

**Site Adjacent to South Lodges  
Old Deer, Peterhead, AB42 5EZ**

**Data Structure report (DSR)**

**Aberdeenshire Planning application APP/2019/2418**



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: soil strip showing modern plough marks in clay with Braes of Biffie (left) and Aikey Brae (right) in background; facing NW

Illus 1 Location plan (*Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020*)..... 3

Illus 2 Site plan showing watching brief area (*copyright Baxter Design Company*)..... 6

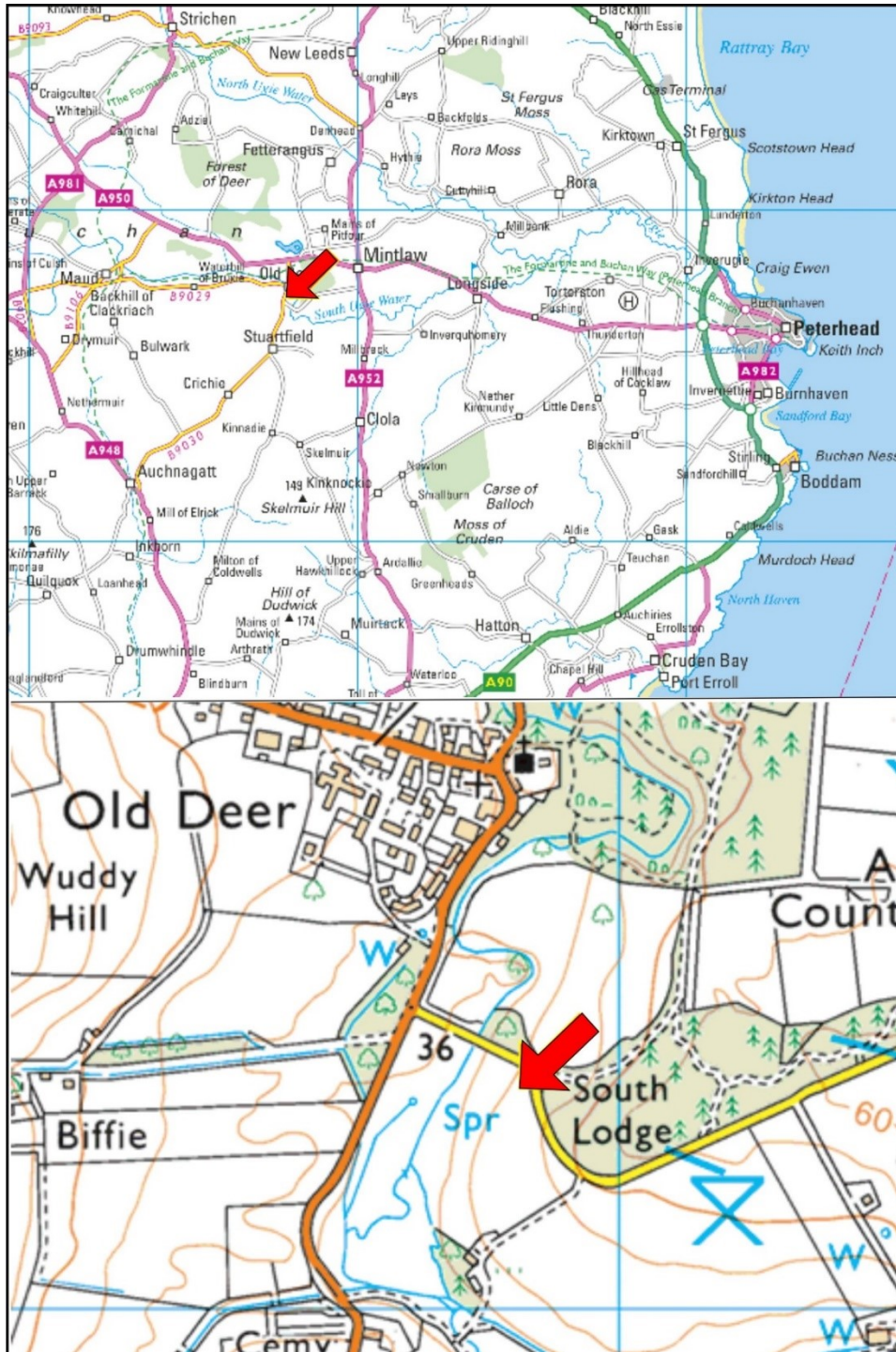
## SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out on 5 August 2020. The topsoil was 0.25-0.3m deep and the subsoil was gravel in the N half of the site and clay in the S. Modern plough scores were recorded in the clay in the S half of the soil strip area but no other features and no finds were identified. 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 adjacent to south Lodge, Aden on the Nether Aden Road. It is centred on NGR NJ 9787 4727, at 40-45m OD in the parish of Old Deer.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Edwin Low for Eric Roger. An application APP/2019/2418 to Aberdeenshire Council was approved on 29.11.19 with a requirement for thus WSI and a watching brief.
- 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 Policy Scotland (HEPS) 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 2020)

