

**Land at Beechlea, Toux Croft, Fetterangus, Mintlaw,
Aberdeenshire, AB42 4LX**

Data Structure Report (DSR)

Aberdeenshire Planning application no APP/2016/2931



**Alison Cameron
Cameron Archaeology Ltd
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ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: The site showing F2 (right); facing N

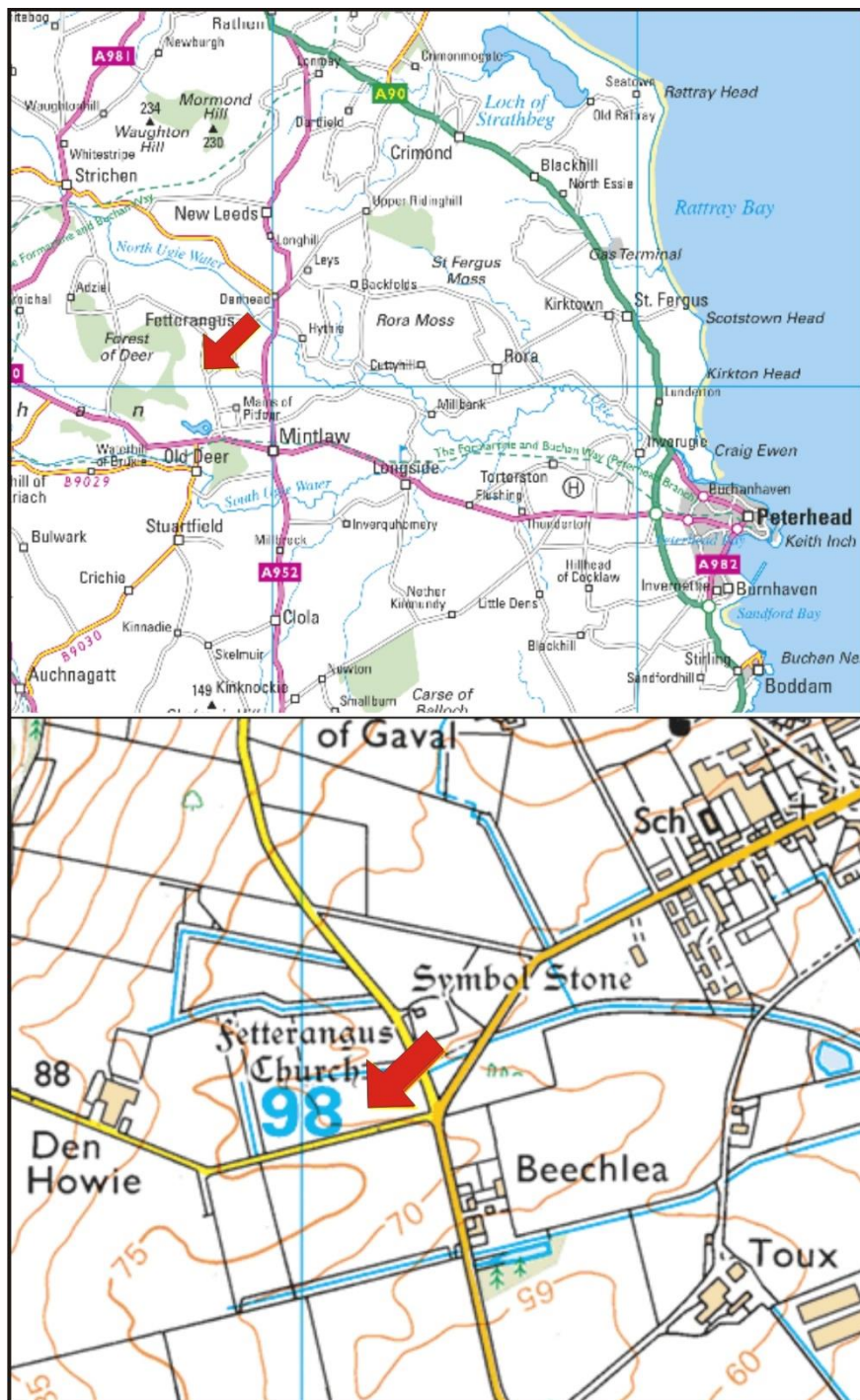
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SUMMARY

