

Forvie Church, Newburgh

Report on Level 1 Standing Building Survey for Scheduled Monument Consent



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SUMMARY

A Level 1 standing building survey was carried out on 6 August 2015 to provide information in support of a Scheduled Monument Consent application for repointing and replacing missing stones from the walls of Forvie Church.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the dunes NE of Newburgh and E of Waterside. It is centred on NGR NK 0204 2661, at 15-20m OD (Illus 1) and in the parish of Slains.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Annabel Drysdale, Scottish Natural Heritage, in support of an application to Historic Scotland for Scheduled Monument Consent for repair and repointing of the church walls.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was 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 2015)

2 BACKGROUND

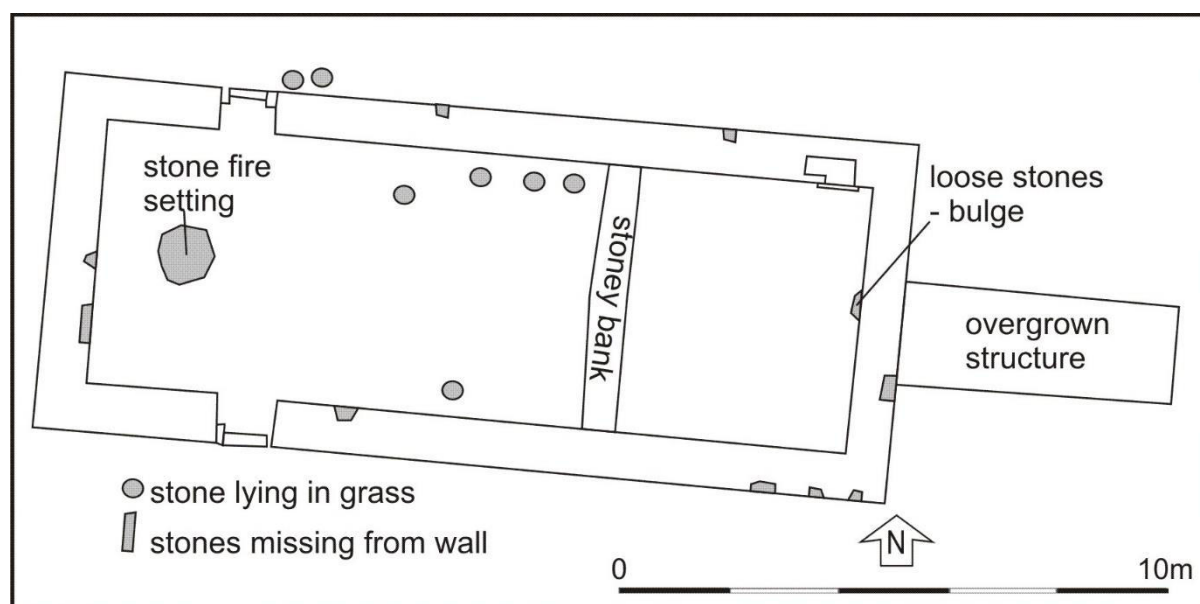
- 2.1 Forvie Church (NK02NW 1) also known as St Adomnan's (or Adamnan's) Church and deserted village is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The church of Forvie, dedicated to St Adamnan, is first mentioned in the 13th-century records of the Chartulary of Arbroath. The parish appears to have maintained its independence until 1573, when it was united with Slains parish. The church was partially excavated in 1957-8, revealing a plain oblong structure, measuring 15.75m by 4.57m internally with walls 0.6m thick. The walls survive some 1.2-1.5m in height, rising to a maximum of 2m in the west gable. Two doorways faced each other near the western end of the N and S walls; and there is a rectangular aumbry (with an inner compartment to the left) in the N wall of the chancel. There is a stone bank towards the east of the interior and this may form the edge of a raised platform for the east end of the church or may be the foundation for an internal partition (Illus 2). The building appears to have dated from the 12th century; and intrusive burials found by the excavators suggest that it had become ruinous by the 15th century. Excavations in 1953, S of the church, revealed the foundations of square huts, apparently of the medieval period, built of roughly shaped stones and red clay. Further excavations in 1955 revealed a paved floor and yielded a number of 13th/14th-century pot sherds. Other stray medieval finds, including a pin, spindle whorls and 14th-century pottery, have been made in a midden S of the church. The area S of the church is now occupied by dunes, which appear to cover the remains of the medieval settlement. The scheduled area measures overall 120m N-S and 180m E-W and is defined on the SW by the E side of the track leading to the beach, to the SE by a stream which runs into Oldkirk Burn south of the church, and to the N by a straight line corresponding to National Grid northing 2664. The monument is of national importance because it comprises a rare association of medieval parish church and deserted village undisturbed by later buildings, which together contribute to an understanding of medieval architecture and rural settlement. Although the church has been partially excavated, most of the archaeological remains of the village remain undisturbed below dunes and have the potential through excavation to add to our knowledge and understanding of medieval society, economy, and material culture (Historic Scotland SAM online; Cowan and Easson 1976; Easson 1957).
- 2.2 A watching brief was maintained in February 2003 while the footbridge crossing the Old Kirk Burn at Forvie Kirk was replaced and upgraded. No archaeological features or finds were evident (Murray 2003). As part of further upgrading work, the pathway immediately on either side of the bridge was renewed in February 2006. A watching brief was maintained whilst this work was undertaken. With the exception of the buried turf line on the E path, no archaeological features were evident during the course of the watching brief (Murray 2006). A watching brief was maintained on the 28th June 2007 during the placement of a number of 'finger' interpretative posts around the area of Forvie Kirk and deserted medieval village. In all 5 posts were placed, each post was 90mm square and required to be dug in to a depth of c.750mm. The holes were excavated by hand in short spits of c.200mm and were c.180mm square. Post 1 - NK 01962 26600. No archaeological features or finds were evident. Post 2 - NK 02015 26585. No archaeological features or finds were evident. Post 3 and 3a - NK 02061 26613. Human remains. Post 4 - NK 02088 26614. No archaeological features or finds were evident. Post 5 - NK 01992 26560. No archaeological features or finds were evident. With the exception of the human remains evident in Post-holes 3 and 3a, no other archaeological features or finds were evident. It is now apparent, however, that a burial ground associated with the kirk is located to the S and W of the kirk (Murray, 2007).

