

Watching Brief, Aboyne Castle, Aboyne, AB34 5JP
Data Structure Report (DSR)
Site Code CA345-2017



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Cover, coal gas pipe inspection cover within brick housing

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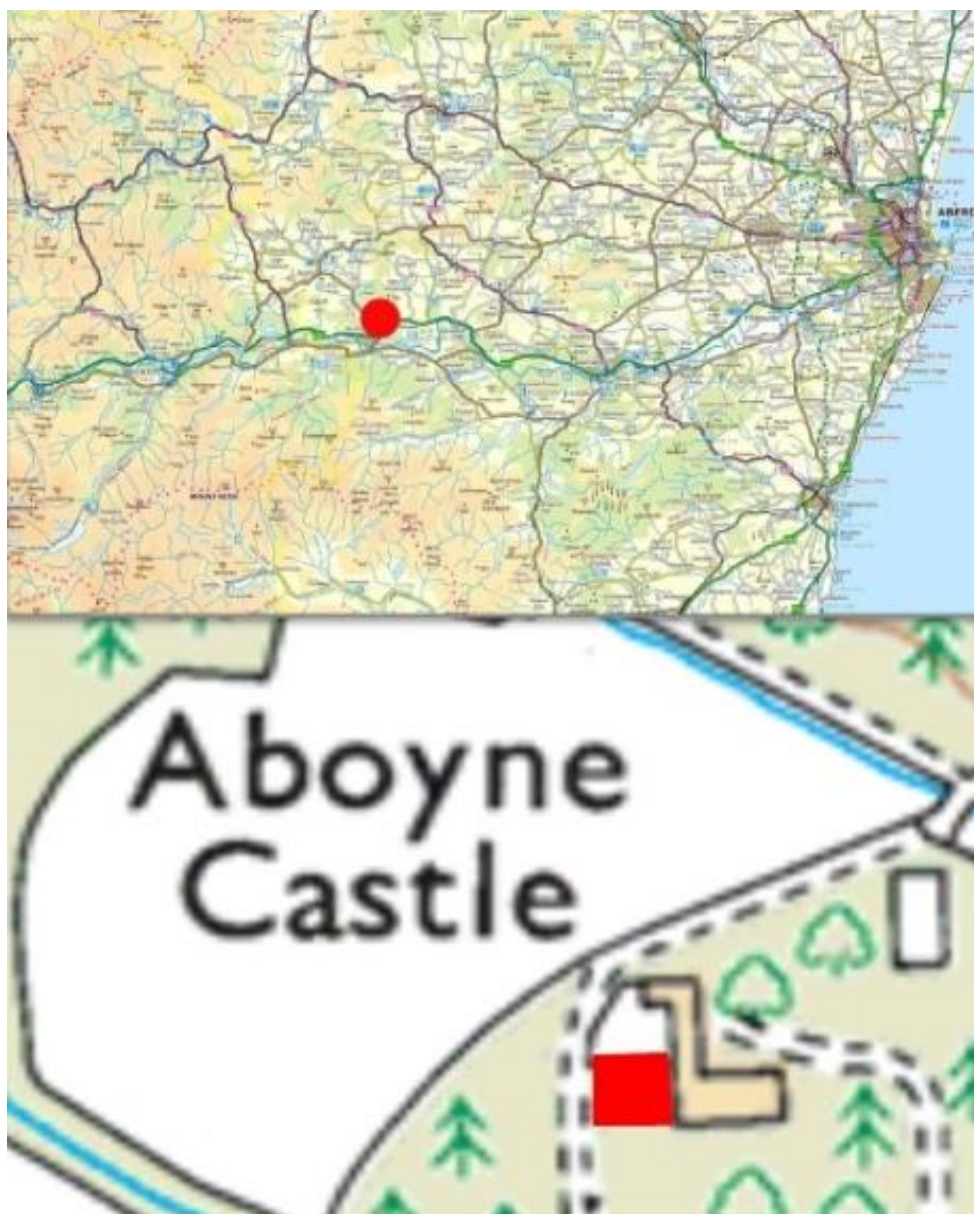
SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken between 6th and 7th February 2019 at Aboyne Castle, Aboyne, AB34 5JP. The watching brief revealed 10 features all of which were of 19th or 20th century origin. Map evidence shows feature 6 was constructed in the second half of the 19th century and features 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 were also of 19th century date. Features 4, 8, 9 and 10 are more likely of early 20th century origin.

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 some 920m due north of Aboyne off the A93. It is centred on NGR NO 52631 99580, at 128m OD in the parish of Aboyne and Glen Tanar.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Alistair Aboyne. An application entitled: “APP/2016/2047 | Demolition of Modern Extensions, Alterations and Extension to Castle With Internal Alterations, Aboyne Castle Aboyne Aberdeenshire AB34 5JP” was lodged with the Aberdeenshire Council, who require an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks.
- 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 with watching brief area marked in red (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

