

**KINSTAIR STEADING**  
**ALFORD**  
**ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Standing Building Survey**

Carried out 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014

by

**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2014-13**

by

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**KINSTAIR STEADING**  
**ALFORD**  
**ABERDEENSHIRE**

**- Standing Building Survey -**

1. Background

- 1.1 A standing building survey was required for the steading buildings at Kinstair, Alford, Aberdeenshire, prior to their demolition for the construction of three houses.
- 1.2 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP), which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for archaeological work to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances. Planning Application Number: APP/2013/2984.
- 1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was required which includes measured plans, a written account of the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence in addition to a photographic survey.
- 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Mr John French. The site element of the survey was completed on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

2. Desk-top survey

- 2.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council and in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) through Canmore, Canmap and Pastmap.
- 2.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.

- 2.3 An outline plan was provided by the client but the detailed plans were drawn on site by MAS Ltd. The only elevations drawn were those where some of the original features were evident.

### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The site lies at c.193m OD in open rolling countryside c. 1km to the S of . The farmhouse has already been converted and several other houses are situated near the steading.

Parish: Alford

NGR NJ 5750 1470

RCAHMS No: NJ51SE 21 (House/ manor). Aberdeenshire SMR NJ51SE21 (manor)



**Illus 1** The site, general view looking SW. Shows E wall of original S range (C) and infill building (D)

### 4. Documentary evidence

- 4.1 Bogdan and Bryce (1991, 28) record this as a possible manor site.
- 4.2 Robert Gordon's map *Formarten and part of Marr and Buquhan*. 1630-1655 marks and names Kinstair.

- 4.3 Roy's Military Map of 1747/55 shows a settlement cluster at Kinstare (sic). The area around is shown as rig and furrow cultivation.
- 4.3 The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1869. Sheet lxii.8 (Alford)) shows the Improvement steading. A building on an L-plan, possibly the original house, lies in the position of the existing house, forming the E side of the group of buildings. The N range of the steading extends to the house. Freestanding ranges are shown at the S and W of an almost L-shaped yard. The N end of the W range is shown unroofed. Two small freestanding buildings lie to the N of the NW of the steading. Another small roofed building and an unroofed building are shown to the SE of the steading.
- 4.4 By the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6"/mile Ordnance Survey of 1899 (published 1900. Aberdeenshire Sheet 062.08) the N, S and W ranges have been joined up forming 3 sides of the open yard. The S range has been foreshortened to allow a gateway between the house and steading. The derelict N end of the W range has been foreshortened to the line of the N range. Only one small building remains to the N of the group. Two small buildings lie to the SE.

## 5 Methodology

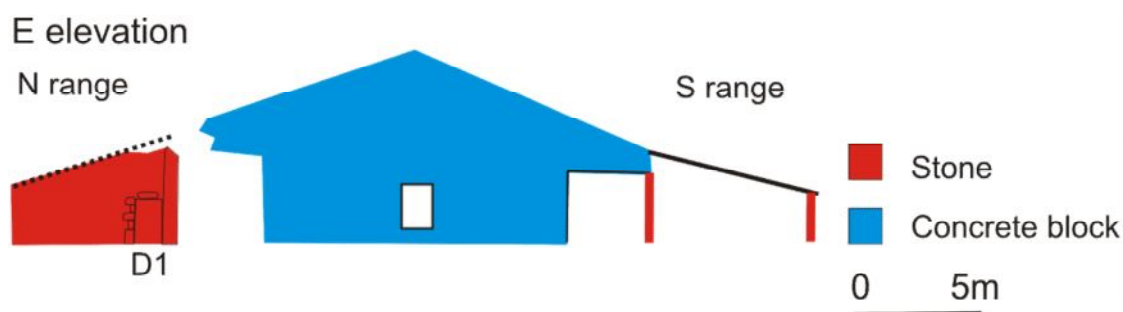
- 5.1 The ground plans have been annotated to show details and to indicate differences in the building materials which may help in understanding the development and history of the building.
- 5.2 The areas recorded were photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied for the archive and an annotated plan in the present report (Illus 11) indicates the position of each.

## 6 The Steading

The steading has been very substantially altered and rebuilt over the last 50 years or so, with the result that of the original N range only the N wall and a

fragment of the S wall remain and of the original S range, only the N, E and W walls remain. Both ranges (Illus 3: C and E) have been reduced to single pitch bays on either side of the infilled central court (Illus 3: D). Two fairly recent concrete block buildings (Illus 3: A, B) have been added to the W.

