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STANDING STRUCTURE RECORDING

St. Ninian's Chancel, St. Ninian's (Stirling)

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PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	MCEACHERN MACDUFF ARCHITECTS ON BEHALF OF THE KIRK SESSION, ST NINIAN'S OLD PARISH CHURCH
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NS 795 917 (NS 79564 91677)
<i>Address</i>	KIRK WYND, STIRLING
<i>Parish</i>	STIRLING
<i>Council</i>	STIRLING
<i>Planning Application Ref No</i>	N/A
<i>NMRS No</i>	NS79SE 44.0
<i>Oasis No</i>	N/A
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<i>HB/SAM No</i>	41095/2997
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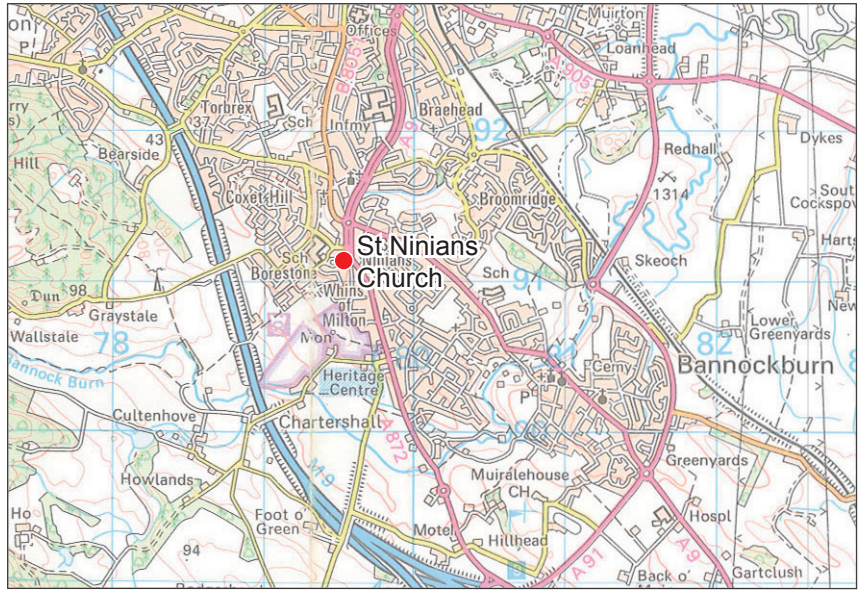
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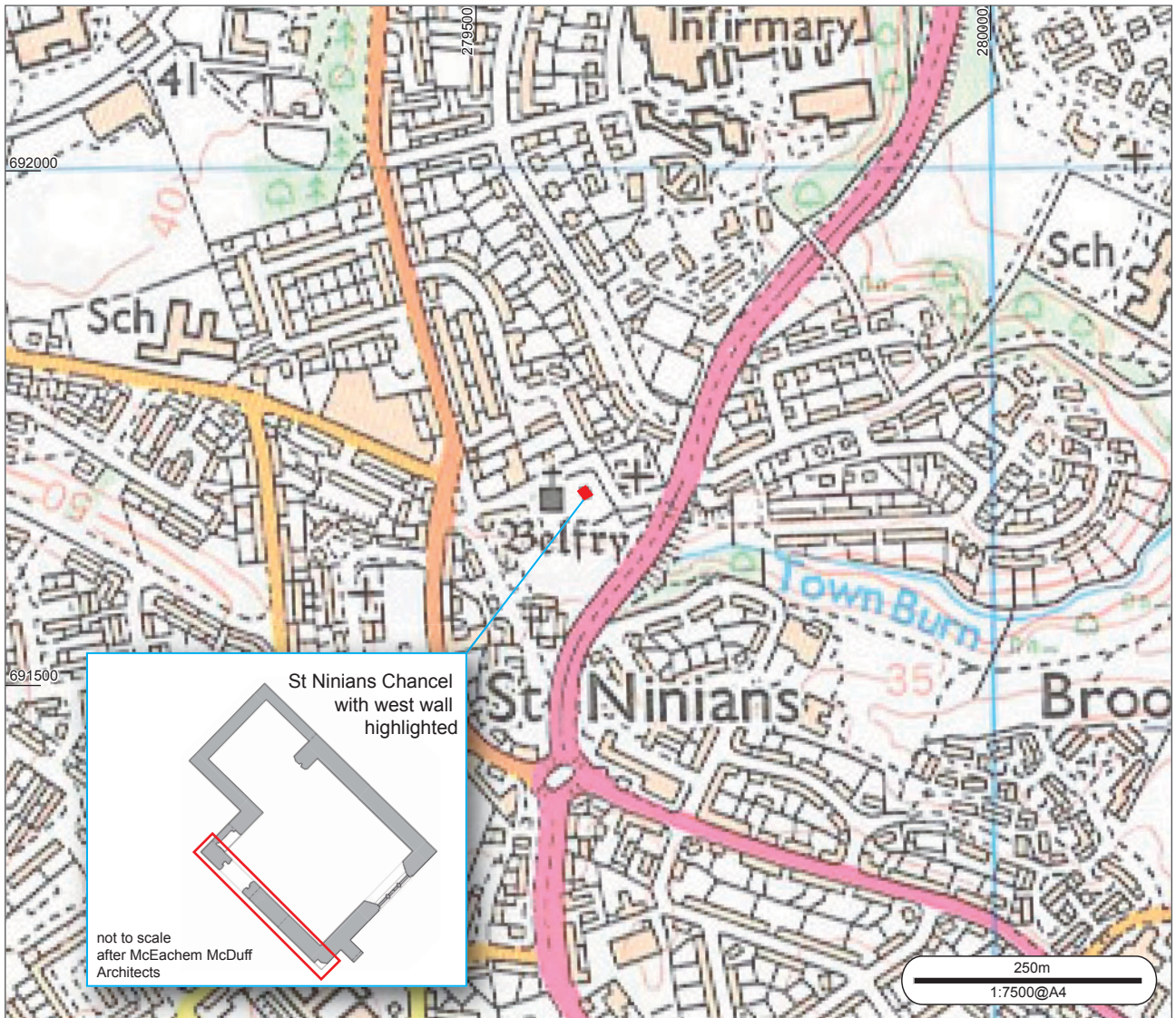
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Illus 1
Location map

