

**LAND SOUTH WEST OF ALLOCHIE COTTAGE
NETHERLEY STONEHAVEN AB39 3QH
REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



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ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover N-S and W-E scars caused by tractor tyres in the early 1980s; top facing N, bottom facing E

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on 26 February 2015 during the soil strip for a new house and driveway using a tracked machine with ditching bucket. The field had been cleared of gorse, whin, heather and large stones by the current farmer, David Moir, in the early 1980s and extensive scars in the natural subsoil were created by the wheels of tractors dragging material from the field. No archaeological features or finds were identified and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required at this site.

1 INTRODUCTION

The site is at NO 86016 90900, in the parish of Fetteresso and at 125-150m OD. It is on the west side of the B979 the Netherley road on the SE side of the Hill of Allochie. Aberdeenshire Council Planning application APP/2011/3550 for erection of a dwellinghouse and garage for an agricultural worker was passed by Aberdeenshire Council on 28 February 2012 with a condition (condition 13) for archaeological work to be carried out; Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service require a watching brief during the soil strip for the proposed house. The work was commissioned by Andrew Ritchie for David Moir.



Illus 1 Site location (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2015).

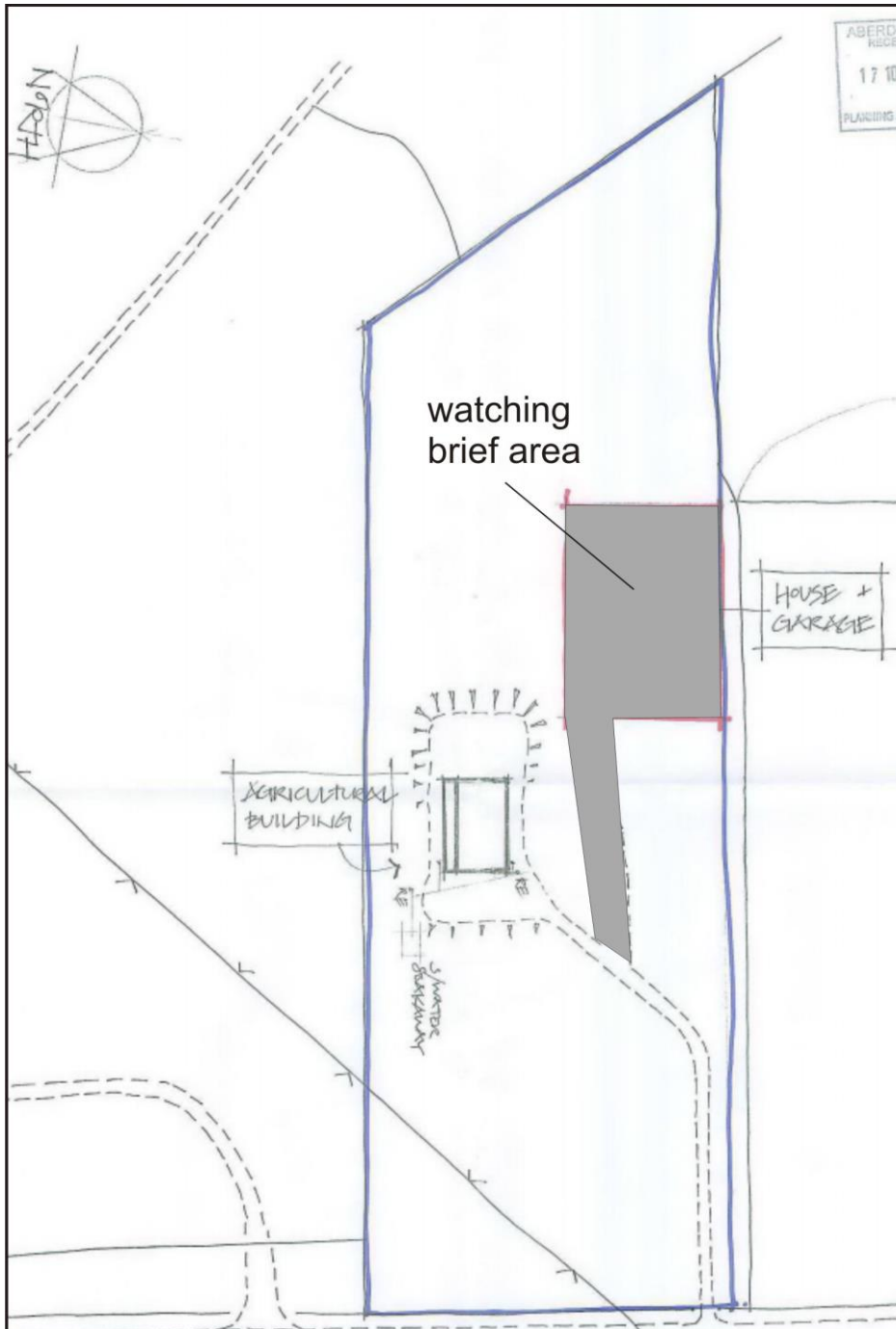
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within 1km of the proposed development, White Hill house and field system. The monument is in an area of heather moorland. It comprises two round houses, the larger measuring 8 m across internally within a bank up to 2.5m wide. The other, 125m to the SSE on the shoulder of the hill, measures c 6m across within a bank 1.5m wide and 0.2m high. There are low cairns round both houses, up to 4m across by 0.4m high in the vicinity of the larger house, and among them short lengths of stony bank. The area to be scheduled comprises the structures referred to above and an area around them in which traces of activities associated with their use will survive measuring 250m NE/SW by 200m NW/SE.
