

Crathes Castle, Crathes, Banchory AB31 5QJ

Data Structure report (DSR)

**Aberdeenshire Council planning application
APP/2018/1843**



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ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Pits 2 with castle in the background; facing SW

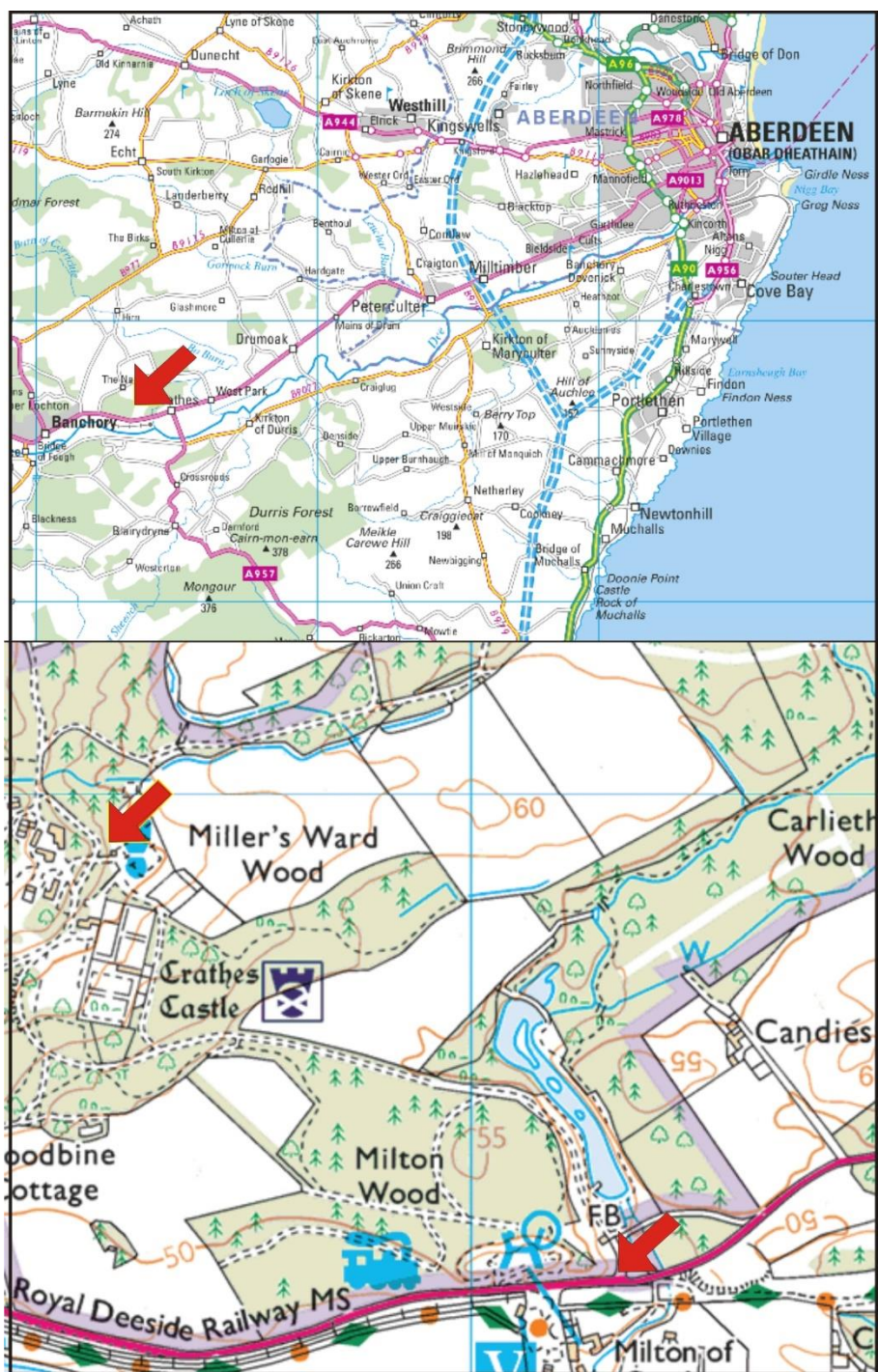
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SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out on 22 January 2019; the weather was sunny and cold. Pits for two groups of signs were excavated in two locations. No archaeological finds or features were recorded. The signs have now been inserted into the trenches and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located within the grounds of Crathes Castle. It is centred on NGR NO 73427 96926 and NO 74240 96275, at 50-60m OD in the parish of Banchory-ternan.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Annie Robertson, NTS. An application to Aberdeenshire council APP/2018/1843 for erection of 6 Flags and Signage (Non-illuminated) requires an archaeological watching brief in the northern area.
- 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 2019)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Aberdeenshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development.

