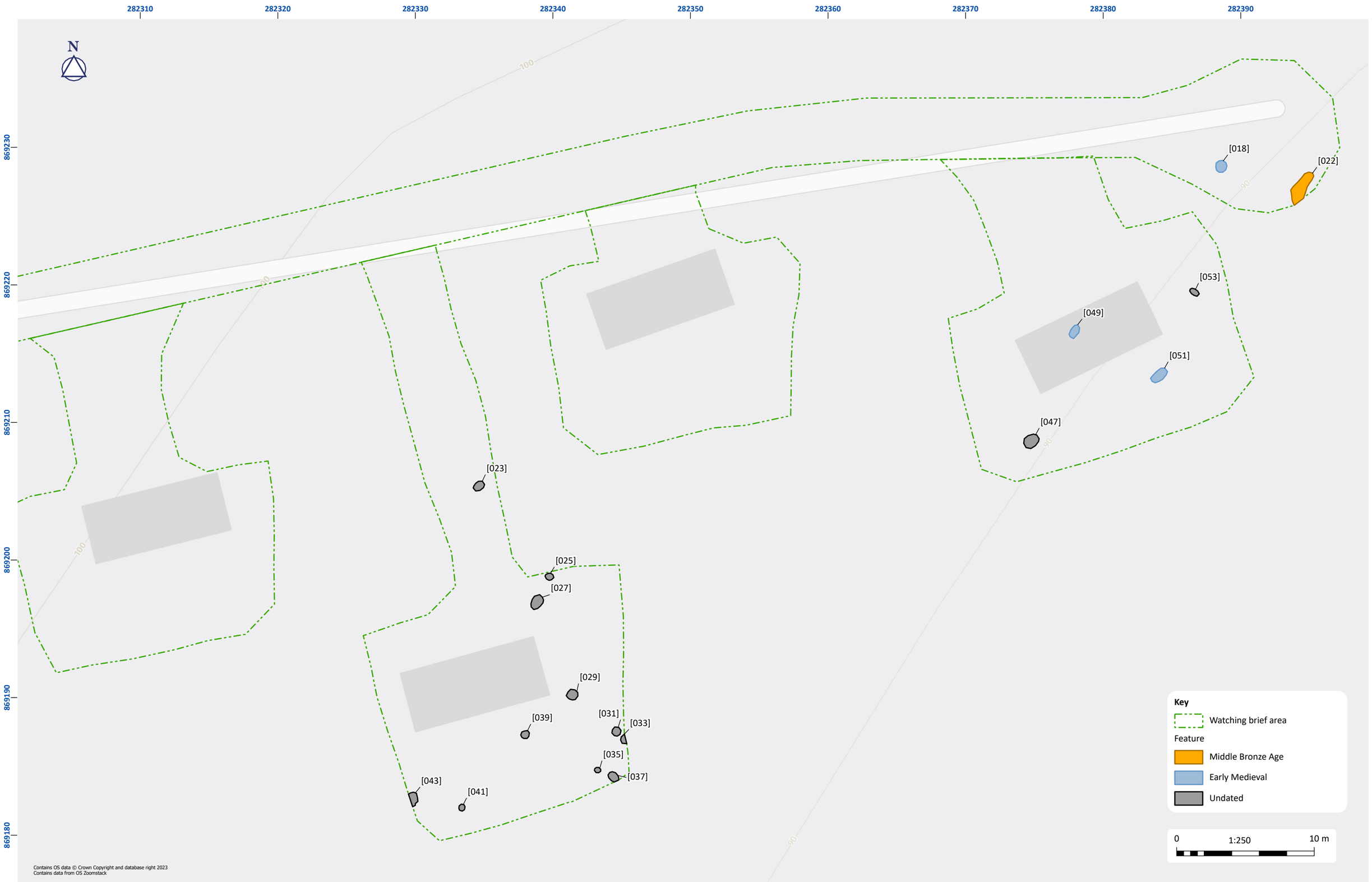

Figure 7: Archaeological features in the camping pod plots

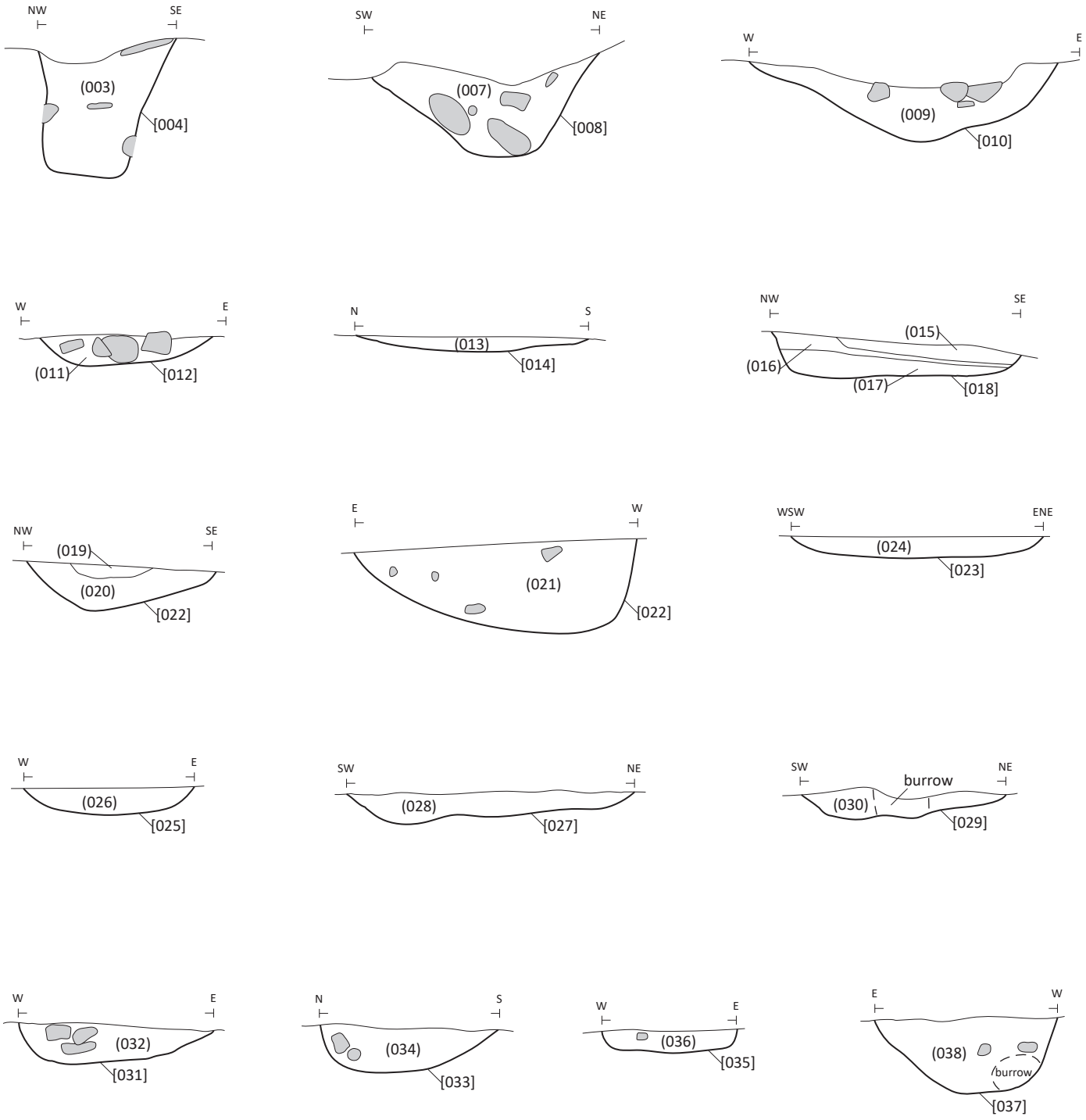

Figure 8: Section drawings of archaeological features

04/70527/DSR/08/01

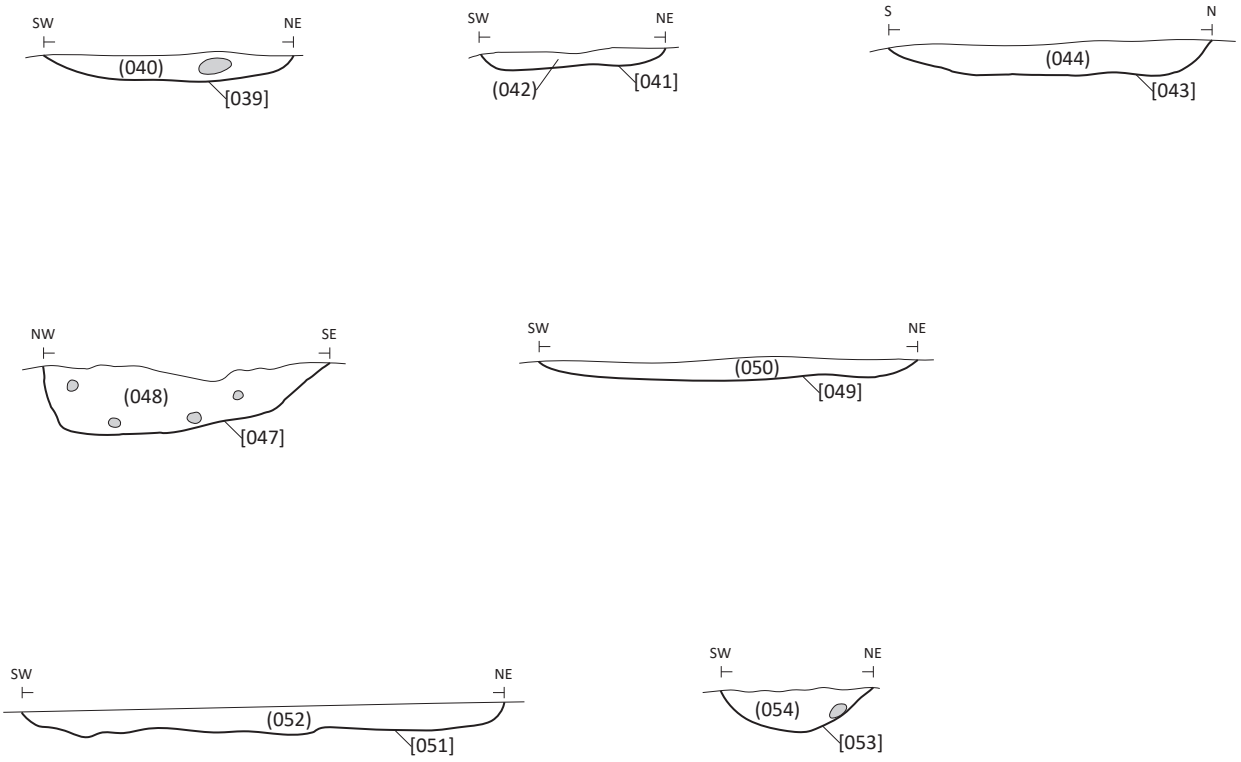

Figure 9: Section drawings of archaeological features (continued)

04/70527/DSR/09/01

Appendix 1 List of Contexts

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
001	Deposit	Plough soil from recent barley crop: very dark greyish brown, friable to loose, clayey sand, with large amounts of small pebbles and stones.	002	-	-	-	-	-	-	Modern plough soil, which has been under recent barley crop.
002	Deposit	Natural subsoil: pale reddish yellow and brownish yellow, loose, silty sand with frequent angular stones. In some places natural bedrock was encountered.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Natural subsoil.
003	Fill	Fill of posthole [004]: dark greyish brown, clayey sand, containing small stones (1-4cm) throughout. Also contains rare flecks and fragments of charcoal. Small finds of a metal (Fe) nail and ceramic sherd found near the surface.	-	001	004	-	-	-	-	Fill of posthole. Small finds suggest fairly recent post removal and backfill.
004	Cut	Cut for circular posthole measuring 0.5m diameter and 0.5m deep. Profile is steep sided with bedrock forming the W edge. Sharp break of slope at top and base.	-	001	-	003	002	-	-	Posthole of unknown date.
005	Deposit	Topsoil: very dark reddish brown, friable, silty sand, measuring 0.25m-0.6m deep across the southern field. Previously used as pasture.	002	-	-	-	-	-	-	Modern topsoil, which has been used as pasture.
006	Deposit	Natural subsoil in southern field. Same as (002).	-	-	-	-	-	-	002	Natural subsoil.

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
007	Fill	Fill of ditch [008]: dark greyish brown, friable, silty sand, containing large angular and rounded stones up to 0.8m diameter. Deposit was homogenous, however heavily disturbed by a large tree root running the length of the feature.	-	005	008	-	-	-	-	Fill of ditch [008].
008	Cut	Cut for ditch/culvert aligned NW-SE and measuring 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep. Profile was generally U-shaped with the sides varying from shallow to very steep. Heavily disturbed by tree roots and animal burrowing.	-	005	-	007	002	-	-	Heavily disturbed ditch/culvert.
009	Fill	Fill of pit [010]: very dark greyish brown, very firm, sandy silt with small fragments of stone throughout. Upper part of the fill was disturbed.	-	005	010	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [010].
010	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 1m by 1.05m and 0.25m deep. Sides are gently and evenly sloping to an evenly rounded base.	-	005	-	009	002	-	-	Large pit of unknown date and function. Possibly modern.
011	Fill	Fill of pit [012]: very dark greyish brown, very firm, sandy silt with small fragments of stone throughout. Upper part of the fill was disturbed.	-	005	012	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [012].
012	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.6m diameter and 0.12m deep. Profile is a wide U-shape with evenly sloping sides and base and a clear break of slope at the top edge.	-	005	-	011	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function.