- 2.2 The proposed development is at the SE end of an area of small cairns (NO89SE27) which occur sporadically along the Hill of Allochie between NO852 914 and NO857 915, with similar concentrations at NO857 915 and NO852 912. A watching brief by CFA in 2012 during groundworks for a windfarm (NO89SW0094) included part of this site, but recorded only a single cairn at NO 85592 81056. It measured 5.6m long, 3.6m wide and 0.4m in height. No finds were found; given its location on peat it is thought to be a clearance cairn of modern date, possibly relating to construction of a haulage road during previous pipeline installation (Savoy, G 2011, 17).
- 30m south of the proposed development, at NO 8602 9078 is a circular stone-walled (NO89SE 16) but measuring 10.0m in diameter between the centres of an ill-defined wall mutilated in the SE. The entrance is not evident. Several denuded stone clearance heaps are visible in the surrounding area, probably from contemporary cultivation plots.
- 30m SE of the proposed development, on the narrow strip of moorland between the public road and the moss to the SE of the Hill of Allochie, there are at least four lengths of stony bank and twenty small cairns (NO89SE 26); the cairns measure between 2m and 5m in diameter. RCAHMS 1984, 25.
- 2.3 A boundary stone is depicted at this location on the OS map of 1867 but not on the 1888 later map edition, although one still stands at this location. Another also stands to the west at NO8587 9088 and another to its east at NO8617 9095.(NO89SE0037)
- 2.4 Allochie Farm (NO89SE 49; Muchalls Estate) is by architects Walker and Duncan is located 600m NNE of the proposed development.
- 2.5 Hill of Allochie (NO89SE0012) Settlement and field system 300-700m south of the proposed development; three stone-walled huts and a field system marked by clearance heaps. Hut A has entrance in S, flanked on the E side by an earthfast stone. Hut B, 7m in diameter, is heavily overgrown with turf and has a bracken- covered SW entrance. Hut C is attached to the NE side of Hut B with no trace of an entrance or communicating passage; in poor state of preservation but appears to be of similar dimensions (RCAHMS 1984, 25).
- 2.6 Remains of a farmstead at Burn of Monboys (NO89SE0020) 400-800m SW of Allochie, comprising the remains of five rectangular buildings, three of which are ranged round a yard. The buildings vary in size from two three-compartment buildings to a single compartment building. Adjacent to the farmyard there are extensive traces of rig and furrow cultivation. The farmstead is depicted as ruinous on the OS 1st edition map, 1867 and 2nd edition, 1888 (RCAHMS 1984, 267).

