

**Torry Battery, Greyhope Road, Aberdeen AB11 5HB  
Data Structure Report (DSR) for trenches 5.12.18**



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## **SUMMARY**

Four trenches were excavated on 5 December 2018, following two test pits in October 2018. Trenches 3-6 were positioned to excavate the areas of foundations for the proposed temporary viewing and interpretation platform, decked access walkway and outside seating. The remains of the curtain wall were uncovered in each trench with evidence of 3 gun slits. The wall is constructed of granite rubble with cream mortar and was 0.6m wide.

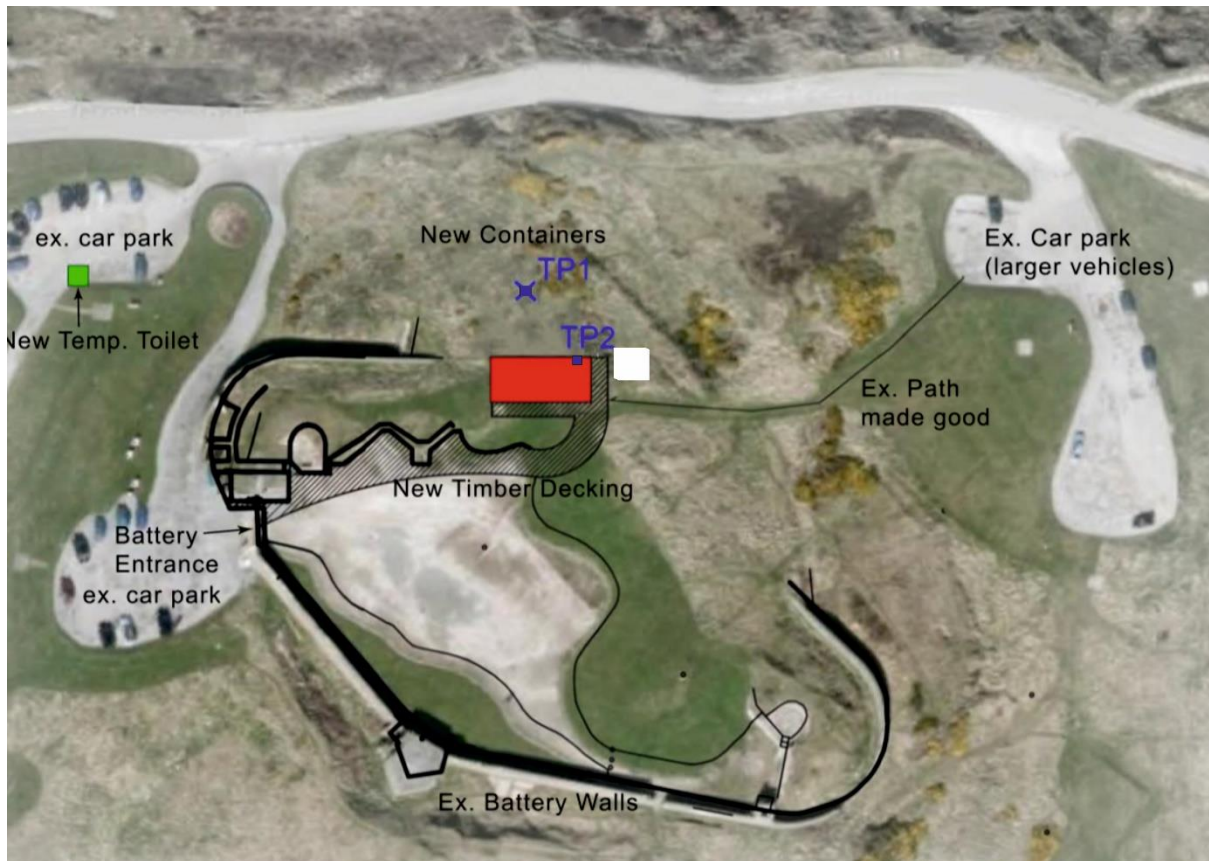
It is recommended that a watching brief is carried out during any groundworks for the proposed development to more fully record the curtain wall and any other features which might survive in this area of the Battery.

# 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on Greyhope Road to the W of Greyhope Bay and the N of Balnagask Golf Course. It is centred on NGR NJ 96527 05627, at 20-25m OD in the parish of Aberdeen.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Dr Fiona McIntyre, Greyhope Bay Ltd. Greyhope Bay is leading on plans for a new build visitor and marine education centre for Aberdeen, developing a temporary viewing platform and cafe space as a strategy to demonstrate potential for a more permanent development on site; an application was submitted to Aberdeen City Council on 30.11.18 (182025/DPP).
- 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 Site plan showing proposed site for portacabin in red (copyright Greyhope Bay Limited)

