

**MUIRAKE FARM TURBINES
CORNHILL
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**- Archaeological Watching Brief -
Carried out 15th & 23rd September 2011
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



Report No: MAS 2011-27
by
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MUIRAKE WIND CLUSTER
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ABERDEENSHIRE

- Archaeological Watching Brief -

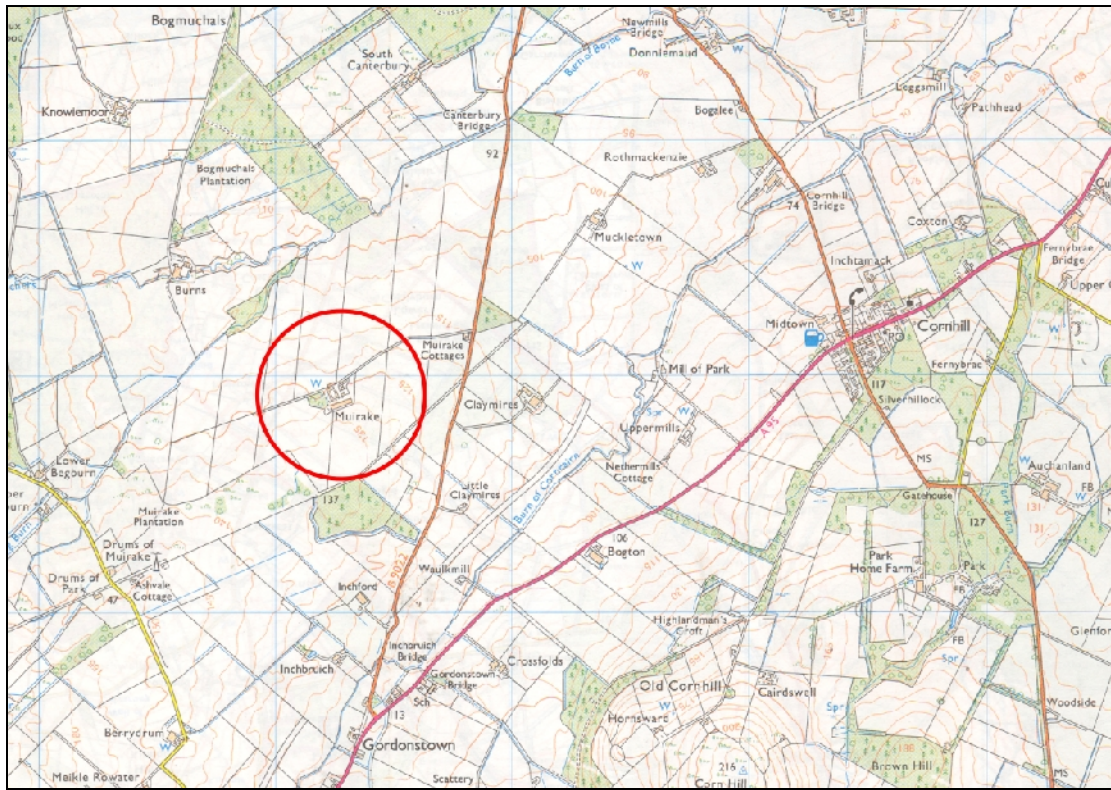
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1. Background

