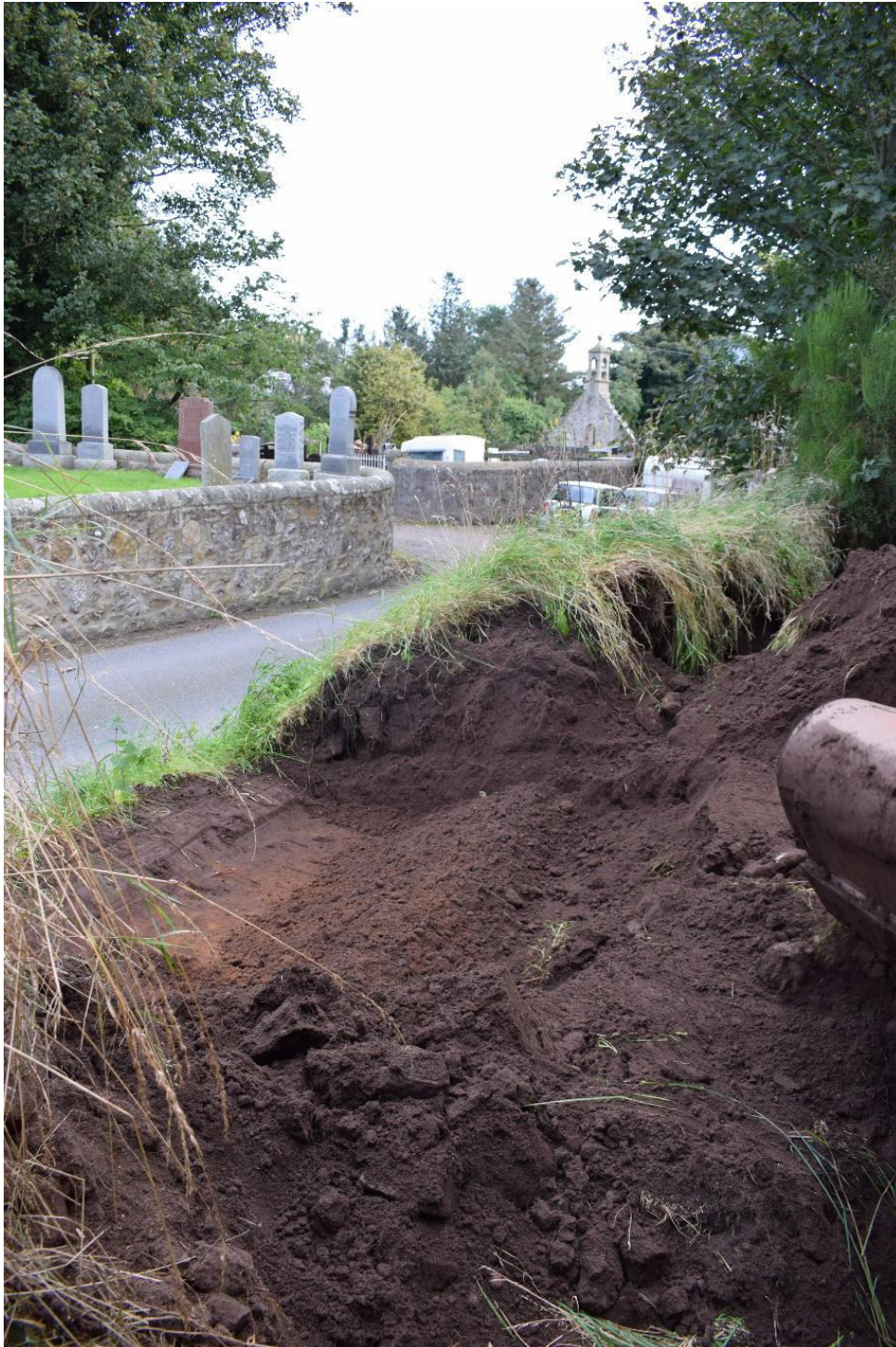


**Site Adjacent to Rathen West Church, Rathen,
Fraserburgh, AB43 8UL
Data Structure Report**



**Alison Cameron
Cameron Archaeology Ltd
20 September 2017**

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Cover: drystone dyke and soil bank on NW side of property removed for new driveway with St Ethernan's Church in background; facing NE