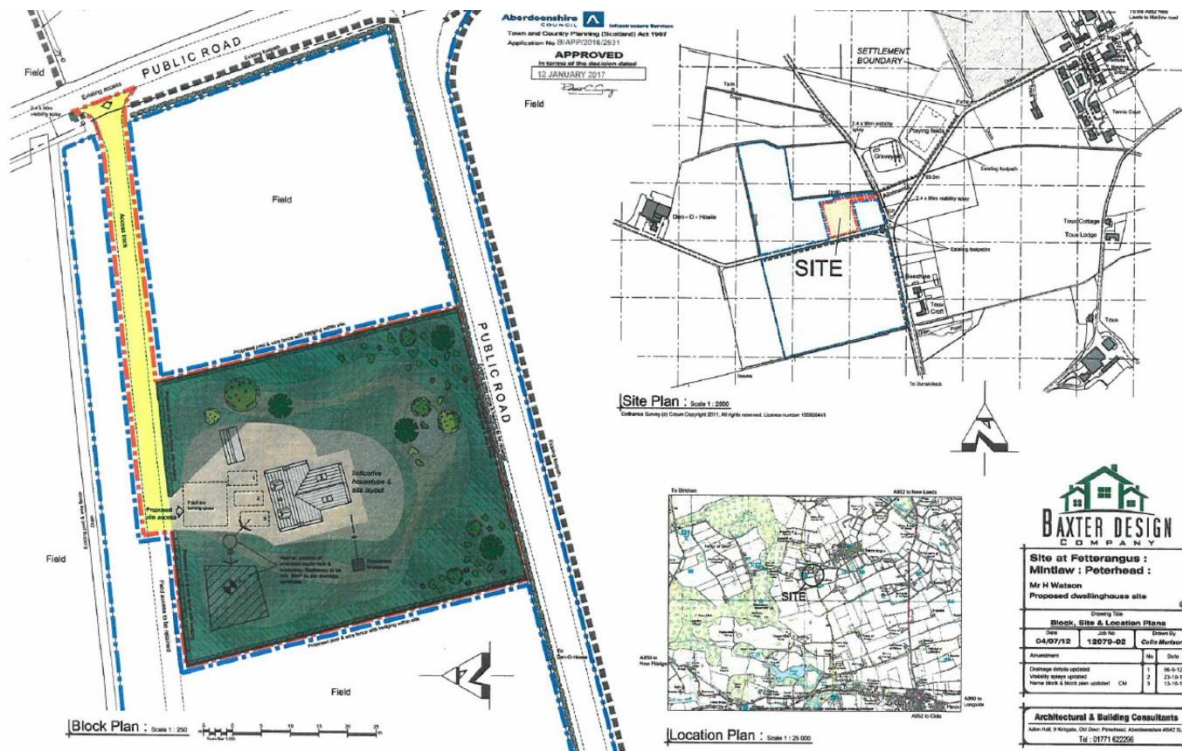
A watching brief was maintained on 16 November 2018 during the soil strip for a new house. The topsoil was 0.4-0.5m deep and the subsoil reddish brown sand in the S of the watching brief area and stoney sandy clay in the N area. On the higher ground at the S of the trench two archaeological features were uncovered, an oval pit (F1) and a post-hole (F2). F1 was 0.85 x 0.5m in size and filled the grey loam and charcoal. F2 was 0.5m diameter and filled with grey loam and charcoal. The archaeological pit and post-hole were determined to be in the garden area of the new house under a new decking area. They are to be covered with geotextile and hardcore which will then not be removed after the end of the build. No further archaeological mitigation is therefore required (Claire Herbert pers comm).

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located N of Beechlea on the SW side of Fetterangus. It is centred on NGR NJ 98090 50450, at 65-70m OD in the parish of Old Deer.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Ashley Kirk. An application APP/2016/2931 to Aberdeenshire Council for the erection of a dwellinghouse was approved on 12.1.17 with a condition for an archaeological watching brief (condition 2).
- 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)



Illus 2 Plan showing proposed house (copyright Baxter Design)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development. This is a summary of the sites found within 1km of the proposed development.