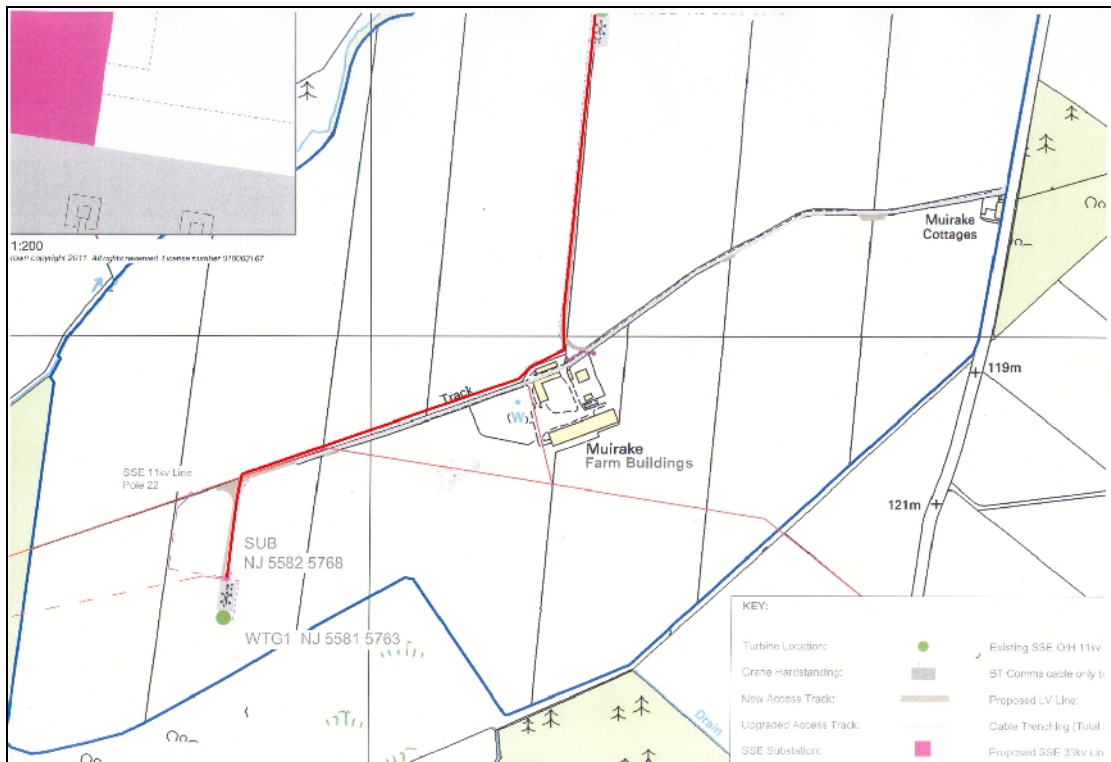
- 1.1 Proposals for the erection of three wind turbines at Muirake Farm, Cornhill Aberdeenshire, required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out prior to the soil clearance for the footprint of the turbines and related cabling [Planning Application Ref: APP/2009/3565].
- 1.2 The Condition is applied in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011, 28) which states that Planning Authorities may impose planning conditions to ensure that arrangements are made for archaeological watching briefs during the approved works and to secure appropriate recording of such works and for the provision of analysis and publication of results.
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Green Cat Renewables Ltd to undertake the watching brief for the cabling and the area of the substation; the field element of which was carried out on 15th & 23rd September 2011.
- 1.4 The soil strip for the turbine bases and hard standing was observed by Derek Hall on 13th & 14th September and is subject to a separate report.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The farm of Muirake is located a short distance W of Cornhill, Aberdeenshire, on the W side of the B9022 [NJ 5624 5798: Parish: Fordyce – Illus.1].
- 2.2 The site is the possible location of a late medieval manor, granted to John Gordon of Cromallat before 1542 and was still in existence in the 18th century.



Illus. 1: Location of turbines, marked in red. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright (2007) All rights reserved. Licence number (100049810)



Illus. 2: Site plan with the cable trench marked in red.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The topsoil was removed by full-slew mechanical digger using a toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, areas were cleaned by hand where necessary.

4. The Work

- 4.1 Watching briefs were maintained on two separate days on the soil strip for the cable trench corridor linking the turbines [see Illus.2].
- 4.2 The cable trench started at the SE corner of the hard standing for Turbine 1 (NJ 5581 5763), and progressed N for 45m. The area for the substation was stripped at this point and then the trench progressed W for 22.5m. It then ran along the E side of the access track to Turbine 1 for c.115m to an existing farm track running NE to SW from the farm.

The corridor for the cable trench was 4-5m wide and the depth of ploughsoil removed varied between 350 – 400 mm and overlay hard yellow to grey sandy natural with much stone. The field had been in crop prior to the commencement of operations.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



Illus. 3: Cable trench corridor running N from Turbine 1.



Illus. 4: Detail of cable trench corridor, looking N.

- 4.3 At the N end of the access track (NJ 5624 5798) to Turbine 1, the cable trench crossed the farm track and went 5m into the field running SW-NE parallel to N side of the track for c.416m to the farm buildings. The trench then skirted the N side of the farm steadings and turned to run N-S for c.410m along the W edge of the access track to Turbine 2 (NJ 5630 58430).

Where the cable trench crossed the farm track, and for most of its run NE towards the farm buildings, the depth of ploughsoil was very thin and varied between 200 – 300mm. The soil was silty and poorly drained and ceramic field drains were evident high in the hard yellow-brown stoney natural.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



Illus. 5: Cable trench corridor, looking S from N side of farm buildings.



Illus. 6: View to Turbine 2, looking NE.



Illus. 7: Cable trench corridor, N of farm buildings towards Turbine 2.

5. Results

- 5.1 An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the soil strip for the cable trench corridor linking both turbines and the substation at Muirake.
- 5.2 No archaeological features or finds were evident.

Catalogue of Digital Photographs (Supplied to Archive)

15th September 2011	
1-4	Cable trench corridor and area of substation, looking N
5	As above, looking NE
6	Cable trench corridor on E side of Turbine 1 hard standing
7	Cable trench corridor on S side of Turbine 1
23rd September 2011	
1-3	Cable trench corridor, looking SW from N side of farm buildings
4-5	View, looking NE, towards Turbine 2
6-8	Cable trench corridor, looking N to Turbine 2