- 2.1 NO79NW0005 The proposed development is within the grounds of Crathes Castle, an L-plan tower-house built in the mid-16th century with a later projecting wing. It is built of granite with rounded angles and rises to four storeys and an attic. The lower storeys are plain but above the first-floor level there is a profusion of corbelling, stringcourse, angle- and stair-turrets, heraldic decoration, gargoyles, and gabling which are unique to Scottish castellated architecture. The entrance, in the re-entrant angle is protected by an iron yett. The interior is famed for its plaster and magnificent wooden painted ceilings. The castle was built for the Burnetts of Leys who received the charter for the land from Robert the Bruce in 1323. Formerly they lived on the crannog at Leys, but following the marriage in 1543 of Alexander Burnett to Janet Hamilton, daughter of Canon Hamilton of the abbey of Arbroath, a dowry of church lands enabled work to begin on a new tower at Crathes. The work was carried out intermittently between 1553 and 1596 by one of the great Bell family of masons. The vaulted ground floor has kitchens, store and a small prison. The high hall is an imposing vaulted space with three stone bosses carved with Hamilton cinquefoils and Burnett holly leaves crowing the vault. Over the fireplace is a jewelled ivory horn, the Horn of Leys, which is said to have been presented to Alexander Burnett by the Bruce when he received the charter. Above the hall four rooms retain their original late 16th century painted ceilings. The designed landscape extends over 272 ha. The parkland is shown on the 1747 Roy maps as small open blocks of land; it was landscaped in the late 18th century. The woodland was planted c.1600 and extended and enlarged in the late 17th/early 18th century. The walled garden were probably built for Sir Thomas Burnet, and were known for their 'delicate fruit'; the majority of the yew hedges could date from the 1850s; a modern flower garden was created in the 1880s. There is a B-listed dovecot to the south-east (SMR NO79NW0104). The Defence of Britain Project recorded that during World War II Crathes Castle was used as a hospital. The castle came into the hands of the National Trust for Scotland in 1951. A watching brief in 1995 during the lifting of stone flags in the 'well' room recorded an underlying hard sandy mortar which may have been an earlier floor level. No evidence for a well was uncovered although it is possible that this was concealed by the mortar layer. AOC undertook a desk based assessment and walk over survey of the designed landscape within the grounds of Crathes Castle. The survey recorded 57 features, of which 15 were field boundaries, 6 were related to the water mains of Aberdeen Waterworks, 4 were recorded from aerial photographs, 3 were extractive sites, 2 were mounds and the remaining 27 are almost exclusively related to the recent land-use within the estate. Report in DES 1997 p7 of later 18th and 19th century glass bottles. In 1996 the ice pond and lade on the estate were cleaned and recorded. This was carried out in 2 stages: an evaluation followed by the cleaning of the entire system. The lade is 138m long above and 40m long below the pond. It was deliberately channelled from an existing stream, and the sides lined with stones. When completely emptied the pond measured 10m N-S by 8m W-E. In general the type of material found indicated that after the functional use of the pond ceased in the mid-19th century, the pond was used as a recreational site for the inhabitants of the castle. A complete ice manufacturing system (the upper dam, sluice, lade, pond, slide, lower dam and ice houses) is present at Crathes estate and the survival of this system in such an intact condition appears to be quite rare. In April-May 2000 a geophysical survey was undertaken by students from Glasgow University. Resistivity survey confirmed the 1913 photographic evidence of a central garden feature of four arcs of bed around a central trellis, and beyond this, four small circular beds (DES 2000, 8). A blocked 16th century pistol loop was discovered during redecoration work in the S stair

