Dumfries fibre optic ductwork ring: Archaeological Investigations in Castledykes Park, Dumfries

Written Scheme of Investigation



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Introduction

1. This Archaeological Scheme has been prepared in support of a joint Project between NHS Dumfries & Galloway and Dumfries & Galloway Council to install a fibre optic ductwork ring around Dumfries. The installation works are being commissioned by Asher Associates Ltd. These archaeological works are designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area from the site installation work.

2. The Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist, who advises Dumfries & Galloway Council on archaeology matters, and Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage Management Officers have provided guidance to Asher associates on the structure of archaeological works required.

3. Andrew Nicholson, the Council Archaeologist has been appointed by to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation for the site investigation work. This WSI provides the detail of the works (monitoring, exclusion, excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication) for all ground breaking works for the site investigation work.

4. The identified structure of mitigation works are those necessary to ensure that the site investigation work can proceed while dealing appropriately with the identified adverse impact on the archaeological resource.

5. A consideration of the possible post-excavation and reporting structure for these works is also presented.

Background

6. The proposed development area is located to the south of Dumfries in a public park (centred NX 9768 7467). The park includes the earthwork remains of the former royal castle of Dumfries (MDG6142) and a possible earlier motte (MDG6141), both of which are Scheduled Monuments (SM2472). It is also the site of a medieval chapel (MDG6143) and was transformed in the later 18th century by the construction of a mansion house (MDG27053) and extensive landscaping, including the creation of a sunken garden in the town's late medieval quarry to the south-west. The park is designated as a Non-Inventory Designed Landscape (MDG25666). A small prehistoric polished hammer in ornamental stone from Castledykes is in Dumfries Museum (MDG6144).

7. William I took control of Lower Nithsdale around 1166, and erected a castle to the south of the burgh in c.1173, prior to his capture at Alnwick the following year. This is taken to be the 'Paradise Moat', the westernmost of the two earthworks within Castledykes Park. The royal castle, with its attendant chapel was constructed at Castledykes between c.1184 and c.1200. During the reign of John Balliol it was associated in wardenship with the castles of Kirkcudbright and Wigtown, and had a garrison of seventy-six men. In 1300 the 'castrum' was enclosed with a timber pele, around which another ditch was dug. The castle was seized by Robert Bruce in 1306 after he murdered John Comyn at Greyfriars in Dumfries, but held for only three weeks. It was surrendered to Bruce again in 1313 by Sir Dugal M'Doual, and was one of the castles in southern Scotland whose slighting was ordered on the release of David II in 1357. It was described as still ruinous two centuries later, in a mid sixteenth century report by an English agent, so appears to have never been rebuilt.

At some point in the late 18th century a "mansion house" (RCAHMS 1920) was built at the northern end of the earthworks and the grounds extensively landscaped (see Fig.X). The small stream which runs at the base of the ditch to the east of the earthworks was apparently culverted at this point, continuing northwards around the house before turning westwards – presumably along the former line of the defensive ditch, and drives, paths and other features added. The house was demolished in 1952, and the area subsequently landscaped again as a

public park. It may be at this point that the eastern lodge on Glencaple Road was demolished, to be replaced by a public toilet block.
Whilst the southern mound is known as Castle Hill, it is probable that the mound immediately to the north, between Castle Hill and Castledykes, was also part of the fortifications, as it is bounded by the culvert which continues northwards from the extant ditch. It is not known whether this represents the castrum of 1300, or whether it was part of the original fortification and the castrum lies either further west, between the two mounds and the feature called The Saddle, or under the terrace on which the house sat.

8. The Study Area is shown on Figure 1, with the proposed route marked in red and the Scheduled areas in blue, appended at the end.

Objectives

9. The character and scope of the archaeological resource within the development area is not fully understood, and it is not certain which elements belong to the medieval castles and which relate to the landscaping for the later mansion house and park. Although only a single find of prehistoric material has been made within the park finds elsewhere in the vicinity show good evidence for prehistoric occupation of the higher ground overlooking the Nith estuary from the Mesolithic onwards.

