

**Millburn Rise, Land at High Street, St Combs,
Aberdeenshire, AB43 8YU
Data Structure report (DSR)
Aberdeenshire Planning application APP/2019/1364**



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SUMMARY

A 5% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 21 October 2019; four trenches were excavated. A tracked 15-ton machine with 2m ditching bucket was used for the work. It is evident that the area has been wet in the past with underlying palaeochannels and boggy areas surviving in the field. No archaeological features apart from furrows in Trenches 1 and 2 were identified and no finds recovered and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the SW side of St Combs. It is centred on NGR NK 05192 63045, at 15-25m OD in the parish of Lonmay.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Tiffany Kelly, Claymore Homes. An application APP/2019/1364 for Erection of 19 Dwellinghouses is awaiting approval. Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service require a 5-7% archaeological evaluation.
- 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 Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development.

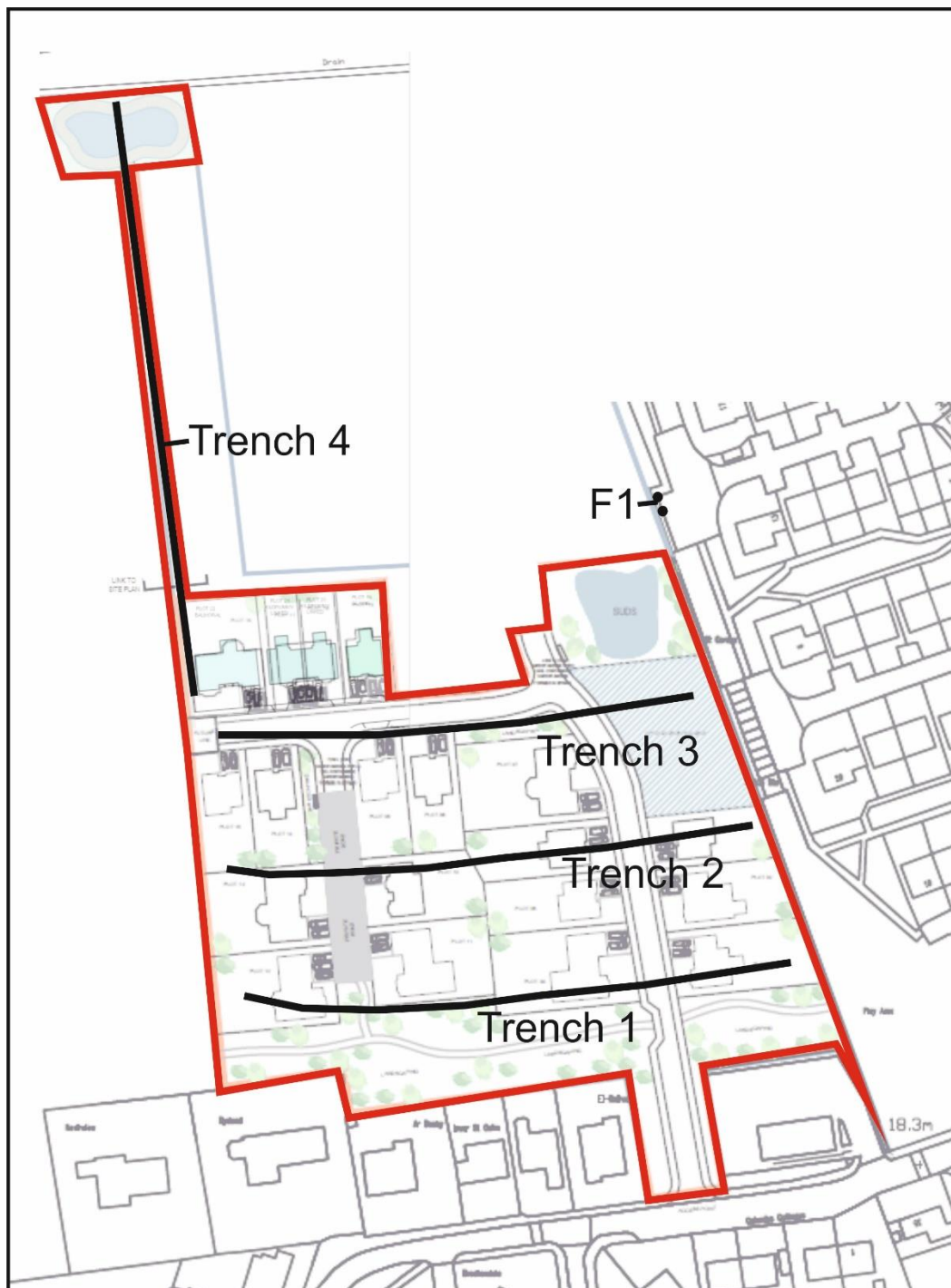
- 2.1 There is one Scheduled Monument within 1km of the proposed development. The medieval church of St Combs (St Columba; SMR NK06SE0001) was abandoned in 1608 when a new church was built 2 miles further inland. All that remains is part of the W gable, pierced by a small square-headed window and a fragment of the N wall. Some 18th and a few early 19th Century gravestones survive in the churchyard (MacGibbon and Ross 1896-7, Vol 3, 587; Scott et al 1951-61, Vol 6, 228).
- 2.2 Village of St. Combs (SMR NK06SE0004), which is said to have been founded in the mid 1780s by Charles Gordon of Cairness in competition to the village of Boatlea which was at that time owned by a neighbouring Laird. The village largely consists of typical fishermen's houses, which are laid out in a series of parallel streets. The buildings are generally 1-storey and attic, 4-roomed rubble cottages. Traditionally, the cottages were built gable-on to the sea to shelter them from bad weather. By the year 1820's the village had three or four rows of houses, which was built on flatter ground. In the year 1830's a school was built. This was previously the old common ground. This school continued until the late 1880's and was then used as a dwelling house.
