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Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Balmedie-Tipperty

Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty Lot 4 – Fastlink Invasive Archaeological Investigations

Mitigation Excavation

AWPR/B-T/FL/008

Report No. 3205



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Lot 4 – Fastlink
Invasive Archaeological Investigations**

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

As part of a programme of mitigation investigations along the Fastlink section of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, a strip and map investigation was undertaken at site AWPR/B-T/FL/008, to the north of Coneyhatch Farm, roughly 3km north of Stonehaven.

The features identified relate to buildings associated with Backhill farmstead in the 19th century, which were demolished some time before 1902. The findings indicate that the immediate environs at Kempston Hill and the farmstead of Backhill were modified in the 19th century and early 20th century. No remains were found which could be positively identified as the remains of either building depicted on the 1868 map lying within the trench, but the box drains serving the buildings survived. A number of pits were also identified, at least some of which may be the product of activities taking place around the farmstead buildings, while others may be the remains of stone-holes from stone extraction.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of strip, map and excavation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between April and June 2014 at trench AWPR/B-T/FL/008 (abbreviated to FL/008 in this report) for the Fastlink section (Lot 4) of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty (AWPR/B-T).
- 1.1.2 Trench FL/008 was located to the north of Coneyhatch Farm at Kempston Hill, roughly 3km north of Stonehaven (NGR: NO 8717 8977; Fig. 1).
- 1.1.3 The employer for this project was Aberdeen City Council and overall responsibility for its delivery lies with the AWPR/B-T Managing Agent. Jacobs UK Ltd was appointed as the Consultants, CFA Archaeology Ltd was the Contractor for this part of the programme of works, and the curator was Historic Scotland.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty is being developed by Transport Scotland in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. These two projects were individually identified as proposed transport interventions within the Modern Transport System (www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/transport_streets/roads_pavements/transport_projects/roa_wrp_mts.asp) and developed separately through the statutory process. In November 2010 the Scottish Government confirmed its intention to procure both projects under a single Non Profit Distributing contract.
- 1.2.2 The two major improvements to the trunk-road network are close to each other and together will provide significant benefits to the north-east of Scotland by reducing journey times and cutting congestion within Aberdeen City. They comprise four sections: a Northern Leg from North Kingswells to Blackdog; a Southern Leg from Charleston to North Kingswells; a Fastlink from Stonehaven to Cleanhill Junction; and the Balmedie to Tipperty improvements. The work undertaken during the construction of these four sections will consist of 34.6km of wholly new dual carriageway around the outskirts of Aberdeen along with an 11.5km Fastlink running from the A90 at Stonehaven and joining the AWPR/B-T near to Maryculter. An additional 9km of new dual carriageway will also be constructed during the Balmedie to Tipperty part of the project along with 3km of on-line improvements.

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 Previous archaeological work was undertaken in 2012 and consisted of a programme of non-invasive archaeological investigations comprising a desk-based assessment, topographic surveys, photographic surveys, palaeoenvironmental assessment, geophysical surveys, field walking, metal detecting and building recording. These were carried out in areas with suitable ground conditions within the Land Made Available (LMA) for the AWPR/B-T project. The general aim of these archaeological investigations was to identify

the extent and character of known and unknown archaeological remains in order to enable a programme of further archaeological evaluation and mitigation to be designed.

- 1.3.2 Chapter 43 (Part D: Fastlink) of the Environmental Statement (ES) (Jacobs 2007) undertaken for the project identified 43 cultural heritage sites within a study area extending c.250m either side of the centreline of the road alignment. Sites of potential early prehistoric date included Cantlayhills Cairn (Site 28) and Kempstone Hill Complex (Site 491).
- 1.3.3 The historic landscape of the surrounding area was created during the 18th and 19th centuries and is characterised by small, rectilinear pasture fields bounded by stone walls or consumption dykes, isolated farmsteads and areas of upland grazing.
- 1.3.4 The geophysical survey carried out in December 2012 (Headland Archaeology 2012a) identified several anomalies, notably those in close proximity to the former village of Cowie (Site 490). Thirty-five trenches excavated as part of the invasive archaeological investigations were positioned to target these anomalies.
- 1.3.5 A palaeoenvironmental survey carried out in October 2012 (Headland Archaeology 2012b) identified areas of peat within Red Moss Wetland (Site 67) and Blackburn Moss Wetland (Site 119). The earlier find of a Late Bronze Age sword reportedly from the base of the peats at Red Moss indicates peat formation in this area may be relatively late, beginning in the Late Bronze Age. However, the initial estimate for peat formation in Aberdeenshire is 10,600–9800 cal BP (Tipping 2007) possibly suggesting that the depth at which the sword was recovered was not accurately recorded. This early date for peat formation was supported by palaeoenvironmental sampling and analysis carried out by CFA at Blackburn Moss Wetland as part of this programme of works. The report on this has been produced under separate cover (Cressey and McCulloch 2013).
- 1.3.6 A programme of intrusive trial trenching was undertaken by CFA in 2013 within Lot 4 (Fastlink) of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Kirby 2014). Crossley Cairn lay within the road corridor and was excavated as part of this programme of works.
- 1.3.7 Four sites were revealed by the trial trenching, including: two areas of pits and linear features (trenches FL0034 and FL0242); a possible alignment of shallow pits (trench FL0381); and a stone spread or surface (trench FL0328) which was situated on the site of a farmstead annotated 'Broomhill' on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1868). A sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from one of the areas of pits and linear features, but lithics from the other area of pits and linear features proved undiagnostic, and there was no secure dating evidence from the pit alignment.
- 1.3.8 Following the trial trenching, nine sites were identified for further mitigation works. These consisted of four sites identified during trial trenching (FL/001,

FL/003B, FL/004, FL/005), two cairns identified as upstanding features (FL/002, FL/006), and an additional three areas identified by Jacobs following the trial trenching programme (FL/003A, FL/007, FL/008).

1.3.9 It was agreed with the Consultant, and with the approval of Historic Scotland, that the mitigation measures relating to the two cairns, one located at Fishermyre and the other located near Stranog Hill, would take the form of a topographic survey, followed by hand excavation. The results of the topographic surveys of FL/002 and FL/006 are covered in separate reports (See Mitchell 2014a and 2014b).

1.3.10 It was agreed with the Consultant, and with the approval of Historic Scotland, that the mitigation measures relating to the other sites identified during and following trial trenching should take the form of a strip and record, with hand excavation of any features revealed subject to further agreement. These are reported under separate cover.

1.3.11 The areas which required further mitigation work are summarised below.

Mitigation site ref	Trench Number	Description
AWPR/B-T/FL/001	FL0034/FL0034a	Pit and curvilinear feature
AWPR/B-T/FL/002	N/A	Cairn (near Fishermyre NO 870 903)
AWPR/B-T/FL/003A	N/A	Historical map evidence for earlier settlement
AWPR/B-T/FL/003B	FL0328	Stone surface (Broomhill Farm)
AWPR/B-T/FL/004	FL0242/FL0242a	Pit/linear feature. Prehistoric pottery
AWPR/B-T/FL/005	FL0381	Pit alignment
AWPR/B-T/FL/006	N/A	Cairn (near Stranog Hill NO 870 969)
AWPR/B-T/FL/007	N/A	Historical map evidence for earlier settlement
AWPR/B-T/FL/008	N/A	Historical map evidence for earlier settlement

Sites requiring further mitigation

1.3.12 This report covers the mitigation for trench FL/008, as agreed with the Consultant. This consisted of strip and map followed by hand excavation of the features.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

2.1.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Specification (Schedule 1) contained within ITT Vol.2 (Aberdeen City Council 2013) which set out the framework for the methodologies/requirements of this programme of mitigation excavation

2.1.2 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork.

