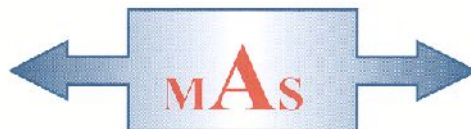


CRATHES CASTLE ABERDEENSHIRE BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION BUILDING



**- Archaeological Watching Brief -
Carried out September 2nd 2013
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2013-26
by
H K Murray**

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**CRATHES CASTLE
ABERDEENSHIRE
BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION BUILDING
-Archaeological Watching Brief-**

H K Murray

1. Background

- 1.1 The Aberdeen and District Beekeeper's Association have lodged a planning application for the erection of a log cabin within part of the nursery gardens at Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire, to be used as an apiary and teaching area (APP/2013/2097). No archaeological condition was set on the application and Historic Scotland, who were consulted had no comment to make (HS Ref: HGG/A/GD/181 dated 15th July).

However, in 2005 some Early Neolithic activity (Murray, Murray & Fraser, 2009, 71) had been recorded 25-30m to the S of the present site, during the construction of the Overflow Car park. As a result, Dr Shannon Fraser, Archaeologist for the National Trust for Scotland felt that the area of the proposed building should be investigated prior to work commencing. Although the proposed building is to be supported on a series of pad foundations, it was agreed that the whole footprint should be stripped to natural to allow the best possible chance for the recognition and recording of any archaeology.

As a result an archaeological watching brief was carried out to record any archaeological features that might be revealed.

- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the watching brief on the footprint of the new building; the field element of which was carried out on 2nd September 2013.

2. The Site

- 2.1 Parish: Banchory-Ternan
GPS (centre of site): 373579, 796874

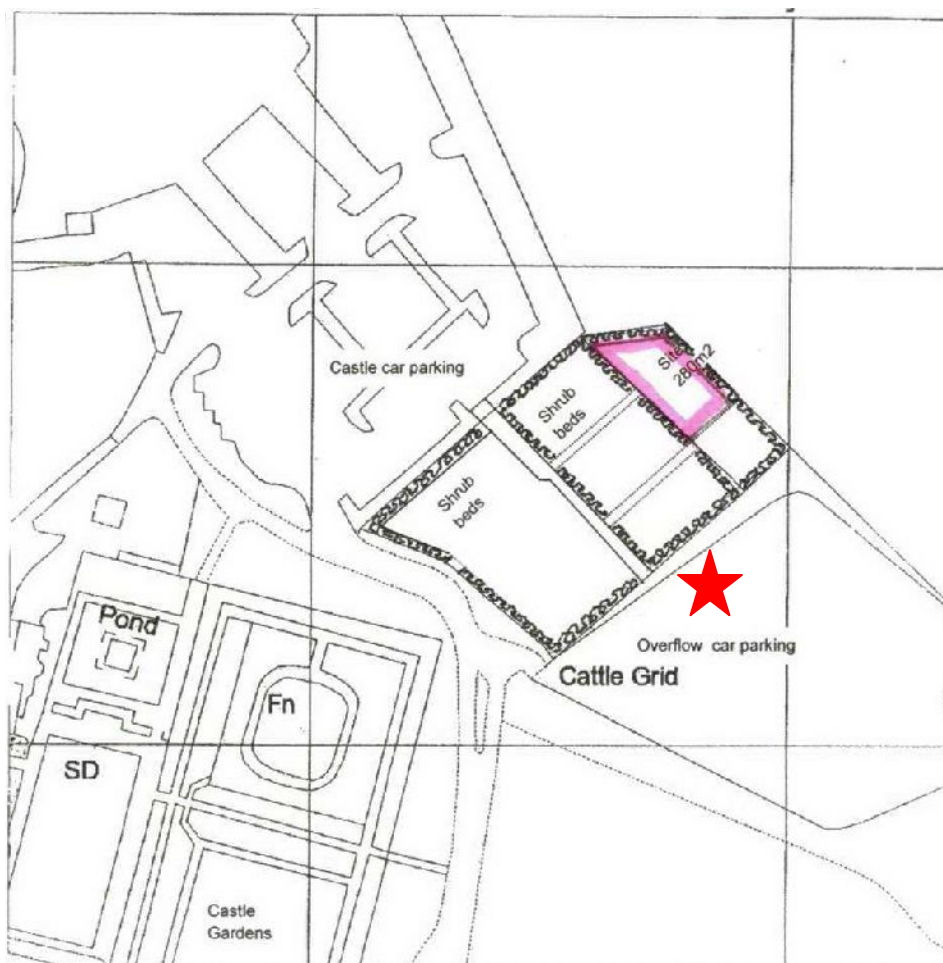
- 2.2 The site comprised the E area of the nursery garden, which was enclosed by hedges and had been cultivated as nursery beds for a number of years. Prior to this it had been cultivated as part of the agricultural field.



