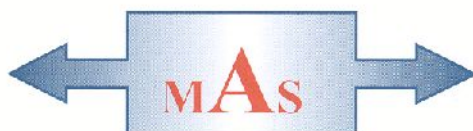


**DRIVEWAY REPAIRS
CASTLE FRASER
ABERDEENSHIRE**



Archaeological Watching Brief
Carried out between April and June 2015
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2015-18
by
H K Murray and J C Murray

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**DRIVEWAY REPAIRS
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-Archaeological watching brief-

H K Murray and J C Murray

1. Background

1.1 In 2015 a major programme of maintenance to driveways and associated drainage was undertaken by the National Trust for Scotland at a number of properties, including Castle Fraser, Aberdeenshire.

1.2 Dr Shannon Fraser, archaeologist for the National Trust for Scotland, determined that it was advisable to commission a watching brief on those parts of the works that would involve excavation for drains and other features in areas that were not already known to have been disturbed.

1.3 At Castle Fraser there were two main areas of concern: the direct environs of the castle and those areas of the driveway which were in the vicinity of the John Bell Stone- an area where prehistoric activity might be predicted to occur.

1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake a watching brief on ground disturbance in the agreed areas and to record any finds or features that were revealed. The watching brief was carried out between April and June 2015.

2. The Site

The works relate to a number of sites within the estate of Castle Fraser, Aberdeenshire.

(a) Castle Fraser, Aberdeenshire.

Parish: Cluny

NGR NJ 7227 1255

NMRS No: NJ71SW6 Canmore ID 18722

(b) Associated sites:

John Bell's stone: possible prehistoric standing stone. NGR:NJ7211 1271

NMRS No:NJ71SW5 Canmore ID 18721

Gateway. Structure shown across S end of Broad Walk c.25m N of courtyard. Shown on 1788 and 1788-94 plans. (CAF96B002)

NGR: NJ7226 1262. NMRS No: NJ71SW 172. Canmore ID: 339798

W Lodge. Built c 1820-30.

NGR: NJ7184 1245 NMRS No: NJ71SW 6.2 Canmore ID: 83636

3 Methodology

3.1 All ground works in the areas agreed with Dr Fraser were observed with any potential features cleaned by hand, planned, photographed (Appendix 1) and recorded as appropriate.

3.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper 120 GPS and Glonass.

4 Results

All areas observed have been given a simple series of numbers. These do not relate to the contractor's numbers. Drainage works in the agreed areas were observed. Four main areas were recorded: Drainage grips from W lodge to S of castle; Drainage grips and road crossing in N driveway; Drain trench 1 from triangle to grass E of archway and Triangle W of castle and drain trench 2.

The drainage grips (Illus 3, 4: numbered 1- 23) were all approximately 5m long and 800mm wide and 1.1m deep in the grass parallel to the edges of the road with a slot excavated in one side to channel water from the road into the grip. When excavated the

grips were lined with geotextile and filled with hard core. In grip 17, when wall A was encountered, the wall was recorded and covered and the grip extended to the E.