- 2.3 The remains of rectangular enclosure on the SE side of the village, was at one time thought to have been the remains of a Roman camp (SMR NK06SE0006). The enclosure is situated in a sheltered hollow, its longer axis N/S with banks 0.91m high. This is a completely indefensible position, ruling out its use as a Roman Camp. It is almost certainly associated with the 19th Century brickworks. According to local information bricks were found in quantity when the enclosed area was ploughed a few years ago. The name 'Camp Hill' is not known locally. A rectangular enclosure is depicted at this location on the OS map of 1867 but not on the 1888 edition.
- 2.4 There was a windmill (SMR NK06SE0023) to the S of the proposed development (Donnachie and Stewart 1967, 276-9).
- 2.5 There is an area of rig and furrow showing as cropmarks on the S side of the village (SMR NK06SE0008) on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps. There are farmsteads in the surrounding area including Cairnglass (SMR NK06SW0101) and Overton of Inverallochy (SMR NK06SW0040).
- 2.6 Remains of a WWII five-sided pillbox with five gun emplacements (SMR NK06SE0017).
- 2.7 There are the remains of a shipwreck that was possibly sunk in WWII (SMR NK06SE0011). There are several more offshore according to local tradition.
- 2.8 Whitelinks Bay is the site of an aircraft crash site (SMR NK06SE0012). During World War II, a Spitfire crash landed in the bay. The pilot, Flight Sgt Richardson, was killed on impact.
- 2.9 There is a circular crop mark visible on a vertical aerial photograph taken in 1974 (SMR NK06SW0070). There is a thin outer circular trace, within which the area is lighter than the surrounding ground. There is also what appears to be an almost

central dark blob, which could suggest a burial pit. This crop mark may represent the remains of a ploughed out barrow.

2.10 The early maps (Illus 3-5), OS maps (Illus 6-8) and the 1942 aerial photograph (Illus 9) show that this area has been farmland.

