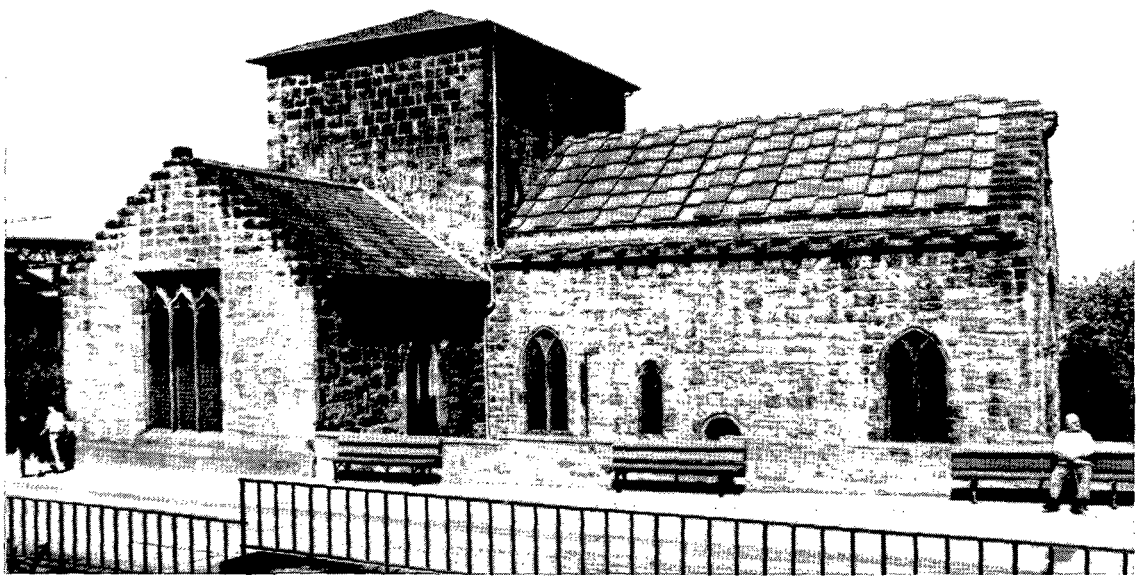
3 THE BUILDINGS OF THE FRIARS IN SCOTLAND

JA STONES

The position of many of the houses of all three orders of friars (and of the Trinitarians, so often included among them, although not a mendicant order) near to the heart of modern towns has meant that very little has survived above ground. The combination of damage or looting at the Reformation, albeit not as extensive as once was imagined, with later systematic removal of re-useable building materials and finally redevelopment, has robbed Scotland of almost all evidence of mendicant architecture. Of some forty-five houses of the Franciscan, Dominican and Carmelite orders, not to mention eight Trinitarian houses, only fragments of three houses, Franciscan at Inverkeithing, Dominican at St Andrews and Carmelite at South Queensferry (Ill 2), are still extant, along with part of the central area of the church at the Trinitarian house at Dunbar. At Elgin, the Franciscan church remains, although much restored, while the Franciscan church at Aberdeen stood until the early years of this century, when it was demolished to make way for Marischal College; fortunately a few photographs (held at Local Studies Department, Aberdeen City Libraries) and measured drawings were completed before its removal (Cooper 1903-4). Out of the considerable number of friaries which flourished N of the border between the 13th and 16th centuries, the standing remains are extremely few.

In recent years, excavation has extended our knowledge of the layout of the Franciscan house at Jedburgh (Todd 1985), the Dominican friary at Perth (Hall 1984) and the Trinitarian house at Dunbar (Wordsworth 1983), in addition to the excavations of the Carmelite houses at present under discussion.



ILL 2 : The former church of the Carmelite friars at South Queensferry

REMAINS OF CARMELITE FRIARIES

Of the twelve medieval friaries of the Carmelite order in Scotland only the choir and crossing of the church at South Queensferry now remain upstanding, although part of the nave stood until the mid-19th century. Also surviving above ground are a few foundations of the church at Luffness (*RCAHMS East Lothian,* 1-2). Although some investigations were undertaken at South Queensferry in the 1970's (Wallace 1971), they were unproductive, and it can be said that the three excavations at Aberdeen, Linlithgow and Perth were exploring unknown territory, as virtually nothing was known of the establishments of the Carmelites in Scotland.