10. Necessarily, therefore, the following objectives must remain quite general:

- to monitor all intrusive excavation works to ensure the prompt identification of the archaeological resource within the area;
- to endeavour to relocate works to avoid significant archaeological strata if exposed by the site excavation works; and
- where relocation is not credible - to investigate, sample and record the archaeological resource that is adversely impacted upon by the site excavation works.

11. The objectives defined above within the development area are to be achieved through the programme of works detailed within this Scheme of Investigation.

Project Works

12. A programme of works anticipated to satisfy the requirements of the client will be undertaken. The first stage of these works is outlined below, including:

- undertake a continuous archaeological watching brief on the site excavation work in a manner that will expose any significant archaeological horizons with care;
- advise on micro-siting of site excavation work elements to retain significant archaeological horizons where appropriate;
- hand excavation to sample archaeological features exposed by the works which would be subsequently impacted on by the excavation works;
- production of a report which integrates the findings of the works, detailing the nature, form and extent of the archaeological features;
- the completion of an OASIS form; and
- in the event of significant archaeology being identified and recovered an additional report will be prepared to design appropriate post-excavation analyses and reporting, including publication where appropriate.

All works will adhere with the Chartered Institute for Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

Monitoring

13. The default approach will be that all trench excavation work will be monitored from the point where it enters the upper level of the park above the sunken garden to the south of 'paradise' motte through to where it exits the park via the eastern gateway.

14. Specifically when monitoring is undertaken:

- an archaeologist will monitor the excavation of the duct trench;
- the archaeologist will have the authority to halt the excavator should an archaeologically significant horizon be met. The archaeologist will monitor the excavator until the underlying natural subsoil has been exposed or the maximum working depth reached;
- minor or isolated potential archaeological features identified during the course of works will be excavated (in keeping with excavation protocols below); and
- more extensive or significant potential archaeological features will be assessed, delimited and secured by temporary fencing (erected by the main contractor) pending determination in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and the client as to how the material should be dealt with.

In accordance with policy on the excavation of human remains, the local constabulary, Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service and Historic Environment Scotland will be notified should articulated in situ human remains be uncovered in the course of excavations.

Excavation

15. Where archaeological remains are accessible and where excavation is the appropriate response the areas will be cleaned using hand tools to define surviving archaeology. The exposed archaeology will then be excavated and recorded.

16. After the cleaning and planning the excavation sampling strategy will seek to maintain the following levels:

a. all structures and all zones of specialised activity (e.g. funerary, ceremonial, industrial, agricultural processing) will be fully excavated and all relationships recorded;

b. ditches and gullies will have all relationships defined, investigated and recorded. Sufficient lengths of the feature will be excavated to determine the character of the feature over its entire course; the possibility of re-cuts of parts of the feature, and not the whole, will be considered. This will be achieved by a minimum 10% sample of each feature;

c. sufficient artefact assemblages will be recovered (where possible) to assist in dating the stratigraphic sequence and for obtaining ample ceramic groups for comparison with other sites;

d. all pits, as a minimum, will be half-sectioned. Usually at least 50% (by number) of the pits will be fully excavated. Decisions as to which pits will be fully excavated will be taken in the light of information gained in the half-sectioning taking into consideration, amongst other things; pit function, artefact content and location;

e. for post and stake holes where they are clearly not forming part of a structure (see above) 50% (by number) will be half-sectioned ensuring that all relationships are investigated. Where deemed necessary, by artefact content, a number may demand full excavation;

f. for other types of feature such as working hollows, quarry pits, etc the basic requirement will be that all relationships are ascertained. Further investigation will be a matter of on-site judgment, but will seek to establish as a minimum their extent, date and function; and

g. for layers, an on-site decision will be made as to the limits of their excavation. The factors governing the judgment will include the possibility that they mask earlier remains, the need to understand function and depositional processes, and the necessity to recover sufficient artefacts to date the deposit and to meet the project aims.