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

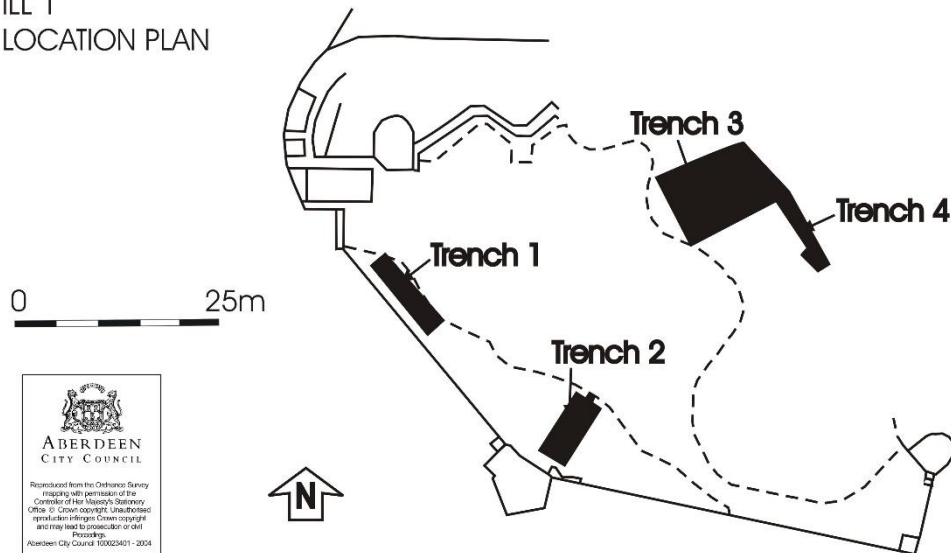
The Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development.

2.1 Torry Point Battery (ACC SMR NJ90NE 0013) is a Scheduled Monument. It was built in 1860 on the Girdleness headland in order to protect the port and harbour of Aberdeen from sea borne attack. It was built at the same time as another battery on the north side of the mouth of the river Dee (NJ90NE 0231). It has been claimed that the battery was built as a result of a feared invasion by French troops after Napoleon III became Emperor of France. This is not the case: whilst Napoleon I had been a very real enemy to Britain it was not so clear cut with his nephew. Britain and France were allies in the Crimean War in the 1850s and remained allies fighting China in the 2nd China War. Moreover after he was deposed Napoleon III lived the remainder of his life in Britain; his son died fighting for the British Empire in the Zulu Wars. In reality the battery was built because the previous battery built to defend Aberdeen (in 1780, NJ90NE 0257) had been allowed to fall into disrepair. For many years there had been a recognised need to build a new battery or batteries in Aberdeen. Negotiations for this between the Town Council and the Board of Ordnance were ongoing and intermittent between 1805 and 1860. The Crimean War provided a final 'shot in the arm' to these negotiations and broke the deadlock over the knotty issue of exactly who would pay what for the batteries. Originally staffed by volunteers, however, Torry Battery was partially dismantled and decommissioned in the 1890s. It was not until WWI that the Battery was again manned. During WWI troops trained here saw action throughout the theatres of war. Between the Wars the Battery was used as temporary housing, at a time of shortage in the housing stock. The Battery was again staffed on a permanent basis during WWII. During WWII the Battery was adapted for airborne attack. Also during the war the Battery took at least one direct hit from a German bomber resulting in

some fatalities in 1941, although its guns did engage a number of German bombers. In that year the Battery's 'heavies', or big guns, opened up for the only time in its history, on a friendly vessel. During the war the Battery was staffed by many different personnel, some Home Guard and many men from the City of Liverpool Battalion of the Royal Artillery. Interviews with some of these men have suggested that on the whole they had very fond memories of their time in Aberdeen and especially of the times when town's people brought free fish and chips to the Battery's gates for them. After WWII Torry Battery was again used as temporary housing for a number of families. During this period there was a great sense of community amongst the families who lived at the Battery. This was part of a wider 'squatter' movement. The pre-war housing shortages had been exacerbated during the war and many families (especially those of newly returned service men) began to squat in newly vacated army huts and camps. After the last family left in 1953 Torry Battery was partially demolished. The ruins became a playground for local children and resulted in a number of calls for its complete dismantling. During this period it became home to many different species of migratory birds. In recent years the Battery has been the focus of more attention and in early 2004 an archaeological excavation was carried out (NJ90NE 0256). This revealed, inter alia, a curious, late nineteenth century, system of heating the bedding store for Torry Battery by way of flues running from an open fire in an adjacent stone room. Torry Battery was Scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 2000, which affords it a measure of legal protection (Aberdeen City Council SMR online).

