

**Phase B, Northwoods Housing Development, Mintlaw,
AB42 4AF
Data Structure Report**



**Alison Cameron
Cameron Archaeology
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CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
3	THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION	5
4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
5	REFERENCES.....	8
6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
	APPENDIX 1 MAPS.....	9
	APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS	14

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Trench 6 S end showing foundation trench for stone field boundary identified on OS maps; facing NNW

Illus 1	Location plan	3
Illus 2	Site plan showing evaluation trenches (<i>copyright Baxter Design</i>).....	6
Illus 3	Drystone dyke between Trenches 6 and 7; facing NNE	7
Illus 4	Tr 5 shallow topsoil, plough scores in natural compact clay subsoil; facing NNW .	7
Illus 5	Pont's map of 1583-96 showing approximate area of proposed site in red	9
Illus 6	Gordon's map of 1636-52 showing approximate area of proposed site in red	9
Illus 7	Blaeu's map of 1654 showing approximate area of proposed site in red	10
Illus 8	Roy's map of 1747-55 showing approximate area of proposed site in red	10
Illus 9	Thomson's map of 1826 showing approximate area of proposed site in red	11
Illus 10	Gibb's map of 1858 showing site outline in red	11
Illus 11	First Edition OS map showing site outline in red	12
Illus 12	Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red	13
Illus 13	1976 aerial photograph showing site outline in red (<i>copyright NCAP</i>).....	14

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at this site on 27-28 March 2018. The weather was cold and wet, and 22 trenches were opened representing 5% of the available area. The topsoil over the whole proposed development area was very shallow and post-medieval agriculture had greatly affected the compact clay natural subsoil beneath. The foundation for a former stone boundary dyke was identified in Trenches 5 and 6, and stone and ceramic field drains were numerous throughout the S half of the site.

No archaeological finds or features were identified, and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the proposed development.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the N side of Mintlaw on the W side of the A952 Mintlaw to Fraserburgh road. It is centred on NGR NJ 99596 48761, at 50-60m OD in the parish of Longside.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Gary Purves, Colaren Homes. An application APP/2016/1606 for 100 dwellinghouses was approved on 13.3.18 with standard archaeology condition (condition 14) for 5-7% archaeological evaluation.
- 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 2018)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development.

- 2.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments within 1km of the proposed development.
- 2.2 A 7% evaluation was carried out prior to Phase 1 of this project (HER NJ94NE0110). The site lies within a landscape of late prehistoric activity. Vestiges of rig and furrow cultivation were evident on a ridge at the N end of the site and a flint scraper and two flint flakes were found. No other features were evident and no further investigation was necessary. (Murray 2013, 26)
- 2.3 A cropmark at Brakeshill (HER NK04NW0027) may be of agricultural origin. At Glen Ugie a cropmark of a roughly circular enclosure (NK04NW0080) is partly obscured by cropmarks of natural features. At Auchtydonald there is a Crop mark of a possible oval enclosure (HER NK04NW0006), although a quarry is depicted at this location on OS map of 1867. The quarry is still visible on an aerial photograph taken in 1973. Near this location a Souterrain (HER NK04NW0082) was recorded as a crop mark on RCAHMS aerial photograph transcription.
- 2.4 South and West of the proposed development is Aden the remains of a 17th-19th century designed landscape. The estate was purchased in 1758 by Alexander Russell who implemented contemporary ideas of farming 'Improvement' reorganised his tenant farms, planted woods for shelter and built a house overlooking the South Ugie Water (HER NJ94NE0034). Succeeding generations of the Russell family completed the transformation by enlarging the house and building the unique steading (c. 1800 HER NJ94NE0035). By the 1920s house and gardens were in decline, and Russell sold the estate in 1937. After a succession of owners it was purchased by Aberdeen County Council in 1974, part of which has since been developed as a country park. It contains several category C-Listed features. These include the former laundry (HER NJ94NE0092) situated between the mansion and stables, which may be late 18th century in date, and which has now been converted to North East Folklore Archive. The walled garden (HER NJ94NE0093) is dated 1766 but was probably rebuilt in the earlier to mid-19th century. It incorporates a bothy, potting shed and gardener's cottage. The North Lodge (HER NJ94NE0164) and West Lodge (HER NJ94NE0151), built in 1832 and now both in a ruinous condition.
- 2.5 Within Aden estate Excavation of two stone structures in Aden Country Park was carried out from 6-19th June 2016 by a team of 36 archaeologists, Book of Deer members, students and volunteers as well as staff and nearly 300 pupils from local primary schools and Mintlaw Academy. Structure 1 is a T-shaped building, probably built on the medieval period, possibly as a tower house and possibly later used as an Episcopalian Meeting House. Nearly 20 coins of the late 18th century, copper alloy heart-shaped brooch and copper alloy book fittings are included in the finds from the later use of the building. Burnt timbers and stone were excavated from the demolition of the building which had been burnt prior to demolition. Structure 2 may have an agricultural or mixed domestic and agricultural use. There is a hearth inside the S wall surrounded by a well-laid cobbled floor and a stone-lined pit in the NE corner of the N room which may have been an exterior courtyard (Cameron 2016). As part of a Book of Deer funded project, an evaluation was carried out by Murray Archaeological Services of a group of 27 circular enclosures or possible huts lie in a plantation 40m N of the former stables of Aden House between NJ 9805 4798 and NJ 9811 4819 (NJ94NE 88) (Murray and Murray 2011). A trench was also dug in the park by Guard Archaeology with no significant archaeological results (Lelong 2009). Excavations in March-April 2017 in the north of the park on