3 THE LEVEL 1 STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

A level 1 standing building survey was carried out on 6 August 2015 and a plan and elevations were drawn and a condition survey carried out (Illus 2).

The structure is in a very exposed position in the landscape and shows signs of wear and tear due to both weather and visitors. The lime mortar pointing has been worn from between the stones on the interior and exterior and the stones are standing proud. This has resulted in stones becoming loosened and falling from the walls. Some of these stones are lying near where they have fallen (Illus 9) and some have been covered with grass growing on the interior and exterior of the church (see Illus 2 for a location of these stones). Grass has also taken root in some of these gaps and is causing further erosion of the mortar (eg on the W wall; Illus 3). Some of the loose stones have been gathered on the interior near the W wall and used as a setting for a small fire (Illus 4).

The areas around the N and S doors have been heavily pointed at one time and the wall-heads in this area covered with mortar (Illus 8). This has meant that these well-travelled accesses to the building are in better condition than other areas of the walls. The remaining wall-heads are all covered with sand and grass which seems stable with little loss of stone at this level. There is a bulge in the centre of the interior of the E wall where stones are falling from the wall (Illus 7) and these will need to be removed, replaced and repointed. There is an overgrown structure (Illus 2, cover, top) against the exterior of the E wall and this may be affecting the integrity of this wall. This may have been a factor in the creation of this area of loose stone.