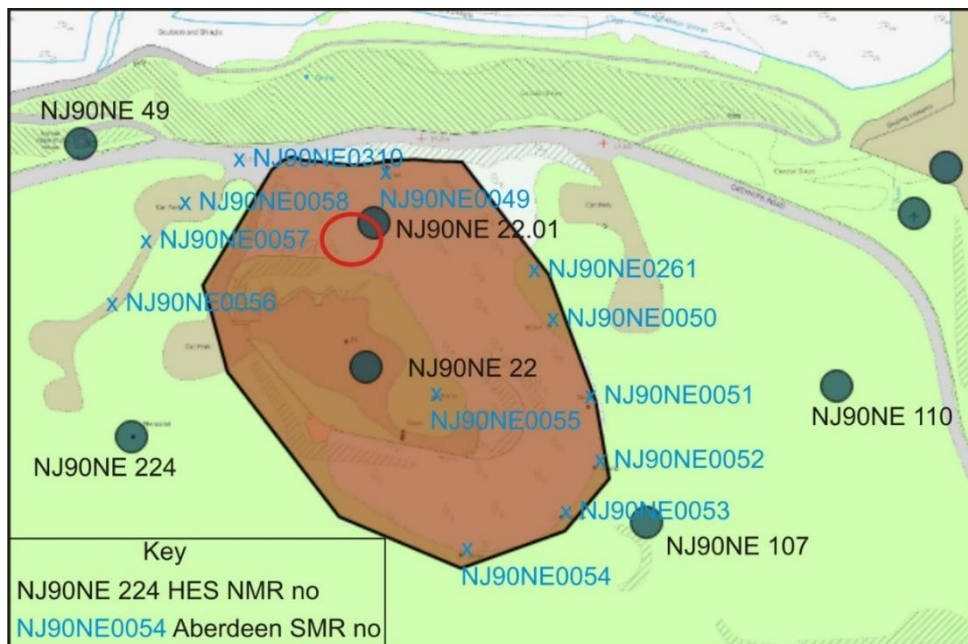
- 2.2 During March and April 2004, four trenches were excavated at Torry Point Battery, a coastal defence battery built between 1859 and 1861 (ACC SMR NJ90NE 0256; Illus 3). Trench 1 was positioned just within the gate to the battery, in the area of a range of buildings used during the military period as storerooms. Trench 2 was positioned in the area of a building used in the first period of the battery as an infirmary and latterly as a Royal Artillery gun store. Trenches 3 and 4 were excavated to the east of the battery in an area which was occupied by gun emplacements in the early 20th century, close to the proposed location of the container. The excavation revealed that these had been completely removed and the area dug down c 4m for the disposal of building materials, particularly stone, brick, wood and metal. In Trench 4 a large fragment of brick wall, concreted at its base, was uncovered but it was quickly established that this was rubble, not part of an adjacent building which had fallen in this location. A metalised surface was traced in part of the trench. It was on the same level as the current 'parade ground' surface. The original 'parade ground' extended further to the east than it now does, and this can be seen on the contemporary plans of the battery. The finds from this site are in the collections of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums (Cameron 2009).

TORRY BATTERY 2004  
ILL 1  
LOCATION PLAN



Illus 3 Plan showing excavation trenches from Cameron 2009 (copyright Aberdeen City Council)

2.3 There are a series of WB boundary stones around the edge of the Battery (NJ90NE 56-58, 319, 261, 50-54). None of these are located near the proposed container.



Illus 4 Aberdeen SMR and HES sites and Scheduled area (brown) (copyright HES)

2.4 The pillbox (called a blockhouse) is shown on a plan of the proposed infantry defences of Torry Battery dated 31 May 1913 (The National Archives WO 78/5198) (NJ90NE 22.01; Illus 4). It is shown as a coffin-shaped structure with seven firing embrasures, at the corner of a barbed wire entanglement covering the front of the battery. The pillbox visible on the 1945 and 1947 aerial photographs (Illus 5) appears to be of the same shape. This is in the approximate location of the proposed container but this may have been buried or destroyed since the 1947 aerial photos.



Illus 5 1947 aerial photograph showing approximate proposed site for container (copyright HES)