- 2.7 A programme of archaeological work was undertaken in 2003 and 2004 along the route of the Aberdeen to Lochside natural gas pipeline (NO89SE 20). A desk-based assessment and walkover survey were conducted within a 1km wide corridor and 362 sites were identified, ranging from prehistoric to modern. These include 20 listed buildings and 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Proposed mitigation measures resulted in a programme of archaeological fieldwork both before and during pipeline construction, including fieldwalking, site surveys, evaluations, excavations and a watching brief. Approximately two-thirds (33km) of the pipeline route passed through agricultural land, and all available ploughed fields were systematically fieldwalked, comprising 65 fields covering 18.56km. No scatters of finds or new sites of archaeological interest were located (Johnson 2004, 12-13).
- 2.8 900m NNE of Allochie amongst modern clearance in an area of rough pasture to the E of a pipeline track 400m ENE of Allochie farmhouse, there is a scatter of earlier cairns and short stony banks (NO89SE 23). Along the N side of the area there is a series of hollowed trackways, and on the rough ground to the NW and W there are traces of rig-and-furrow cultivation and stony banks of more recent date (RCAHMS 1984, 100).
- 2.9 A palaeoenvironmental assessment was carried out by Headland Archaeology in 2012 ahead of the proposed AWPR Fastlink corridor. Auger samples were taken over an area at Blackburn Moss c.1.8km in length and between 0.3km and 0.05km in width. Across much of this area this recorded a dark brown peaty podzol soil, but peats with a maximum depth of 1.5m were recorded in the central and southern sections. The peats existed as pockets of peatland rather than continuous peat cover.
- 2.10 Nothing remains of the 'ditches and embankments' (NO89SE 14) that extended over the Hill of Muchalls (950m E of Allochie) before it was enclosed and cultivated (probably in the early 19th century) (Watt 1914, 66; RCAHMS 1984, 32).
- 2.11 Headland Archaeology undertook a metal-detector survey on the Hill of Muchalls Battlefield as part of a programme of archaeological non-invasive investigations to facilitate the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and associated schemes (AWPR). The site surveyed was located on the Fastlink section of the AWPR. The Hill of Muchalls battlefield was the site of a skirmish between Covenanted and Royalist armies in June 1639. The approximate area of the battlefield is shown on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland. Part of this area transects the road corridor. A metal-detecting survey of this area revealed four potentially 17th century finds, two of which have military connections. Though none in themselves are definitive proof of the Battle of Muchalls, all were clustered in the same general area. Other finds relate to agricultural use of the fields in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 2.12 The proposed house site is within a small field SSW of Allochie Croft; an agricultural building has been constructed within the plot in recent years (Illus 2). The field is shown as moorland on the First, Second and Third Edition OS maps (Illus 3).
- 2.13 The grandfather of David Moir, the current owner and farmer, took over the farm in 1901 and there have been many improvements. David Moir improved the current field in the early 1980s burning heather and removing whin, gorse and large stones.

3 WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on 26 February 2015 during the soil strip for a new house and driveway using a tracked machine with ditching bucket. The topsoil was 0.1m deep at the north of the field and 0.2m at the south. The natural subsoil was sand and gravel with clay and is prone to waterlogging. The whole field is covered with 0.2m wide shallow trenches c 1-1.2m apart running N-S, E-W and NW-SE. The field had been cleared of gorse, whin, heather and large stones by the current farmer, David Moir, in the early 1980s and these scars in the natural subsoil were created by the wheels of tractors dragging material from the field. No archaeological features or finds were identified and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required at this site.



Illus 2 Watching brief area (copyright Andrew A Ritchie Architects)

4 REFERENCES

Johnson, M 2004 'Aberdeen to Lochside Gas Pipeline (Dunnottar; Fetteresso; Echt; Maryculter; Marykirk; Arbuthnott parishes), survey; fieldwalking; excavation; watching brief', *Discovery Excav Scot, vol.5*, 12-13.

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Savoy, G 2011 'Meikle Carewe Wind Farm, Aberdeenshire (Fetteresso parish), watching brief', *Discovery Excav Scot, New, vol.12* Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England, 17.

Watt, J C 1914 *The Mearns of Old: A History of Kincardine from the Earliest Times to the Seventeenth Century*, Edinburgh and Glasgow, 66.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

