

**Land to rear of Rosebank, Montgarrie,  
Alford, AB33 8AP**



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

(top) Trench 1 facing NE; (bottom) site from the NE showing trench 1 (foreground) Trench 2 (background) and Montgarrie village in background

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## SUMMARY

Two trenches representing 7% of the proposed development area were excavated on 28 February 2014 using a tracked machine with 2m ditching bucket. No significant archaeological features were recorded and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current development.

# 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The proposed development site, centred on NGR NJ 5761 1778, lies to the rear of Rosebank house in the small village of Montgarrie, to the North of Alford. The site is currently in agricultural use, having primarily been used for pasture, situated at c.145m OD, and slopes gently southwards. It is bounded on its North and West sides by the village, but is flanked by open agricultural land to the South and East (Herbert 2014). A planning application to Aberdeenshire Council (APP/2013/3319) for the erection of 3 houses was approved on 28.1.14 with standard archaeology condition (condition 8).
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Alastair J McPherson, Rosebank Cottage, Montgarrie, Alford, Aberdeenshire. Aberdeenshire Council have produced a Brief for an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Field Evaluation (Herbert 2014).
- 1.3 All the archaeological work will be carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.



Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014)

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Only one Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is located within 1km of the proposed development site. Druidsfield Stone Circle, Montgarrie (NJ51NE 1). The new statistical account of Scotland records 'A stone circle in the parish, about 50ft in diameter, was removed 'within the last 30 years'. The site sloped and... 'within the circle it had been levelled by removing the earth on the upper side, so as to present on this part of the circle, a bank nearly perpendicular, of not less than 5ft, gradually decreasing to the east or lower part, when it became level with the natural surface. The upright stones were on the top of the bank.' From the circle, a road paved with neatly-fitted but irregular stones stretched for at least 600yds to the SE through a bog. At the far end it was about 6yds wide, 'but near 20yds when it approached within 50yds of the circle, and here the paving was covered with ashes... On the upper or NW side of the circle, although the ground here was very dry, there was likewise a considerable size of pavement, not under 100yds long by about 40yds wide. The greater part of the stones of this latter pavement had evidently been brought from a hill about 3 miles distant. There was no pavement within the circle. About 50yds above the circle, there were found two stone ladles, close together. The handle of one had been broken off: that of the other was about 9ins long, with a knob at the end, apparently for hooking on to the lip of a vessel (NSA 1845). The OS Name Book reports 'The two stones here are believed to be the remains of the circle described by the NSA (1845). They are about 6ft high, nearly 3ft broad and about 2ft thick. There is no evidence for the causeway having run SE: it is believed to have run towards 'another stone circle which shows it leading in a north-east direction', (presumably the reason for the exact alignment of the causeway upon NJ51NE 16) (Name Book 1866).
- 2.2 A cist (NJ51NE 12) was excavated in the early 19th century was found in the village of Montgarrie. The OS Name Book records 'A cist containing some ashes or black mould found whilst ploughing about 30 years ago. It consisted of rough flags forming the sides, ends, top and bottom, and measured about 4 feet 6ins (1.37m) long by 2 feet (0.6m) broad, and 20 inches (0.5m) deep (Name Book 1866). The exact find spot of the cist is unknown and there is now no trace of the structure but the previous owner of the house presumed the find-spot of the cist (see Illus 5) reportedly revealed the cist a number of years ago (Alastair Mcpherson pers comm).
- 2.3 A souterrain (NJ51NE 13) was found in the village of Montgarrie in the early 19th century. The OS Name Book reports 'An ancient dwelling about 20 feet (6.1m) in length and about 10 (3m) in breadth, found during land improvement about 30 years ago' (Name Book 1866). The exact find spot of the souterrain is unknown and there is now no trace of the structure.
- 2.4 NJ51NE 112 A small area of rig-and-furrow cultivation is situated in the corner of a pasture field 80m NW of Druidsfield farmstead (NJ51NE 1). The rigs measure 10m in breadth and are aligned NE and SW; they probably represent the remains of a much larger area of rig, which originally extended into the improved field to the W.
- 2.5 NJ51NE 56 An archaeological assessment undertaken by AOC (Scotland) Ltd. in Mill Field, Montgarrie, failed to locate any features of archaeological interest. The field extends to within 15m of the reported site of a souterrain (NJ51NE 13) (Carter 1993, 36).
- 2.6 NJ51NE 58 Montgarrie Meal Mill, probably 1886. Tree-girt but on an industrial scale, as befits its date, four storeys with colossal wheel, 23ft 6in. in diameter and

4ft 6in. broad, by James Abernethy, 1886, driving five pairs of stones in line. Lade in reinforced concrete, 1947. Aberdeenshire vent to kiln (Shepherd 2006, 80).

