

**Non-Invasive Archaeological Investigations for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
(AWPR Package)**

Project code: AWPR-002

Employer: AWPR Managing Agent

Consultant: Jacobs UK Ltd



**ABERDEEN WESTERN PERIPHERAL ROUTE PACKAGE
(NORTHERN LEG)**

Dyce Airfield – Radio Station (Site 154c)

Building Recording Survey



Report Author: Jürgen van Wessel

Report Reference No: AWPR-NL-007

Date: 31st October 2012



**Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL**



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ALBA AOSMHOR**



**HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd**



Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
(NORTHERN LEG)

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Building Recording Survey

Contract:	Non-Invasive Archaeological Investigations for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR Package)
Employer	AWPR Managing Agent
Consultant	Jacobs UK Ltd
Contractor	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
Contract Manager	Russel Coleman
Project Manager	Sorina Spanou
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Survey	Jürgen van Wessel
Schedule	
Fieldwork	October 2012
Report	October 2012

SUMMARY

A historic building survey to Level 3 standard (English Heritage 2006) of Dyce Airfield – Radio Station (Site 154c) was undertaken in order to provide an interpretative report and a full archive in advance of construction associated with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) (Northern Leg) scheme. The survey will provide a record of the building prior to its removal during the AWPR construction works.

The Radio Station comprises a small circular building with a substantial porch, built of brick and concrete, with a roof mount for a dish/antenna. The latter has been removed, along with nearly all of the internal fittings. The structure was in generally good condition at the time of the survey.

An investigation of the documentary sources revealed very few references to this structure, although it can be dated by aerial photography to before 1941. The building is likely to have functioned as both an R/T (Radio Telephone) and D/F (Direction Finding) station for Dyce Airfield (now Aberdeen Airport). It appears to have been in operation for at least 50 years before being decommissioned in the early 1990s.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This document is submitted as the report on a building recording survey at Dyce Airfield Radio Station (Site 154c) located on the proposed route of the Northern Leg of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR). The building recording survey is part of a programme of archaeological non-invasive investigations to facilitate the construction of the AWPR and associated schemes. The work was undertaken in accordance with a specification prepared by Jacobs UK Ltd within the Invitation to Tender (ITT) (Aberdeen City Council 2012).
- 1.1.2 The AWPR is proposed as both a bypass and a distributor road around the City of Aberdeen. The route envisages the construction of a wholly new dual carriageway some 34.6km long around Aberdeen, together with a link to Stonehaven some 11.5 km long, and includes associated side roads and junctions. The AWPR is divided into three sections; the Northern Leg, Southern Leg and Fastlink (Illus 1).
- 1.1.3 The Employer is the AWPR Managing Agent, administrator of the Commission on behalf of Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and its funding partners. The Consultant is Adam Brossler of Jacobs UK Ltd. The Engineer for the A90 Balmedie to Tippetty Scheme is Grontmij who also facilitated access to the survey areas. The Contractor is Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, the archaeological organisation appointed by the AWPR Managing Agent to carry out the work reported here. Historic Scotland provides advice, supervision and oversight of the content, conduct and quality of archaeological aspects of the Contract, acting in support of Transport Scotland.
- 1.1.4 On the 11th of October 2012 Headland Archaeology undertook the building recording survey of Site 154c to the specification provided in the ITT (ACC 2012). The project was managed by Russel Coleman (Contract Manager) and Sorina Spanou (Project Manager). Fieldwork and reporting was undertaken by Jurgen van Wessel.

1.2 *Background to the Project – AWPR*

- 1.2.1 Desk-based assessment and site inspection undertaken in support of the cultural heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) identified a total of 316 sites of cultural heritage significance along or close to the route (Jacobs UK Ltd 2007). Chapters 13 (Northern Leg), 28 (Southern Leg) and 43 (Fastlink) (Cultural Heritage and Archaeology) of the ES for the scheme recommends measures to be undertaken to

evaluate or mitigate potential impacts of the scheme on the cultural heritage resource. These recommendations include both invasive and non-invasive archaeological evaluation followed by archaeological mitigation.

1.2.2 Based on the requirements of the ES and the results of subsequent dialogue with Historic Scotland, the following non-invasive archaeological investigations are required across all sections of the scheme:

- topographic survey;
- palaeoenvironmental assessment;
- geophysical survey;
- field walking;
- metal detector survey and
- building recording.

1.2.3 The present report deals with the building recording survey of Dyce Airfield-Radio Station (Site 154c) located on the proposed Northern leg of the route.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 The general aim of the archaeological non-invasive investigations is to identify the extent and character of known and unknown archaeological remains in order to enable a programme of mitigation to be designed. More specific aims and objectives are as follows:

- To identify, investigate and record any such archaeological remains to the extent possible by the methods put forward in the ITT Specification (ACC 2012); in this case, to provide a record of Dyce Airfield-Radio Station in advance of the AWPR construction works.
- To disseminate the results through deposition of an ordered archive and a detailed report at the National Monument Records of Scotland (NMRS), and publication at a level of detail appropriate to the significance of the results.

1.3.2 The results of the non-invasive investigations will enable a more accurate assessment of the potential impact of the scheme on archaeological remains and the design of any further evaluation works and an appropriate programme of mitigation works (if necessary). Such works will form part of a separate contract.

1.4 Site Location & Description

- 1.4.1 The building is located at NGR NJ 87309 14483 in the parish of Dyce (Illus 1). It stands at an elevation of 67.5m OD, around 30m south of Lyndmoor house in an undulating arable field (Plate 1). It is aligned with the main runway at Aberdeen (Dyce) Airport, approximately 1.4km from its northern end.
- 1.4.2 The Radio Station is a small circular building with a substantial porch, built of brick and concrete, with a roof mount for a dish/antenna. The latter has been removed, along with nearly all of the internal fittings. The structure was in generally good condition at the time of the survey.

1.5 History of Dyce Airfield

- 1.5.1 The Radio Station relates to Dyce Airfield (now Aberdeen Airport), which lies approximately 2km to the south-south-east. The airfield was opened in July 1934 (Chorlton 2010, 65) as a civil aerodrome operated by Aberdeen Airways Ltd. (Aberdeen City SMR no NJ81SE 0113). It was requisitioned and improved by the Air Ministry for military use following the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Civilian flights resumed in 1946 and the airfield was operated from 1947 by the state-owned airline British European Airways. Further expansions and improvements occurred in the early 1950s, at which time the airfield was renamed to Aberdeen Airport, and again in the 1970s, when a new terminal and facilities for handling and servicing helicopters related to North Sea Oil activity were added. There have been a number of further enhancements in recent years, including a runway extension and improvements to the main passenger terminal.