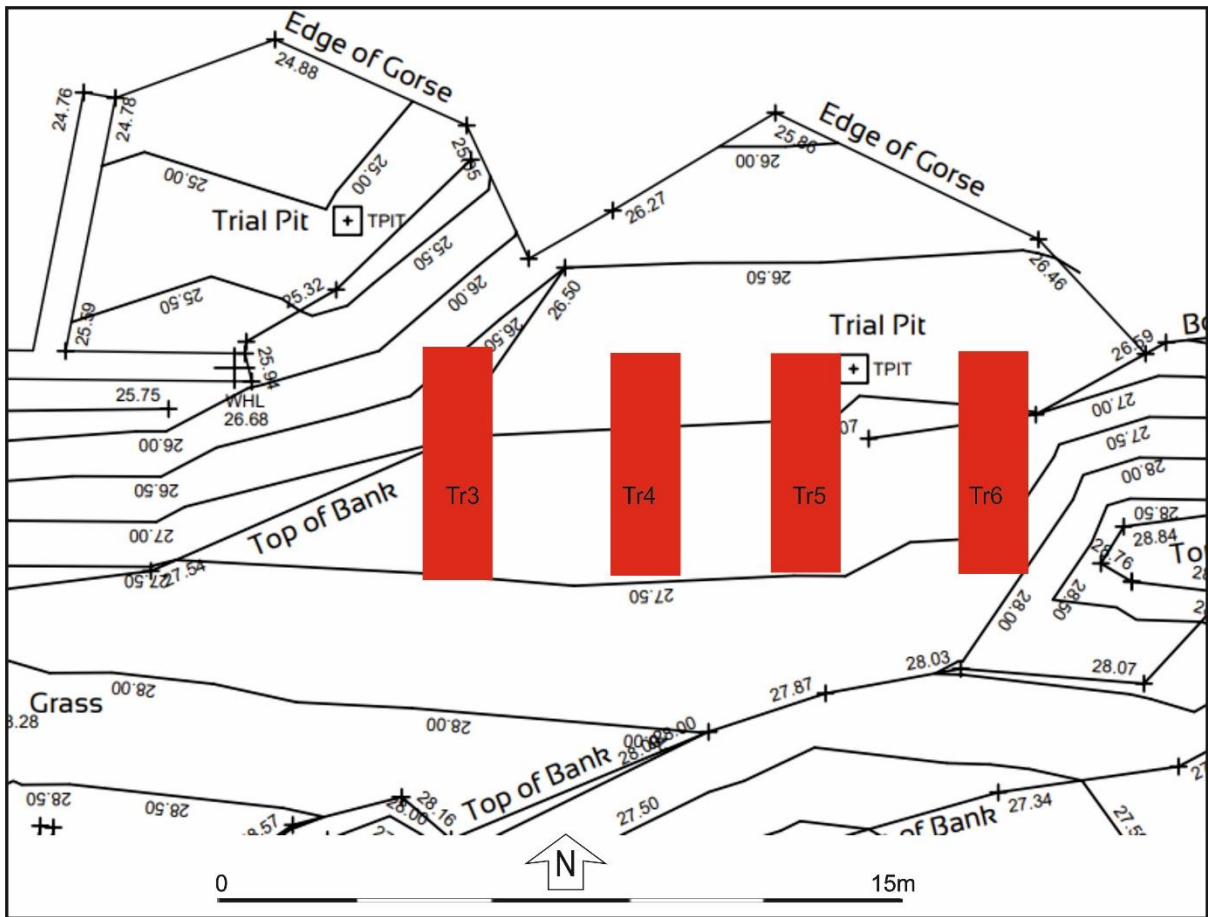
- 2.5 Two test pits were excavated on 25 October 2018. TP1 contained rubble, 20<sup>th</sup>-century metal and sand and TP2 contained a section of the curtain wall which survives on the NW, W and S side of the Battery. This was cleaned and recorded and the trench backfilled. A third trench was not required.

### 3 TEST TRENCH WATCHING BRIEF

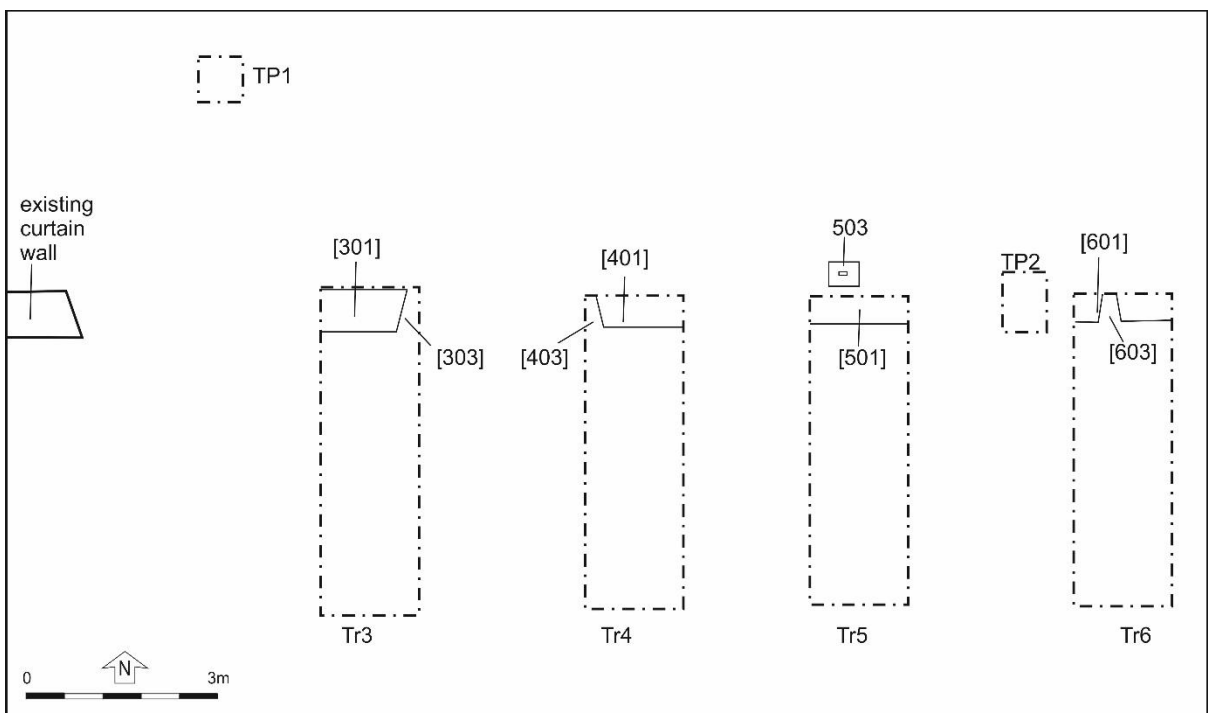
Following the excavation of two test pits on 25 October 2018, four follow-up trenches were excavated on 5 December 2018. They were 4.5m long and 1.5m wide and were excavated along the lines of the foundations required for the proposed development. The work was carried out by a 3.5 ton tracked machine with 1m ditching bucket.