- 2.7 Montgarrie appears on Blaeu's map of 1654 labelled as 'Mongary' (Illus 3) and 'Mongeery' on James Robertson Topographical map of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine, 1822 (Illus 4). The First and Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps (Illus 5) show that there have been series of roofed building at the extreme west of the site and that the road ran from the NE to the SW of the site through the centre of the proposed development. One 19th-century agricultural building is to be removed during the proposed development.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

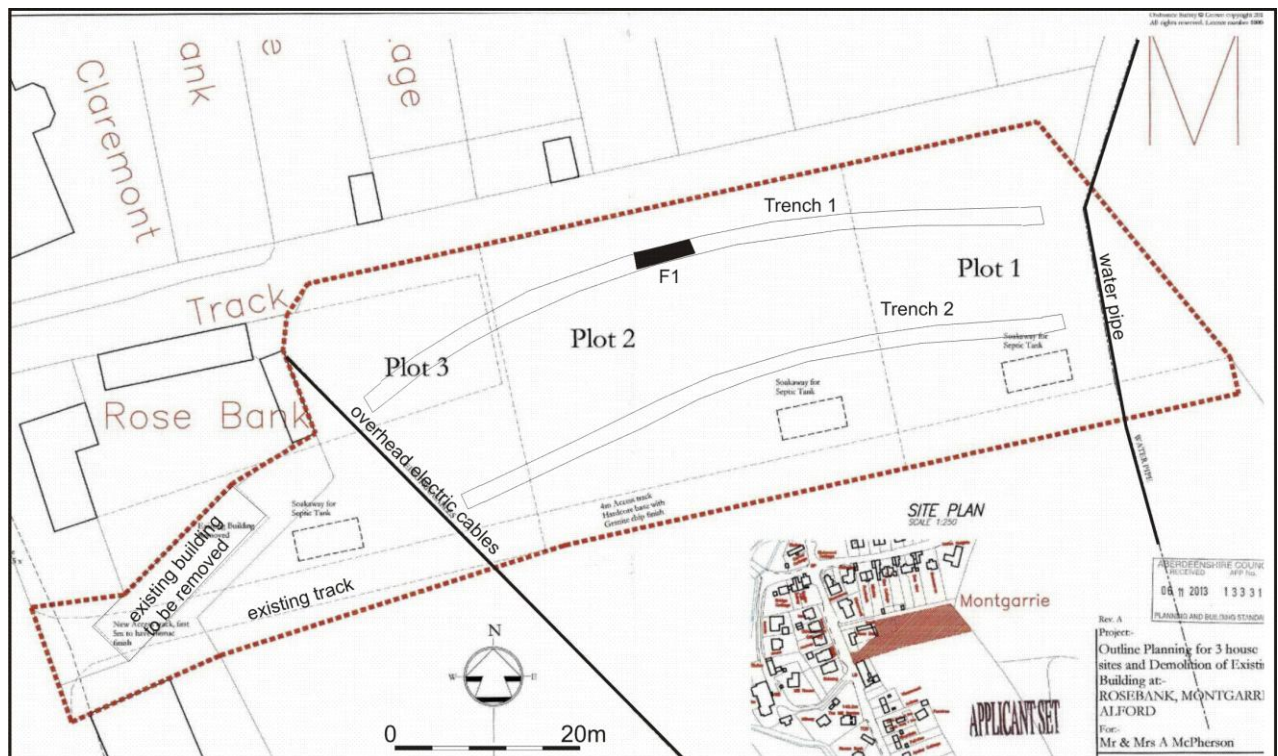
Two trenches representing 7% of the proposed development area were excavated on 28 February 2014 using a tracked machine with 2m ditching bucket. The subsoil was sand and gravel at the west end, sand in the centre of the trenches and angular boulders at the east end of the trenches.

