

**Mains of Melrose, Gamrie, Aberdeenshire, AB45 3EN**  
**Report on watching brief**



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover soil strip for turbine base (foreground) and associated agricultural works revealing palaeochannel (top left); facing E; Bottom soil strip for cable trench; facing S

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## SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out on 15-16 December 2015 and 1, 22 and 23 February 2016. The soil strip for the access road, parking, crane base and associated works, turbine base and associated agricultural work and the cable were carried out using tracked machine and toothless ditching bucket. No archaeological finds or features were identified. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the N Aberdeenshire coast c 5km E of Macduff. The site is situated on a cliff top on open, flat, agricultural land open to the sea on the N and E sides (Herbert 2015). It is centred on NGR NJ7468 6457, at 70-75m OD (Illus 1) and in the parish of Gamrie.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Aidan O'Mahony, Project Engineer, Muirden Energy, Turriff, Aberdeenshire, AB53 4NH. A planning application APP/2014/2795 for erection of a 77m wind turbine was passed on 8 June 2015 and there is a requirement for an archaeological watching brief (Herbert 2015).
- 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 2016)

## 2 BACKGROUND

There are no known sites within the area of the watching brief. On a prominent hill immediately E of the site is the Law of Melrose (NJ76SE 3), a large cairn situated in a prominent position on top of a ridge at 400ft OD. It is composed of earth and stones and measures 28.5m in diameter and 4m in maximum height. It has been extensively mutilated by the removal of almost the entire N half. Locally it is supposed to have been a place of execution, (ONB 1869) but this tradition does not seem to have survived.

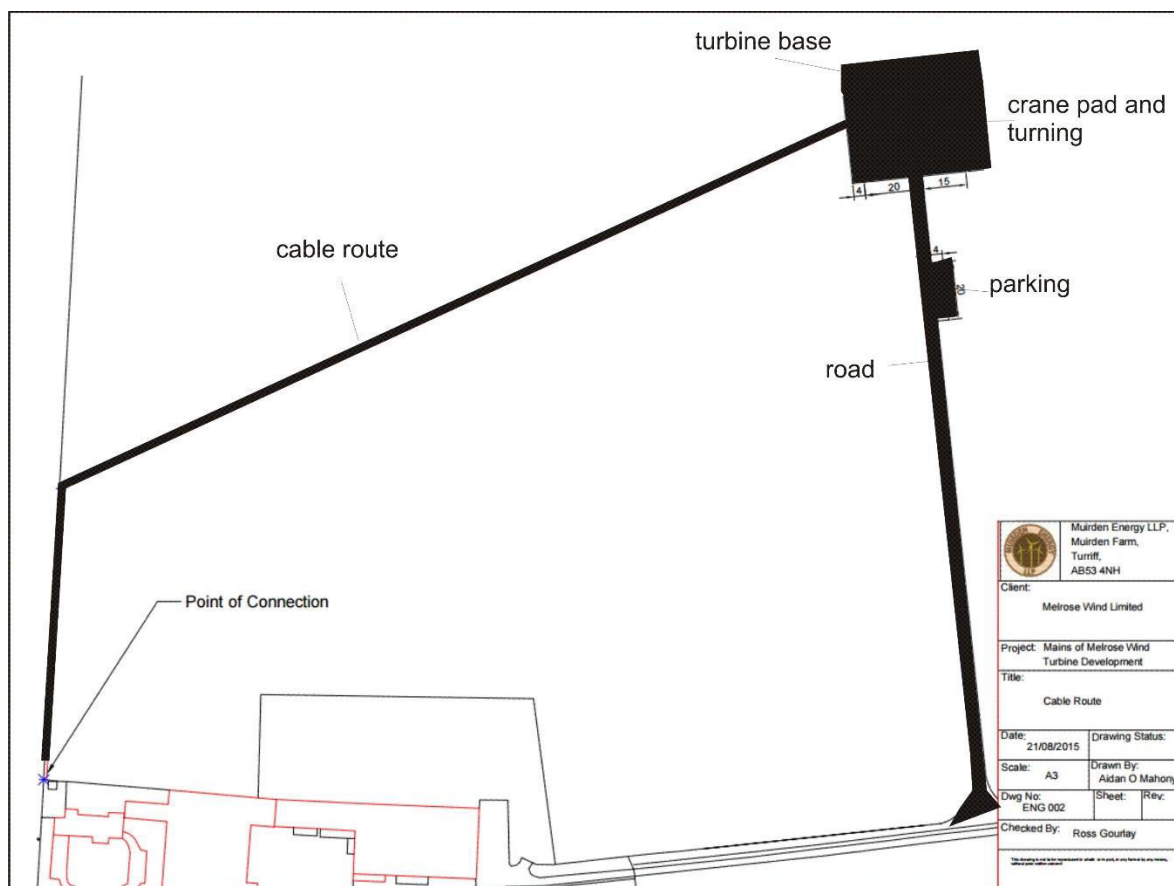
## 3 THE WATCHING BRIEF (Illus 2)