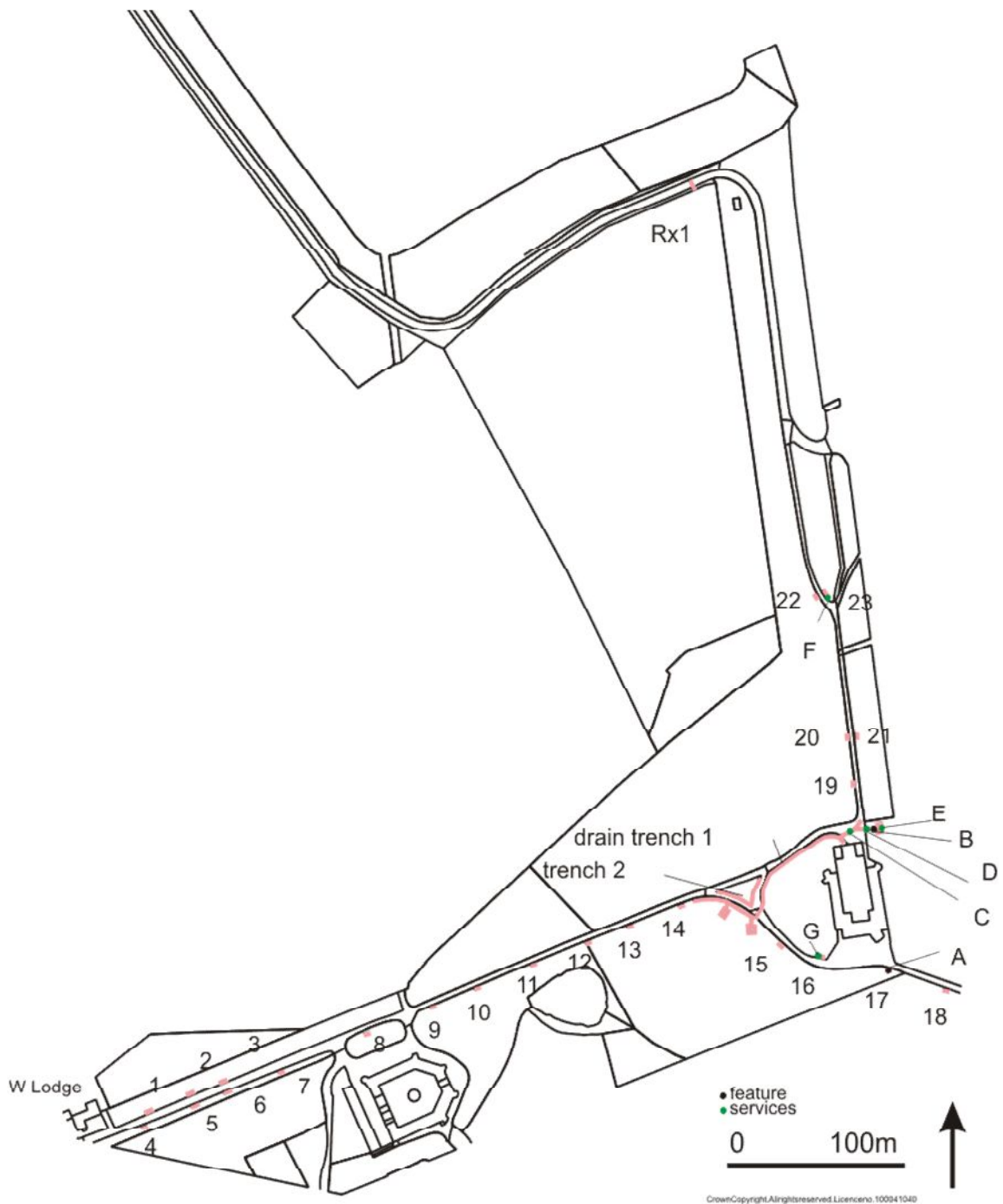


Illus 1 Position of grip 9 (originally numbered T3)

