

Rear of 28 Main Street, Turriff, AB54 3RA

Report on the archaeological evaluation



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20 December 2016**

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SUMMARY

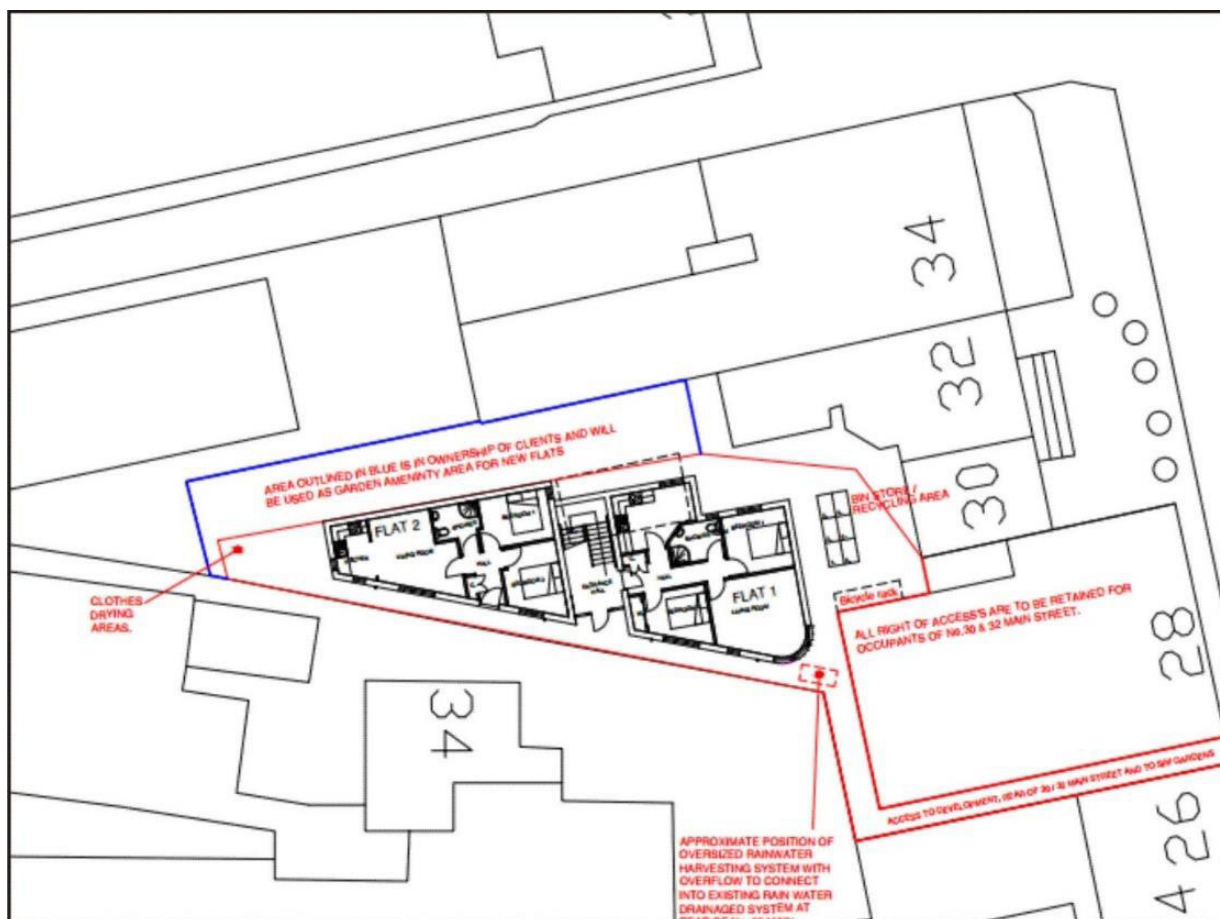
A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 19 December 2016. Two trenches were excavated. The site was on the edge of a historic watercourse and river gravels covered with topsoil were recorded. No archaeological finds or features were identified and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current development.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the W side of Main Street and the S side of Manse Road, Turriff. It is centred on NGR NJ 7249 4990, at 55-60m OD in the parish of Turriff.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by James Ironside, James G Ironside Limited, Architectural & Building Consultant, Dunvegan, Victoria Terrace, Turriff, AB53 4DZ for Celebrations of Turriff. A Planning Application (Ref No APP/2015/1730) has been submitted for the Erection of 6 No Flats.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement (HESPS) 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)