2.1.3 A terrestrial photographic condition survey was undertaken prior to and immediately after the investigation. All equipment and footwear was cleaned and disinfected prior to entry on to any areas of land. An Ecological Clerk of Works conducted walkover surveys prior to any work commencing and consulted regularly to ensure that any ecological matters were dealt with promptly and correctly.

2.2 Surveying

2.2.1 The trench location was provided by the Consultant, as shown on Fig. 1. The location was accurately surveyed as excavated and tied in with the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Ordnance Datum using a GPS with a survey grade accuracy of $\pm 10\text{mm}$.

2.2.2 Precision topographic mapping was achieved through the use of GNSS/GPS systems. The survey achieved real-time GNSS/GPS positioning accurate to 0.01m horizontal and 0.03m vertical, through the use of a Trimble R6 GNSS system with a TSC3 controller running Trimble Access surveying software. This equipment provides centimetre-accurate RTK corrections using the Trimble VRS Now RTK GNSS service to plot / stake-out features etc within Access.

2.2.3 Data collection and survey control was integrated with the overall plans for the invasive investigations.

2.2.4 Survey data was exported from Trimble Access on the TSC3 controller to dxf format, retaining individual point feature codes and associated attributes, and processed in AutoCAD 2013. Model space in CAD was in metres at 1:1 and standard CFA layers and feature codes were used.

2.3 Mechanical Excavation

2.3.1 All topsoil/subsoil was stripped from the agreed area by a tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. All groundbreaking operations were undertaken under the direct and continuous supervision and control of the Contractor. Mechanical excavation ceased either at the first archaeological horizon or at the level of the natural geological deposits where it could be demonstrated that no archaeological horizon existed.

2.3.2 Immediately after the removal of the topsoil and any other overburden, the whole area was hand cleaned and inspected for archaeological features. The suspected features then received further cleaning and were assigned feature numbers. A list of the features was then presented to the Consultant along with a plan showing their respective positions within the trench. After further consultation with the Consultant, all of the features were partially excavated in order to determine the character, condition, quality and date of any archaeological features. The cleaning extended for 10m beyond any archaeological feature.

- 2.3.3 An overall plan of all visible features was prepared by instrument survey and, where appropriate, hand planning. The plan also showed any areas of visible damage or destruction of the archaeology caused by recent activity e.g. service trenches, quarry pits etc. The survey data and any hand-drawn plans were accurately tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Ordnance Datum.
- 2.3.4 Following the completion of the topsoil stripping, a composite drawing showing information from the instrument survey and the hand planning was prepared and submitted to the Consultant. Features shown on the drawing were annotated with a preliminary archaeological interpretation. The drawing was submitted to the Consultant with detailed costings and programme for undertaking excavation of features present, and for a post-excavation assessment and preparation of a post-excavation assessment report. Following agreement with the Consultant, the mitigation excavations were then undertaken as described in Section 2.4.
- 2.3.5 Topsoil and subsoil were segregated into separate spoil heaps on either side of the trench. Spoil from the excavation of any archaeological features was stored on the subsoil side. All backfilling was undertaken following inspection by, and with the prior agreement of, the Consultant. The material was backfilled in reverse order of removal in a series of layers no more than 250mm thick, each layer compacted as appropriate by the mechanical excavator prior to placement of the next layer.

2.4 Hand Excavation and Recording

- 2.4.1 Hand excavation was undertaken of all the archaeological features required by the Consultant, as follows:
- 50% of each pit or post-hole (half-sections or two quarter-sections as appropriate). Where necessary to obtain dating evidence or sufficient material for soil samples, such features were then fully excavated.
 - at least 20% of each simple linear feature within the whole stripped area with no individual section being less than 1.0m wide.
 - At least 30% of linear features forming enclosure or closely related to settlement activities rather than to agricultural activities, with no individual section being less than 1m wide.
 - in addition to the above, all intersections between features and all terminals of linear features.
- 2.4.2 All excavated contexts were fully recorded by detailed written context records giving details of location, composition, shape, dimensions, relationships, finds, samples, cross-references to other elements of the record and other relevant contexts. At least one plan and at least one section were drawn at an appropriate scale. Photographic records in digital form were taken of all trenches and archaeological features using a camera with a minimum resolution of ten megapixels. Feature locations were surveyed using a GPS with a survey survey-grade accuracy of $\pm 10\text{m}$ (horizontal)/ $\pm 30\text{mm}$ (vertical). All artefacts were recovered from site for specialist examination and analysis. All soil from the excavation of archaeological features was metal detected.

2.5 On-site Palaeoenvironmental Sampling Strategy

2.5.1 Samples comprising at least 40 litres per context or 100% of smaller contexts were taken from the recovery of small plant remains, small bones and finds. The soil samples were processed during fieldwork to allow a continuous reassessment and refinement of sampling strategies.

2.6 Archiving

2.6.1 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be deposited at the RCAHMS and will conform to current guidelines in MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006). The deposition of paper and digital archives with RCAHMS will comply with their current requirements (RCAHMS 1996a, 1996b) and with the Archaeological Archives Forum (Brown 2007), ADS guidelines for digital archives (Richards and Robinson 2001), and the IfA's 'Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials' (IfA 2013).

2.6.2 All artefactual material is allocated through the Treasure Trove process. *Treasure Trove in Scotland: A Code of Practice* (Scottish Government 2008) will be followed for the notification of finds to the Treasure Trove Unit. The finds/ecofacts will be archived according to the Scottish Museums Council guidelines (Scottish Museums Council 2000). Copies of specialists' reports, finds, illustrations, and x-rays will be included with the deposition where appropriate. Packing lists (paper and digital), and site information recorded on Museum Transfer Forms will be included with each deposition. Signed receipts for deposition will be retained. A discard policy is not appropriate for material collected in Scotland.

2.6.3 A summary statement of the results of this survey will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* once all archaeological works are completed (Appendix 7). An *OASIS Scotland* entry will be completed.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.1 General

3.1.1 Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 1.

3.1.2 A summary of the excavated features is contained in Appendix 5 and the locations of the features are shown on Fig. 2. Sections are shown on Fig. 3. Features pre-fixed with 'F' were recorded during the strip and map and were proved to be non-archaeological.

- 3.1.3 The deposits within the trench predominantly consisted of between 0.3m and 0.5m of dark brown/black sandy silt topsoil **(001)**. The natural geology consisted of mid brown sandy gravels with areas of firm silty clay **(002)**. All features were isolated, cut in to natural and lay under topsoil.

3.2 Features

Pits

- 3.2.1 An oval pit **(003)** (Fig. 2-4) measured 1.40m in length and 1m in width and survived to a maximum depth of 0.25m. The base of the pit was heavily disturbed by rodent burrowing activity and several small-medium rocks were present. The pit contained a single fill **(004)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.2 An irregular shaped pit **(005)** measured 1.30m in length and 1.25m in width and survived to a maximum depth of 0.25m (Fig. 2-3). The base of the pit was heavily disturbed by rodent burrowing activity. The pit contained a single fill **(006)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.3 A sub-circular pit **(007)** measured 1.20m in diameter and survived to a maximum depth of 0.20m (Fig. 2-3). The base of the pit was heavily disturbed by rodent burrowing activity. The pit contained a single fill **(008)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.4 A pit **(009)** measured 1.60m in maximum length and 1m in width and survived to a maximum depth of 0.12m (Fig. 2-3). The base and sides of the feature were heavily disturbed by rodent burrowing activity to the point where the true shape of the pit, if any, could not be established. The pit contained a single fill **(010)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.5 An oval pit **(011)** measured 1.40m in length and 1.30m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.16m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(012)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.6 An oval pit **(013)** measured 2.80m in length and 1m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.25m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(014)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil and some sherds of post-medieval ceramics. Very small quantities of wood and heather charcoal were recovered from the soil sample.
- 3.2.7 An oval pit **(015)** measured 2.60m in length and 1.6m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.25m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(016)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil. Small rocks (>0.15m diameter) and small chunks of re-deposited natural **(002)** were also prevalent near the base of the pit. The soil sample was sterile of archaeobotanical remains. Sherds of post-medieval ceramics were recovered.

