

13. CONCLUSIONS

The recent archaeological works at Grantown Road, Forres add to the picture of multiperiod settlement in the area revealed by the earlier works published by Cook in 2016. The 2016 publication noted Mesolithic, Early Neolithic, Bronze Age, Late Iron Age, and early medieval archaeological remains and concluded that the site was most significantly settled and utilised during the Late Iron Age period (Cook 2016). The palisaded enclosure and roundhouse remains uncovered during the present works date to this period, confirming that the Late Iron Age was indeed a significant point in terms of variety of settlement and likely in the intensity of site occupation and activities. However, the latest works have also uncovered a series of Early Neolithic pits and a possible Early Neolithic post-built roundhouse structure, which may be comparable in date with a range of features found in the earlier works. There is, however, potential that the radiocarbon date suggesting an Early Neolithic date for the roundhouse

structure may derive from residual material, which would allow this structure to potentially be Bronze Age or Iron Age in date. However, taken together, these new features appear to complement the earlier recorded remains and may suggest that the Early Neolithic activity at Grantown Road was the most geographically widespread across the landscape, in comparison with the more plentiful Late Iron Age features, which were more densely clustered. Although some early medieval features had been encountered previously, the presence of later, 13th century, activity at Grantown Road contrasts with the absence of evidence from the first half of the 2nd millennium AD in the earlier works. The presence of a rare, locally produced sandstone mortar is tentative evidence for a relatively high status 12th to 13th century settlement or other activity hitherto unrecorded in the local vicinity – though as only a single small fragment of mortar was recovered, the medieval core of Forres, a few kilometres to the north, is the most obvious source.