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
013	Fill	Fill of gully [014]: dark greyish brown, friable, silty sand with frequent fine gravel and larger pebbles. Clear evidence of plough disturbance.	-	001	014	-	-	-	-	Fill of gully [014].
014	Cut	Cut for gully measuring 0.75m wide and 0.05m deep. Sides are shallow, with indistinct break of slope to a concave base.	-	001	-	013	002	-	-	Shallow gully.
015	Fill	Upper fill of firepit [018]: deposit of charcoal up to 0.04m deep over fill (016).	016	005	018	-	-	-	-	Upper fill of firepit [018].
016	Fill	Mid fill of firepit [018]: pale brownish grey, sandy silt up to 0.07m thick. Located between two charcoal-rich deposits (015) and (017).	017	015	018	-	-	-	-	Mid sterile fill of firepit [018].
017	Fill	Basal fill of firepit [018]: deposit of charcoal up to 0.05m deep under fill (016).	-	016	018	-	-	-	-	Basal fill of firepit [018].
018	Cut	Cut for sub-circular firepit measuring 0.85m by 0.7m and 0.1m deep. Sides are steeper on the NW side due to the hill slope, but in general gently sloping with a rounded base.	-	005	-	015, 016, 017	002	-	-	Firepit with three fills indicating reuse.
019	Fill	Upper fill of firepit [022]: reddened (burnt) sandy silt and ash material on the upper surface of the pit. Indistinct edges and possible mixing with underlying fill.	020	005	022	-	-	-	-	Upper fill of firepit [022].

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
020	Fill	Mid fill of firepit [022]: mixed, reddened (burnt) sandy silt containing charcoal flecks and larger charcoal blocks which may be the remains of intact timbers or posts. No clear order to the timbers but they may have been set into the lower fill.	021	019	022	-	-	-	-	Mid fill of firepit [022] containing burnt timbers which may indicate a possible structure within the pit.
021	Fill	Basal fill of firepit [022]: dark brownish grey silty sand with indistinct edges that may have been truncated by (020).	-	020	022	-	-	-	-	Basal fill of firepit [022].
022	Cut	Cut for irregular shaped firepit measuring 1m wide and 2m long (possibly extending outside the trench). Sides were steep and irregular with a general U-shaped profile. Possible timber posts in the fill left small holes across the base.	-	005	-	019, 020, 021	002	-	-	Firepit, containing remains of burnt posts which may indicate structural remains.
023	Cut	Cut for shallow sub-circular pit measuring 0.77m by 0.6m and 0.06m deep. Sides are very gently sloping with a wide flat base.	-	005	-	024	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
024	Fill	Fill of pit [[023]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and occasional charcoal flecks (1%).	-	005	023	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [023].
025	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.56m by 0.45m and 0.09m deep. Sides are gently sloping with a gradual curve onto a wide, slightly rounded base.	-	005	-	026	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
026	Fill	Fill of pit [025]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and occasional charcoal flecks (1%).	-	005	025	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [025].