Illus 2 Plan showing main features and areas of repair required



Illus 3 Exterior west elevation; facing E



Illus 4 Interior W elevation showing stones missing and recent fire setting (foreground)



Illus 5 Interior E elevation with detail of missing stonework



Illus 6 Interior S wall with South Door (right) showing mortared E jamb, vegetation on wall-heads and stones and pointing missing from wall



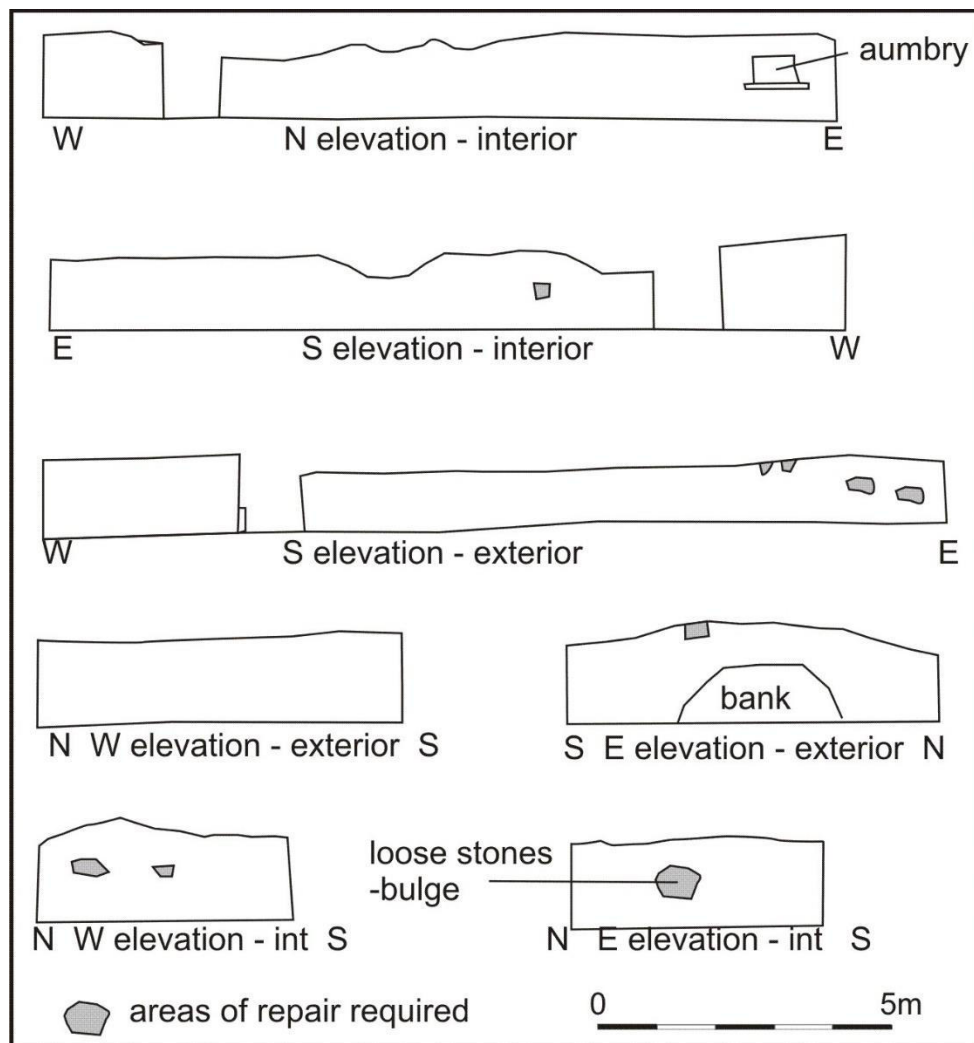
Illus 7 Interior E wall showing detail of bulge in wall where stones require to be removed, replaced and re-mortared



Illus 8 S door (foreground) and N door showing little repair needed, mortar along jambs and well-used access route