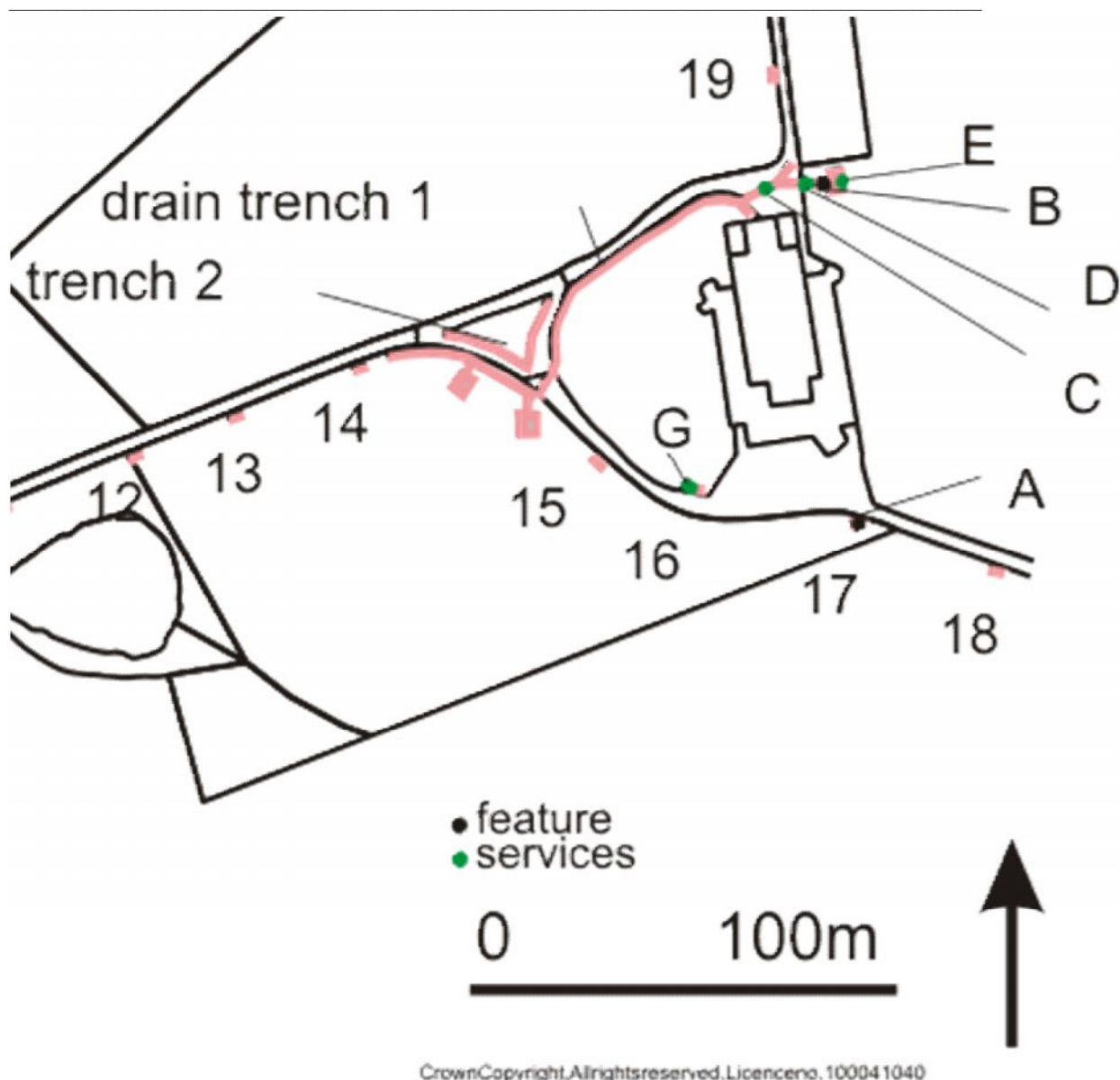


Illus 2 Detail of grip 9 showing depth of build-up.

The location of observed grips, drain trenches and all observed features is shown on Illus 3, 4 with details in Table 1.



Illus 3 Plan of areas observed (pink and numbered) and all features recorded (black and green dots with letters A-G). Crown copyright: All rights reserved Licence No 10004140



Illus 4 Detail of area near castle with areas observed (pink and numbered) and all features recorded (black and green dots with letters A-G). Crown copyright: All rights reserved Licence No 10004140

Table 1 Details of drainage works observed.

Location No	Work observed	GPS	Stratigraphy	Context no	Context detail
W drive	Grip 1	W:371873,812449 E:371878,812451	1.1m building debris, stone and slate, probably from lodge?		
	Grip 2	W:371895,812459 E:371901,812464	1.1m building debris, probably from lodge?		
	Grip 3	W:371915,812468 E:371918,812468	c. 900mm deposited brown earth over yellow gritty		

			natural		
	Grip 4	W:371871,812442 E:371874,812443	c.300mm topsoil over very rocky natural		Grips 4-7 are c1.5m in from drive to avoid water main
	Grip 5	W:371900,812452 E:371903,812453	4-500mm topsoil over very rocky natural		
	Grip 6	W:371918,812461 E:371921,812462	4-500mm topsoil over very rocky natural		
	Grip 7	W:371948,812463 E:371951,812475	Disturbed topsoil fill to 1m		
	Grip 8	W:371997,812493 E:372002,812495	1.1m all stone and earth build- up		
	Grip 9	W:372033,812510 E:372037,812511	1.1m all stone and earth build- up		Original number T3 on photograph
	Grip 10	W:372058,812521 E:372063,812522	1.1m all stone and earth build- up		
	Grip 11	W:372089,812533 E:372094,812535	1.1m all stone and earth build- up		
	Grip 12	W:372119,812546 E:372123,812546	0.90-1m deposited brown soil over yellow sandy natural		Original number T6 on photograph
	Grip 13	W:372143,812555 E:372148,812555	0.90-1m deposited brown soil over yellow sandy natural		
	Grip 14	W:372172,812566 E:372177,812566	0.90-1m deposited brown soil over yellow sandy natural		
S of Castle					
	Grip 15	NW:372229,812546 SE:372232,812542	300mm topsoil over natural.		
	Grip 16	E:372251,812547 W:372256,812537	Disturbed to 1m.		
				G	Drain with brick infill across W end of trench
	Grip 17	E:372294,812529 W:372289,812530			
		SW:372290,812530 NE:372292,812530		Wall A	Detail see below
	Grip 18	E:372321,812519 W:372326,812518	N side loose rubble at road edge, rest topsoil and rubble infill to 1m		
N Drive					
	Grip 19	N:372275,812636 S:372273,812631	300-400mm topsoil over natural		Electric cable to S
	Grip 20	N:372269,812664	400mm topsoil		