- 2.1 NJ95SE0004 Scheduled. Fetterangus Church: Remains of a church, built c.1120 and recorded in the 13th century. The church was dedicated to St Fergus and granted to the monks of St Thomas of Arbroath by Ralph le Neym about 1200. The grant was confirmed by King William the Lion. Only the foundations remain on which an enclosed burial place has been built. A holy water stoup has been set into the turf within the church. Symbol stone [NJ95SE0038](#) stands at the entrance to graveyard. There are good 17th and 18th century grave slabs nearby.
- 2.2 NJ95SE0038. Fetterangus Church. Remains of Pictish I symbol stone. Water worn slab of whinstone, the symbols are badly weathered and several cracks run across the face 9RCAHMS 1994, 8). Bears the cauldron symbol (triple disc with cross-bar); two double discs, one superimposed over arc of other; a possible Z rod (one disc may have a rectangle joined to it to form a mirror-case symbol); a curved line terminating in a scroll. Moved from original position and is now fixed to the inside of the graveyard wall of Fetterangus Church ([NJ95SE0004](#)), to the right of the entrance.
- 2.3 NJ95SE0078: Fetterangus cemetery. An evaluation was carried out at this site in August 2009 by MAS in advance of a proposed cemetery extension. Two trenches were excavated in proximity of the North side of the church. A single flint blade was recovered from a topsoil context, unrelated to any excavated feature - together with the previously recorded flint finds in this area is suggests there was prehistoric activity or settlement nearby. A number of sherds of medieval pottery, including rims and a handle, were also recovered from a feature which has been interpreted as an oven or kiln. They are dated within the range 13th-15th century, and would

appear to represent domestic rubbish rather than kiln waste. Also observed was the remains of medieval or post-medieval rig and furrow cultivation. In November 2009 two further evaluation trenches were excavated, followed by small-scale excavation. No finds or features were recovered from the two new evaluation trenches. The excavation included re-opening parts of trenches 1 and 2, removing the section between them and extending several metres to S and W to check for any other associated features. During the November 2009 excavations three separate hearths/fire areas were identified; one of the features could be the base of an enclosed oven, while the other two features appear to be open hearths. Ovens and hearths of this type and size could be related to a number of domestic activities - as bread ovens, brewing places and grain drying kilns - but there was no direct evidence in the charcoal layers to give an indication of function. The lack of evidence of medieval structures or finds makes any extensive settlement in this area unlikely. It is possible that the hearths were associated with the building or possibly repair of the church (Murray 2009, 27).