Illus 1 Site looking NW.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 The footprint of the building c. 10 x 4m , was stripped to natural by mini-digger. The area was cleaned, observed, planned and photographed by MAS Ltd.
- 3.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper CX.



Illus 2 Location of site (pink outline). Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2012. License No 100041040 . Red star denotes approximate position of prehistoric features excavated in 2005.

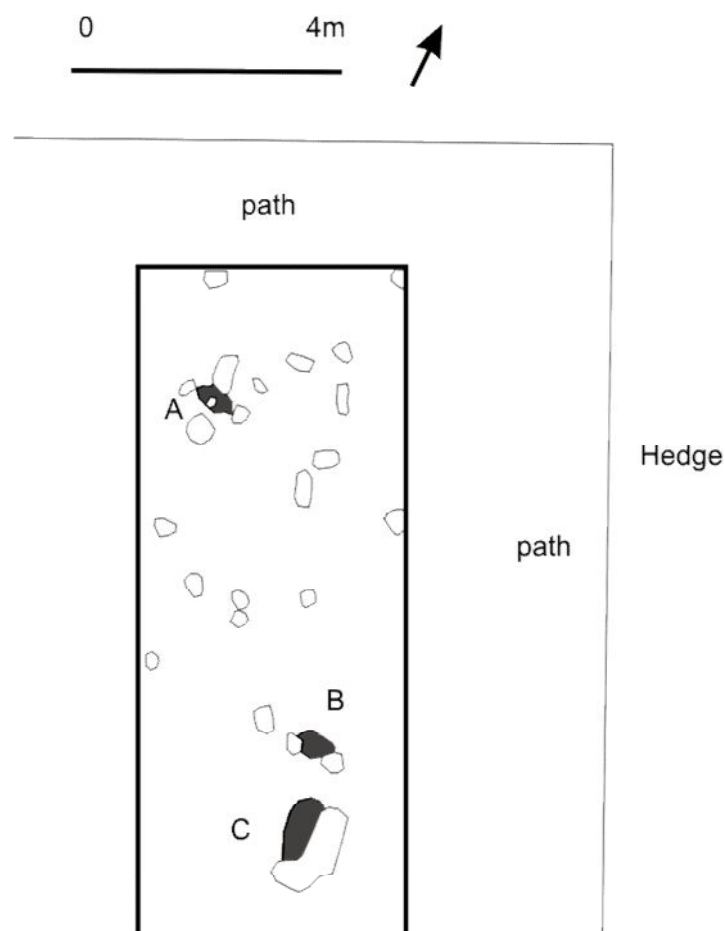
4. The Results

Over most of the site there was c 500mm topsoil over c 300mm subsoil. The natural ground was yellow boulder clay with frequent rounded natural boulders, some of considerable size. There was a slight slope down to the SE. In three places (Illus 4: A, B, C) the topsoil and subsoil overlay patches of darker grey-brown earth surviving in small pockets between large boulders (A: 0.75 x 0.20m x 130mm deep. B: 0.40 x 0.30m x 30mm deep. C: 1.12 x 0.30m x 50mm deep.) All were sectioned and then fully excavated. None produced any artefacts or ecofacts, with the exception of one very tiny fragment of charcoal in C. In 2005 in the Overflow Car park, the features containing flint or pottery were charcoal-rich. Other features in the Overflow Car park without

charcoal in the fill were similar to the relict soil recorded on this site (Murray, Murray & Fraser, 2009, 71).



Illus 3 Darker patch of earth between boulders (A).



Illus 4 Plan showing relict soil in areas A,B,C.



Illus 5 Detail of A.

5. Discussion

No identifiable prehistoric features were found. The three areas of darker soil did not show any evidence of human activity and may be relict soil trapped between boulders and as a result protected from the mixing activity of subsequent cultivation.

References

Murray, H K , Murray, J C and Fraser, S M 2009 *A tale of the Unknown Unknowns: A Mesolithic pit alignment and a Neolithic timber hall at Warren Field, Crathes, Aberdeenshire*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

Photographic catalogue Crathes Castle Beekeeper's Association Building	
Digital frame no	Content
1	Site looking NW
2	Site looking S
3-4	Detail of dark soil deposit
5-8	Site looking NW