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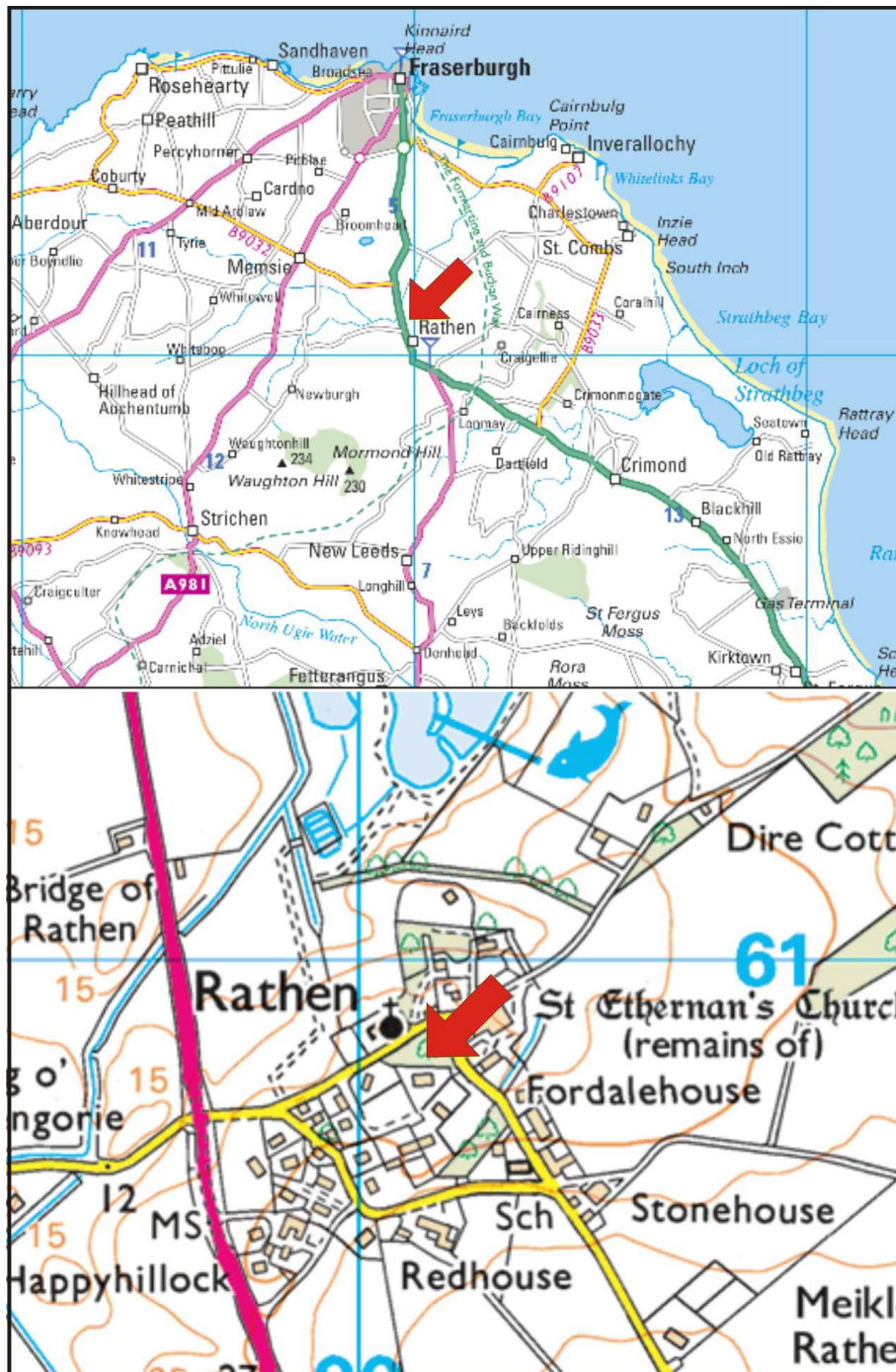
SUMMARY

The watching brief took place on 14 and 19 September 2017. Around 70 trees (planted around 20 years ago, Steven Lawrence pers comm) were removed from the site by the previous owner and there were large stumps and roots throughout the site. The client used a 5 ton tracked machine with ditching bucket to clear areas of the site to natural subsoil. This included the full extent of the proposed garage, house and driveway including removing the drystone dyke adjacent to the road on the NW of the property, the new access. The topsoil was up to 0.7m deep and the subsoil was rusty brown sand and gravel.