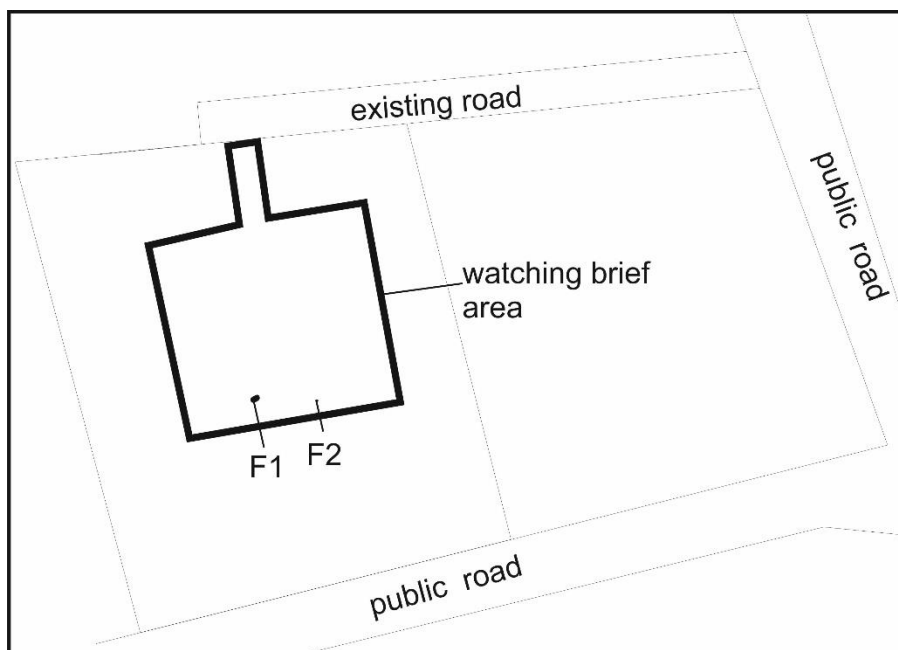
- 2.4 NJ95SE0057 Toux: Site of small farmstead or croft; a small L-shaped building with an attached enclosure to the south, is depicted on both the OS maps of 1867 and 1888. Nothing is now visible at this location.
- 2.5 NJ95SE0035 Toux: Farmstead, still in use, possibly built on or near the site of earlier manor house for the Barony of Toux. It was also known as the Barony of Touchis or Touchie. The farmstead is depicted on the OS map of 1867 as being almost U-shaped in place with open court to the NE. Another L-shaped building lies on this side, almost forming a rectangular steading. Another building within an enclosure lies to the SW, and a small single building to the SE, and another to the north beside the road. By 1888 the NW side of the steading had been widened. The building to the south now appears to be attached to the steading. Only part of the building in the north appears to survive. The small building to the SE has now gone. The farm has since been added to and extended.
- 2.6 NJ95SE0030 Gaval. Cropmark of ring ditches. At least one appears to be a double ring ditch.
- 2.7 NJ95SE0012 Den O'Howie. Flint arrowheads; said to have been found 'in abundance' near supposed camp (OS NJ95SE002) in 1853 by resident of Den of Howie. No further information.
- 2.8 NJ95SE0002 Den O'Howe. Remains of earthwork; all that remains of this supposed camp are slightly curved parallel ditches, c8m apart in the E and 12.5m apart in the W. The ditches have sharply defined sides and give the appearance of being fairly modern, but their purpose is not apparent. No trace of any continuation of the ditches, or of other works, could be seen in the adjoining fields.
- 2.9 NJ94NE0039 Pitfour. Designed landscape, site of mansion house and possible site of manor. This may have been the site of Manor Place of Pitfour. The estate came in to the possession of the Ferguson family in the early 18th Century. The original estate was enlarged by the acquisition of land at Inverugie, formerly owned by the Earl Marischal. The 'improving' Fergusons subsequently built one of the most magnificent mansions in the north-east designed by John Smith, with landscaped surrounding policies. The finished product was one of the show-pieces of Buchan. The earlier mansion house may have been an addition to the former manor or built on the site of the manor. The conservatory gallery was carried on Ionic columns with a protruding studio on Corinthian columns, which was added along the entire front of the house. When the house was demolished, the studio and gallery were removed to Kinloch House, near St Fergus. Although the house was demolished in 1927-30 and the grounds have suffered much from timber

felling, the lake and its surrounding buildings still have great landscape and architectural value. All buildings associated with the house are group listed B because of this.