2. SURVEY PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The historic building recording of Dyce Airfield – Radio Tower (Site 154c) was undertaken to a Level 3 standard as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).
- 2.2 English Heritage's Guide (2006, 14) states: Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and support an historical analysis. The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. If documentary sources are used they are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record will not normally discuss the

building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance at any length. It may, however, form part of a wider survey – thematic or regional, for example – of a group of buildings, in which additional source material contributes to an overall historical and architectural synthesis. A Level 3 record may be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat but time or resources are insufficient for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.

- 2.3 The fieldwork consisted of a metric survey of the building using reflectorless EDM. The building is relatively simple, and it was possible to record all necessary detail using this method; rectified imagery was thus not required in this instance.
- 2.4 The drawn record included:
- Measured plans of the structures, identifying evidence for phasing, alteration etc;
 - Measured elevation drawings of the structures showing individual coping stones and other architectural details; Sample areas showing the nature of the wall construction below the coping stones shall also be included and
 - All drawings shall be annotated with information on structural detail, changes in building material, evidence for phasing, function and alteration.
- 2.5 A full photographic record was made of the structure using a 35 mm analogue Single Lens Reflex camera for the production of black-and-white photographs, and a high resolution digital camera for the production of colour images. The resultant negatives and prints from the film-type camera will provide a longer lasting and a more stable photographic output for archival purposes.
- 2.6 Plans showing the location and direction of all print and digital photographs (Illus 2) and a full photographic index (Appendix 1) are also provided.
- 2.7 Digital images will be supplied in a suitable digital format for long-term storage and accessibility, e.g. uncompressed TIFF format. An illustrative selection of digital images will be provided in hard copy as part of the project archive.
- 2.8 The photographic record of the site was used to amplify and illuminate the archive drawings and supplement and verify the written record.
- 2.9 The photographic record included black and white prints and digital photographs showing:

- the overall appearance of the structure in its setting, including oblique and parallel shots;
 - the elevations of the building, including coverage of the exterior and interior;
 - structural details.
- 2.10 The written recording of the structure, historic surfaces and associated heritage assets was undertaken using pro forma record forms.
- 2.11 All field records and other products of the work shall be archived with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), following and adhering to its standards and guidance for project archiving (RCAHMS 1996a, b).
- 2.12 Due to health and safety concerns, no attempt was made to gain direct access to the roof.

3. RESULTS

3.1 *Documentary evidence*

- 3.1.1 Very little documentary or cartographic evidence was found for this building. It has not been listed and does not have a record in the NMRS. The Aberdeen City SMR number listed in the Environmental Statement (NJ81SE 44.02) does not exist; it is a valid NMRS number but refers to the location of a pillbox some 900m to the south. It was not possible to find reference to this structure elsewhere in the SMR.
- 3.1.2 The building does not appear on the 1928 Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet, nor the 1946 or 1959 one-inch. It is first shown on the 1964 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. There are some difficulties relying on Ordnance Survey mapping of this period when researching military or other strategically important sites; many were simply omitted. While neither the 1946 nor 1959 Ordnance Survey maps show the building, they also do not show any detail of the adjacent airfield. The 1946 sheet does not acknowledge the airfield's existence at all (Illus 3), instead depicting the area as it was prior to the construction of the airfield. In 1959 the area is left blank but labelled 'Dyce Airport' (Illus 4). Curiously, the 1957 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 National Grid sheet does show some detail of 'Aberdeen (Dyce) Aerodrome'; but again there is no sign of the Radio Station. Lyndmoor House is shown from 1957.
- 3.1.3 The building falls outwith the coverage of a Luftwaffe air photo of Dyce Airfield (RCAHMS Item SC 445460). However, Royal Air Force Imagery from March 1941 clearly shows the building on at least three separate plates (National Collection of Aerial Photography ID nos 006-004-003-053-C, 006-004-003-063-C and 006-004-003-064-C).

3.2 Survey and Description

- 3.2.1 The building is circular in plan (Illus 5) with a protruding rectangular porch facing due north. The external diameter of the circular part is 5m; the total length of the building from north to south (including the porch) is 6.45m.
- 3.2.2 The building is single storey (Illus 6, 7); standing to between 3.15m and 3.4m high to the top of the roof slab. The variance is due to the ground sloping down somewhat to the south-east (Plate 2). A supporting structure for the (now removed) dish/aerial rises a further 0.31m from roof level.
- 3.2.3 The walls are of brick and concrete construction and are 0.47m thick. The exterior is harled, but where this has cracked or fallen off (and on the interior of the porch) the concrete below is exposed (Plate 3). It is possible that this concrete is only a coating; immediately below the roof some of this layer has also broken away to expose brick beneath (Plate 3). Not enough of the brickwork was exposed at any point to assess the bonding or type of brick. Whether brick has been used only in areas requiring extra support (i.e. the wallhead and around the air vents, see below) or if the whole structure is of concrete-coated brick is at this time unclear. No sign of reinforcement was visible within the exposed sections of wall fabric. Two air vents with metal grilles are visible on the western side (Illus 7b). The condition of the exterior is generally good; some of the harling has fallen away, including a large part of the east external elevation of the porch.
- 3.2.4 The roof is of reinforced concrete; it forms a 0.6m thick plug with a 0.15m thick rim where it is supported on the wallhead. It appears to consist of a single slab, spanning both the circular section and the porch. It is likely to have been pre-fabricated and lifted into position, please see section 4.3 for discussion. It has been weatherproofed with a thin tar finish, some of which has come loose, exposing the concrete below. On top of the roof, a rectangular structure measuring 2.46m long, 0.51m wide and 0.35m tall is aligned north-north-west to south-south-east. It appears to have acted as a support for a dish/antenna and three vertical bolts or mounting pins can be seen at its centre. A smaller rectangular structure runs perpendicular to this; it measures 2.2m long by 0.1m wide and 0.08m high and is oriented east-north-east to west-south-west. Both structures were weatherproofed with tar. These two features were identified from ground level.
- 3.2.5 The porch is 2.6m wide, 1.8m deep and 3.1-3.4m high externally, and 1.8m wide, 2.1m tall and 1.45m deep internally (Illus 6a). The internal floor level of the porch is raised 0.5m above ground level, a small ladder found inside the building may have assisted in gaining entry. The side walls of the porch are 0.4m thick. The structure of the roof was not visible, but it is likely that the rim of the roof slab (see 3.2.4) is supported directly on the wallheads and the northern edge on a concrete lintel, c. 0.45m thick. The whole has been finished with concrete. A wooden door, measuring 0.7m by 1.95m, on the western side of the south wall gives access to the interior; the door has been mostly removed, with only the stiles, upper rail and parts of the panelling still *in situ* (Illus 6a).
- 3.2.6 The floor of the porch is of poured concrete, although it is not possible to tell if this is solid to ground level or has been built with cavities or using some other method. A void at ground level on the eastern side of the north elevation of the porch, measuring 0.5m wide by 0.3m tall may have acted as some sort of vent; presently it is filled with rubble (Plate 4).
- 3.2.7 The interior of the building measures 4.05m in diameter with a central 0.4m square concrete pillar (Plate 5). This pillar is located directly below the mounting pins on the