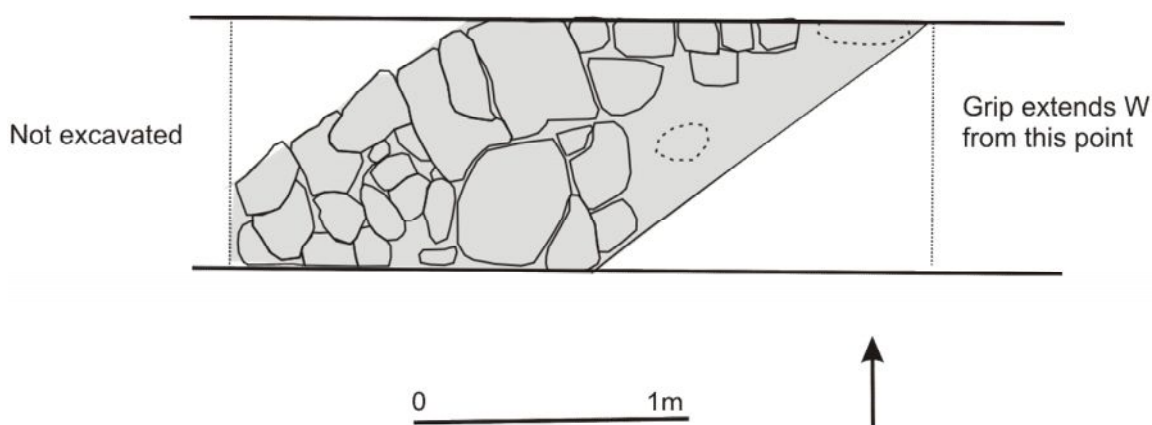
		S:372271,812659	over natural		
	Grip 21	N:372274,812665 S:372275,812660	c.400m topsoil over natural		
	Grip 22	N:372252,812738 S:372250,812743	c.400m topsoil over natural		
	Grip 23	N:372255,812745 S:372257,812740	c.400m topsoil over natural		
				F	2 black plastic pipes E/W across S end of trench (Illus 12)
	Road Crossing 1 Total depth 350mm.	N:372181,812969 S:372178,812976	300mm tar and road make-up over natural		Water pipe placed in plastic drain below road
Triangle W of castle and drain trench 2	Trench 2: gullies on either side of 'triangle'. 800mm wide 200-250mm deep	(illus 4)	Topsoil and small stones		
	Road widening on either side of triangle with drain and gullies to soakaway pits in grass. Pits 3x3m and 3x 3.8m. 1.3m deep.	(illus 4) Soakaways: 372200,812564 372214,812554 Drain NW:372181,812571 S:372217,812562 (by road crossing below drive) NE 372224,812585	c.600mm topsoil over natural.		No features
Drain trench 1	Extends along S side of drive from triangle to archway into courtyard, with spur to soakaway in grass NE of archway. Trench 540-700mm wide. 700mm deep. Soakaway 3.8 x 2.2m. 1.2m deep.	W: 372224,812585 By arch: 372267,812601 to E at soakaway in grass:372285,812611	From bend to archway W to triangle there was c400mm topsoil over natural. From W of wall B to archway, c.700mm redeposited soil with occasional frags animal bone, slate. E of wall B c 150-300 topsoil over natural		
		372282,812609		Wall B	Details below
		372262,812602		C	Electricity cable
		372278,812610		D	? security cable
		372286,812608 to 372285,812613		E	Telecomm cable runs c.100mm below grass along E edge of soakaway

Wall A (Illus 4-7, 15)

When topsoil was excavated in grip 17 the top of a wall running NE/SW across the trench was revealed. This was further excavated by hand, recorded and backfilled and the grip was extended E of the wall.

