

**Report on a Watching Brief  
Mains of Edzell  
Cameron Archaeology CA409**



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Cover illustration: Trench nearing completion along proposed access road, looking south-east.

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## SUMMARY

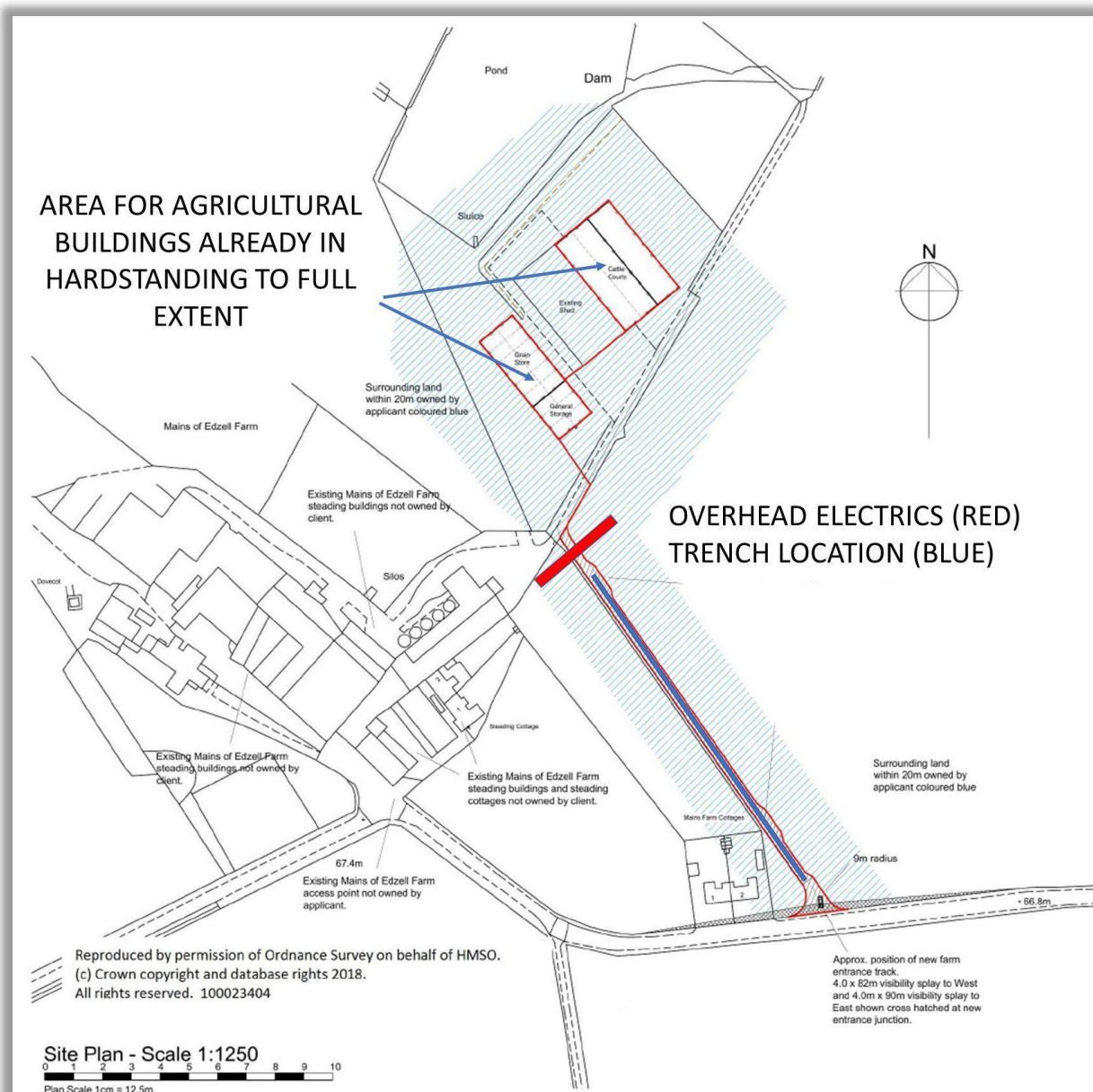
On June 13th, 2018, a 7% evaluation was carried out on land due east of Mains of Edzell in advance of a new access road and agricultural buildings/extensions adjacent to the existing structures. No archaeological finds or features were noted, and it is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation is deemed necessary.