- 3.2.8 An irregularly shaped pit **(017)** measured 0.95m in maximum length and 0.60m in maximum width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.08m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(014)** of dark brown/black sandy silt.
- 3.2.9 A sub-oval pit **(019)** measured 0.48m in length and 0.30m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.04m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(020)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.10 A kidney-shaped pit **(021)** measured 0.60m in maximum length and 0.30m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.08m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(022)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.11 An irregularly-shaped pit **(023)** measured 1.08m in maximum length and 0.80m in maximum width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.25m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(024)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil. Numerous small stones existed in the fill, and one iron object was recovered.
- 3.2.12 An oval pit **(025)** measured 2.40m in length and 2.00m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.24m (Fig. 2-3, 5). The pit contained two fills: a lower fill **(026)** of medium-firm dark brown silt and an upper fill **(027)** of firm mottled-orange/brown sandy clay, which appeared to be a mixture of topsoil **(001)** and re-deposited chunks of natural **(002)**. Sherds of post-medieval ceramic and glass fragments and an iron object were recovered from both fills. Very small quantities of wood and heather charcoal were recovered from the soil sample.
- 3.2.13 An irregularly-shaped pit **(028)** measured 1.70m in length and 1.40m in width. It was truncated to the south-east, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.18m (Fig. 2-3). The pit contained a single fill **(014)** of dark brown/black sandy silt, very similar to topsoil.
- 3.2.14 An irregularly-shaped pit **(030)** measured 1.80m in maximum length and 1.80m in maximum width, and it survived to a maximum depth of 0.30m (Fig. 2-3). The pit was centred on a large boulder set within the natural. The single fill **(031)** was dark brown/black sandy silt. Very small quantities of wood charcoal were recovered from the soil sample.
- 3.2.15 A linear/oval pit **(032)** ran into the limit of excavation at the north-eastern edge of the trench (Fig. 2-3). The pit measured a visible maximum of 1.80m in length and 0.70m in width, and survived to a maximum depth of 0.06m. The pit contained a single fill **(033)** of dark brown/black sandy silt similar to topsoil.

Drains

- 3.2.16 A linear box drain **(034)** (Fig. 2-3, 6) ran for 23.00m in a south-west to north-east direction and continued into the north-eastern trench edge. The drain consisted of side walls built of one to two courses of upright stones **(035)** up to

0.50m in height, with flat capstones (035) laid across to form the roof with dimensions of up to 0.6m in length and width. The drain contained a dark grey silt fill (036) containing numerous sherds of Victorian pottery. Very small quantities of wood charcoal were recovered from the soil sample.

3.2.17 Box-drain (037) extended from (034) at its north-eastern end and curved round in a semi-circle on the east side of (034) before joining it again further to the south-west where the drain terminated (Fig. 2-3, 7). Drain (037) was of a similar construction to (034), although the side walls and capstones (038) were slightly smaller in overall dimensions, measuring up to 0.50m in maximum length and width. The drain's fill (039) was a dark grey silt which contained post-medieval ceramics and glass fragments, iron, and a small piece of clay pipe. Very small quantities of wood and heather charcoal were recovered from the soil sample.

3.2.18 At the north-eastern end of drain (034), two linear features extended from its north-western side. A shallow and narrow drain/ditch (040) extended in a north-west direction from (034). This feature contained one fill (041) similar to the dark grey silt deposits of (036) and (038).

3.2.19 Around two metres to the south-west of (040), another shallow and narrow linear feature (042) ran in a north-west direction from drain (037), containing a single fill (043) of dark grey silt (Fig. 2-3). Both features (040) and (042) became more shallow before running out of the north-western limit of excavation.

Other Features

3.2.20 Three other features mapped during the strip and map phase were found on excavation to be non-archaeological in origin.

3.2.21 **F801**, which had the appearance of an L-shaped ditch in the eastern corner of the trench, was found to be an animal burrow. Three other features, **F804**, **F810** and **F814**, were very thin lenses of silt lying on the natural.

4. FINDS by Christina Hills

Find type	No.	Weight (g)
Clay Pipe	1	2
Glass	12	30
Iron	21	767
Pottery	116	829
Slag	27	2

Table 1- Summary of finds

4.1 The finds are summarised in Table 1. All were post-medieval or modern in date, belonging to the 19th and 20th centuries.

- 4.2 The pottery was all glazed ceramic and came from pits **013**, **015** and **025** as well as the fills of drains **034** and **037**. A small fragment of clay pipe was recovered from **039**.
- 4.3 All the glass was green or clear bottle glass and was found in pit **025** as well as drain fills **034** and **037**.
- 4.4 A mixture of iron fittings were found on site, including nine nails, a strap, hook, a broken sheet and a chain. These came from pits **023** and **025** as well as drain fills **034** and **037**. Fragments of slag were recovered from samples taken from pit **015** and drain fill **037**.
- 4.5 No further work is recommended on the finds.

5. ARCHAEOBOTANICAL ANALYSIS by Mhairi Hastie

5.1 Methodology

- 5.1.1 Each sample was processed through a Siraf style flotation tank, washed over a 250µm mesh and re-floated. The floating organic material (flot) was collected in a 250µm sieve and the material remaining in the tank (retent) was washed through a nest of sieves of 10mm, 5mm, 2mm, 1mm and 250µm size. Both flot (organic) and retent (inorganic) fractions were then air-dried under controlled conditions. A 10 litre sub-sample of each bulk soil sample was processed and assessed unless the sample was less than 10 litres in total, in which case the whole sample was processed (see Table 2 for details).
- 5.1.2 The retents were sorted by eye for small finds and any non-buoyant archaeobotanical remains, and scanned with a magnet to pick up ferrous debris, and any archaeologically significant material was removed and bagged.
- 5.1.3 The flots were scanned using a binocular microscope (x10-x200 magnification) and the presence of any charred plant remains recorded.
- 5.1.4 Identifications of archaeobotanical material were carried out with reference to seed atlases and in-house reference collection.

Sample number	Context number	Context description	Sample vol (litres)	Vol. of sample processed (litres)
1	016	Fill of pit (015)	40	10
2	014	Fill of pit (013)	40	10
3	031	Fill of pit (030)	40	10
4	026	Lower fill of pit (025)	40	10
5	036	Fill of drain (034)	40	10
6	039	Fill of drain (037)	40	10

Table 2. Sample details

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Small finds and other artefacts recovered from the retents are discussed above in Section 4.

5.2.2 The amount of archaeological significant material recovered from the samples was low. The results are summarised in Tables 3 and 4.

Wood charcoal: Small quantities of wood charcoal were recovered from five of the samples, pit fills **014**, **026** and **031** and drain fills **036** and **039**. The charcoal fragments recovered were generally small in size (< 5mm in diameter).

Heather charcoal: In addition to the wood charcoal a small quantity of heather charcoal fragments were recovered from three of the samples, pit fills **014** and **026**, and drain fill **039**.