roof, and is likely to have provided direct support for the dish/antenna. The inside face of the circular wall has been finished with a thin layer of plaster, with thin wooden strips set into it in places (Plate 6), possibly for the mounting of electrical equipment. Much of the original white paint has peeled off (Plate 7), as has some of the plaster, exposing the concrete beneath. The air vents noted above link directly to the interior at 1.3m above floor level; these have been formed with brick and also have metal grilles on the west side of the interior wall (Plate 8). On the east side, near the doorway, a flat chipboard panel measuring 0.75m wide and 1.3m tall has been attached to the wall (Plate 9). It presently holds two disconnected pieces of electrical equipment; one that appears to be a fuse box or patch panel, the other is marked '43/17mm-1 Standby Memlok, 20 Amp 600V'.

- 3.2.8 The floor is of poured concrete, and has been raised by approximately 0.03m from the floor of the porch with a small step under the door. At the time of the survey it was largely covered in debris, presumably from when the electrical equipment had been stripped out (see below). The white painted plasterboard ceiling gives an internal height of 1.95m. The plasterboard has been removed in places, revealing timber studwork and the base of the roof slab, which has been formed using corrugated sheeting (Plate 10). The sheeting has been removed leaving only an impression in the concrete. A number of tubular metal ducts run across the ceiling and down the walls at various points (including to the equipment panel east of the door). These are connected with a number of circular junction boxes. It is not clear where these ducts would have connected to the equipment on the roof of the structure.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Very little documentary evidence could be found for the date or exact purpose of this building. The ES (see comments in 3.1.1) notes that this was a Radio Telephone (RT) station stand, which suggests use in ground-to-air communication. While undertaking the building survey the present author had a conversation with the owner of Lyndmoor house (located immediately to the north), who recalled some details of the building while still in use. He believed it formed part of a ground-based approach guidance system for aircraft (Plate 11), rather than a radio station *per se*. It was evidently unmanned, with a weekly visit from an engineer for maintenance. The building contained electrical equipment (principally batteries) and had a phone line for communication. This equipment (and the dish/antenna on the roof) had been removed during the early-mid 1990s, suggesting that the building was still in active use until that time.
- 4.2 Dyce was host to a Very High Frequency Radio Telephone (VHF R/T) station from at least 1949 (*Anon* 1949, 583), as part of a network of such stations aimed at allowing continuous voice communications for civil aviation. A VHF D/F (direction finding) service was provided on the same frequencies. Radio Direction Finding (RDF) was used from the 1930s for the longer range navigation of ships and aircraft, a technology which led to the development of radar in the early part of World War II. It is likely (though not confirmed) that the surveyed building was the transmitter/receiver for both of these services, and had been in operation for some time when the article above was written. This may also explain why the building has remained in service into the late 20th century; although supplanted by more modern technology, RDF was cheap and reliable and so has seen extended usage.

- 4.3 There remain some questions about the method of construction for this structure. The foundations and substructure of the floor were not seen at any point, and the purpose of the ground-level void on the north elevation remains uncertain. As very little of the wall fabric could be seen, it is unclear whether the walls of the structure are principally of concrete or of brick finished with concrete. The roof however is likely to have been precast as a single reinforced concrete slab, either on site or elsewhere. Had it been cast in place it would have required very substantial support, and it would have been much more difficult to remove the corrugated formwork from the base.

5. REFERENCES AND ARCHIVES CONSULTED

5.1 References

Aberdeen City Council 2012: *Invitation to Tender for the non-Invasive Archaeological*

Investigations for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR Package)

Anon 1949 *Aviation News: V.H.F. R/T. Coverage in Flight*, 3rd November 1949, 583.

Chorlton, M 2010 *Scottish Airfields in the Second World War Vol 3 – The Grampians*, Newbury.

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings- A guide to good recording practice*.

Jacobs UK Ltd 2007 *Environmental Statement. Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR)*

Lowry, B 2004 *British Home Defences 1940-45*, Oxford.

Price, A 2004 *Britain's Air Defences 1939-45*, Oxford.

RCAHMS 1996a. *Publication and Archiving of Archaeological Projects*

RCAHMS 1996b. *Guidelines for Archiving Archaeological projects*

5.2 Maps consulted

Ordnance Survey 1928, Six-Inch Aberdeenshire Sheet LXV.NE

Ordnance Survey 1946, One-Inch Sheet 45 – Aberdeen

Ordnance Survey 1957, 1:25,000 Sheet NJ81

Ordnance Survey 1959, One-Inch Sheet 40 – Aberdeen

Ordnance Survey 1964, 1:2500 Sheet NJ 87 14

Royal Air Force: Second World War Aerial Reconnaissance (Scotland) 1941 ID nos 006-004-003-053-C and 006-004-003-063-C and 006-004-003-064-C

5.3 Archives Consulted

Aberdeen City Council Sites and Monuments Record

Historic Scotland Listed Buildings Database

National Archives of Scotland

National Monuments Record of Scotland

The National Collection of Aerial Photography

5.4 Online Resources Consulted

Aberdeen Airport *Facts and Figures*

<http://www.aberdeenairport.com/about-us/facts-and-figures>

NLS *Ordnance Survey Air Photo Mosaics of Scotland, 1944-1950*, accessed 25th October 2012

<http://maps.nls.uk/os/air-photos/index.html>

Old-Maps, various pages, accessed 26th October 2012

<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html>

Wikipedia *Radio Direction Finder*, accessed 29th October 2012

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_direction_finder

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Photographic record (Illus 2)

