

**LAND AT CULTERHOUSE ROAD, MILLTIMBER,
ABERDEEN AB13 0DH
REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND
WALKOVER**



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SUMMARY

A 7% archaeological evaluation and walkover was carried out on 23 February 2015. Two small cairns were recorded in the north of the field, probably from nearby forestry or farming activity. No features were recorded in the wooded area at the south of the site. Rig and furrow cultivation furrows were recorded in Trenches 1-3 running NW-SE across the field but no other features or finds were identified. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during this development.

1 INTRODUCTION

The site is at NJ 85267 01584 (centred), in the parish of Peterculter and at 65-75m OD. It is on the north side of Culterhouse Road east of East Lodge. Aberdeen City Council Planning application P131558 for erection of five dwellings and associated garden grounds was passed by Aberdeen City Council on 20 October 2014 with a condition (condition 3) for archaeological work to be carried out; Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service (who are covering Aberdeen City) require a 7% archaeological evaluation.



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

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

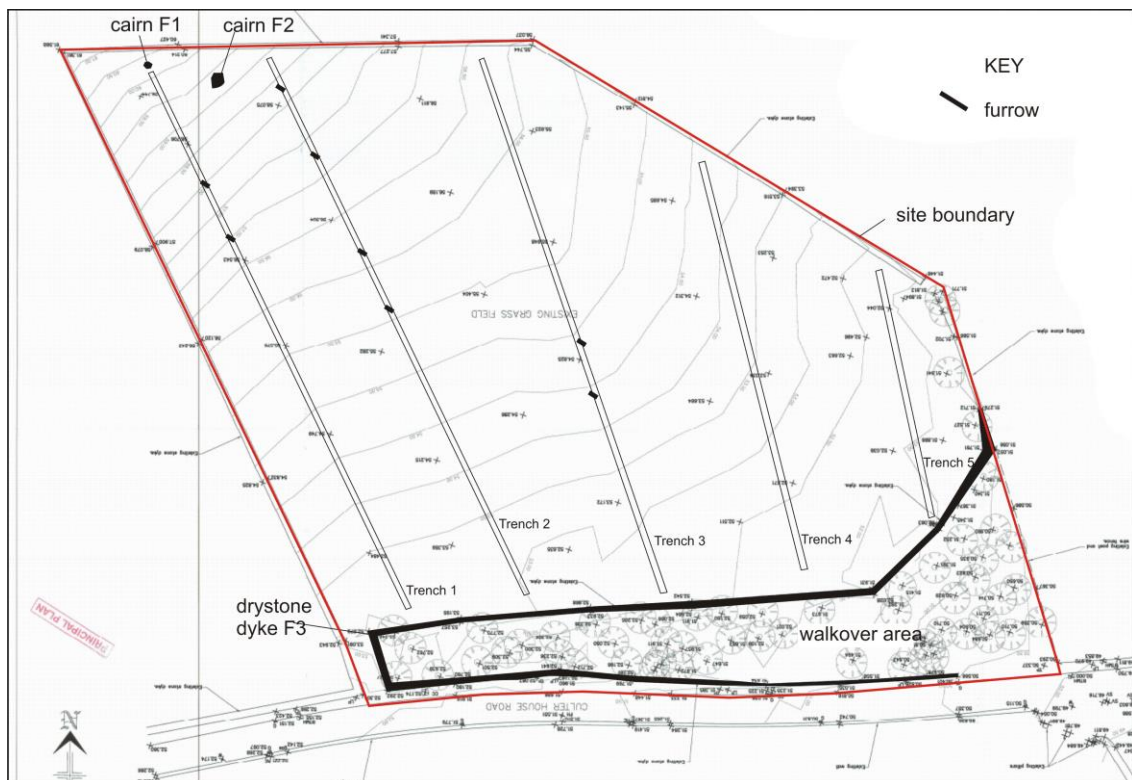
- 2.1 There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within 1km of the proposed development. Binghill House stone circle and cairn comprise a recumbent stone circle surrounding a ring-cairn, and a burial cairn to the east, all of prehistoric date. It is 850m NNE of the proposed development. The monuments lie on a slight slope, within the wooded policies of Binghill, the surviving portion of a small surviving prehistoric landscape on this fertile ridge N of the River Dee. The stone circle measures about 9.2m in diameter, but only three stones survive in situ. One on the N arc stands 1.3m high and another on the NNE, 1.1m high; while a massive recumbent stone on the SSE is 2.2m wide and 1.1m high. Two further stones on the E and two flankers lie prostrate and their original positions cannot be ascertained. The ring-cairn measures 7.6m in diameter over a boulder kerb, enclosing an area about 2.4m in diameter. The cairn measures at least 6m in diameter and stands 0.5m in height. There is a possible kerbstone on the SE arc. The scheduled area is in two parts. The area round the stone circle and ring-cairn is a portion of a circle with a maximum diameter of 30m, centred on the centre of the stone circle. It is bounded to the NW by a field wall, the upstanding