5.2.3 The charcoal is probably remnants of fuel used during occupation of the site.

Sample number	Context number	Context description	Pottery (modern)	Iron (obj?)	Glass	Slag/ Fuel ash	Charcoal
1	016	Fill of pit (015)	+			+	
2	014	Fill of pit (013)					+ (vsf)
3	031	Fill of pit (030)					+
4	026	Lower fill of pit (025)		+	+		
5	036	Fill of drain (034)	++	+	+	+	+
6	039	Fill of drain (037)					+

Table 3. Composition of Retents

Sample number	Context number	Context description	Flot Vol (ml)	Heather charcoal	Wood Charcoal	AMS	Coal	Slag/ Fuel ash
					Qty	AMS		
1	016	Fill of pit (015)	50					++++
2	014	Fill of pit (013)	20	+ (vsf)	+ (sf)	No		++
3	031	Fill of pit (030)	10		+ (sf)	No		
4	026	Lower fill of pit (025)	100	+ (vsf)S	++	Yes	+ (sf)	+++
5	036	Fill of drain (034)	30		++	Yes	+ (sf)	++
6	039	Fill of drain (037)	30	+ (vsf)	++	Yes	+ (sf)	++

Key: + = rare, ++ = occasional, +++ = common and ++++ = abundant
 sf = small fragments (<5mm in dia.)
 vsf = very small fragments (<2mm in dia)

Table 4. Composition of Flots

5.3 Statement of potential

5.3.1 The carbonised plant remains are in poor condition, the fragmentary and abraded nature suggesting that they have undergone much movement prior to burial. The low amount of material recovered does not allow for detailed discussion. The charcoal assemblage is too small to infer species exploitation and the composition of the local woodland. Three samples, pit fill **026**, and drain fills **036** and **039**, contained sufficiently large enough fragments of charcoal for AMS dating.

5.4 Storage and Curation Policy

- 5.4.1 All processing, recording, storage and samples has been carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials (2001, revised 2008), with Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (English Heritage 2011) and with reference to the Association for Environmental Archaeology's Working Paper No. 2, Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluation (1995).
- 5.4.2 The carbonised plant remains (charcoal) recovered from the samples have been packaged as appropriate for long-term storage in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum and as per the contract in sealed finds bags at room temperature. The assemblages will be stored at CFA's secure storage facility until such time as the archive is ready to be deposited.

6. ASSESMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

6.1 Backhill Farmstead

- 6.1.1 The farmstead which is depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map is not named but is in roughly the same location as the existing inhabited buildings known as Kempston Hill (Fig. 8).
- 6.1.2 A roofed rectangular building and a well are depicted on the map just to the north of the existing buildings, while a second roofed building probably corresponds to ruins still surviving adjacent to the inhabited buildings. Two further roofed rectangular buildings, one large and one small, are depicted in the arable field containing trench FL/008, along with an irregular-sided enclosure and what appear to be further walls and trackways.
- 6.1.3 By the Second Edition map (1902), the farmstead is named Backhill and the two buildings and enclosure in the current arable field have gone. Two further roofed buildings are shown, one of which still survives as ruins and the other which corresponds to the location of the current house.

6.2 Pit features

- 6.2.1. All of the pit features in Trench FL/008, apart from **025**, contained one fill which was similar to the topsoil (**001**), consisting of dark brown or black sandy silt. Some of the features contained small quantities of wood and heather charcoal and some contained small numbers of post-medieval finds. It is likely that at least some of these pits are the product of activities taking place around the farmstead buildings, while others may be the remains of stone holes from stone extraction, particularly those containing rock fragments or boulders or those which had uneven dimensions. The bases and sides of the pit features in many instances were so disturbed by rodent burrowing activity that any detailed analysis of the forms of the pits is not possible.

- 6.2.2 Oval pit **025** was the only pit to contain two fills, neither of which was directly similar to topsoil (**001**). The pit contained multiple fragments of 19th and 20th century pottery in both fills (**026** and **027**). It seems likely, due to the concave sides and asymmetrical shape of the base, that the pit was dug for the extraction of a large stone or boulder from the field. The pit was then backfilled in two phases and used as a small refuse tip, explaining the prevalence of ceramic sherds.

6.3 Drainage

- 6.3.1 A system of interconnecting field drains was identified within Trench FL/008. A larger drain (**034**) ran south-west to north-east and continued out of the north-eastern limit of excavation. The alignment of this drain seems to correspond with the alignment of a trackway shown on the Ordnance Survey First Edition Map of 1868 (Fig. 8), and lies parallel to the larger rectangular building depicted on that map. The southern part of this drain lies beneath what would have been the location of the smaller building and it is possible that a pit-like extensions to the south-eastern side of drain **034** is the vestigial remains of foundations for this smaller building.
- 6.3.2 The second drain (**037**) connected with drain **034** at two points and was semicircular in plan. Rubble and uneven construction at the two points where the drains meet suggest that the curved drain (**037**) was constructed after **034** was already established, and engineered in order to prevent or manage overflow. The origin of the two linear ditches (**040** and **042**) is also likely to stem from overflow management from the stone drains. The alignment of ditches **040** and **042** suggests that these features respected the northern end of the larger building depicted on the OS map.
- 6.3.3 It is likely that the drains served these buildings and went out of use sometime before 1902 when the buildings were demolished and removed and the field turned over to arable use. It is possible that the buildings were byres or otherwise related to stock, with the drains managing animal waste.

6.4 Discussion

- 6.4.1 The features identified in Trench FL/008 relate to buildings associated with Backhill farmstead in the 19th century, and which were demolished some time before 1902. The findings indicate that the immediate environs at Kempston Hill and the farmstead of Backhill were modified in the 19th century and early 20th century. No remains were found which could be positively identified as the remains of either building depicted on the 1868 map lying within the trench, but the box drains serving the buildings survived.
- 6.4.2 The results of this programme of works indicate that the landscape through which the Fastlink route will pass has been intensively utilised during the post-medieval period with a large number of features relating to post improvement agriculture. The majority of the post-medieval and modern sites along the route are related to 18th/19th century agricultural improvements and consist of farmsteads, clearance cairns, consumption dykes and field systems. These

improvements saw the creation of the larger enclosed fields that dominate the agricultural landscape within the road corridor. Seven farmsteads (Sites 32, 42, 45, 47, 87, 94 and 97) were identified within the study area as well as three consumption dykes (Sites 505, 508 and 510) (Jacobs 2007). Other known post-medieval agricultural features include four groups of clearance cairns (Sites 121, 506, 507 and 524), and the Redmoss Relict Field Boundary (Site 509), probably marking the edge of the moss (*ibid.*). The sample excavation of Crossley Clearance Cairn (Kirby 2014) suggests that is also likely to date to this period.

- 6.4.5 Backhill farmstead is a further example of sites from the post-medieval period, relating to post improvement agriculture. There is no archaeological value in undertaking any further work or reporting in relation to site FL/008.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The features identified in Trench FL/008 near Coneyhatch relate to buildings associated with Backhill farmstead in the 19th century, and which were demolished some time before 1902. The findings indicate that the immediate environs at Kempston Hill and the farmstead of Backhill were modified in the 19th century and early 20th century. No remains were found which could be positively identified as the remains of either building depicted on the 1868 map lying within the trench, but the box drains serving the buildings survived. A number of pits were also identified, at least some of which may be the product of activities taking place around the farmstead buildings, while others may be the remains of stone-holes from stone extraction.
- 7.2 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record.
- 7.3 A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (See Appendix 7) and the investigation will be reported through *OASIS Scotland*.
- 7.4 No further work or reporting is required in relation to site FL/008.

