

Archaeological Watching Brief
Two Proposed Wind Turbines,
Muirake Farm, Cornhill, Aberdeenshire



Muirake Farm looking South West



15th September 2011

Introduction (Illus 1 and 4)

This archaeological watching brief on the ground stripping for the two wind turbine plinths was carried out for Vento Ludens to satisfy the archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development, as noted by Aberdeenshire Archaeological Service in the condition attached to Planning Application APP/2009/3565 dated 8th September 2010. It was undertaken by the author on Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th September 2011 (Site Code MUR01), weather conditions were wet and windy on the first day and bright and sunny on the second.

Archaeological Background (Illus 2, 3)

Muirake Farm is on or in the vicinity of the medieval manor house of John Gordon of Cromlatt which is referred to in 1542 and still existed in the early 18th century (Bogdan and Bryce 1991, 25). A settlement is first depicted on William Roy's map of 1747-55 where it is named 'MuirEsk' and a settlement named 'Cotts' is depicted to its North as well as an unnamed building. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862 shows 'Muirake' with a mill and associated mill dams and lades, there is nothing else marked in the vicinity.

Watching Brief

Turbine 1 (Illus 4 to 7)

The site of this wind turbine lies 450m SE of Muirake Farm at 135 metres above Ordnance Datum. The area of the turbine plinth, which measured 41.15m North to South and 32m East to West, was stripped of a soil which varied in depth between 0.32m and 0.50m. This dark brown sandy soil (ploughsoil) overlay a blue green sandy clay with abundant stones and occasional iron pan which represented the natural subsoil. There was no sign of any archaeological deposits or features.

Turbine 2 (Illus 4, 8 to 10)

The site of this wind turbine lies 500m North of Muirake Farm at 105 metres above Ordnance Datum. The area of the turbine plinth, which measured 40.5m East to West and 18.5m North to South, was stripped of a soil which varied in depth between 0.20m at its eastern end to 0.65m at its Western end. This dark brown soil overlay a blue green sandy clay with frequent stones which represented the natural subsoil, the soil at the Western end of the stripped area had a noticeably higher peat content. Apart from three linear field drains which were located running North West to South East across the stripped area no archaeological deposits or features were located.

Conclusions

Monitoring of the two wind turbine sites at Muirake Farm located no archaeological deposits or features relating to the documented medieval manor or the other settlement marked on Roy's map of the 18th century.

References

Bogdan, N and Bryce, I B D 1991 'Castles, manors and 'town houses' survey', *Discovery Excav Scot*, 25

Cartographic Sources (<http://www.nls.uk/maps>)

Roy, William General 1747-55 Military Survey of Scotland

Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank James Fidler of John Brown Construction, Farlane Whitty of Green Cat Renewables and Dave the machine driver for their help and interest during the watching brief.

Illustration List

Illus 1 Site Location with turbines (red dots) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illus 2 'MuirEsk' on William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland 1747-55 ((© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illus 3 Muirake as shown on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illus 4 Stripped area for turbine plinths (in red) Scale 1:100

Illus 5 location of stripped area for Turbine 1 looking East

Illus 6 Stripped area for turbine 1 looking South

Illus 7 Stripped area for Turbine 1 looking East (Muirake Farm visible on horizon)

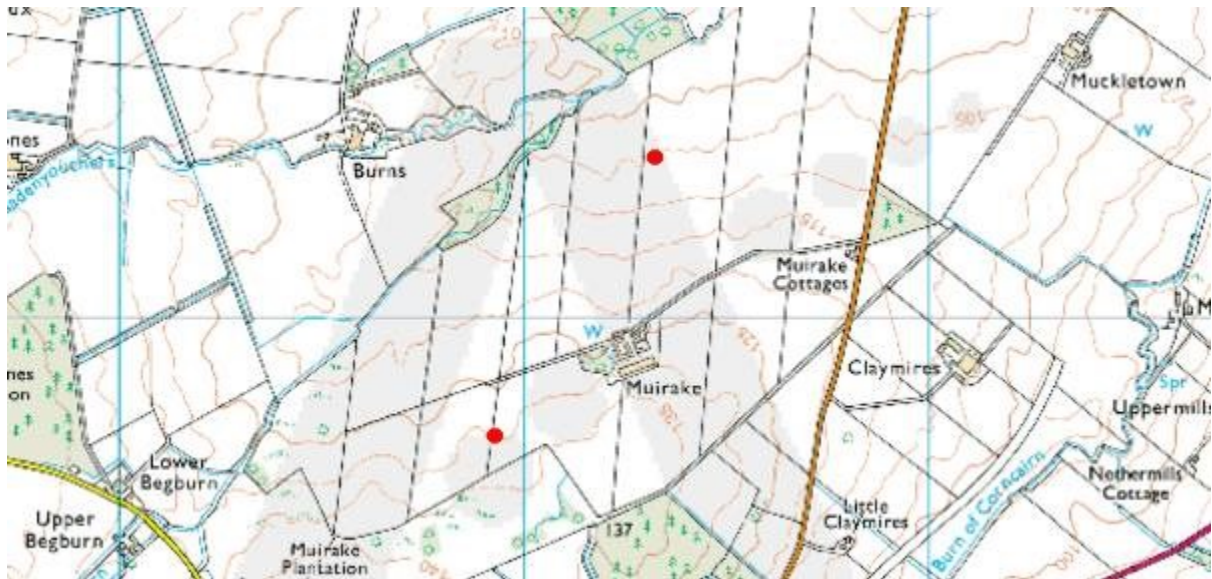
Illus 8 Location of stripped area for Turbine 2 looking North