The wall was c.900mm wide and c.2.5m was revealed. There were larger stones on the less disturbed N edge but many of the stones in the wall core were fairly small. The base was on natural but no obvious wall cut was visible within the trench. Up to c.400mm height survived. It was sealed by 600-780mm topsoil and there was 50-100mm of light yellow sandy soil, possibly mortar, over the N edge. To the N the ground below the level of the wall was dark brown, more compact earth with some charcoal. To the S undifferentiated topsoil extended to c. 900mm on to the natural. This gives some impression that NW was 'within' an enclosed area relating to the castle and SE was 'outside' that area.

A small sherd of post-medieval redware was found during the cleaning of the wall.



Illus 5 Plan of wall A



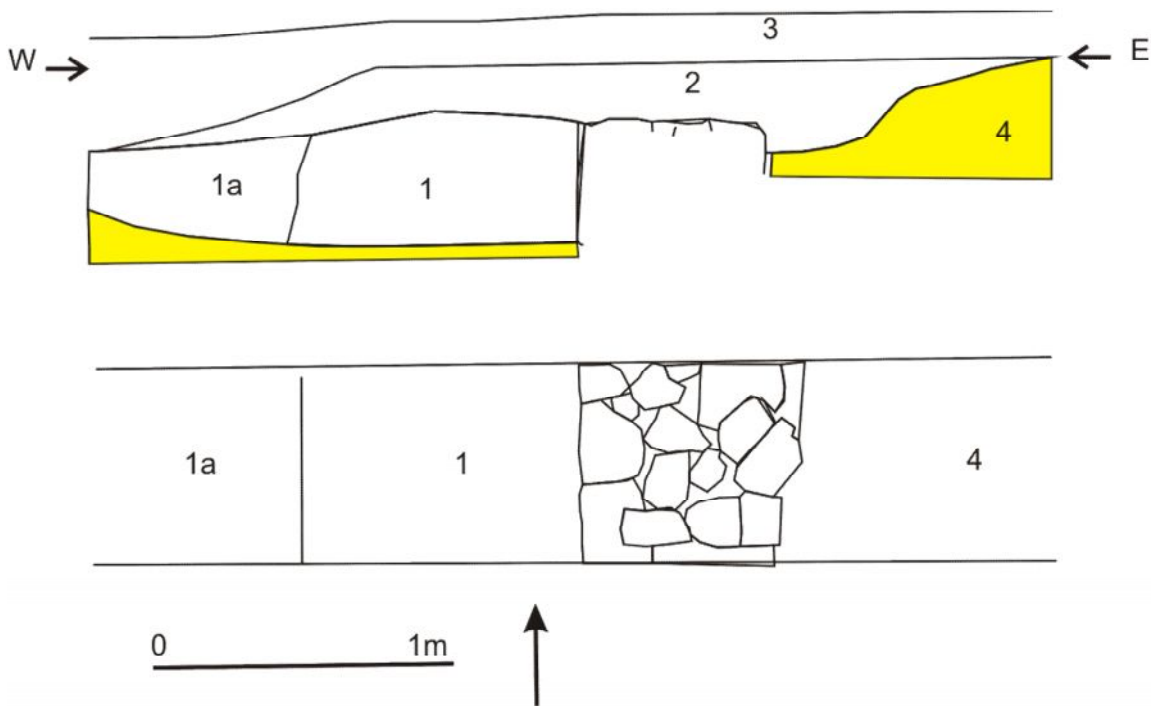
Illus 6 Position of wall A in Grip 17 in relation to castle



Illus 7 Detail of wall A looking E

Wall B (Illus 8-11, 15)

Wall B ran N/S across drain trench 1, in the grass to the NE of the archway into the courtyard. The wall was 800mm wide and survived to 400mm and up to 3 courses on the W face. The wall was of rubble stones but set with a good vertical face to the W. It had been mortared with a pale white/yellow sandy mortar. The E face was cut into the natural (Illus 8: layer 4). There was a difference of c. 600mm in the depth of natural on either side of the wall; it appears to have been used as a revetting wall against a deliberate cut into the natural. The lower ground to the W had been built up to the height of the surviving wall with brown earth (Illus 8: 1) containing some rubble, stone, slate and mortar and fragments of glass and animal bone, all of probable 19th century date. The amount of stone reduced away from the wall face (Illus 8:1a). A layer of yellow redeposited natural with some stone rubble (Illus 8:2) sealed both this infill to the W and the natural on the E side of the wall, below topsoil (Illus 8:3).