the west side of the camping and caravan site identified 19th and early 20th-century military trenches which were part of a military training area for local militia (Cameron 2017).

- 2.6 Mintlaw is the Site of the Earl Marischal's house (HER NK04NW0024) which is mentioned at Mintlaw in 1590. This suggests a possible hunting seat but the exact location of the house is not known.
- 2.7 19th century farms Howe of Pitfour (HER NJ94NE0082), East Mains of Pitfour (HES NJ94NE 133), Backhill (HES NK04NW 47), Hillhead of Mintlaw (HER NK04NW0051), Balring Cottage (HER NJ94NE0062), Boghead (HER NK04NW0088),
- 2.8 Site of a rifle range (HER NK04NW0046) which is depicted on the 2nd edition OS map. A substantial earthen bank was located at the targets site at the eastern end of the range. It is visible on vertical aerial photographs taken in 1977 but has been removed by 1988 when further vertical aerial photographs were taken.
- 2.9 The Mintlaw war memorial (HER NK04NW0044) stands in the centre of a traffic roundabout in the middle of Mintlaw. It commemorates the dead of both World War I and II. It has an octagonal base sitting on a five-stepped plinth. It is surmounted by a circular pillar on top of which is a decorated cross. It was unveiled August 1st 1920. Full transcription of memorial held in AAS Digital Archive.
- 2.10 The land is now farm fields and appears to have been fields since the early maps (Illus 5-10). On the First Edition OS map (Illus 11) it is a parcel of land consisting 8 fields with a pump in the centre and is flanked by a bank of trees on the N and E edges. By the Second Edition OS map some of the field have merged and the pump is no longer extant (Illus 12). Here are 5 fields on the 1976 aerial photograph (Illus 13).

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at this site on 27-28 March 2018. The weather was cold and wet and 22 trenches were opened, with a tracked machine and 2m toothless ditching bucket, representing 5% of the total area of the proposed development.

The topsoil over the whole proposed development area was very shallow (0.1-0.2m) and post-medieval agriculture had greatly affected the compact clay natural subsoil beneath. Modern plough scores were seen in the natural subsoil in all trenches.

The foundation for a former stone boundary dyke was identified in Trenches 5 and 6 and an area around it 20 x 15m was opened up (Tr 5A) to check the area around it. Stone and ceramic field drains were numerous throughout the S half of the site which has always been very wet and borders an area of known deep peat (Hamish Watson, pers comm). Some areas had standing water especially the W end of Trenches 11-14) and Trench 14 was abandoned as it was filling up with water. The N area of Trenches 18-20 also had standing water and there were bunds of soil in this area which slightly limited the choice of trench locations.

No archaeological finds or features were identified and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the proposed development.