tower (Fraser, 2001, 8). The recording of exterior elevations of the E and N ranges of the estate offices courtyard was undertaken in 2001. Seven major structural phases were identified (Fraser, 2002). Two watching briefs carried out by Murray Archaeological Services in 2005, one during the laying of a cable between Crathes Castle and Courtyard/Stables (Murray 2005). Wall foundations were revealed which belonged to the 19th-century extension wing which had burnt in 1966; cobbling was exposed to the east of the horse mill. Second alongside N and E ranges of the enclosed courtyard behind horse mill at Home Farm. Followed by series of watching briefs and small-scale excavations in central area and NW part of courtyard. Watching brief carried out by Addyman Associates between 2005-2006 over redevelopment of the 18th/19th century steading court of Crathes castle Home Farm, specifically the standing structures and excavation of their interiors. A general historic building survey was also undertaken, incorporating the results of previous recording in 2003. An archaeological watching brief in February 2012 on a new soakaway at the SE corner of the stable block recorded no archaeological features or artefacts (Murray 2013, 14). Geophysical survey was carried out in November 2012 (Ovenden 2012) around the castle aimed at mapping surviving remains of the inner court and ranges and possibly other garden features. The survey detected numerous anomalies. Within the main lawn S of the castle possible structural remains identified may relate to earlier pavilions or other garden features. Survey of the croquet lawn detected a geometric pattern of anomalies indicative of a formal garden. A watching brief was carried out by MAS in July 2013 on drainage works around the base of the 16th century tower (Murray and Murray 2014, 16). A 1798 estate map shows a range extending W from the SW corner of the tower, but a shot section of wall and associated cobbling was concluded to be of too light construction to be that shown on the map; it was more likely to be a kerb to a path, possibly associated with the W range. Excavation was carried out by MAS in 2014 (Murray and Murray 2015, 17-18) to investigate a number of anomalies identified by geophysical survey by RGC in 2013. It revealed part of a previously unknown courtyard which would have formed the approach from the south to the 16th century castle. Within the west side of the courtyard were remains of a stone walled building c.6-7m long and 3.7m wide internally, and divided into two rooms. An original cobble floor survived in the north room. It is probable that this was building was mirrored on the other side of the courtyard. The whole courtyard appears to have been demolished in the later 18th century, and the area landscaped to lawn. A small number of flints were recovered from trenching at the south end of the lawn. A watching brief took place on 29 October 2012 during excavation of drainage trenches but no archaeological remains were uncovered (Cameron 2012, 16).