Illus 2 Site plan showing proposed development (copyright James G Ironside Ltd)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments within 1km of the proposed development.
- 2.2 There are no listed buildings on the W side of Main Street; 39-41 Main Street on the opposite side of the road are Listed C late 18th century buildings and the Clydesdale Bank at 1 Main Street/Balmellie Street is also Listed C and of late 19th-century date.
- 2.3 Turriff (NJ74NW0089) is a town and burgh, comprising a medieval core and later planned 'village'. The town was created a Burgh of Barony by James IV in 1511, giving the town the right to hold three fairs annually and to trade freely in 'wine, wax, wool and leather'. In the late 1700s there was a period of planned expansion. Turriff was an important centre for the agricultural trade: in the mid-19th century the mart was one of the largest in the country. Developments in the town in the 19th century included construction of the Deveron Bridge in 1826 (replacing the ferry), and arrival of the railway in 1856 (Aberdeenshire HER online).
- 2.4 There are 160 site of historic and archaeological interest within 1km of the proposed development. Many of these form the buildings of the town of Turriff mostly dating to the 19th century.
- 2.5 There is a possible early medieval monastery in the area implied from the mention of Cormac, Abbot of Turbruaid, in one of the notitiae in the Book of Deer (Stuart 1869), c. 1135. The notitiae, however, are suspect and nothing else is known of a monastery there (NJ74NW 27; Easson 1957, 192-3; Cowan and Easson 1976, 192-3). 300m WSW of the proposed development is Saint Congan's Church (NJ74NW

12) was granted before AD 1214 to the Monks of Arbroath. The old parish church of St Congan was a long narrow structure, 120ft, in length, by 18ft wide. When the new church was erected in 1794 the earlier building was left to decay and the eastern end, still known as 'the quire' is all that now remains. The erection of the choir can be satisfactorily assigned to the first part of the 16th century.

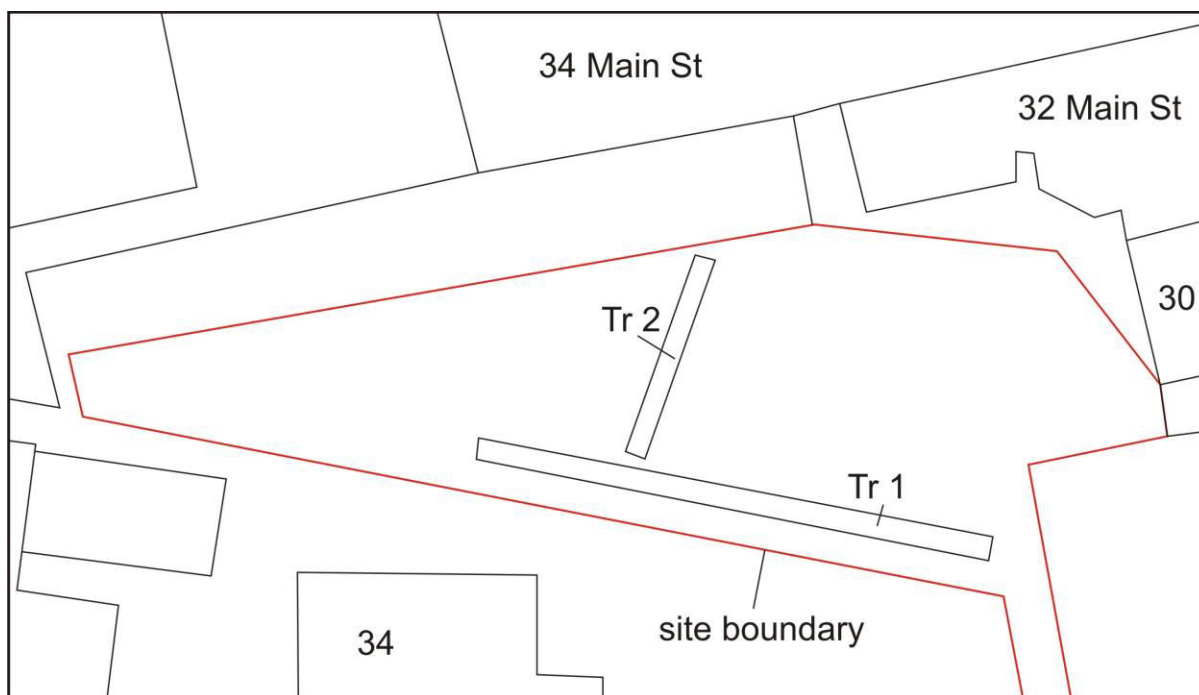
In 1861 portions of the choir were taken away, and on removing the stones from a window in the south wall which had been built up, there appeared on the splay of one side the figure of a bishop painted on the plaster in bright colours. An inscription in Gothic letters above read 'S Ninianus'. A similar painting on the other splay of the window was destroyed before it could be drawn or photographed - there is reason to believe that there was a series of similar pictures around the church (Stuart 1869, cxxxiv-cxlv; MacGibbon and Ross 1896-7, 615-6).