STANDING STRUCTURE RECORDING

St. Ninian's Chancel, St. Ninian's (Stirling)

by Allison H. Borden

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by McEachern MacDuff Architects (on behalf of the Kirk Session, St. Ninian's Old Parish Church) to undertake a programme of structure recording at St. Ninian's Chancel, St. Ninian's (Stirling) (HB No. 41095 – Category A; NMRS No. NS79SE 44.00; SAM No. 2997). This report forms a record of damage to one wall of the standing structure on the site, as well as a photographic catalogue of fallen stones with decorative details. A brief for the works required was supplied to McEachern MacDuff Architects by the Inspectorate at Historic Scotland.

1. INTRODUCTION

McEachern MacDuff Architects commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd. to undertake a programme of structure recording at St. Ninian's Chancel, St. Ninian's (Stirling) on behalf of the Kirk Session, St. Ninian's Old Parish Church, the objective being to produce a record of damage to the west wall of the chancel. This record was requested by the Inspectorate at Historic Scotland, and comprised a brief desk-based study to put the chancel into context, measured survey and rectified photography of the damaged west wall of the chancel and a photographic catalogue of those fallen stones with decorative detailing.

The chancel is listed Category A (HB No. 41095). St. Ninian's chancel ruin is also part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 2997). The schedule for St. Ninian's includes the remains of the church, including the chancel ruin and the belltower, and two medieval tombstones. The ruin is also included in the NMRS (National Monuments Record of Scotland), NMRS No. NS79SE 44.0, and the Scottish Monuments Record (SMR), SMR No. 828.01 (Stirling Council).

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The village of St. Ninian's lies approximately 1.5 km south of Stirling and had been absorbed into the greater urban area of Stirling by the mid-19th century. St. Ninian's was originally named Eccles (ie. 'church'), a name given to locations of early churches in Scotland. It also has been known historically by the name St. Ringan's (a variant of St Ninian's).