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
027	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 1.06m by 0.8m and 0.08m deep. Sides are very gently sloping with a wide flat base.	-	005	-	028	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
028	Fill	Fill of pit [027]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and occasional charcoal flecks (1%). Some disturbance from animal burrowing.	-	005	027	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [027].
029	Cut	Cut for sub-circular put measuring 0.7m by 0.6m and 0.08m deep. Sides are very gently sloping onto an irregular base which has been severely disturbed by animal burrowing.	-	005	-	030	002	-	-	Possible firepit, heavily truncated and disturbed by burrowing.
030	Fill	Fill of pit [029]: dark black brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and frequent charcoal flecks (10%).	-	005	029	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [029].
031	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.66m by 0.6m and 0.12m deep. Sides are moderately steeply sloping with a gradual curve onto a slightly rounded base.	-	005	-	032	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
032	Fill	Fill of pit [031]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with a cluster of small (0.05-0.1m) angular stones in the centre. Contains rare (<1%) charcoal flecks.	-	005	031	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [031].
033	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit partly exposed in the trench, measuring 0.6m by 0.35m (from baulk) and 0.15m deep. Sides are moderately steeply sloping with a moderate break of slope onto a flat base.	-	005	-	034	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function.

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
034	Fill	Fill of pit [033]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional medium stones (0.1-0.2m) and occasional small stones (5%) and rare charcoal flecks (<1%).	-	005	033	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [033].
035	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.44m by 0.38m and 0.07m deep. Sides are moderately steep with a sharp curve onto a flat base.	-	005	-	036	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
036	Fill	Fill of pit [035]: dark black brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and one large stone (0.25m diameter) on the N side. Also contains occasional charcoal flecks (1%).	-	005	035	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [035].
037	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.6m by 0.77m and 0.26m deep. Sides are steeply sloping with a gradual curve onto a slightly rounded base. Some disturbance from burrowing.	-	005	-	038	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function.
038	Fill	Fill of pit [037]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and occasional charcoal flecks (1%).	-	005	037	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [037].
039	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 0.64m by 0.56m and 0.08m deep. Sides are very gently sloping with a wide flat base.	-	005	-	040	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
040	Fill	Fill of pit [039]: dark black brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and frequent charcoal flecks (5%).	-	005	039	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [039].

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
041	Cut	Cut for circular pit measuring 0.48m diameter and 0.04m deep. Sides are shallow with a flat base.	-	005	-	042	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
042	Fill	Fill of pit [041]: dark black brown, friable, silty sand with frequent charcoal flecks (5%).	-	005	041	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [041].
043	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit partly exposed in the trench, measuring 0.84m by 0.62m (from baulk) and 0.08m deep. Sides are moderately steep with a sharp curve onto a flat base.	-	005	-	044	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function, probably truncated.
044	Fill	Fill of pit [043]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small stones (10%) and frequent charcoal flecks (10%).	-	005	043	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [043].
045	-	Void	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
046	-	Void	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
047	Cut	Cut for sub-oval pit measuring 1.24m by 0.75m and 0.18m deep. Sides are steeply sloping with a sharp curve onto a flat base. Disturbed by burrowing.	-	005	-	048	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function.
048	Fill	Fill of pit [047]: mid grey brown, friable, silty sand with occasional small and medium stones (20%) and very rare charcoal flecks (<1%). Burrowing and root disturbance throughout.	-	005	047	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [047].
049	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit measuring 1m by 0.7m and 0.05m deep. Sides are very shallow with a wide flat base. Disturbed by burrowing.	-	005	-	050	002	-	-	Firepit or in situ burning, possibly truncated.

Context No.	Context Type	Description	Over	Under	Fill of	Filled By	Cuts	Cut By	Same As	Interpretation
050	Fill	Fill of pit [049]: very mixed mid orangey grey, friable, silty sand with black charcoal lenses throughout. Contains occasional small stones (10%) and frequent charcoal flecks and chunks (20%).	-	005	049	-	-	-	-	Fill of firepit [049].
051	Cut	Cut for sub-rectangular pit measuring 1.27m by 0.84m and 0.06m deep. Sides are very shallow with a gradual curve onto a wide flat base.	-	005	-	052	002	-	-	Firepit or in situ burning, possibly truncated.
052	Fill	Fill of pit [051]: dark black, loose, silty sand with some orangey brown lenses from animal burrowing. Contains occasional small stones (10%) and very charcoal rich (60%), with frequent charcoal flecks, chunks and some larger pieces of wood.	-	005	052	-	-	-	-	Fill of firepit [051].
053	Cut	Cut for sub-oval pit measuring 0.75m by 0.4m and 0.11m deep. Sides are moderately steeply sloping with a gradual curve onto a rounded base.	-	005	-	054	002	-	-	Pit of unknown date and function.
054	Fill	Fill of pit [054]: dark grey brown, friable, silty sand, mixed with light orangey sand from burrowing. Contains occasional small stones (10%) and very rare charcoal flecks (<1%).	-	005	053	-	-	-	-	Fill of pit [053].

Appendix 2 List of Samples

Context no.	No. of Tubs/Bags	Size	Comments
003	1 tub	10L	Contains possible charcoal
007	1 tub	10L	Contains possible charcoal
009	1 tub	10L	Contains possible charcoal
011	1 tub	10L	Contains possible charcoal
013	1 tub	10L	Contains possible charcoal
015	1 tub	10L	Contains charcoal from a firepit
017	1 tub	10L	Contains charcoal from a firepit
019	1 tub	10L	Contains charcoal from a firepit
020	1 tub	10L	Contains charcoal from a firepit
024	1 bag	4L	Contains charcoal
026	1 bag	3L	Contains charcoal
028	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
030	1 bag	4L	Contains charcoal
032	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
034	1 bag	4L	Contains charcoal
036	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
038	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
040	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
042	1 bag	3L	Contains charcoal
044	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
048	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal
050	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal from a firepit
052	2 bags	10L	Contains large quantities of charcoal from a possible firepit
054	1 bag	5L	Contains charcoal

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RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

23 August 2023

Laboratory Code	SUERC-111921 (GU64922)
Submitter	Jackaline Robertson AOC Holdings Ltd Unit A7 Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead EH20 9SY
Site Reference	70527
Context Reference	17
Material	Cereal caryopses : Oat
$\delta^{13}C$ relative to VPDB	-26.8 ‰
Radiocarbon Age BP	956 ± 21

N.B. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD) and requires calibration to the calendar timescale. The error, expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