- 2.6 325m W of the proposed site is the possible site of the old castle of Turriff which still existed in 1610 or 1612. It stood within an area bounded by Castlehill, Mill Road, Gall Street and Deveron Street, and was then known as the Tower of Torrey (Milne 1906, 161; Bogdan and Bryce 1991, 27; Yeoman 1988, 131).
- 2.7 Three carved stone balls (NJ74NW 36, 37, 38) are recorded from Turriff. Two, with six prominent knobs, are in Royal Museum of Scotland (RMS AS 68 and AS 69). The cast of a third, with seven knobs, is also in RMS (RMS AS 85). Proc Soc Antiq Scot 1887, 286; 1890, 279; 1893, 10-11; Marshall 1979, 67, 69. A leaf-shaped flint 'spearhead' (NJ74NW 35) measuring 3ins x 1in, from Turriff, which was formerly in the collection of John Rae, is now in Royal Museum of Scotland (RMS AA 73; PSAS 1893, 11). A porphyry axehead (NJ74NW 30) from Turriff was purchased from the Wilson Collection in 1910 for the Anthropological Museum, Marischal College, Aberdeen University. It measures 121 by 50 by 25mm (Reid 1912, 6; Black 1893, 348). Medieval silver finger ring (NJ74NW 199) with a strong similarity to one from the late 12th-century hoard from Lark Hill, Worcester. Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 35/03) and allocated to Aberdeenshire Heritage (Campbell 2004, 17-18).
- 2.8 Turriff physic (Chalybeate) well (NJ74NW 11) was Famed for its medicinal qualities, the Physic well is supposed to have been regarded as a Holy Well. (Name Book 1895). The spring of water issuing from the slope some 6.0m NE of the published position of the Physic Well, is probably water draining from the higher part of the town (information from D E S Turnbull, Burgh Surveyor, Turriff) NJ 7229 4971. The spring and the site of the well are buried under a heap of slag from the near-by gasworks (NJ74NW 31).
- 2.9 Three trenches excavated at Castle Hill during work on the Turriff Relief Road produced evidence of earlier site usage, probably 19th century. One trench contained debris and cuts relating to 18th century buildings (Cachart 1990, 18).
- 2.10 Immediately south of the proposed development is Turriff Nurseries (NJ74NW 107) which have been in existence since before 1926, the 3rd Edition OS map.
- 2.11 Gordon's map of 1636-52 (Illus 6, 7), Moll 1745 (Illus 8) show no detail of the town. Roy 1747-52 (Illus 9) shows a collection of buildings and streets but it is not possible to exactly locate the proposed development site. Robertson 1822 (Illu 11) and Thomson 1826 (Illus 10) show the town is still relatively small and the W side of Main Street seems to have a line of buildings. The First Edition OS map (Illus 12) shows the triangular parcel of land with buildings along Main Street to the E and Manse Road to the N and a long thin building along the S side belonging by the Third Edition OS map (Illus 14) to a nursery. The configuration of buildings changes slightly on the E side of the proposed development with small unroofed building being replaced by a larger roofed building on the Second Edition OS map (Illus 13). The area has sparse

trees on the First Edition but is open ground on the Second and Third Editions. The area is now an open yard (Illus 15).

