

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR TRENCH
HADDO HOUSE
TARVES
ABERDEENSHIRE



Archaeological Evaluation

Carried out 23rd January 2012

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-4

by

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HADDO HOUSE ABERDEENSHIRE LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR REPLACEMENT -Archaeological Evaluation-

H K Murray and JC Murray

1. Background

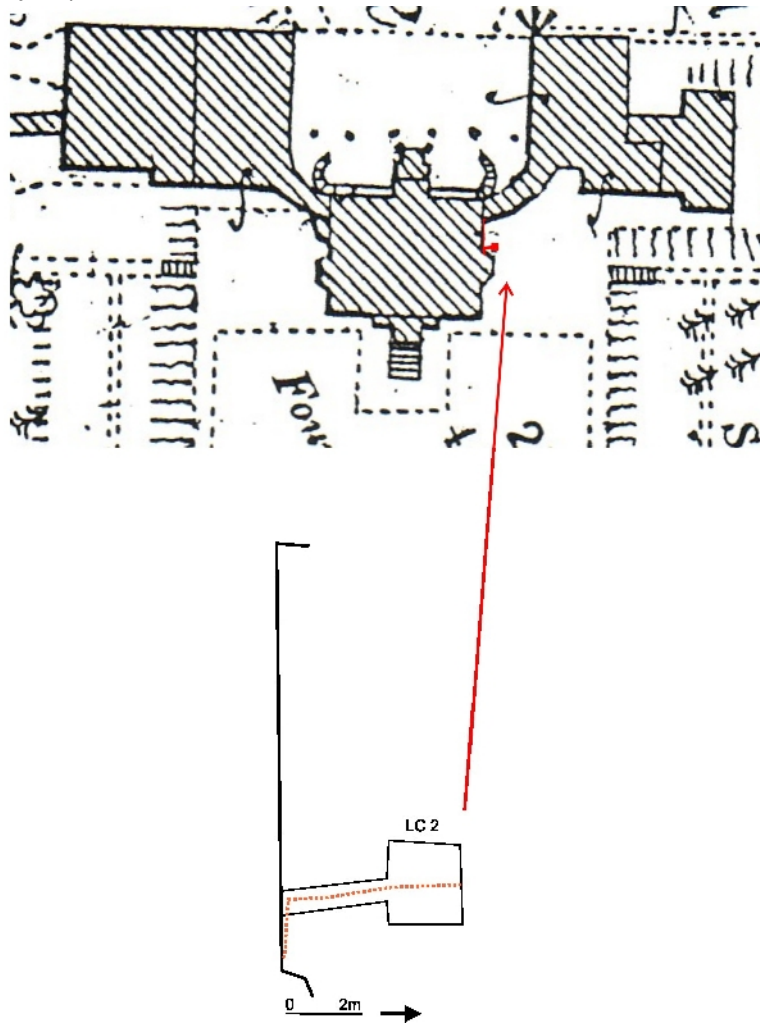
- 1.1 Renewal of one lightning conductor at Haddo House, Methlick, Aberdeenshire, required the excavation of a trench beside the N wall of the central block of the mansion. As a result an archaeological evaluation was carried out with the excavation of the trench by archaeologists and archaeological features being recorded.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in the context of the possibility of features relating to Haddo House and its associated gardens or features relating to earlier activity on the site.
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the work. The field element was carried out on 23rd January 2012 prior to the insertion of the new lightning conductor.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The site lay to the N of the main block of Haddo House, Methlick, Aberdeenshire.
Parish: Methlick
GPS: 386860, 834767 (trench)
NMRS ref: NJ83SE 21, NJ83SE 42.00

3 Methodology

- 3.1 One (LC 2) of the three existing lightning conductors needed replacement (Illus 1). The trench was excavated by hand, planned and photographed by MAS Ltd.