Recording

17. All recording will be done using the standard single context recording method of practice: site plan at 1:100, sections drawn at 1:10, individual features will be planned at 1:20 scale, and digital colour photographs will be taken. All context, small finds and bulk samples will be given unique numbers. Any artefacts that are retrieved will be subject to standard Treasure Trove procedures.

Reporting

18. The Data Structure Report will contain the following:

- the location and National Grid Reference of the site;
- a non technical summary describing briefly the work undertaken;
- appropriate lists and diagrams summarising the contexts and artefacts recovered and the records made of them;
- A selection of digital photographs to illustrate the written report;
- Fully referenced bibliography and cartographic sources;
- Photographic print and slide registers as an Appendix;
- *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (DES) Entry as an Appendix;

19. A full draft of the Data Structure Report will be circulated to the client and Historic Environment Scotland for comment. An appropriate number of copies of each finalised report will be supplied to the client, Historic Environment Scotland and Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service.

Agreement of Post-Excavation strategy

20. Where significant archaeological material has been recovered a Costed Post-Excavation Research Design will be prepared in conjunction with the Data Structure Report. This will identify the recommended analyses for the recovered material as well as providing the names and brief CVs for the appropriately qualified and experienced specialists who will carry out the works. It will also recommend the structure for the publication and dissemination of the results. This design will be subsequently agreed with Historic Environment Scotland

21. To some degree the examination will be led by the nature of the materials recovered. However any work is likely to focus on artefact analysis, palaeo-environmental analysis, radiometric dating and stratigraphic interpretation.

22. The works will also incorporate conservation work on any artefacts recovered to ensure their suitability for disposal. Full declaration of all finds will be made to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer.

Dissemination and Archiving

23. The results of the project will be published in an appropriate archaeological journal or monograph should the fieldwork results warrant this. The suitable level of publication will be dependent on the significance of the project results.

24. The project archive originally prepared during the initial site reporting will be expanded during reporting to cover all new materials generated by the post-excavation and reporting works. The finalised

archive would be submitted to the National Record of the Historic Environment at the conclusion of the project.

25. The lists of finds submitted to the Treasure Trove Unit will be renewed at the conclusion of the project will. The finds will be retained until they can be collected by, or delivered to the institution awarded the collection by the Treasure Trove Unit.

Timetable

26. Dumfries and Galloway Council's archaeologist could start when required after 8th September, but the confirmation that this WSI is acceptable to Historic Environment Scotland is necessary before site works commence.

27 The duration of works on-site will depend on the archaeological features encountered and the work programme of the main contractor. The initial reporting would be completed within four weeks of the completion of all on-site works.

28. In the event of a substantial break in the on-site works (ie greater than 4 months) then an interim report would be issued to ensure all parties are aware of the stage the archaeological works have reached.

Copyright

29. Dumfries and Galloway Council will retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it will provide an exclusive licence to the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Written Scheme.

30. Dumfries and Galloway Council will assign copyright to the client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports.

Health & Safety

31. Dumfries and Galloway Council maintains high Health & Safety standards on-site and a copy of our Health & Safety policy is available. The lead archaeologist will liaise with the Main Contractor before coming on-site to ensure that works are conducted in a safe manner.

32. Archaeological excavations will not proceed if there is a risk d due to the presence of dangerous or live services or contaminants.

Project team

33. The Archaeologist for the excavation and monitoring will be will the Council's Archaeologist who has an experience comparable to the MIfA grade of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

34. The Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist will maintain close contact with the client and Historic Environment Scotland with all significant findings being reported immediately. Monitoring visits during fieldwork will be facilitated if requested.