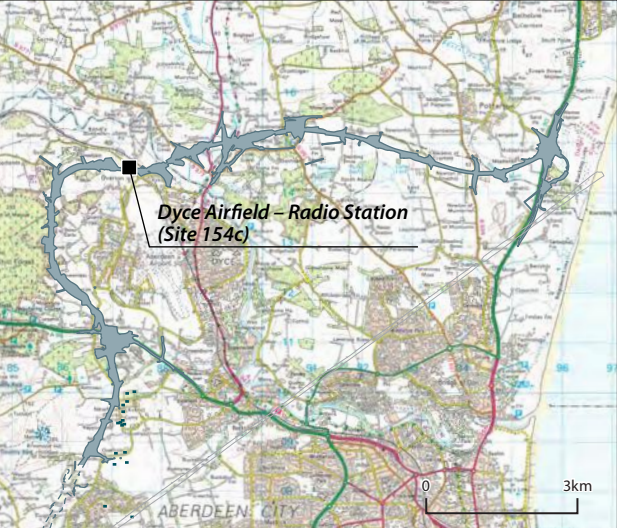
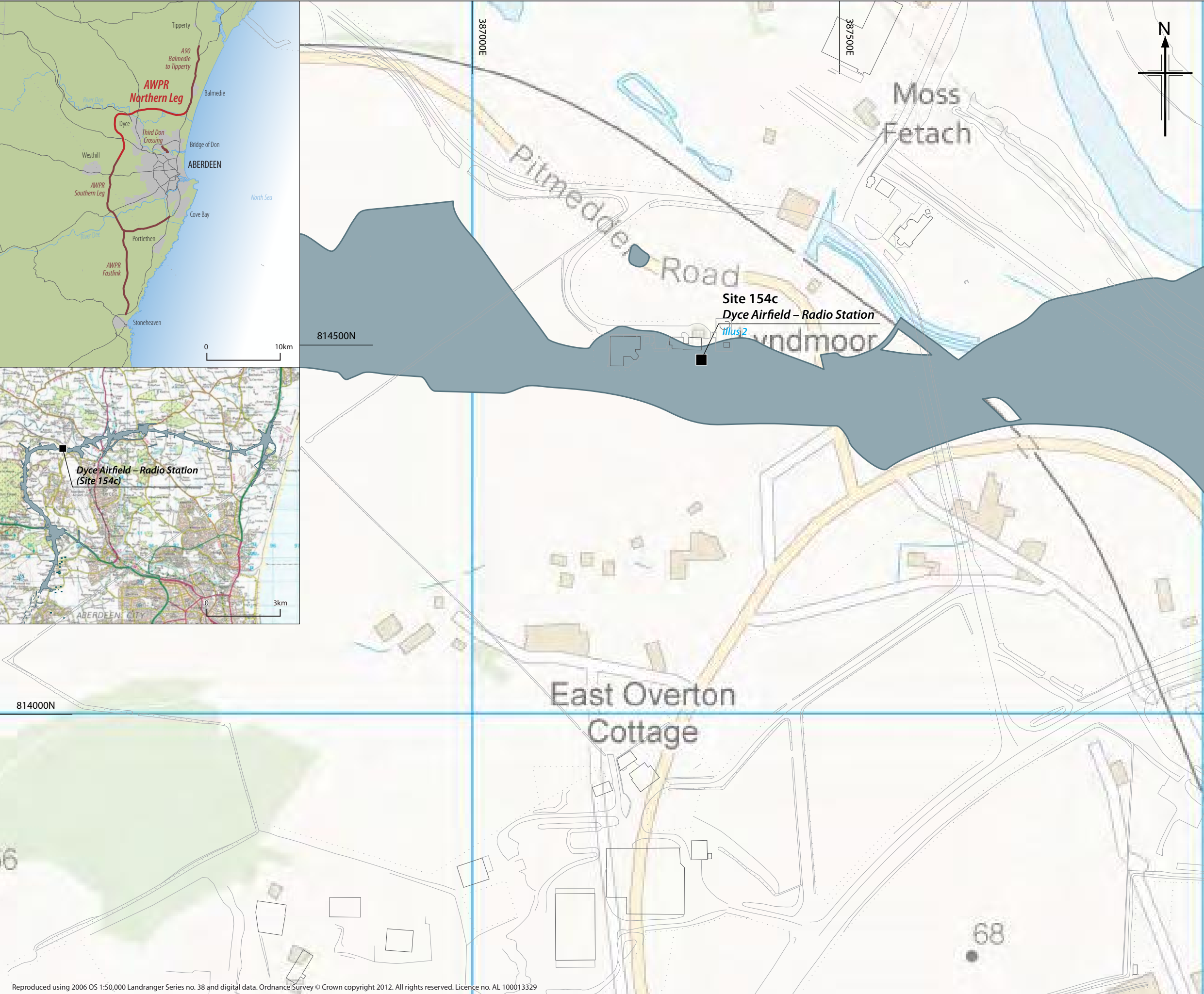
Each photo number refers to both a digital and black & white print image from the same location.

Photo Number	Direction Facing	Description
001	south-east	Working shot - interior survey through doorway
002	north-east	Working shot - interior survey
003	east-north-east	Detail of equipment panel
004	north-east	Interior showing doorway and equipment panel
005	east	Interior showing equipment panel
006	south-east	Interior showing equipment panel
007	south	Interior
008	south-south-west	Interior
009	west-south-west	Interior showing the southern air vent
010	west	Interior showing both air vents
011	north-north-west	Interior showing northern air vent and doorway
012	north-east	Interior showing doorway
013	north-west	Interior showing doorway
014	north-east	Interior showing equipment panel
015	south-east	Floor of interior from porch
016	east	View of ceiling showing corrugated sheeting above plasterboard



		and pipework
017	west-south-west	Detail of southern air vent
018	west-north-west	Detail of northern air vent
019	north	View from interior to porch through doorway
020	south	View of porch floor showing possible vent at ground level
021	south	View of porch ceiling
022	south	North-facing elevation
023	south-south-east	General view showing runway lights in background
024	south	Detail of possible ground-level vent
025	south-east	General view
026	south-east	Detail of northern air vent
027	east	West-facing elevation
028	north-east	General view
029	north	South-facing elevation
030	north-west	General view
031	west-north-west	General view
032	north-north-west	Plane with porch in foreground
033	west	East-facing elevation
034	south-west	General view
035	west	Detail of wall base
036	south-east	General view
037	north-north-east	General view

038	north-north-west	General view with plane overhead
039	north-north-west	General view with plane overhead
040	north-north-west	General view with plane overhead
041	north-north-west	General view with plane overhead
042	west-north-west	General view