Illus 1 Location of LC2 trench

4. The Results

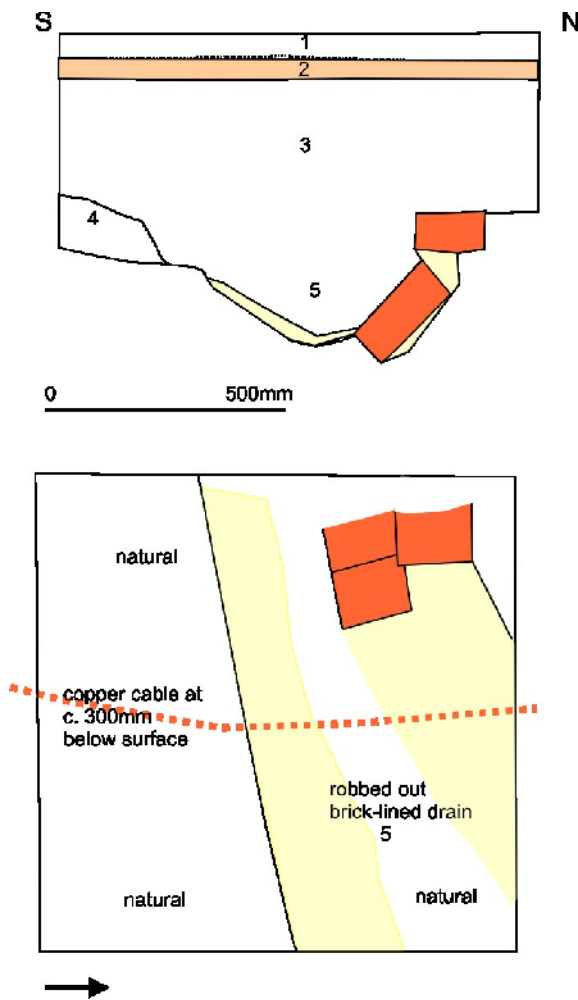
4.1 Lightning conductor trench LC 2

Between 1.3m and 2.3m from the outer N wall of the main central block of Haddo House and W of the W side of the bay window. 1m square and 500-700mm deep.



Illus 2 Location of trench LC2. Person standing in trench.

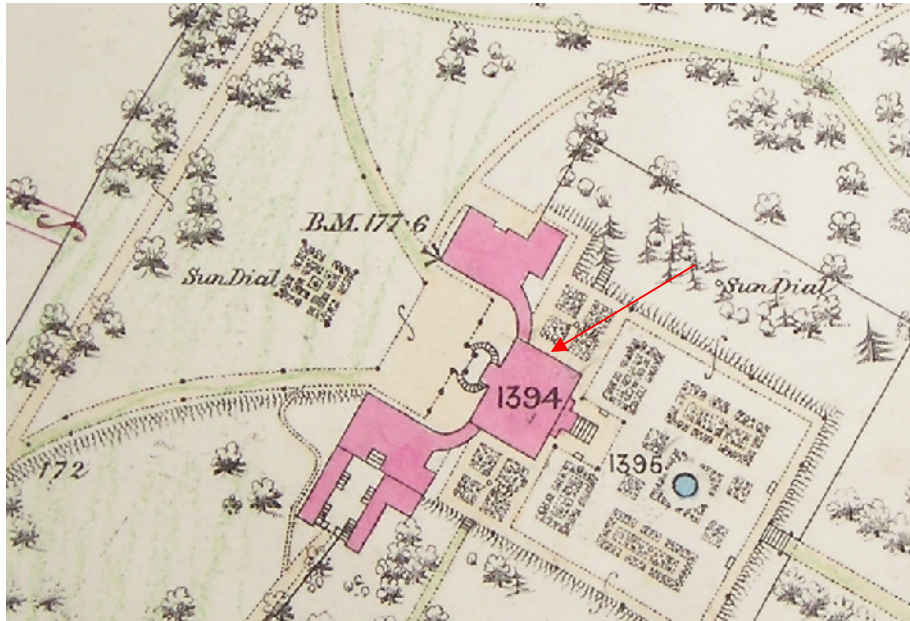
At the time of excavation this area was a gravel pathway extending along the N side of the house. The gravel (1) was c.50mm deep and overlay pink granite dust (2) also c.50mm deep. Along the line of the copper lightning conductor cable, the pink granite dust had been disturbed. Below layer 2 and backfilling the disturbed area there was between 250 and 550mm of mixed grey gritty soil (3) with large rubble stones, some patches of mortar and occasional slate fragments. At the extreme SW corner of the trench this overlay a small patch of dark brown more humic, possible garden earth (4) which overlay natural yellow boulder clay.



