One of Scotland’s oldest ancient homes unearthed during construction works in Edinburgh

THE ancient building in South Queensferry was discovered during preparation work for the building of the Forth Replacement Crossing.

Groundworks in progress to prepare the southern approach to the new Forth Replacement Crossing

THE remains of what is believed to be one of Scotland’s earliest homes have been uncovered during construction works.

The ancient dwelling was found during an archaeological excavation in a field at Echline in South Queensferry, Edinburgh, in preparation for the building of the Forth Replacement Crossing.

A 7m oval pit is all that remains of the dwelling, dated to the Mesolithic period around 10,250 years ago.

It has been recorded as one of the earliest houses in Scotland.

Rod McCullagh, a senior archaeologist at Historic Scotland, said: “This discovery and the information from the laboratory analyses add valuable details to our understanding of a small but growing list of buildings erected by Scotland’s first settlers after the last glaciation 10,000 years ago.

“The radiocarbon dates taken from this site show it to be the oldest of its type found in Scotland, which adds to its significance.”

The remains feature a number of postholes which would have held wooden posts to support the walls and roof, probably covered with turf. Several internal fireplace hearths were also identified and more than 1000 flint artefacts were found, including materials used as tools and arrowheads.
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Other discoveries include large quantities of charred hazelnut shells, suggesting they were an important source of food.

Archaeologists believe the dwelling, which is more than 5000 years older than Stonehenge, would have been occupied on a seasonal basis, probably in winter.

Ed Bailey, project manager for Headland Archaeology, the firm who carried out the excavation, said: “The discovery of this rare type of site has provided us with a unique opportunity to further develop our understanding of how early prehistoric people lived along the Forth.”

Transport Minister Keith Brown said: “This ancient dwelling is an important and exciting discovery.”

The new Forth Road bridge will build over the ancient home. Historic Scotland said: “Our archaeologists advise Transport Scotland on major projects. Finds are properly recorded to add to our understanding of the site.”

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