element of which is excluded from the scheduling. The area to be scheduled round the cairn lies about 40m to the east. It is a circle 25m in diameter. Both areas include the visible features and an area around them in which evidence relating to construction and use of the monuments may survive. Both are marked in red on the attached map. The monument is of national importance because of its potential to contribute to our understanding of prehistoric ritual and funerary practices. Although few of the stones of the circle are standing, the buried archaeology of the site will survive. The interest and importance of the site is enhanced by the presence of the burial cairn, which will contain the remains of at least one burial, and will also cover an area of contemporary ground surface.
- 2.2 There are no known sites within the proposed development and 34 other sites of archaeological interest within 1km (Appendix 1). There are slight traces of fortifications on the top of Camp Hill, about three-quarters of a mile east of Peterculter. The site of this alleged fort lies on top of a long and narrow east-west running ridge. No traces of it can now be seen on the ground (Yeoman 1988, 130).
- 2.3 A stone axe 120mm long and 65mm wide tapering to 25mm was found by Mr Gil Robertson at Burnbrae, Contlaw Rd in 1993 (NJ90SE 59). The axe is now in the collections of the University of Aberdeen. A flint barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in a garden in Milltimber (NJ80NE 54; Greig 1991, 24).
- 2.4 Rig and furrow survives in several areas including Binghill (NJ80SE 92) 4m breadth aligned NW-SE and NE-SW in mature woodland. Also at Guttrie Hill (NJ80SW 92) 100m S of Bloomfield there is a small area 6m breadth aligned NNW-SSE and ENE-WSW and on the south side of Guttrie Hill (NJ80SW 49) the rigs measure up to 6m in breadth and aligned mainly NNW and SSE; on the N of the road they lie in woodland, while on the S they lie in an improved field.
- 2.5 On the south side of North Deeside Road towards Maryculter Bridge over the river Dee, there are several known archaeological sites. About 230 Mesolithic worked flints were found near Maryculter Bridge by Dr Grieve on 28 December 1973. They were surface finds, in a field to the west of the road and north of the River Dee, following ploughing and heavy rain. They are retained by Aberdeen City Museums (NJ80SE 36). A possible enclosure (NJ80SE 42) is located at Waterside on the SE facing slope north of the river Dee. A standing stone was reported at Milltimber Farm (Jervise 1875-6, 19) but no knowledge of the stone was reported in 1961 and no stone is now present on the farm.

