

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF INVESTIGATION**

In respect of

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RECORDING

at

**HUNTLY CASTLE
WATER TREATMENT WORKS**

for

Historic Environment Scotland

by

Kirkdale Archaeology



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INTRODUCTION

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A programme of archaeological works conducted by Kirkdale Archaeology is required in order to monitor the work associated with the proposed upgrade of the waste water treatment system at Huntly Castle (Fig.1). The work entails the excavation of the existing sewage pipe from the existing toilets to the septic tank to lay new power and water services. The new services will then continue outside of the SAM through the location of the old septic tank to the location of a new septic tank, which has already been subject to trial investigations. Although the trial excavations found nothing of archaeological interest, and the route is largely disturbed, the works are taking place in a location of high archaeological sensitivity and as such mitigation is necessary to avoid disturbing significant archaeological deposits.

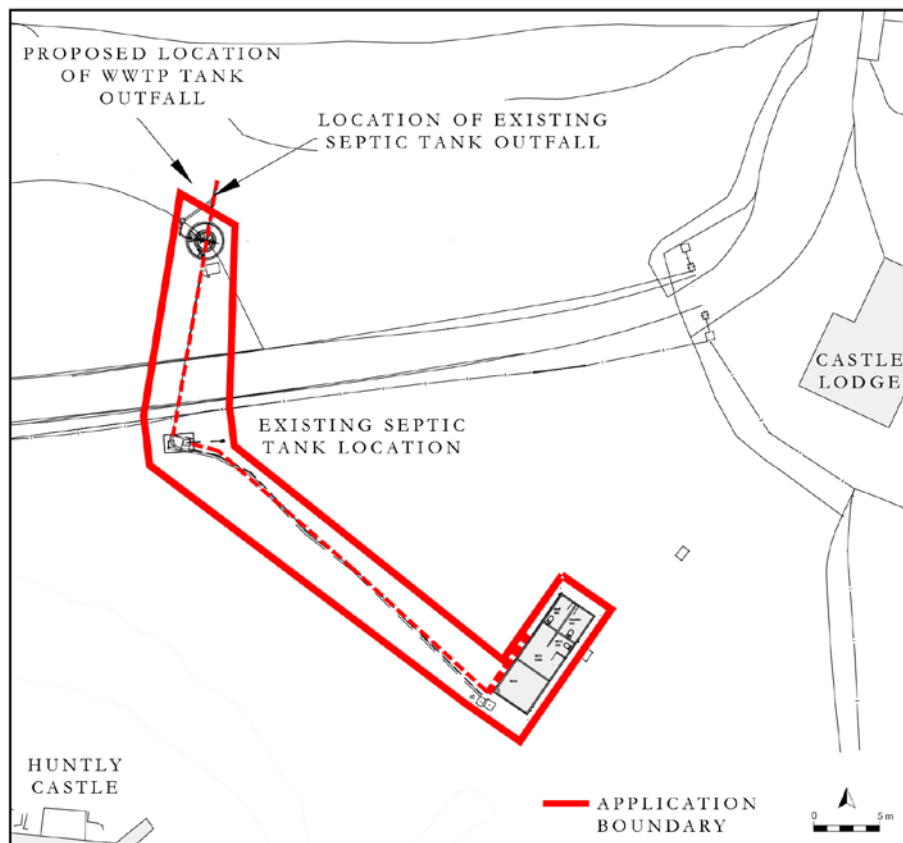


Figure 1: The proposed location of the work.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Huntly Castle is a highly complex, multi-period castle. It stands on a rise of ground, much altered to form the castle, protected to the west by the rocky gorge of the river Deveron. It is approached along a splendid double avenue of plane trees. The castle was located near an important route from the south into Moray, which in the 12th century still posed a challenge to the Canmore dynasty. The Peel of Strathbogie, as Huntly was originally known, was first constructed by Duncan, earl of Fife. The castle was granted by Robert I to Sir Adam Gordon, of Huntly in Berwickshire, and as the Gordons rose to pre-eminence in the north, Huntly Castle became their chief residence. First built in the 12th century as a motte-and-bailey, a type of timber castle, it underwent several transformations. Today, the site is dominated by the 'palace' with its magnificent southern façade capped by a red sandstone superstructure of two-storey oriel windows, carved with an inscription. To the north of the palace, within what would have been the bailey of the original timber castle, there are foundations of an earlier L-plan towerhouse, along with numerous other footings for several phases of courtyard buildings. To the west, the original motte still stands, and to the east is the early 17th century entrance.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In the 1920s the site was subject to a comprehensive clearance excavations under the direction of Douglas Simpson. Recent excavations around the west side of the courtyard have demonstrated that intact archaeological deposits do survive just below the surface in areas which we know to have been excavated by the Ministry of Works. The monument therefore remains archaeologically sensitive since the clearances cannot be taken as either having provided a definitive picture of the archaeology of the site or as having sterilised it.

In December 2014 an archaeological watching brief was carried out on a series of test trenches to the north of the castle bailey which were intended to locate the best position for the new septic tank. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the investigations, although given the proximity of the investigation to the north side of the castle, the presence of archaeological material in the vicinity should not be ruled out.

F I E L D W O R K

Prior to the digging of the pipe trench, a JCB will be brought in to clear the topsoil off of the location of the proposed new waste water treatment tank. This location has already been subject to test pitting, as noted above, and nothing of interest was found. The proposed excavation will be subject to an archaeological watching brief to ensure that there is nothing in this location which was missed by the trial pits. Work will stop if significant archaeological material is

encountered. All ground-breaking works associated with additional new pipe for cable installation will be subject to an archaeological watching brief under the same conditions.