# 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located due east of Edzell some 450m on the Lethnot Road. It is centred on NGR NO59132 69118, at 67-76m OD in the parish of Edzell.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Jane Smith under application 17/01029/FULL - Angus Council. The archaeological work should include, but is not limited to, a 5-7% archaeological trial trenching evaluation and strip and map of the development area.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work will be 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 1a & b: Location plan in red (*Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018*).



Illus 2 Site plan showing trench location (blue) and proposed areas already in hardstanding over extent of building area (*copyright A.B. Roger and Young, Ltd*).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development. There are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments with 1km of the site (2.1-2.4, below) in addition to five non-scheduled sites from Historic Environment Records, Angus Council.

### 2.1 Mains of Edzell, (enclosure 170m NNW of) SM6573

The monument is an enclosure (or fort) bounded by three ditches, dating probably to the late Bronze Age or Iron Age (between about 1000 BC and AD 500). The archaeological remains lie buried beneath the topsoil, but the triple ditches around the NE side of the monument are visible as cropmarks captured on oblique aerial photographs. The monument lies about 85m above sea level and occupies the top of a low hill. The land falls away quite steeply to the SW towards the West Water, which lies some 600m from

the enclosure. The monument was first scheduled in 1996, but the documents did not meet modern standards: the present amendment rectifies this. Overall, the enclosure ditches cover an area measuring about 105m E-W by 75m N-S. The interior within the circuit of the inner ditch measures about 40m across, though the extent of the inner ditch has not been established on the W side. The ditches are generally 2-3m wide and spaced at intervals of 8-10m. Limited trial excavations have assisted in clarifying the line of the middle and outer ditches to the S and W, where the monument is not in arable cultivation. Trial excavations have also demonstrated that a palisade trench lies about 10m inside the line of the inner ditch on the N side of the enclosure, apparently located behind a series of entrances through the three enclosure ditches. The excavation also revealed a series of pits and postholes in the interior of the enclosure that are not visible on aerial photographs. The scheduled area is irregular on plan to include the remains described above and an area around them within which evidence relating to the monument's construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The scheduling excludes a small sand quarry located to the S of the scheduled area, and the above-ground elements of a post-and-wire fence that crosses the scheduled area.

## 2.2 Edzell Castle SM90136

The monument comprises the remains of Edzell Castle, a property in the care of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The monument comprises a series of well-preserved structural remains, dominated by a tower house of early 16th century date, to which a courtyard and ranges of associated buildings were later added. It also encompasses a walled garden surrounded by an elaborately decorated architectural framework dating to the early 17th century. Smaller buildings thought to represent the remains of a bathhouse and summer house are built onto the SW and SE corners of the garden respectively.

The area to be scheduled encompasses the castle and its garden, together with an area around them in which traces of associated activity may be expected to survive. It is approximately rectangular with maximum dimensions of 140m NNW-SSE by 100m as marked in red on the accompanying map extract. The scheduling excludes above-ground features associated with a modern sheepfold in the SW part of the site, and above-ground elements of modern field boundaries.

## 2.3 Castle Hillock, motte, SM137

A motte of elongated trapezoidal form, whose longer axis lies WNW - ESE and whose summit area measures about 125' long by 52' across its eastern or broader end.

Round the motte are distinct traces of an entrenched bailey measuring about 300' in length and 200' in greatest breadth. On the north this bailey finds a natural boundary in a deep ravine, but on the east and south the boundary is formed by a ditch, now almost filled up, but apparently about 30' in average breadth. No trace of foundations of any kind appears either on the motte or within the area of the bailey, but vaulted chambers are said to have been removed in the late 18th century. According to Simpson the site was not abandoned until the 16th century tower of Edzell Castle (NO56NE 8) was built. The site of 'The Pit' as pointed out by the keeper of Edzell Castle c 1860 'is in a very wet place in the Moat...and is partly enclosed by a paling...but is barely traceable and except that the place is more marshy than the rest, there is nothing remarkable about it.' (Name Book c 1860). According to Jervise this was 'the fatal pit of the ancient lords' but it does not appear to fit Mackie's definition of the 'pit' as being a private prison for minor offenders. NSA mentions 'a small lake which was employed when drowning was the order of the day.' This description seems to fit the site more easily.