- 2.6 A short cist, containing a beaker (type Ca), a skull, and a few bones, was found, in February 1899, by men digging for sand in a natural knoll in a field a few hundred yards east of Milltimber Station (NJ80SE 11). The Beaker is now in the Anthropological Museum of Aberdeen University - accession no. 19712 (Hunt and Inglis 1986, 30).
- 2.7 Culter House (NJ80SW 7) is a large mansion house dating back to the 12th century and now completely modernised. The present mansion house, which replaced a building of much earlier date, was erected about the year 1640. Whilst undergoing reconstruction in 1910, the house was extensively damaged by fire, but has since been rebuilt and two wings added. The building was the Boarding House for St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen. The site also includes an 18th-century dovecot, garden, gate piers, gazebo and walled garden (Bogdan and Bryce 1991, 23).
- 2.8 There are several country houses including Edghill House (NJ80SE 189), Old House of Binghill (NJ80SE 8; now demolished for housing; 'ancient silver coins' were found during the removal of the house (Evans and Thain 1990, 331, 340), Binghill House (NJ80SE 93) and Farm (NJ80SE 93.01).
- 2.9 An evaluation on 16 June 2009 of a small development site on a gravel ridge overlooking the Dee revealed a small area of ard marks. No other archaeological features or finds were recorded. (Murray 2009, 14). A small evaluation at Pittengullies Brae was carried out in 2013 but no archaeological features or finds were identified (Cameron 2014).
- 2.10 The site is a field bordered with trees at the south on the First and Second OS maps (Illus 6, 7).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