The remains of two shallow furrows were identified, one NNW-SSE and one SW-NE. No other archaeological finds or features were identified and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the SE side of Rathen West Church. It is centred on NGR NK 00090 60895, at 20-25m OD in the parish of Rathen.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Claymore Homes. An application APP/2017/1417 was approved by Aberdeenshire Council on 5 September 2017. Aberdeenshire Council require a watching brief during the soil strip.
- 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 2017)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are two scheduled monuments within 1km of the proposed development.

- 2.1 St Ethernan's, Rathen old parish church consists of the remains of St Ethernan's, the old parish church of Rathen (HER NK06SW0031), 220m ENE of the proposed development. The present edifice dates from the seventeenth century and occupies the site of an earlier church, first on record as a parsonage between 1207 and 1228. The church was dedicated to St Ethernan (Eddran), the early Christian saint who is said to have consecrated a church at "Rethin" in the sixth century. The present church occupying the site bears the date 1633 on its S aisle. The remains of the main part of the church consist of the intact W gable, part of the S wall and a round-arched opening (partly blocked) to the S aisle. The building measures 7.8m N-S and has been at least 20m from E-W over walls 0.8m thick. The W gable has a shouldered-arched doorway below a semi-circular headed window with roll-moulded jambs. The aisle, originally crowstepped, is dated 1633 and projects 10.45m from the S wall. In the W wall of the aisle is a round-arched doorway with a draw-bar hole. Above the door is a panel with the inscription, "Alexander Fraser of Philorth, Patron", a coat of arms and part of a broken inscription. In the E wall of the aisle is an ogee-headed aumbry, and a rectangular recess, probably a piscina to the S of it. The lower skewputt stones on the aisle are carved: that on the W with a human face, the E one with a ram's head. The walls of the nave are rubble-built but much of the upper part of the church was probably rebuilt when a new bellcote was added in 1782. A diamond shaped sundial (1625) which probably fell from the S wall of the aisle has been fixed to the W wall of the main body of the church.
- 2.2 The second Scheduled Monument is Trefor Hill (HER NK06SW0028) an alleged motte which comprises a motte (an artificial castle mound) of Medieval date, visible as a grass-covered mound. It is 600m NNE of the proposed development. The monument is situated in a prominent position on the south-facing slope of Trefor Hill at about 20m O.D. It comprises a modified oval natural knoll, with artificial scarping evident on the northern side, where it stands up to 4m high. The summit is flat and is enclosed by a denuded earth and stone bank, enclosing an area c 25m NW-SE by 22m transversely. The width of the bank varies from 0.5m wide on the northern side, where it is defined by edge-set quartz orthostats, to c. 1.5m wide on the southern side, where it is best defined. Two rectangular depressions are present within the centre of the summit and may relate to previous exploration of the summit.
- 2.3 In 2007, Murray Archaeological Services carried out a programme of trial trenching (HER NK06SW0097) on the proposed site of an extension to the cemetery of the West Church. Although the graveyard is adjacent to the site of a possible medieval motte and the old parish church of St Ethernan, no features of archaeological significance were recorded in the three trenches. Only a few flint flakes and a few abraded sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, the latter possibly associated with activity in or around the medieval church of St Ethernan (Murray and Murray 2008, 28).
- 2.4 Adjacent to Rathen West Kirk is Rathen War memorial (HER NK06SW0062) which commemorates the dead of both World War I and II. It is a tall rectangular block, with a slightly stepped plinth on which is carved a wreath. It is surmounted by a tall urn draped with a cloth on a decorated plinth. The whole monument stands on an angled base of coursed roughly hewn granite.
- 2.5 To the NE of the proposed development is Dicken's well (HER NJ96SE0067) is the site of a well depicted on the 1867 1st edition, and 1888 2nd edition, 1888, OS

maps, named Diker's Well on the 1st edition sheet. It is not shown on current OS maps.