3 THE EVALUATION

A 5% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 21 October 2019. Four trenches were excavated (Illus 2). A tracked 15 ton machine with 2m ditching bucket was used for the work.



Illus 2 Plan showing trenches (copyright Claymore Homes)

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 130m long excavated at the S edge of the site, ENE-WSW. The E end of the trench is on an E-facing slope and the W end on a plateau (Illus 3). The ploughsoil at the E end was 0.5m deep above light brown clay subsoil and there was a palaeochannel in the centre of the trench 1.6m deep filled with peat. The soil at the W end was 0.25m deep on stoney clay gravel natural subsoil. There are NNW-SSE furrows up to 1m wide and 8-10m apart in the E end of the trench. No other archaeological features apart from the furrows or finds were recovered.



Illus 3 Trench 1; facing E towards St Combs

Trench 2

Trench 2 was parallel to Trench 1 and 130m long. The ploughsoil at the E end was 0.35-0.4m deep on clay subsoil, the soil increasing to 0.6m in the centre and W end of the trench. There are NNW-SSE furrows up to 1m wide and 8-10m apart in the E end of the trench. There was evidence of waterlogging in the centre of the trench in the form of peat. No other archaeological features apart from the furrows or finds were recovered.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was parallel to Trench 2 and 130m long. The topsoil at the E end was 0.5m and 0.4m deep in the centre and 0.3m deep at the W end. There are NNW-SSE furrows up to 1m wide and 8-10m apart in the E end of the trench. There was evidence of waterlogging in the centre of the trench in the form of peat. No other archaeological features apart from the furrows or finds were recovered.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was N-S and excavated along the line of the pipe for the SUDS; it was 160m long. The ploughsoil was 0.25-0.3m deep on a gravelly stone clay subsoil with NW-SE modern plough marks along most of the trench. No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

Immediately to the N of the proposed development F1 is a pair of stone gateposts which were photographically recorded (Illus 4, 5).



Illus 4 F1; facing E



Illus 5 F1 (N); facing NW

It is evident that the area has been wet in the past with palaeochannels and boggy areas surviving in the field. No archaeological features apart from furrows in Trenches 1 and 2 were identified and no finds recovered and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.

4 REFERENCES

Donnachie and Stewart, I L and N K. (1967) '*Scottish windmills: an outline and inventory*', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol. 98, 1964-6.

MacGibbon and Ross, D and T. (1896-7) '*The ecclesiastical architecture of Scotland from the earliest Christian times to the seventeenth century*', 3v. Edinburgh.

Scott, H et al (eds.. (1915-61) *Fasti ecclesiae Scoticae: the succession of ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation, Revision*. Edinburgh.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Tiffany Kelly, Claymore Homes for initiating this project, Chris Forman, Colin McKinnon, Stevie and George all of Claymore Homes for their help on site and to Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service for her advice during this work.