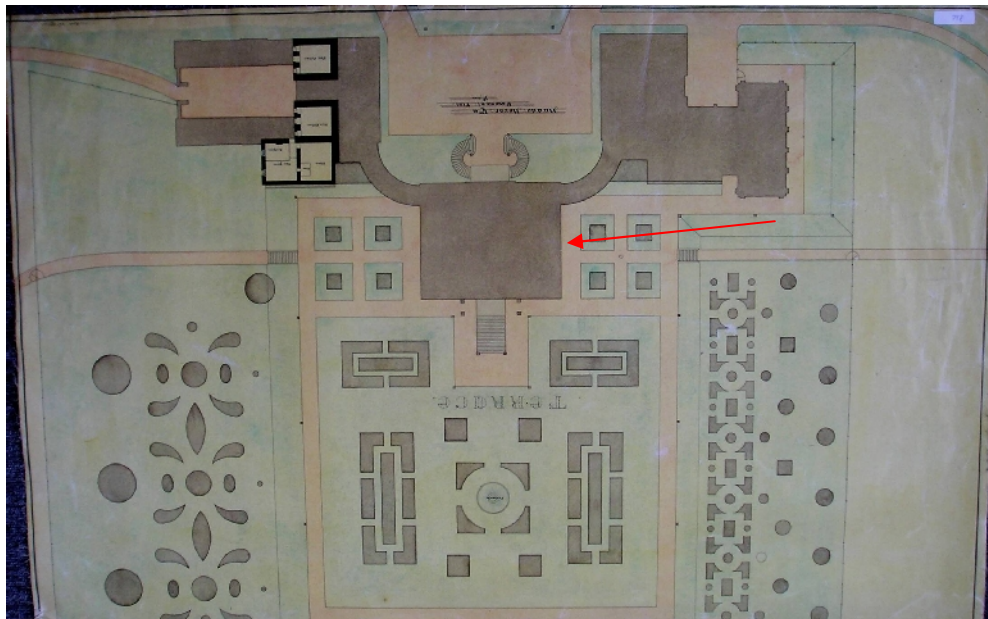
Illus 3 Section and plan LC2 trench

A gully ran WSW/ENE across the base of the LC2 trench; it was partially cut into the natural and was c.400mm in width and V-shaped in section with a maximum internal height of 280mm. This was the remains of a V-sectioned brick-lined drain (5); bricks only survived on the N side at the W end. Elsewhere the bricks had been removed (probably when the lightning conductor cable was inserted) and only the bedding mortar remained.

The pink granite gravel is identical to similar material excavated during work in a similar position to the S of the main block of Haddo House, during works preceding the present rearrangement of the garden beds (Murray and Murray, 2008, 3), where it was considered to be the surfacing of the mid-19th century paths.



Illus 4 1st Ordnance survey map of 1869 with approximate position of trench marked by arrow.



Illus 5 1880s garden plan showing detail of paths with approximate position of trench marked by arrow.

The V-section brick-lined drain is identical to the brick-lined drains excavated at Castle Fraser, Aberdeenshire (Murray and Murray 2008, 28-29, illus 15, 16) which were thought to date to the end of the 18th or early 19th century. It was considered that they were perhaps unlikely to date to after the 1830s/40s when the manufacture and

use of clay drainage tiles in Scotland became common (Glendinning and Wade Martins, 2008, 76-7). A similar date is probable for this Haddo drain.



Illus 6 Drain in W section of LC2, looking W



Illus 7 Drain across the base of the trench, looking NW

5. Conclusions

Two features, the path and the robbed out drain, were recorded in the Lightning Conductor trench but neither were considered to be at any risk from the renewal of the lightning conductor.

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

Photographic catalogue Haddo House lightning conductor trench LC2	
Digital frame no	Content
1-2	Haddo House. N wall of main block. LC trench to RHS of bay window, person working in trench
3-4	Detail of trench site, looking S
5-8	Detail of trench looking W. Scales indicate brick drain
9-11	Detail of trench looking NW. Scales indicate brick drain
12-17	Detail of trench looking S to wall of Haddo House.

References

Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S 2008 *Buildings of the Land*. RCAHMS: Edinburgh.

Murray H K and Murray J C 2008 *Terrace Garden Restoration Project, Haddo House, Methlick, Aberdeenshire*. MAS 2008-25. Report for National Trust for Scotland.

Murray H K and Murray J C 2010 *Castle Environs Project 2010: Castle Fraser Aberdeenshire*. MAS 2010-18 Report for National Trust for Scotland.