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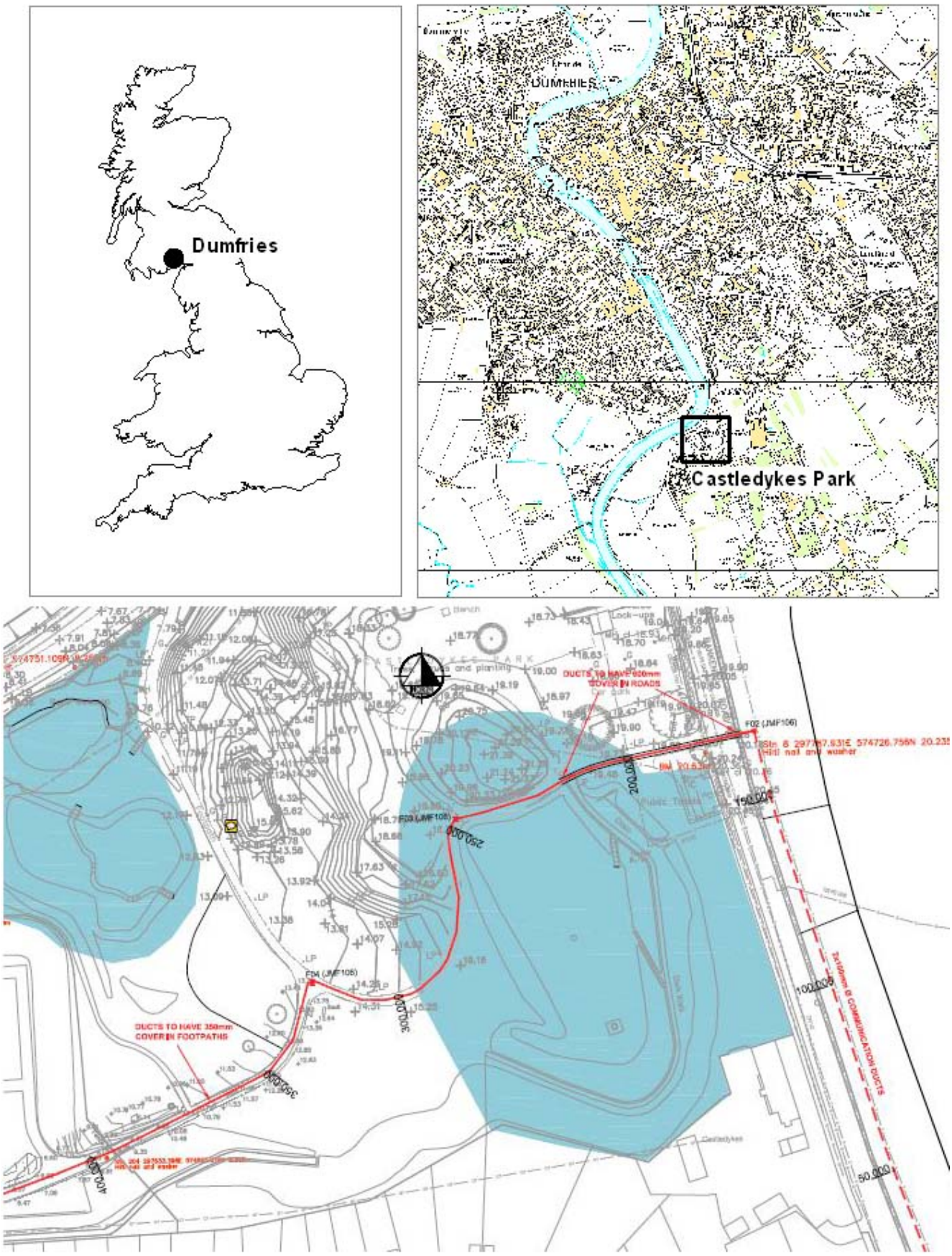


Figure 1. Location of site works, with route of trench (red) and scheduled areas (blue).