- 2.6 Adjacent to Dicken's well is Paviehillock (HER NK06SW0094) the site of a croft depicted on the 1867 OS 1st edition map, comprising two rectangular buildings, the easternmost with a small rectangular enclosure at its southwest end. None of these features appear on the 1888 2nd edition OS map.
- 2.7 Rathen village comprises several 19th century buildings including Rathen House (HES NK06SW 57) or Rathen Manse and Kirkmill House (HES NK06SW 57.01) Rathen Manse offices. Redhouse farmhouse (HES NK06SW 101), Stonehouse (HER NK06SW0106) a farmstead, still in use, depicted on historic OS maps. The 1st edition shows a U-plan steading, open to the southwest, the west wing longer than the east, and with an attached horsemill on the northeast side. To the south is a rectangular building with attached garden, and to the southwest another rectangular building. By the time of the 2nd edition OS map, a new range had been added on the southwest side of the steading court. Current maps indicate that the building southwest of the steading is now disused, and the horsemill has been removed. Photographic survey of the outbuildings was carried out in 2015 ahead of proposed development. To the SE of the village is Meikle Rathen (HER NK06SW 99).
- 2.8 To the N of Rathen village is a raised, curved area which may be the remains of a possible motte (HER NK06SW0029). There is also a possibility of this being an earlier enclosure. There are faint traces of a possible ditch showing on a vertical aerial photograph (Bogdan and Bryce, 1991, 26; Yeoman 1988, 131),
- 2.9 At Fordalehouse is the Site of a stone (HER NK06SW0096) depicted on the 1867 1st edition and 1888 2nd edition - and later - OS maps. On the 1st edition it stands in the middle of a field, suggesting a possible rubbing stone, although changes in field layouts by the time of the 2nd edition sheet resulted in a field boundary location. It does not appear on current OS maps.
- 2.10 To the NE of the village is Bourtreebush (HER NK06SW0003) where an urn was found in 1828 (OSNB, 76, 75).
- 2.11 Also at Bourtreebush is a well-developed crop mark (HER NK06SW0025) of a pennanular ring ditch is visible in a field of cereal crop.
- 2.12 At Gallows Hill (HER NK06SW0042) is a circular enclosure with several other possible enclosures showing as cropmarks. There are also other indeterminate features in the area, some of which are geomorphic.
- 2.13 To the SW of the proposed development is Middletack (HER NJ96SE0016) is a cropmark of a polygonal enclosure with possible internal features is showing as an early cropmark on a vertical aerial photograph. There is also a cropmark of an enclosure with two concentric circles (HER NJ96SE0015) adjacent to St Oyne's Hill (HER NJ96SE0024) thought to be an 'old encampment'. It is the highest of several glacial hillocks in the area. There is no trace of scarping or any artificial features, and no finds have been made in the area; name still known locally.
- 2.14 NW of the proposed development is Mill Farm where there are a series of cropmarks including several pits, ring-ditches and other indeterminate features (HER NJ96SE0038). Vertical aerial photography recorded the cropmarks situated on a gentle E-facing slope in agricultural ground at an altitude of about 20m OD. Also cropmarks of souterrains, pits and possible ring ditch. Vertical aerial

photography recorded the cropmarks situated on a gentle slope in agricultural ground at an altitude of about 30m OD (HER NJ96SE0037).

- 2.15 The proposed development site appears to have been farmland on the early maps of the area (Ills 3-10) and is part of one large field on the first and second Edition OS maps (Illus 13-14).

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

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The client used a 5 ton tracked machine with ditching bucket to clear areas of the site to natural subsoil. This included the full extent of the proposed garage, house and driveway including removing the drystone dyke adjacent to the road on the N of the property, the new access (Illus 2-4). The topsoil was up to 0.7m deep and the subsoil was rusty brown sand and gravel.

The remains of two shallow furrows (F1 and F2, Illus 2) were identified, one NNW-SSE and one SW-NE. No other archaeological finds or features were identified and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.



Illus 2 Site plan showing area of watching brief and furrows F1 and F2 (copyright Claymore Homes)



Illus 3 Soil strip of proposed garage area; facing NE



Illus 4 Furrow F1; facing SW

4 REFERENCES

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

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

Murray and Murray, H K and J C. (2007) *Rathen West Church Cemetery, Rathen, Aberdeenshire (Rathen parish), evaluation*, *Discovery Excav Scot*, vol. 8, 2007. Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England.