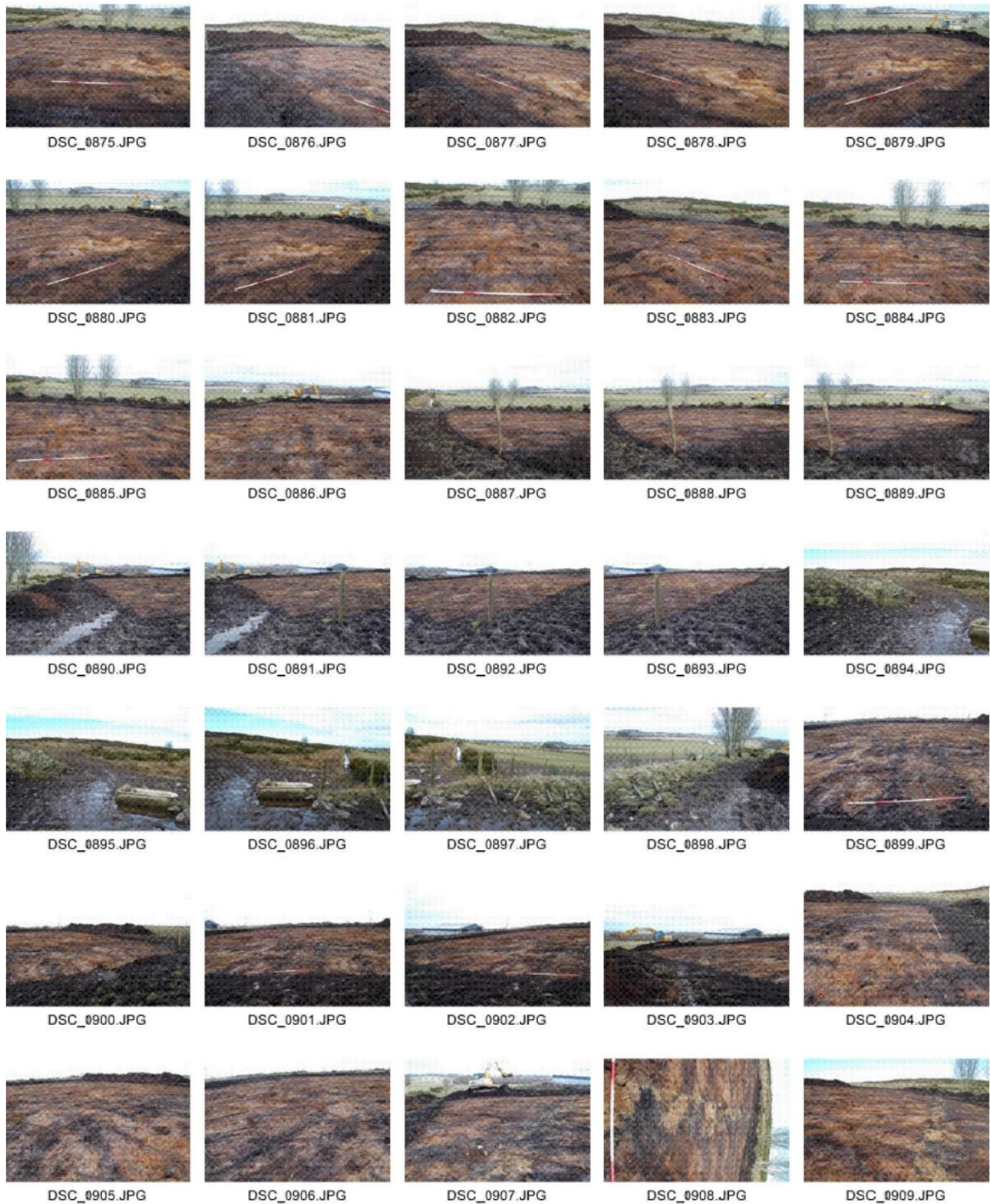
I would like to thank Andrew Ritchie, Andrew A Ritchie Architects and David Moir for initiating this project and Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council for her advice during the work.