A 7% archaeological evaluation and walkover was carried out on 23 February 2015 using a 15 ton tracked machine with 2m flat-edged ditching bucket. Five trenches (Illus 2) were excavated with the topsoil being 0.15m deep at the north side of the site and 0.2-0.25m deep at the south end. The natural subsoil is compact sand and stone at the north end and clay with sand and silt at the south end. There were numerous large earthfast boulders encountered suggesting that the field has not been intensively ploughed in the modern period. Modern N-S plough marks were recorded in the south of the field, however.

Rig and furrow cultivation furrows were recorded in Trenches 1-3 running NW-SE across the field. They were 0.8-1m wide and 0.05-0.1m deep. They were 8-9m apart. No other features or finds were identified.



Illus 2 Plan showing area of proposed development, evaluation trenches and features recorded during this work (copyright Churchill Homes)



Illus 3 Furrow Trench 2; facing SSE

4 WALKOVER

Two small cairns were recorded in the north of the field (Illus 4, 5), were probably formed from nearby forestry works. No features were recorded in the wooded area at the south of the site during the walkover and the surrounding dyke F3 was recorded (Illus 6).



Illus 4 Cairn F1; facing E



Illus 5 Cairn F2; facing SSE



Illus 6 NW corner dyke F3 with tree belt in background; facing SE

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 A 7% archaeological evaluation and walkover was carried out on 23 February 2015. Two small cairns were recorded in the north of the field, probably from nearby forestry works. No features were recorded in the wooded area at the south of the site.
- 5.2 Rig and furrow cultivation furrows were recorded in Trenches 1-3 running NW-SE across the field but no other features or finds were identified.
- 5.3 It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during this development.

6 REFERENCES

Bogdan and Bryce, N and I B D 1991 'Castles, manors and 'town houses' survey', *Discovery Excav Scot*, 23.

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Murray, HK 2009 'Milltimber Farm, Aberdeen City (Peterculter parish), evaluation', *Discovery Excav Scot, New, vol.10* Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England, 14.

Yeoman, P A 1988 'Mottes in Northeast Scotland', *Scot Archaeol Rev*, vol.5, 130.

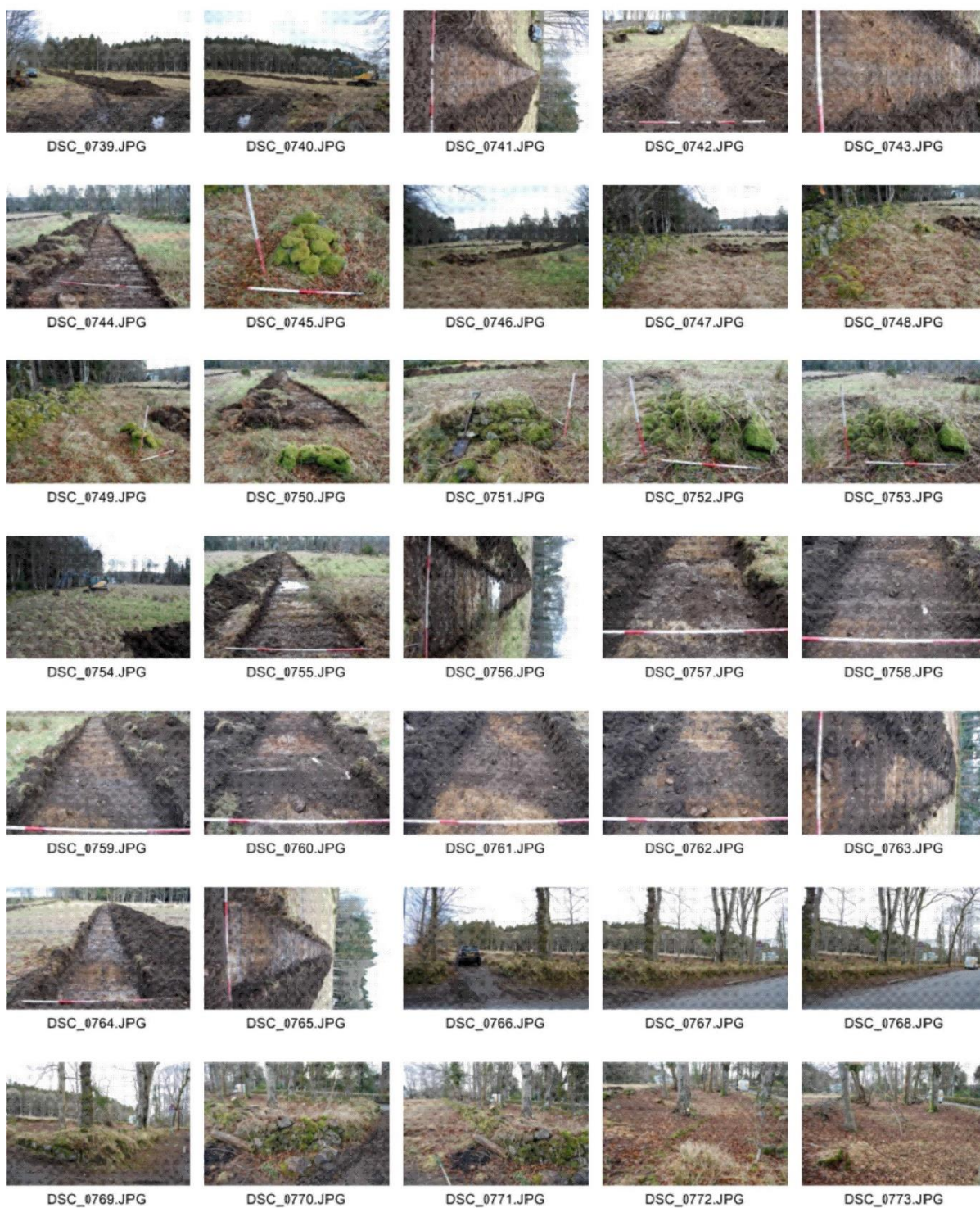
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