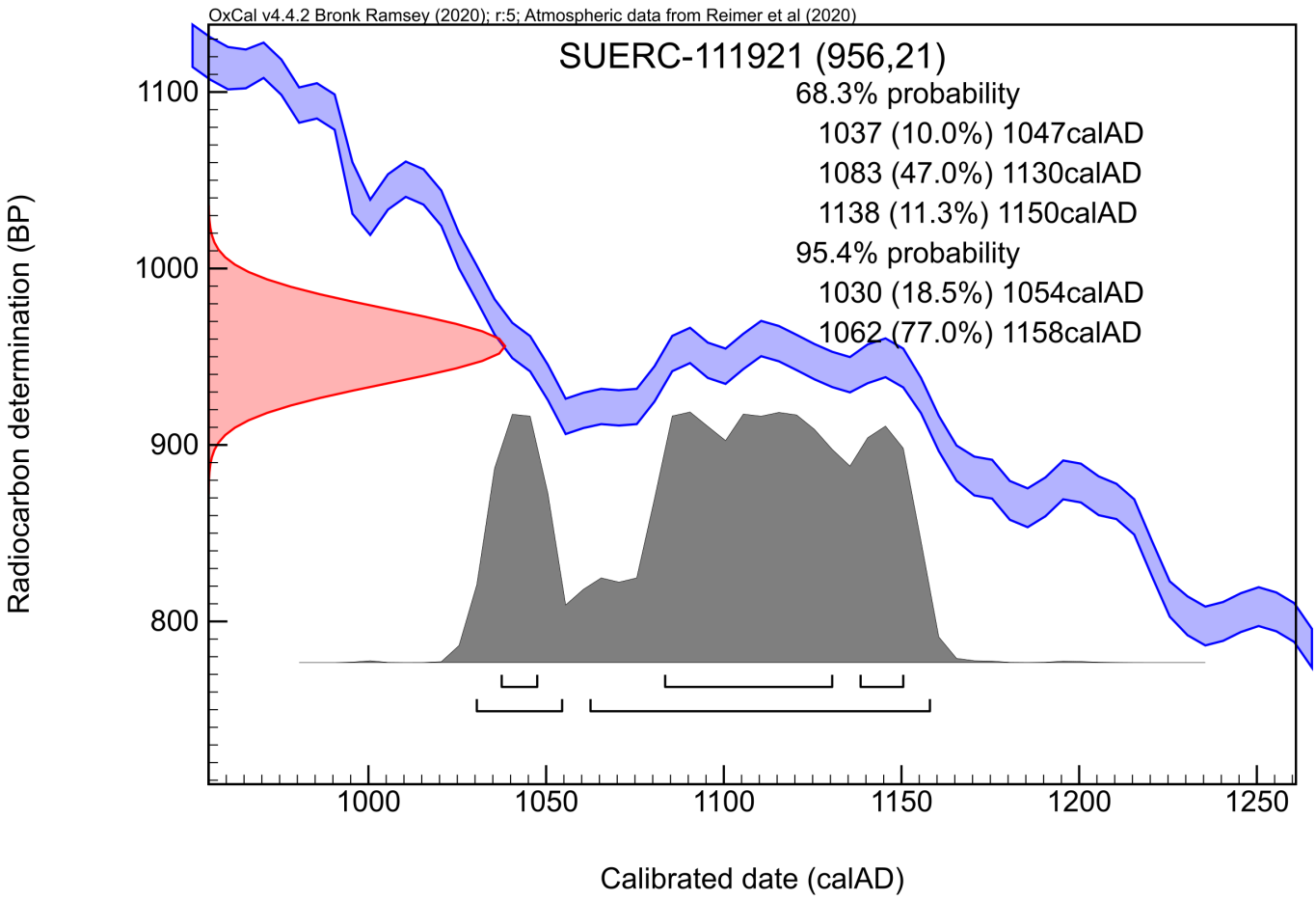
Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Laboratory and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. The laboratory GU coding should also be given in parentheses after the SUERC code.

Detailed descriptions of the methods employed by the SUERC Radiocarbon Laboratory can be found in Dunbar et al. (2016) *Radiocarbon 58(1) pp.9-23.*

For any queries relating to this certificate, the laboratory can be contacted at suerc-c14lab@glasgow.ac.uk.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by : E. Dunbar

Checked and signed off by :



The radiocarbon age given overleaf is calibrated to the calendar timescale using the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program OxCal 4.*

The above date ranges have been calibrated using the IntCal20 atmospheric calibration curve†

Please contact the laboratory if you wish to discuss this further.

* Bronk Ramsey (2009) *Radiocarbon 51(1) pp.337-60*

† Reimer et al. (2020) *Radiocarbon 62(4) pp.725-57*

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RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

23 August 2023

Laboratory Code	SUERC-111925 (GU64923)
Submitter	Jackaline Robertson AOC Holdings Ltd Unit A7 Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead EH20 9SY
Site Reference	70527
Context Reference	19
Material	Charcoal roundwood : Alder
$\delta^{13}C$ relative to VPDB	-29.3 ‰
Radiocarbon Age BP	3286 ± 24

N.B. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD) and requires calibration to the calendar timescale. The error, expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

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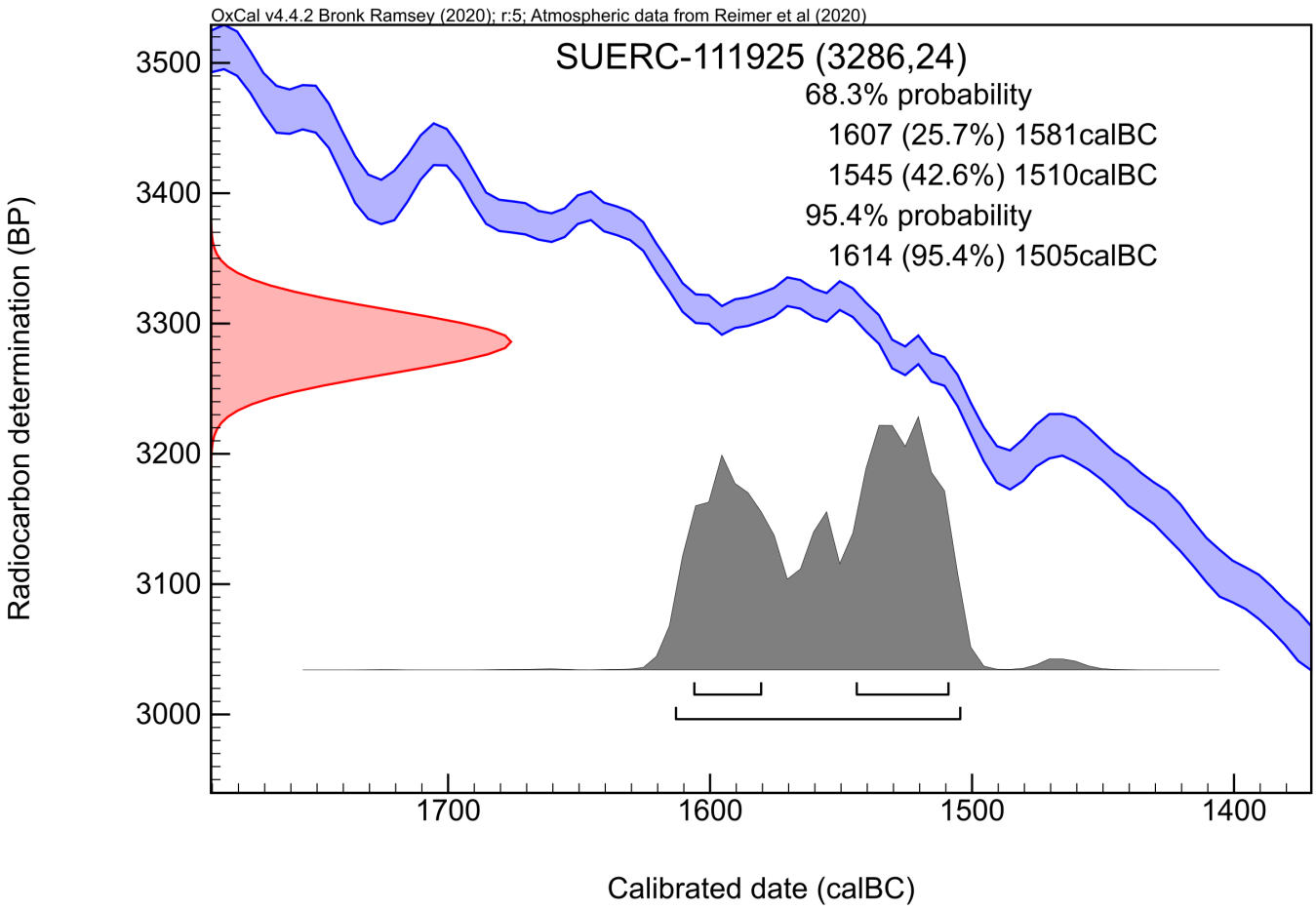
For any queries relating to this certificate, the laboratory can be contacted at suerc-c14lab@glasgow.ac.uk.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by : E. Dunbar

