

**PLOT 1**  
**PITFOUR LAKE**  
**MINTLAW**  
**ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Archaeological Watching Brief**

Carried out 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**

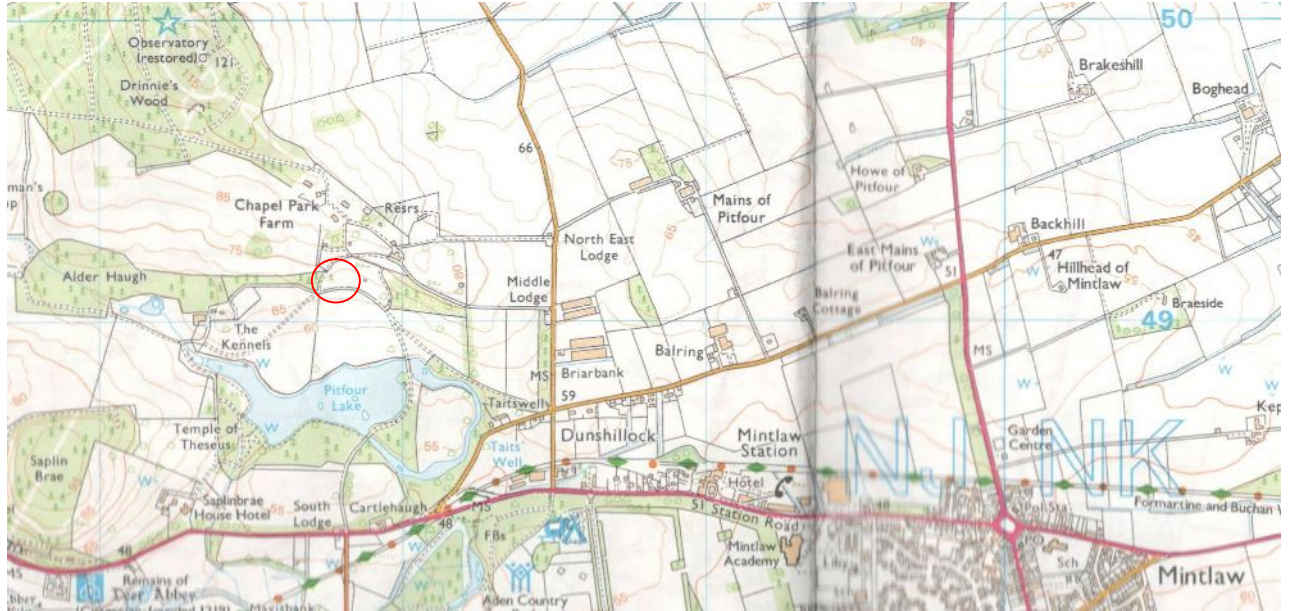


**Report No: MAS 2018-17**  
by  
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**PLOT 1  
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Archaeological Watching Brief**

1. Background
  - 1.1 A planning application for the building of a new dwelling house on Plot 1, Pitfour, Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire required a watching brief for ground works. (APP/2017/2787)
  - 1.2 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, HESPS), which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for archaeological work to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances. This specified that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during the soil strip of the footprint of the new dwelling, garage and access..
  - 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Mr Brian Buchan. The work was carried out on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018.
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 Location of site (red circle shows approximate position). OS map reproduced Crown Copyright. Licence 100041040**

### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The site of the new building lies in the Pitfour Estate, N of the A950 and WNW of Mintlaw. It is on a gentle slope facing S to Pitfour Lake.
- 3.2.1 Prior to the soil strip a number of trees had been felled on the site and topsoil had been removed off part of the site (Illus 2). This area was given a cleaning scrape during the watching brief to determine if any features had been revealed.



**Illus 2 Site, looking W at commencement of watching brief**

3.3 The site lies within the important Pitfour Estate, first developed by the Ferguson family in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and developed throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The mansion had stood to the E of the present site, but it was demolished in 1926/7 and the stonework re-used on Council properties in Aberdeen (McKean, 1990,91-2). Nothing remains of the mansion above ground but basement cavities are evident on the property to the E of the present site. Part of the present site had been the tennis courts (pers. comm. Mr Hamish Watson).