Illus 8 South Section and plan of wall B



Illus 9 Position of wall B in relation to castle



Illus 10 Detail of wall B in Drain trench 1, looking E



Illus 11 Detail of wall B from above looking S

5 Discussion

Drainage grips from W lodge to S of castle (Illus 1, 2)

Drainage grips 1-3 and 7-14 showed that there is a considerable deliberate build up of deposited earth and, in the case of grips 1 and 2, rubble, used on either side of the W drive. This was not apparent in grips 4-6 which were placed further from the road to avoid the water main. While it is possible that some of this deposit may be derived from the construction of the water main trench along the S side of the drive, it may also have been a deliberate attempt to create a level carriageway. No road crossings were undertaken in this area so it is unclear to what extent the road itself was built up.

Drainage grips and road crossing N driveway (Illus 12)

Unlike the W driveway, the N driveway (drainage grips 19-23 and road crossing 1) only had 300-400mm of topsoil above natural.



Illus 12 Grip 23 showing shallow topsoil. Water pipes (F) across S end of trench.

Triangle and drain trench 2 (Illus 13, 14)

The area W of the castle around the road 'triangle' and in the grass to the W showed only a moderate degree of soil deposition, with up to 600mm topsoil, such as might have

been expected with the formation of the triangle itself.



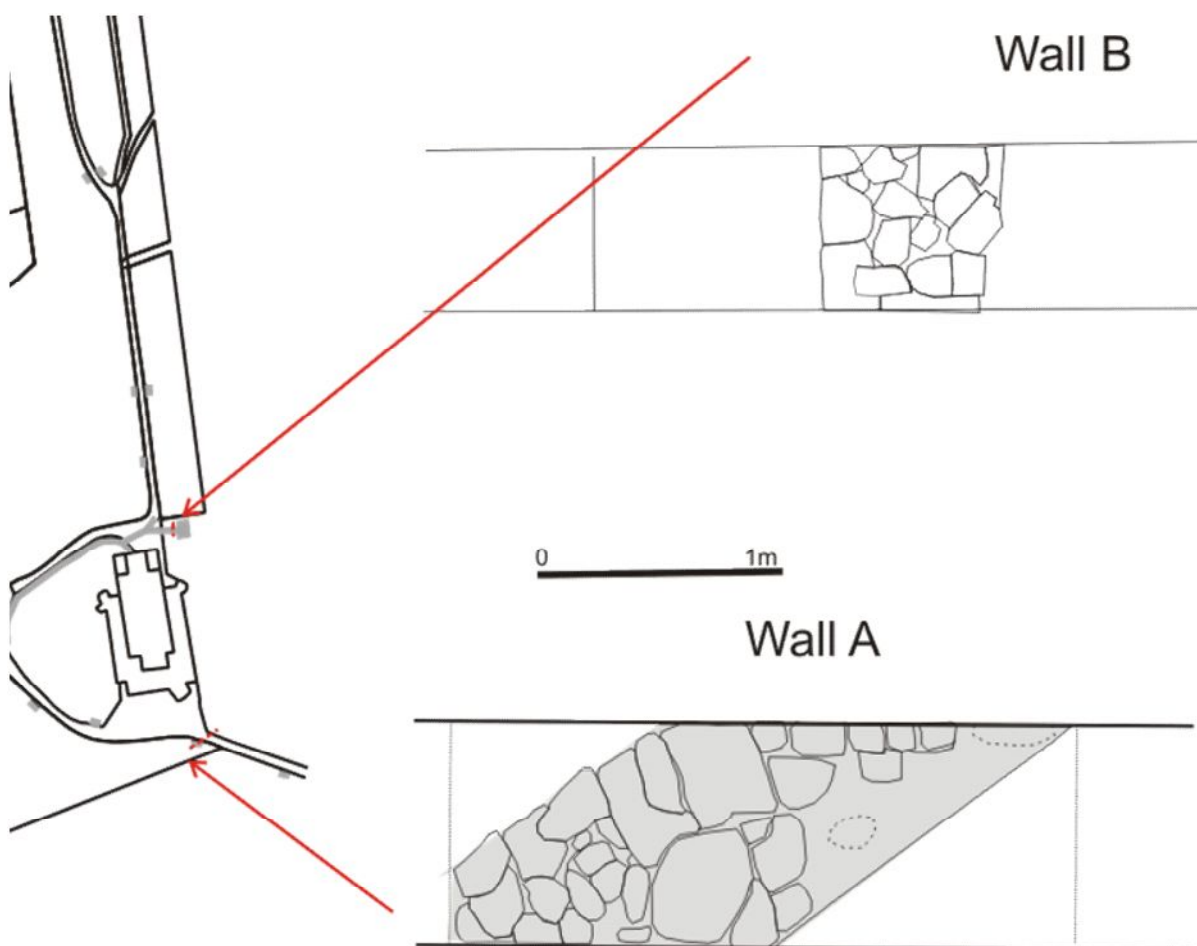
Illus 13 Triangle area



Illus 14 Drain from triangle to soakaway in grass to W of castle

Drainage grips S of castle and wall A

Drainage grip 15 showed only shallow (300mm) topsoil, but the three grips (16-18) S and SE of the castle all had up to 1m of deposited topsoil and rubble, indicating perhaps some of the levelling of the immediate castle environs in the late 18th century. This is likely to have happened in or around 1796 when the old garden at the E of the castle was dismantled and moved and the present landscape developed (Murray & Murray 2010). Wall A in grip 17 is not shown on the 1799 estate map or subsequent OS maps. Nor is it shown on the 1788/9 estate plan that shows the earlier garden layout. It does not appear to relate to the stone culvert found further E in 2014 during drainage works (Murray & Murray 2014). It is possible, therefore that this may be a late medieval wall.



