

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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## **New Ellon Cemetery Site, West of Balmacassie Cottage, Ellon**

### **Archaeological Evaluation**

**Report No. 3338**

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This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

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West of Balmacassie Cottage,  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in September 2015 on an area of land proposed for the creation of a new cemetery to the north of Ellon, Aberdeenshire (NGR: NJ 968 313) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), dated 22 July 2015, for the evaluation was produced by CFA to meet the requirements of the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

### **1.2 Background**

The proposed development area (NGR: NJ 968 313) is centred on a plot of land between Balmacassie Cottage to the west, residential Ellon to the east, and the A948 to the immediate south. The site is bounded on its north and southeast edges by modern open drains, beyond which is an extensive area of arable and pastoral agricultural land.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the project were to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area; to establish their vulnerability to the proposed development; and to propose mitigation measures.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

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

Prior to evaluation a desk-based assessment was undertaken and the following sources were consulted:

- The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) online database for sites, find spots or monuments within the proposed development area;
- Ordnance Survey and military maps available online through the National Library of Scotland;
- In addition, internet sources were consulted for information relating to general background, listed buildings, satellite imagery and other heritage resources within the study area.

The evaluation was required to initially cover 5% (1100m<sup>2</sup>) of the site that was available for evaluation (2.2ha). This was to be extended to 7% (1540m<sup>2</sup>) if complex archaeological remains that could not be understood by the 5% sample were uncovered. It was agreed with the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeological Advisor that

evaluation could be curtailed at 5%, since no features were revealed that merited extending the trenching programme. Trenches were targeted to provide good coverage of the area, whilst avoiding on site obstructions as well as modern cable and gas services.

All trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket down to either the natural surface or the first archaeological horizon. Any further excavation required to fulfill the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The positions of all archaeological features were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment

### **3. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Cartographic Sources**

A selection of pre and post-World War II Ordnance Survey maps were examined, as well as General Roy's Map of the Highlands.

General Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-52) depicted the area within a region of low rolling hills and small scale arable farming, with small scattered farming dwellings and small afforested areas, but provided no detail of the development area.

The 1871 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area showed the northern and south-eastern site boundaries in the same position as the open drains that currently formed the development area boundaries. The 1901 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area showed the same detail, but also showed a field boundary on the southern boundary. Subsequent maps show the same detail until the construction of the A948 road which follows the southern boundary.

Modern satellite imagery shows the development area within the boundaries shown on the maps, with a small shelterbelt of trees and a building just outside the north-eastern corner.

#### **3.2 NMR and HER sites**

No cultural heritage sites or archaeological events have been recorded within the proposed development area. Within the wider study area there are four sites: a findspot for a stone polished axehead (NMRs No NJ93SE 37) c. 500m to the north of the site; a findspot for a further stone polished axehead (NMRS No NJ93SE 39) c. 300m to the southeast of the site; a brewery (NMRS No NJ93SE 95) c.100m to the south of the site which is currently in use as a commercial microbrewery; and a farmstead (NMRS No NJ93SE 54) c.500m to the northwest of the site.

Ellon Castle Park Wall (Aberdeenshire council HER ID NJ93SE0048) lies c.200m to the southeast of the development area. The Wall was built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as the retaining wall for Ellon Castle's designed landscape, much of which is now built over by residential buildings.

### 3.3 Designated sites

There were no Listed Buildings or World Heritage Sites within a 1km buffer zone of the proposed development site. Ellon Castle and Garden is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Index No 7333) that lies c. 700m to the southwest of the site, separated from the site by residential areas and an industrial estate.

## 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 General

Appendix 1 presents a tabulated summary of trench dimensions and a brief summary of the features encountered. Numbers in bold in the following text refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2. The location of the trenches is presented on Fig. 1.

Thirteen trenches were excavated, with a combined total area of 1170m<sup>2</sup>.

Topsoil (**001**) was mid-brown sandy clay across the site, and was sterile with no artefacts recovered from it.