## 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. Old Deer Church (HER NJ94NE0002) is the remains of a 15th Century church, comprising a nave and chancel, now roofless, but with walls standing to their original height. The walls appear to be partly rebuilt especially the S wall of the chancel near the E end. The church probably occupies the site of an early Culdee settlement founded by St. Columba and St. Drostan in AD 580, the predecessor of the Abbey of Deer. According to the minister, it is known locally as the Church of Deer and there is no definite evidence to indicate a dedication to St Drostan. The chancel was almost entirely reconstructed in 1731 (with thinner north and east walls) upon the death of Anne Stuart, wife of James Ferguson of Pitfour to whom a monument was constructed against the internal south elevation. The nave was converted to a burial aisle when the new church was built to the west in 1789, the western end being truncated to make room for the new church. Opinions vary on which architectural elements are in their original positions. There are marks of an old doorway in the N wall, there has also been a square-headed doorway in the S wall. There are two piscinas in the nave, one on the chancel arch on the N, the other on the S wall which had a projecting basin, now sliced off. The most interesting feature of the church is the locker or ambry in the N wall of the nave; the top is of dropped arch form; the arch, jambs and sill are checked for a door. Above the door is a pointed arch with a kind of tracery enclosing a cross pattern cut out of granite. In the E wall is a finely carved heraldic stone. On the exterior of the S wall of the nave is an arched tomb recess for a monument, probably medieval in date. Several post medieval memorial stones were built into the external north elevation. Desk-based assessment by GUARD in 2008 (Lelong and Rennie 2010, 26-27) considered the potential of the area around the church as the potential site for containing traces of the early medieval monastery of Deer, and concluded that there was reasonably strong grounds for interpreting the site of Old Deer Church as the site of the monastery. Ground Penetrating Radar and gradiometry surveys of the interior of the old kirk were carried out in 2010 by GUARD. A previously unrecorded grave and a linear anomaly that may be related to the Old Deer monastic settlement were located in the chancel of the old kirk, and a further unmarked grave was found within the Russell mausoleum. A single trench was excavated here in October 2011 by MAS (Murray and Murray 2011, 25) as part of the Book of Deer Project, targeted on the anomaly revealed by the 2010 geophysical survey.
- 2.2 The site is adjacent to Aden House (now Country Park; HER NJ94NE0077) the remains of a 17th-19th century designed landscape. The estate was purchased in 1758 by Alexander Russell who implemented contemporary ideas of farming 'Improvement' reorganised his tenant farms, planted woods for shelter and built a house overlooking the South Ugie Water (NJ94NE0034). Succeeding generations of the Russell family completed the transformation by enlarging the house and building the unique steading (c. 1800 NJ94NE0035). By the 1920s house and gardens were in decline, and Russell sold the estate in 1937. After a succession of owners it was purchased by Aberdeen County Council in 1974, part of which has since been developed as a country park. It contains several category C-Listed features. These include the former laundry (NJ94NE0092) situated between the mansion and stables, which may be late 18th century in date, and which has now been converted to North East Folklore Archive. The walled garden (NJ94NE0093) is dated 1766 but was probably rebuilt in the earlier to mid 19th century. It incorporates a bothy, potting shed and gardener's cottage. The North Lodge (NJ94NE0164) and West Lodge (NJ94NE0151), built in 1832 and now both in a

