

# **Data Structure Report for an Archaeological Evaluation at Cradlehall Business Park, Inverness**

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Planning Reference: (02/00300/FULIN)

NGR: (2698 8445)

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

Client: BDH & Company Ltd

Project code: CBP03

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## SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the site of the proposed Cradlehall Business Park, Inverness. Trial trenches were placed on the site of the first phase of development known as the West Site. Trenching did not uncover any traces of activity other than a large modern soakaway feature. In the absence of any archaeological discoveries it is recommended that no further archaeological works be carried out on the West Site, though the remainder of the development area will require separate investigation.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report relates to an archaeological evaluation carried out by Headland Archaeology Ltd on the site of a proposed business park on Cradlehall Farm Road, on the eastern outskirts of Inverness. This development forms part of a larger planning application (02/00300/FULIN) comprising housing and a community woodland. A negative suspensive constraint relating to archaeology has been placed on the application (condition 9 dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003).

The evaluation examined only one part of the proposed development, an area of approximately 0.96ha known as the West Site. The West Site (NGR 2698 8445) forms Phase 1 of the business park development. Approximately 250 linear metres of trenching were excavated in this location totalling approximately 5% of the overall development area. The work was commissioned by WS Atkins on behalf of their client BDH and Co Ltd.

## **2. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION (Figure 1)**

The West Site occupies an area of approximately 0.96ha to the south of Cradlehall Farm Road on the eastern margins of Inverness. Originally farmland the western and southern margins of the site have been recently disturbed by earthmoving in connection with enabling works for the development (see Figure 1). A narrow corridor parallel to the main road had also been disturbed by the construction of a new cycle path. The only remarkable piece of topography within the project area was a small plateau at approximately 45mOD. To the north and west of the plateau the land slopes gently down towards the road. The nearest watercourse to the site is the Scretan Burn which is located some 300m to the west.

## **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figures 2 & 3)**

There are a number of archaeological sites in the immediate environs. Archaeological work in advance of a recent development at Castlehill in 2000 revealed circa 25 post-holes, irregular scoops and shallow pits from which Neolithic and Iron Age pottery and pitchstone was recovered (NMRS NH64SE246). Radiocarbon dates suggested a date range in the later 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC for the earliest activity here. An evaluation was carried out in the field to the SW in 2000 (NMRS NH64SE254). Several small pits and a charcoal spread were identified but no dating evidence. Environmental remains recovered from soil samples, however, suggested a medieval or later date for these features.

In the more recent past, there was a military barracks at Cradlehall in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century though the location of this appears to be east of the present site. A rapid survey of the map evidence identified Cradlehall Farm in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century though its origins may lie before this (Thomson 1830). The Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map of 1874 shows Cradlehall Farm and vicinity though nothing in the development area. A pond and lade is also shown on this map, though this is located to the south of the development area.

## **4. METHOD**

Slightly over five percent of the site area was investigated representing 500m<sup>2</sup> or 250 linear meters using a 2m wide flat bladed ditching bucket. The trenches were randomly placed across the site in order to provide as broad a coverage as possible in the search for

archaeological features. Not all parts of the development area were available for investigation, namely that occupied by the new access road and sewerage system. A 360° tracked excavator was used to remove modern overburden and topsoil down to the subsoil. Trenches did not exceed 1.2m in depth for health and safety reasons; where deeper excavation was required to answer specific questions, machine-excavated sondages were sunk through the base of the trench. Recording was carried out using the Headland Archaeology standard recording system. Colour print and slide photographs were taken. Trench locations were planned using a Leica TCR 407 Total Station Theodolite.

## **5. RESULTS**

A total of 7 trenches were opened on the site with 3 located on the small plateau in the east of the site. Archaeological visibility could be described as good on account of the orange/ brown glacial till which formed the subsoil on the site. Only one feature was identified in this trenching namely a 7m wide soakaway in TR3. This feature, approximately 7m wide and 2m deep, was filled with medium and large rounded cobbles. This feature seems to be part of a modern soakaway system perhaps for a building but more likely related to agricultural drainage. The presence of a spring to the south of the site suggests a wet area and perhaps hints at problems with drainage in the past.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features were identified in the evaluation, however the area sampled is only one part of the overall development. Further evaluation will be required on Phase 2 of the project in order to fulfil the planning condition.