8. REFERENCES

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Ordnance Survey 1868 Kincardine Sheet XII.11 (Fetteresso)

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APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context	Fill of	Description
001		Topsoil
002		Natural
003		Cut of pit/stone-hole
004	003	Fill of 003
005		Cut of pit/burrow
006	005	Fill of pit/burrow
007		Cut of pit/stone-hole
008	007	Fill of 007
009		Cut of pit/burrows
010	009	Fill of 009
011		Cut of pit
012	011	Fill of 012
013		Cut of pit
014	013	Fill of 013
015		Cut of pit
016	015	Fill of 015
017		Cut of pit
018	017	Fill of 017
019		Cut of pit
020	019	Fill of 019
021		Cut of pit
022	021	Fill of 021
023		Cut of pit
024	023	Fill of 023
025		Cut of pit
026	025	Lower fill of 025
027	025	Upper fill of 025
028		Cut of stone-hole/pit
029	028	Fill of 028
030		Cut of pit
031	030	Fill of 030
032		Cut of pit
033	032	Full of 032
034		Cut of main drain
035	034	Stone structure of drain 034
036	034	Silty fill of drain 034
037		Cut of curved drain
038	037	Stone structure of drain 037
039	037	Silty fill of drain 037
040		Cut of drain
041	040	Fill of drain 040
042		Cut of drain
043	042	Fill of drain 042

APPENDIX 2: Digital Photographic Register

Strip & Map

Photo No.	Contexts/description	Taken from
001-006	General pre-ex/working shots	Various
007	Feature 812	N
008	Feature 808	N
009	Feature 807	E
010	Feature 809	N
011	Feature 011	N
012	Feature 013	N
013	Feature 019	NE
014	Feature 020	E
015	Feature 021	N
016	Feature 018	N
017	Feature 017	N
018	Feature 010	E
019	Feature 006	N
020	Feature 005	N
021	Feature 016	SE
022	Feature 015	SE
023	Feature 004	W
024	Feature 003	SW
025	Feature 001	NW
026	Feature 002	N
027	Feature 014	N
028	Features 022 and 023	NE
029	Features 022 and 023	SW
030	General shots of site 008 post-stripping	SW

Mitigation Excavations

Photo No.	Context/description	Taken From
001	NE-facing section of pit 003	NE
002	S-facing section of pit 005	S
003	N-facing section of pit 007	N
004	S-facing section of pit 009	S
005	NE-facing section of pit 011	NE
006	NW-facing section of pit 013	NW
007	SE-facing section of pit 015	SE
008	N-facing section pit 017	N
009	N-facing section pit 019	N
010	W-facing section pit 021	W
011	NE-facing section pit 023	NE
012	NE-facing section pit 025	NE
013	NW-facing section pit 028	NW
014	SE-facing section pit 030	SE
015	SE-facing section pit 032	SE
016-023	General shots of stone drains 034 and 037	Various
024	SW-facing section of drain 034 (Section 1 on plan 31a+b)	SW
025	SW-facing section of drain 034 (Section 2 on plan 31a+b)	SW
026	N-facing section of drain 037 (Section 3 on plan 31a+b)	N

APPENDIX 3: Field drawing register

Dwg no.	Sheet No.	Description/contexts	Section/plan	Scale
1	1	Post-ex plan of pit 003	Plan	1:10
2	1	NE-facing section of pit 003	Section	1:20
3	1	Post-ex plan of pit 007	Plan	1:20
4	1	N-facing section of pit 007	Section	1:20
5	2	Post-ex plan of pit 005	Plan	1:20
6	2	S-facing section of pit 005	Section	1:10
7	1	Post-ex plan of pit 011	Plan	1:20
8	1	NE-facing section of pit 011	Section	1:20
9	2	Post-ex plan of pit 009	Plan	1:20
10	2	South-facing section of pit 009	Section	1:10
11	2	Post-ex plan of pit 013	Plan	1:20
12	2	NW-facing section of pit 013	Section	1:10
13	1	Post-ex plan of pit 015	Plan	1:20
14	1	SE-facing section of pit 015	Section	1:20
15	3	NE-facing section of pit 025	Section	1:20
16	3	Post-ex plan of pit 025	Plan	1:20
17	3	Post-ex plan of pit 023	Plan	1:20
18	3	NE-facing section of pit 023	Section	1:10
19	3	Post-ex plan pit 019	Plan	1:20
20	3	N-facing section of pit 019	Section	1:10
21	3	Post-ex plan of pit 021	Plan	1:20
22	3	W-facing section of pit 021	Section	1:10
23	3	Post-ex plan of pit 017	Plan	1:20
24	3	N-facing section of pit 017	Section	1:10
25	1	Post-ex plan of pit 028	Plan	1:20
26	1	NW-facing section of pit 028	Section	1:20
27	5	Post-ex plan of pit 032	Plan	1:20
28	5	SE-facing section of pit 032	Section	1:20
29	4	Post-ex plan of pit 030	Plan	1:20
30	4	SSE-facing section of pit 030	Section	1:20
31a	6	Post-ex plan of stone drains 034 and 037; NE end	Plan	1:50
31b	7	Post-ex plan of stone drains 034 and 037; SE end	Plan	1:50
32	5	SW-facing section of drain 034 (Section 1 on plan 31a+b)	Section	1:10
33	7	SW-facing section of drain 034 (Section 2 on plan 31a+b)	Section	1:10
34	6	N-facing section of drain 037 (Section 3 on plan 31a+b)	Section	1:10
35	6	SE-facing section of drain 040	Section	1:10
36	6	SE-facing section of drain 042	Section	1:10

APPENDIX 4: Sample register

Sample No.	Context	Fill of	Sample type	Reason for Collection	Sample volume
001	016	015	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l
002	014	013	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l
003	031	030	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l
004	026	025	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l
005	036	034	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l
006	039	037	Bulk	Environmental analysis	40l

APPENDIX 5: Finds register

Context	Sample	Find type	No.	Wt (g)	Notes	Spotdate
014		Pottery	3	18	Ceramic	Modern
016	1	Pottery	1	1	Ceramic	Modern
016	1	Slag	18	1		Modern
024		Iron	1	249	Strap	Modern
026		Pottery	5	10	Ceramic	Modern
026		Glass	2	3	Green bottle	Modern
026		Iron	2	25	Nails	Modern
026	4	Glass	2	1	Green bottle	Modern
026	4	Iron	7	4	Broken sheet	Modern
027		Pottery	4	21	Ceramic	Modern
036		Pottery	74	719	Ceramic	Modern
036		Glass	4	24	Green+clear bottle	Modern
036		Iron	1	287	Hook	Modern
036		Iron	6	36	Nails	Modern
036	5	Glass	3	1	Green+clear bottle	Modern
036	5	Pottery	14	8	Ceramic	Modern
036	5	Slag	9	1		Modern
036	5	Iron	2	18	Nails	Modern
039		Pottery	15	52	Ceramic	Modern
039		Iron	1	130	Chain- broken	Modern
039		Glass	1	1	Green bottle	Modern
039		Iron	1	18	Nail	Modern
039		Clay Pipe	1	2	Stem	Post-med