Illus 3 Drystone dyke between Trenches 6 and 7; facing NNE



Illus 4 Tr 5 shallow topsoil, plough scores in natural compact clay subsoil; facing NNW

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The topsoil over the whole proposed development area was very shallow and post-medieval agriculture had greatly affected the compact clay natural subsoil beneath. The foundation for a former stone boundary dyke was identified in Trenches 5 and 6, and stone and ceramic field drains were numerous throughout the S half of the site. No archaeological finds or features were identified, and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the proposed development.

5 REFERENCES

Cameron AS 2017 Site 1 19th and early 20th-century military training ground. Report prepared for Ironside Farrar and Aden Country Park HLF.

Lelong, O 2009 'The Monastery of Deer archaeological project: desk based assessment and field evaluation'. Report for Book of Deer Project.

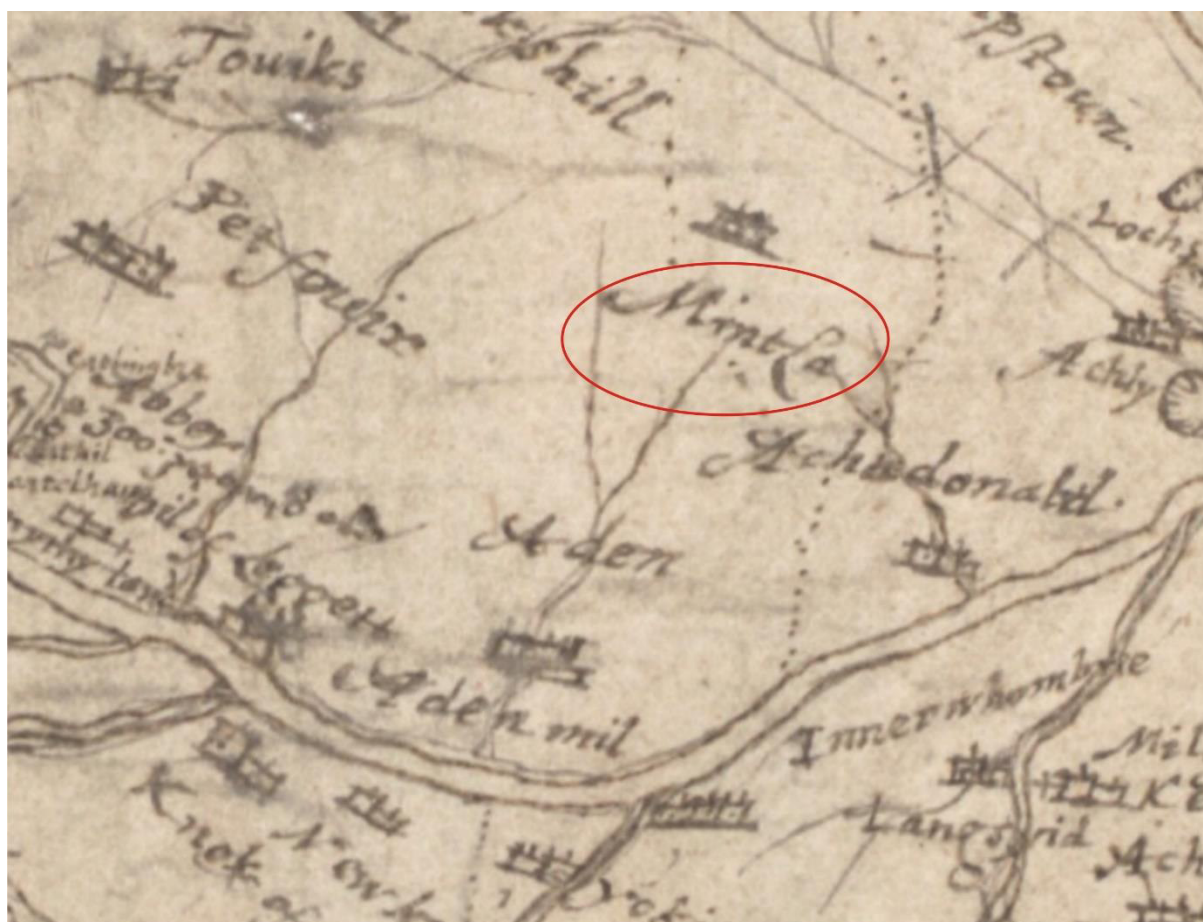
Murray H 2013 North Woods, Mintlaw Discovery And Excavation In Scotland, New Series, Volume 14, 2013, 26.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