Ordnance Survey (Name Book. *Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale)*).

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Steven Lawrence for funding the project, Tiffany Kelly, Claymore Homes for initiating this project and to Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service for her advice during this work.

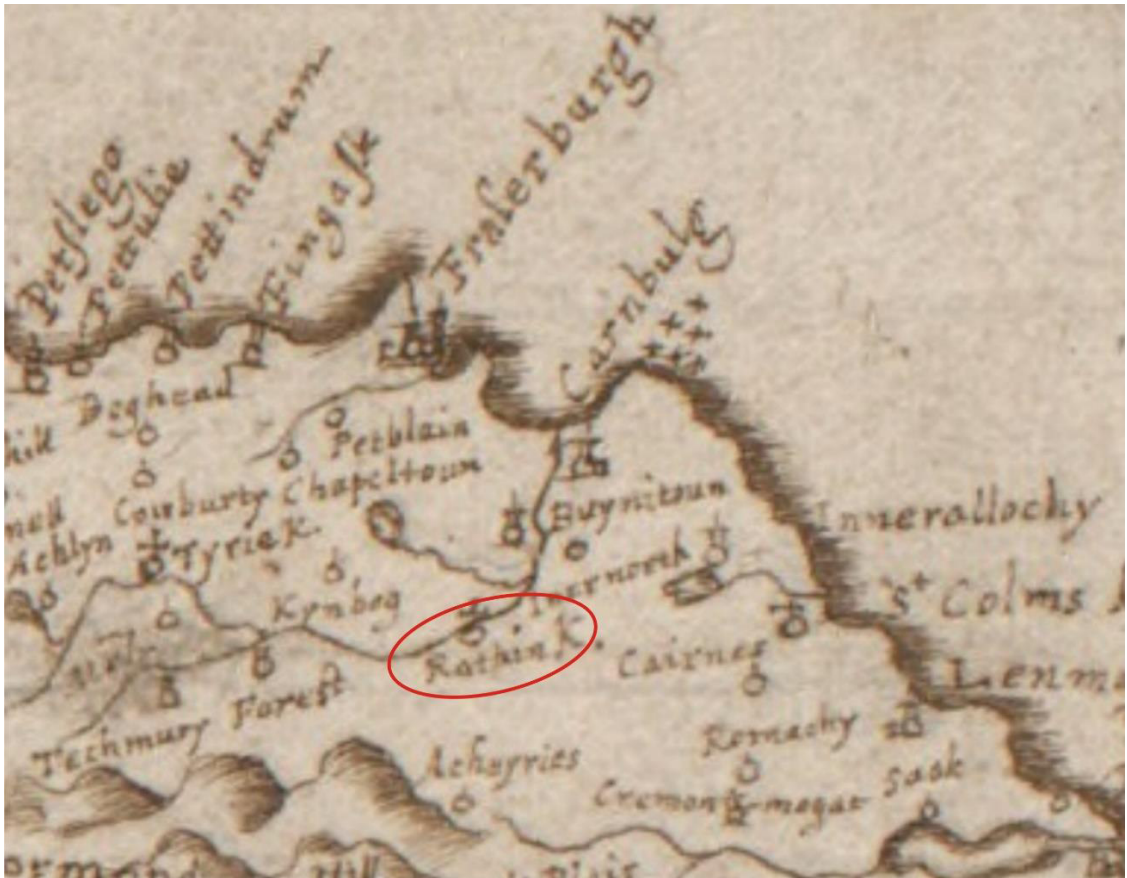
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APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 5 Pont Buchan c1583-96