In the following descriptions, details of the measurements of openings are only given for the sections of original wall.



**Illus 2 E Elevation of Buildings C and D and section through Building E.**

### 6.1 *Building A*

Present/recent use For cattle.

Dimensions 23 x 6.5m ext.

Walls Concrete block walls with corrugated tin sheeting on upper parts of S and E walls.

Roof Single pitched corrugated asbestos over steel frame.

Doors and windows

*S wall* Three gated openings with metal uprights.

*W wall* Narrow doorway.

### 6.2 *Building B*

Present/recent use Machinery store. Divided along centre. Part possibly originally for silage.

Dimensions 26 x 19m ext. Abuts Building D.

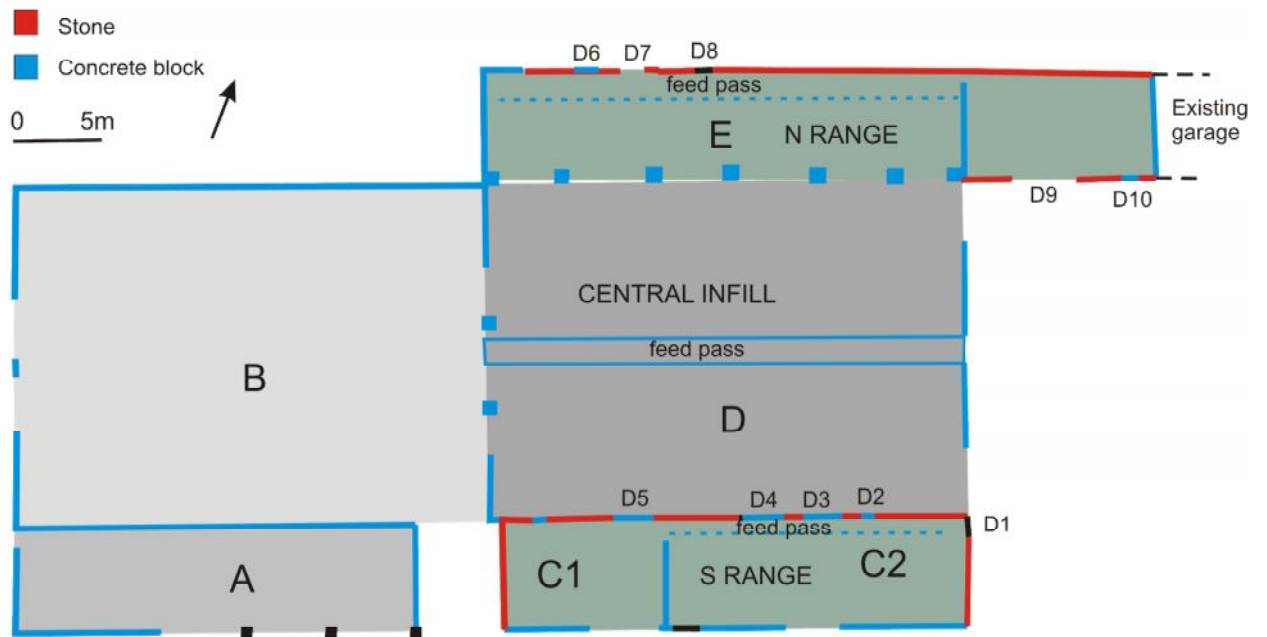
Walls Concrete block walls with uprights of steel framework

Roof Pitched corrugated asbestos over steel frame.

Doors and windows

*E end* Open to Building D.

*W wall* Two wide machinery doors with sliding corrugated iron doors.



Illus 3 Main plan with numbering used in text. (Larger version as Illus 12)



Illus 4 W wall of Buildings A and B

### 6.3 *Building C: Original S range*

Present/recent use For cattle.

Dimensions 26 x 6.5m ext.

Walls N, E and W walls of rubble stone. S wall rebuilt with concrete blocks.

Roof Single pitched box section asbestos over steel frame.

Interior Divided into two by concrete block wall. C2 used for cattle with feed pass along inside of N wall with access from C1.