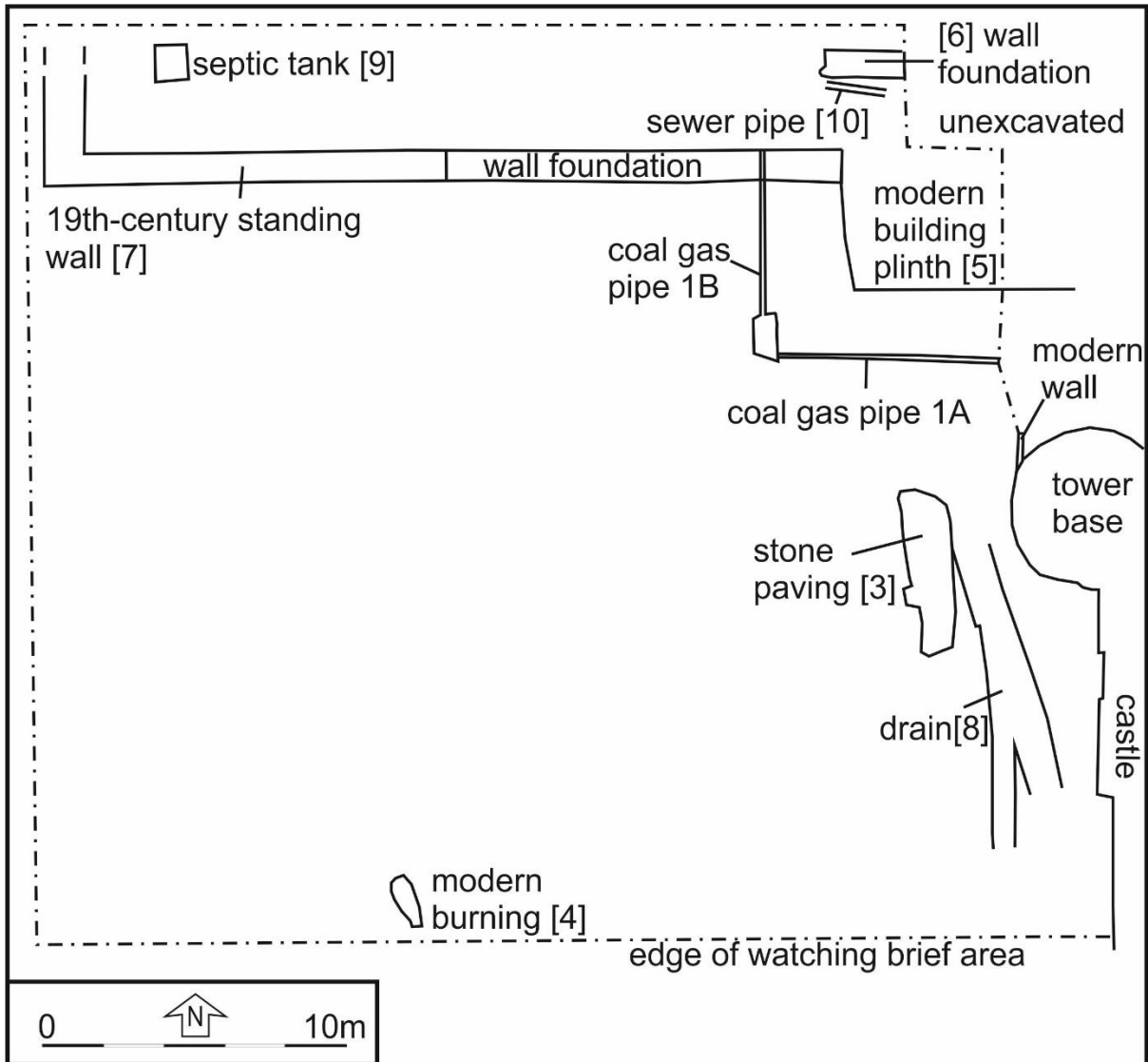
- 2.1 There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within 1km of Aboyne Castle. Heogan palisaded enclosure (SM10980, NGR: NO 531 990), lies some 635m SE of Aboyne Castle. "The monument comprises the remains of an enclosure and timber house of later prehistoric date, visible as cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs. The monument lies in arable farmland at around 120m OD. It comprises a circular palisaded enclosure, with a diameter of approximately 26m with an entrance to the E. A circle within the enclosure, measuring about 17m in diameter, probably indicates the remains of a timber roundhouse. It also has an entrance to the E in line with that of the enclosure. Other cropmarks in the vicinity include pits and linear features, which may represent the remains of associated structures. These cropmarks may not all be contemporary and might represent a long history of human occupation in this area in the later prehistoric period. The area proposed for scheduling comprises the remains described and an area around them within which related material may be expected to be found. It is irregular in shape with maximum dimensions of 144m from its westernmost to easternmost point by 114m from its northernmost to southernmost point, as marked in red on the accompanying map extract. The boundaries to the south, east and west are defined by the boundary fence of the field, which is itself excluded from the designated area."
- 2.2 Aboyne Castle (NO59NW 5; NO 5263 9955) is itself listed by Historic Environment Scotland as "A tall rambling multi-period mansion now falling into ruin, occupying almost the same site as a possible medieval peel and a horizontal motehill (Simpson 1949) castle of the Bissets, lords of Strathdee from before 1233. The site was protected by a wide, boggy loch formed by the Tarland Burn. The present building has been so much altered and enlarged in the 18th and 19th centuries that its original plan cannot now be determined, but the NW portion is the oldest incorporating a five-storey circular tower corbelled to square and crowned by a classical balustrade. This is presumably part of the "house" capable of defence which existed in 1638 and was partially rebuilt in 1671. A later replica of this tower stands at the NE angle. In 1242 the Thanage of Aboyne lapsed to the Crown and the estate appears thereafter as a favourite royal residence. It played a locally important part in the Wars of Independence, and in 1307 Edward I sent instructions for its fortification. No further record exists until the mention of the 17th century "house". Simpson was of the opinion that the late 13th century and 14th century references to the Castle of Aboyne actually referred to Coull Castle (NJ50SW 5) and that no medieval peel existed. He explained away references to it as misinterpretations. Aboyne Castle belongs to the Marquis of Huntly whose family have held the property since at least the early 15th century." (W D Simpson 1929; 1949; New Statistical Account (NSA) 1845; N Tranter 1962-70; D MacGibbon and T Ross 1887-92; E Meldrum 1957).
- 2.3 Mains of Aboyne, Site Number NO59NW 5.02 NGR NO 52556 99371, some 200m SSW of Aboyne Castle. Little information is available about this 'period unassigned' house built for the factor at Mains of Aboyne, other than an early 18th century (1717) reference to a wright (builder) and building materials: "Accounts for wright work, the supply of timber, and a load of 10 000 divots (cut sods for roofing)" (Scottish Records Office 1717 GD 181/212).
- 2.4 Mains of Aboyne enclosure (Site Number NO59NW 49; NGR NO 525 993) is located some 280m SSW of Aboyne Castle. The 'period unassigned' enclosure is noted by

Historic Environment Scotland as follows: "Air photography (CUCAP CDE 82, dated 20 July 1977 and AAS/95/09/G26/11-12, dated 28 August 1995) has recorded a large rectilinear enclosure cut by a track. (NMRS, MS/712/19).