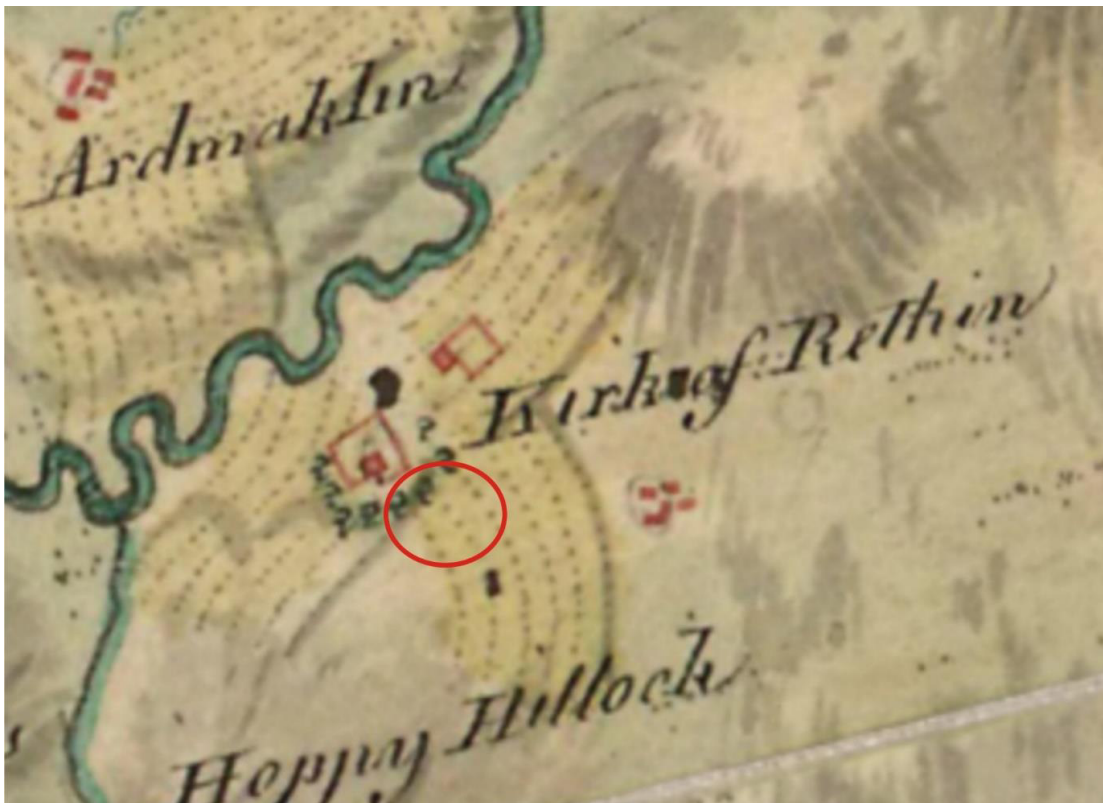
Illus 6 Gordon Aberdeen, Banf [sic], Murrey [sic] &c. to Inverness : [and] Fra the north water to Ross / Robertus Gordonius a Strathloch describebat 1640.



Illus 7 Blaeu Duo Vicecomitatus Aberdonia & Banfia, una cum Regionibus & terrarum tractibus sub iis comprehensis 1654