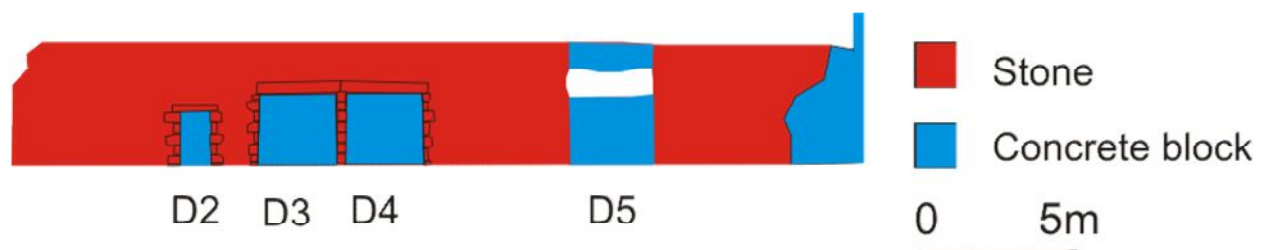


Illus 5 View of interior of C2 looking E

Doors and windows

*S wall* Modern rebuild in concrete blocks. Wide opening to C1 with sliding metal door. Narrow blocked doorway into C2, fittings of original sliding door. Wide opening with gate across into C2.

*E wall* Door D1. Original door with rubble stone rybats on S and N wall on N, part of rubble lintel. W: 1.07m. H: 1.8m. Blocked with dressed granite. Probably originally an internal wall as this end of S range truncated by 1900.



Illus 6 Elevation of N wall of S range

*N wall* Door D2 Original door with dressed granite lintel and rybats. W: 0.85m. H: 1.95m. Blocked with concrete blocks on inner face.

Door D3 and Door D4. Both original cart bays with dressed granite rybats and lintels and dressed granite blocks on pier between them. W: 2.45m. H: 2.4m. Blocked with concrete blocks on inner face.

D5. In its present form a wide concrete break through with concrete lintel.

Blocked with concrete blocks.

W of D5 there was an area of patching with concrete blocks but no obvious blocked openings.

*W wall* No openings.



**Illus 7 N wall of S range. Detail of D2 and cart bays D3 and D4**



6.4 *Building D: Roofing infill of original open court.*

Present/recent use For cattle.

Dimensions 26 x 19.5m ext.



**Illus 8 Looking W along Building D with central feed pass on LHS**

Walls E wall of concrete blocks. W wall concrete block walls on either side of wide central opening with weight bearing concrete block pillars either side of central axis.

S side uses N wall of S range. N side, the S wall of N range replaced by concrete block pillars c 600mm square to bear roof weight.

Roof Low pitched box section asbestos over steel frame.

Interior Divided into two cattle courts by concrete feed pass running E/W along central axis.

Doors and windows

*E wall* Wide, high openings to each of the parallel courts. Narrow opening to feed pass.

6.5 *Building E: Original N range*

Present/recent use For cattle.

Dimensions c.38m x 6.5m ext. with further harled extension at E end which is a garage belonging to farmhouse and not part of the present development.

Walls Only N wall and small part of S wall survived. These are rubble stone. Top of S wall raised with concrete blocks. W wall and internal wall of concrete blocks.

Roof Single pitched box section asbestos over steel frame.

Interior Divided into two parts; the larger W part was open to the central cattle court and had a feed pass up the N side.



**Illus 9 Original N wall of N range**

Doors and windows

*N wall* Door D6. Original door with dressed granite rybats and lintel. W:1.2m H: 2m. Concrete blocked.

Door D7. Either a widening of an original wall or a break-through. Concrete sides and lintel. W: 1m. H: 2m.

Door D8 Original door with dressed granite rybats and lintel. W:1.1m H: 2m. Blocked with dressed granite.

*S wall- E end.* Door D9. Granite rybats but concrete lintel. W: 3.5m. H: 2.5m. Width suggests this may have been a break-through of two narrow doors. Fittings for sliding door.

Door D10. Original door with dressed granite rybats and lintel. W: 1.2m H: 2.2m. Blocked with concrete blocks. Fittings for sliding door.



**Illus 10 E surviving end of S wall of original N range, with D9 and D10**

## 7 Discussion

Kinstair was a fairly typical Aberdeenshire improvement steading, probably dating from *c.* 1800- 1850 with development throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (RCAHMS 2007, 208. Glendinning and Wade Martins 2008, 119-120). However, very significant restructuring and development of the steading in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century has left little of the original steading intact. No internal features remain and it is not possible to indicate detailed function of the original ranges.