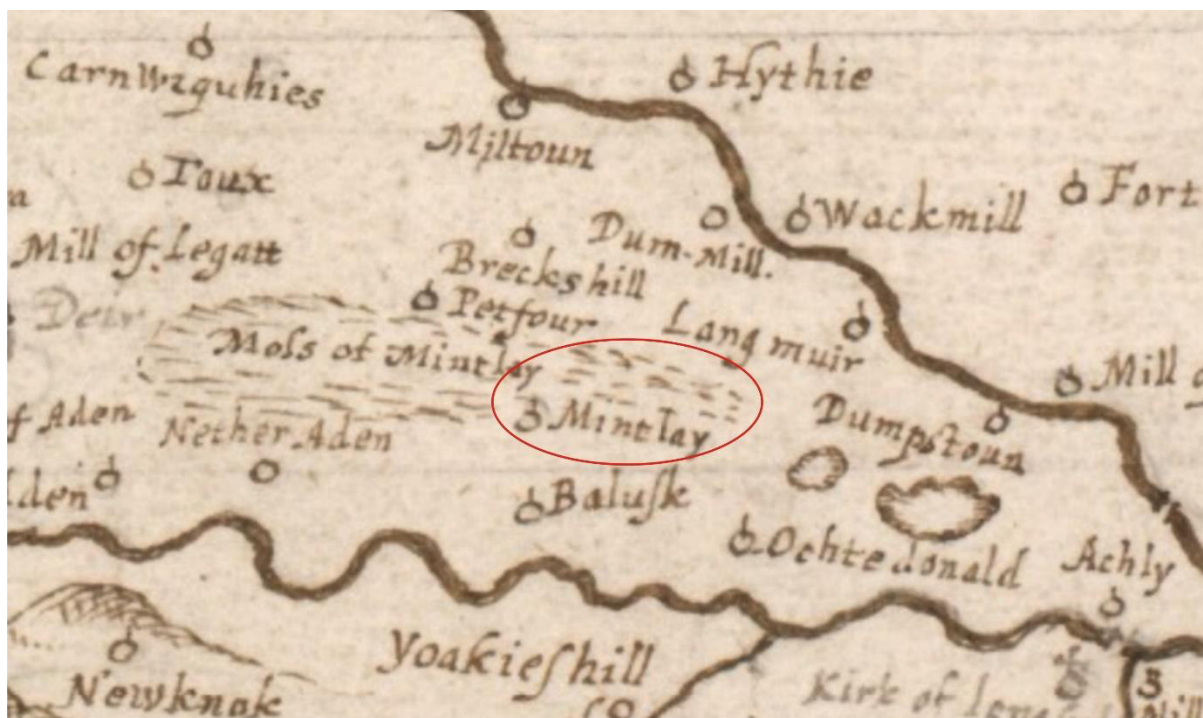
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Cameron Archaeology
45 View Terrace
Aberdeen
AB25 2RS
01224 643020
07581 181057
cameronarch@btinternet.com
www.cameronarchaeology.com
Company registration no 372223 (Scotland)
VAT registration no 990 4373 00