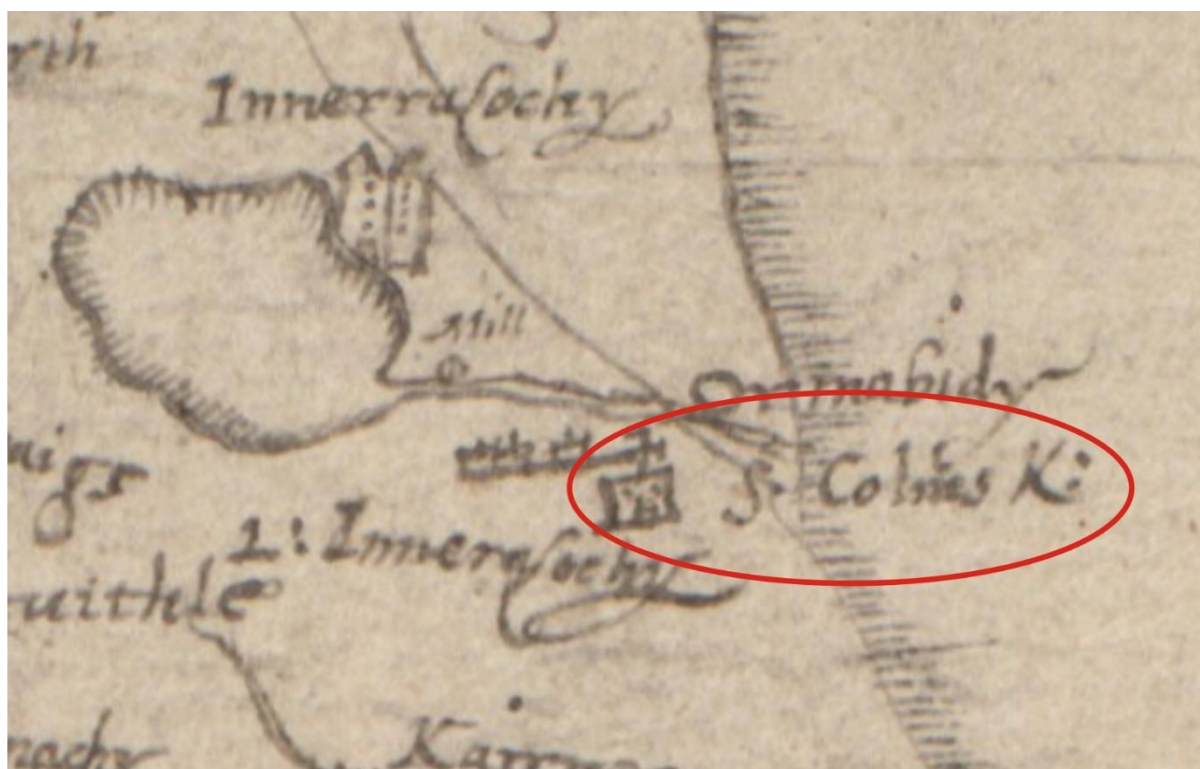
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APPENDIX 1

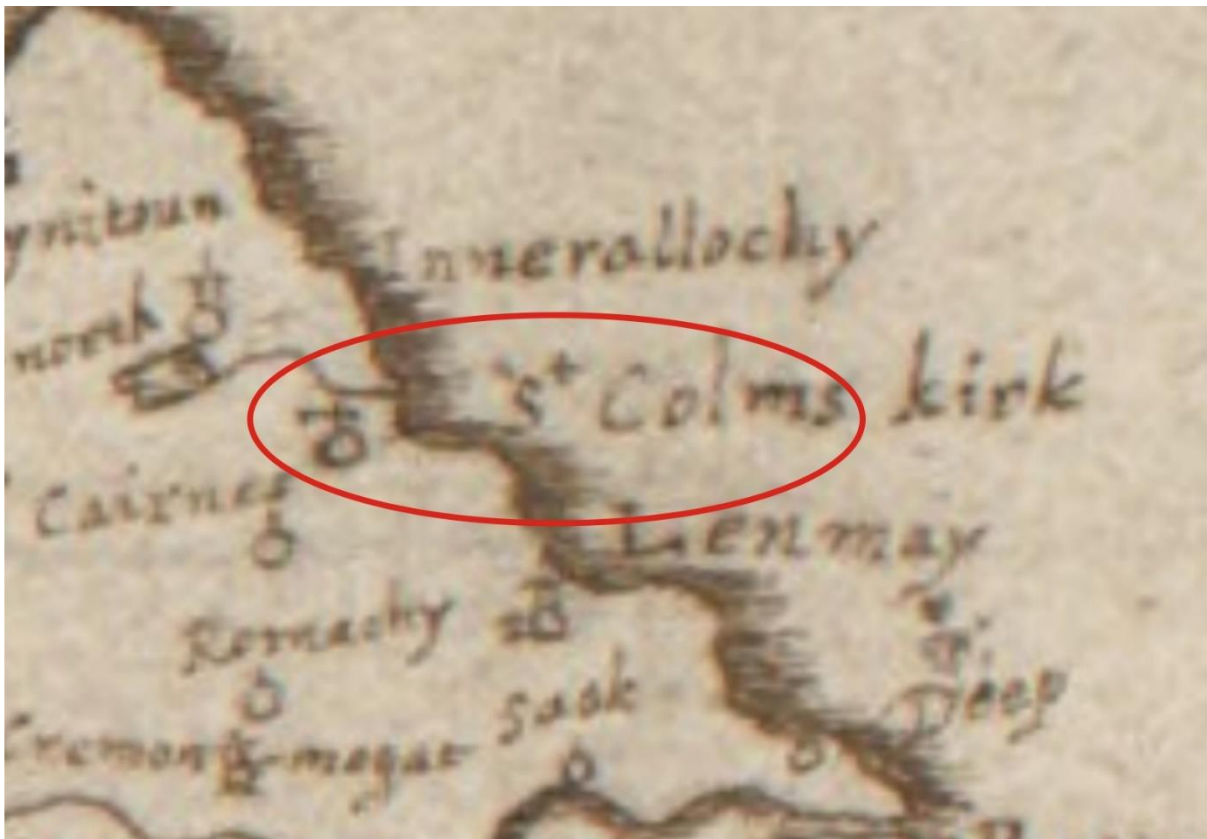
Archaeological and historical sites within 1km of the proposed site (Aberdeenshire SMR online)