Checked and signed off by :



The radiocarbon age given overleaf is calibrated to the calendar timescale using the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program OxCal 4.*

The above date ranges have been calibrated using the IntCal20 atmospheric calibration curve†

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RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

23 August 2023

Laboratory Code	SUERC-111926 (GU64924)
Submitter	Jackaline Robertson AOC Holdings Ltd Unit A7 Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead EH20 9SY
Site Reference	70527
Context Reference	50
Material	Charcoal roundwood : Hazel
$\delta^{13}C$ relative to VPDB	-27.2 ‰
Radiocarbon Age BP	1017 ± 24

N.B. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD) and requires calibration to the calendar timescale. The error, expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

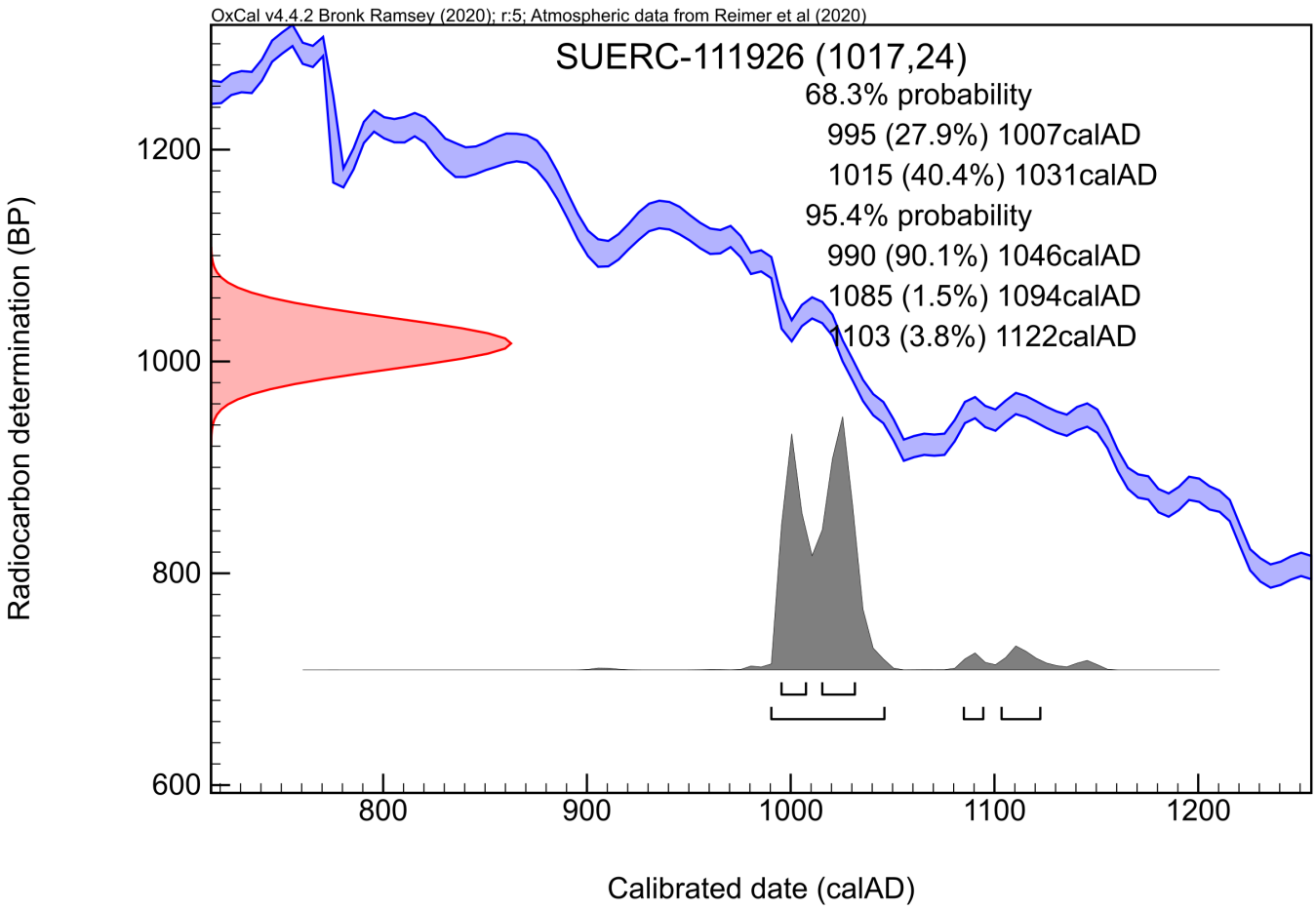
Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Laboratory and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. The laboratory GU coding should also be given in parentheses after the SUERC code.

Detailed descriptions of the methods employed by the SUERC Radiocarbon Laboratory can be found in Dunbar et al. (2016) *Radiocarbon 58(1) pp.9-23.*

For any queries relating to this certificate, the laboratory can be contacted at suerc-c14lab@glasgow.ac.uk.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by : E. Dunbar

Checked and signed off by :



The radiocarbon age given overleaf is calibrated to the calendar timescale using the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program OxCal 4.*

The above date ranges have been calibrated using the IntCal20 atmospheric calibration curve†

Please contact the laboratory if you wish to discuss this further.

* Bronk Ramsey (2009) *Radiocarbon 51(1) pp.337-60*

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Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0QF, Scotland, UK
Director: Professor F M Stuart Tel: +44 (0)1355 223332 www.glasgow.ac.uk/suerc

RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

23 August 2023

Laboratory Code	SUERC-111927 (GU64925)
Submitter	Jackaline Robertson AOC Holdings Ltd Unit A7 Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead EH20 9SY
Site Reference	70527
Context Reference	52
Material	Charcoal roundwood : Hazel
$\delta^{13}C$ relative to VPDB	-26.7 ‰
Radiocarbon Age BP	1064 ± 24

N.B. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD) and requires calibration to the calendar timescale. The error, expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Laboratory and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. The laboratory GU coding should also be given in parentheses after the SUERC code.

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Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by : E. Dunbar

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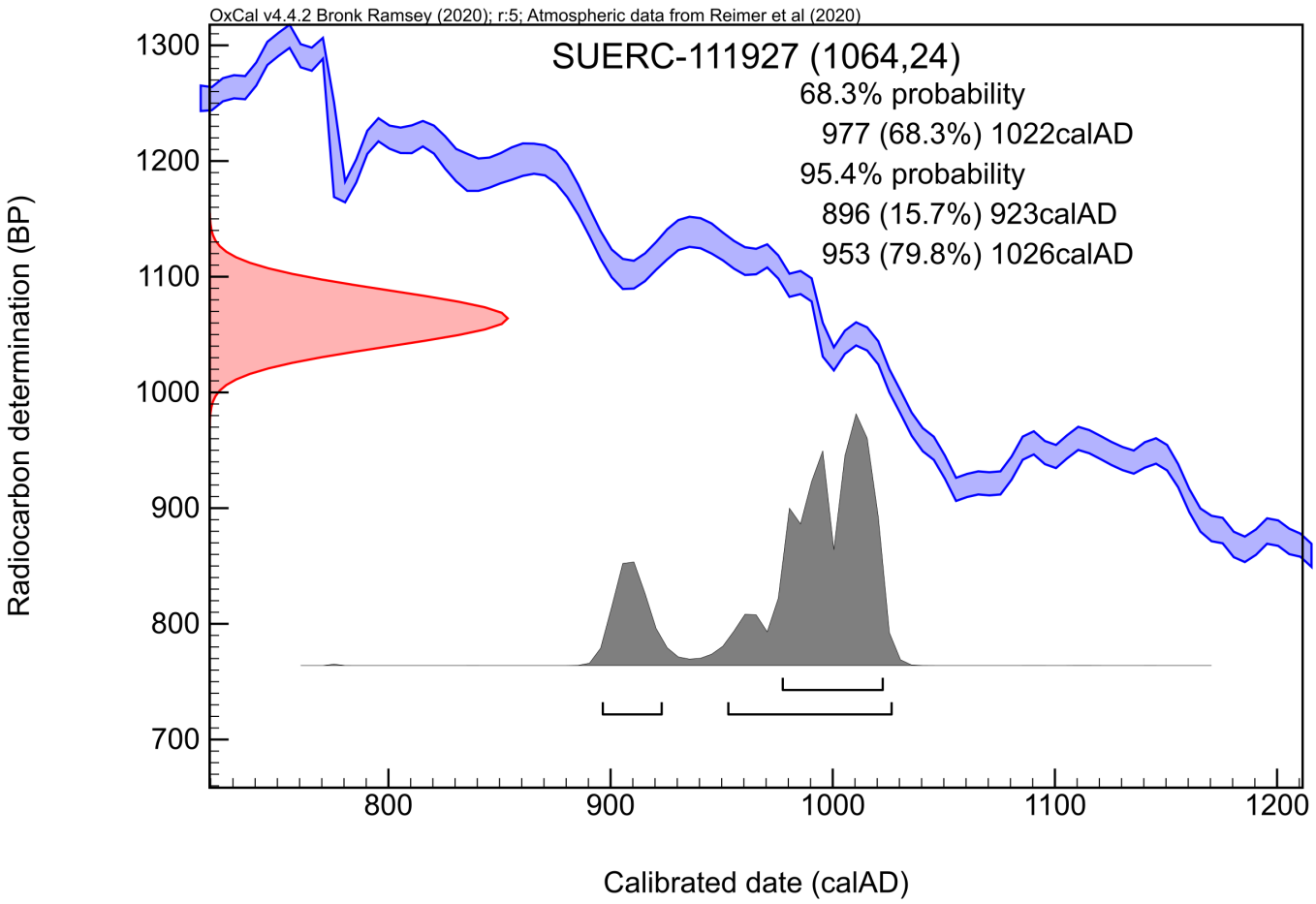