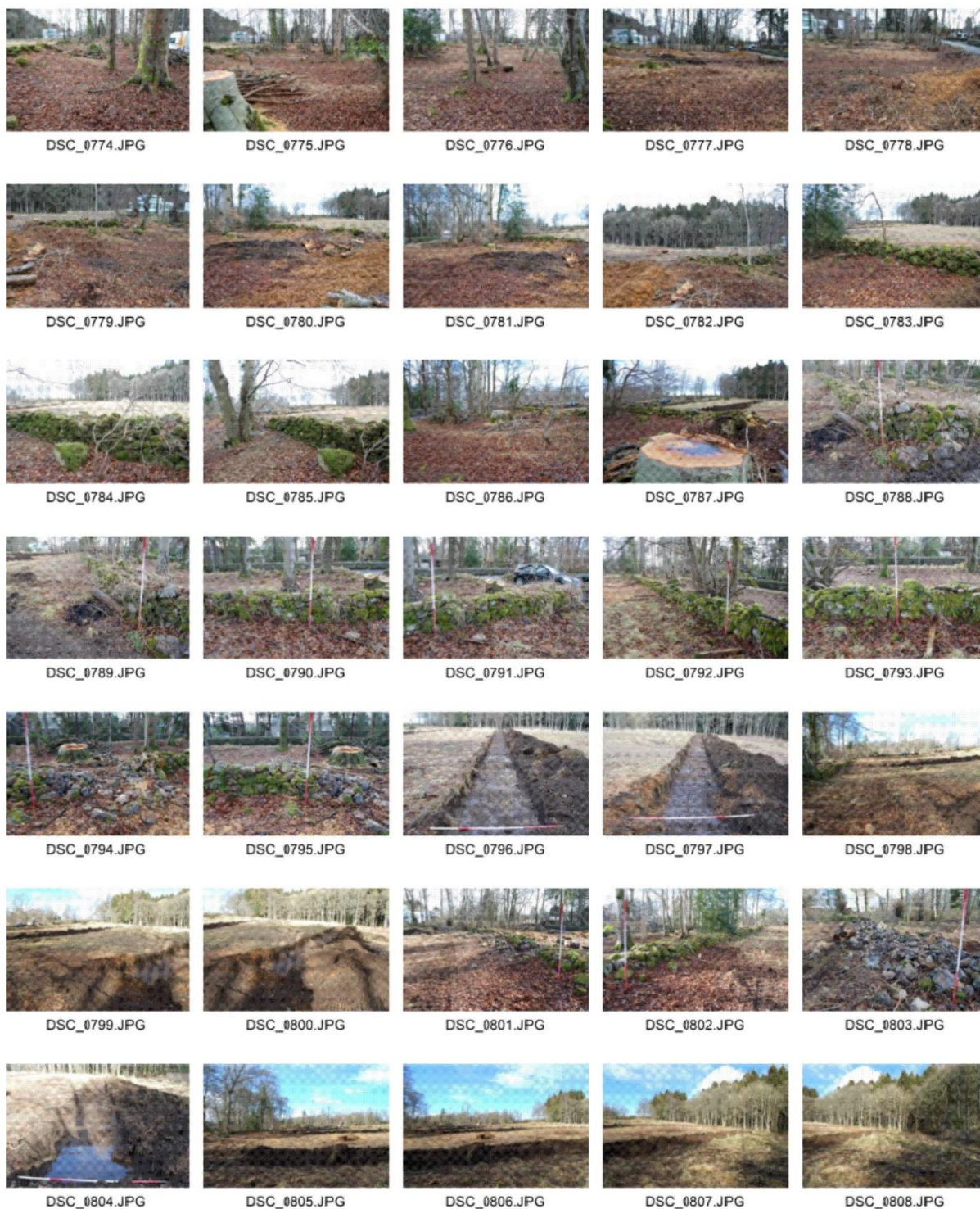
I would like to thank Kenny Clubb, Churchill Homes for initiating this project and Bruce Mann, Aberdeenshire Council for his advice during the work.