APPENDIX 6: Summary of Archaeological Features

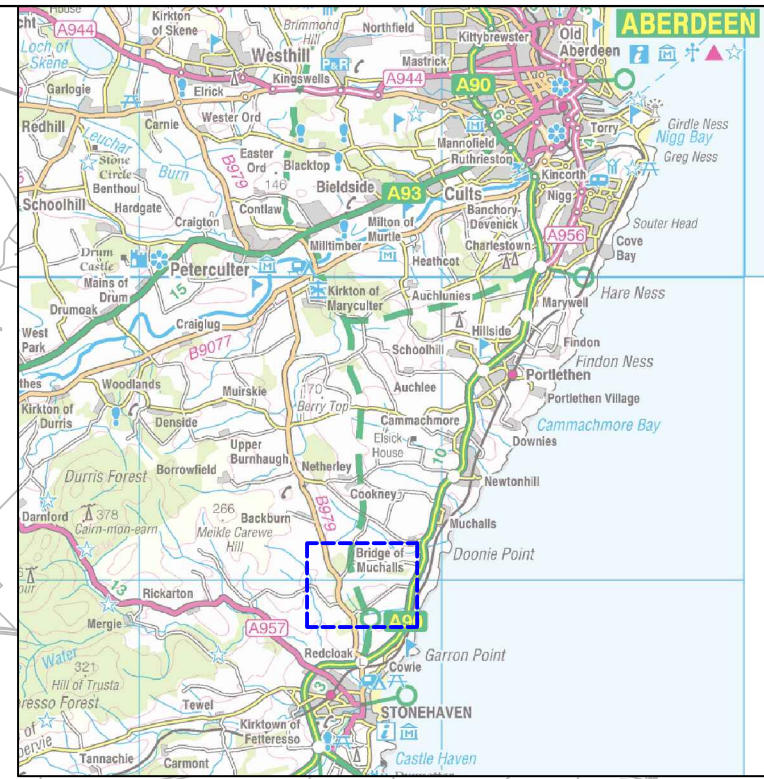
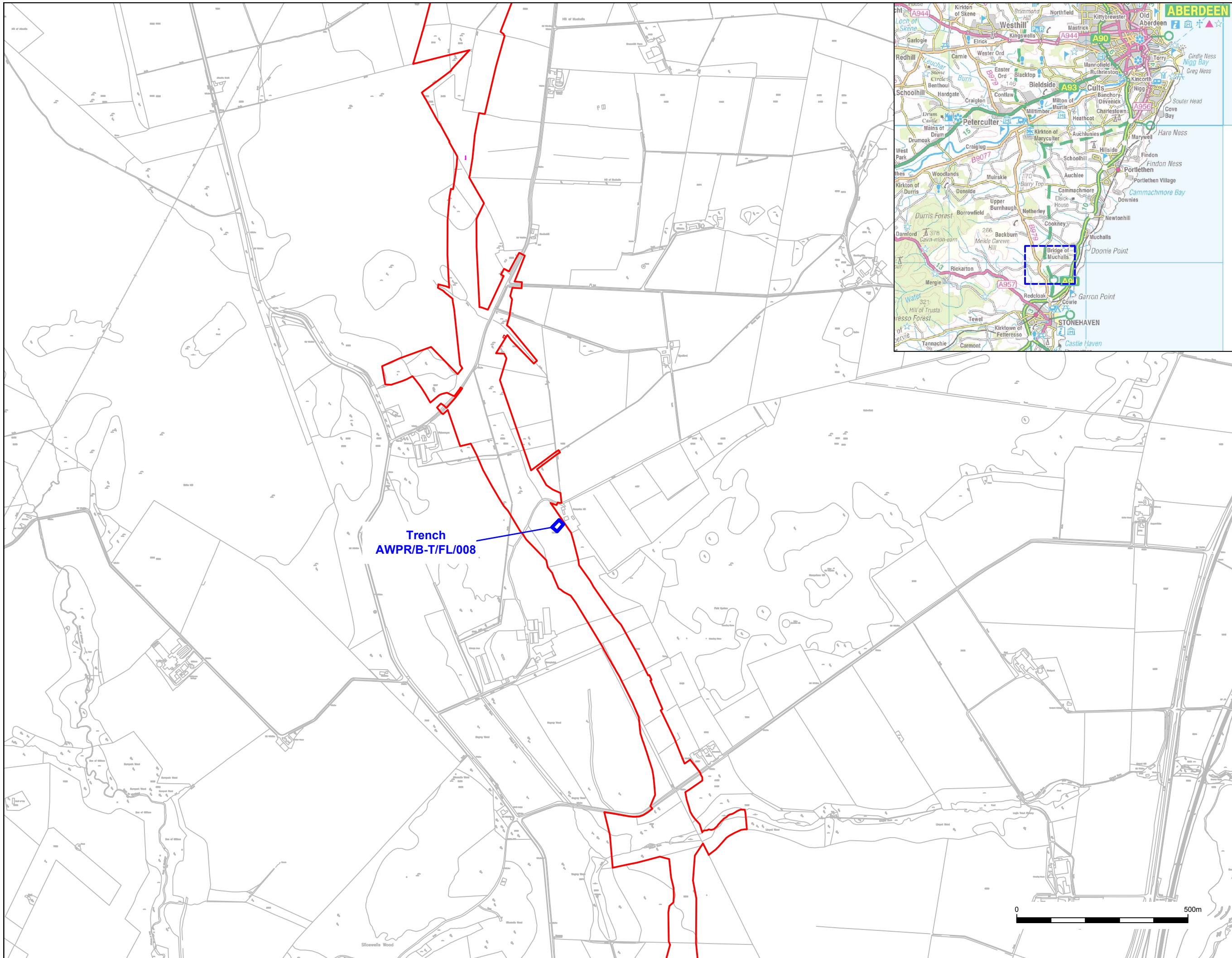
Context/ Feature	Description	Dimension	Fills/Deposit
(003)	Oval pit	1.40m length, 1.00m width; 0.25m deep	(004) – dark brown/black sandy silt with included rocks
(005)	Irregular-shaped pit	1.30m length, 1.25m width; 0.25m deep	(006) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(007)	Sub-circular pit	1.20m diameter; 0.20m deep	(008) – dark brown/black sandy silt (entire feature heavily disturbed by rodent activity)
(009)	Irregular-shaped pit	1.60m length, 1.00m width; 0.12m deep	(010) – dark brown/black sandy silt (entire feature heavily disturbed by rodent activity)
(011)	Oval pit	1.40m length, 1.30m width; 0.16m deep	(012) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(013)	Oval pit	2.80m length, 1.00m width; 0.25m deep	(014) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(015)	Oval pit	2.60m length, 1.60m deep;	(016) – dark brown/black sandy silt with multiple rocks
(017)	Irregular-shaped pit	0.95m length, 0.60m width; 0.08m deep	(018) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(019)	Sub-oval pit	0.48m length, 0.30m width; 0.04m deep	(020) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(021)	Kidney-shaped pit	0.60m length, 0.30m width; 0.08m deep	(022) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(023)	Irregularly-shaped pit	1.08m length, 0.80m width; 0.25m deep	(024) – dark brown/black sandy silt with numerous small stones
(025)	Oval pit	2.40m length, 2.00m width;	(026) – medium-firm dark brown

		0.24m deep	silt (027) – mottled orange/brown sandy clay
(028)	Oval/linear pit	1.70m+ length, 1.40m width; 0.18m deep	(014) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(030)	Irregular-shaped pit	1.80m length, 1.80m width; 0.30m deep	(031) – dark brown/black sandy silt with large stones
(032)	Linear/oval pit	1.80m+ length, 0.70m width; 0.06m deep	(033) – dark brown/black sandy silt
(034)	Linear box drain	23m+m length, up to 0.6m width, up to 0.5m depth	(035) – stone structure of drain – capstones and sidewall stones (036) – dark grey silt fill
(037)	Curved box drain	22m length, up to 0.50m width; up to 0.30m depth	(038) – stone structure of drain – capstones and sidewall stones (039) – dark grey silt fill
(040)	Shallow linear ditch/drain	11+m length, 0.40m width; 0.08m depth	(041) – dark grey silt
(042)	Shallow linear ditch/drain	11+m length, 0.30m width; 0.08m depth	(042) – dark grey silt

APPENDIX 7: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeenshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty, Lot 4 – Fastlink, Invasive Archaeological Investigations
PROJECT CODE:	FAST
PARISH:	Fetteresso
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Ewan MacNeilage
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Strip and map, and mitigation excavation
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 8717 8977
START DATE (this season)	May 2014
END DATE (this season)	May 2014
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:	The features identified in Trench FL/008 near Coneyhatch relate to buildings associated with Backhill farmstead in the 19th century, and which were demolished some time before 1902. The findings indicate that the immediate environs at Kempston Hill and the farmstead of Backhill were modified in the 19th century and early 20th century. No remains were found which could be positively identified as the remains of either building depicted on the 1868 map lying within the trench, but the box drains serving the buildings survived. A number of pits were also identified, at least some of which may be the product of activities taking place around the farmstead buildings, while others may be the remains of stone holes from stone extraction.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	N/A
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Aberdeen City Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ

EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland Aberdeenshire Council Sites & Monuments Record



Key:

- LMA
- Trench

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 w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Fig. No:	1	Revision:	A
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Title:
**Location of Trench
 AWPR/B -T/FL/008**

Project:
**Aberdeen Western Peripheral
 Route/Balmedie-Tipperty
 Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008
 - Mitigation Excavation**