The pipe route from the cabin to the existing septic tank is known, and there are no plans to increase the size of the trench. Therefore, this is disturbed ground already and the excavation of the route should not impact on undisturbed archaeological deposits. A small linear trench is also required along one side wall of the cabin to route the new services round to follow the outpipe. At the road, which is outside of the scheduled area, the intention is to either mole underneath or dig out the tarmac and replace.

Although the planned route is through disturbed ground, it should be noted that the original pipe trench was dug without archaeological supervision, and as such the sections have not been recorded. The opening up of the pipe trench presents an opportunity to record the profile of deposits across this part of the site. Therefore, an archaeological watching brief will be undertaken inside and outside of the scheduled area. The section will be recorded, either as a profile with depths along the length of the trench (should nothing of archaeological interest be noted in the sides of the trench), or including representative section drawings where significant material is found. In the case of any new excavation into ground not demonstrably disturbed, the excavation will be archaeologically monitored down to the top of the first archaeological layer or to the required depth, whichever is shallower. If significant archaeological deposits are encountered within the required depth, work will stop and the significance of the findings assessed. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) CRT will be informed, who will discuss the findings with the District Architect and HES Heritage Management Officer before resumption of the work.

M O N I T O R I N G

This will entail:

- The presence on site of at least one site archaeologist during all ground breaking works.
- The archaeologist should be able to direct rate, location and method of excavation employed by contractor.
- The archaeologist should suspend excavation if necessary, in order to examine / clean / retrieve any archaeological features, surfaces, structures or artefacts that may be exposed during excavation.
- All spoil will be suitably stored for examination before backfill/reinstatement.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING & EXCAVATION

This will entail:

Drawing

- Confirmation of site plan as supplied by the Client.
- Location plan of all interventions at a suitable scale, 1:50/1:100.
- Detailed, individual area plans of all interventions – at significant stages of excavation if appropriate and on completion of excavation, drawn at a scale of 1:20.
- All sections, or a representative selection, will be drawn in detail at a scale of 1:10.
- All drawing will be annotated with site feature numbers, site code, scale, date and name(s) of staff.

Photography

- Still photographs will be colour digital and will record general location of works, plus detailed coverage during, and on completion of, excavation.
- All photographs will have a suitable scale visible.
- All photographs will be listed in a full photo register (describing content, orientation and date).
- 'Documentary' photographs will also be taken in order to represent site conditions, constraints and resources.
- If appropriate, digital moving coverage will be taken for further illustration of site conditions, constraints and resources.

Site Recording: Buried Archaeology

- Description of all excavated material will be expressed in terms of archaeological features, each of which will be assigned a unique three-digit number. The numbering will also reference the site code and any individual trench number.
- Each discrete feature will be described on site *pro forma*, which will cover stratigraphic relationships, finds, physical description, location, drawing references and interpretation.
- Each feature will also be listed in a feature register – comprising a brief description, date, and feature number.

Sampling

When required, three levels of sampling are proposed for above and below ground investigations:

- **General:** Bulk sample per context removed.
- **Special:** Specific sample identified for later specialist study (charcoal, industrial waste, environmental, infestations, organics).
- **Specialist:** Monitoring of any independent sampling strategy from external specialists (dendrochronological, mortar, paint, *etc.*)

GENERAL ISSUES

In the event of the discovery of significant remains and/or artefacts, which may be impacted by the proposed works, excavation should be suspended until further instruction is received from relevant agencies. At this point the Historic Environment Scotland CRT should also be informed and consulted.

All artefacts, faunal remains and samples will be processed off-site. Disposal and/or examination/conservation of this material will be assessed in the light of results of fieldwork.

Any programme of specialist post-excavation work on finds, faunal remains and analysis of samples will be assessed on completion of the fieldwork

Any human remains revealed during the excavation will remain *in situ*. All discoveries of human remains will be reported to the local police and Historic Environment Scotland CRT.

If human remains are to be excavated during any subsequent work, this will be completed in line with Historic Environment Scotland policy on the treatment of human remains.

REPORTING

The results of the Fieldwork and DBA will be presented in an illustrated Data Structures Report (DSR) with accompanying digital documentation as specified by the Historic Environment Scotland CRT.

Copies of the report and digital files will be produced as specified. Typically this comprises:

- Four bound paper copies.
- Two digital versions on CD including all photographs (the latter in tiff or jpeg format).

This will include an assessment of all assemblages and recommendations for any further specialist work.

A costed programme for the full sample analysis towards publication of the findings will be included if appropriate.

A short note will be submitted to 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' and OASIS

The position of all trenches, excavation areas *etc.*, will be supplied on CD disk, as a georeferenced .dxf file.

Reports will be submitted within 20 working days of completion of the fieldwork.

ARCHIVE

If there is no further requirement for reporting beyond the DSR and D&E entry, the report and site records will be compiled in a suitable archive comprising primary data and digital documentation as appropriate, suitable for submission to local and national archives.

The archive will follow current guidelines for archival standards set by the Archaeology Data Service and RCAHMS.

The project archive will be deposited with the NMRS within six months of completion of fieldwork and relevant post-excavation analyses. Finds will be subject to the Scots laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*, and will be reported to the Crown Agent for disposal. Appropriate conservation of finds will be conducted before disposal.

Gordon Ewart
1st February, 2016