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The above date ranges have been calibrated using the IntCal20 atmospheric calibration curve†

Please contact the laboratory if you wish to discuss this further.

* Bronk Ramsey (2009) *Radiocarbon 51(1) pp.337-60*

† Reimer et al. (2020) *Radiocarbon 62(4) pp.725-57*

Appendix 4 Fired Clay Report

Andrew Morrison

A small quantity of fired clay fragments (11.2g) was recovered during the post-excavation processing of soil sample retent. In total, 10 small to tiny, fired clay fragments were retrieved, all of which were from the burnt sandy silt and ash top fill (*019*) of an irregular fire pit [*022*], the lower fills of which contained the remains of burnt timbers or posts, possibly representing structural remains, while the top fill was partially mixed with the underlying layer.

The fired clay fragments are all well-worn and heavily abraded, with a light pinkish orange to buff-coloured fabric of fine sandy clay with infrequent tiny quartzite inclusions, to a darker, grey-brown fabric likely representing a different pocket within the clay. One of the fragments retains a possible root/grass impression, while the largest fragment has a light grey-buff coloured to black fabric, possibly resulting from secondary firing. Due to the advanced weathering, all the fragments are amorphous, apart from the largest fragment, which displays a possible deliberately shaped surface with a potential rounded withy impression (Diam: >11.4mm) in the opposite face. Due to the small size and heavy abrasion affecting the fragment, the interpretation of the flat surface and withy impression is not definitive, and not enough of the overall form survives to determine the type of structure of which it may once have formed a part.

Fired clay fragments may relate to clay-lined structures or features such as a hearth, or to any number of withy and clay-built superstructures, including a wattle wall or screen, furnace, or grain-drying kiln; in these, raw clay was built around a framework of withies, which then became fired either as a product of the structure's function or as the result of an incidental burning event. While many of these wattle and clay structures are often associated with prehistoric activity, possible date ranges for withy and clay structures can span anywhere from the prehistoric to early modern periods, with grain-drying kilns, for instance, used in the drying of grain prior to milling and storage (Ellis 2002, 435), representing common feature types that were present on nearly every farm or farm group in Scotland from the medieval to early modern periods (Fenton 1978).

The fire pit [*022*] that the fired clay fragments were recovered from has been dated through radiocarbon dating of a fragment of roundwood alder charcoal from the top fill (019) to a date range of between 1614–1505 cal BC (95.4% probability; SUERC-111925) placing it in the middle Bronze Age. The small quantity and well-worn and abraded fired clay fragments recovered suggests that they are all residual within the feature's top fill (*019*), and likely represent the remains of a heavily truncated prehistoric feature located somewhere in the vicinity rather than being directly related to the function of the pit, with the burnt surface of largest fragment representing a secondary firing resulting from its inclusion within the fire pit fill.

Catalogue

RT019 Fired Clay. Ten small to tiny fragments of very well-worn and abraded fired clay. Light pinkish orange to buff coloured fabric of fine sandy clay with infrequent tiny quartzite inclusions to a darker, grey brown fabric likely representing a different pocket within the clay. One has a possible root/ vegetation impression. The largest fragment displays a possible flat to slightly curved surface with a potential rounded withy impression within the opposite face. The fabric is light grey-buff coloured to black from firing. All other fragments are amorphous. Not closely dateable. Largest fragment: L: 23.6mm, W: 15.7mm, Th: 15.6mm, Withy Diam: >11.4mm. Total Mass: 11.2g. Retent finds. Context (*019*): Upper fill of irregular fire pit [*022*], which possibly contained burnt-out structural remains. Top fill had indistinct edges with likely mixing with the underlying fill.

Appendix 5 Fire-cracked Stone Report

Andrew Morrison

A sample of fire-cracked cobbles and heat affected rock fragments (3.9kg) were recovered by hand in the field during the recent archaeological watching brief at land to the southeast of Castlecraig Farm. In total, 11 small to moderate-sized ovoid cobble and more angular stone fragments were retrieved from the single, stone-rich sandy silt fill (*011*) of a sub-circular pit [*012*].

The recovered stones comprise a mixture of quartzitic fine-grained sandstone and mica schist water-worn cobbles, both of which are common to the area, the largest of which is no larger than the palm of an average-sized hand. Most of the stones have been fire-cracked, while all have been heat-affected with sooting present across their surfaces, confirming their association with heat, water, and fire. Fire-cracked rocks are the result of exposure to direct heat, which can also fracture when placed into contact with water. The heat-retaining properties of the stone can be put to many uses, including as pot boilers, where the stones were heated in a fire and then placed in to a vessel to instantly heat the liquid contents (Ballin Smith 1994, 210), in cooking, where the fire-heated stones were placed in the base of a cooking oven and covered in grass or vegetation with the food then being cooked over the top (Curle 1939, 91), as well as in corn-driers where they were used to help dry the grain before processing (Fenton 1978: 375). Another potential use for fire-cracked cobbles is in the sauna, or bath house, as was demonstrated at the Viking/Norse settlement at Freswick Links, in Caithness (Curle 1939, 77–9), where previously fire-cracked cobbles were re-heated over a fire in the corner of a small stone chamber, with water then poured over the hot stones to produce steam and increase temperature and humidity.

Although the function of the pit [*022*] remains unclear, the presence of charcoal along with the fire-cracked and heat-affected cobbles suggests that it may represent the remains of a heavily truncated cooking pit of an indeterminate date.

Catalogue

<4> Fire-cracked/ heat-affected stone. Eleven small to moderate-sized fire-cracked cobbles and heat-affected stone. Water-worn ovoid to more angular/ irregular fragments of quartzitic sandstone and mica schist, that are all either fire-cracked or heat-affected with discolouration, degradation, and sooting all present. No further evidence of use or modification has been noted. Includes a larger mica schist fire-cracked cobble, two larger fire-cracked and one heat affected quartzitic sandstone cobbles, three smaller fragments of heat-affected and fire-cracked mica schist, and four smaller fragments of heat-affected and fire-cracked quartzitic sandstone and one small trapezoidal, heat-affected quartzite pebble. Not closely dateable. Largest fragment: L: 88.2mm, W: 125.8mm, H: 60.0mm. Total Mass: 3,927.3g. Context (*011*): Firm, stone-rich sandy silt single fill of sub-circular pit [*012*], the upper part of which is disturbed by burrowing

Appendix 6 Ecofact Report

Genoveva Dimova

Introduction

A total of 24 bulk samples were submitted for environmental analysis in November 2023 from the watching brief undertaken in advance of construction of new holiday pods at Castlecraig Farm, Nigg. The samples were collected from a series of pits, firepits, postholes and gullies, dating to the middle Bronze Age and the early medieval period. It was noted during excavation that many of the archaeological features had been heavily truncated, and this may have inadvertently destroyed or permanently removed ecofacts from the assemblage.

