

**MAINS OF LESLIE  
INSCH  
ABERDEENSHIRE**

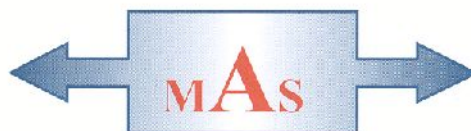


**Archaeological Watching Brief**

Carried out 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017

by

**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2017-16**

by

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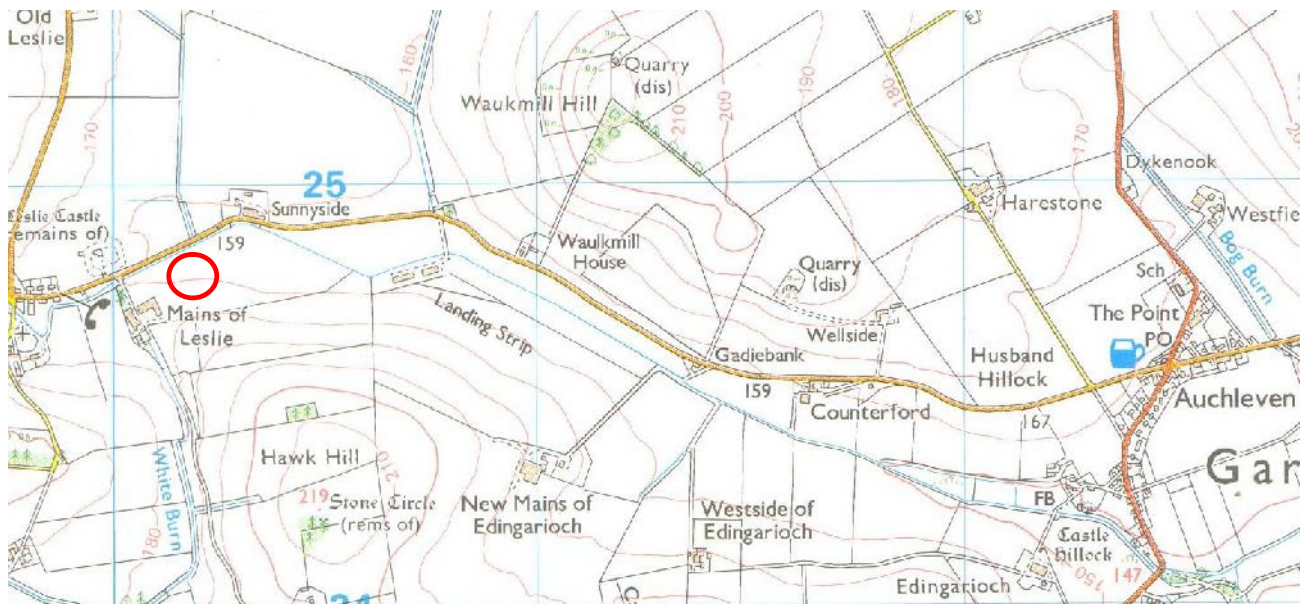
**MAINS OF LESLIE  
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Archaeological Watching Brief**

1. Background
  - 1.1 A planning application for the building of a new General Purpose Agricultural building at Mains of Leslie, Leslie, Inch, Aberdeenshire required a watching brief for ground works. (APP/2016/3336)
  - 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. The archaeological condition (Condition 1) was applied to this application in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP). Due to the proximity of Leslie Castle and the known prehistoric sites, a Written Scheme of Investigation was required. This specified that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during the soil strip of the footprint of the new shed.
  - 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Mr Alan Simpson. The work was carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
2. Methodology
  - 2.1 A watching brief was undertaken during machining. The cultivated topsoil was removed to the top of natural by a mechanical excavator with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Any possible features were investigated and the stratigraphy recorded.
  - 2.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper 120 GPS and Glonass.

- 2.3 A full set of photographs will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the National Sites and Monuments Records at HES.



**Illus 1 Soil strip of site area**



**Illus 2 Location of site (red circle shows approximate position)**

### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The site of the new building lies to the E of the farm road to Mains of Leslie. It is within a cultivated grass field which slopes gently S up towards Hawk Hill.



3.2 The site lies within an area with potential survival of prehistoric and medieval archaeology.

- To the N, across the road between Auchleven and Leslie, is Leslie Castle, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century castle on the probable site of an earlier medieval castle (Aberdeenshire SMR NJ52SE0001). Mains farm is probably on the site of the home farm of the castle.



