

Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
October 29th 2001
Auldearn Church, Highland
NH 918 / 555



By
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Introduction

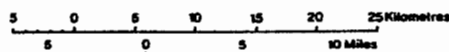
This report is for an archaeological watching brief carried out to the north of Auldearn Church for the installation of an electricity cable for floodlighting for Highland Council on behalf of Auldearn Community Council.

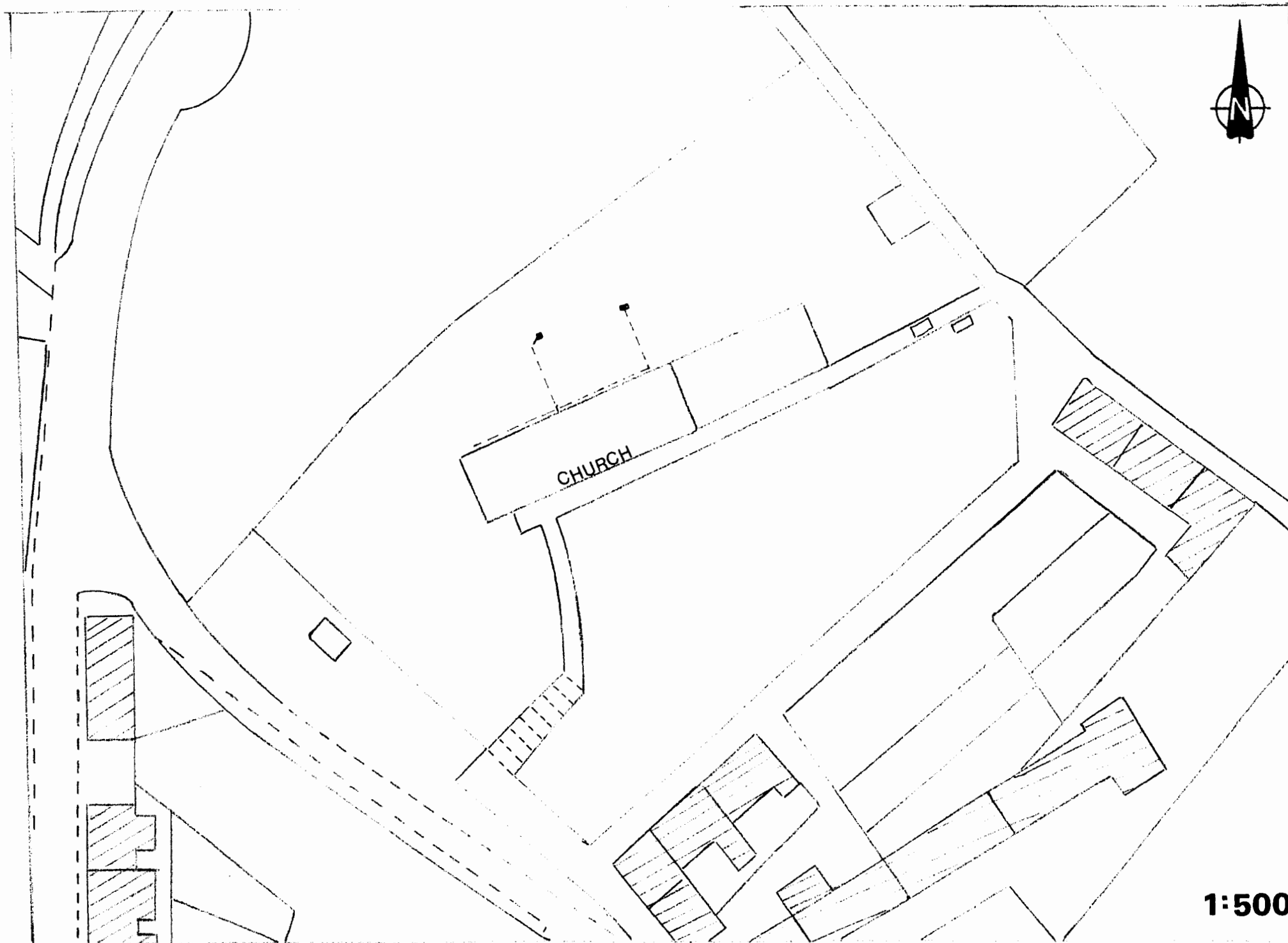
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work :

- Mr. R Murchison, of Highland Council;
- Staff of Highland Council Roads Department, for onsite work;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

Cover : church from south.