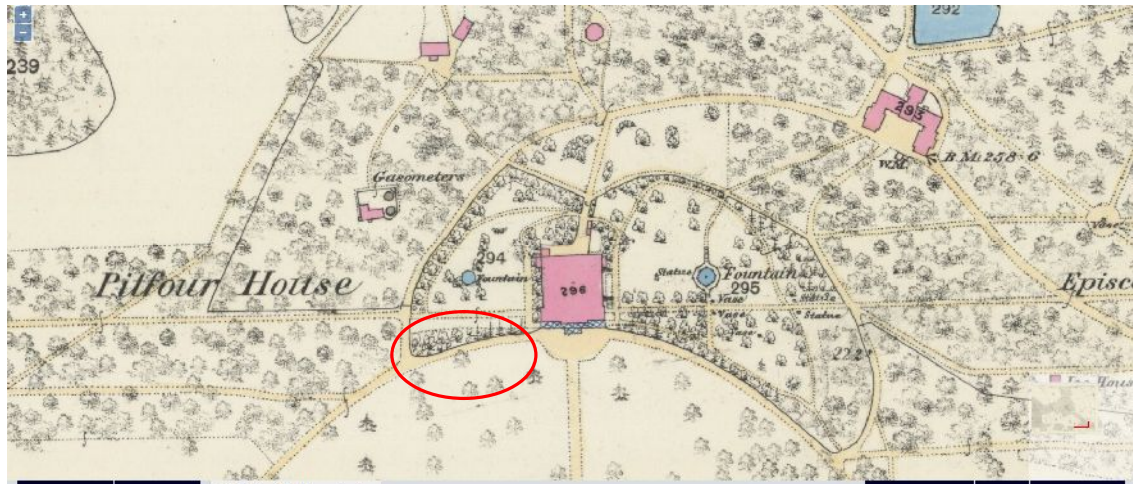
Parish: Old Deer

NGR (centre of whole area) NJ 97765 49140

#### 4. Map evidence

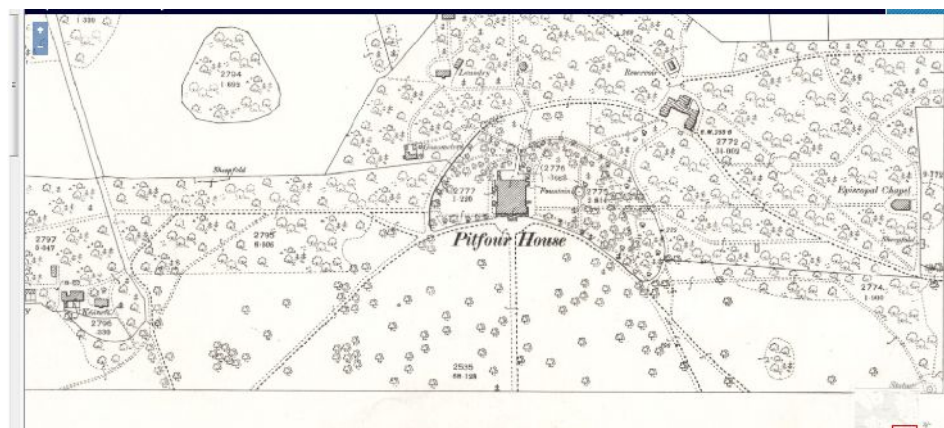
1870

1870 1<sup>st</sup> OS map Aberdeenshire & Banffshire (Det) XIII.16 (Old Deer) 1870 shows the area of Plot 1, to the W of the former mansion house as part of the formal gardens.



**Illus 3 Aberdeenshire & Banffshire (Det) XIII.16 (Old Deer) 1870**

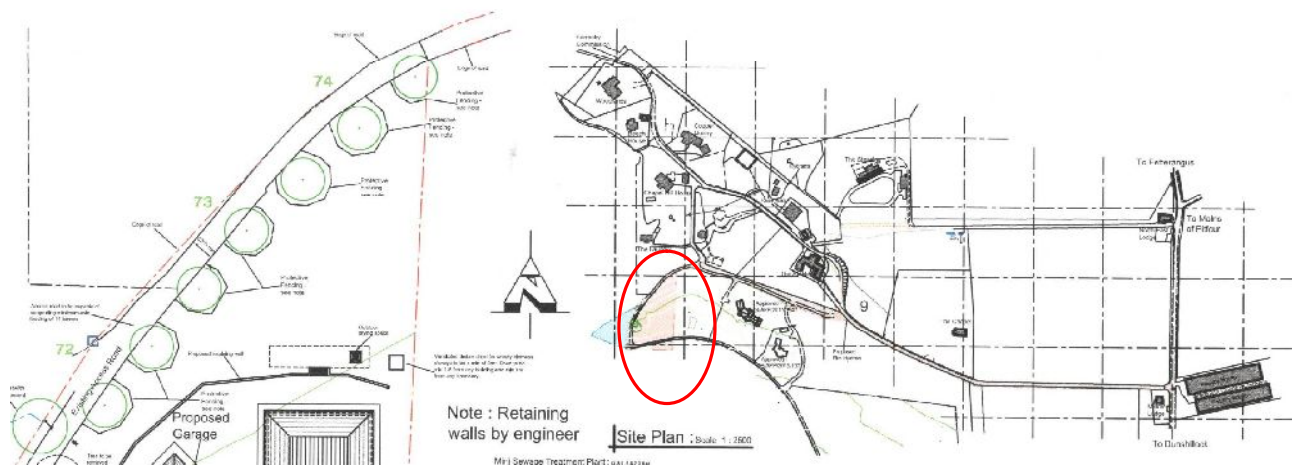
1901 OS map 1901 (published 1902) Aberdeenshire sheet XIII.16 (Old Deer) Shows little change within area of site.