The curtain wall is 0.6m wide constructed of granite blocks and rubble with cream mortar. The base of the wall was not reached in any trench as the foundations for the proposed development are shallow. Over the wall were layers and lenses of soil and dumped sand. No other archaeological features or finds were recorded.

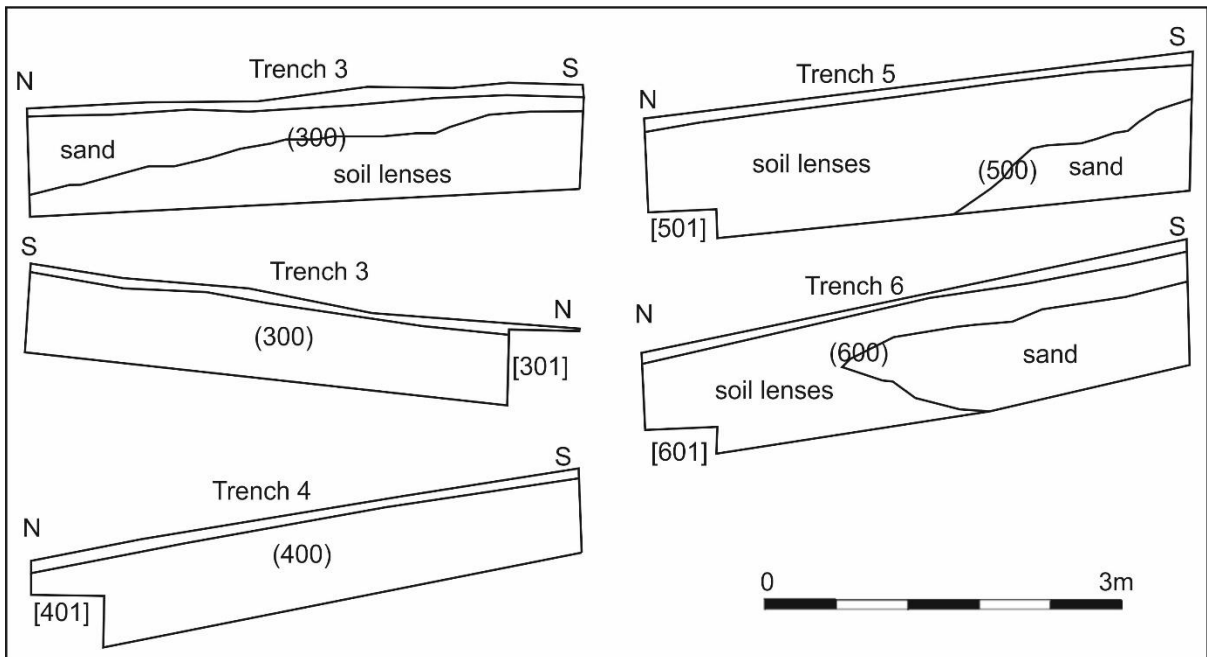




Illus 6 Topographical plan with trench locations and existing curtain wall (Left) (copyright Greyhope Bay Limited)



Illus 7 Plan of trenches with features excavated



Illus 8 Trench sections

### 3.1 Trench 3

Trench 3 was dug to 0.7m deep; at the N end was a wall [301] 0.6m wide and constructed of granite blocks and rubble and cream mortar. There was a gun slit [303] at the E end of the wall. The full width of this slit was not revealed as it was partially outwith the excavated trench.



Illus 9 Trench 3 wall 301 showing granite block and mortar construction; facing N

### 3.2 Trench 4

Trench 4 was dug to 0.8m deep; at the N end was a wall [401] constructed of granite blocks and rubble and cream mortar. There was a gun slit [403] in the W end of the wall. The full width of the wall and the gun slit were not revealed as they were partially outwith the excavated trench.



Illus 10 Trench 3 wall 301 showing granite block and mortar construction; facing N

### 3.3 Trench 5

At the N end of Trench 5 was a solid section of the curtain wall (501) which was stone and mortar built. Above the wall was a poured concrete base built on a stone foundation (503); it was located above the demolished wall and therefore clearly a later feature which held a wooden post, possibly something like a flag-pole.



Illus 11 Wall 501 (bottom) with concrete base 503 on stone base (above); facing N



Illus 12 Concrete base 503 (bottom) with wall 501 (top); facing S

### 3.2 Trench 6

Trench 6 was dug to 1.1m deep; at the N end was a wall [601] constructed of granite blocks and rubble and cream mortar. There was a gun slit in the exposed wall section [603]. The full width of the wall was not revealed but the gun slit was 0.24-0.46m wide.



Illus 13 Wall 601 with gun slit 603; facing S

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Four trenches were excavated on 5 December 2018, following two test pits in October 2018. Trenches 3-6 were positioned to excavate the areas of foundations for the proposed temporary viewing and interpretation platform, decked access walkway and outside seating. The remains of the curtain wall were uncovered in each trench with evidence of 3 gun slits. The wall is constructed of granite rubble with cream mortar and was 0.6m wide.