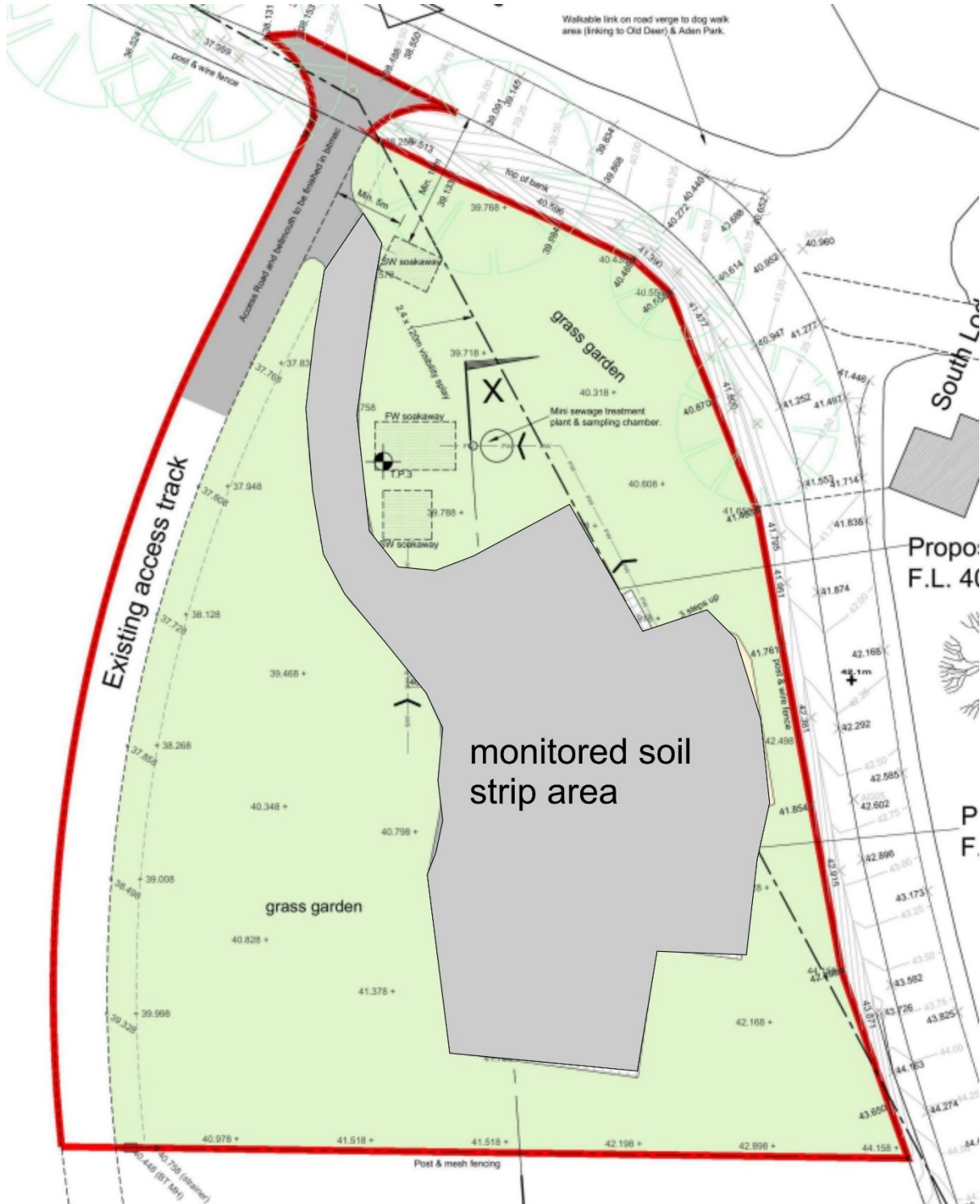
ruinous condition. There are also former kennels converted to a cottage (NJ94NE0173) that is not listed, but is later 19th century.