3 THE EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 19 December 2016. Two trenches were excavated with a tracked machine and 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.2 Trench 1 was 18m long along the southern boundary of the site. It was dug through 0.6m of topsoil containing brick and sparse modern china, on top of 0.3m of river gravels and sands and then a compact rusty brown sand (Illus 4).
- 3.3 Trench 2 was 7m long and dug through topsoil on top of white soft sand. The trench was 0.05m deep at the N end and undulated to a maximum depth of 0.6m deep at the S end. This is the remains of the edge of the historic watercourse.
- 3.4 No archaeological finds or features were identified and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current development.



Illus 3 Plan showing evaluation trenches (copyright James G Ironside Ltd)



Illus 4 Trench 1 showing topsoil over river gravels and sand; facing S



Illus 5 Trench 2 showing clean white sand sloping down to the south; facing S

4 REFERENCES

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5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Jim Ironside for initiating this project, Celebrations of Turriff, Stephen the digger driver and to Claire Herbert for her advice during this work.

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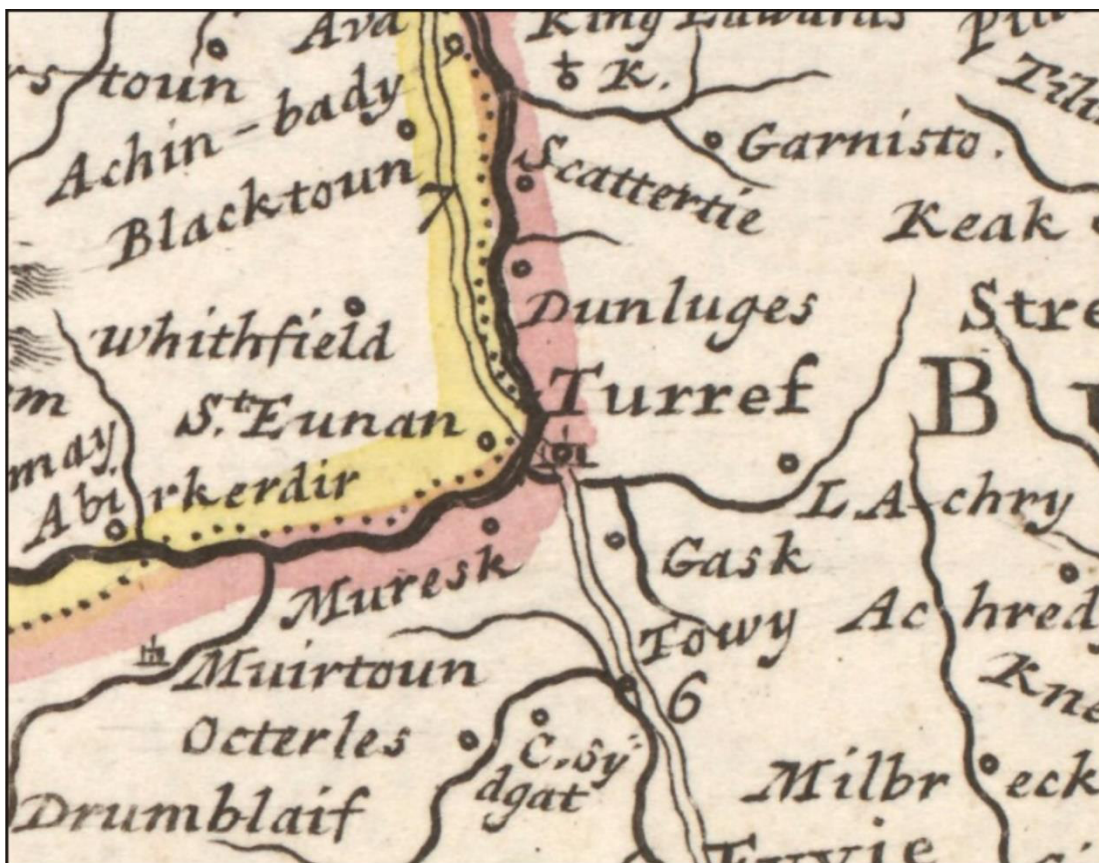
APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 6 Robert Gordon's map of 1636-52 showing Turreff (circled in red) (*copyright National Library of Scotland*).