## 8. References

Bogdan, N and Bryce, I D B 1991 'Castles, manors and 'town houses' survey, *DES*, 28.

Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S 2008 Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000 Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

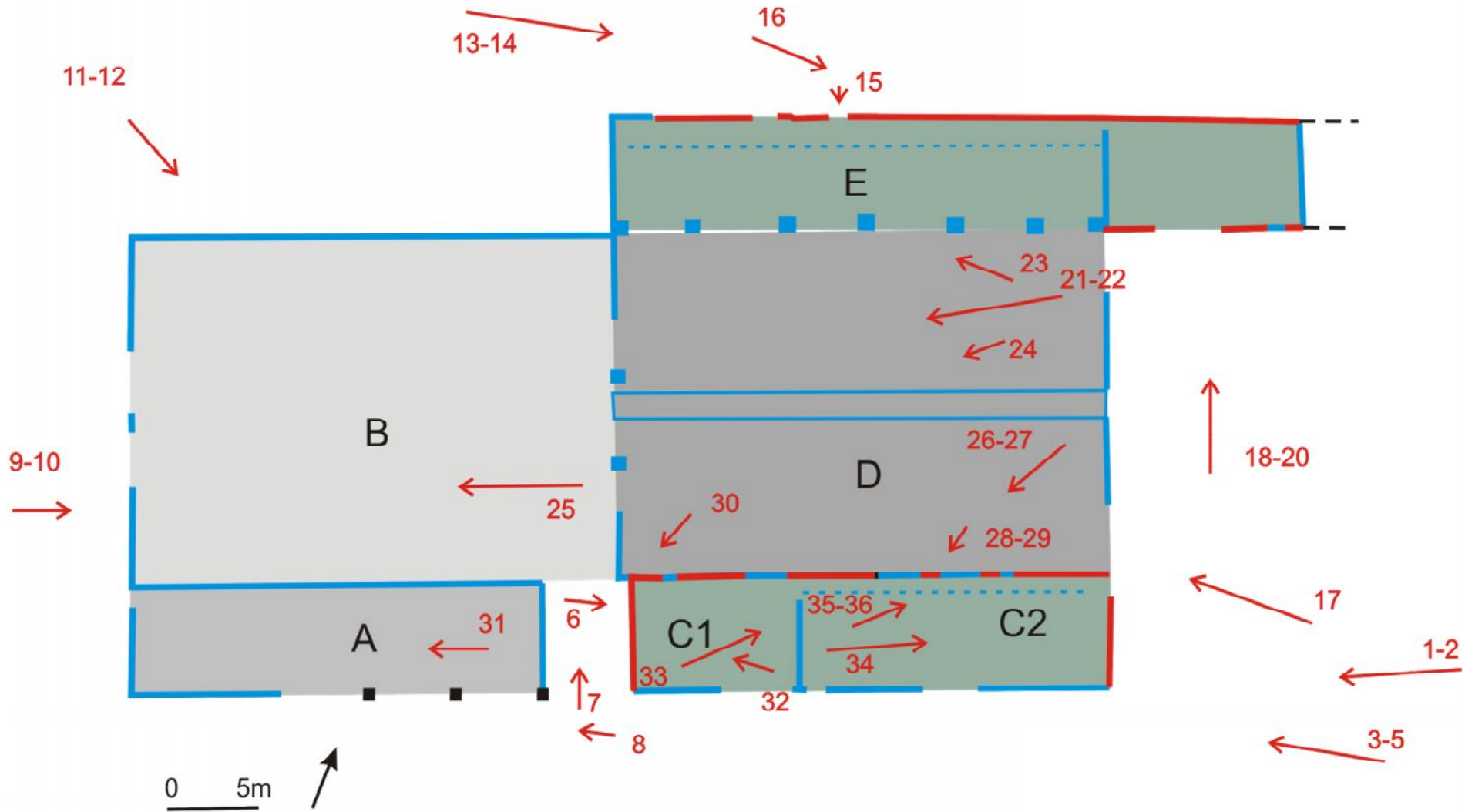
Gordon's map *Formarten and part of Marr and Buquhan*. 1630-1655 Viewed in Charting the Nation. Adv.MS.70.2.10 <http://lac-liv1.is.ed.ac.uk>