- 2.3 In the woods above the site excavation took place in 2017 which identified several ephemeral structures on the slope which may be associated with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century military history of the estate or estate management (Cameron 2017).
- 2.4 A programme of excavation, survey, fieldwalking and trial trenching within Aden Country Park revealed a probable Neolithic enclosure, military training site and T-shaped post-medieval structure (Cameron 2018, 22-23; Cameron 2016, 27-28; Cameron 2017, 20).
- 2.5 The village of Old Deer (HER NJ94NE0113), depicted on OS 1st and 2nd edition and earlier maps. Deer enters the historical record in the 10th or 11th century when its foundation legend is recorded in the Book of Deer. There is also evidence for a monastery at Deer in the early Medieval period, although its location is not known. Pont's map surveyed in the late 16th century shows the church at Deer with a substantial village to west and south. Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) shows a cluster of buildings in the area now occupied by the village. By the time Thomson's Atlas of Scotland was published in 1832 the village of Old Deer appears to have adopted a more formal layout, and the main north-south road shifted to its present line of the Kirkgate. Abbey Street, the main east-west axis of the village, is first shown on this map, although it may have been established long before. The assessment concluded that there were strong grounds for interpreting the site of the Old Church as the location of the early Monastery of Deer.
- 2.6 A programme of geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants followed by trial trenching by Cameron Archaeology (HER NJ94NE0177) was carried out in 2014 at several location around the present cemetery and Cheverton farm as part of the Book of Deer Project. The resistance survey identified a number of anomalies which suggested potential archaeological features. A total of 12 trenches were excavated. Fieldwalking and metal detecting were also undertaken as part of the project. No evidence for this being the site of the early medieval monastery of Deer was recovered. Finds from the sites included 23 flints and one quartz sherd, most suggested to date from the Middle - late Neolithic. A small number of abraded medieval pottery sherds and daub may have resulted from spreading of nightsoil. Other finds included a George III silver crown dated 1817-20, and a lustreware candlestick base (Cameron 2015, 31).
- 2.7 Immediately S of the proposed development is Mill of Aden (HER NJ94NE0071) depicted on the OS map of 1867 as a corn mill. The lade leads off from a weir on the burn to the north to the mill. The mill was T-shaped orientated NW/SE. Four other small buildings lay 20m to the north, all parallel to each other and all also orientated NW/SE. By 1888 a fifth small building has been added to the south of the group. The mill appears to have been altered slightly with the leg shortened, forming less of a T-shape. Today the mill is in ruins although one other building, the house, still survives and is in use. Part of the lade still survives but the remainder has been infilled.
- 2.8 At Cheverton a stone axe (HER NJ94NE0010) was found in 1850 (OSNB 1848-78, Book 68, 106).
- 2.9 At Knock a stone hammer was found before 1894 (HES NJ94NE 24) (Buchan Field Club 1895, 117).

### 3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

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It is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during the current planning application.



Illus 2 Site plan showing watching brief area (copyright Baxter Design Company)

## 4 REFERENCES

**Buchan Field Club.** (1895) *'Excursion to Atherb', Trans Buchan Fld Club, vol. 3, 1892-5*

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**Murray, HK and JC.** (2011) *'Old Deer, Aberdeenshire (Old Deer parish), excavation', Discovery Excav Scot, New, vol. 12, 2011.* Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England.

**Ordnance Survey (Name Book.** (1848-1878) *Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale).*

## 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Ryan Urquhart, Baxter Design Company and Edwin Low (for Eric Roger) for initiating this project and to Claire Herbert, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service for her advice during this work.

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## APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
3726-7	Soil strip completed	SSE
3728	Soil strip completed	SSE
3729	Soil strip completed	E
3730	Soil strip completed	SE
3731-2	Soil strip completed	SSE
3733	Soil strip completed	NNW
3734	Soil strip completed	NNW



DSC\_3726



DSC\_3727



DSC\_3728



DSC\_3729



DSC\_3730



DSC\_3731



DSC\_3732



DSC\_3733



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