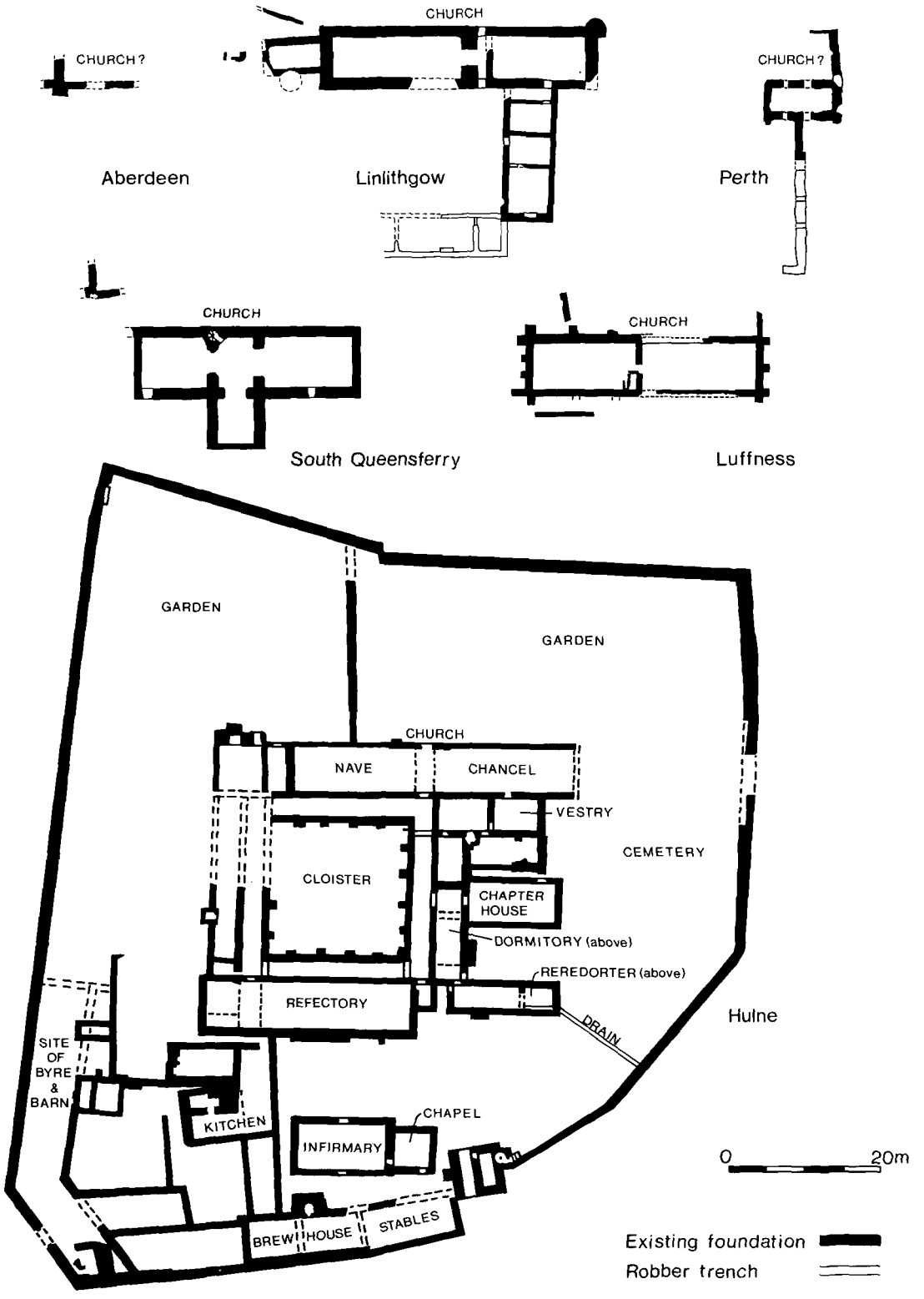
FRIARY CHURCH

The present state of our knowledge of the layout of the Scottish Whitefriars convents is shown in Ill 3. It is clear that the one common factor which defines Scottish Carmelite friaries is the simple church building, aligned E-W, tending to be long and narrow and aisleless. Only at South Queensferry is there a transept, which on a much smaller scale recalls the S preaching transepts added to some Irish friaries in the 14th and 15th centuries, for example at the Dominican house at Kilkenny (Craig 1982, 82).

The long narrow church seems to follow the pattern established in England by the Carmelite order at Hulne in Northumberland (Hope 1890). This friary is thought to have been founded shortly after the introduction of the order to England around 1240 (Egan 1972, 90), although it cannot certainly be said that the church or other buildings of Hulne pre-dated all the Scottish friaries at present under discussion. However, the Scottish churches seem to fit much more closely into the pattern of Hulne than they do into that of some of the other Carmelite houses, for example the large preaching nave constructed at Coventry in the 14th century (Woodfield 1967, 278-9). Broadly, Scottish parish church architecture also tended to be on a simpler scale than comparative English examples—very many rural churches in Scotland were built from the 13th to the 17th century in the form of a plain aisleless rectangle.

At Linlithgow we have some evidence for the internal arrangements of the church, which seems to have started life as a chapel in the 13th century, and was expanded to the E by a chancel after the friars took it over in the early 15th century. The position of the high altar in the presbytery has been clearly defined, along with the fact that it had a retable above it, while two altars, perhaps dedicated to St John the Baptist and St Thomas the Martyr, have been identified to the N and S of the entrance from the nave into the chancel (Chapter 5.2).