The chancel ruin is located toward the east end of the old churchyard on the south/west side of Kirk Wynd (the 'new' Old Parish Church sits to the east side of Kirk Wynd) in St. Ninian's at National Grid Reference (NGR) NS

79564 91677. The site is roughly bounded by Main Street, Kirk Wynd and the A9 (see Illus 1).

The grassy churchyard site is currently occupied by two standing structures, the belltower (rebuilt in the mid-18th century) and the chancel ruin, as well as numerous gravestones. The churchyard is level ground, except on the interior of the chancel ruin where existing grade is approximately two metres above that on the outside of the ruin.

3. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1 Method

The study area, for the purposes of desk-based assessment, comprised standing elements of the chancel ruin. The sources consulted were: records, including those in the NMRS, held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh; historic maps held at the National Map Library, Edinburgh; and readily available published sources.

3.2 Results

St. Ninian's was the earliest church in or near Stirling, dated possibly as early as the 5th century, when St. Ninian was active (Gifford and Walker, 688). The earliest reference to the church is in the 12th century, under David I. St. Ninian's was its own medieval parish and it served as the administrative centre for churches in this area of the Forth Valley.

The building was damaged by fire in the 15th, and possibly the 16th, centuries. There are records of grants toward repairs to the church at least twice in the 15th century (Gifford and Walker 749-50). The approximate



Illus 2
Pont's map of Scotland

location of the church at St. Ninian's is labelled on Pont's map of the late 16th century as 'Ninian's K.' (short for Ninian's Kirk); however, it is represented only by Pont's stylised symbol for a church (see Illus 2).

By the end of the 17th century, the church was in disrepair. Plans were drawn up by three designers in 1721-22 and by 1725, one of these men, a mason from Alloa named Robert Henderson, had completed alterations and additions to the structure. It was shortly after this, in 1734, that the ruined steeple, sitting toward the west end of the churchyard, was largely rebuilt (Gifford and Walker, 749-50).

The church was used as a powder magazine during the Jacobite Rising, and sadly was blown up (it is unclear whether on purpose or by mistake) at the time of Prince Charles' retreat in 1746. Although there is no map evidence showing the church in its entirety, the footprint of the church is represented on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1859-60, helpful in visualising the context for the standing remains (OS 1874) (see Illus 3).



Illus 3
1st edition OS map (1874)

4. STRUCTURE RECORDING

4.1 Methods

The survey of the damaged chancel wall utilised the general standards set out by English Heritage (2006), the RCAHMS (2004) and the IfA (2008) and involved a combination of written description, sketch drawings and photographs, as well as photorectified interior and exterior elevations. The principle purpose of recording in this instance was to document the line of damage on this wall and to record any significant features within it. A photographic catalogue of carved fallen stones *in situ* was also made.

The metric drawings of the chancel wall were created using a Leica 405 EDM (Electronic Distance Measurer) and a portable PC utilising AutoCAD LT software. In addition to the metric survey, digital photographs of the damaged wall were taken for rectification with the drawings. As the view of damage to the external face of the wall was obscured by scaffolding at the time of the site visit, a photograph taken in 2009 showing the damaged wall prior to collapse was utilised for rectification. Contextual photographs of the chancel were also taken. Each photograph was given a shot number and digital files were named accordingly. The drawing and photographic registers are included as Appendix 1.

4.2 Results

The chancel ruin consists of the standing masonry walls of a single-storey 'L'-shaped structure oriented North-south. The main and original part of the chancel is rectangular, and measures approximately 3m deep (east-west) by 3.5m wide (North-south). There is a small, almost square addition to its North side, which measures 2m deep by 1.5m wide (see the straight joint on the exterior of the east wall). It is possibly a private chapel or a chapel of reservation.