- 2.5 Image Wood (Site Number NO59NW 1; NGR NO 5240 9904), 580m SSW of Aboyne Castle, is a rather unusual prehistoric stone circle or possible 'four-poster' with a potential later fifth stone addition. HES describes Image Wood as follows: "Aboyne Stone Circle: An extremely small stone circle; the space between the inner faces of its N and S stone is only 11' wide. The two stones on the N are close together, and all the stones are erect and massive. The circumference, taken through the centres of the stones, is exactly 40'. A very slight mound rises round the bases of all the stones, causing the enclosed space to be slightly higher than the level of the ground outside, possibly due to the modern path being carried around the circle. Some years ago, Lord Huntly dug a trench at this circle and "only some black earth and cinders were found." (F R Coles 1905). A setting of five stones, generally as described and planned by Coles. The most northerly stone is canted to the N, and though earthfast, may not be in situ. Without this stone, the remains could be either a "four poster" or the remains of a small stone circle of the transitional type described by Burl (Burl 1971).
- 2.6 Aerial photography has identified a possible ring ditch and associated souterrain or 'earth house' some 575m SW of Aboyne Castle. HES describes the cropmarks as follows; "NO59NW 44 523 991 - Ring-ditches and souterrains: identified while checking aerial photographs held by Grampian Regional Council." (M Greig 1994). Air photography (CUCAP CDE 82, dated 20 July 1977) has recorded the cropmarks of what may be ring-ditches and a souterrain on a gentle SE-facing slope immediately S of a large rectilinear enclosure. (NMRS, MS/712/9).
- 2.7 Some 434m NNE of Aboyne Castle are situated a number of clearance cairns, described as follows: "On a SE facing slope in the area centred NO 528 999 is the remains of a field system marked by several stone clearance heaps. The area has been heavily afforested and no huts, lynchets or fields were visible under thick vegetation" (HES 2017).

3 WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was carried out from 6-7 February 2019. Features identified included two cast iron coal gas pipes (1A, 1B) connecting under a low brick structure housing an iron inspection hatch (2), the possible remains of a paved surface (3) and a section of truncated wall dating from the 19th century (6). The foundation of a part upstanding rubble wall (7) merged into the demolition debris of a building (5). A 19th century clay drainage pipe (8) ran close to the western face of the castle whilst a 20th century sewer pipe ran in a westerly direction from a position adjacent to wall base (6) to a septic tank (9).



Illus 2: Plan of all features discussed in this DSR

3.1 Features 1 & 2

Two truncated sections of cast iron metal pipe ran across the courtyard area to the north west of the castle structure (Illus 2). Each pipe measured 0.15m in diameter and were made up of 1.8m sections with solid metal seals at each joint. Pipe 1B (5.0m) ran from a point in the foundations of a rubble wall (feature 7) south, into a small brick structure (feature 2). Pipe 1A (6.5m) emerged from the east side of the brick structure and ran towards the castle (Illus 3). They are thought to have carried coal gas from a production plant to the north of the castle into the building during the 19th century (*pers comm.* Alistair Aboyne).



Illus 3: Features 1A (right) & 1B (rear) in association with feature 2: facing N

Feature 2 was a low standing brick structure measuring 1.2m by 0.6m with walls a maximum of 0.2m high. The area enclosed by the walls was floored with cement and housed a cast iron inspection hatch located in the southern half, situated over the point where pipes 1A and 1B met (Illus 4). The hatch was held in place by a metal bar with a brass locking screw (Appendix 3). There were no visible manufacturers trademarks.