Illus 7 Robert Gordon's map of 1654 showing Turreff (copyright National Library of Scotland).



Illus 8 Herman Moll's map of 1745 showing Turreff (copyright National Library of Scotland).



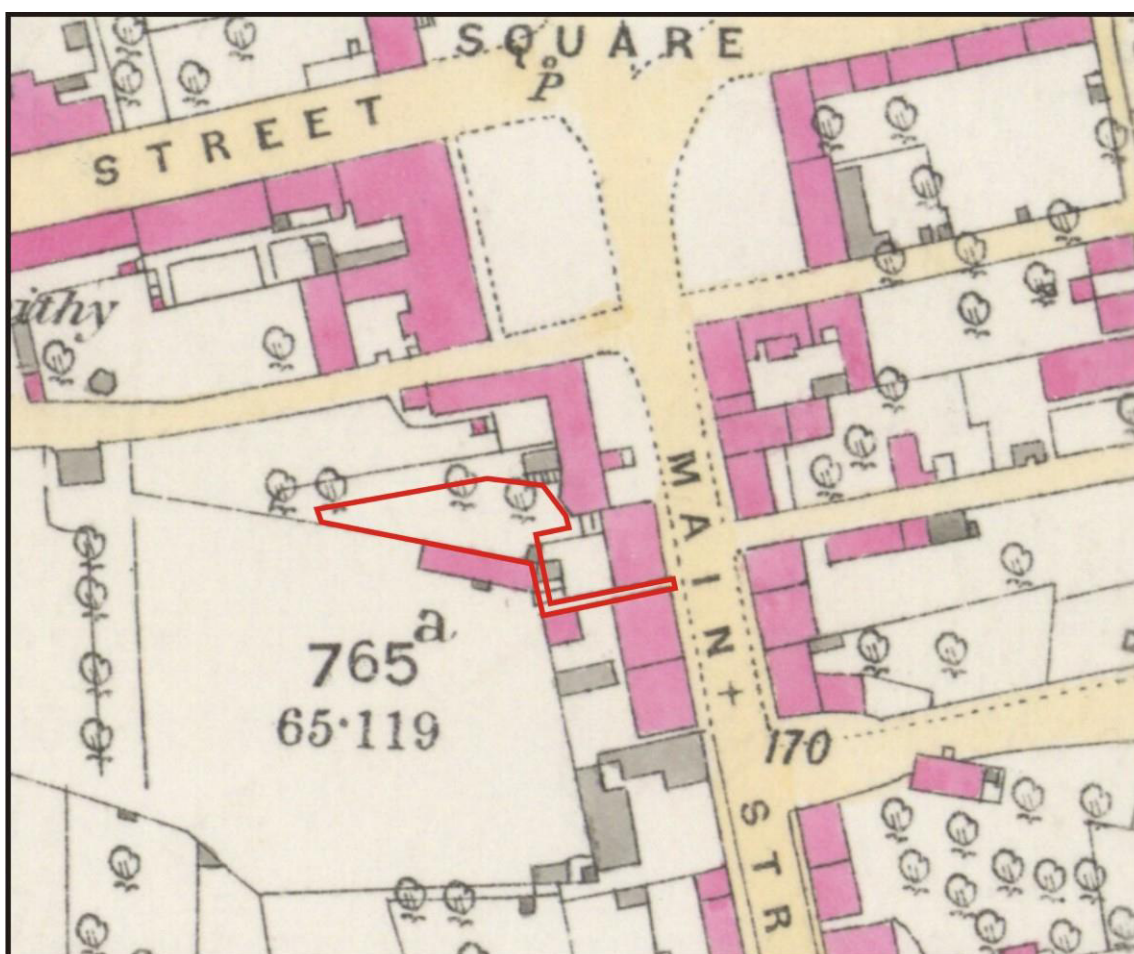
Illus 9 Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55 showing Turriff (copyright National Library of Scotland).