The environmental finds were composed of carbonised macroplants and charcoal. The main objective of this report was to analyse the two ecofact assemblages in conjunction with each other. This was to help understand crop husbandry, diet, exploitation of wild plant resources, the nature of surrounding woodland and to identify any changes in how plant resources were used throughout the occupation of the settlement.

Methodology

The bulk samples were processed in their entirety in laboratory conditions using a floatation method designed to retrieve both ecofacts and artefacts (cf. Kenward *et al*. 1980). The sediment consisted of a sandy silt, which did not require any pre-treatment. The wash overs were scanned using a high-powered microscope at x10-x450 magnification. The residue was separated using a stack system of 4mm, 2mm and 1mm sieves, and each fraction was scanned by eye and with a magnet.

All plant macrofossils were examined at magnifications of x10 and up to x450. Macroplant identifications were confirmed using modern reference material and seed atlases stored at AOC Edinburgh (Cappers *et al.* 2006; Jacomet 2006). Taxonomy and nomenclature for plants follows Stace (2010).

A maximum of ten charcoal fragments larger than 4mm were selected for further analysis. Species identifications were confirmed by analysing the transverse, tangential and radial sections at x70-x450 magnification and using keys and texts stored at AOC Edinburgh (Schweingruber 1990; Hather 2000).

The assemblage

The macroplant

The macroplant assemblage numbered 83 finds, recovered from eight deposits. It was composed of cereal caryopses, nuts, and weeds. Preservation of these finds ranged from poor to good, but most were described as adequate.

Crops

A total of 72 caryopses were recovered from three contexts, fill (007) in undated ditch [008], and fills (015) and (017) in medieval firepit [018]. The cereals were cultivated oat (*Avena sativa* L.), oat (*Avena* sp.) and cereal (*Cerealia* sp.). The cereal assemblage was concentrated within firepit [018].

Nuts

A total of 15 hazelnut (*Corylus avellana* L.) shell fragments and one complete hazelnut were recovered from six features: Bronze Age firepit [022], Medieval firepit [018], and four undated features, ditch [008], pit [012], pit [047], and pit [053].

Woodland

A single tree bud was recovered from undated pit [023].

Weeds

The nine weeds were scattered among four contexts with no evidence of selective or deliberate disposal. The number and species were: three sedge (*Carex* sp.), two black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus* L.), one bog bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata* L.), one pale persicaria (*Persicaria lapathifolia* L.), one cinquefoils (*Potentilla* sp.), and one clover (*Trifolium* sp.).

The charcoal assemblage

From the charcoal assemblage (958.3g), 215 fragments were identified to species. The species were alder (*Alnus glutinosa* L.), hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.), pine (*Pinus* sp.), cherry (*Prunus* sp.), and oak (*Quercus* sp.). Preservation of the charcoal ranged from poor to good, with most fragments recorded as adequate. The assemblage was concentrated within the four firepits: [018], [022], [049] and [051], as well as pit [009].

Summary of the contextual units

Middle Bronze Age

Firepit [022], contexts (019), (020).

Macroplant: There were six fragments of hazelnut shell and one complete hazelnut found in fill (019).

Charcoal: From context (019), the charcoal (7g) was identified as oak (70%), roundwood hazel (20%), and roundwood alder (10%). From context (020), the assemblage (55.2g) was formed entirely of oak.

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel debris, whereas the hazelnut shell could have been collected as a wild food resource. The complete hazelnut was either accidentally dropped into the fire during roasting or was part of the material used as fuel.

Early Medieval

Firepit [018], contexts (015), (017)

Macroplant: There were 71 cereal caryopses scattered among contexts (015) and (017). The species were oat (94%) cultivated oat (3%), and cereal (3%). One sedge, one bog bean, and one fragment of hazelnut shell were also recovered from (017).

Charcoal: The charcoal assemblage from both contexts was large: from fill (015), there were a total of 140g of charcoal identified entirely as oak, while from context (107), there were 105.5g of oak charcoal.

Synthesis: The cereal is food waste overlooked within this firepit and the charcoal the remnants of fuel debris. The hazelnut shell is likely wild food debris recycled as fuel. The weeds may be accidental inclusions that were accidentally burnt.

Firepit [050], context (049)

Macroplant: There were no macroplants.

Charcoal: The charcoal (74.4g) was hazel.

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel debris from the firepit.

Firepit [051], context (052)

Macroplant: There were no macroplants identified.

Charcoal: The assemblage (493.9g) was formed entirely of hazel.

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel waste.

Features of unknown date

Drainage ditch [008], context (007)

Macroplant: A single oat and two fragments of hazelnut shell were found.

Charcoal: The charcoal (0.4g) was identified as two fragments of oak.

Synthesis: These ecofacts are food and fuel waste reworked into the unused drainage ditch.

Pit [010], context (009)

Macroplant: There were no macroplants.

Charcoal: The assemblage (36.3g) was formed of hazel roundwood (50%), alder roundwood (40%), long with fragments of oak (10%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel waste, disposed of within this pit.

Pit [012], context (011)

Macroplant: A single hazelnut shell was recovered.

Charcoal: The charcoal (19.2g) was hazel roundwood (90%) and oak fragments (10%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel debris, while the hazelnut shell is food debris, potentially recycled as fuel.

Pit [023], context (024)

Macroplant: The only find was a single bud.

Charcoal: The assemblage (2.6g) was composed of hazel roundwood (90%) and oak fragments(10%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel waste, while the bud was likely brought to the site with the wood used for fuel.

Pit [027], context (028)

Macroplant: There was a single cinquefoil noted.

Charcoal: The only charcoal was a single fragment of oak (0.1g).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel debris whereas the weed is an accidental inclusion.

Pit [029], context (030)
Macroplant: No macroplants were identified.

Charcoal: The charcoal (4.8g) was formed entirely of oak.

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel waste reworked into this pit.

Pit [031], context (032)
Macroplant: The weeds were mix of one sedge, one black bindweed, one pale persicaria and one clover.

Charcoal: The assemblage (0.5g) was identified as oak (80%) and alder (20%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel waste while the weeds likely grew nearby and were accidentally burnt.

Pit [033], context (034)
Macroplant: There were no macroplants noted.

Charcoal: There was one fragment of hazel and one of oak (0.2g).

Synthesis: The charcoal is likely fuel waste.

Pit [035], context (036)
Macroplant: No macroplants were present.

Charcoal: The charcoal (0.3g) was composed of hazel roundwood (90%) and oak (10%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is likely fuel waste.

Pit [037], context (038)
Macroplant: The only finds were one sedge and one black bindweed.

Charcoal: No charcoal was recovered from this pit.

Synthesis: The weeds are accidental inclusions.

Pit [041], context (042)
Macroplant: There were no macroplants identified.

Charcoal: The assemblage (2.7g) was identified as oak (70%) and hazel roundwood (30%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel waste.

Pit [043], context (044)
Macroplant: No macroplants were noted in this pit.

Charcoal: The charcoal (0.5g) was formed of oak (60%), hazel (20%), and pine (20%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel waste reworked into this pit.

Pit [047], context (048)
Macroplant: There were four fragments of hazelnut shell.

Charcoal: The assemblage (1.8g) was composed of oak (60%), cherry (30%), and alder (10%).

Synthesis: The charcoal is redeposited fuel debris, while the hazelnut shell could have been collected as a wild food recourse and recycled as fuel.

Pit [053], context (054)
Macroplant: A single fragment of hazelnut shell was found.