Illus 9 Detail of stones lying in long grass adjacent to interior N wall



Illus 10 Elevations showing main features and repairs required

4 REFERENCES

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5 CONCLUSIONS

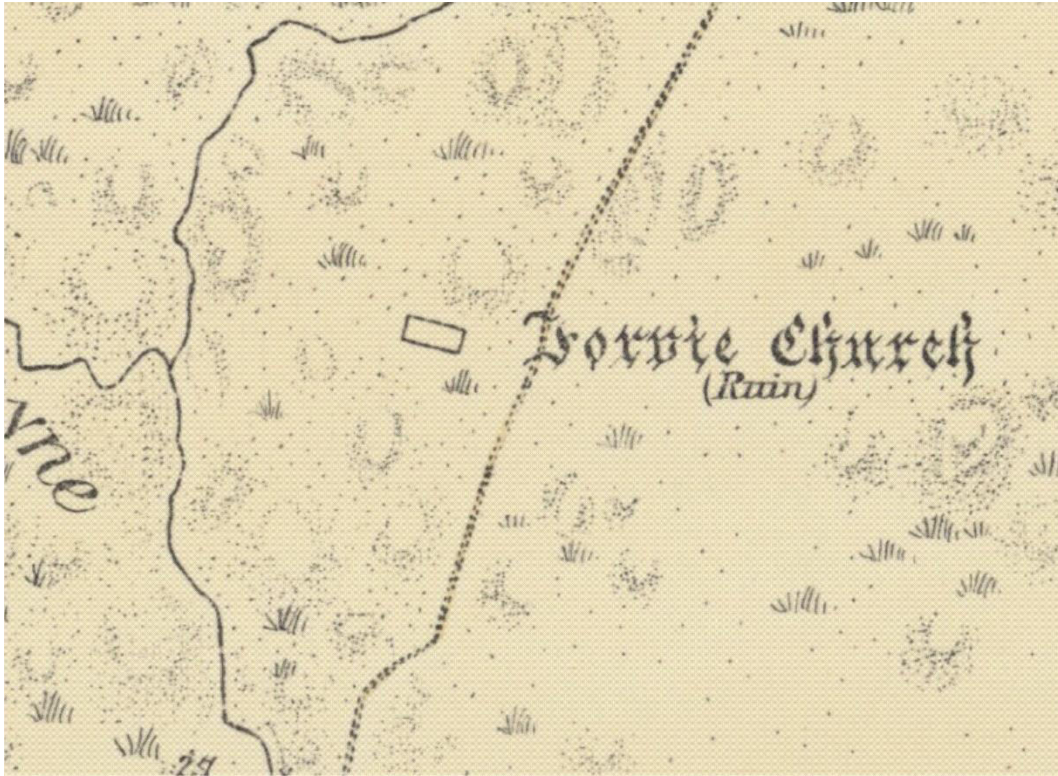
There are several areas where stones require to be replaced and the whole structure requires repointing. This survey was carried out to support and application by SNH for Scheduled Monument Consent to carry out these repairs.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