NSA 1845; A Jervise 1853; O S Name Book; W D Simpson 1931; W D Simpson 1952.

The motte, c 4.0m high, is natural but has probably been artificially levelled. The ravine on the north is an old course of the West Water, still marshy. The moat is only faintly traceable on the south side as a shallow depression in pasture - c 10.0m wide and c 0.6m deep. It has been entirely obliterated on the west and partially on the east. /The bailey takes the form of a low terrace. There is no trace of 'The Pit'.

Visited by OS (JLD) 14 July 1958.

Castle Hillock - a ploughed down motte and bailey scarped from a natural knoll, generally as described by Simpson and OS Field Surveyor (JLD). The ditch is still traceable in the S but it is mostly obliterated in the E by a farm track and totally destroyed in the W. In the SW for about 40.0m there is a counter-scarp to the inner edge of the ditch, which may be original, indicating that there were two ditches with an intermediary bank for at least part of the periphery. At the E end of the motte a terrace has been set into the slope which is probably a salient protecting the SE approach and probably of secondary construction.

Resurveyed at 1/2500.

Visited by OS (ISS) 18 August 1971.

This motte has been formed from an elongated natural mound and its level top measures 39m from WNW to ESE by up to 14m transversely. The defences at the foot of the mound have been severely reduced by later agriculture, but on the N it is protected by a former river course and on the S there are traces of what may be two ditches.

A Jervise 1853; W D Simpson 1931; RCAHMS 1984.

This motte is situated on the NE side of the road, opposite old Edzell Parish Church (NO56NE 7) and graveyard and SSW of Edzell Castle (NO56NE 8). It comprises an oval knoll, whose top measures 45m from NW to SE by 16m transversely and is 5m in height, with a terrace at either end. The NE and SW sides are considerably steeper than those on the NW and SE and the NW side of the knoll appears to have been degraded, perhaps during an episode of cultivation. The SE terrace measures 14m NW to SE by 8.5m and appears to have been scarped into the knoll. There may be an entrance-way running away to the SE from this terrace. The NW terrace measures 28m from NW to SE by 26m and extends round to the N, tapering out about half way along the knoll. On the S a spread bank runs along the base of the knoll, and immediately outside it there is a hollow 8m wide, which may be an old river (West Water) channel incorporated into the motte defences. The bailey described by earlier authorities is no longer discernible.

Visited by RCAHMS (DCC), 27 September 1989.

## 2.4 Edzell Old Church and Lindsay Burial Aisle, 465m SSW of Edzell Castle, SM13613

The monument includes the structure known as the Lindsay burial aisle, the buried remains of the medieval church of Edzell parish and the core of the surrounding burial ground. The medieval church may have been built in the 13th century, while the Lindsay burial aisle was probably added to the S side of the existing church nave in the 16th century. However, a fragment of 9th-century stone sculpture found in the churchyard suggests there may have been an ecclesiastical site here from the early Christian period, as does the site's traditional association with St Drostan. The monument is situated about 100m NE of the West Water at around 60m above sea level.

Most of the medieval church was demolished following the erection of a new church in the village of Edzell in 1818. The upstanding burial aisle is a rectangular stone structure measuring about 7.5m N-S by 6m transversely, with a modern timber and slate roof. A rounded archway in the N elevation formerly gave access to the medieval church. The internal face of the S gable contains a wide, arched recess below a window and there is also a narrow recess at the S end of the E wall. There are low earthworks to the N of the aisle that suggest the position of the demolished church. A bank to the S and E of the aisle may signify an early churchyard boundary.

The area to be scheduled is irregular on plan, to include the remains described above and an area around them within which evidence relating to the monument's construction, use and abandonment may survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. On the S and E sides, the scheduling extends up to but does not include the boundary walls of the burial ground. The scheduling specifically excludes all burial lairs where rights of burial still exist and all memorial stones that date to after 1800. The monument was first scheduled in 1959, but the documentation did not meet modern standards: the present amendment rectifies this.

### **Non-scheduled sites within 1km.**

#### **2.5 Mains of Edzell Farmstead HER Angus, NO56NE0040**

Farmstead still in use. On the (c.1846) 1st edition OS map it is shown as a group of nine varied buildings, including one with an attached horsemill at the west of the group. By the (c.1888) 2nd edition OS map the horsemill has been removed and many of the central buildings have been roofed over to form a large sprawling steading. An additional building is shown to the east of the farmstead. The 2006 map shows that all of the buildings are in use apart from a small square building at the west of the complex.