Illus 9 Stripped area for Turbine 2 looking North West, field drains visible running diagonally across area

Illus 10 Western end of stripped area for Turbine 2 showing deeper peaty soil horizon

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

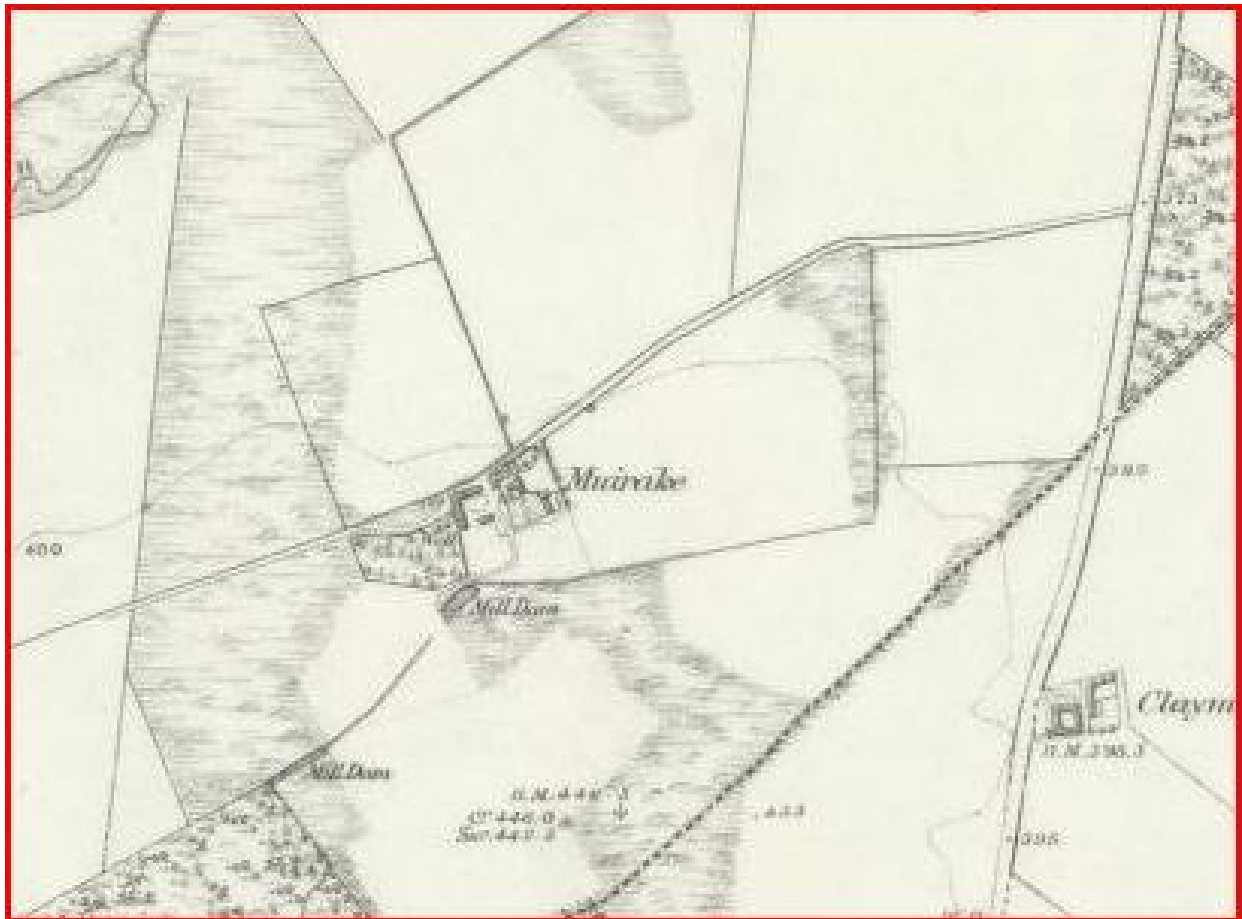
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeenshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Two new wind turbines at Muirake Farm, Cornhill
PROJECT CODE:	MUR01
PARISH:	Fordyce
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	In vicinity of documented medieval manor
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 562 579
START DATE	13 th September 2011
END DATE	14 th September 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out on the stripping of ploughsoil down to natural subsoil on the site of two new wind turbines. Natural was encountered at a depth of between 0.32 and 0.50m on the site of Turbine 1 and 0.20m and 0.65m on the site of Turbine 2. No archaeological deposits or features were located.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Monitoring of cable trenches
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Vento Ludens
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk



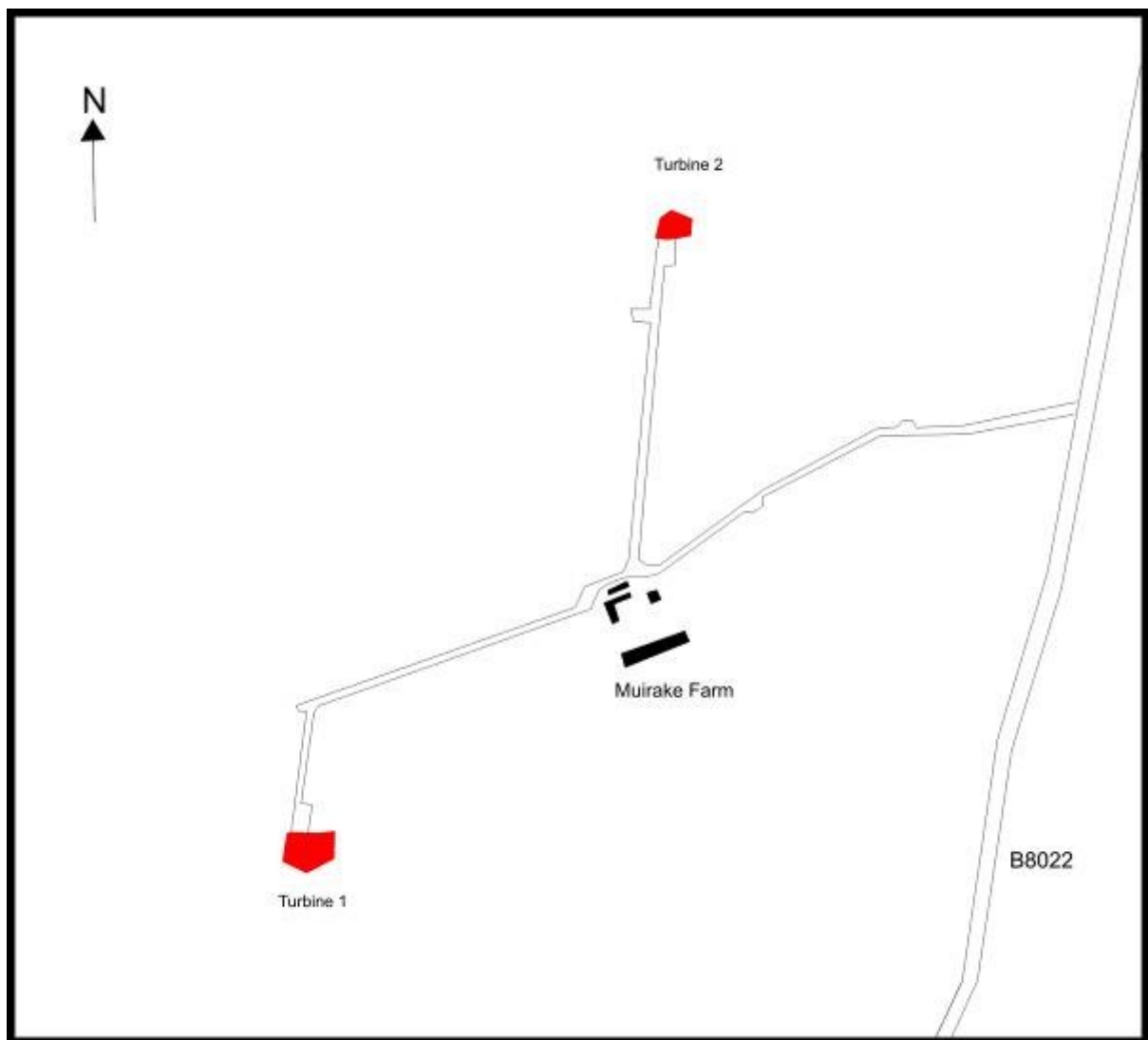
Illus 1 Site Location with turbines (red dots) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)



Illus 2 'MuirEsk' on William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland 1747-55 ((© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



Illus 3 Muirake as shown on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



Illus 4 Stripped area for turbine plinths (in red) Scale 1:100



Illus 5 location of stripped area for Turbine 1 looking East



Illus 6 Stripped area for turbine 1 looking South



Illus 7 Stripped area for Turbine 1 looking East (Muirake Farm visible on horizon)



Illus 8 Location of stripped area for Turbine 2 looking North



Illus 9 Stripped area for Turbine 2 looking North West, field drains visible running diagonally across area



Illus 10 Western end of stripped area for Turbine 2 showing deeper peaty soil horizon