Illus 8 Moll The Shires of Bamf [i.e. Banff] and Aberdeen 1745



Illus 9 Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55



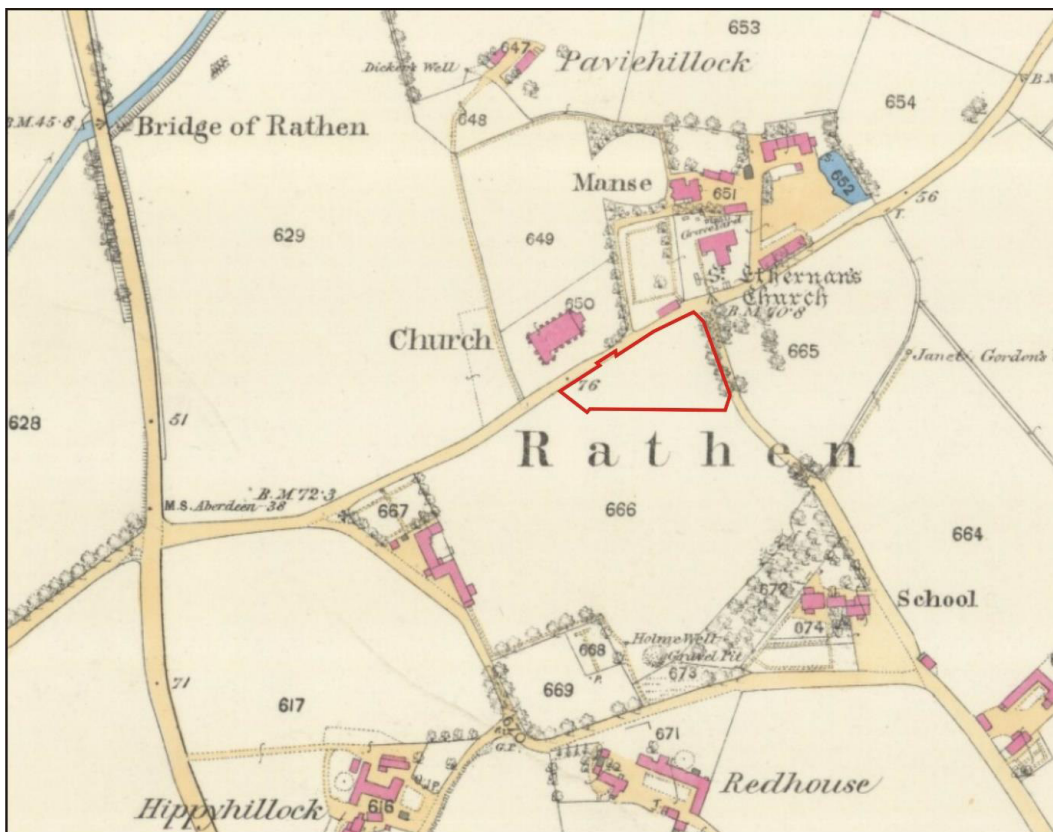
Illus 10 Thomson Northern Part of Aberdeen & Banff Shires. Southern Part 1826



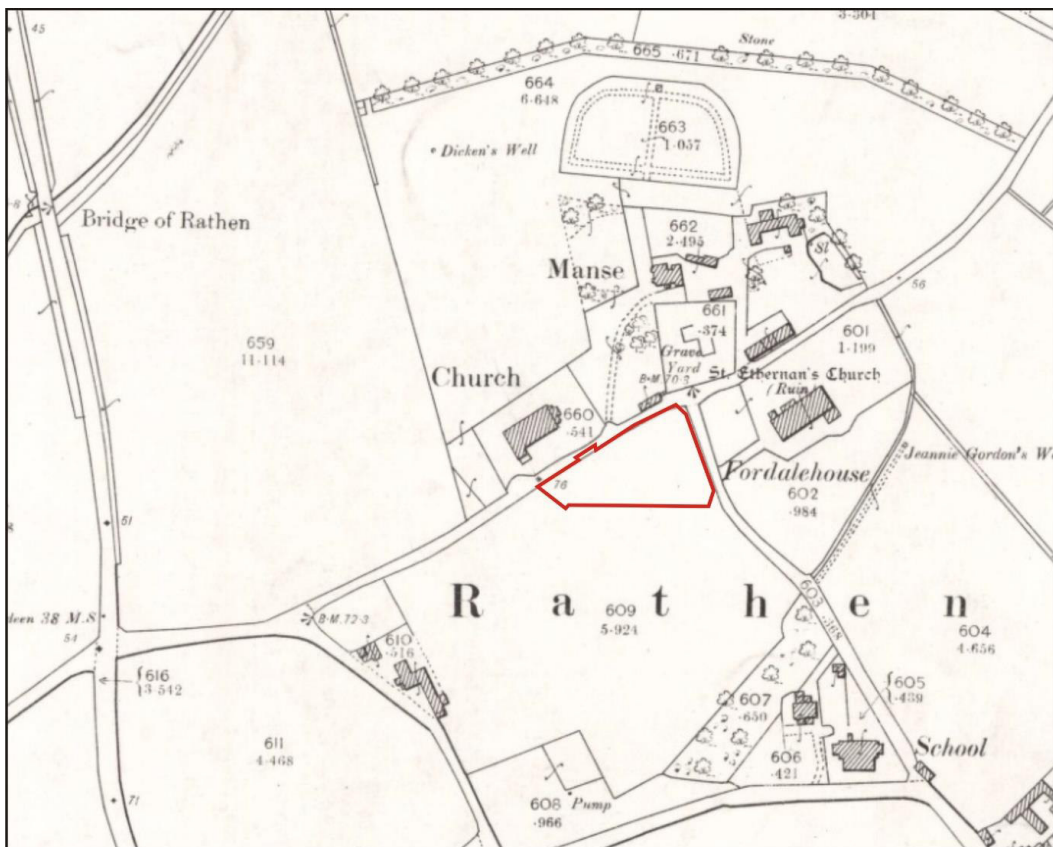
Illus 11 Robertson Topographical and military map of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine 1822