**Illus 3 General view of stripped area looking N. Leslie Castle stands behind the trees in the background.**

- To the S on the higher ground of Hawk Hill (Aberdeenshire SMR NJ62SW0019 and 0035-0037) 3 Bronze Age cist burials were found in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Also on Hawk Hill, two stones remain of a recumbent stone circle (NJ62SW 0001 (also called Loanhead).



**Illus 4 Looking S towards Hawk Hill (trees on top) showing site of new shed in relation to existing buildings.**

- Bronze Age or Iron Age settlement is indicated by aerial photographs of the Edingarioch farm to the E, which indicate three ring ditches (possible roundhouses) and a souterrain (Aberdeenshire SMR NJ62SW0027.)
- More generally three stone axes (Aberdeenshire SMR: NJ52SE0030) are known from 'Leslie', with no more exact find spot.

Parish: Leslie (Aberdeenshire)

NGR (centre of whole area) NJ 6006 2474 NGR

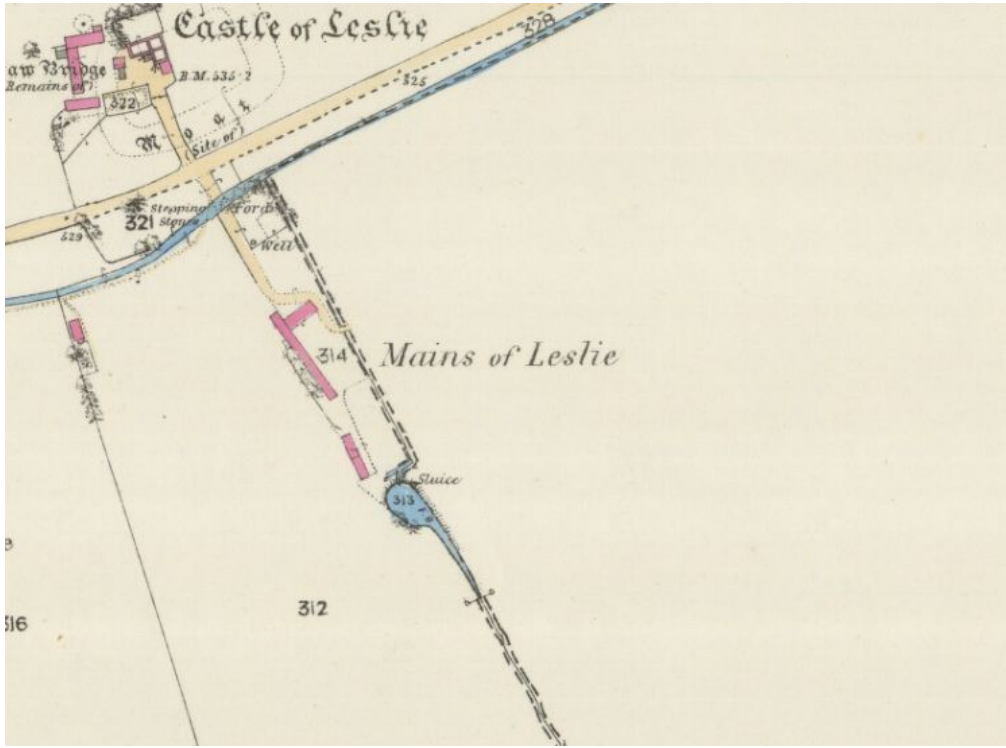
#### 4. Map evidence

1747-55 Roy Military Map. This shows the field in cultivation with no additional features. [www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk)

1797 Scanned image of plan of the Mill and Glebe of Leslie, from a book of plans of the estate of Leith Hall belonging to General Alex Hay of Rannas, surveyed by George Brown, 1797. Accessed on line at <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/961142>