Historical Background

It is unknown when the church of Auldearn was established. Known to have been dedicated to St Columba and that the prebend was held by the Dean of Moray in Elgin Cathedral.

Present church was built in 1757, replacing earlier church, of which the nave of c.1600 survives. Church was altered in 1816-18 and 1898. The families of Hay of Lochloy, Brodie of Lethen and Dunbar of Boath reusing the earlier foundation as a burial vault. The nave was also used for burial of ministers in the late 19th century. The churchyard around the church was used principally for burials up to the 1890's when a new extension was built to the north.

Burial Records

Records for the church are fragmentary with Kirk of Session records surviving from 1805 onwards. Mortcloth records in the form of accounts exist for 1721 to 1754 (But with gaps); records of burials exist from 1816 to 1854. A later lair register exists but both lack details.

To date only two archaeological projects have previously been conducted in the area of the church; one has been a small watching brief to the northwest corner of the churchyard for the installation of an underground electricity cable with only a small amount of disarticulated bone found (Farrell, 2001) with the second project of work being a survey of the gravestones of the churchyard and adjoining cemetery. (Farrell, 2000)

Objectives

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the cable trench to record those features revealed by excavation work. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed.

Site Conditions

The area under investigation is on the north side of the church with grass and a number of headstones.

Weather on the day of work (October 29th 2001) was slightly overcast with bright periods.

Watching Brief Investigation

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

Results

A cable trench 20m in length by 0.20m wide by 0.15m was excavated to the edge of the north side of the church for the electricity cable, which revealed only topsoil with a content of fragments of sandstone rubble, pieces of slate, a couple of disarticulated bones (not retained) and two fireclay drains from the church guttering. The area has been partially disturbed to the area of the drains. Offset from this were two tracks for the cable to each floodlight (these were made by cutting the turf partially and inserting cable – no full excavation was undertaken). The two floodlight stances were each 0.6m by 0.6m by 0.2m deep and revealed only topsoil. Area was reinstated upon completion.

Recommendations

No recommendations with regards to this project are to be proposed.

Archive

Notebook of results to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh. A set of colour slides has been deposited with Highland Sites and Monuments Record, Inverness.

References

Farrell, S (2000) Auldearn Churchyard – A survey of its Memorials. 5 Volumes. Unpublished report held in the NMRS.

Farrell, S (2001) Auldearn Churchyard – Archaeological Watching Brief September 3rd–5th 2001. Unpublished report held in the NMRS.

Historic Scotland (1996) The treatment of human remains in Archaeology. Version 1.1. & Earlier version (Operational Policy Paper no.5)

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

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Appendix 1 – Details of Slides

- 1 – View of north side of church facing east before excavation.
- 2 – View of ibid of start of trench.
- 3 – View of ibid of excavated trench.
- 4 – View of ibid with electricity cable insitu.
- 5 – View of north side of church after reinstatement.
- 6 – View of excavation for floodlight base no.1.
- 7 – View of excavation for floodlight base no.2.
- 8 – View of base for floodlights.

Brief for archaeological work at:

Auldearn Parish Church

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

1) Background

- a) This specification has been produced in response to the need for an archaeological watching brief to be carried on site ground works. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted

2) Terms of Reference

- a) This specification is for archaeological recording work occasioned by the proposals for installation of lighting and associated cables at Auldearn Parish Church. It is based on the project details prepared by Rod Murchison, Senior Projects Officer, Environment Section, Planning & Development Service. If these details are changed a new specification will be needed. It is valid until April 1st 2002 after which if no work has been carried out a revised specification will be needed.
- b) The specification has been produced for Rod Murchison, the Project Manager, who will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements. Estimates should be obtained from archaeological contractors on the basis of this specification
- c) Any reference to 'archaeologist' in this specification is to be taken to mean a qualified and experienced practitioner acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist. This is to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The project should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists or an archaeologist of equivalent standing.
- d) **Before site works commence, the proposed arrangements, including a timetable for the work must be agreed with the Project Manager, and the Senior Archaeologist in writing.**

3) Tendering

- a) Tenders must be accompanied by a project design, statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director, and other staff where possible.