It is recommended that a watching brief is carried out during any further groundworks for the proposed development to more fully record the curtain wall and any other features which might survive in this area of the Battery.

## 5 REFERENCES

Cameron AS 2009 Excavations at Torry Point Battery, Aberdeen. Archaeology Data Service ref <https://doi.org/10.5284/1003892>

Aberdeen City SMR online [https://online.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Services/SiteMonument/SiteMonumentDetail.aspx?Id=NJ90NE%200013\\*\(accessed 1.8.18\)](https://online.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Services/SiteMonument/SiteMonumentDetail.aspx?Id=NJ90NE%200013*(accessed%201.8.18)).

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

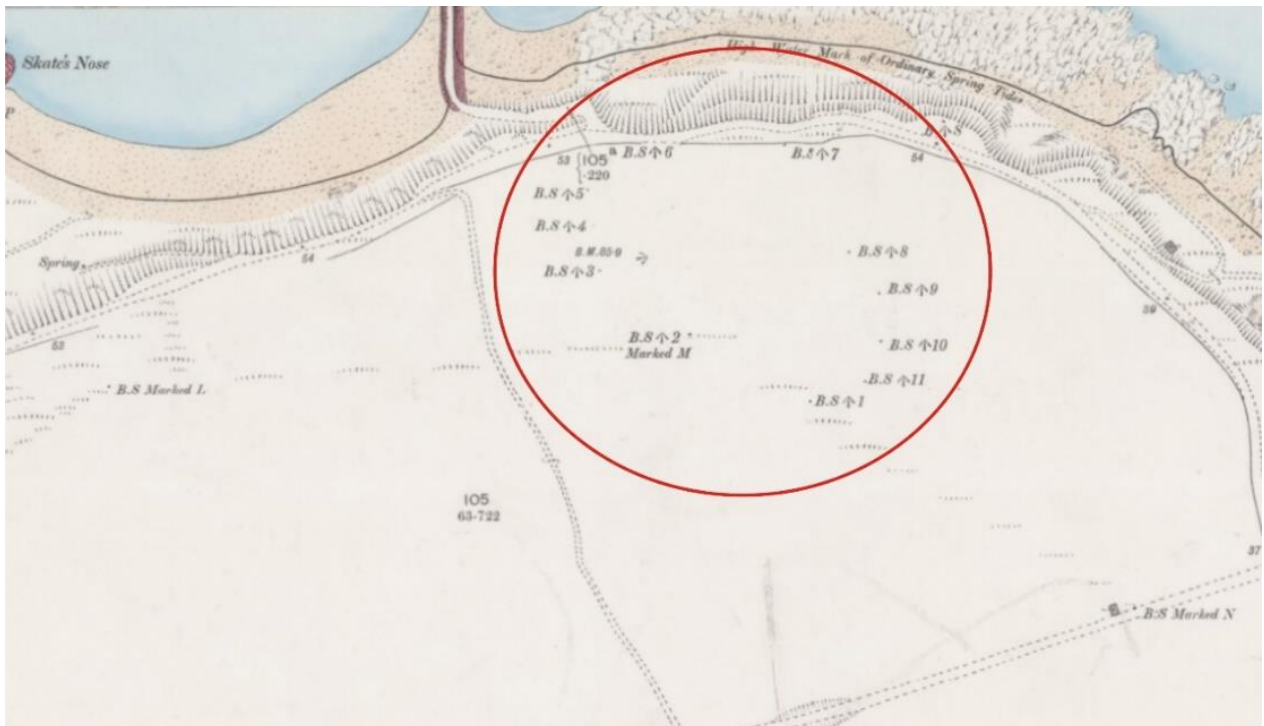
Thanks to Fiona McIntyre, Greyhope Bay Ltd for initiating this project, to Gokay Deveci (The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment) and Denis Harper (Cameron and Ross) for their assistance on site and to Bruce Mann, Aberdeen City Council Archaeology Advisor for his advice during this work.