**Illus 4 Aberdeenshire sheet xiii.16 1900 (published 1902)**

## 5. The Results

An area approximately 32m E/W and 50m N/S was stripped of topsoil to the top of natural. (co-ordinates 397742,849146; 3 97787,849162; 397753, 849132; 397782,849131)



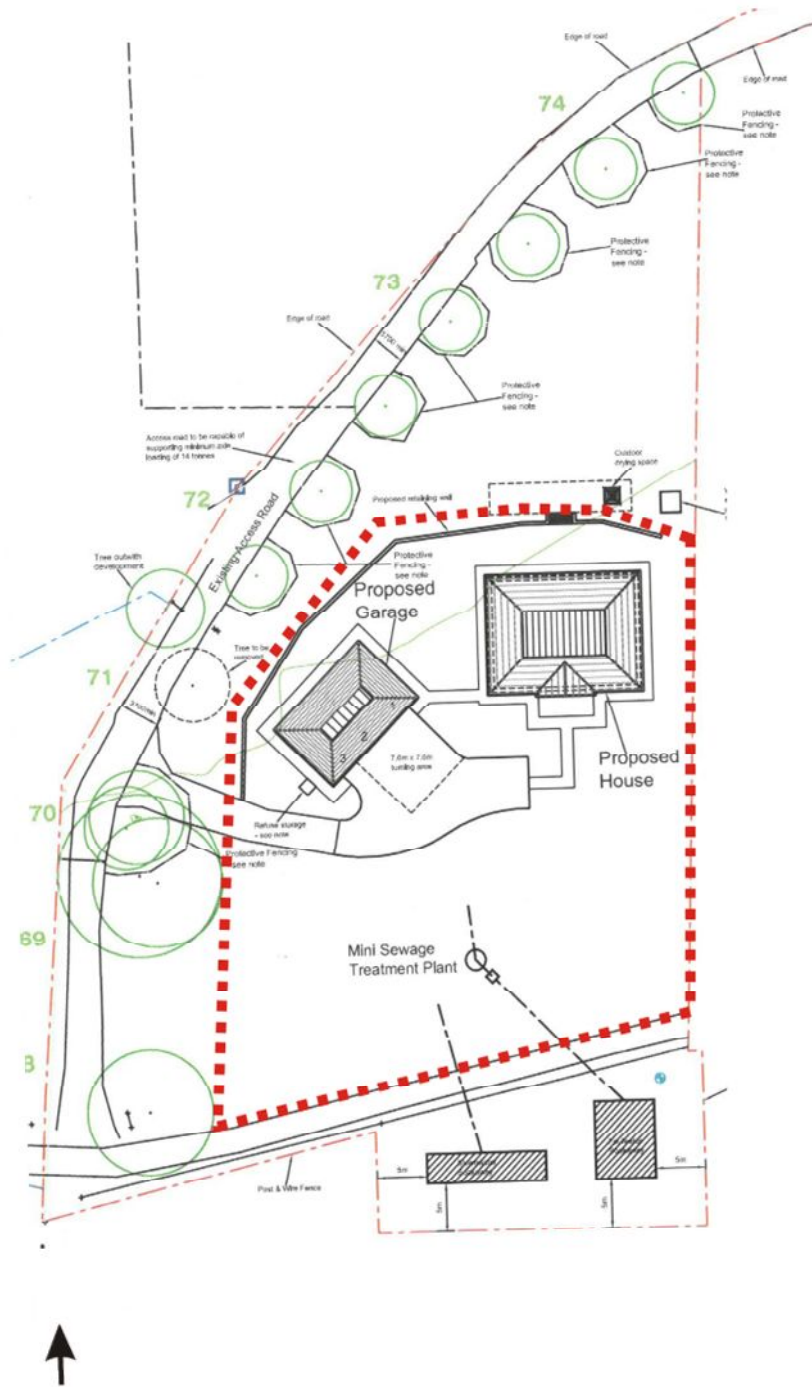
**Illus 5 Plan of site. Site shaded pink. Plan courtesy of Baxter Design Company.**

The topsoil ranged in depth between c. 250-350mm. Natural comprised yellow sand. Considering the demolition of the original mansion house in 1926/7 had taken place just to the E on the adjoining plot, there was a surprising lack of building rubble or debris. Three small fragments of worked stone were recorded (Illus XX), two of which may have been from garden sculpture.

Apart from a cast iron water pipe running N/S, no other archaeological features or finds were evident.



**Illus 6 Three fragments of worked stone from the topsoil**



Illus 7 Site plan courtesy of Baxter Design Company. Red dotted outline indicates area of watching brief

## 6. Discussion

There was no evidence of surviving archaeological features or finds.

## Photograph Catalogue

1-4	General view across site looking W before watching brief
5-9	General view across site looking W after soil strip
10-15	General view across site looking S after soil strip
16-17	General view across site looking SE after soil strip
18-19	General view looking E after soil strip

## References

MacKean, C 1990 *Banff and Buchan: An illustrated architectural guide*.  
Edinburgh:RIAS.