Charcoal: The assemblage (12.9g) was formed entirely of oak.

Synthesis: The charcoal is fuel waste reworked into this pit, while the hazelnut shell is food debris, potentially recycled as fuel.

Discussion

Crops

The cereal assemblage has derived from residual food waste overlooked within the fire pits and reworked into the surrounding pits, postholes and gullies during cleaning of hearths and floor surfaces. The absence of any cereal chaff indicates that crop processing did not occur in this location and the caryopses are the remnants of domestic food waste. The only crops recovered from the dated deposits came from medieval firepit [018]. The species were oat (94%), cultivated oat (3%), and cereal (3%). During the medieval period, oats were an economically important crop, due to their suitability to the wetter climate and poorer soils of Scotland (Dickson & Dickson 2000, 213). Therefore, their exploitation at Castlecraig during this period is unsurprising.

Nuts
A complete hazelnut shell and six hazelnut shell fragments came from Early Bronze Age firepit [022], while a single hazelnut shell fragment was recovered from medieval firepit [018]. Hazelnuts have been collected as a wild food resource in Scotland from the Mesolithic onwards and the shells were often recycled as kindling. They are frequently recovered from archaeological contexts due to their widespread availability and their robustness, which means they survive the charring process more often than other types of plant material (Bishop 2019). The unfragmented condition of the complete hazelnut shell suggests that while it could have been collected for food, the nut was not extracted and consumed. Instead, it may have been accidentally dropped into the fire during roasting or was an accidental inclusion with the wood selected for fuel.

Woodland

The bud recovered from one of the pits of unknown date is an accidental inclusion within the wood that was brought to site to be used as a fuel source.

Weeds

The only weeds recovered from the dated deposits came from early medieval firepit [018], in which there was one sedge and one bog bean. Both of those species favour damp habitats, indicating the site was close to boggy and wet environments (Stace 2000). The black bindweed, pale persicaria, cinquefoils and clovers are found in both waste ground and damp habitats. The small size of the weed assemblage precludes drawing any conclusions about how the surrounding environment developed throughout the site's occupation.

Some of the species, such as clover, cinquefoils, black bindweed and pale persicaria, have historically been used as food and medicine, while sedges were used for thatching, flooring, bedding, packing and fuel. However, as most of the weeds were scattered around the site in small numbers and all represent common weeds it is not possible to establish what economic role, if any, they had at this site.

Charcoal

The charcoal assemblage is in situ fuel debris recovered from the firepits, as well as material, reworked into the surrounding ditches, gullies, pits and postholes. There was no evidence that any structural elements of artefacts were burnt or disposed of onsite. The wood species are all native and would have grown in the surrounding landscape. Alder and birch are found in damp habitats, while hazel and cherry grow in hedgerows, scrub, or more open woods. Pine prefers acidic landscape whereas oak is adaptable to a variety of growing conditions (Linford 2009; Stace 2010).

The small size of the charcoal assemblage makes it challenging to draw any firm conclusions concerning the changing role of woodland from the Bronze Age to the medieval period. The most that can be ascertained from the available evidence is that during the Early Bronze Age, oak (85%) was the dominant species with hazel (10%) and alder (5%) having a more marginal role. The medieval assemblage was a mix of hazel (50%) and oak (50%). The charcoal from Castlecraig Farm has formed through the in situ burning and disposal of fuel debris.

Conclusion

The macroplant and charcoal assemblage from Castlecraig Farm, while small still provides some information about the role of plant resources during both periods of occupation. During the middle Bronze Age the population had access to a variety of woodland resources, including oak, alder, and hazel, while the recovery of hazelnut shell points to the exploitation of wild food resources. Analysis of the medieval deposits reveals that oats were cultivated for food and hazel and oak were used as a fuel resource. The ecofact assemblage demonstrates that the population living at this multi-phase site had access to both food and fuel resources.

Appendix A:

Table 1: Charred macroplant.

Date			**Bronze Age**	**Medieval**	**Medieval**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**
Feature			firepit 22	firepit 18	firepit 18	ditch 8	Pit 12	pit 23	pit 27	pit 31	pit 37	pit 47	Pit 53
Context			19	15	17	7	11	24	28	32	38	48	54
Area			Turning circle	Turning circle	Turning circle	Track	Track	Plot 2	Plot 2	Plot 2	Plot 2	Plot 4	Plot 4
Sample No			7	9	6	2	4						
Sample vol(l)			10	10	10	10		4	5	5	5		
% Analysed			100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Species	**Name**	**Part**											
Crops													
Avena sativa L.	Cultivated oat	Caryopsis/es		1	1								
Avena sp.	Oat	Caryopsis/es		15	52	1							
Cerealia sp.	Cereal	Caryopsis/es			2								
Nuts													
Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	Shell whole(s)	1										
Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	Shell frag(s)	6		1	2	1					4	1
Weeds													
Carex sp.	Sedges	Nutlet(s)			1					1	1		
Fallopia convolvulus L.	Black bindweed	Achene(s)								1	1		
Menyanthes trifoliata L.	Bog bean	Seed(s)			1								
Persicaria lapathifolia L.	Pale persicaria	Achene(s)								1			
Potentilla sp.	Cinquefoils	Achene(s)							1				
Trifolium sp.	Clovers	Seed(s)								1			
Other													
Bud(s)								1					

Table 2: Charcoal

Date	Feature	Context	Area	Sample No	Species	Name	Frag	RW	Weight(g)
Brone Age	firepit 22	19	Turning circle	7	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	7		
Brone Age	firepit 22	19	Turning circle	7	*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		2	
Brone Age	firepit 22	19	Turning circle	7	*Alnus glutinosa* L.	Alder		1	7
Brone Age	firepit 22	20	Turning circle	8	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	20		55.2
Medieval	firepit 18	15	Turning circle	9	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	6	14	140
Medieval	firepit 18	17	Turning circle	6	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	18	2	105.5
Medieval	firepit 49	50	Plot 4		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		20	74.4
Medieval	firepit 51	52	Plot 4		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		20	493.9
Unknown	ditch 8	7	Track	2	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	2		0.4
Unknown	pit 10	9	Track	3	*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		5	
Unknown	pit 10	9	Track	3	*Alnus glutinosa* L.	Alder		4	
Unknown	pit 10	9	Track	3	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	1		36.3
Unknown	pit 12	11	Track	4	*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		9	
Unknown	pit 12	11	Track	4	*Quercus* sp.	Oak	1		19.2
Unknown	pit 23	24	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		9	
Unknown	pit 23	24	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	1		2.6
Unknown	pit 27	28	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		1	0.1
Unknown	pit 29	30	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	10		4.8
Unknown	pit 31	32	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	4		
Unknown	pit 31	32	Plot 2		*Alnus glutinosa* L.	Alder	1		0.5
Unknown	pit 33	34	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	1		
Unknown	pit 33	34	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel	1		0.2
Unknown	pit 35	36	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		9	
Unknown	pit 35	36	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	1		0.3
Unknown	pit 41	42	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	7		
Unknown	pit 41	42	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel		3	2.7
Unknown	pit 43	44	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	3		

Date	Feature	Context	Area	Sample No	Species	Name	Frag	RW	Weight(g)
Unknown	pit 43	44	Plot 2		*Corylus avellana* L.	Hazel	1		
Unknown	pit 43	44	Plot 2		*Pinus* sp.	Pine	1		0.5
Unknown	pit 47	48	Plot 2		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	6		
Unknown	pit 47	48	Plot 2		*Prunus* sp.	Cherry	3		
Unknown	pit 47	48	Plot 4		*Alnus glutinosa* L.	Alder	1		1.8
Unknown	pit 53	54	Plot 4		*Quercus* sp.	Oak	20		12.9

Key: (g)=weight given in grams









AOC Archaeology Group

AOC Archaeology Group, **The Old Estate Office, Rosehaugh Estate, Avoch, IV9 8RF**

| tel: **01463 819 841** | mob: **07972 259255** | e-mail: **inverness@aocarchaeology.com**

www.aocarchaeology.com