Dataset UID	Name	Details
NK06SW0040	Overton Of Inverallochy	farmstead
NK06SW0070	Cairnglass	Circular crop mark
NK06SW0101	Cairnglass	farmstead
NK06SE0023	Botany View	Windmill
NK06SE0010	Corse Craig	harbour
NK06SE0004	St Combs	village
NK06SE0017	St Combs	pillbox
NK06SE0011	St Combs	shipwreck
NK06SE0012	Whitelinks Bay	Crash site
NK06SE0008	St Combs	Rig and furrow
NK06SE0001	St Columba's Church, St Combs	Church
NK06SE0006	St Combs	enclosure

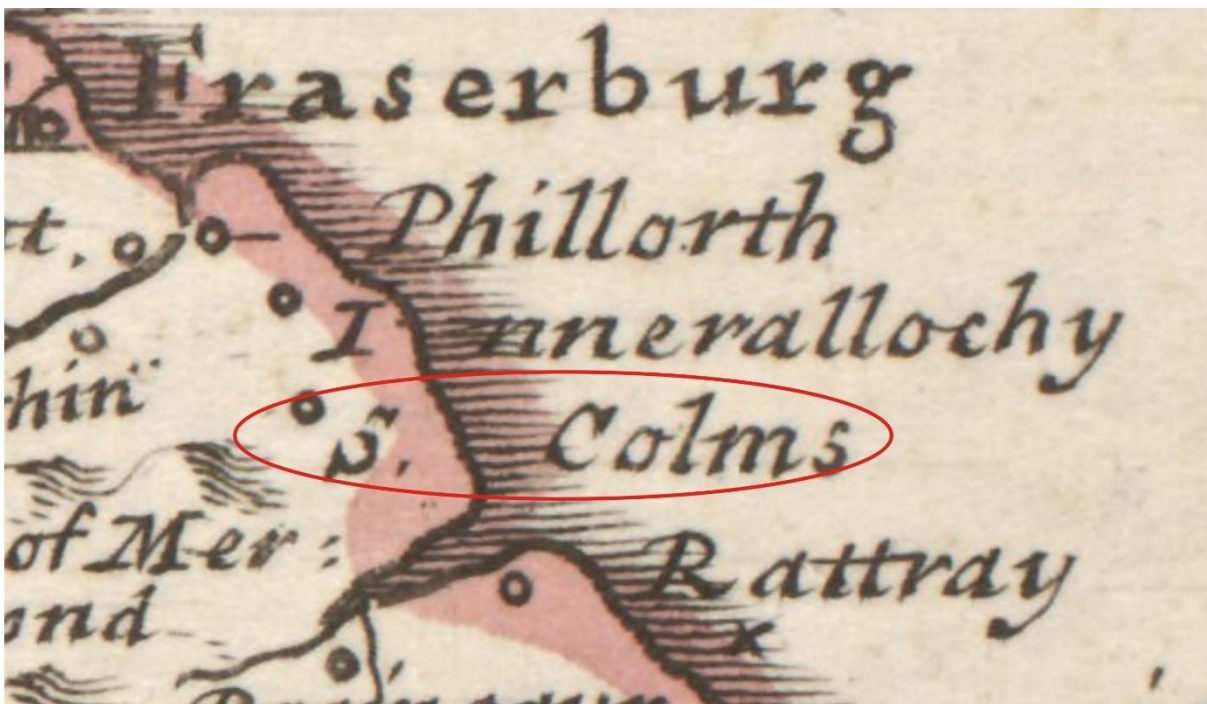
APPENDIX 2 MAPS



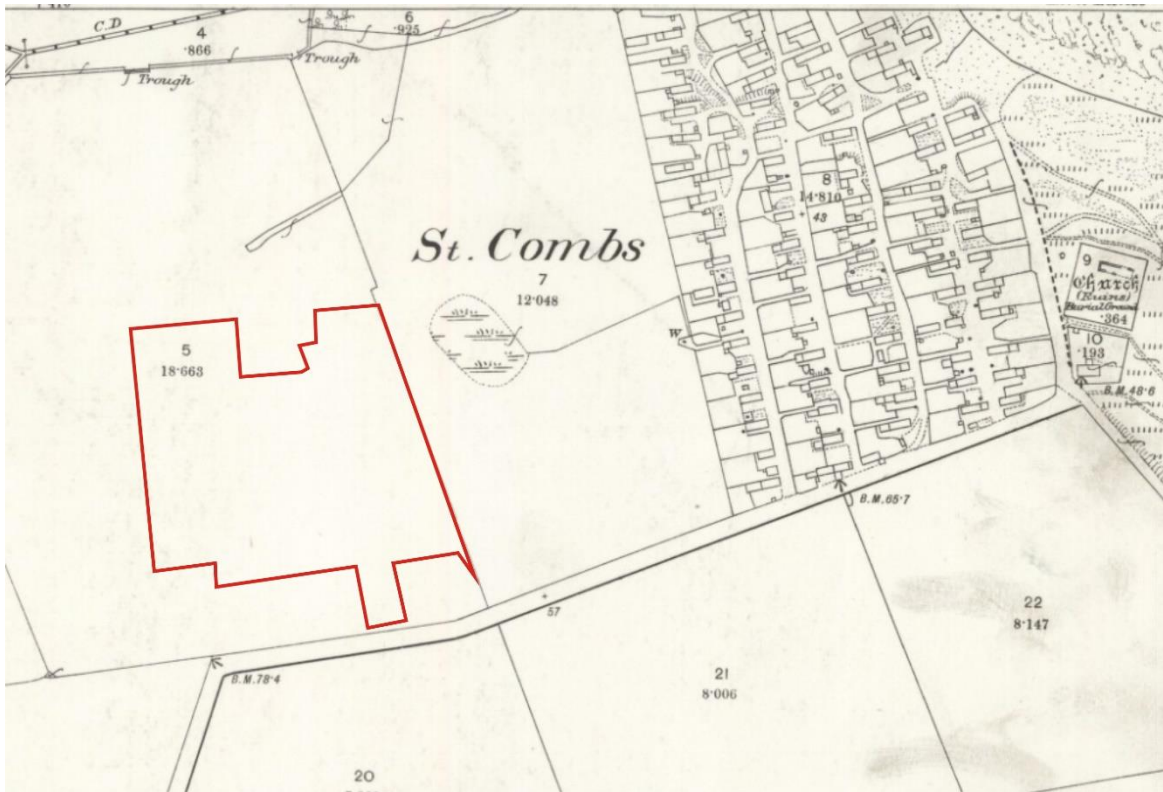
Illus 6 Pont's map of c1583-92 with St Combs Church circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