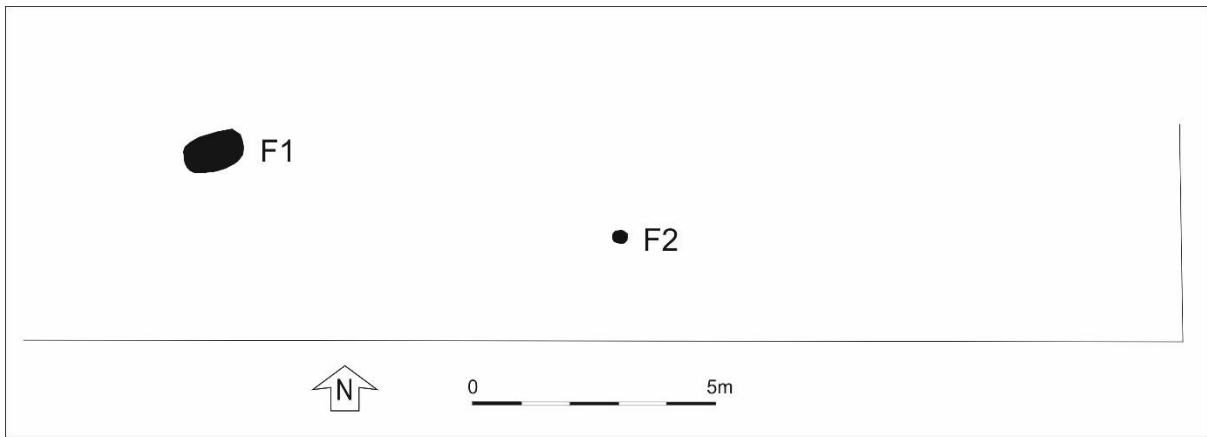
- 2.10 NJ94NE0016 Pitfour: Cropmark; rectilinear enclosure and other indeterminate features are visible as crop marks in a cereal crop on oblique aerial photographs taken in both 1975 and 1977; situated on a gentle slope at an altitude of 75m OD.
- 2.11 NJ95SE0039 Den of Howie. Remains of a group of kerb cairns, in a line c E/W centred on grid ref, found in recently cleared woodland near base of slope. A track meanders across these features from main access road. West-most cairn (1) is 3.5m in diameter with almost complete kerb of rounded, grey granite boulders, maximum 0.6m long; depression in interior. Cairn (2) lies 12m E; possible diameter 3m with two kerbstones still in position. Cairn (3) is c1.6m in diameter with three boulders in contiguous arc and one on opposite perimeter. Cairn (4) is c3m diameter; a nearly complete kerb of rounded boulders with straight sides set to interior; a low depression in interior (Shepherd 1991, 28).
- 2.12 NJ95SE0014 Fetterangus. Six flint arrowheads; found in 1859. No further information.
- 2.13 The proposed development area has been agricultural fields on the OS maps (Illus 6-7).

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was maintained on 16 November 2018 during the soil strip for a new house (Illus 2, 3). The topsoil was 0.4-0.5m deep and the subsoil reddish brown sand in the S of the watching brief area and stony sandy clay in the N area. On the higher ground at the S of the trench two archaeological features were uncovered, an oval ?pit (F1; NO98079 50429) and a post-hole (F2, NO98088 50428) (Illus 3, 4). F1 was 0.85 x 0.5m in size and filled the grey loam and charcoal. F2 was 0.5m diameter and filled with grey loam and charcoal.



Illus 3 Plan showing watching brief area (copyright Baxter Design)



Illus 4 Plan showing features F1 and F2



Illus 5 F1 (bottom) F2 (top); facing E

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The archaeological pit and post-hole were determined to be in the garden area of the new house under a new decking area. They are to be covered with geotextile and hardcore which will then not be removed after the end of the build. No further archaeological mitigation is therefore required (Claire Herbert pers comm).

5 REFERENCES

Murray, HK. (2009) '*Fetterangus Cemetery, Aberdeenshire (Old Deer parish), evaluation*', *Discovery Excav Scot, New, vol. 10, 2009*. Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England

RCAHMS. (1994) *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Pictish symbol stones: a handlist 1994*. Edinburgh.

Shepherd, I. (1991) '*Den of Howie (Old Deer parish): kerb cairns*', *Discovery Excav Scot, 1991*.