Illus 4: Feature 2: facing E

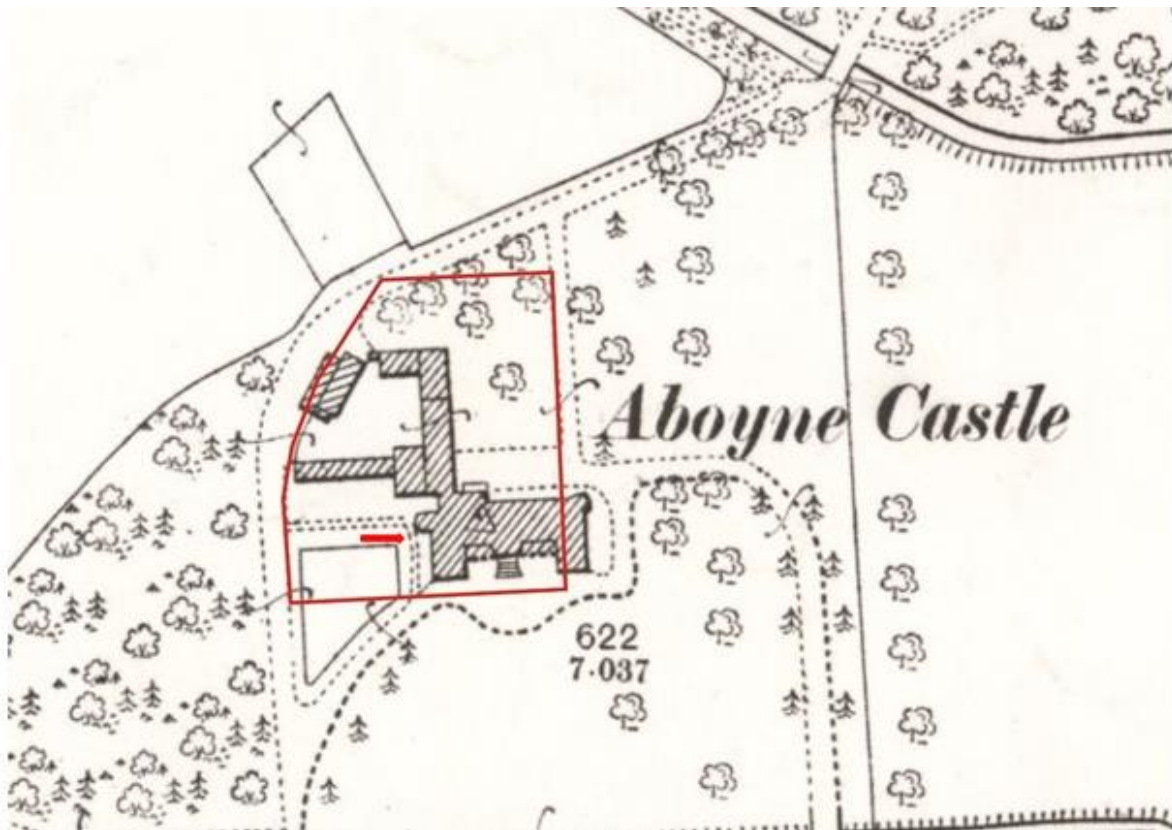
3.2 Feature 3

A single layer of stones covering an area 5.0m by 1.5m ran on a N-S axis parallel to the castle structure from a point 2m west of the tower (Illus 5). Individual stones ranged from 0.1m- 0.2m in diameter and appeared to have been placed to form a surface or base for other surfacing material.



Illus 5: Feature 3: facing S

This could be the remains of a pathway or driveway depicted on the 2nd edition OS maps (Illus 6). Though a path is shown in the first edition OS map the line of the path has altered slightly between map editions: that in the second edition being straighter and closer to the castle structure.



Illus 6: Second Edition OS map of Aboyne Castle showing proposed development site in red. Feature 3 is believed to be the remains of the pathway marked with a red arrow (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire 082.14 (includes: Aboyne and Glen Tanar; Birse) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899

The base of a pontil blown glass bottle lay *in situ* on top of the stones of feature 3 (Illus 7).



Illus 7: Blown glass bottle base in feature 3: facing W

3.3 Features 5 & 7

Feature 5 was the demolished foundation of a small building; the flat roofed structure noted in the HER for Aboyne Castle (Illus 8).



Illus 8: Feature 5: facing W



Illus 9: Feature 5 possibly incorporating part of feature 7: facing E

The demolition rubble covered an area approximately 6.5m by 4m though the building foundations had not been removed across the full 4m width. Along the W edge the foundation blocks of a rubble wall were in place. However, these may have also formed part of feature 7, a partially demolished rubble wall with rubble coping, standing to the north west of the castle tower. The rubble wall was known to incorporate feature 5.



Illus 10: Feature 7: facing NW

3.4 Feature 6

Feature 6 was a short section of stone wall with lime mortar (Illus 11) measuring 1.5m x 0.55m x 0.25m. A triangular section of plaster surface abutted the south side of this wall which had been cut through to insert a modern sewerage pipe (feature 10). Feature 6 was located within the courtyard to the NW of the castle tower, 2m immediately N of feature 5. The position corresponds to the N wall of W wing of Aboyne Castle depicted on the 2nd edition, but not the 1st edition OS map indicating it was constructed sometime between 1867 and 1899. This section of wall will remain untouched, by the proposed development.



Illus 11: Feature 6: facing S

3.5 Features 4, 8, 9, & 10

All remaining features identified during the watching brief were of modern origin and therefore not of archaeological interest. Feature 4 was a patch of modern burning, feature 8, a 19th / 20th century drain, feature 9 a modern septic tank and feature 10 a modern sewerage pipe.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief revealed 10 features, all of which were of 19th or 20th century origin. Map evidence shows feature 6 was constructed in the second half of the 19th century and features 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 were also of 19th century date. Features 4, 8, 9 and 10 are more likely of early 20th century origin.

The area of the watching brief, in the immediate vicinity of the current standing buildings and courtyard at Aboyne Castle, has been subject to significant modification and excavation during the 19th and 20th centuries rendering the discovery of pre- 19th century development within this area improbable.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Robert Lenfert who prepared the WSI for this watching brief; to Alison Cameron for all her advice and assistance during the preparation of this DSR and to Claire Herbert of Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. Thanks also to Alistair Aboyne for providing valuable background information regarding Aboyne Castle and to the staff of AJS for their help on site.