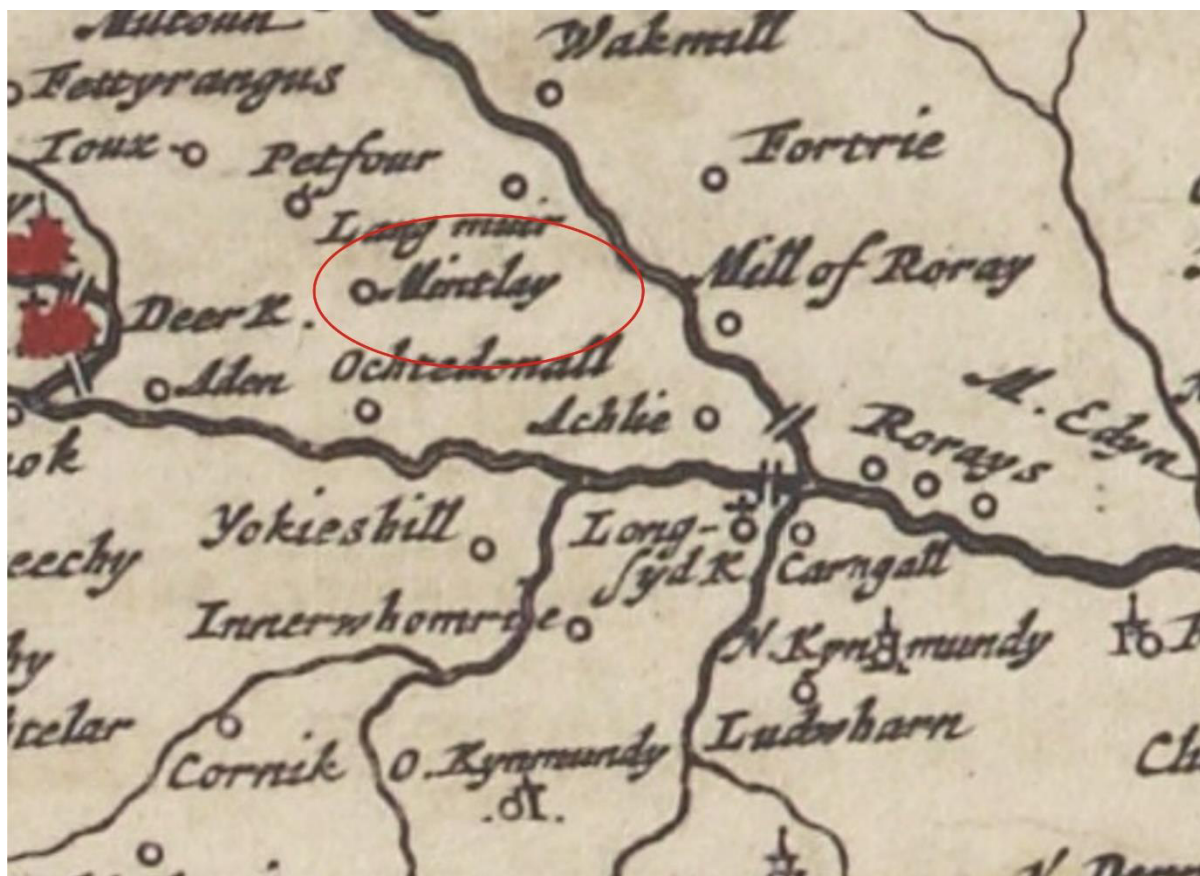
APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 5 Pont's map of 1583-96 showing approximate area of proposed site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 6 Gordon's map of 1636-52 showing approximate area of proposed site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 7 Blaeu's map of 1654 showing approximate area of proposed site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