Client:
Aberdeen City Council

Scale at A3:
1:10,000

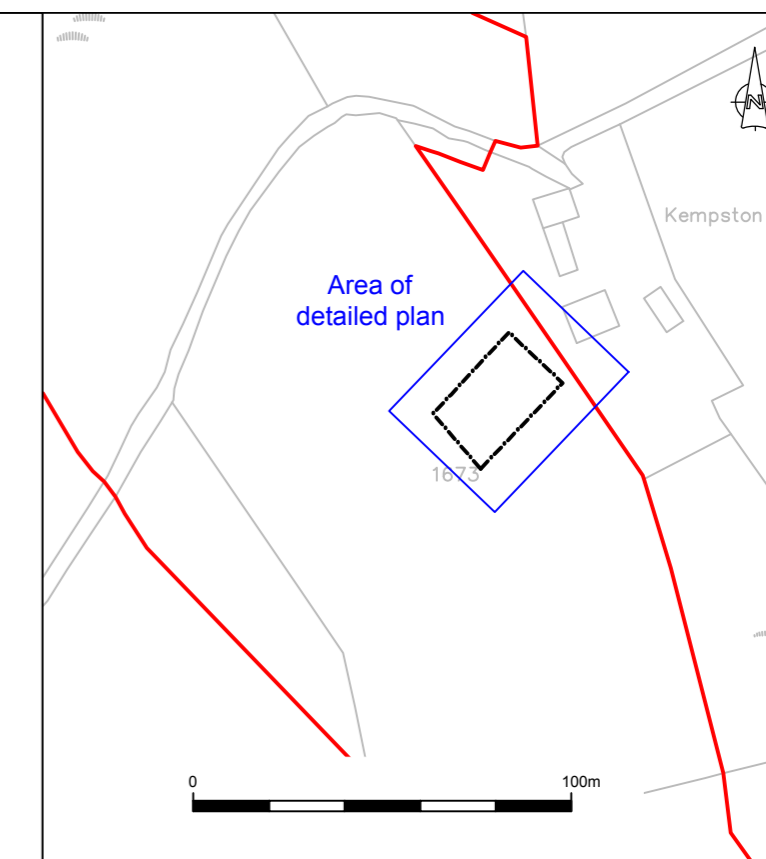
Drawn by:	Checked:	Report No:
TB	GS	3205





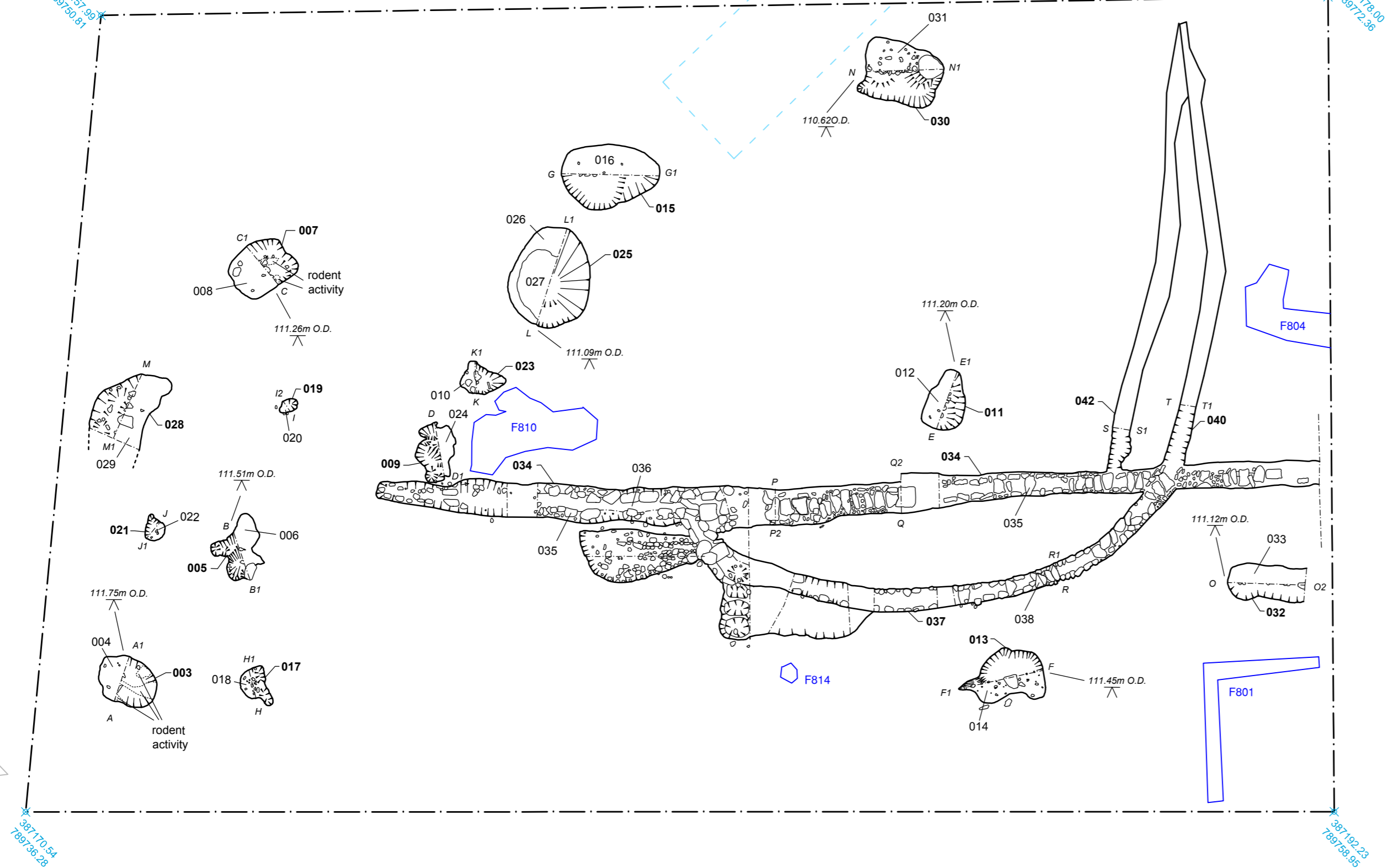
Key:

- LMA
- Excavation Area
- Evaluation Trench
- Features
- Unexcavated Features



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387178.00
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387170.54
789706.28