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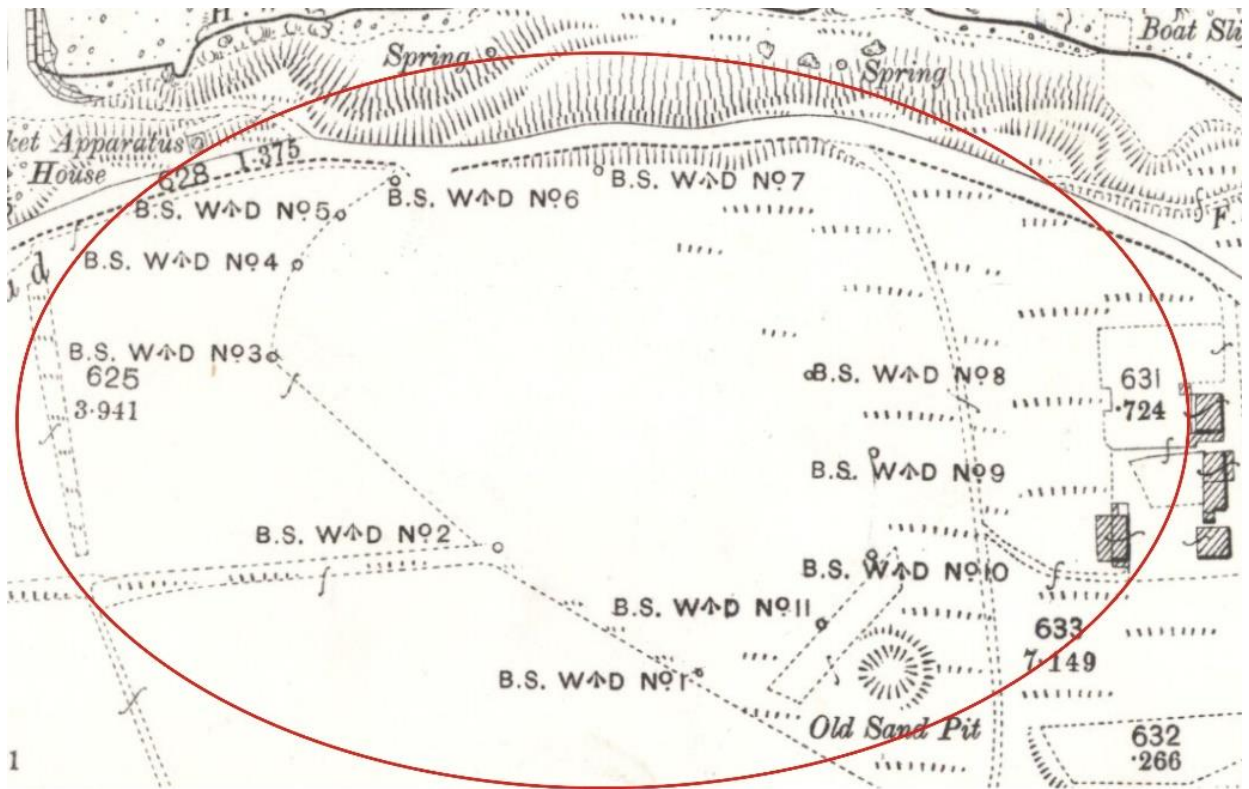
## APPENDIX 1 CONTEXTS

Context no	Trench	Details
300	3	0.7m deep topsoil lenses of soil and sand
301	3	Curtain wall 0.6m wide
302	3	Granite rubble bonded with cream mortar
303	3	Gun slit – not fully revealed within trench
400	4	0.8m deep topsoil lenses of soil and sand
401	4	Curtain wall 0.6m wide
402	4	Granite rubble bonded with cream mortar
403	4	Gun slit – not fully revealed within trench
500	5	1.1m deep topsoil lenses of soil and sand
501	5	Curtain wall 0.6m wide
502	5	Granite rubble bonded with cream mortar
503	5	Poured concrete post base
504	5	Stone rubble base for 503
600	6	1m deep topsoil lenses of soil and sand
601	6	Curtain wall 0.6m wide
602	6	Granite rubble bonded with cream mortar
603	6	Gun slit 0.24-0.46m wide

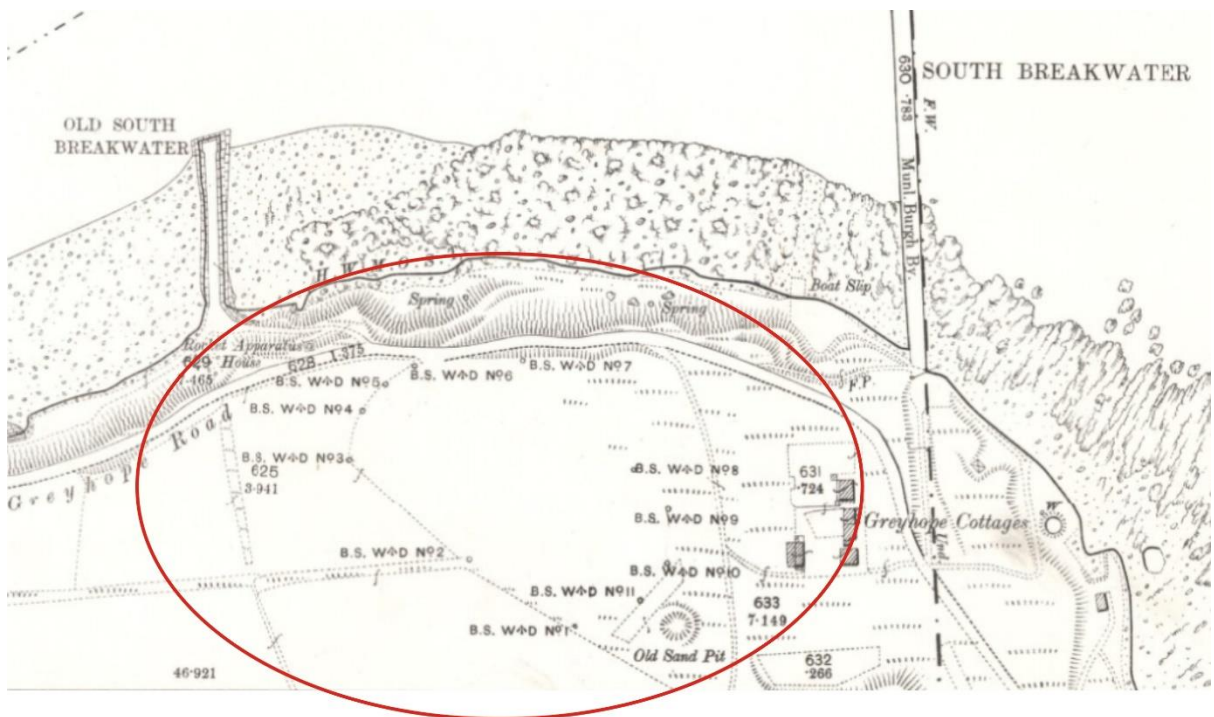
## APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 14 First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Kincardineshire IV.3 (Combined) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1899