Appendix 2 Illustrations



LEGEND

-  AWPR Northern Leg CPO boundary
-  Site

0 250m
Scale 1:5,000 @ A3



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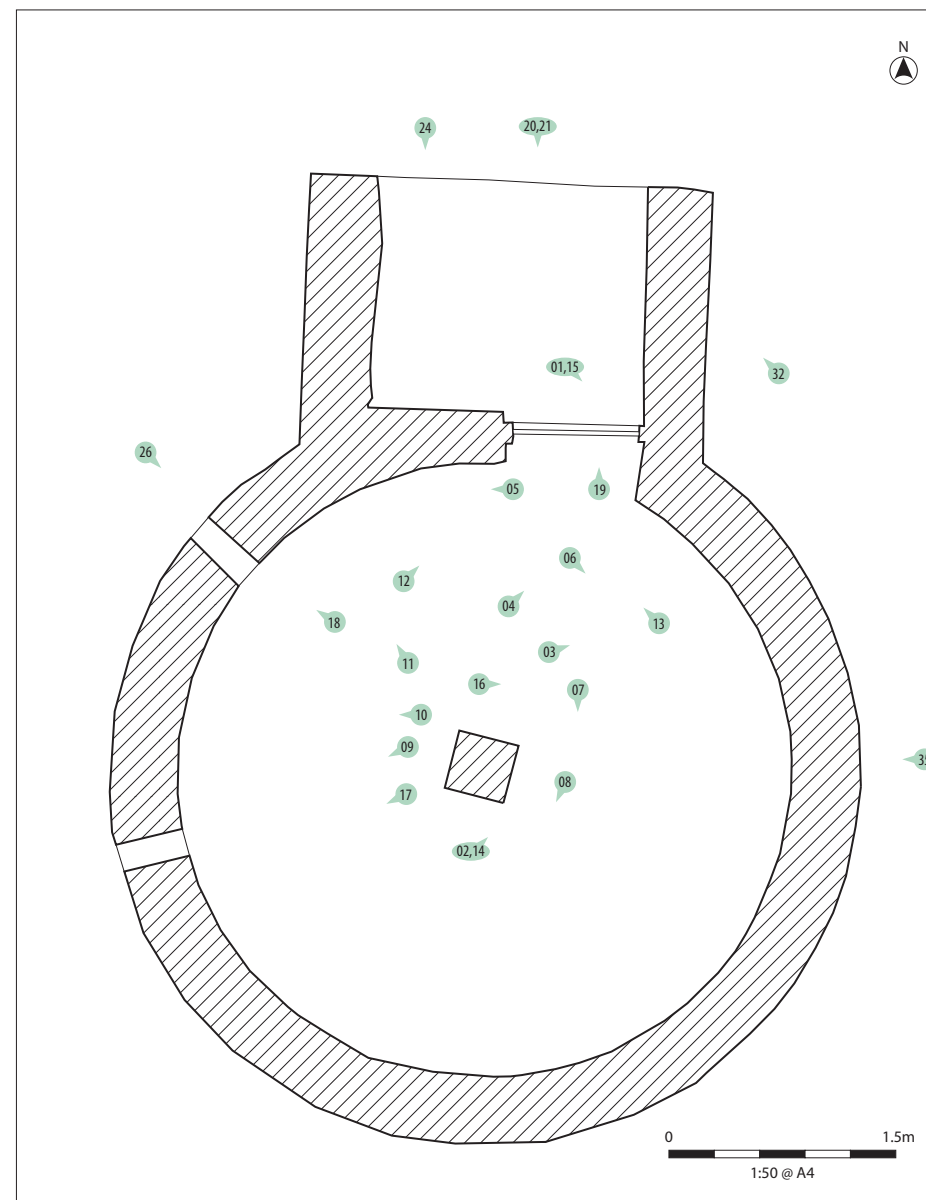
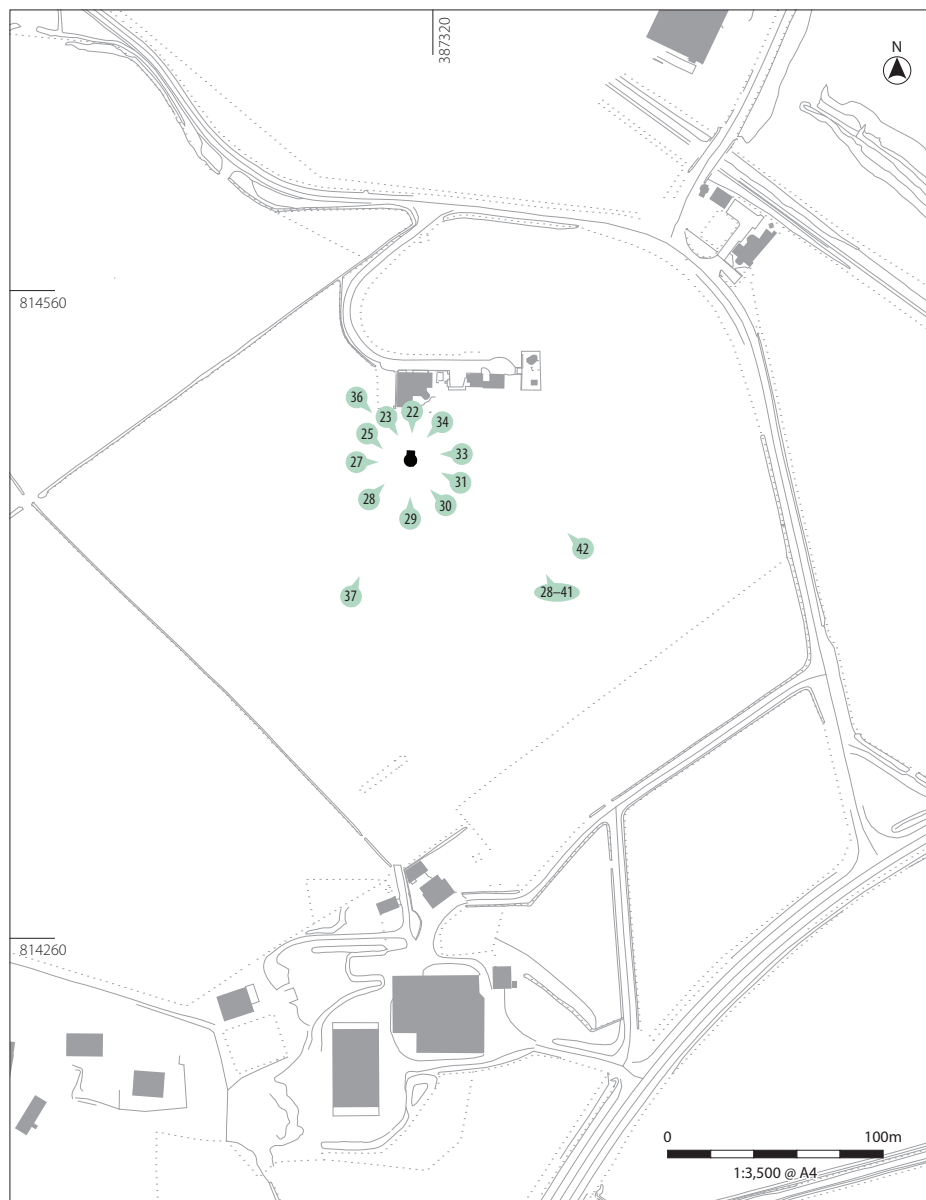