## **7. REFERENCES**

### *Cartographic sources*

1830 Thomson, J *Atlas of Scotland, Northern Part of Inverness Shire. Southern Part.*

1874 Ordnance Survey *Inverness and Bona 1:10,560 scale map, Sheet XII.*

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was managed for Headland by Russel Coleman and the fieldwork carried out by Graeme Brown. Kirsty Cameron of Highland Council Archaeology Unit provided curatorial input for the project. The work was funded by BDH and Co Ltd.

## 9. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Photographic register

Film type: CP

Film number: 1

Shot	Facing	Description
1-2		ID shots
3	W	Location shot
4	WSW	Location shot
5	SW	Location shot
6	S	Location shot
7	N	Location shot
8	NNE	Location shot
9	NE	Location shot
10	E	Location shot
11	NW	TR1
12	N	Soakaway in TR3
13	NW	Soakaway in TR3
14	ESE	TR4
15	ESE	TR3
16	N	TR2
17	W	TR5
18	ENE	TR6
19	E	TR7
20	WSW	Completed evaluation
21	W	Completed evaluation
22	WNW	Completed evaluation

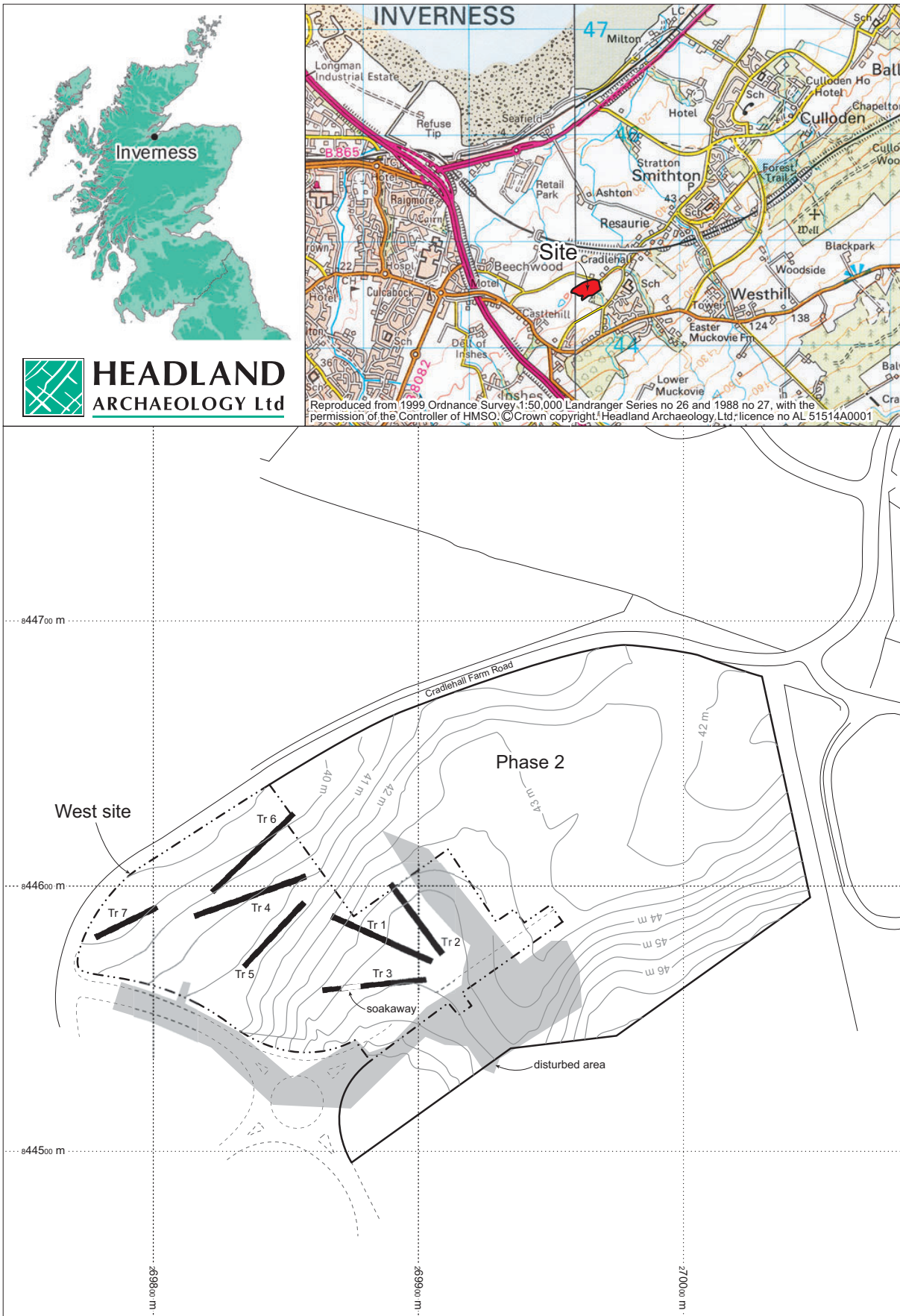


Figure 1 - Cradlehall Business Park: Trench location





Figure 2. Cradlehall Business Park: Extract form Thompson's Atlas 1830

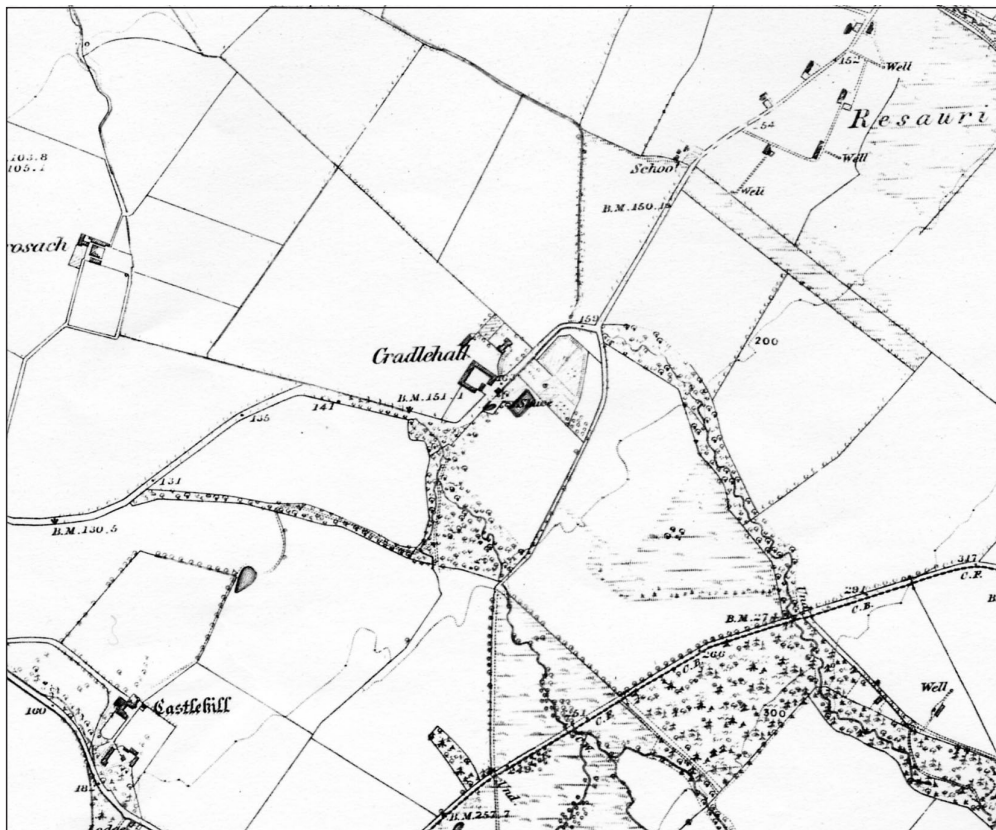


Figure 3. Cradlehall Business Park: Extract form Ordnance Survey 1:10560, Sheet XII, Inverness and Bona, 1874.