RCAHMS 2007 *In the shadow of Bennachie: A Field Archaeology of Donside, Aberdeenshire*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

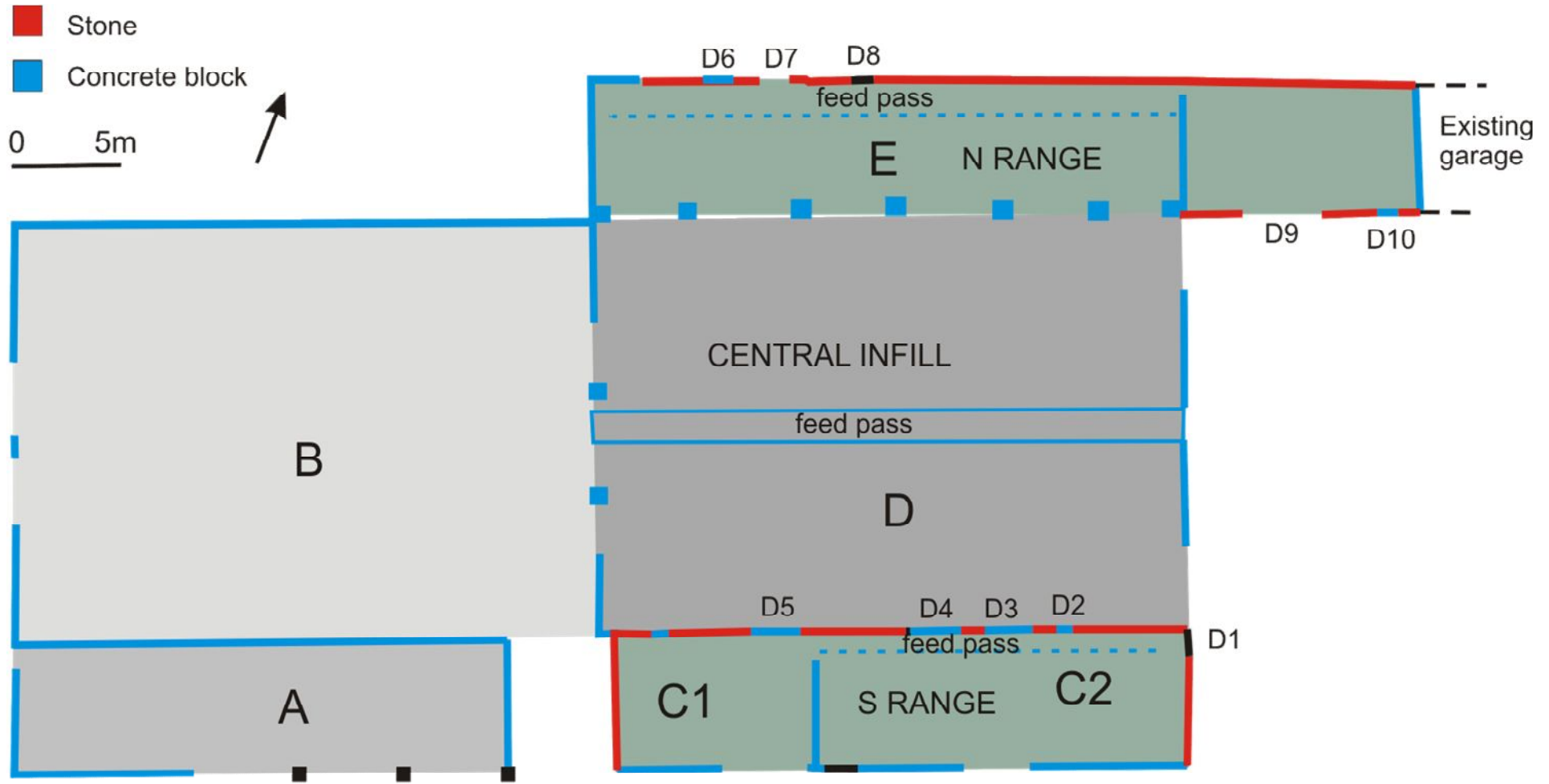
Roy. Military Map of 1747-55 on line at <http://www.nls.uk/maps>

## 9 Archive

A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (Illus 11) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



Illus 11 Photographic references



Illus 12 Main plan