Illus 15 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire LXXV.12 (Aberdeen) Publication date: 1901 Revised: 1899 to 1900



Illus 16 Third Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire LXXV.12 (Aberdeen) Publication date: 1925 Revised: 1923 Levelled: 1899/1900

## APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_2973	Trenches 3-6 with South Breakwater in background	ENE
DSC_294	Trench 3 with wall 301	N
DSC_2975-6	Trench 3 W section showing layers and lenses of soil and sand backfill above wall 301	W
DSC_2977-9	Trench 3 wall 301 showing it above the level of the trench on the W side and just buried on the E side	N
DSC_2980-1	Trench 3 wall 301	E
DSC_2982	Trench 3 with wall 301 (bottom)	S
DSC_2983	Trench 3 in relation to the upstanding curtain wall	WSW
DSC_2984	Trenches 4-6	E
DSC_2985-88	Trench 4 wall 401	
DSC_2989-90	Trench 4 W section showing layers and lenses of soil and sand backfill above wall 401	W
DSC_2991	Trench 3 wall 301 in relation to upstanding curtain wall	W
DSC_2992	Trench 4 wall 401 in relation to upstanding curtain wall	W
DSC_2993-95	Trench 5 wall 501 in relation to upstanding curtain wall	W
DSC_2996	Trench 5 wall 501	W
DSC_2997	Trench 5 concrete base 503 (bottom) with wall 501 (top)	S
DSC_2998-3002	Trench 5 concrete base 503 (top) with wall 501 (bottom)	N
DSC_3003	Trench 6 wall 601 in relation to upstanding curtain wall	W
DSC_3004	Trench 6 wall 601 with gun slit 603	E
DSC_3005	Trench 6 wall 601 with gun slit 603	W
DSC_3006-8	Trench 6 wall 601 with gun slit 603	N
DSC_3009	Trench 6 wall 601 with gun slit 603	W
DSC_3010-11	Trench 6 wall 601 with gun slit 603	S
DSC_3012	Trench 6 E section showing layers and lenses of soil and sand backfill above wall 601	
IMG0883-906	Locational photos	





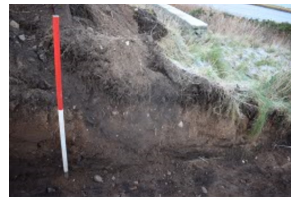
DSC\_2973



DSC\_2974



DSC\_2975



DSC\_2976



DSC\_2977



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DSC\_2982



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DSC\_2984



DSC\_2985



DSC\_2986



DSC\_2987



DSC\_2988



DSC\_2989



DSC\_2990



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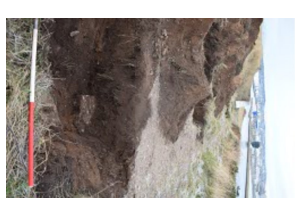
DSC\_3000



DSC\_3001



DSC\_3002



DSC\_3003



DSC\_3004



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DSC\_3006



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DSC\_3012



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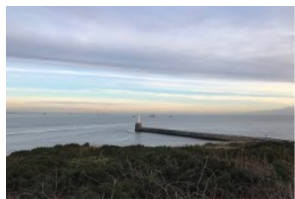
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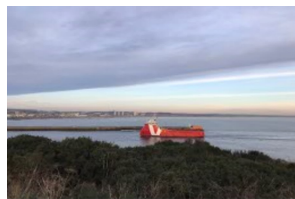
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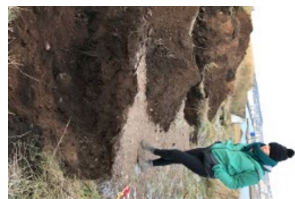
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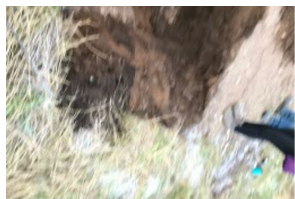
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IMG\_0892



IMG\_0893



IMG\_0894



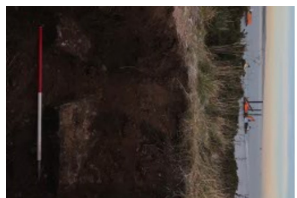
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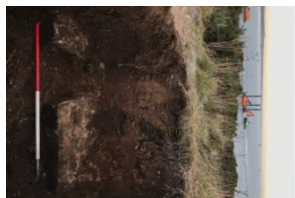
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