The rear (east) wall of the chancel, and the walls in the Northern extension to the chancel have no openings. There are three pointed arched recesses near the south end of the east wall, possibly the ambry and piscina. There is a blocked tripartite window in the south wall of the chancel. The damaged west wall has a blocked opening surmounted by a round arch. The return in the Northern wall, just west of the Northern extension, has a blocked opening with a pointed arch to the exterior and a flat-headed opening to the interior. Although it may incorporate some earlier elements, Gifford and Walker (2002) roughly date the structure to the 16th century.

The walls of the chancel ruin, including the damaged west wall, are made of a fairly even dark grey colour by growth of lichen over their surface. The main feature in the western wall is the blocked, round arched opening, most likely an interior connection to the nave of the church. It is interesting to note that the deep red sandstone voussoirs

to the interior (chancel side) of this blocked archway have rounded edges and are much larger than those on the exterior (what would have been the nave side) of the chancel. The voussoirs are also chamfered at their bottom edges on the inside face of the opening. The voussoir stones to the nave side are mostly grey in colour, have flat edges and faces and do not appear to have the chamfer detail. There is a substantial amount of smear pointing over the joints between the stones on the exterior; however, slates are visible inserted in-between voussoir stones in some locations along the arch.

The only other features visible on the exterior of the wall are two small depressions (see Illus 4), one immediately adjacent to it to the west just above ground level and one above and slightly east of the arch's extent. The depression near ground level is roughly 10cm by 6cm and only 1cm deep. The depression higher on the wall is 17cm by 15 cm. It is 2cm deep.

Damage to the wall began when removal of a tree that had grown into the inside face of the wall resulted in almost parallel structural cracks running diagonally from south to North down the wall, the furthest east of these running into the North side of the arch (see Illus 4). These cracks precipitated a partial wall collapse in this area. The line of damage is not identical on both the interior and exterior faces of the wall, so its rubble core and the normally unseen back sides of the facing stones are visible (see Illus 4 and 5).

There are a number of loose stones in three piles near the ruin, one to the inside (east) of the damaged section and two piles to the west of the ruin, which have been roughly stacked. The piles have been labelled A-C. See Appendix 2 for photographs of their rough locations. (Pile A is also visible on the interior elevation of the west wall, just below the damaged section of wall (see Illus 5).

The view of the stones on the interior of each pile was obscured by those resting atop them. Where stones with carved detail were readily visible, each was labelled with a chalked-on number. This resulted in identification of 25 stones. After numbering the individual stones with chalk, a photograph of each pile was taken from above, as were photos of each of the carved stones. Brief descriptions and photos of each carved stone (Stone no. 1 – Stone no. 25) are included in a catalogue in Appendix 2.