Illus 1
Site location plan

Drawing status
Scale: 1:5000@A3 DO NOT SCALE

Headland Archaeology Drawing No.: Illustration 1
Based on Drawing No.: 81033200/CD/3000/CH/016 (ITT Appendix B) Rev

This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.



Illus 2

Plan showing film and digital photo directions



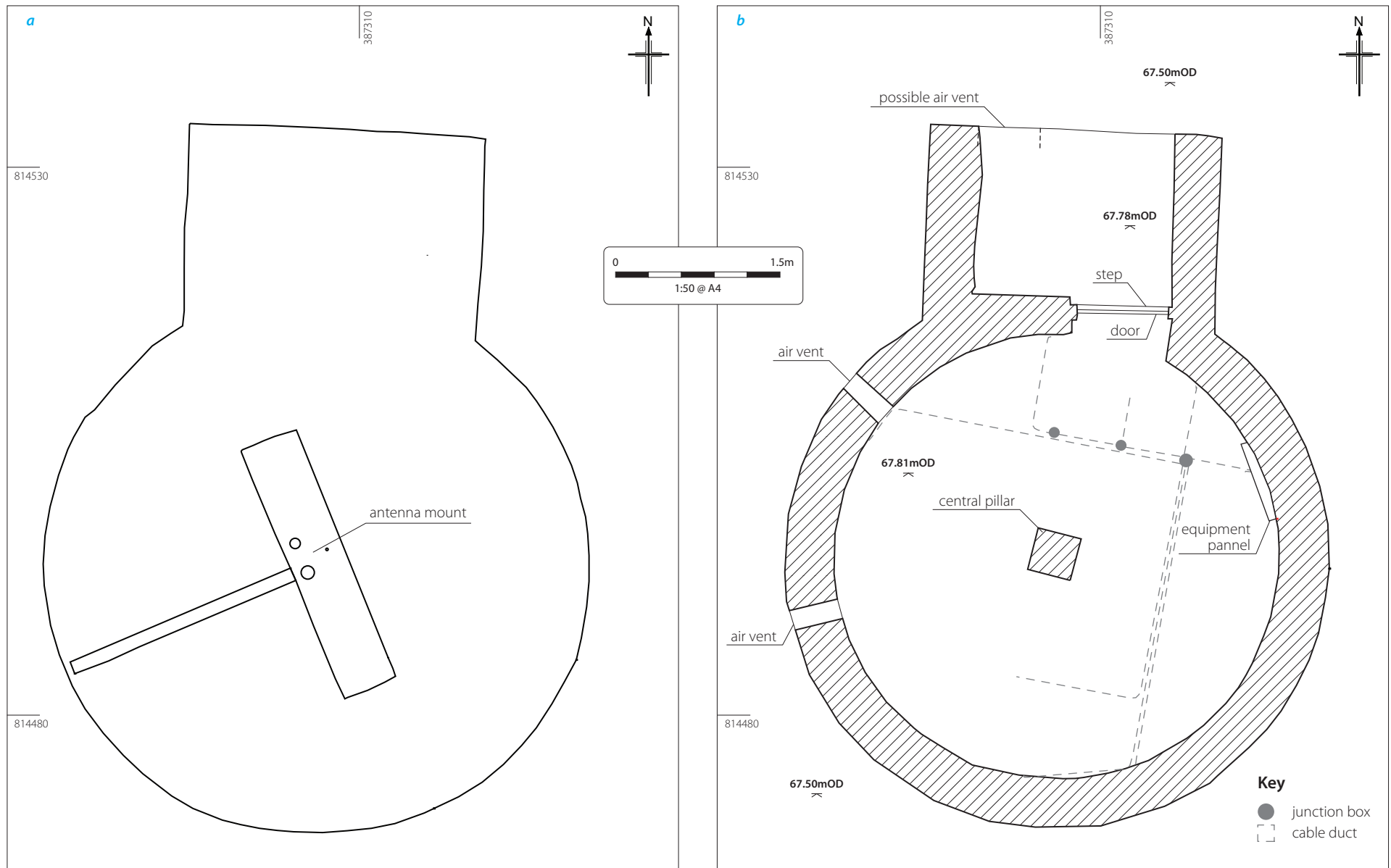
Illus 3

1946 Ordnance Survey one-inch – Aberdeen, Sheet 45

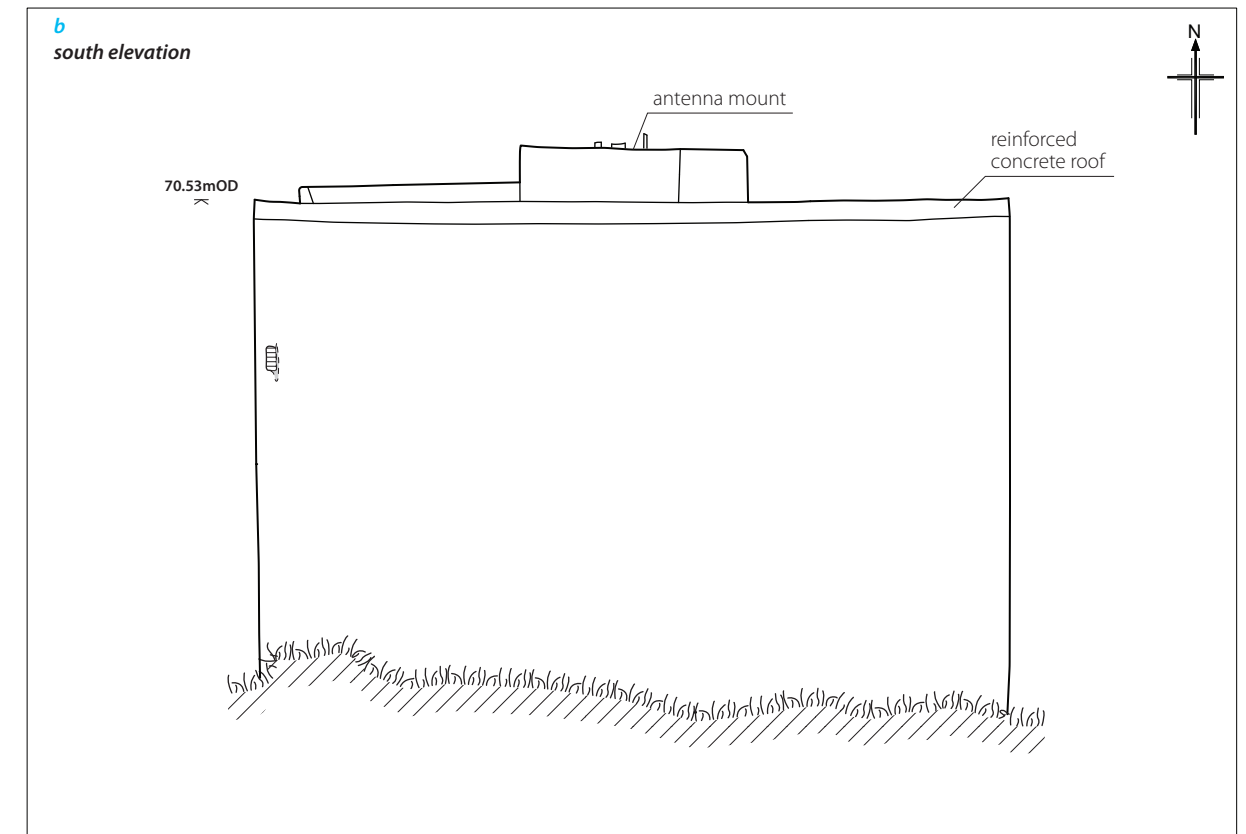
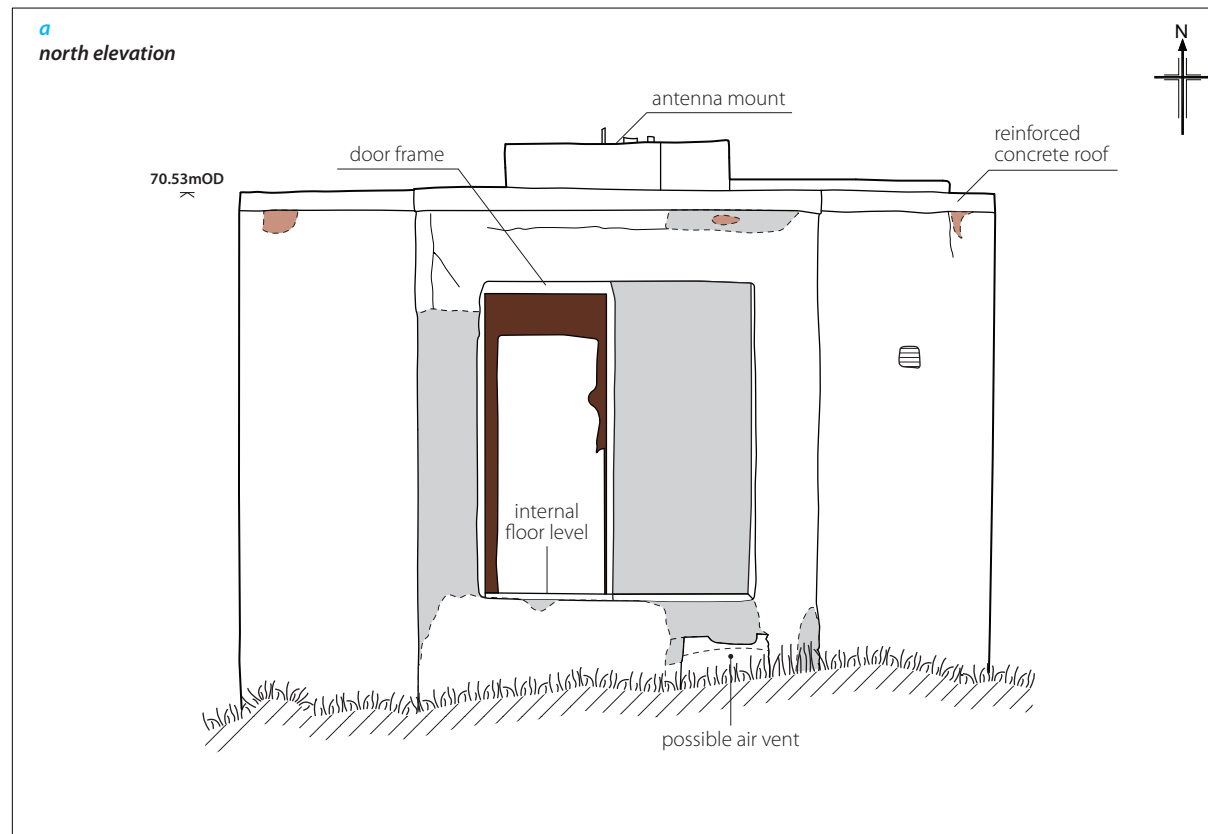