A watching brief for the crane base (Illus 3), turning area and access road (Illus 4) was carried out on 15-16 December 2015. The area of the crane base was gravel subsoil with 0.2m clayey topsoil. There were numerous medium and large stones in the subsoil with associated stones holes which were investigated. The access road trench had 0.12-0.2m of heavy clay topsoil on a pink clay subsoil.

A watching brief on the cable trench was maintained on 1 February 2016. The trench was 1.5m wide and ran from the sub station diagonally to the field boundary to the W and then S along the field boundary to near the existing pylon. The N-S trench along the former field boundary revealed several field drains, concrete and an iron pipe (cover illus, bottom). A road had been previously located along this boundary.

A watching brief for the turbine base and associated agricultural works took place on 22-23 February 2016. This trench was 15m wide and 60m long to allow for a lower area of the field to be backfilled the extra material from the turbine base trench. This hollow was the remains of a palaeochannel which was partially uncovered (cover illus, top).

No archaeological features or finds were recorded during this watching brief. The soil was typically shallow (10-15cm with the area of the palaeochannel up to 1m deep. The clayey subsoil was scored with plough marks and there were several field drains.



Illus 2 Watching brief areas (copyright Muir Energy)





Illus 3 Soil strip for crane base and associated works showing shallow topsoil and field drains; facing S



Illus 4 Soil strip for road; facing NNE

## **4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A watching brief was carried out on 15-16 December 2015 and 1, 22 and 23 February 2016. The soil strip for the access road, parking, crane base and associated works, turbine base and associated agricultural work and the cable were carried out using tracked machine and toothless ditching bucket. No archaeological finds or features were identified. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

## **5 REFERENCES**

Herbert, C 2015 Scope and Framework of an archaeological watching brief at Mains of Melrose, Gamrie.

Ordnance Survey (Name Book. *Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale)*. Page(s): Book No. 14, 70.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## APPENDIX 1

### PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_3010-13	Start of soil strip for crane base and turning area	NW/W
DSC_3014-19	Soil strip crane base NW corner	W/SW
DSC_3020-22	Soil strip crane base	S
DSC_3023-48	Soil strip crane base including field drain and stone holes	S/NW/N/NE
DSC_3049-67	Soil strip access road including field drain and stone holes	
DSC4397-4428	Soil strip for cables	W/S
DSC 5223-5249	Soil strip for turbine base and associated agricultural works	

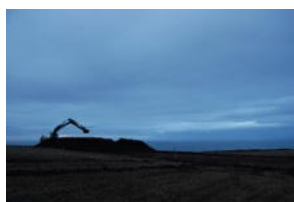




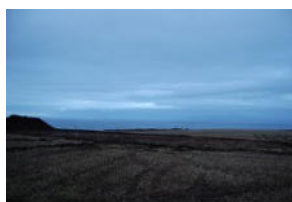




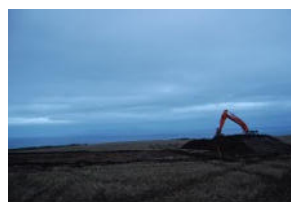
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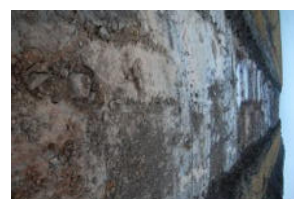
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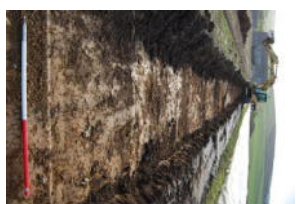
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