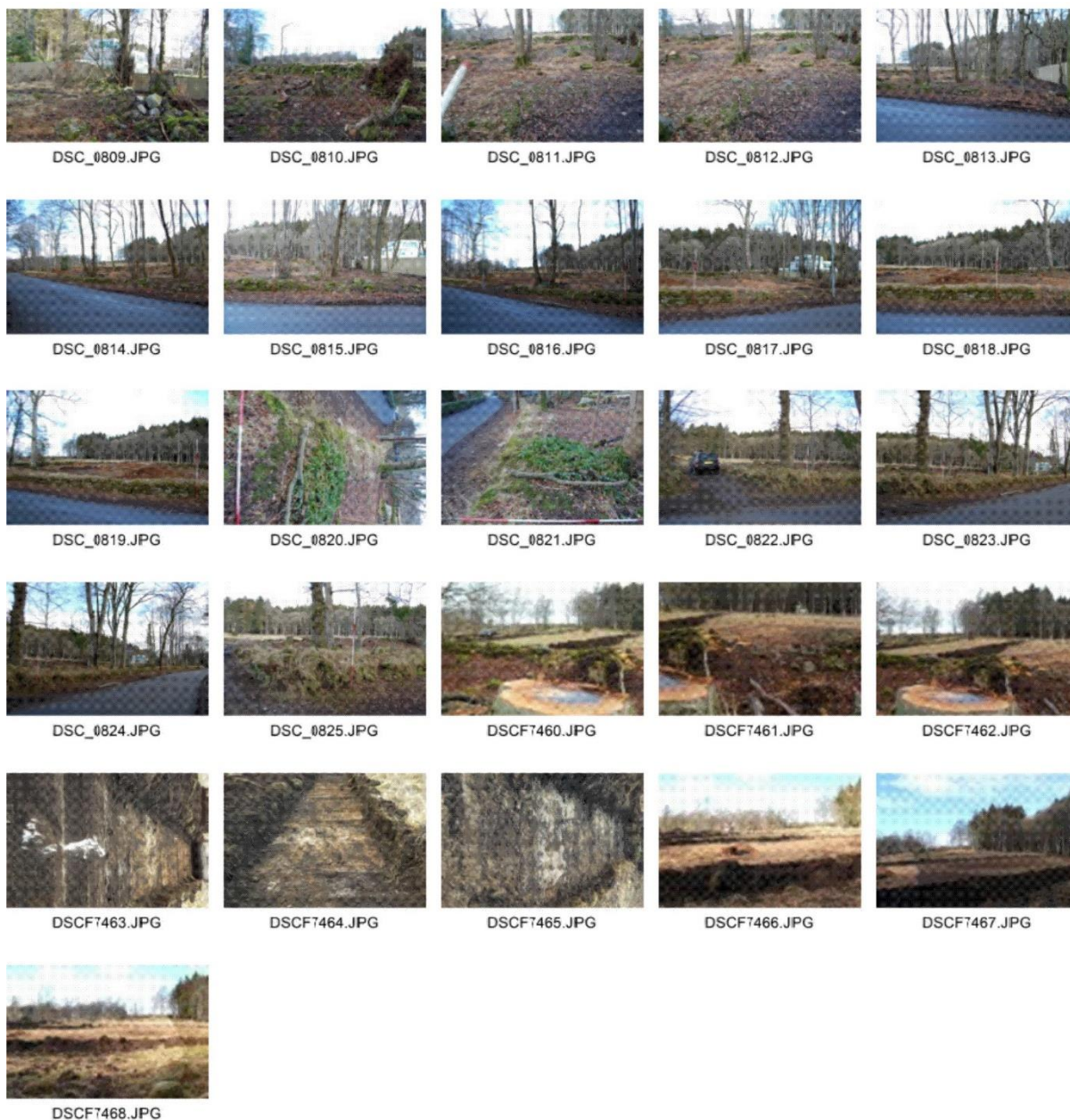
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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_0739	Trench 1 and 2 (right)	NNE
DSC_0740	Trench 1 and 2 (right)	NE
DSC_0741-43	Trench 1 from south end including field drain trench	NNW
DSC_0744	Trench 1 from north	SSE
DSC_0745	Cairn F1	E
DSC_0746	Cairn F1 at N end Tr 1	SE
DSC_0747-49	Cairn F1 at N end Tr 1	ESE
DSC_0750	Cairn F1 at N end Tr 1	SSE
DSC_0751	Cairn F2 (with old spade abandoned)	W
DSC_0752-3	Cairn F2	SSE
DSC_0754	Starting Tr 3	E
DSC_0755-6	Tr 2 from N end	SSE
DSC_0757-63	Tr 2 furrows 1m wide 8-9m apart	SSE
DSC_0764-65	Tr 2 from S end	NNW
DSC_0766	Low wall F3 around tree shelter belt	NE
DSC_0767-8	Low wall F3 around tree shelter belt SW corner	ENE
DSC_0769-71	Low wall F3 around tree shelter belt NW corner	SE
DSC_0772-81	Walkover of tree belt	E
DSC_0782-85	F3 N wall between trees and field	NNW
DSC_0786	Walkover of tree belt	E
DSC_0787	Tree belt with Tr 1 and Tr 2 in background	NW
DSC_0788-9	Low wall F3 around tree shelter belt NW corner	SE
DSC_0790-95	F3 N wall between trees and field	S/SE
DSC_0796	Tr 3 from S end	N
DSC_0797	Tr 4 from S end	N
DSC_0798-800	Tr 5, 4, 3	NW
DSC_0801-803	F3 N wall between trees and field	SE/SW
DSC_0804	Tr 5 from S	N
DSC_0805-808	Trenches from SW corner of field	W/NW/N
DSC_0809-12	Walkover of tree belt	N/W
DSC_0813-25	F3 S wall between trees and Culter House Rd	N/NE/NW
DSCF7460-2	Tr 1 and 2 from tree belt	NW
DSCF7463	Large earthfast boulders Tr 3	SSE
DSCF7464-5	Modern plough marks Tr 3	SSE
DSCF7466-8	Trenches from SE corner of field	W/NW/NNW