#### **2.6 Blackbanks HER, Angus, NO56NE00769**

Site of a now destroyed L-shaped range of two buildings, probably cottages, which are depicted only on the (c.1888) 2nd edition OS map.

#### **2.7 Edzell, HER Angus, NO56NE0079**

A Royal Observer Corps underground monitoring post, opened in November 1957 for the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation and closed September 1991. The surface features remain. A metal dome on the ventilation shaft indicates that this was a master post. The access shaft is surrounded by a concrete plinth. A line of telegraph posts ends alongside the road at the closest point to the post. The base of an Orlit post sands nearby.

#### **2.8 Bonhard, HER Angus, NO56NE0041**

Former farmstead. On the (c.1846) 1st edition OS map it is shown as three small rectangular buildings, one with a sub-square enclosure to the south and a small hut to the south-west. By the (c.1888) 2nd edition OS map the eastern building and the enclosure have been removed. A small T-shaped building is shown to the south of the remaining buildings. The 2006 map shows the T-shaped building and small parts of the other two, these disused. A modern building, divided into dwellings is shown to the north-west of the surviving building.

#### **2.9 United Free Church, Dalhousie Street, Edzell. HER Angus, NO56NE0077**

Site of a United Free Church, built in 1900 by Thoms and Wilkie of Dundee, architects. It was in religious use for only a short period, closing for worship around 1940. It was taken over by the Education Authority in the 1950s and used by Edzell's school in Church Street, the nave being used a gymnasium and the attached hall as a nursery. It was later used as a store, but it was demolished in the later 20th century and housing has been built on the site. No trace of the church remains, but the gateway on the corner of the Glebe and Dalhousie Street appears to survive. The church was built in a modern Movement neo-perpendicular style, with a squat battered tower. It is constructed from bullfaced masonry with ashlar dressings and shows the influence of C.R. Mackintosh.



Illus 3 Evaluation trenching underway, view looking south-east.

### 3 THE EVALUATION

On June 13th, 2018, a 7% evaluation was carried out using a 360 excavator with a 1.5m bladed bucket. One trench was excavated along the full length of the proposed track entrance, with the exception of the NW end abutting the current track, where overhead electrics were present. The adjacent area for the proposed buildings is already surfaced in hardstanding which appears to have been in place for a number of years and was not trenched. The topsoil in Trench 1 was quite shallow, averaging 0.20m in depth, overlying a very compact reddish-brown gravelly clay loam.

### 4 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological finds or features were observed within the evaluation trench for the proposed track, and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological mitigation is required.

### 5 REFERENCES

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<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/master/default.aspx?Authority=Angus> as of 11-06-2018.

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## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