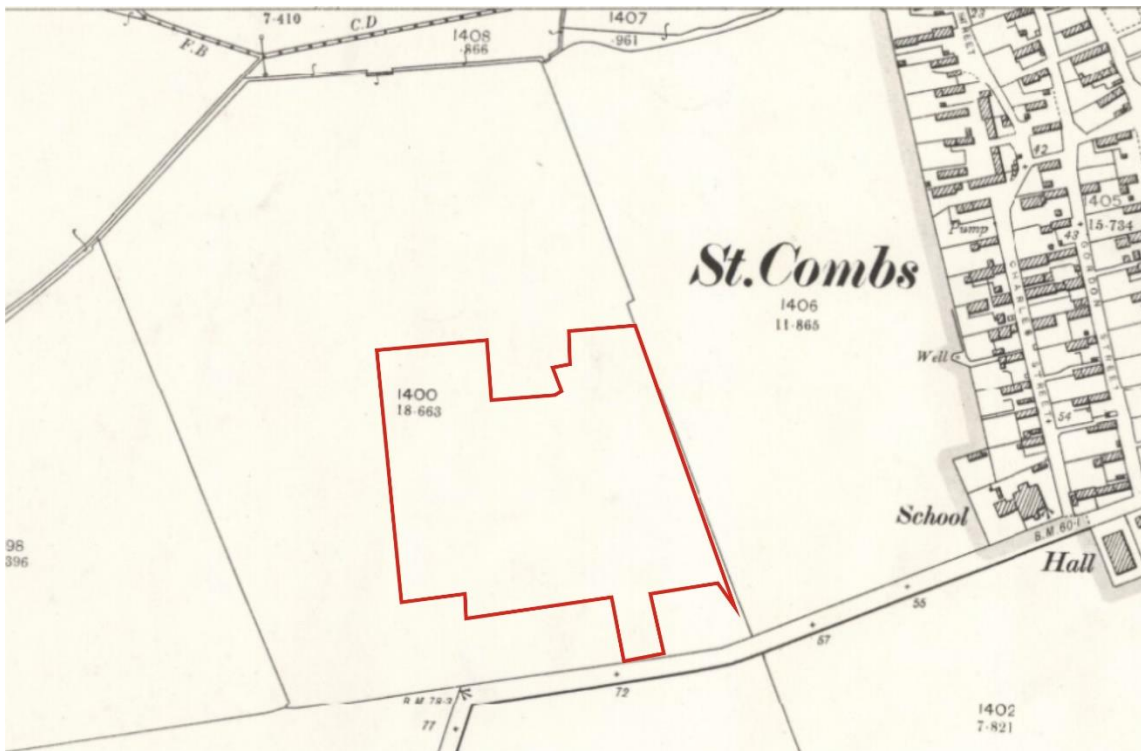
Illus 7 Gordon's map of c1636-52 with St Combs Church circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