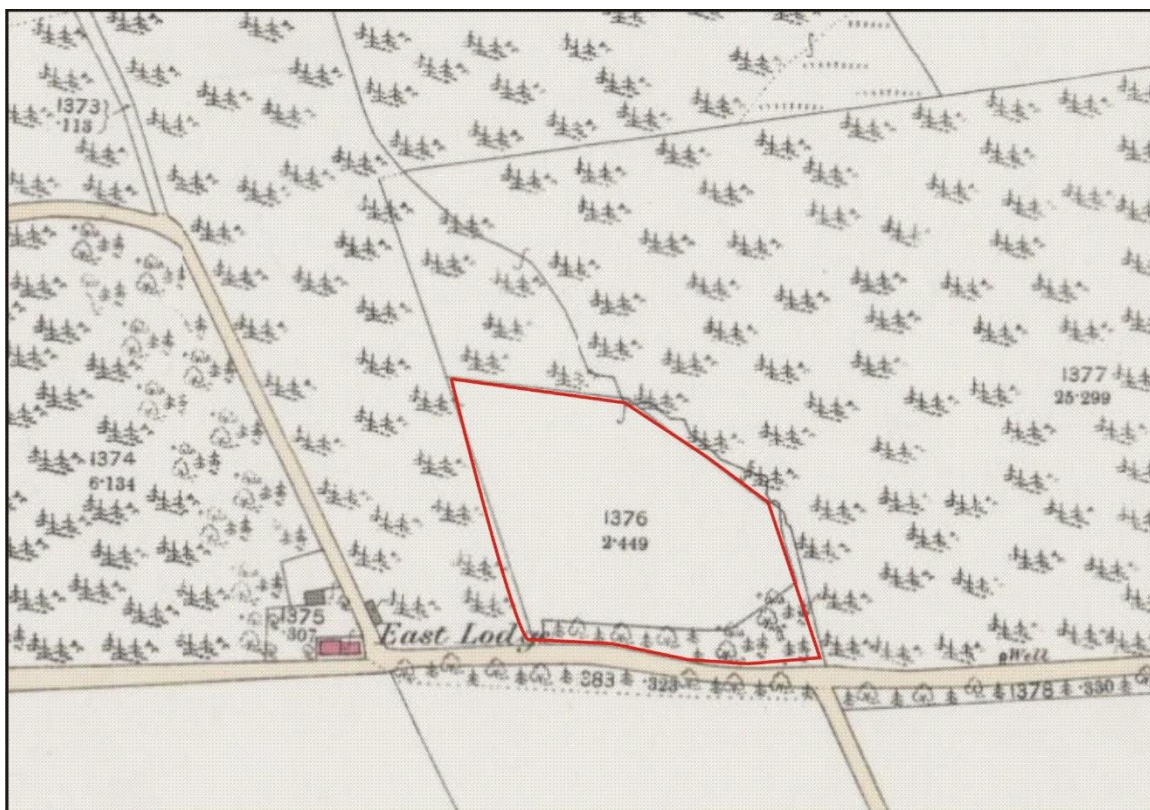
APPENDIX 2 MAPS



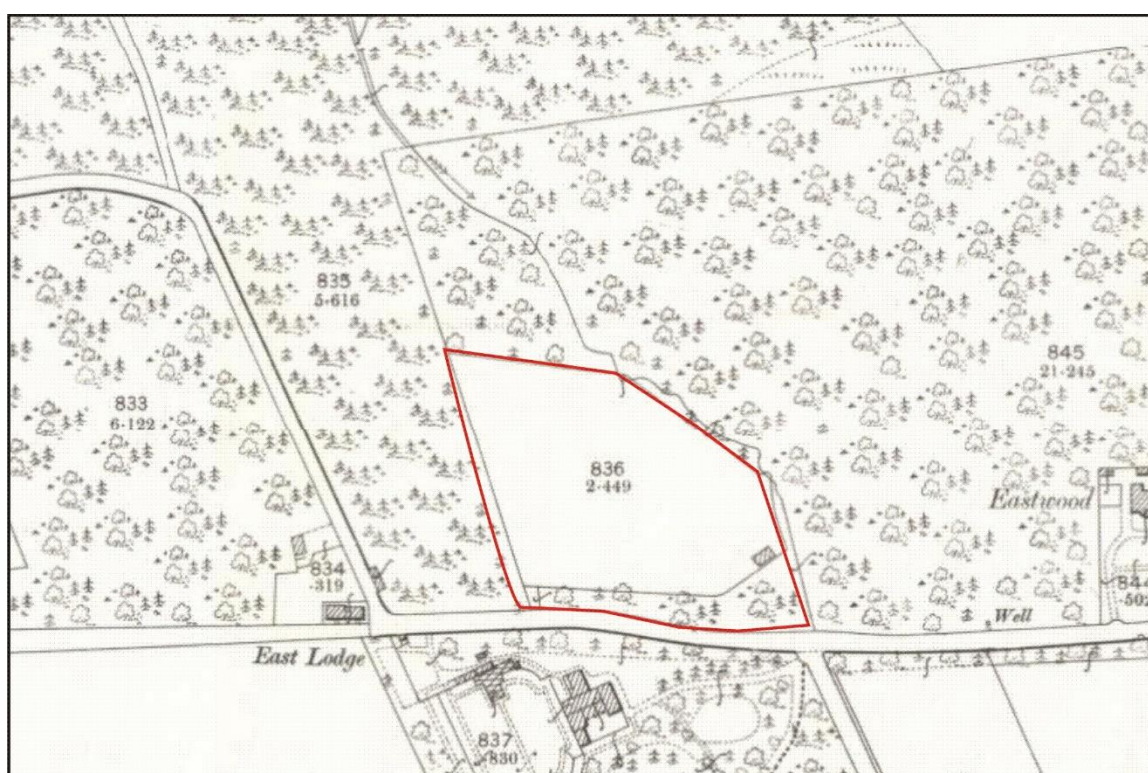
Illus 7 James Robertson Topographical and Military Map of the Counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine 1822 showing approximate area of site in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*)