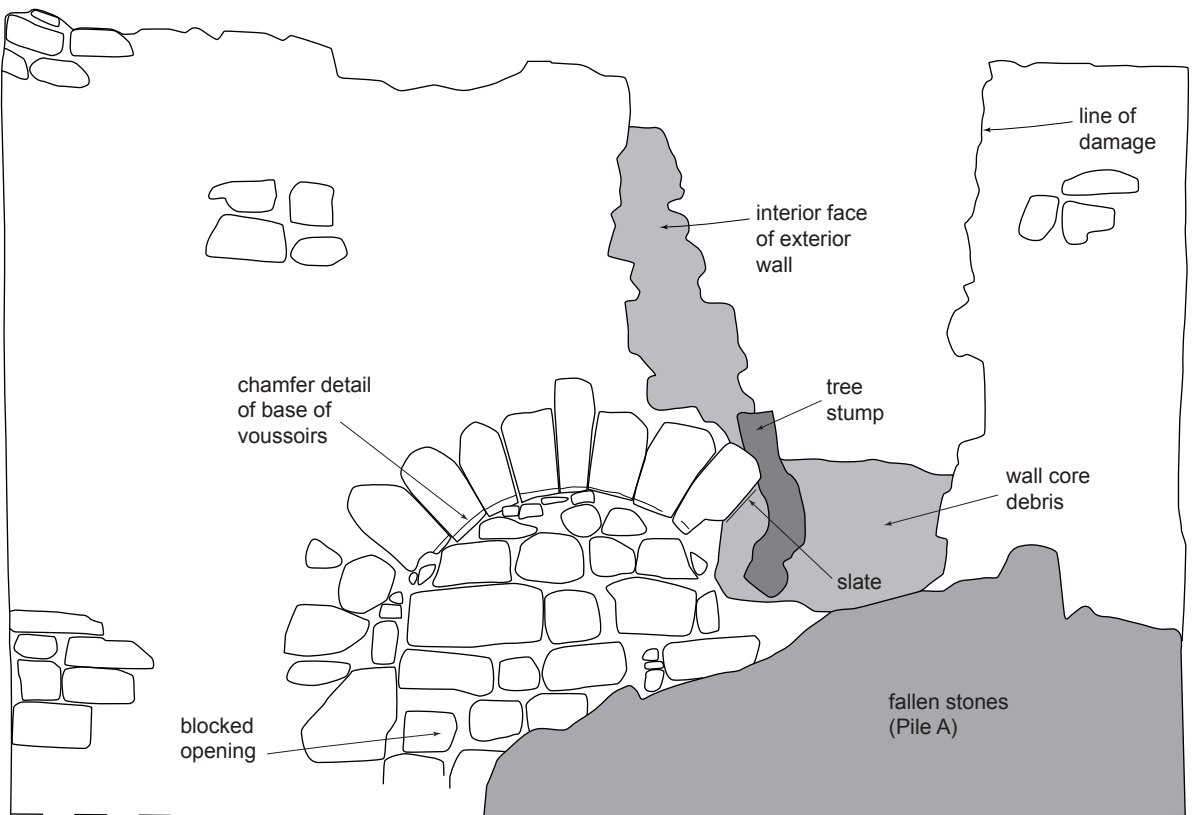
4.3 Discussion

The west wall of the chancel ruin appears to have been built in one phase; however, the character of the wall is made fairly homogeneous by a regular layer of lichen over the structure's surface. The single phase theory is not borne out by the desk-based assessment, which indicated that the church was repaired in the 16th century, fell into disrepair by the 17th century and was heavily damaged in the 18th century. (It would be surprising if the west wall of the chancel escaped the explosion of the stored gunpowder unscathed). The change in mortar from the lower to higher areas of the wall (the repointing of the

upper part of the wall with cement mortar is most visible near the line of structural damage) also indicates that repair or reconstruction of at least parts of the wall has been carried out.

A quick photographic record of the stones which have fallen from the wall indicated that any readily accessible/visible worked stones came in a short list of types, those with a single chamfered edge, those with both edges chamfered and those with both edges chamfered and a splayed base (in one piece). A few of the stones are the only example of their particular shape, see stones 3 (possibly hexagonal in shape), 13 (fluted?), 22 (round top) and 21 and 24 (two light grey stones that appear to have been machine cut). It is unlikely that all of these stones come from the damaged section of wall. They could originate from other locations in the churchyard, a family burial plot enclosed by the ruin, or from another site.

This record of the damaged wall and fallen stones should assist in planning for the stabilisation and possible consolidation of the west wall in line with the requirements of the Historic Scotland.



1m

Illus 5
Photorectified interior elevation of west wall of chancel

SOURCES

Cartographic Sources

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- RCAHMS 2004 *Survey and Recording Policy*. Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.
- Gifford, J & Walker, EA 2002 *Stirling and Central Scotland*. London, Yale University Press. (Series: The Buildings of Scotland).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Photographic register

Photo No.	Direction	Feature No. (where relevant)	Description
1	E	W wall	context shot
2	E	W wall	context shot
3	S	N wall	context shot (W to E pan 1/2)
4	S	N wall	context shot (W to E pan 2/2)
5	W	E wall	context shot - Note straight joint
6	N	S wall	context shot
7	NE	-	context shot
8	SE	-	context shot
9	N	N wall	interior (W to E pan 1/2)
10	N	N wall	interior (W to E pan 2/2)
11	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
12	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
12	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
14	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
15	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
16	W	W wall	interior (S to N pan)
17	NW	W wall (chapel)	interior
18	S	S wall	interior
19	NE	chapel	interior - Note ruined wall return
20	S	N wall	exterior
21	E	Pile A: S1-15	view of pile from above (standing to west) - stone 15 Not visible (under fallen tree)
22	E	Pile A: S1-15	location detail S15
23	E	S1	-
24	E	S2	-
25	E	S3	-
26	E	S4	-
27	S	S13	-
28	SE	S14	-
29	E	S5	-
30	E	S12	-
31	E	S11	-
32	E	S9-10	-
33	S	S7-8	-
34	SE	S15	-
35	S	S6	-
36	NE	S14	-
37	S	S13	-
38	-	-	-