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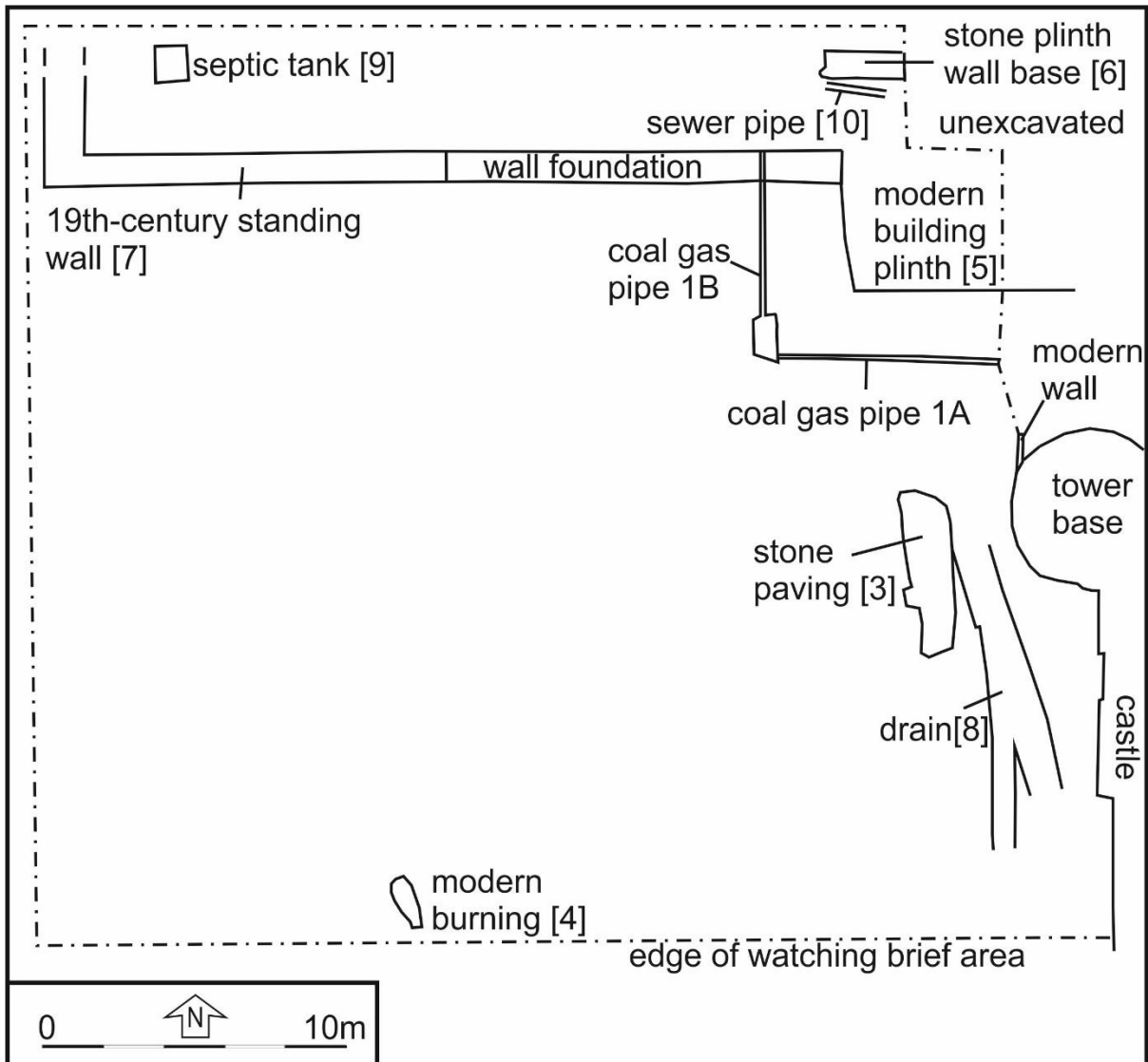
APPENDIX 1 CONTEXTS

Context Number	Description	Feature
345001	Cast iron pipe	1A & 1B
345002	Brick wall with cement mortar	2
345003	Cement floor	2
345004	Iron inspection cover	2
345005	Brass screw in iron inspection cover	2
345006	Glazed clay pipe section	2
345007	Stones forming the base of a pathway	3
345008	Ash, coal and burnt plastic bonfire remains	4
345009	Spread of demolition rubble including stone, plaster, brick steel cable, cement and plastic bags	5
345010	Stone blocks (roughly shaped)	6
345011	Lime mortar	6
345012	Plaster surface abutting stone wall	6
345013	Rubble wall	7
345014	Robbed rubble wall base	7