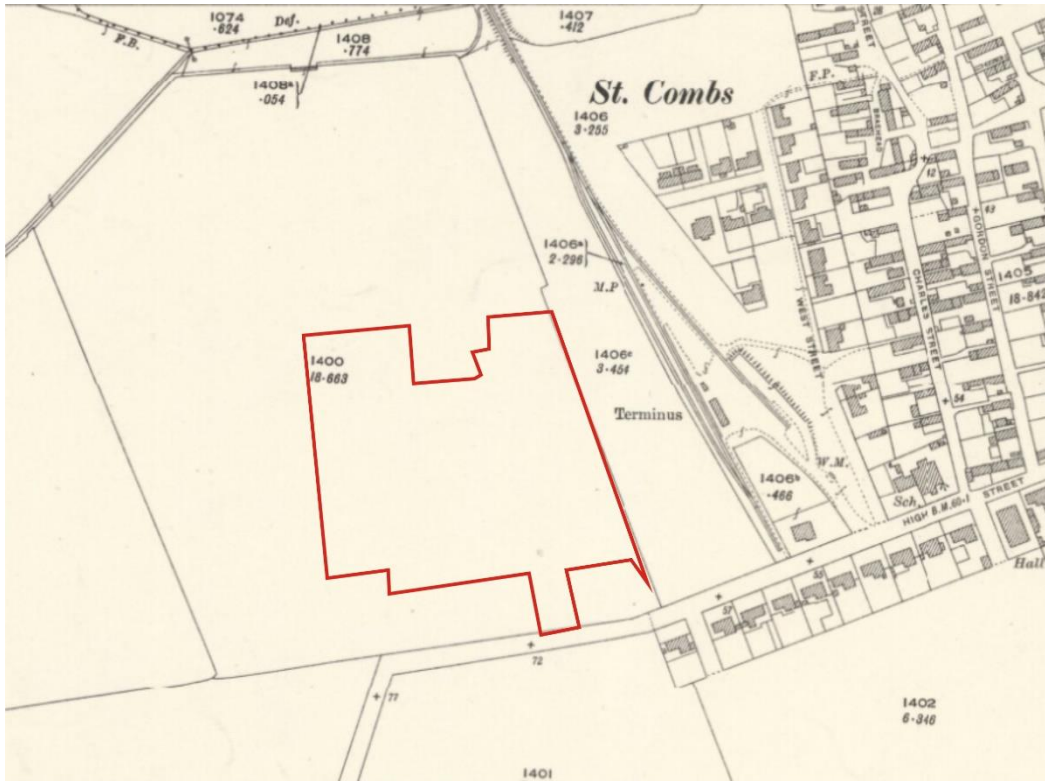
Illus 8 Moll's map of 1745 with St Combs circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 9 First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire III.15 (Combined) Survey date: 1869 to 1870 Publication date: 1892



Illus 10 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire III.15 (Lonmay; Rathen) Publication date: 1902 Revised: 1900



Illus 11 Third Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeenshire III.15 (Lonmay; Rathen) Publication date: 1926 Revised: 1924 to 1925 Levelled: 1901



Illus 12 1942 aerial photograph with site outline in red; facing N (Copyright HES NCAP)
Date: 13 October 1942 **Location:** Cairnglass; Lonmay; ABERDEENSHIRE; SCOTLAND
Coordinates (lat, lon): [57.655360](#), [-1.914060](#) **Description:** Fiddler's Green-St Combs

APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
573-4	Tr1	W
575	Tr2 being excavated	N
576-9	Tr2	W
580	Tr3	W
581-3	Tr3	E
584-5	Tr2	E
586-7	Tr1	E
588-590	Site from W end Tr1	NE/NNE/N
591-2	Tr4	N
593-5	Tr4	S
5007-5013	F1 beehive mortared stone gateposts	



DSC_0573



DSC_0574



DSC_0575



DSC_0576



DSC_0577



DSC_0578



DSC_0579



DSC_0580



DSC_0581



DSC_0582



DSC_0583



DSC_0584



DSC_0585



DSC_0586



DSC_0587



DSC_0588



DSC_0589



DSC_0590



DSC_0591



DSC_0592



DSC_0593



DSC_0594



DSC_0595



IMG_5007



IMG_5008



IMG_5009



IMG_5010



IMG_5011



IMG_5012



IMG_5013