

7 Conclusion

It is difficult to interpret the nature of human activity in the area with the available evidence although some broad assumptions can be made. The area was settled at the beginning of the Neolithic period and occupied sporadically since. It is probable that the land was put to agricultural use with settlement on the edge of the Gogar Loch between Areas B and C. It is likely that animal husbandry was important in the Neolithic as indicated by the trackway. The edge of the loch would have been an excellent environment for fishing and fowling, which would have supplemented agriculture throughout the prehistoric period. The segmented enclosure system may have served as stock enclosures later in the prehistoric period. Evidence for habitation was scant but evidence was recovered for temporary settlement in the Neolithic, with more permanent settlement in the Bronze/Iron Age. The stone structure identified in Area F is an unusual feature and likely to be of either industrial or ritual function; it is very difficult to assign a domestic function to it on the available evidence. A possible cist and a number of possible funerary pits were identified in Areas A

(Phase II) and B (Phase II), although it is difficult to confirm this without the presence of human bone. If these features do represent human burials they are likely to represent isolated burials adjacent to settlement.

While significant archaeological deposits were recorded in the areas excavated, particularly areas B and F, it was unfortunate that it was not possible to open much more extensive areas. The evaluation, while extensive for its day (in Scotland), represented less than 0.5% of the surface area of the site which would be considered grossly inadequate in modern (post-1994 publication of NPPG5) archaeological practice, where a 5% sample area is the norm. The results of the excavations appear to indicate that the areas investigated were located at the periphery of more intense foci of activity. It is recognized that, with hindsight, and in a modern development context, a more robust sampling strategy would have been pursued initially and that the entire development site would have been subjected to a more exhaustive programme of works including the stripping and excavation of much larger areas.