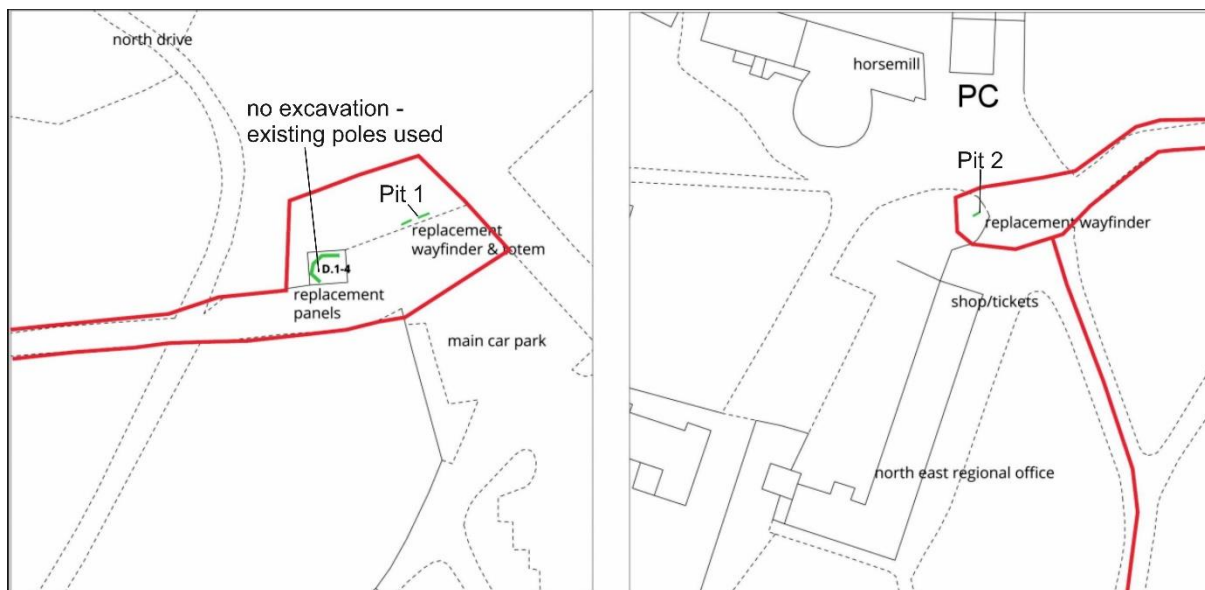
- 2.2 An archaeological watching brief was carried out during construction of new pathways as part of the upgrading of the Deeside Way in February 2006 (SMR NO79NW0075). The stretch between Milton of Crathes railway bridge and the entrance to Milton Crathes crossed the old mill lade which at this point was culverted to flow NE-SW under the A93. No other archaeological features or finds were evident (Murray 2006).
- 2.3 The NW signs are being erected in open ground to the N and NNW of the Castle. The SE group of signs are being erected near the entrance, adjacent to the old road and lades (HES NO79NW 137) from the lake into the Burn of Coy.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was carried out on 22 January 2019; the weather was sunny and cold.

Pit 1 (NO 73468 96908) was located adjacent to the current car park (Illus 2). It was 1.5m long, 0.5m wide and 0.8m deep; most of the trench was taken up with the concrete from previous signs and there was a dump of stones at the W end of the trench which appeared to be associated with the concrete. Roots were prevalent in the trench and no archaeological features or finds were recorded. W of this trench were two smaller pits 0.3m diameter and 0.5m deep and were dug through the rooty soil and stones.

Pit 2 (NO 73382 96877) was located on an artificial mound outside the door of the Gift Shop and Tickets (Illus 2). Two holes 0.3m diameter and 0.5m deep were excavated through soil; no archaeological features or finds were recorded.



Illus 2 Plan showing location of signs in red (copyright The National Trust for Scotland)



Illus 3 Pit 1 main trench facing W



Illus 4 Pit 1; facing N



Illus 5 Pit 2; facing NW

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A watching brief was carried out during the digging of pits for two groups of signs in two locations. No archaeological finds or features were recorded. The signs have now been inserted into the trenches and it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