Photo No.	Direction	Feature No. (where relevant)	Description
39	W	Pile B: S16-22	–
40	NW	Pile C: S23-25	–
41	W	S16	–
42	W	S17	–
43	W	S18	–
44	W	S19	–
45	W	S20	–
46	W	S21	–
47	S	S22	–
48	S	S23	–
49	W	S24	–
50	S	S24	–
51	W	S25	–
52	E	W wall	damaged area of wall from above (standing to west), pan S to N 1/2
53	E	W wall	damaged area of wall from above (standing to west), pan S to N 2/2
54	NE	W wall	damaged area of wall from above
55	SE	W wall	damaged area of wall from above
56	NW	W wall	context shot
57	NW	W wall	context shot
58	S	–	context shot
59	W	belltower	context shot

Appendix 2: Catalogue of carved stones

Here follows a description of the readily visible carved stones in the three piles, A-C, adjacent to the chancel ruin. Purely for the purposes of this report, each stone has been assigned a number. A thumbnail photo of each stone is accompanied by a short description.

General views



Pile No. A
Stone No. 1-15
Direction E
Description View of pile from above (to west) - stone 15 No.t visible (under fallen tree).



Pile No. A
Stone No. 7-12, 15
Direction E
Description View of pile from above (to west) - location detail stone 15.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 16-22
Direction W
Description View of pile from above.



Pile No. C
Stone No. 23-25
Direction NW
Description View of pile from above.

Detail pile A



Pile No. A
Stone No. 1
Direction E
Description Block of buff or grey ashlar with chamfered edges - face side.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 2
Direction E
Description Block of grey ashlar with chamfered edges - face side.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 3
Direction E
Description Hexagonal grey sandstone block? (appears so from face side).



Pile No. A
Stone No. 4
Direction E
Description Buff ashlar stone - unclear if carved on underside.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 5
Direction E
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side - and splayed base in one piece.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 6
Direction S
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side - and splayed base in one piece.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 7 & 8
Direction S
Description Block of grey ashlar with chamfered edges - face side (7).
Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side (8).



Pile No. A
Stone No. 9 & 10
Direction E
Description Red sandstone voussoirs.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 11
Direction E
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side - and splayed base in one piece.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 12
Direction E
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side - and splayed base in one piece.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 13
Direction S
Description Grey/buff fluted column section?



Pile No. A
Stone No. 14
Direction NE
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side.



Pile No. A
Stone No. 15
Direction SE
Description Grey block of ashlar under tree - No.t fully visible/accessible, but appears carved in shape of 2 or 5.

Detail pile B



Pile No. B
Stone No. 16
Direction W
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edge.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 17
Direction W
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edge.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 18
Direction W
Description Grey sandstone voussoir.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 19
Direction W
Description Red sandstone voussoir.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 20
Direction W
Description Red sandstone voussoir.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 21
Direction W
Description Block of buff/light grey ashlar with saw marks - unclear if underside is irregularly shaped/weathered or carved.



Pile No. B
Stone No. 22
Direction S
Description Buff ashlar stone rounded smooth top with flat faces.

Detail pile C



Pile No. C
Stone No. 23
Direction S
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edges - face side - and splayed base in one piece.



Pile No. C
Stone No. 24
Direction S
Description Broken off astragal moulding in grey ashlar (embedded in a block of concrete).



Pile No. C
Stone No. 25
Direction W
Description Block of buff ashlar with chamfered edge - face side.