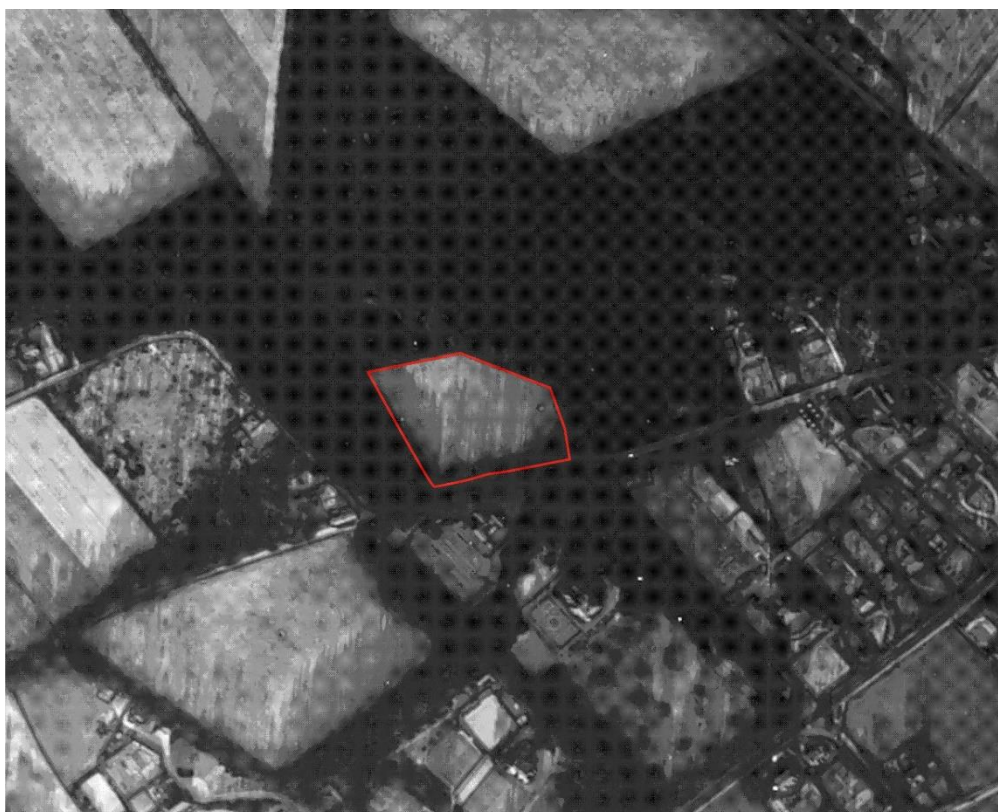
Illus 8 John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland 1832 showing approximate area of site in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*).



Illus 9 First Edition OS maps showing area of site in red. Aberdeen Sheet LXXXV.7 (Combined) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1869 (copyright National Library of Scotland).



Illus 10 Second Edition OS maps showing area of site in red. Aberdeenshire 085.07 (includes: Peterculter) Publication date: 1900 Revised: ca. 1899 (copyright National Library of Scotland).



Illus 11 1946 aerial photograph showing approximate area of site outlined in red (*copyright NCAP*).
 15 January 1946 Location: Nether Beanshill; Peterculter; ABERDEENSHIRE; SCOTLAND
 Coordinates (lat, lon): 57.111202, -2.250249 UNI: NCAP-000-000-087-464 Sortie: 106G/UK/1125
 Frame: 3328 Corporate bodies 541 Squadron (RAF) Image type: Vertical Scale: 10500

APPENDIX 3 FEATURES

Feature no	Description	Size
F1	Small stones piled on topsoil; moss covered	1m diameter
F2	Medium and large stones piled on topsoil	1.6 x 3m
F3	Low boundary wall around tree belt	Up to 1m high and 2.2m wide