### 4.2 Trial Trenching Results

*Trench 1 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NE to SW. Topsoil (**001**), maximum 0.45m deep overlay natural (**000**). Modern plough scores running E to W were noted within the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

*Trench 2 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NNE to SSW. Topsoil (**001**) was 0.4m deep at the SSW and NNE ends, and 0.3m in the centre on the trench. The topsoil directly overlay natural (**000**). No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

*Trench 3 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NW to SE. Topsoil (**001**) was 0.4m deep at the SE, extending to 0.45m in the centre and at the NW end of the trench. This overlay natural (**000**). A black plastic pipe aligned NW - SE was visible in the NW end of the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

*Trench 4 (1.8m by 50m; Figs. 2 & 3)* was aligned E to W. Topsoil (**001**) was 0.35m deep at the W end, extending to 0.4m deep at the centre and the E end of the trench. This lay directly over natural (**000**). Five furrows from rig and furrow cultivation were identified running in a NNE to SSW orientation across the trench. The rig and furrow had a 6.5m - 7m wavelength with furrows c.3m wide. The furrows contained mid-brown sandy clay. One of the furrows was excavated (**002**) and was found to be c. 0.10m deep. No other archaeological remains were found.

*Trench 5 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NW to SE. Topsoil (001) was 0.4m deep and directly overlay natural (000) which consisted of a light brown/yellow silty sand. One cultivation furrow, aligned NNE-SSW, was identified in the SE end of the trench. No other archaeological remains were found.

*Trench 6 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NNE to SSW. Topsoil (001) was 0.25m deep at the NNE end, 0.4m deep in the centre and 0.35m deep at the SSW end of the trench and directly overlay natural (000). A cultivation furrow orientated NNE-SSW measured 0.9m wide by 0.1m deep (004) was excavated and contained a mid brown sandy clay fill (005). No other archaeological remains were found.

*Trench 7 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NE to SW. Topsoil (001) was 0.4m deep at the SW end and 0.45m deep in the centre and at the NE end of the trench and overlay natural (000). Four cultivation furrows aligned NNE-SSW were identified. No other archaeological remains were found.

*Trench 8 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned ESE to WNW. Topsoil (001) was 0.4m deep at the ESE end and 0.3m deep in the centre and at the WNW end of the trench and overlay natural (000). Three cultivation furrows aligned NNE-SSW were identified. No other archaeological remains were found.

*Trench 9 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NE to SW. Topsoil (001) was 0.4m deep at the SW end and in the centre, and 0.35m deep at the NE end of the trench and overlay natural (000). No archaeological remains were discovered.

*Trench 10 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned east to west. Topsoil (001) was 0.4m deep at the E end and in the centre, and 0.35m deep at the W end of the trench and overlay natural (000). No archaeological remains were discovered.

*Trench 11 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned N to S. Topsoil (001) was 0.3m deep at the S end, 0.4m deep in the centre and 0.35m deep at the N end of the trench and overlay natural (000). No archaeological remains were discovered.

*Trench 12 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned E to W. Topsoil (001) was 0.35m deep at the E end and 0.3m deep in the centre and at the W end of the trench and overlay natural (000). No archaeological remains were discovered.

*Trench 13 (1.8m by 50m)* was aligned NW to SE. Topsoil (001) was 0.45m deep at the SE end and 0.4m deep in the centre and at the NW end of the trench and overlay natural (000). No archaeological remains were discovered.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The HER and NMRS provided information on four sites within a 500m buffer zone surrounding the proposed development area; two polished stone axe findspots, a farmstead and a brewery in current commercial use. No known sites were recorded within the boundaries of the proposed development area. Historical cartographic evidence indicated that the development area has been undeveloped since at least the

mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and that the existing site boundaries were established at or before that date.

The trial trenching evaluation, which covered a combined total area of c.1170m<sup>2</sup> (c.5% of the development area) revealed no archaeological remains, aside from traces of rig and furrow cultivation.

Based on the results of this evaluation CFA recommend that no further work is required. However, it is recognised that the final decision lies with the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record.