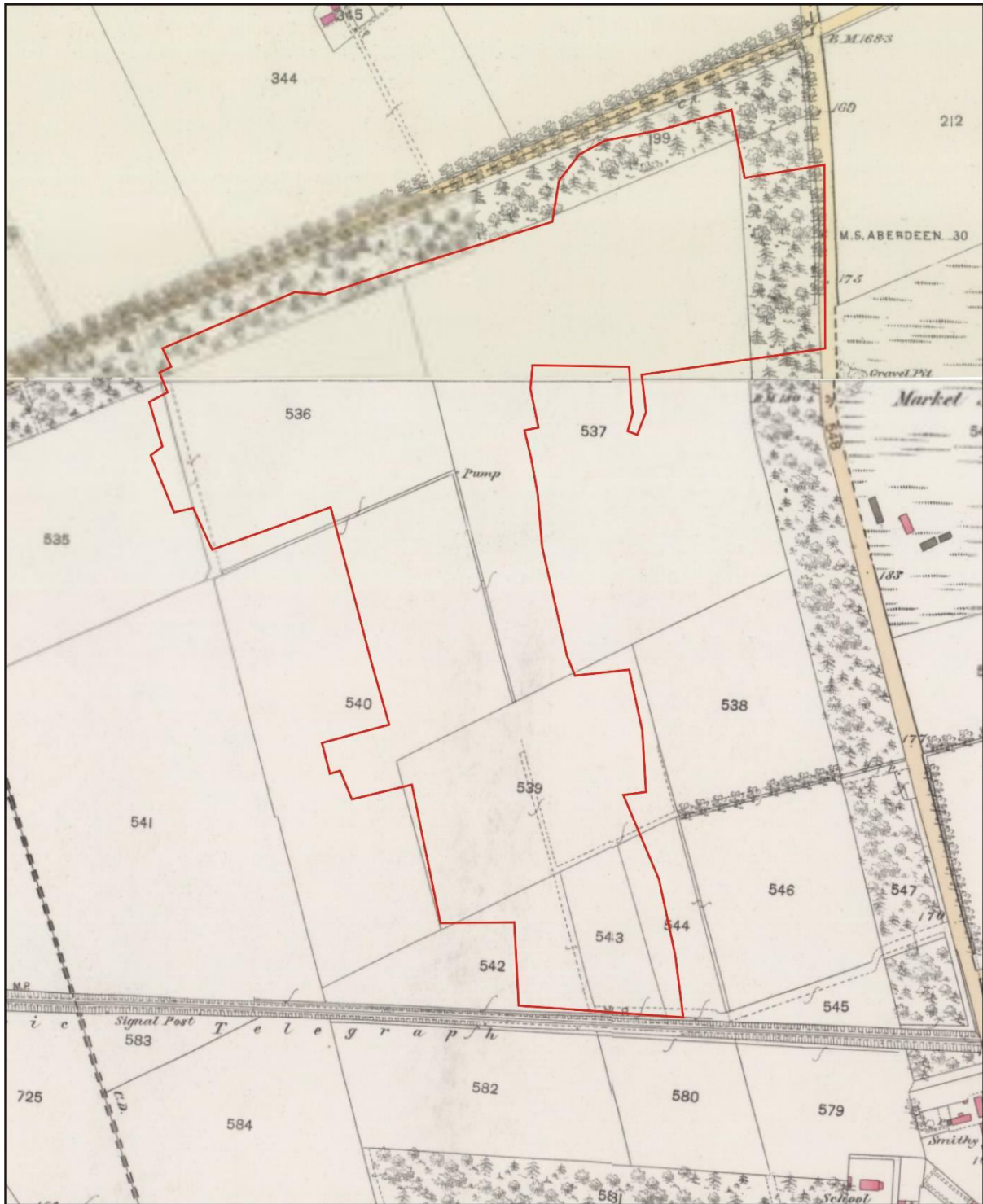
Illus 8 Roy's map of 1747-55 showing approximate area of proposed site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