387192.23
789706.95



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Fig. No: 2	Revision: A
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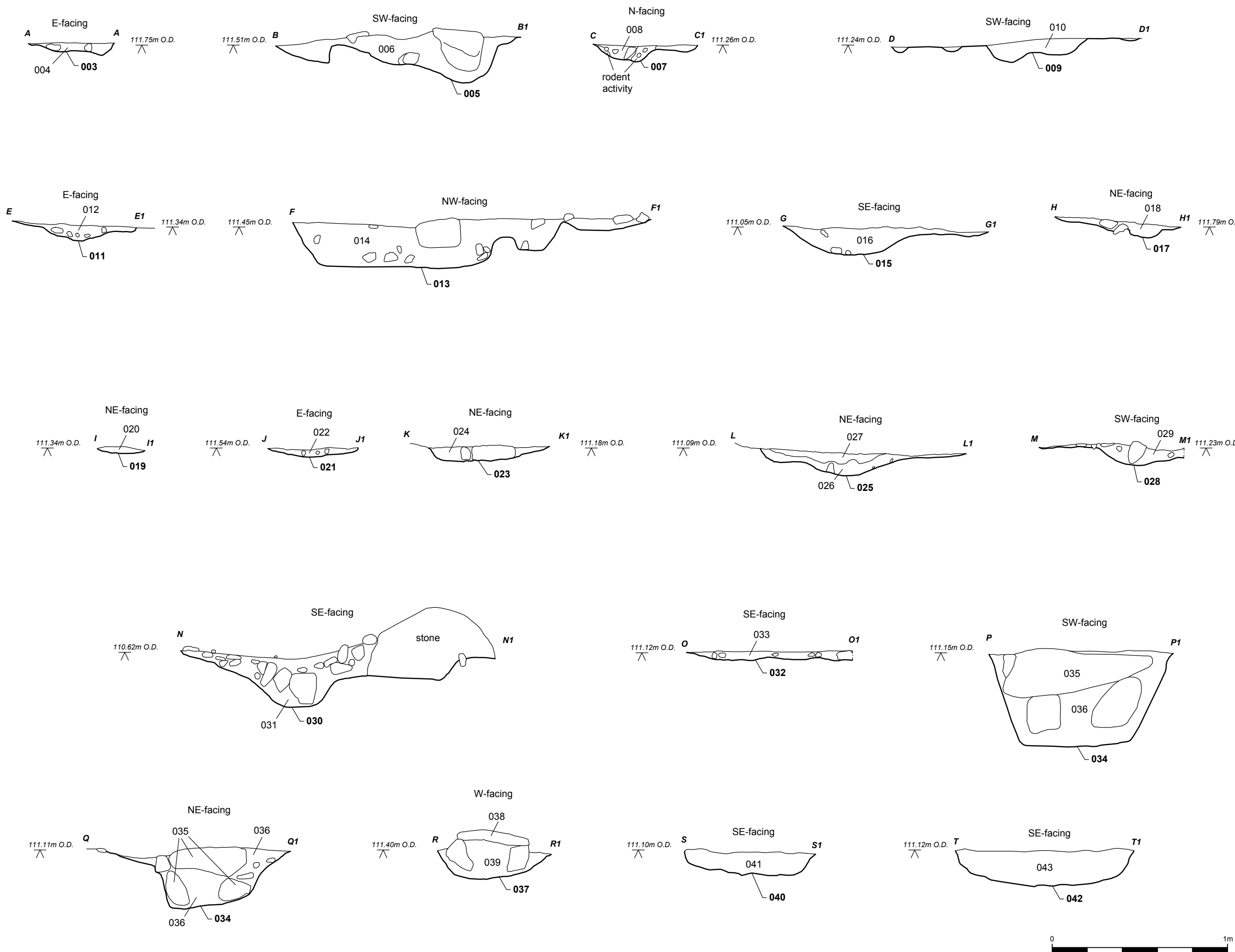
Title:
**Plan of Trench
 AWPR/B -T/FL/008**

Project:
 Aberdeen Western Peripheral
 Route/Balmedie-Tipperty
 Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008
 - Mitigation Excavation

Client:
Aberdeen City Council

Scale at A2:
1:2000, 1:100

Drawn by: TB	Checked: GS	Report No: 3205
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Key:

Fig. No: 3 Revision: A

Title: Sections, trench FL/008

Project: Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008 - Mitigation Excavation

Client: Aberdeen City Council

Scale at A3: 1:10,000

Drawn by: TB Checked: GS Report No: 3205



Fig. 4 - Photograph of heavily burrowed pit 003



Fig. 5 - Photograph of pit 025 after excavation



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Title:
 Selected photo

Project:
 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty
 Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008 - Mitigation Excavation

Fig. 4-5	Report: 3205	Drawn: TB	CKD: GS	Date: 15/12/14
Client: Aberdeen City Council				
Scale:				





Fig. 6 - Photograph of section through drain 034



Fig. 7 - Photograph of section through drain 037



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Title:
 Selected photo

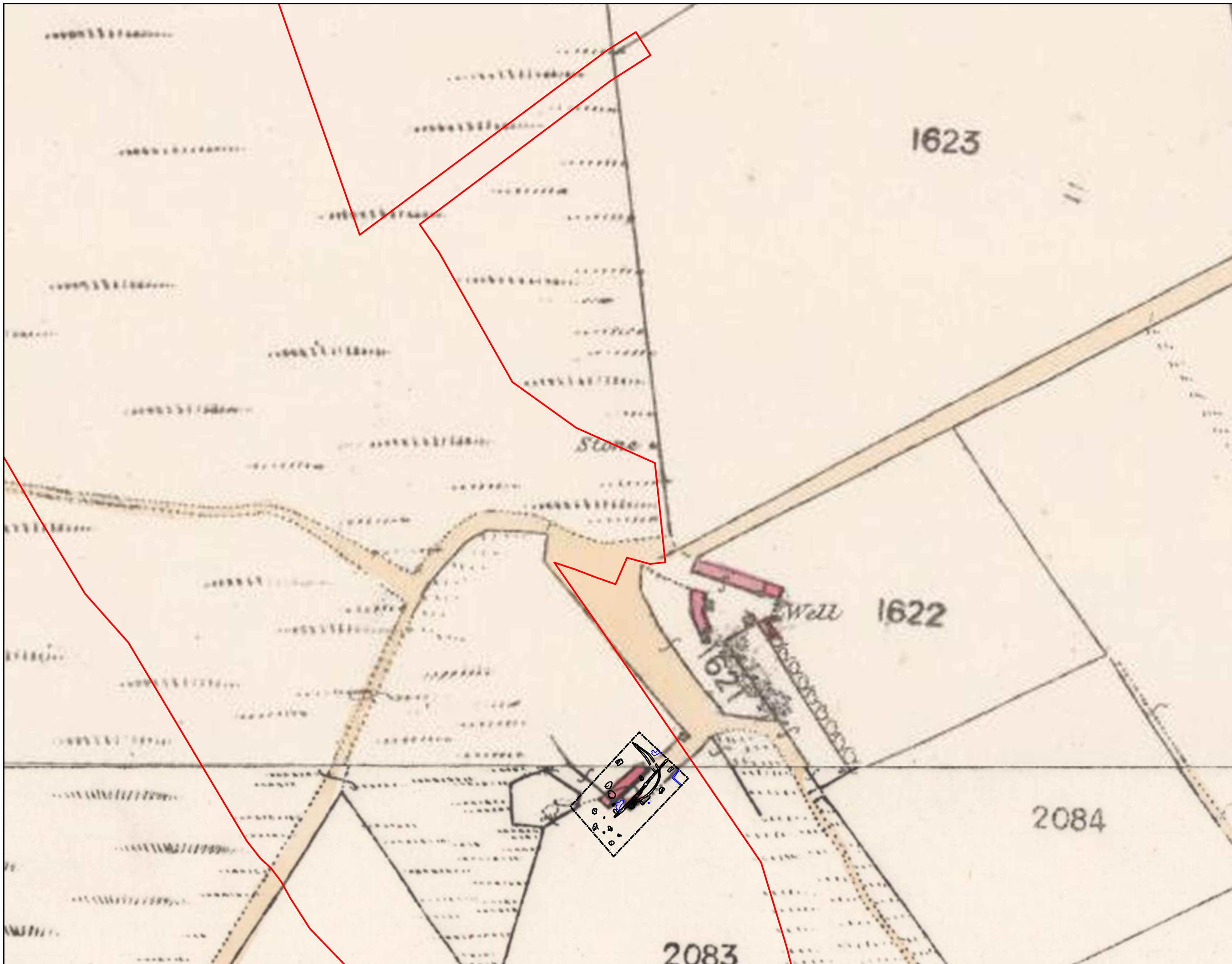
Project:
 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty
 Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008 - Mitigation Excavation

Fig. 6-7	Report: 3205	Drawn: TB	CKD: GS	Date: 15/12/14
Client: Aberdeen City Council				
Scale:				





Key:



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 w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Fig. No:	8	Revision:	A
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Title:
 Plan of site showing the farmstead of Kempston Hill on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map

Project:
 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty Lot 4/ AWPR/B-T/FL/008 - Mitigation Excavation

Client:
 Aberdeen City Council

Scale at A3:
 1:1000



Drawn by:	Checked:	Report No:
TB	GS	3205