On completion of the programme of archaeological works a summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

## 6. REFERENCES

### *Cartographic*

Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-1755  
Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1871 *Aberdeenshire*, Sheet XXXVIII  
Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1901 *Aberdeenshire*, Sheet XXXVIII.SE  
Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1928 *Aberdeenshire*, Sheet XXXVIII.SE  
Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition ca.1950 *Aberdeenshire*, Sheet XXXVIII.SE

### *Online Resources*

BGS 2015 - <http://www.bgs.ac.uk> (Accessed 03/09/15)  
National Library of Scotland - <http://maps.nls.uk/index.html> (Accessed 03/09/15)  
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) online database - <http://pastmap.org.uk/> (Accessed 03/09/2015)  
Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) - <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/shire/default.aspx> (Accessed 03/09/2015)  
Google Maps - <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/> (Accessed 03/09/2015)



## APPENDIX 1: Summary of Trenches

Trench	Dimensions and Orientation	Depth	Features
1	1.8m by 50m; NE-SW	0.4m at either end, 0.45m in centre	No archaeological remains. E-W running modern plough scores.
2	1.8m by 50m; NNW-SSE	0.4m at either end, 0.3m in centre	No archaeological remains.
3	1.8m by 50m; NW-SE	0.4m at either end, 0.45m in centre	Black plastic pipe visible in NW end of trench.
4	1.8m by 50m; E-W	0.4 at E end, 0.35 and W end	5 furrows aligned NNE-SSW.
5	1.8m by 50m; NW-SE	0.4m	1 furrow aligned NNE-SSW.
6	1.8m by 50m; NNE-SSW	0.25 at NNE end, 0.4m in the centre, 0.35m at SSW end.	A cultivation furrow, 0.9m wide and 0.1m deep, aligned NNE-SSW.
7	1.8m by 50m; NE-SW	0.4m at SW end, 0.45m at centre and NE end.	4 furrows aligned NNE-SSW.
8	1.8m by 50m; ESE_WNW	0.3m at WNW end and centre, 0.4m at ESE end	3 furrows aligned NNE-SSW.
9	1.8m by 50m; NE-SW	0.4m at SW end and centre, 0.35m at NE	No archaeological remains.
10	1.8m by 50m; E-W	0.4m at E end and centre, 0.35m at W end	No archaeological remains.
11	1.8 by 50m; N-S	0.3 at S end, 0.4m in centre, 0.35m at N end	No archaeological remains.
12	1.8m by 50m; E-W	0.35m at E end, 0.3m at centre and W end	No archaeological remains.
13	1.8m by 50m; NW-SE	0.45m at SE end, 0.4m in centre and NW end.	No archaeological remains.

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context	Fill of	Trench	Description
000		All	Natural undisturbed sub-soil
001		All	Topsoil - Mid-brown sandy clay
002		4	Cut of furrow
003	002	4	Fill of furrow - Mid brown sandy clay
004		6	Cut of furrow
005		6	Fill of furrow - Mid brown sandy clay