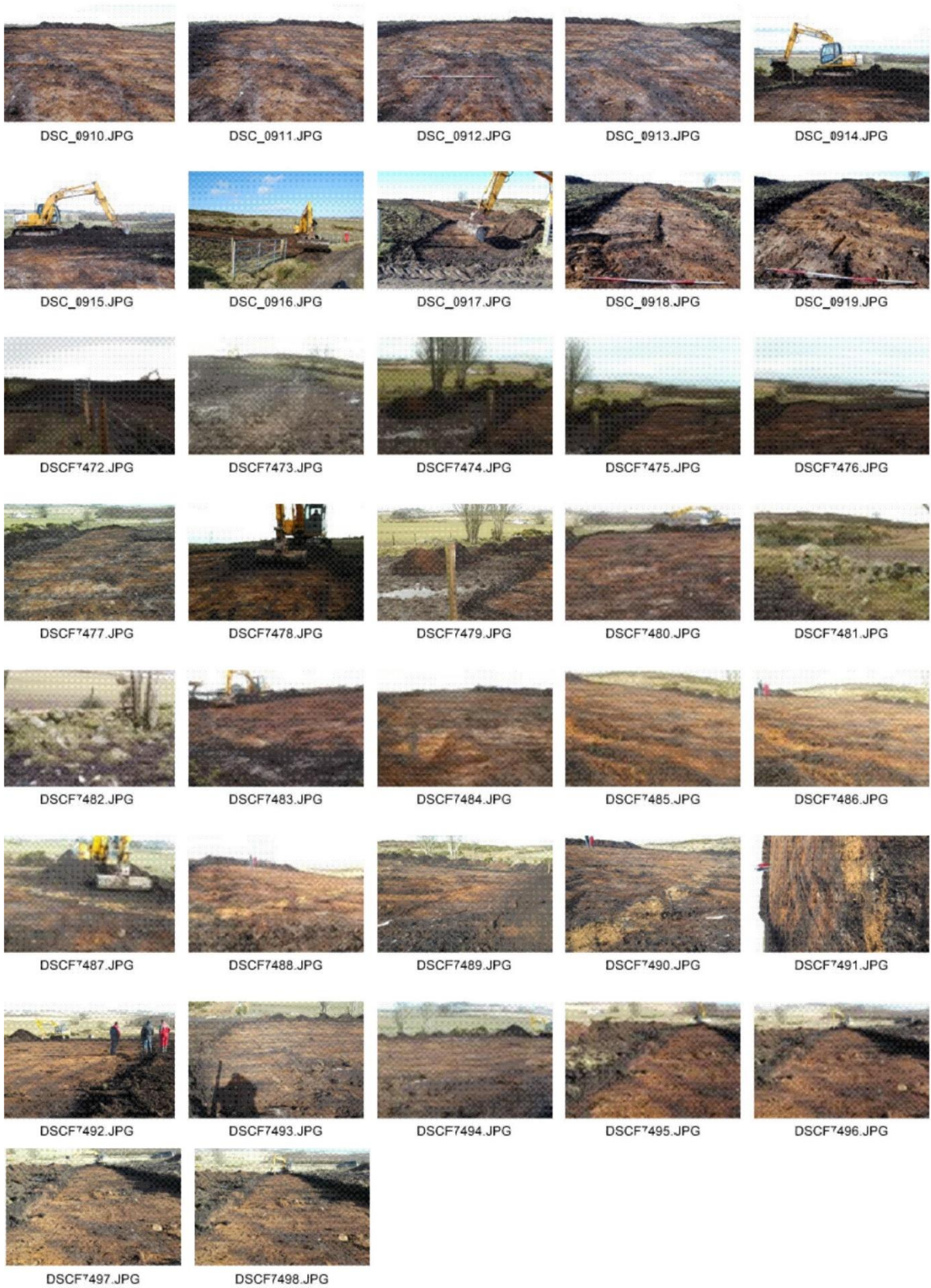
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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