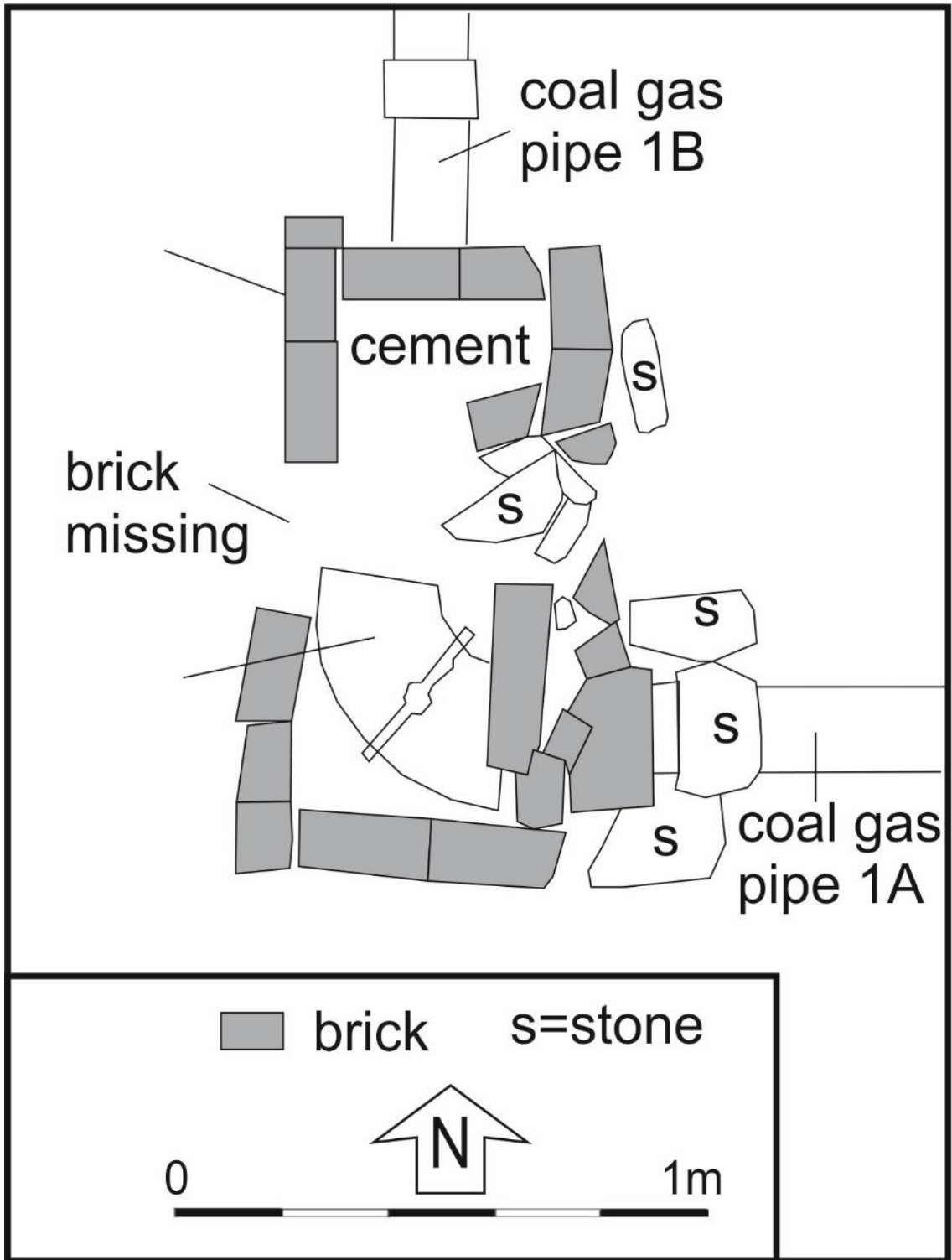
APPENDIX 2 FINDS

SF Number	Context	Description
001	345007	Blown glass bottle base

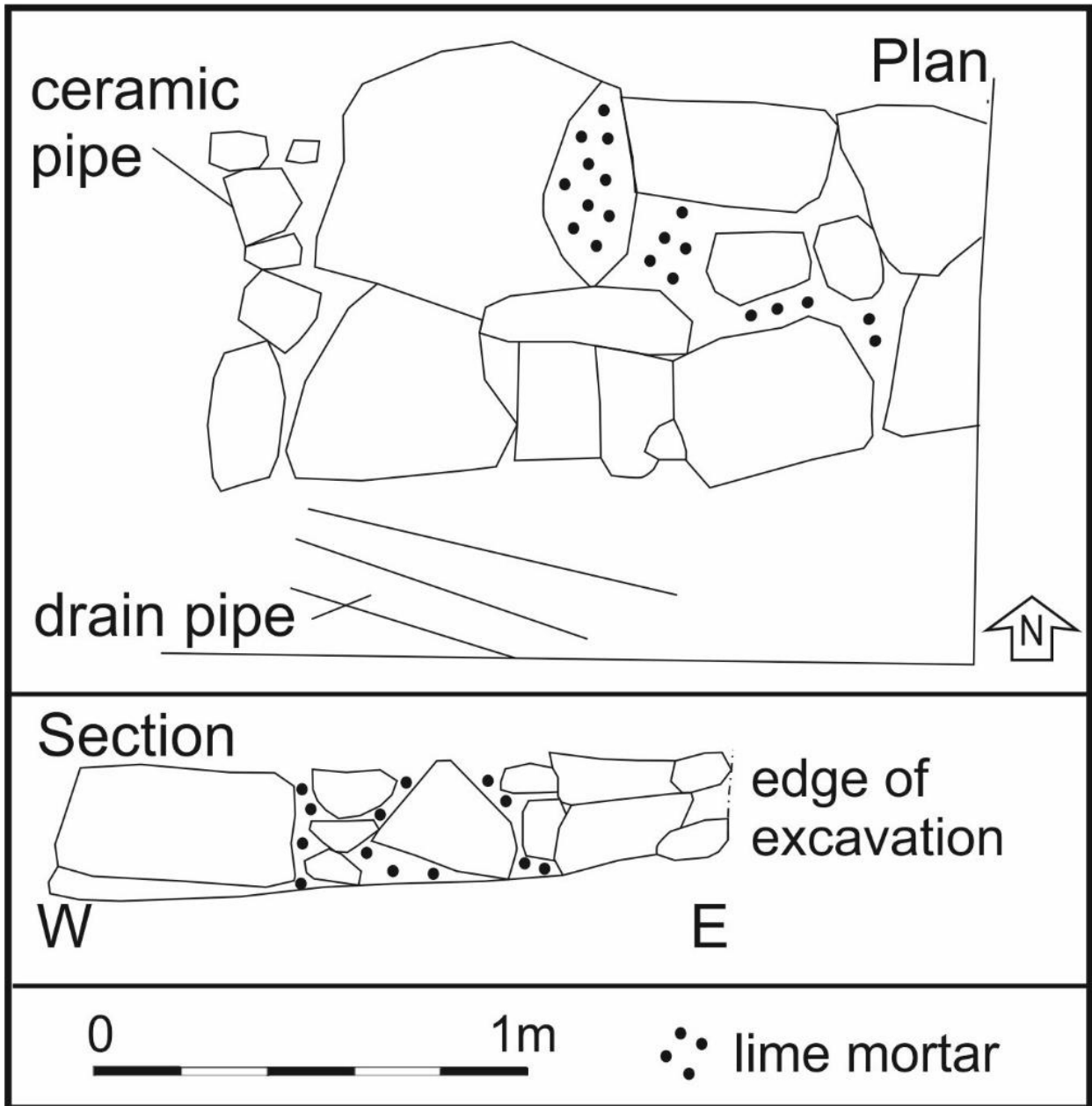
APPENDIX 3 PLANS AND SECTIONS



Illus 12: Plan 1



Illus 13: Plan 2