The most striking feature associated with friary churches as opposed to monastic and secular churches of the middle ages is the so-called walking-place—a passageway between the nave and chancel often connecting the cloister on one side of the church with the graveyard and the "outside world" on the other. There seems to be some evidence that this existed at Linlithgow, flanked to the W by a rood screen and to the E by a choir screen, the rood screen (probably of wood) being founded on the partially demolished E wall of the original chapel (see Chapter 5.2; Ill 41). Sometimes these walking places were surmounted by a tower, as may be the case at the Trinitarian house at Dunbar (MacGibbon and Ross 1896-7, 3, 462). There is no evidence for or against a tower at Linlithgow. At Luffness it is conceivable that the foundations visible at the E end of the nave may be evidence of a tower (Ill 3), but it seems more likely that at Luffness, as at Linlithgow and Hulne (Hope 1890, 115), an altar stood on either side of the entrance from the nave into the chancel. However, we should not forget the possibility of a wooden tower or steeple as suggested by Clapham at the Carmelite friary of Denbigh (Clapham 1927, 101-4).



ILL 3 : Plans of Scottish Carmelite friaries and of the friary at Hulne, Northumberland. South Queensferry is based on MacGibbon and Ross 1896-7, 3, fig 1214; Luffness is based on a survey by RCAHMS (Crown copyright); Hulne *is after Hope 1890, 105*

CONVENTUAL BUILDINGS

The accepted arrangement of the domestic and administrative buildings of the friary was a series of structures situated around one or more courtyards or cloisters, most commonly S of the church. This plan has its origin in the layout of the Cistercian abbey, but in the case of the friaries tended to be on a much less elaborate scale, owing to lack of finance, fewer personnel and essential differences between the cloistered existence of the monk and the closer relationship of the friar with the outside world. The plan of Hulne indicates a typical Carmelite layout (Ill 3), although on a larger scale than any of the Scottish houses.

At Linlithgow and Perth some evidence has been obtained about the location and function of some of the conventual buildings. At Linlithgow (Ill 41), individual rooms within the E range have been identified as a sacristy (where sacred vessels were kept and washed), a chapter house (where friary business was discussed), a parlour (where the friars were permitted a degree of relaxation), while the dormitory may have been located upstairs in this range. The S range was the usual position for the refectory, and one of the rooms in that range seems to have served that function. At some houses, for example Hulne, the W range may have been reserved for accommodation for the prior or for guests (Hope 1890, 122). Only at Linlithgow is there any evidence of a W range. This evidence is very slight, and it is possible either that the major portion of the W range was beyond the limit of the excavated area, or that the W range was never built. Certainly the Linlithgow cloister yard was never finished. In the case of Linlithgow, founded only in the early 15th century, it may well be that the Reformation intervened before building work was completed. Indeed, in many Scottish friaries, where money was often short, it is possible that once sufficient basic accommodation was available, no effort was made to expand. In Ireland, certainly, not only are there friaries which were built over an extended period as patronage became available (for example the Franciscan house at Adare, Limerick (Leask 1960, 97-8)) but also examples where claustral buildings may never have been completed (Leask 1960, 95). It has been suggested, further, that in mendicant architecture the cloister never had the importance it held in the monastic lifestyle, as a place of study, and that in many friaries it was little more than a means of circulating between buildings (Mellor and Pearce 1981, 23).

ADDITIONAL FRIARY BUILDINGS

Examination of friaries and other religious houses has in the past tended to concentrate on the religious function of the houses, their churches and the immediate friary or monastic buildings. It is clear from the documentary evidence that all these friaries had close links with their local communities. Indeed at Linlithgow the prior was a burgess of the burgh of Linlithgow in the years leading up to the Reformation (see Chapter 5.1), and all the friaries were administrators of considerable estates. We must not forget the various ancillary buildings associated with such activities, some of which may have been in the immediate vicinity of the friary buildings (as for example at Hulne) and some further afield. In 1571 James VI transferred a number of lands of the Aberdeen friars to Captain Andrew Chisholme. These included "the dwelling place formerly pertaining to the Whitefriars, lying within the said burgh, with gardens, barns, malt-house, kiln, cobill and other buildings lying together in the friars' Green". In 1661 Parson Gordon mentions the friars' kiln as being the only standing building remaining of the Carmelite friary (Parson Gordon, 16).

Finally, it is clear that from the 13th century the Perth friary had a close association with the bishops of Dunkeld, and that the friary was the site of an important episcopal residence, refurbished in the early 16th century (see Chapter 6.1). Unfortunately, no trace of such a building was recorded during the excavation, although its existence may well have been reflected in the substance and organisation of the friary complex.

BURIAL AREAS AND GARDENS

At Aberdeen, Linlithgow and Perth there is evidence of burials within churches, within the cloister (at Linlithgow) and in an external cemetery to the N and E of the church at Linlithgow. Other areas of the friary precinct, neither occupied by buildings nor cemetery, would have been utilised as open land, possibly cultivated, or as gardens or orchards. At Aberdeen, excavations at 45-59 Green and 67-71 Green (Ill 6) identified some areas which may have been so utilised, while the 'Friars' garden' is specifically mentioned as late as 1794, when Carmelite Street was laid over its site (*Abdn Recs Marischal Col,* 238). From Perth we seem to have a charming insight into the problems of friary horticulture and the need to extend orchards and gardens to provide more produce (Brockie, 1536-7), but sadly the reference may be spurious (see Chapter 6.1).