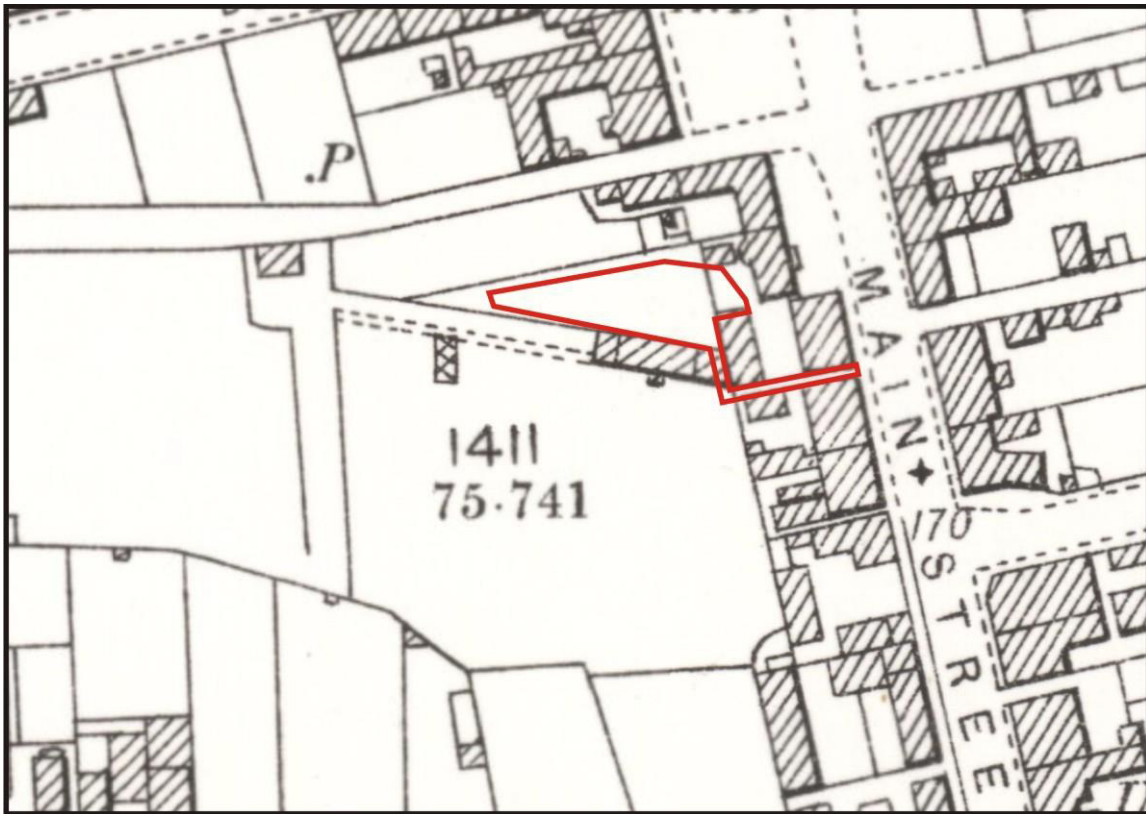
Illus 10 John Thomson map of 1826 showing the approximate area of the proposed development (circled in red) (copyright National Library of Scotland).