4) Objectives

- a) To record, to professional standards, any features and objects of archaeological importance that will be damaged or destroyed by this development. This is often achieved by clearing the topsoil to a clean surface in which archaeological features can be identified by the archaeologist.

5) Method

- a) A watching brief will be conducted by an archaeologist on site ground-works, including service trenches so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards.
- b) Those carrying out site works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. Where excavating machinery is to be used, a straight-edged bucket must be used on a back acting machine. Care will need to be taken to avoid over excavation, and the advice of the archaeologist on-site should be adhered to regarding this.
- c) The archaeologist must be given every aid by contractors to enable the archaeological work to be carried out. Contractors may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. This must be catered for and adhered to.
- d) **Should archaeological remains be encountered during the work, the archaeologist must be allowed up to one hour to record each feature. If longer than this is required, refer to paragraph 6(d)**

6) Monitoring

- a) The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor projects to ensure that specifications are met.
- b) Monitoring will normally be by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
- c) Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names and local addresses, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Senior Archaeologist by the archaeologist contracted to carry out the work.
- d) **Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or any other unexpected occurrences or conditions which might affect the agreed project work or its timetable or cost must be notified immediately to the client and the Senior Archaeologist. Revised arrangements will be required and the archaeologist must organize a site meeting with the applicant/agent and senior archaeologist to agree a course of action. No further archaeological work should take place upon the features requiring extra time until the meeting has been held and appropriate arrangements agreed. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.**
- e) Where archaeological work fails to meet this specification the applicant will be in breach of the planning condition until matters are rectified.

7) Reporting

a) Project report

- i) At least four copies of the project report must be produced. These must be submitted to all of the following within 3 weeks of the completion of the field work.
 - One paper copy for the Nairn Area Planning and Building Control Manager
 - One paper copy for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX where it will be available for immediate consultation by the public
 - A copy of the complete report in Adobe Acrobat format (ie a pdf file). This can be supplied by email or on a computer disc. Please ensure that all drawings and photographs are included.
 - One paper copy to be deposited with Norman Newton, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness.
- ii) The report must include, as a minimum,
 - Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected. Grid references must be included.
 - Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification
 - Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork
 - Scale plans, and photographs of all archaeological features noted
 - A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location
 - A brief analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of the results for future research. Note that a negative result may itself be significant.
 - General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project
 - A set of colour slides illustrating the project progress from start to completion.
- iii) The completed report will be available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, the Archaeology Unit reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. Subject to this, copyright will remain with the author unless specifically transferred in writing, and the Archaeology Unit

will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. Copyright will be acknowledged in all cases by the Archaeology Unit.

- b) This specification includes arranging a presentation of the project results to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. Arrangements must be agreed with the Senior Archaeologist.
- c) A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The cost of this must be included in any tender document.

8) **Treasure Trove**

- a) The Archaeological Contractor must liaise with the Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery prior to the start of fieldwork, regarding possible emergency conservation needs and future storage arrangements. The Assistant Curator will in turn notify the local museum of the fact that there is archaeological work ongoing in the area. Should museum staff wish to visit the site whilst the archaeological work is in progress, they must first gain permission from the site owner/agent. **The site owner/agent must be aware that no one, other than the Council's Project Manager, in consultation with the Archaeology Unit, has the authority to vary the terms of this specification.**
- b) Provision must also be made for a cataloguing system for artefactual material, which will be compatible with the needs of the institution receiving these finds. Any report to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer must be copied to the Senior Archaeologist, and the Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery. Any finds, where appropriate, should also be reported to the Receiver of Wreck.

9) **General**

- a) The archaeologist appointed must be of a professional standing acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist and must carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- b) The main contractor has responsibility for the Health and Safety of any archaeological staff on site.
- c) The archaeologist is responsible for taking all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurance.
- d) Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.
- e) The archaeologist must agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Senior Archaeologist
- f) The archaeologist appointed will not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the Senior Archaeologist
- g) Proper provision must be made for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.
- h) The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this specification.

John Wood

Senior Archaeologist

Thursday, 30 August 2001