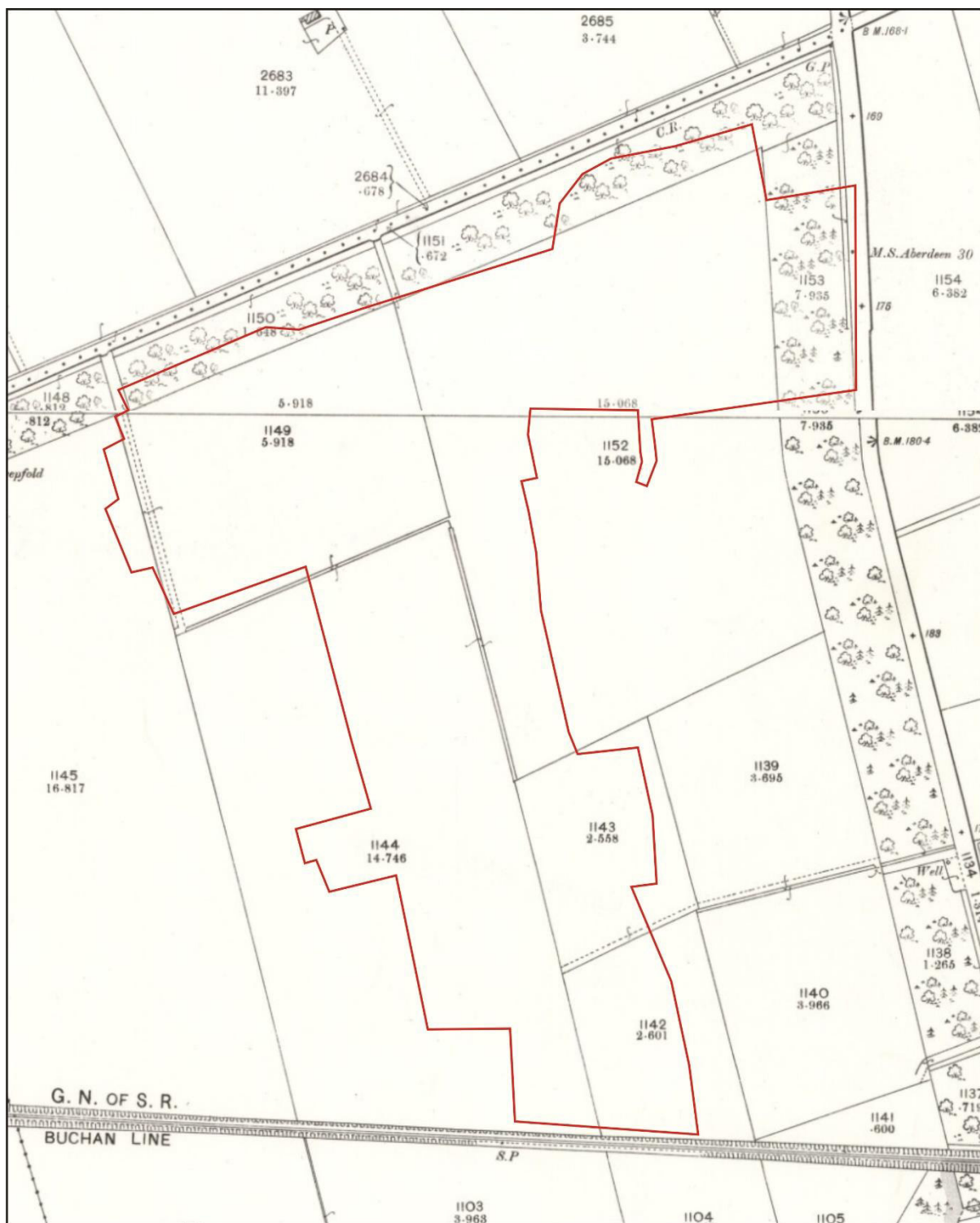
Illus 9 Thomson's map of 1826 showing approximate area of proposed site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 10 Gibb's map of 1858 showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 11 First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*)
 Aberdeenshire XIV.13/1 (Old Deer, Longside - Combined)
 Survey date: 1869 to 1870 Publication date: 1881



Illus 12 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire XIV.13/1 (Longside; Old Deer)
 Publication date: 1902 Revised: 1899



Illus 13 1976 aerial photograph showing site outline in red (*copyright NCAP*)

APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
P3270776-8	Tr 1 shallow topsoil, grey compact clay natural subsoil, ruts from dumper trucks and field drains	WSW
P3270779	Tr 1	ENE
P3270781	Tr 2 shallow topsoil, grey compact clay natural subsoil, ruts from dumper trucks and field drains	ENE
P3270782	Tr 2 dumper truck ruts	ENE
P3270783	Tr 2	WSW
P3270784	Tr 3	WSW
P3270785	Tr 3	ENE
P3270786	Tr 3 (right) Tr 4 (left)	NE
P3270787	Tr 3 (left) Tr 2, Tr 1	ESE