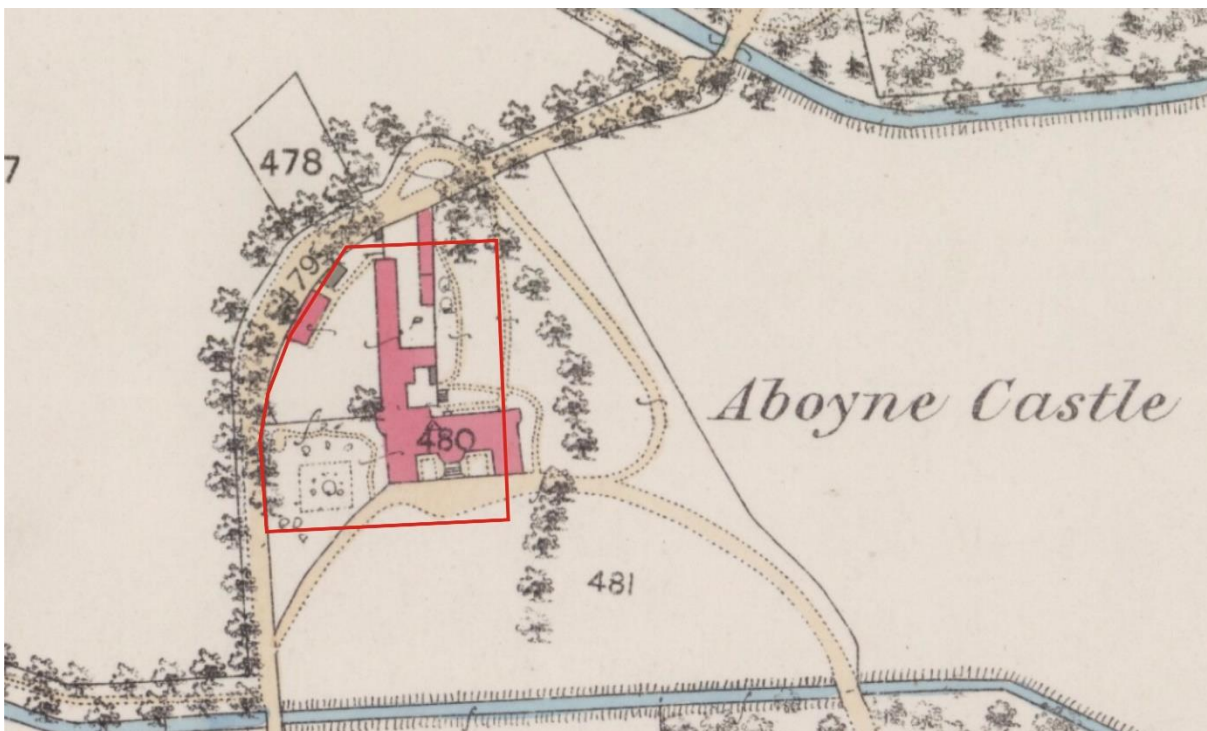


Illus 14: Plan 3 and section

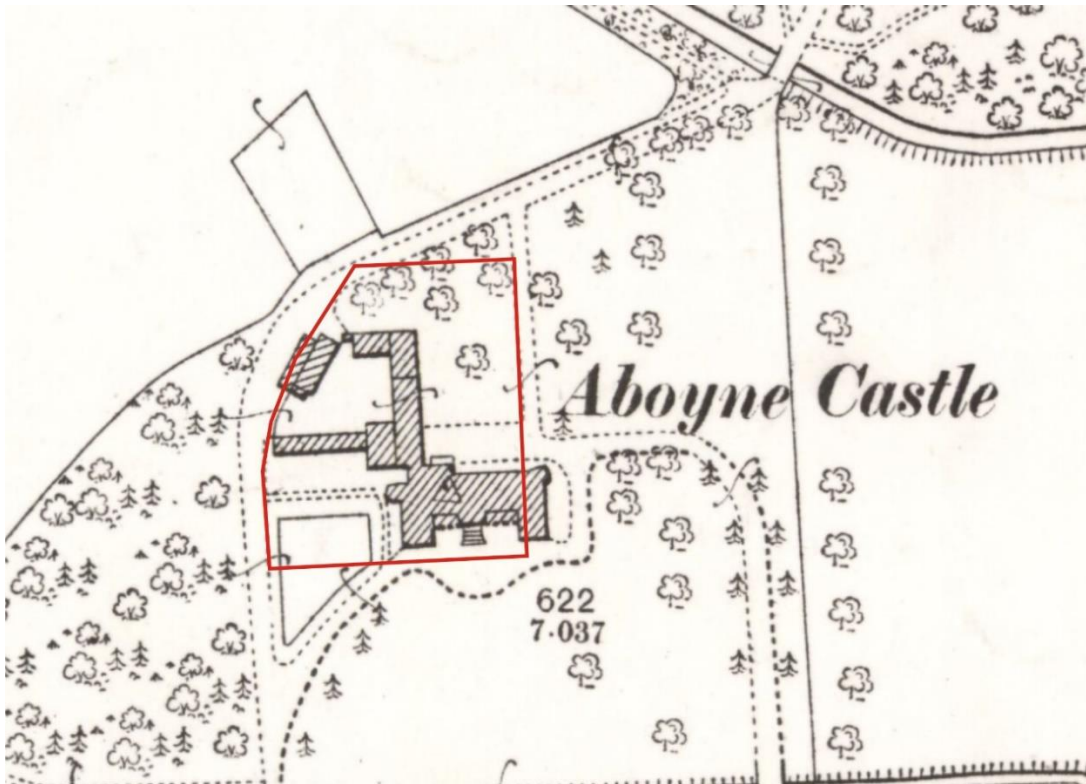
APPENDIX 4 MAPS



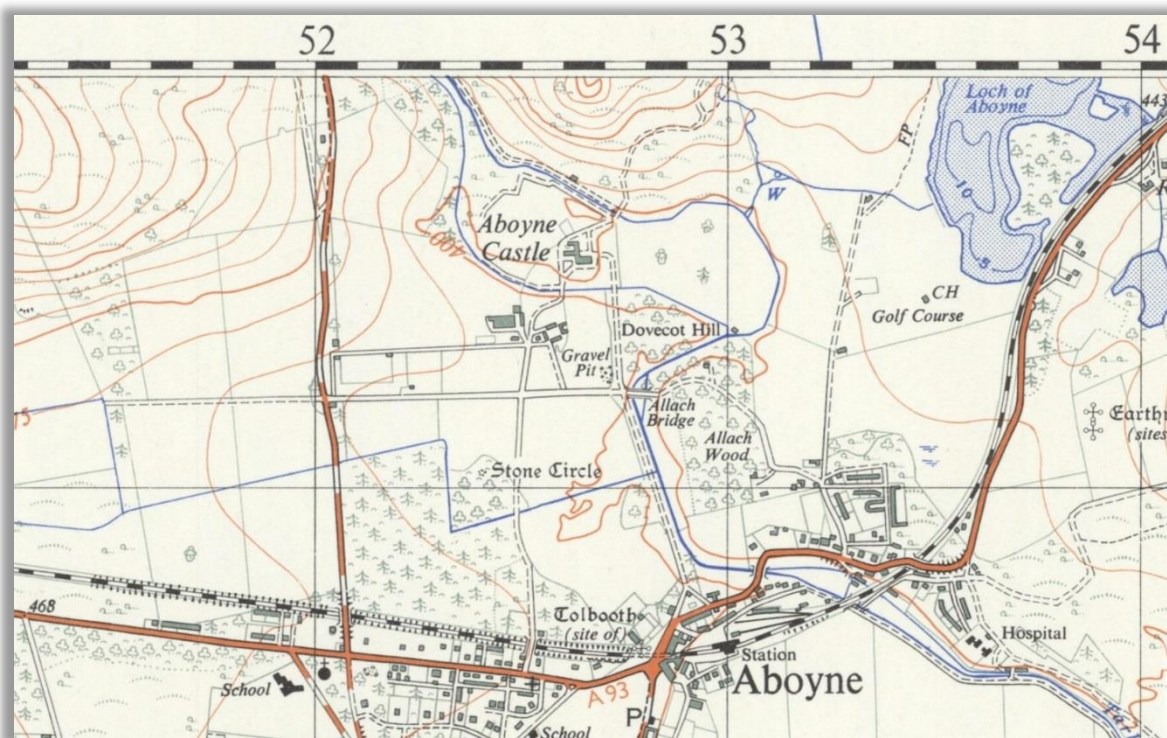
Illus 15: Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55