#### Trench 1

The topsoil was 0.7m deep at the west end, 0.5m in the centre and 0.4m at the east end. F1 (Illus 2) was an area of stone that may be a foundation for the track seen on the First Edition OS map (Illus 5). No other features or finds were recorded in this trench.

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 had 0.6m topsoil at the west end and 0.2m at the east end. Deep plough marks were seen in the centre of the trench (F2) but no other features or finds were recorded in this trench.



Illus 2 Site plan showing trenches, existing building to be removed, overhead electric and buried water pipe (copyright Gordon Gauld)

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two trenches representing 7% of the proposed development area were excavated on 28 February 2014. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered; a possible foundation for a track and evidence of agricultural works at the site were recorded. It is therefore recommended that no further archeological work is required during this current development.

## 5 REFERENCES

**Carter, S** 1993 'Montgarrie (Tullynessle and Forbes parish): site of souterrain', *Discovery Excav Scot*, 36.

**Coles, F R** 1901 'Report on the stone circles of the North-East of Scotland, Inverurie District, obtained under the Gunning Fellowship, with measured plans and drawings', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.35, 209-10.

**Herbert, C** 2014 Brief For An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment And Field Evaluation.

**NSA** (1834-1845) The new statistical account of Scotland by the ministers of the respective parishes under the superintendence of a committee of the society for the benefit of the sons and daughters of the clergy, 15v Edinburgh, Vol. 12, (Aberdeen), 449-50.

**Ordnance Survey (Name Book)** Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale) Druidsfield stone circle, Book No. 88, 85, 90.

**Ordnance Survey (Name Book)** Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale) Montgarrie cist  
Page(s): Book No. 88, 89 Held at RCAHMS Ref

**Ordnance Survey (Name Book)** Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale) Montgarrie souterrain Book No. 88, 93.

**Shepherd, I A G** (2006) Aberdeenshire, Donside and Strathbogie: an illustrated architectural guide, in Charles McKean [Edinburgh], 80.

**Welfare, A** (2011) Great Crowns of Stone: The Recumbent Stones Circles of Scotland: Gazetteer and Appendices, in S Halliday Edinburgh, 513-4 .

## APPENDIX 1 FEATURES

Feature no	Trench	Description
F1	1	4m wide area of stones, possibly a foundation for track seen on First Edition OS map
F2	2	Plough marks cut into natural subsoil, probably all kodern deep ploughing

## APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_0727-32	Trench 1	NNE
DSC_0733-36	Tr 1 (left) Tr 2 (background)	SE
DSC_0737-42	Tr 1	E
DSC_0743-47	Tr 1 F1 stone possible foundation for road	NE
DSC_0748-53	Tr 1 F1 stone possible foundation for road	N
DSC_0754-65	Tr 1 F1 stone possible foundation for road	WSW
DSC_0766-68	Tr 1 F1 stone possible foundation for road	WSW
DSC_0769-74	Tr 1	W
DSC_0775-78	Tr 1 (foreground) Tr 2 (background)	S
DSC_0779-83	Tr 2 (left) Tr 1 (right)	W
DSC_0784-88	Tr 2	W
DSC_0789-93	Tr 2 modern deep plough marks in the centre of the trench	WSW
DSC_0794-98	Tr 2 modern deep plough marks in the centre of the trench	WSW
DSC_0799-806	Tr 2 plough marks and possible rig and furrow	WSW
DSC_0807-811	Trench 2	ENE
DSC_0812-819	Agricultural building to be demolished	
DSCF6802-06	Panoramas of site	