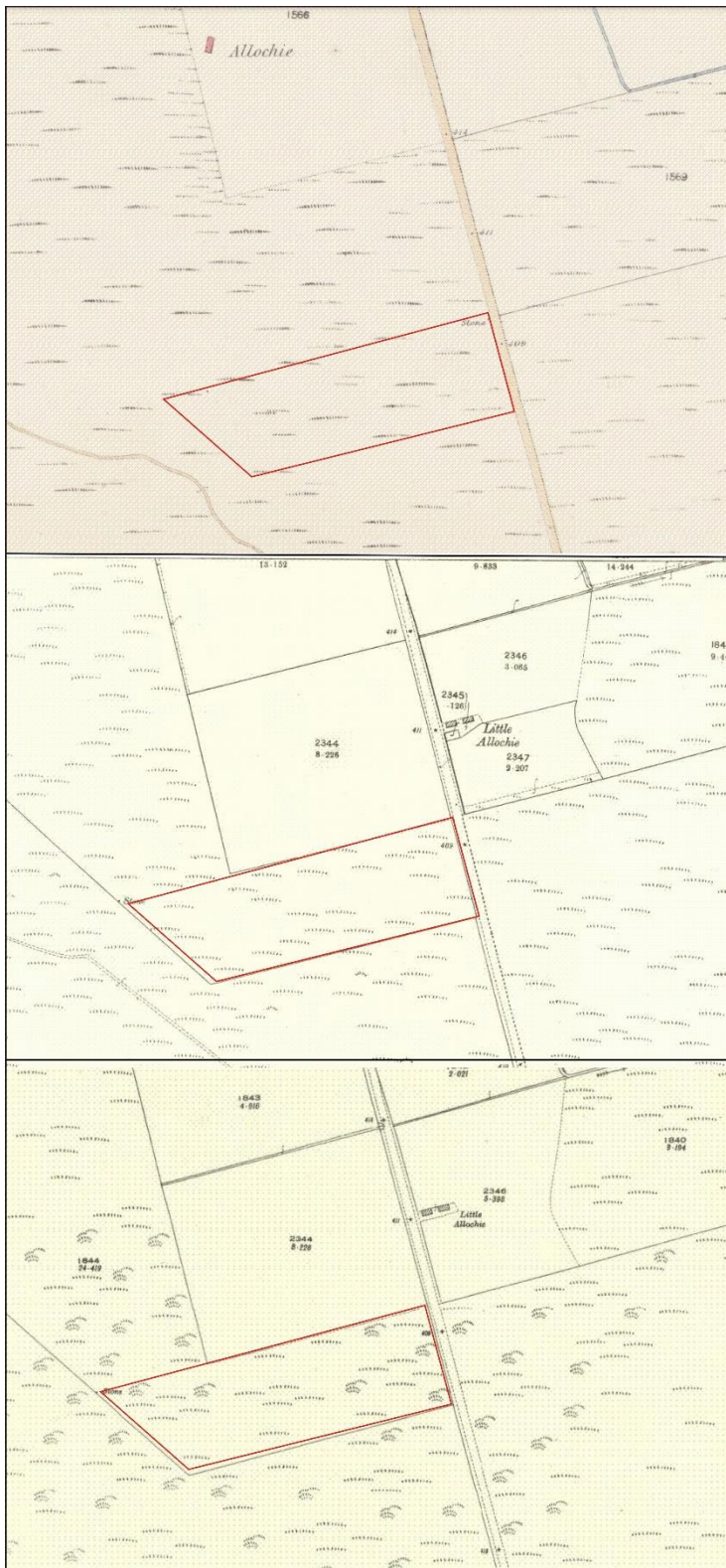
Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_0875	W-E parallel scars in natural subsoil	N
DSC_0876-8	W-E parallel scars in natural subsoil	NW
DSC_0879-81	W-E parallel scars in natural subsoil	NE
DSC_0882-85	N-S parallel scars (top) and W-E (bottom)	N
DSC_0886	N-S parallel scars (left) and W-E (right)	E
DSC_0887-9	Soil strip for house and garage	NE
DSC_0890-93	Soil strip for house and garage from NW corner	E/SE
DSC_0894-98	Adjacent drystone dyke and stones piled from field clearance	
DSC_0899	N-S parallel scars (bottom) and W-E (top)	S
DSC_0900	N-S parallel scars (bottom) and W-E (top)	SW

DSC_0901	N-S parallel scars (bottom) and W-E (top)	S
DSC_0902-3	N-S parallel scars (bottom) and W-E (top)	SE
DSC_0904-7	Soil strip for house and garage	
DSC_0908-9	water pipe trench	
DSC_0910-15	Soil strip for house and garage	
DSC_0916-19	Soil strip for driveway	
DSCF7472-94	Soil strip for house and garage	
DSCF7495-98	Soil strip for driveway	





APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 3 OS maps showing area of site in red. (top) First Edition OS maps showing area of site in red. Kincardine Sheet XII.7 (Fetteresso) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1868 (**middle**) Kincardineshire 015.04 (includes: Fetteresso). Publication date: 1903 Revised: ca. 1902 (bottom) Kincardineshire 015.04 (includes: Fetteresso) Publication date: 1925 Revised: ca. 1923 Levelled: 1902 (*copyright National Library of Scotland*).



Illus 4 1988 aerial photograph showing proposed development in red. Date: 14 May 1988
Location: Allochie; Fetteresso; KINCARDINESHIRE; SCOTLAND UNI: NCAP-000-000-138-919
(copyright NCAP).