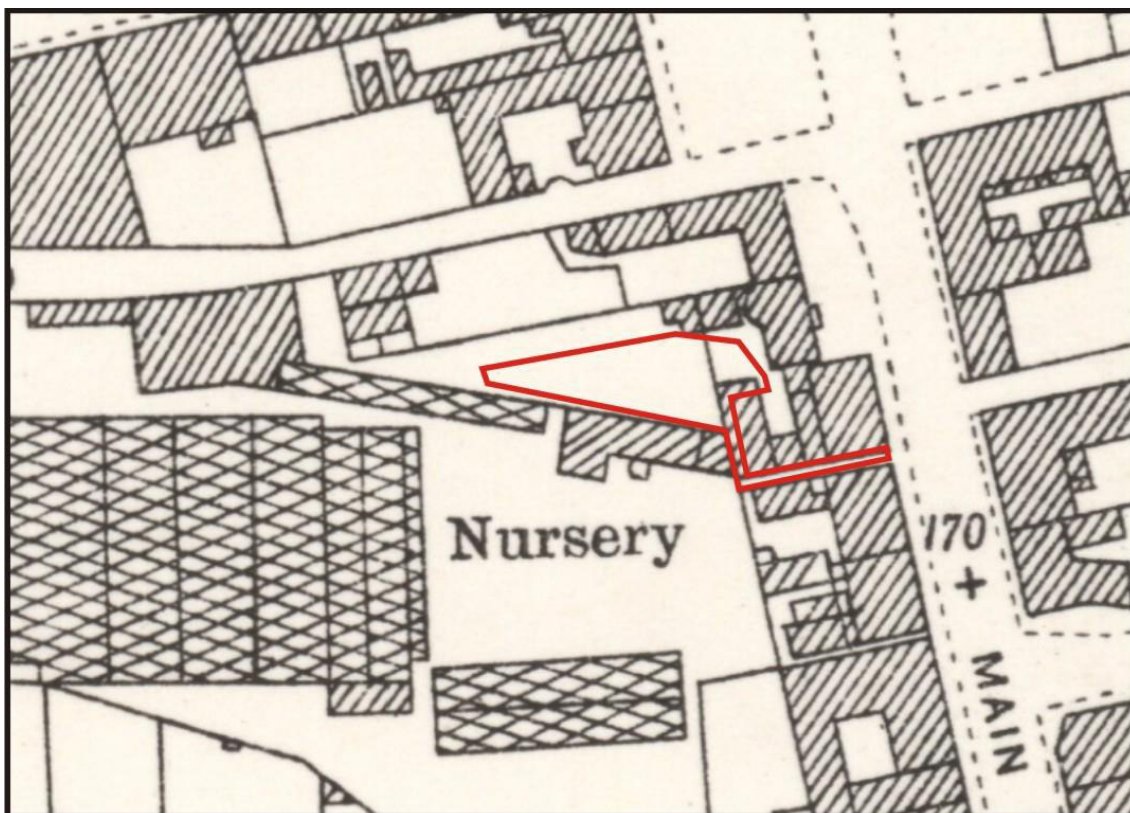
Illus 11 Robertson map of 1822 showing the approximate area of the proposed development (circled in red) (*copyright National Library of Scotland*).