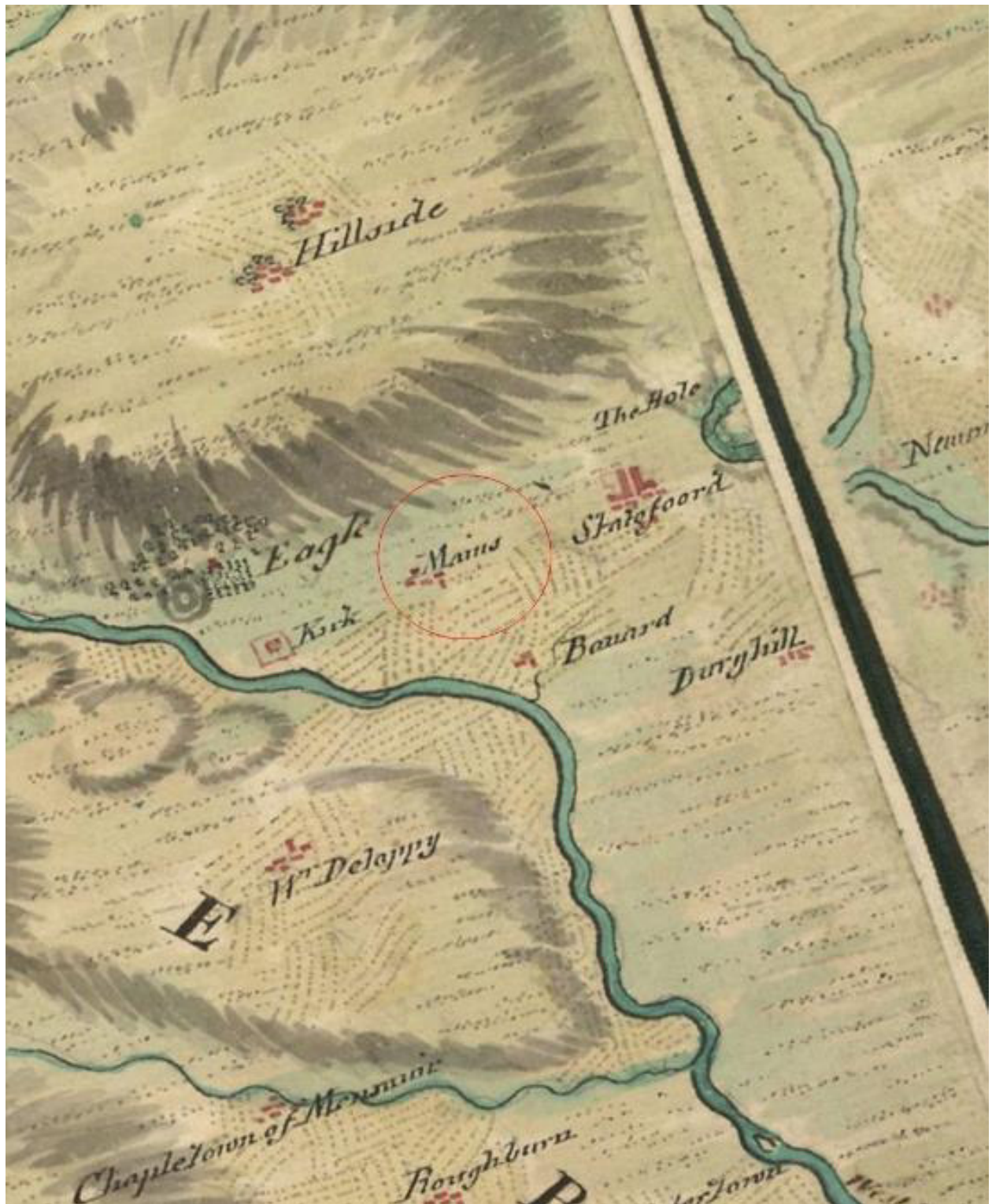
Thanks to Jane Smith for initiating this project, and to Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service, for her advice during this work.

## APPENDIX 1

### Archaeological and historical sites within 1km of the proposed site (HES and Aberdeenshire HER online)

Dataset	Dataset UID	Name	Classification
RCAHMS	SM6573	Mains of Edzell, (enclosure 170m NNW of)	Enclosure/Fort – LBA or IA
RCAHMS	SM90136	Edzell Castle	Fortified tower house, early 16th C origin
RCAHMS	SM137	Castle Hillock	Motte, possible prison
RCAHMS	SM13613	Edzell Old Church and Lindsay Burial Aisle, 465m SSW of Edzell Castle,	Medieval church and burial ground
HER Angus	NO56NE0040	Mains of Edzell	Farmstead
HER Angus	NO56NE00769	Blackbanks	Cottage(s)
HER Angus	NO56NE0079	Edzell	Royal Observer Corp Underground Monitoring Post
HER Angus	NO56NE0041	Bonhard	Former farmstead
HER Angus	NO56NE0077	United Free Church, Dalhousie Street, Edzell.	Former church (now demolished)