P3270788	Tr 4	ENE
P3270789	Tr 4	WSW
P3270790	Tr 4 (right) Tr 3, Tr 2, Tr 1	SW
P3270791	Tr 4 (left) Tr 5 (right) with tree-lined stone bank (top)	W
P3270792-3	Tr 5 shallow topsoil, plough scores in natural compact clay subsoil	NNW
P3270794-5	Tr 5 plough scores, dumper ruts	SSE
P3270796	Tr 5 shallow topsoil, plough scores in natural compact clay subsoil	NNW
P3270797	Tr 5	SSE
P3270798	Tr 6	SSE
P3270799	Tr 6	NNW
P3270800	Tr5A opening area around stone dyke foundation trench	NE
P3270801	Stone dyke foundation trench	WSW
P3270802	Tr 7	NNW
P3270803	Tr 7 (left) with Tr 6 and Tr 5	NW
P3270804-5	Tr 7	SSE
P3270807	Stone boundary with trees on top from Tr 7	E
P3270808	Tr 7	SSE
P3270809	Tr 7 (left) starting Tr 8 (right)	ESE
P3270810	Tr 8	SSE
P3270811	Tr 8 (right) Tr 7 (left)	SE
P3270812	Tr 9	NNW
P3270813	Tr 9 foundation for former field boundary	NNW
P3270814	Tr 9	SSE
P3270815	Tr 10	SSE
P3270816	Tr 10	NNW
P3270818	Tr 11	WSW
P3270819-20	Stone boundary E side Tr 7	NNE/E
P3270821-2	Tr 11	ENE
P3270823	Tr 12	ENE
P3270824	Tr 12	WSW
P3270825	Tr 13	WSW
P3270826	Tr 13	ENE
P3270827	Tr 14	ENE
P3270828	Tr 14 flooding	WSW
P3270829	Tr 15	ENE
P3270830	Tr 15	WSW
P3270831	Tr 16	ESE
P3270832	Tr 16	NNW
P3270833	Tr 17	NNW
P3270836-7	Tr 17 plough scores	ESE
P3270838-9	Tr 19 abandoned due to flooding	S
P3270840	Tr 20	S
P3270841-2	Tr 20	S
P3270843	Tr 20	N
P3270844	Tr 21	NE
P3270845	Tr 21	SW
P3270846	Tr 22	S
P3270847	Tr 22	N



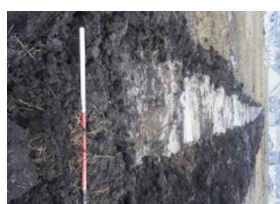
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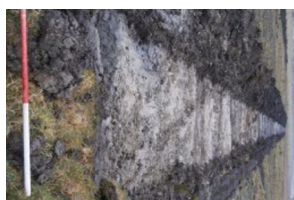
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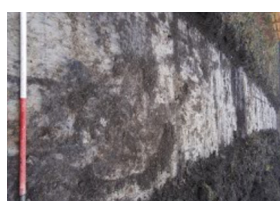
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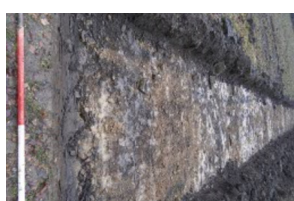
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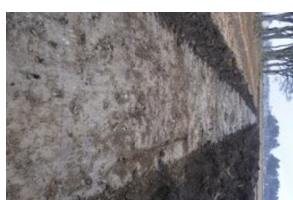
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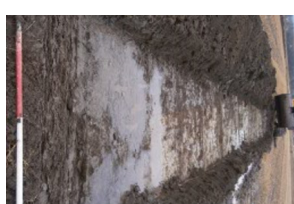
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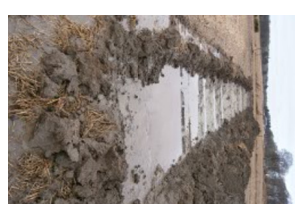
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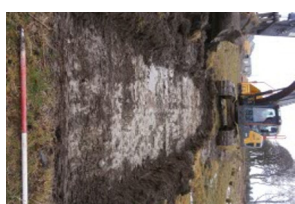
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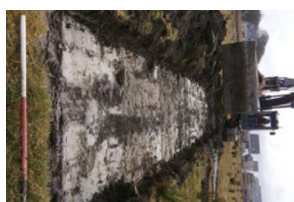
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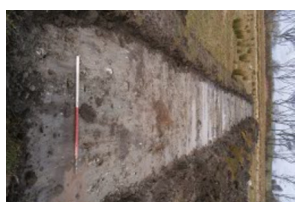
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