Illus 12 Gibb Map of the north eastern districts of Aberdeenshire. 1858



Illus 13 First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeen Sheet VIII.1 (Rathen) Survey date: 1870 Publication date: 1872



Illus 14 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire 008.01 (includes: Fraserburgh; Rathen) Publication date: 1902 Revised: 1900

APPENDIX 2 FEATURES

Feature no	Description
F1	NNW-SSE furrow 1m wide, 0.1m deep, filled with light brown sandy loam
F2	NE-SW furrow 1.2m wide, 0.1m deep, filled with light brown sandy loam

APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_2606-13	Soil strip for garage	NE/SW
DSC_2614-15	Furrow F1	SW
DSC_2616	Furrow F1	SE
DSC_2617-19	Soil strip for garage	NE/SW
DSC_2620-24	Furrow F1	SW
DSC_2625-6	Furrow F1 sectioned	SE
DSC_2627-52	Soil strip for house	
DSC_2653	Site access from E road	E
DSC_2655-6	Bank on NW side of site with Rathen West Church (right)	SW
DSC_2659	Bank on NW side of site	NE
DSC_2660-65	Drystone dyke on N and Ne side of development area	SE/SW
DSC_2666-76	Removing drystone dyke at new entrance to site with Rathen West Church in background	SW
DSC_2678-80	Removing drystone dyke at new entrance to site with Rathen West Church in background	NW
DSC_2681-92	Trench for new driveway including under drystone dyke and earth bank	SW/NE
DSC_2693-4	Trench for new driveway including under drystone dyke and earth bank with St Ethernan's in background	NE
DSC_2695-6, 8	Trench for new driveway including under drystone dyke and earth bank with Rathen West Church (right)	SW
DSC_2697	Trench for new driveway including under drystone dyke and earth bank	SSW



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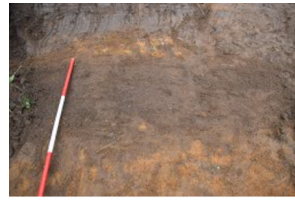
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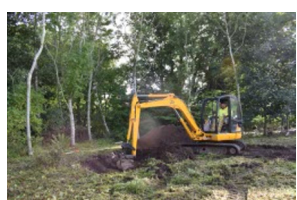
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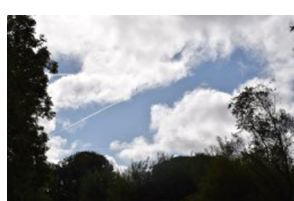
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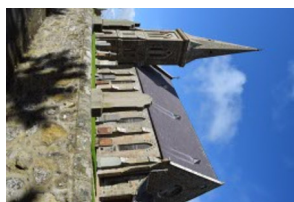
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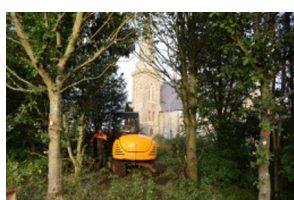
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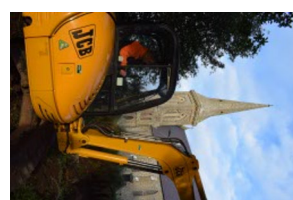
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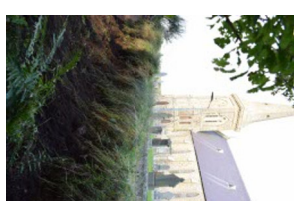
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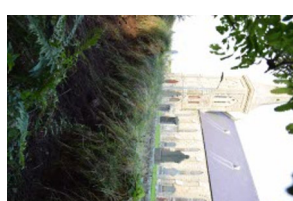
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