Illus 15 Detail of plan to indicate approximate direction of each of the excavated walls (trenches shown grey in main plan)



Illus 16 Gully running to W side of archway

Drain trench 1 from triangle to grass E of archway and wall B

There was no great deposition of topsoil from the triangle E towards the bend in towards the archway, but in front of the archway and across as far as the W side of wall B, there was c 700mm of disturbed deposited earth with some slate, animal bone and occasional glass bottle fragments. This seems to have been in an area contained by wall B with the

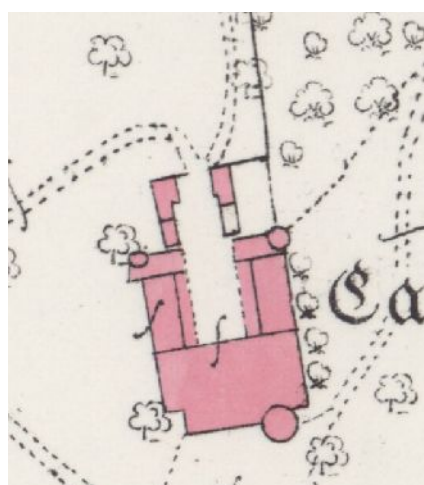
natural revetted by this wall.



Illus 17 Detail of 1788/9 Estate Plan. © Copyright Aberdeen University. Reproduced with permission. Red circle indicates possible revetting wall.

While it is possible that wall B might be the W wall of the building/structure shown on the 1788/9 estate map in this area N of the original formal gardens (Illus 17), this seems unlikely given the fact that the natural was cut back on the W side and that the good face of the wall lay on the W. It is perhaps possible that this is a revetting wall as indicated on the 1788/9 map and still retained on the OS maps of 1864 (Illus 18) and 1899.

It should, however, be noted that in the 1940s there was a Nissen hut in this area which may have caused some disturbance.



Illus 18 Detail of 1st OS map of 1864 (www.nls.ac.uk)

References

Murray H K & Murray, J C 2010 Castle Fraser Environs Project 2010. MAS 2010-18. CAF/10/1. Report available in NTS archive and Aberdeenshire SMR.

Murray, H K & Murray, J C 2014 Castle Fraser, Aberdeenshire. Drain Test Pit. MAS 2014-35. Report available in NTS archive and Aberdeenshire SMR.

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record (to archive)

Digital frame number	Content
1-2	Grip 8
3-8	Grip 9(originally T3)
9-14	Grip 12 (originally T6)
15-28	Grip 17 with wall A
29-32	Grip 23 (originally T16)
33-40	Road widening at triangle W of castle
41-58	Soakaway from triangle W of castle
59-66	Trench 2 around triangle W of castle
67-76	Drain trench 1 across front of archway to edge of E lawn
77-101	Wall B in Drain trench 1 at N end of E lawn, NE of archway
102-104	E end of Drain trench 1
105-106	Soakaway in E lawn, NE of archway
107-108	Grip 3 E of NW lodge
109-110	Road crossing N of castle at bend