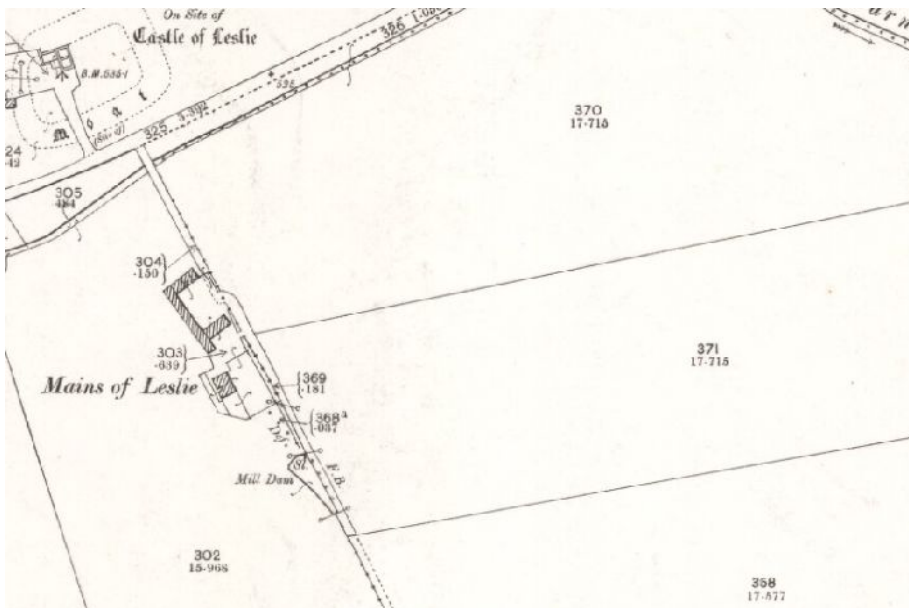
This shows the field in cultivation with no additional features.

1867 1<sup>st</sup> OS map 1867 (published 1870). Aberdeen sheet xlv.13 (Leslie) shows no additional features within area of site.



Illus 5 Aberdeen sheet xlv.13 (Leslie) 1867 (pub 1870)

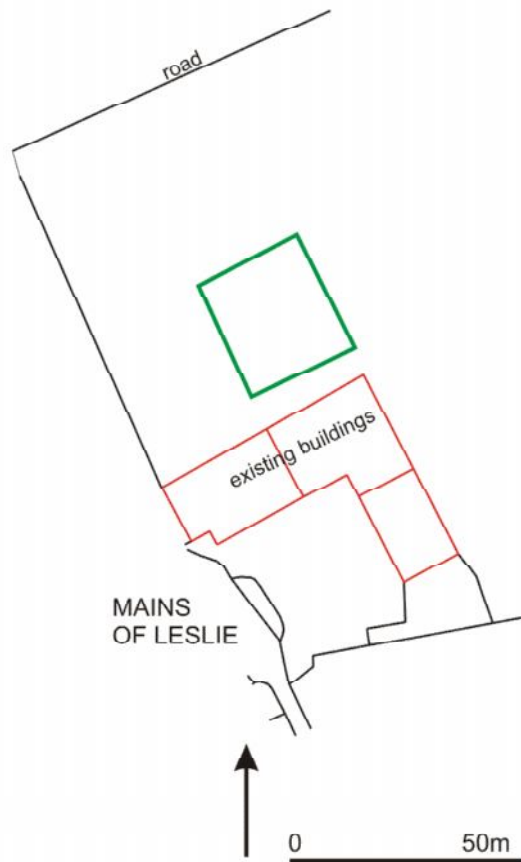
1899 OS map 1899 (published 1900) Aberdeenshire sheet 044.13. Shows no further details within area of site.



Illus 6 Aberdeenshire sheet 044.13. 1899 (published 1900)

## 5. The Results

An area approximately 23m E/W and 26m N/S was stripped of topsoil to the top of natural.



**Illus 7 Plan of site. Site outline in green**

The topsoil ranged in depth between 300-400mm, being possibly a little deeper on the W side. Natural comprised yellow clay, in places incorporating gritty stoney deposits. The c. 5m N of the existing buildings was, inevitably considerably disturbed.





**Illus 8 E section indicating topsoil depth**

An area of patchy burnt deposit lay near the middle of the W side of the area; this appeared likely to be of 20<sup>th</sup>-century origin, probably the burying and ploughing in of incidental rubbish burning.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.

## 6. Discussion

There was no evidence of archaeological features or finds.

### Photograph Catalogue

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | General view looking S to trees on Hawk Hill |
| 2     | General view looking N to road               |
| 3     | View looking NE                              |
| 4-8   | View looking S to trees on Hawk Hill         |
| 9-12  | Area after soil strip, looking N             |
| 13-15 | Area after soil strip looking E              |