DSC\_0727



DSC\_0736



DSC\_0737



DSC\_0753



DSC\_0754



DSC\_0768



DSC\_0769



DSC\_0776



DSC\_0777



DSC\_0778



DSC\_0779



DSC\_0784



DSC\_0793



DSC\_0795



DSC\_0801



DSC\_0807



DSC\_0812



DSC\_0813



DSC\_0814



DSC\_0815



DSC\_0816



DSC\_0817



DSC\_0818



DSC\_0819



DSCF6802



DSCF6803



DSCF6804



DSCF6805



DSCF6806

**APPENDIX 3 MAPS**

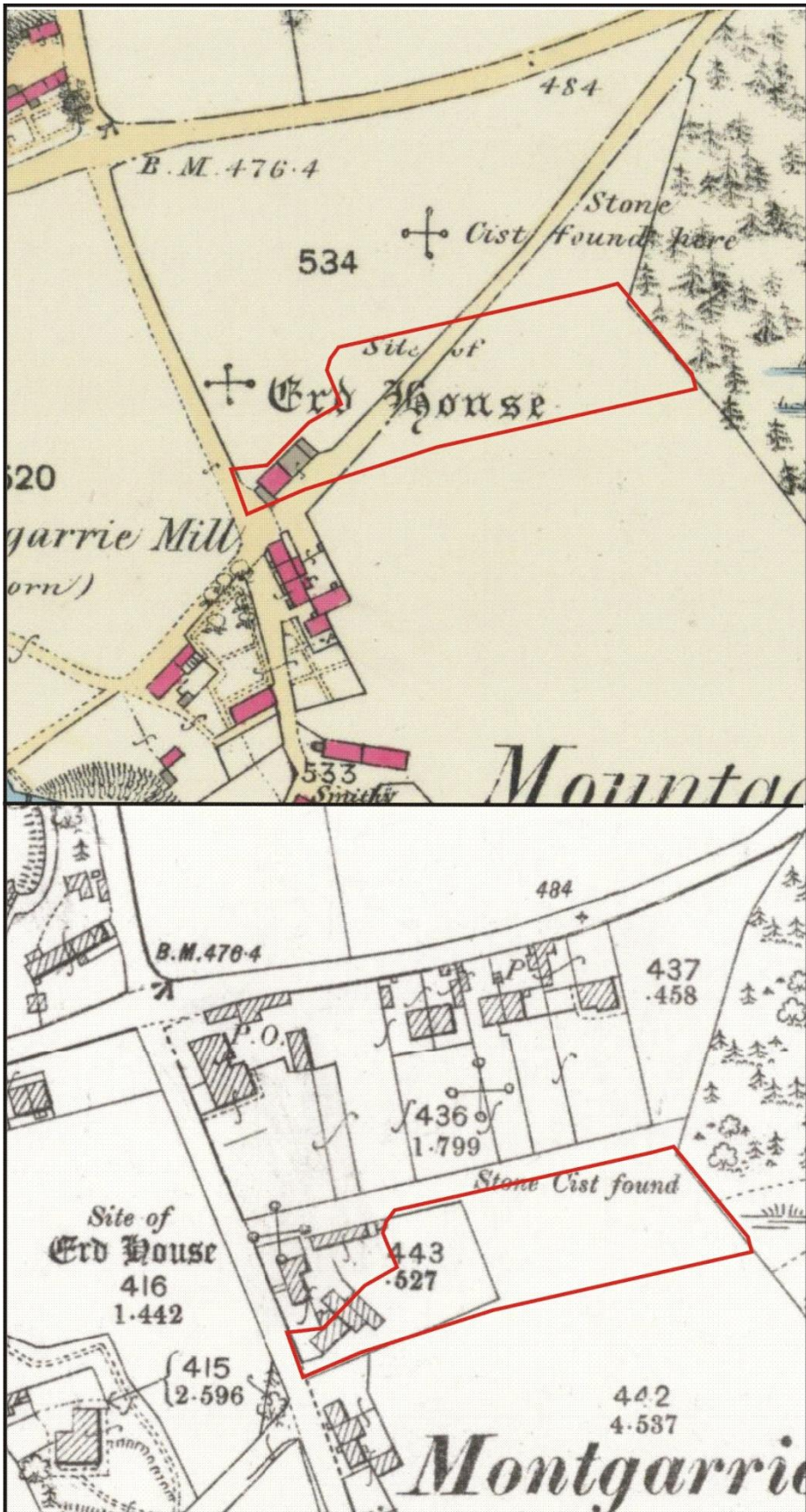


Illus 3 Blaeu 1654 showing 'Mongary' (copyright National Libraries of Scotland)



Illus 4 'Mongearry' marked on James Robertson Topographical map of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine, 1822 (copyright National Libraries of Scotland)





Illus 5 Top: Aberdeen Sheet LII.16 (Tullynessle and Forbes) Survey date: 1867 Publication date: 1869' Bottom: Aberdeenshire, Sheet 052.16 Publication date: 1900 Revised: ca. 1899 with site outline marked in red (copyright National Libraries of Scotland)