Illus 16: First Edition OS map of Aboyne Castle showing proposed development site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeen Sheet LXXXII.14 (Aboyne and Glentanner) Survey date: 1867 Publication date: 1870



Illus 17: Second Edition OS map of Aboyne Castle showing proposed development site in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire 082.14 (includes: Aboyne and Glen Tanar; Birse) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899



Illus 18: Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map of Aboyne Castle, Revised 1960, published 1961 (Crown copyright 1961).

APPENDIX 5 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph ID	Direction facing	Comments
DSC_4780	N	Section of pipe 1A
DSC_4781	N	Section of pipe 1A
DSC_4782	N	Section of pipe 1A
DSC_4783	W	Feature 2 brick structure part exposed
DSC_4784	W	Feature 2 brick structure part exposed
DSC_4785	W	Feature 2 brick structure part exposed
DSC_4786	S	Feature 3- path base
DSC_4787	S	Feature 3- path base
DSC_4788	S	Feature 3- path base
DSC_4789	E	Feature 3- path base, castle in background
DSC_4790	E	Feature 3- path base, castle in background
DSC_4791	E	Feature 3- path base, castle in background
DSC_4792	W	Feature 3- bottle base in context
DSC_4793	W	Feature 3- path stones close up working N-S along feature
DSC_4794	W	Feature 3- path stones close up working N-S along feature
DSC_4795	W	Feature 3- path stones close up working N-S along feature
DSC_4796	W	Feature 3- path stones close up working N-S along feature
DSC_4797	E	Pipe (1A) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4798	E	Pipe (1A) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4799	E	Pipe (1A) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4800	E	Pipe (1A) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4801	S	Pipe (1B) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4802	S	Pipe (1B) entering brick housing (feature 2)
DSC_4803	W	Full length of pipe 1A
DSC_4804	S	Full length of pipe 1B
DSC_4805	E	Features 1 & 2 cleaned back mid distance
DSC_4806	E	Features 1 & 2 cleaned back mid distance
DSC_4807	N	Features 1 & 2 cleaned back mid distance
DSC_4808	N	Features 1 & 2 cleaned back mid distance
DSC_4809	W	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4810	W	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4811	W	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4812	S	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4813	E	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4814	N	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4815	W	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4816	W	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4817	E	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4818	E	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4819	S	Feature 2 housing with inspection cover exposed
DSC_4820	W	Feature 5 demolished building
DSC_4821	W	Feature 5 demolished building
DSC_4822	W	Feature 5 demolished building

DSC_4823	N	Feature 5 demolished building with cut stone for inserted drain
DSC_4824	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface
DSC_4825	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4826	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4827	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4828	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4829	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4830	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4831	E	Feature 5 / feature 7 interface close up N to S overlap sequence
DSC_4832	ESE	Base of tower to show foundations
DSC_4833	S	Base of tower and drain feature 8
DSC_4834	E	Reference shot of tower wall to show construction
DSC_4835	S	Close up of tower foundation
DSC_4836	NW	Feature 7 rubble wall- standing section
DSC_4837	W	Demolition debris of feature 5
DSC_4838	S	Piece of 19 th century air brick
DSC_4839	SW	Demolition debris of feature 5
DSC_4842	E	Feature 6- truncated section of wall
DSC_4843	ES	Feature 6- truncated section of wall
DSC_4844	ES	Feature 6- truncated section of wall
DSC_4845	NE	Feature 6- truncated section of wall
DSC_4846	E	Feature 6- truncated section of wall
DSC_4847	N	Feature 6- truncated section of wall



DSC_4780



DSC_4781



DSC_4782



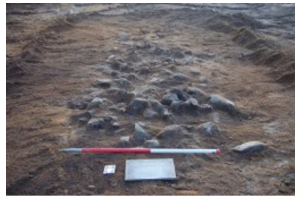
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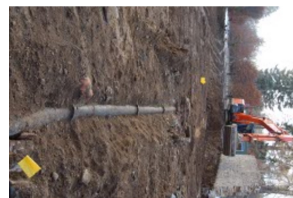
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DSC_4811



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DSC_4818



DSC_4819



DSC_4820



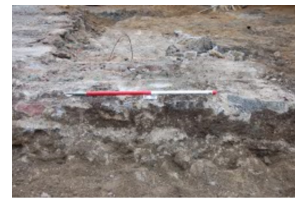
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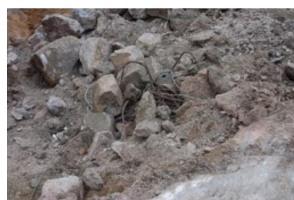
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DSC_4842



DSC_4843



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DSC_4845



DSC_4846



DSC_4847