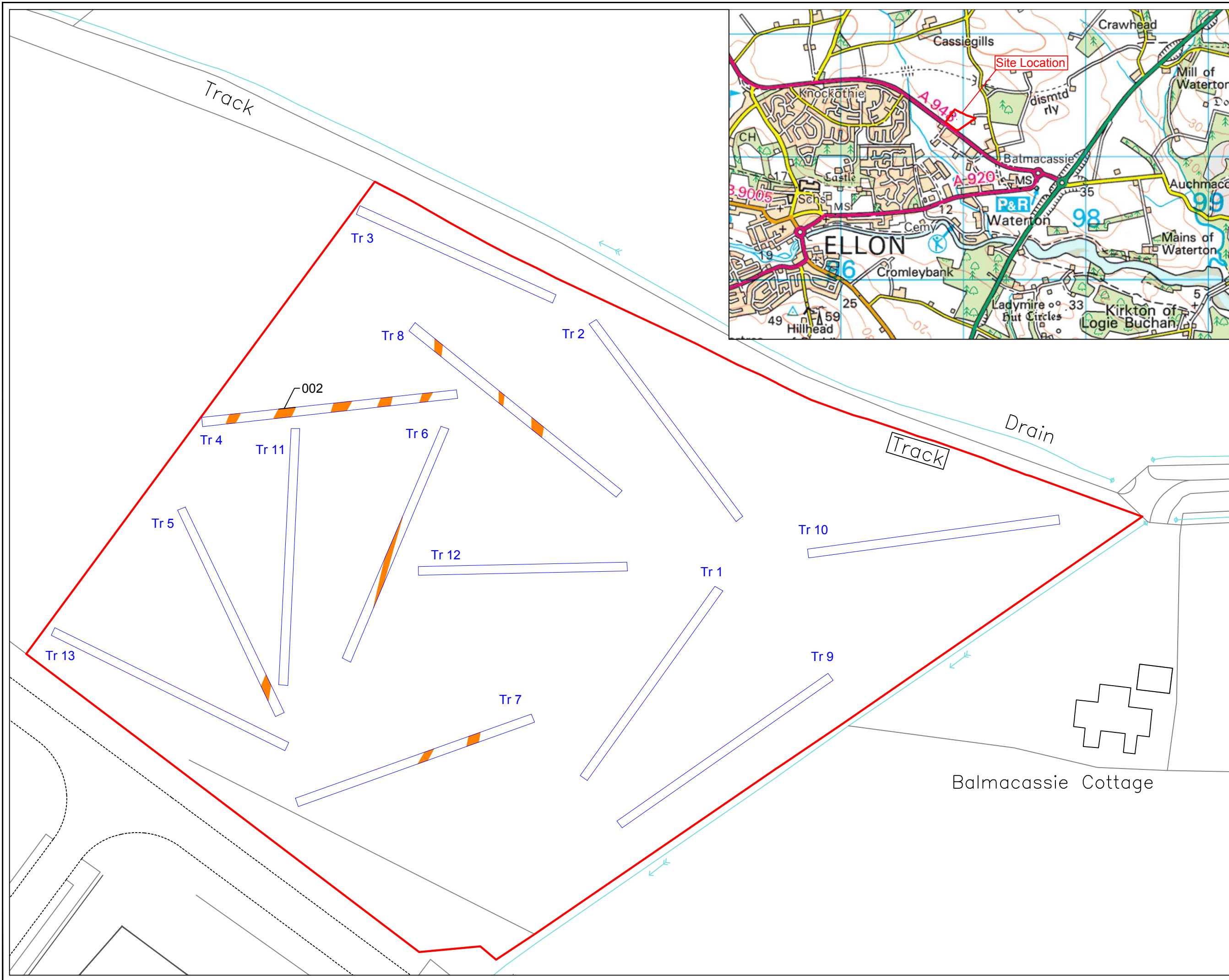
## APPENDIX 3: Photograph Register

Photo	Description
1	Trench 1, post-excavation
2	Trench 2, post-excavation
3	Trench 3, post-excavation
4	Trench 4, post-excavation
5	SSE-facing section of furrow [002]
6	Trench 5, post-excavation

Photo	Description
7	Trench 7, post-excavation
8	Trench 6, post-excavation
9	Trench 8, post-excavation
10	Trench 9, post-excavation
11	Trench 10, post-excavation
12	Trench 11, post-excavation
13	Trench 12, post-excavation
14	Trench 13, post-excavation
15-19	Backfilled trenches

#### APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation In Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Aberdeenshire Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	New Ellon Cemetery, Site West of Balmacassie Cottage, Ellon
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	NELC
<b>PARISH:</b>	Ellon
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Samantha Hickman
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	N/A
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NJ 968 313
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	September 2015
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	September 2015
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of the construction of a new cemetery. No archaeological evidence was discovered aside from areas of rig and furrow cultivation.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Aberdeenshire Council
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk">cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS, Reports lodged with SMR and NMRS.



**Key:**

- Development Area
- Trench Location
- Rig and Furrow



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Fig. No: 1	Report No: 3338
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Title:  
**Site location plan and trench locations**

Project:  
**New Ellon Cemetery, Site West of Balmacassie Cottage, Ellon**

Client:  
**Aberdeenshire Council**

Scale at A3:  
**1:750**

Drawn by: SW	Checked: SH	Date: 22/07/2014
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Fig. 2: Trench 4, post-excitation



Fig. 3: Trench 4, SSE-facing section of furrow (002)



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Title:	Fig. 2 - 3	Report: 3338	Drawn: SW	CKD: SH	Date: 05/10/15
Client: Aberdeenshire Council					
Project: New Ellon Cemetery, Site West of Balmacassie Cottage, Ellon					