5 REFERENCES

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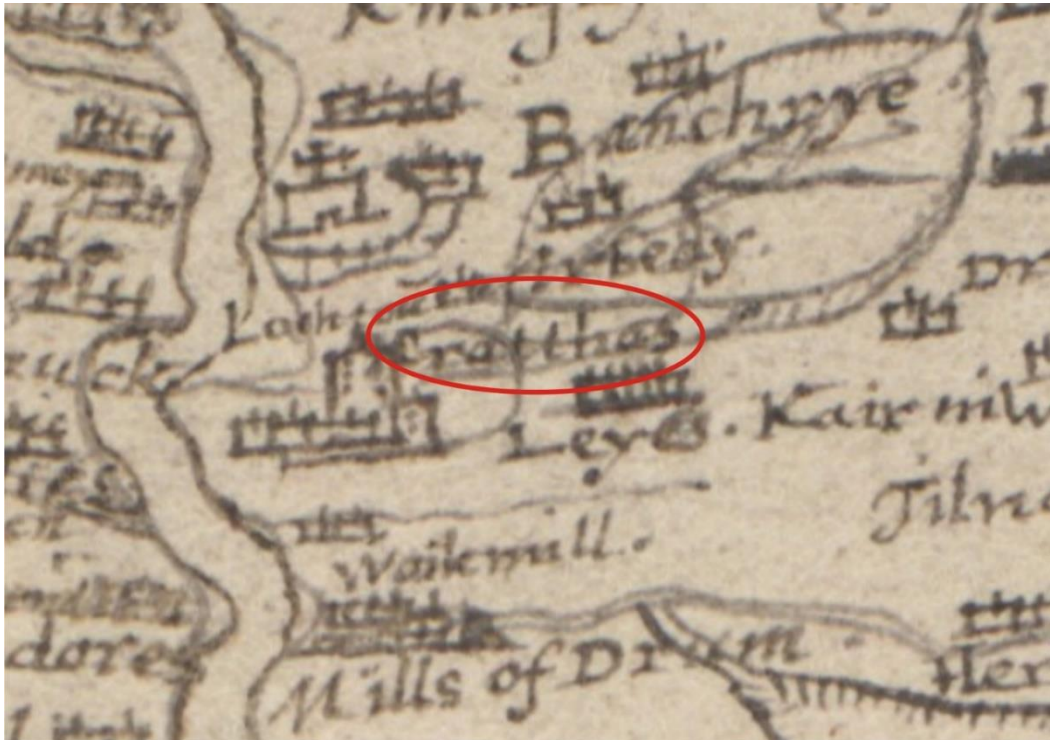
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6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 6 Pont's map of c 1583-96 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 7 Gordon's map of c 1636-52 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 8 Blaeu and Gordon's map of 1654 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



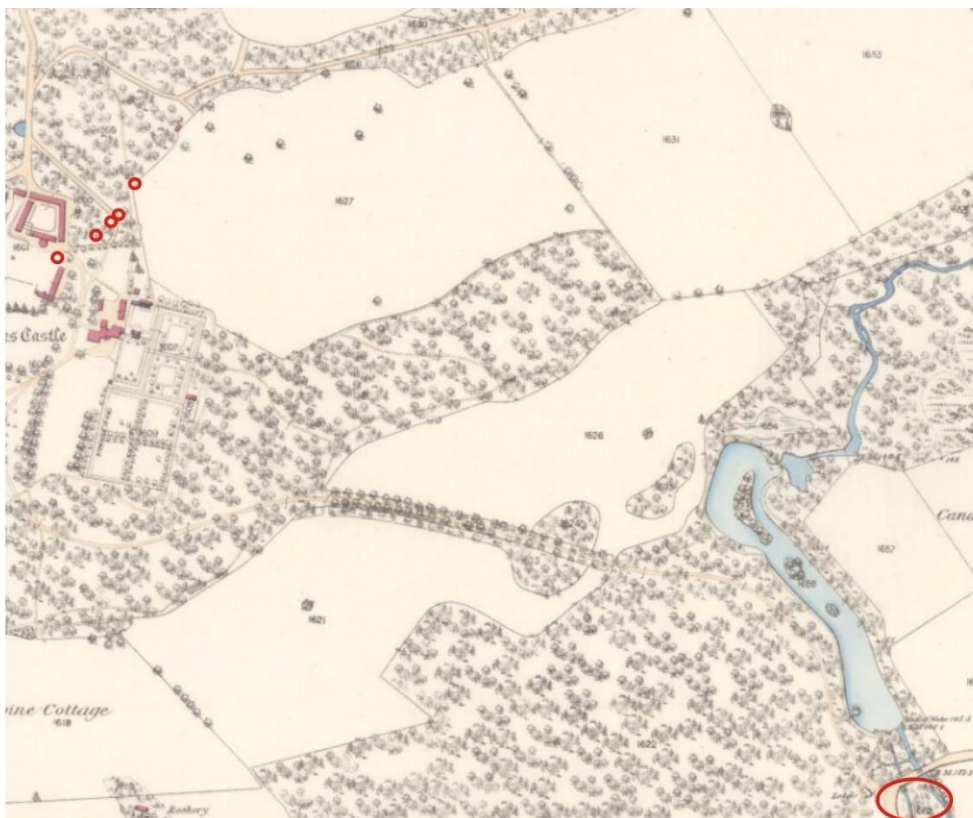
Illus 9 Moll's map of 1745 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