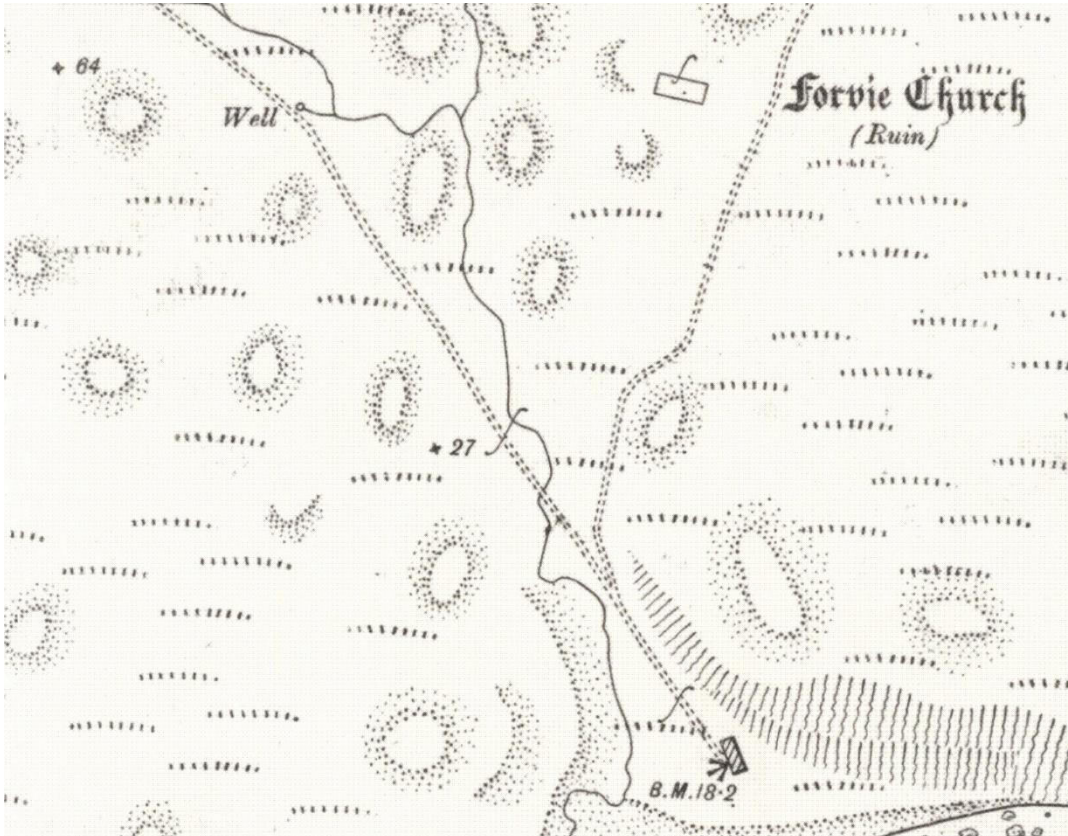
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APPENDIX 1 MAPS

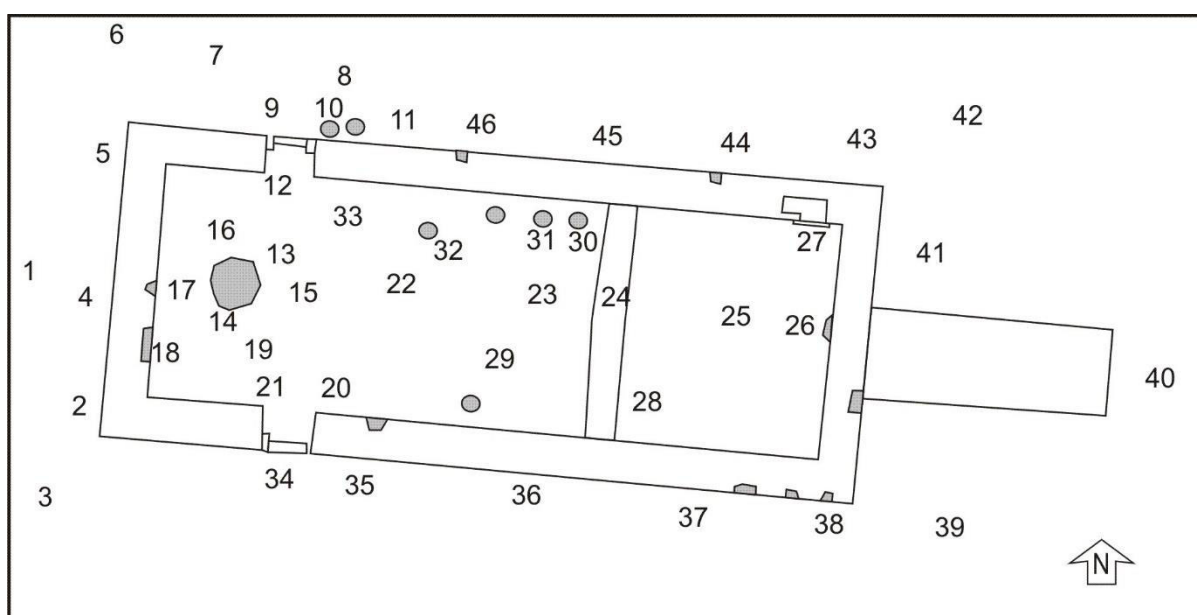


Illus 11 1st Edition OS map showing Forvie Church (ruin). Aberdeen Sheet XLVIII.6 (Slains)
Survey date: 1867 Publication date: 1870 (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 12 2nd Edition OS map showing Forvie Church (top right). Aberdeenshire 048.06 (includes:
Slains) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899 (copyright National Library of Scotland)

APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS



Illus 13 Camera points used in this survey

Photo no	Description	Facing	Camera point
DSC_0054-5	West exterior elevation showing grass growing between stones	E	1
DSC_0056	West exterior elevation S end	E	2
DSC_0057	SW corner	NE	3
DSC_0058	West exterior elevation centre	E	4
DSC_0059	West exterior elevation N end	E	5
DSC_0061-2	NW corner	SE	6
DSC_0063	N wall with N door (left)	SE	7
DSC_0064	N door W jamb	SW	8
DSC_0065	N door W jamb	SW	9
DSC_0066	N door threshold stone	SW	10
DSC_0067	Loose stones NE N door	S	11
DSC_0068	N door interior	NW	12
DSC_0069	N wall interior with N door (right)	NW	13
DSC_0070	Interior W wall showing stone missing	W	14
DSC_0071	Fire setting using stones from walls or fallen stones	W	15
DSC_0072	W wall interior with fire setting using stones from walls or fallen stones	W	15
DSC_0073-5	N wall W end with N door (right)	N	14
DSC_0076	Fire setting using stones from walls or fallen stones		
DSC_0077-8	Stones missing from interior W wall	W	17
DSC_0079-80	Stones missing from interior W wall	W	18
DSC_0081	Stones missing from interior W wall	W	14
DSC_0082-3	S wall W end with S Door (left)	S	14
DSC_0084-5	Fire setting using stones from walls or fallen stones		

DSC_0085-6	S door W jamb	SW	20
DSC_0087	S door E jamb	SE	21
DSC_0088	S wall W end with S Door (left)	S	14
DSC_0089	S wall W end with S Door (right)	SE	14
DSC_0090	E end of interior	E	14
DSC_0091	E end of interior	E	12
DSC_0092	S wall W end with S Door (right)	S	22
DSC_0093	S wall W end with S Door (right)	SW	23
DSC_0094	S wall	S	23
DSC_0095	S wall with stone bank (centre)	S	24
DSC_0096	E wall with stone bank (centre)	E	23
DSC_0097	stone bank	E	24
DSC_0098	E wall interior	E	25
DSC_0099	E wall bulge details	E	26
DSC_0100	W end of church	W	26
DSC_0101	Aumbry	N	26
DSC_0102	Aumbry detail	N	27
DSC_0103	N wall	NE	24
DSC_0104	N wall	N	24
DSC_0105	N wall detail	N	30
DSC_0106-7	loose stones in grass	N	31, 32
DSC_0108	N wall	N	32
DSC_0109-10	NE corner	ENE	32
DSC_0111	N wall	N	32
DSC_0112-13	loose stones in grass	N	32
DSC_0114	N wall with N door (left)	N	33
DSC_0115-16	S door (foreground) N door (background)	N	34
DSC_0117	S wall exterior with S door (left)	NE	34
DSC_0118	S wall exterior with S door (left)	N	35
DSC_0119	S wall	N	37
DSC_0120	S wall E end	N	38
DSC_0121	S wall	WNW	38
DSC_0122	S wall E end	N	38
DSC_0124-5	SE corner	NW	39
DSC_0126	E wall exterior showing bank	W	40
DSC_0127	E wall N end	W	41
DSC_0130-1	NE corner	SW	42
DSC_0132	N wall E end	S	43
DSC_0133	N wall E end	ESE	44
DSC_0134	N wall	S	44
DSC_0135	N wall detail	S	45
DSC_0136	N wall with N door (right)	ESE	8
DSC_013740	Location from track		



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