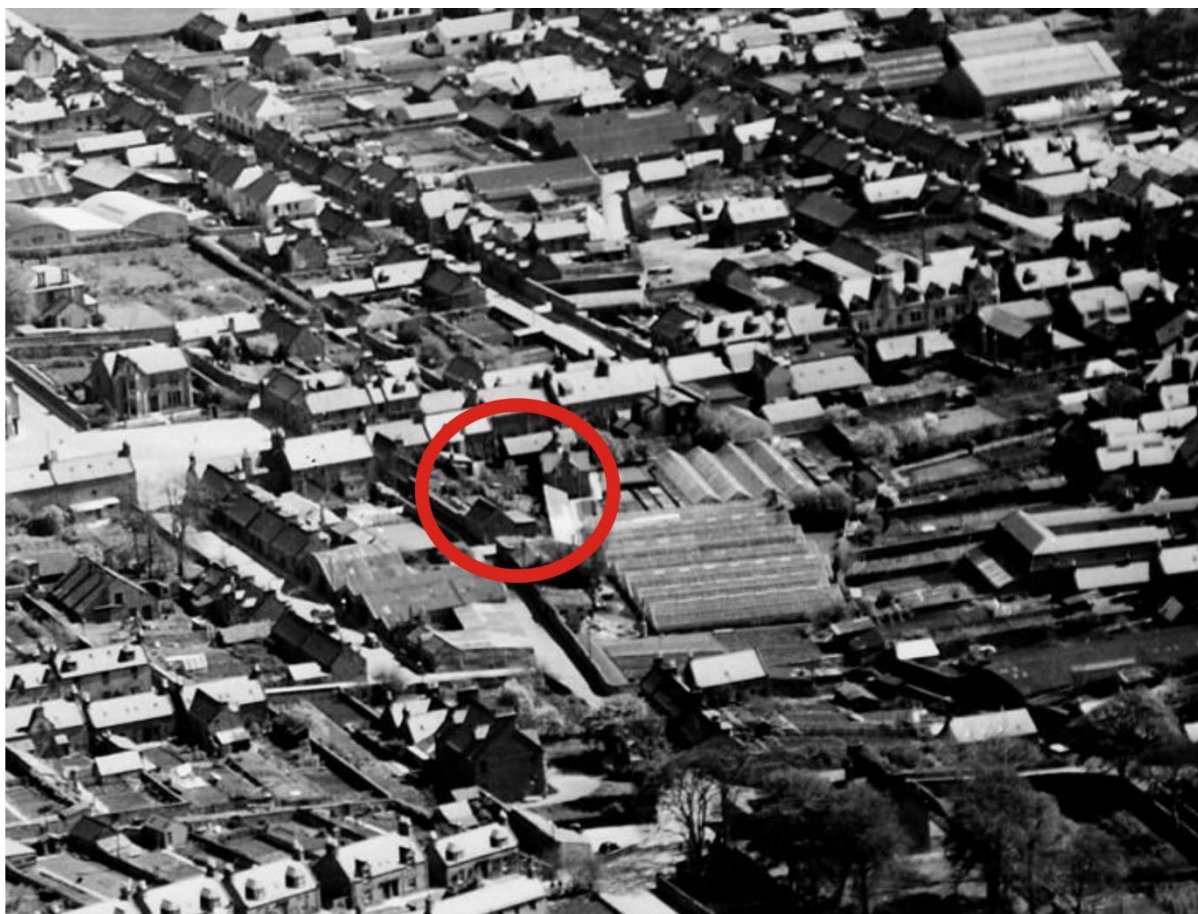
Illus 12 First Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeen Sheet XI.14 (Combined) Survey date: 1870 Publication date: 1874



Illus 13 Second Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*). Aberdeenshire 011.14 (includes: Turriff) Publication date: 1901 Revised: 1900



Illus 14 Third Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*). Aberdeenshire 011.14 (includes: Turriff) Publication date: 1926 Revised: 1925 Levelled: 1900



Illus 15 1948 aerial photograph with site outline in red; facing N (Copyright RCAHMS NCAP). Date: 30 April 1948 Date known Location: Bridgend; Turriff; Aberdeenshire; Scotland Coordinates (lat, lon): 57.539235, -2.460560 Description: Oblique aerial photograph taken facing East UNI: NCAP-000-000-225-953

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXTS

Trench	Context	Description
1	1	Topsoil dark grey clay loam with brick, roof tile and sparse 19 th and 20 th -century pottery 0.6m deep
1	2	Waterwashed gravel and sand lenses 0.3m deep over compact rusty brown natural sand
2	2	Medium brown sandy loam 0.05-0.6m deep over soft white sand

APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Facing	Description
DSC_5094	WNW	Site
DSC_5095-6	WNW	Tr 1
DSC_5097-9	WSW	Tr 1 S section
DSC_5100-108		General site shots including rear of buildings 30-32 Main St

DSC_5109-114	SSW	Tr 2
DSC_5115-7	ESE	Tr 2
DSC_5118-9	SE	Tr 2
DSC_5120	NNE	Tr 2
DSC_5121-2	WNW	Tr 1
DSC_5123-25	ESE	Tr 1
DSC_5126	NW	Tr 1
DSC_5127	S	Tr 1
DSC_5128	SW	Tr 1
DSC_5129	WNW	Tr 1