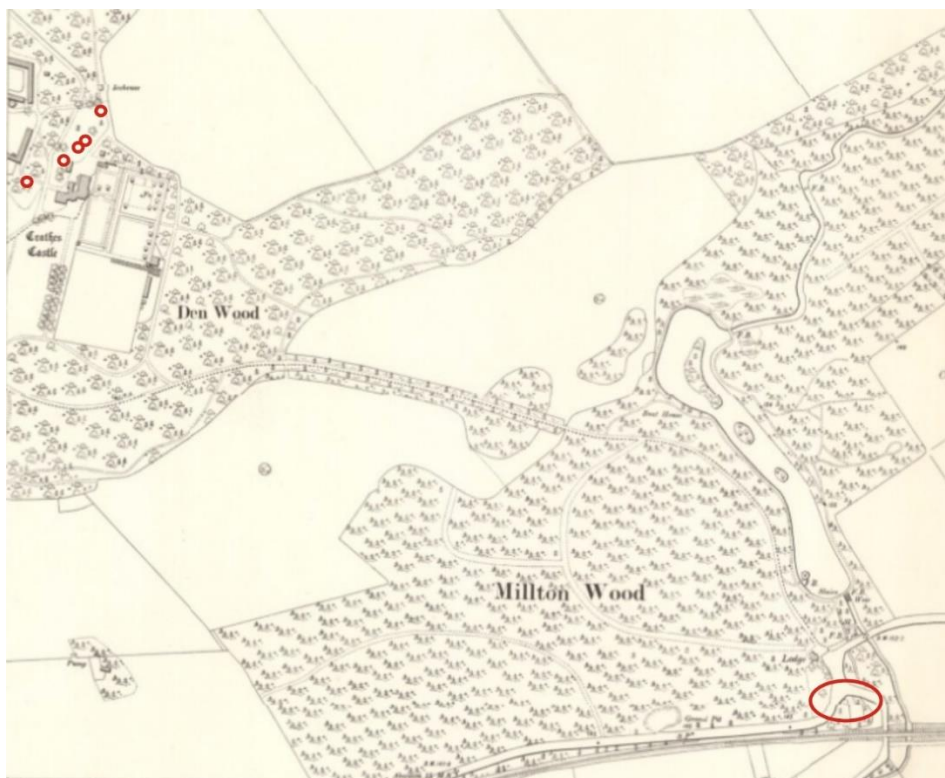
Illus 10 Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 11 Thomson's map of 1822 showing Crathes Castle circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 12 First Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Kincardineshire VI.6 (Banchory Ternan) Survey date: 1864 to 1865 Publication date: 1866



Illus 13 Second Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire XCIVA.3 (Banchory-Ternan; Drumoak) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899



Illus 14 Third Edition OS map showing site outlined in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire XCIVA.3 (Banchory-Ternan; Drumoak) Publication date: 1925 Revised: 1923 Levelled: 1899

APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
4146-7	Pit 1	W
4148-9	Pit 1	E
4150-3	Pit 1	N
4154	Pits 2	NW
4155	Pits 2	S
4156	Pits 2 with castle in the background	SW



DSC_4146



DSC_4147



DSC_4148



DSC_4149



DSC_4150



DSC_4151



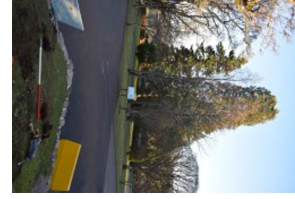
DSC_4152



DSC_4153



DSC_4154



DSC_4155



DSC_4156