

Case Study: Archaeology

Pictish Carving



Perth Transport Futures Project – Phase One A9/A85 Perth Transport Futures Project

28th September 2017

Whilst completing Earthworks operations on site, Alex Campbell and Bryce Prentice made what would turn out to be a significant archeological find. Their actions ensured that an important piece of Perth and Kinross's history was able to be preserved and studied.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the finders of the carving for drawing it to our attention. This is really a significant find... it's a signal of the importance of the area in Pictish times." **David Strachan – Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust**

The Challenge

During earthworks operations on the new A9/A85 junction improvement works at Perth, Alex Campbell and plant operator Bryce Prentice uncovered a large stone, unlike those they would expect to uncover as part of their usual operations and thought that it may have some significance.

The Measures

In line with Perth and Kinross's Local Development Plan and Planning and Archaeology policy, work was halted immediately until the origin of the find could be ascertained and a plan could be put in place as to how to proceed. Archaeologists from both Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust and Culture Perth and Kinross were invited on to site to assess the stone and its importance.

The Results

Mark Hall from Perth Museum and Art Gallery, a specialist in Pictish history in Perthshire, identified the stone as an early Pictish carving depicting a figure holding a spear in his right hand. The figure appeared to be wearing a cloak and has a shaven front scalp and a large nose. The right side of the

image on the stone is obscured by weathering but it is believed the figure is carrying another weapon in his other hand – perhaps a club or a staff.

The find was noteworthy as, whilst there have been many Pictish stone carvings discovered throughout the years in Scotland, this particular size of stone and the image it depicts is extremely rare and of significant importance.

Mark Hall stated "In terms of locally for the Perth area, it fills a blank from the roman episode to the development of Perth as a town from around 1000AD".

David Strachan from Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust thanked the Balfour Beatty team saying "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the finders of the carving for drawing it to our attention. This is really a significant find... it's a signal of the importance of the area in Pictish times."

Further archaeological investigations showed no further sites of significance in the area and works were allowed to recommence.

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