Illus 4

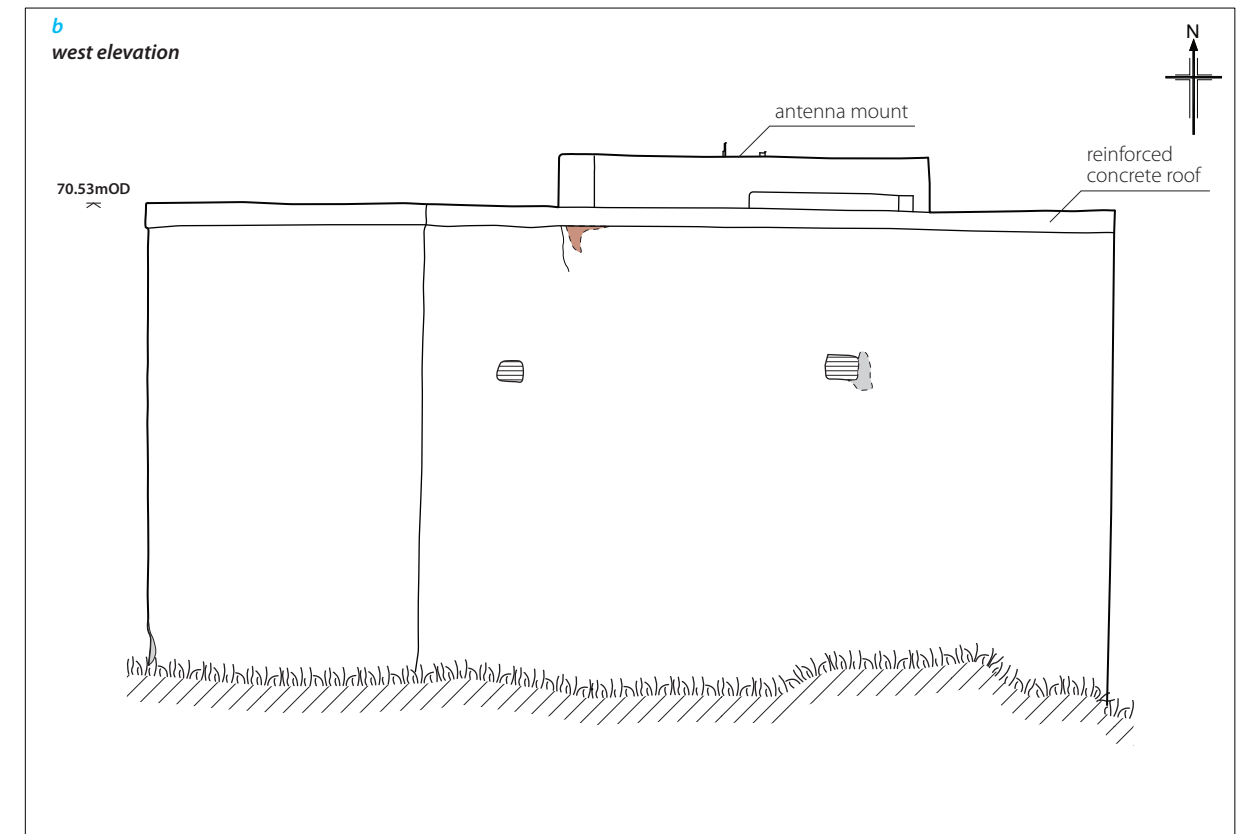
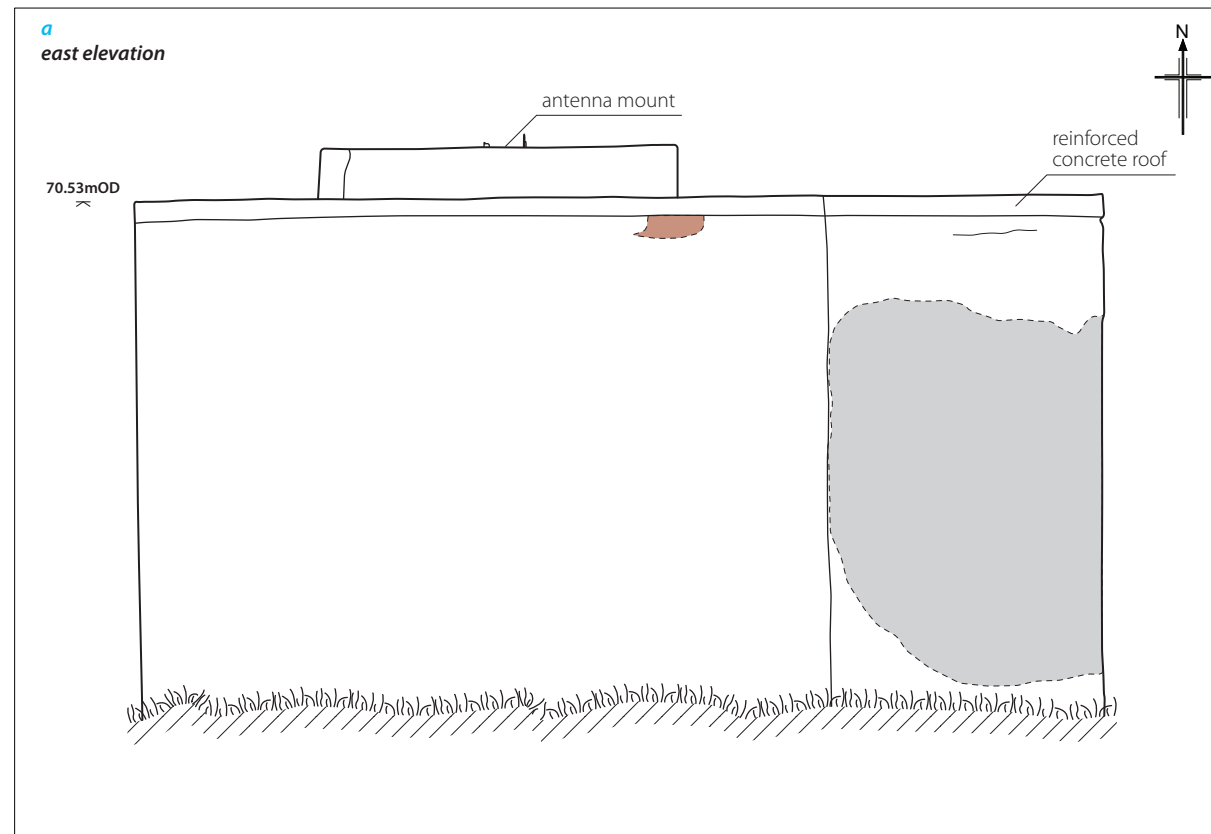
1959 Ordnance Survey one-inch – Aberdeen, Sheet 40



Illus 5
Plan of roof (a) and interior (b)



Illus 6
North and south elevation



Illus 7
East and west elevation



Plate 1

General view from the south-east with Lyndmoor house in the background



Plate 2

General view from the north-west



Plate 3

General view from the north-east, showing areas of exposed concrete and brick beneath harling



Plate 4

Detail of the floor of the porch, from the north



Plate 5

Interior from the doorway, facing south-south-east



Plate 6

View of interior showing equipment panel, wooden inserts and peeling paint/plaster, facing south-east



Plate 7

View of interior wall showing peeling paint, northern air-vent and doorway, facing north-north-west



Plate 8

Detail of the southern air-vent, facing west-south-west



Plate 9

Detail of the equipment panel, facing north-north-east



Plate 10

Detail of the ceiling, facing east



Plate 11

General view from the north, showing airport landing lights in the distance



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