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

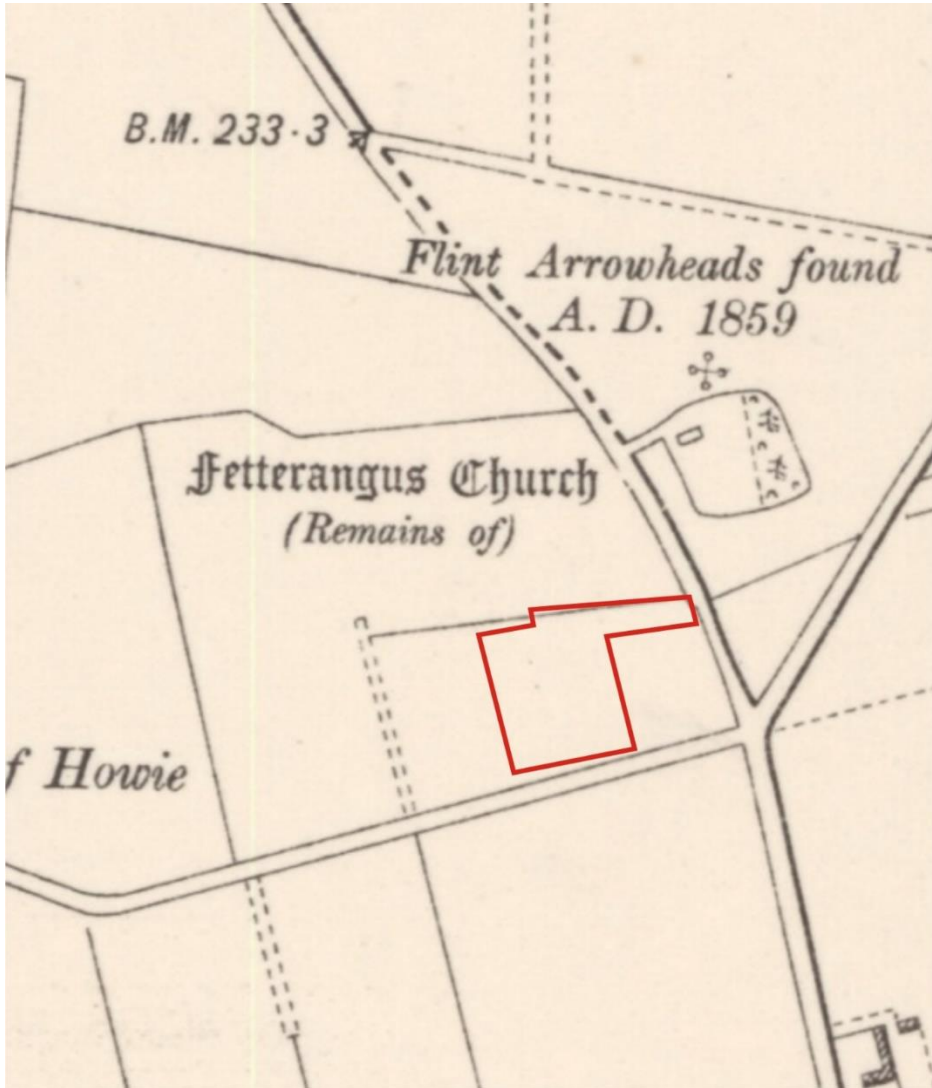
APPENDIX 1 CONTEXTS

Context no	Details	NO
F1	Oval pit	98079 50429
F2	Post-hole	98088 50428
3	Dark grey loam and charcoal	
4	Dark grey loam and charcoal	

APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 6 First Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire, Sheet XIII (includes: New Deer; Old Deer; Strichen) Survey date: 1870 Publication date: 1874



Illus 7 Second Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire Sheet XIII.SE (includes: Old Deer) Publication date: 1902 Date revised: 1901

APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Details	Facing
DSC_2931	F1, F2	E
DSC_2932	F1, F2	S
DSC_2933	F1, F2	S
DSC_2934	F1, F2	W
DSC_2935-6	F1, F2	N
IMG_0791-803	Watching brief area	



DSC_2931



DSC_2932



DSC_2933



DSC_2934



DSC_2935



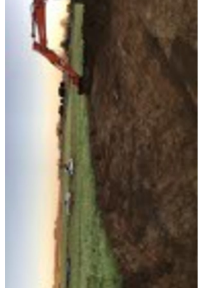
DSC_2936



IMG_0788



IMG_0789



IMG_0790



IMG_0791



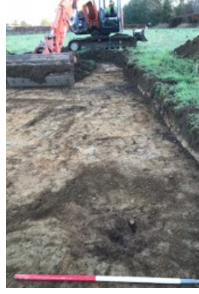
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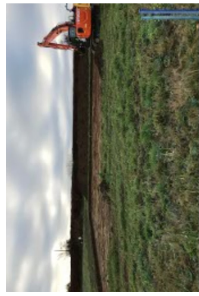
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