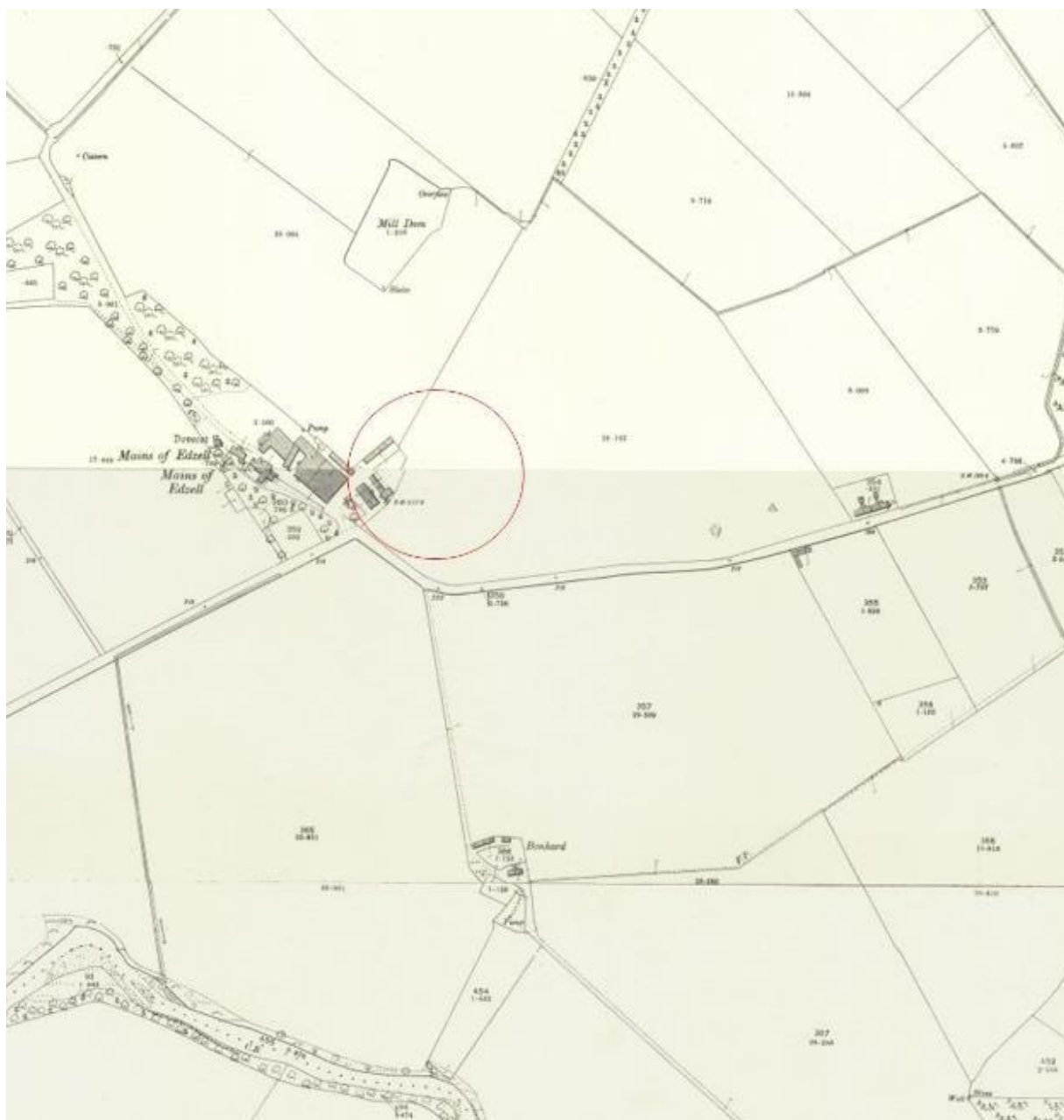
## APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 4 Mains of Edzell marked solely as 'Mains', circled on Roy's military map of Scotland, c.1746.



Illus 5 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of site location. Survey date 1862, published 1868, Sheet XX Forfarshire (copyright National Library of Scotland).



Illus 6 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Kincardineshire, Sheet 026.05/ Sheet 026.09. Publication date: 1904 Revised: ca. 1901.

### APPENDIX 3 PHOTOS

PHOTO ID	DIRECTION FACING	COMMENTS
DSC6058	SE	Trenching commencing along proposed entrance track
DSC6059	SW	Detail of trench and section indicating shallow nature of topsoil.
DSC6062	SE	Trenching approximately one third completed
DSC6064	SE	Trenching nearing completion
DSC6066	NW	Completed nearing completion from approximate mid-point
DSC6068	NW	Area of current hardstanding on W side of existing shed
DSC6069	NW	Area of current hardstanding on E side of existing shed



\_DSC6058.JPG



\_DSC6059.JPG



\_DSC6062.JPG



\_DSC6064.JPG



\_DSC6066.jpg



\_DSC6068.jpg



\_DSC6069.JPG