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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract Duff House, Aberdeenshire (PIC239)

War Memorial Installation, June 2018
Watching Brief
Report No. HES-PIC239-2018-01

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief at Duff House, Banff, Aberdeenshire, carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in June 2018 in order to monitor the works undertaken during the installation of a stone-built war memorial to commemorate those who died here as a result of the German bombing of the east wing on 22nd July 1940. The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work, dated 5th June 2018, was produced by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) and approved by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in advance.

1.2 Background

Duff House (LB21985) is a grand country house, designed by William Adam in 1735 for William Duff, 1st Earl of Fife. The house was the principal residence of the earls of Fife from 1735 to 1906. William Duff commissioned William Adam, the leading practicing architect in Scotland at the time, to design a new house for him outside of Banff. Adam drew up plans for an enormous classical mansion and work began on its construction in June 1735. In terms of architecture, Duff House is of outstanding importance as one of William Adam's major works. Its scale and grandeur of conception mark it out among Scottish houses of the earlier 18th century.

There were numerous quarrels between Adam and Duff over the design, extent and cost of the house. Two grand curving wings were originally planned, but never begun. The shell of the house was finally complete by 1739 with construction of the roof, but further work was halted due to disparity between Duff's expectation of costs and the reality. The dispute eventually led to legal proceedings, begun in 1741; in 1743 Adam took out a case against Duff for non-payment which was finally settled in Adam's favour in 1748, some months before his death.

James Duff, 2nd Earl of Fife oversaw the completion and fitting out of Duff House following the legal settlement. At one stage London-based architect John Woolfe provided new designs for wings, but again these were not built. Much of the interior was in a habitable condition by the early 1760s. From the outset the impact of the unbuilt wings became clear, with pressure for service rooms and servants accommodation. Over subsequent generations of the Duff family the house saw further alterations and improvements to the interior décor and layout.

Major external work was undertaken under the 5th Earl of Fife in the later 19th century, with the addition of an east wing designed by David Bryce junior. Often referred to as the 'Bryce Wing', this extension provided much needed space for a kitchen, offices and servants quarters as well as a billiards room on the first floor.

In 1906 the house and surrounding parkland were gifted to the towns of Banff and MacDuff. The house was adapted for use as a hotel between 1911 and 1913, then as a sanatorium until 1923, when it again was used as a hotel until 1928. These changes in

use had an impact on the interior of the house in terms of layouts and décor, though there was far less of an impact to the exterior. Exterior alterations included glazed balconies cantilevered out on the E side of the house between the pavilions and above the Bryce wing (during the sanatorium phase).

In 1939 the house was requisitioned by the War Office and used to house German POWs and then a succession of allied troops. Features of this wartime occupation include a painted Norwegian flag over the S of the two fireplaces in the gallery, which has now been covered over. The basement has a number of stencilled notices related to the use of the building by Polish troops. The Bryce Wing was badly damaged by a bomb in the Second World War and was demolished soon after the house was taken into State care in 1956.

1.3. Archaeological Sensitivity and Potential Impact

The memorial will sit directly on the footprint of the demolished Bryce Wing, as its design is intended to mark the location of the structure. Alternative options for the memorial's location away from the footprint of the wing were discounted for this reason.

The area proposed for the war memorial has been excavated and recorded previously. In 2006 archaeological monitoring was carried out during works to install new service trenches to the east of the house. During these works substantial structural remains were encountered. The main service trench was 300mm wide by 750mm deep and 30m long; turf and topsoil extended to an average depth of 250mm; the subsoil below had been considerably disturbed by the insertion of other service trenches. The remains of substantial foundations and demolition debris were encountered approximately 10m along the length of the trench at the western end comprising rubble, fragments of modern bricks, tarmac and slates; below the demolition debris substantial foundations were exposed comprising of large facing blocks extending to a depth of over 1.5m below the surface. The trench was extended to better understand and record these remains, which were then cleaned and recorded. Additional exploratory trenches extending out from the main trench showed the foundations to be extensive. The excavation revealed the clearly identifiable remains of the south-eastern corner of the Bryce Wing, including the remains of the entrance door, with entrance flagstone, entrance vestibule and iron boot scrapers still in-situ. The layout of the interior, where excavated, and the footings for a fireplace were identified.

Kirkdale Archaeology carried out archival research alongside the archaeological works which allowed for direct comparison between the material evidence and the archive material. The truncated section of wall uncovered towards the north-west corner of the trench may pre-date the construction of the Bryce Wing in 1860. The remains of the Bryce Wing were extensive and close to the surface. Finds within the structural remains included fragments of plain white ceramics, sections of glass vials (presumably from the laboratories), painted architectural fragments and pantiles.

Small scale excavation elsewhere in the grounds of the house has similarly demonstrated high potential for the survival of archaeological remains, close to the ground surface. In 2011 excavations adjacent to the north-west and south-west corners of Duff House to investigate drainage issues revealed the surviving remains of an

original 1730s slabbed drain which skirted the foundations of the house. The remains were present less than 500mm below the surface.

As this area has previously been excavated and recorded (down to the first horizon of archaeological deposits and features), HES recommended that the foundations for the memorial should be hand-excavated down to the required depth but should not extend beyond the first archaeological layer. A protective separating membrane layer will be laid prior to the foundations being constructed.

The exact depth of the grass bars making up the short stretch of path leading to the memorial were to be determined on site to ensure their insertion resulted in no impact upon the underlying remains.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor all ground disturbance works required for the installation of the war memorial and sandstone bar paving.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified by stopping excavations at an appropriate level (first archaeological horizon) to protect archaeological remains in situ.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods.

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 stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

2.2 Watching Brief

The memorial was intended to sit on the corner of the foundation of the former Bryce Wing, to mark its position. The excavation to uncover the foundations, as recorded previously by Kirkdale, was monitored by an appropriately qualified archaeologist. The excavation was undertaken by hand. The trench was expanded to the SW as the corner of the foundations was not initially located within the trench. This resulted in the memorial being placed closer to the road and therefore the sandstone bars forming a path were not needed.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2.

The area excavated was roughly a right-angled triangle in shape, with the sides measuring 3.8m N-S by 3.4m E-W (Fig. 2).

The topsoil (001) measuring 0.05m thick overlay a made ground deposit (002) which was composed of black ash and cinder hardcore measuring 0.1m deep. Below this was made ground abutting the building foundations consisting of brown/beige silty sand containing mortar and sandstone fragments, of at least 0.25m depth.

These deposits overlay the building foundations which were L-shaped in plan and measured 3.3m N-S by 3.1m E-W, were 0.7-0.8m wide and survived to a height of 0.35m in total (Fig. 3-4). The wall was mortar-bonded granite (005) with foundation slabs of coated with bitumen damp proofing to the exterior (004). The bitumen-coated foundation slabs were exposed in plan only, projecting up to 0.2m from wall 005. The wall had dressed exterior faces and a rubble core, though much of the facing stone was missing.

A drain (006) was uncovered lying to the south of the foundations, consisting of an iron grate and inspection cover (Fig. 5).

Orange-brown gravelly sand (007) uncovered to the outside of the foundation on the south side was probably natural substrate.

4. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in the grounds of Duff House for the installation of a war memorial. This memorial was built on top of the original foundations of the Bryce Wing which was bombed and demolished.

The foundations were not located where initially thought, but once uncovered these were excavated by hand, recorded and photographed accordingly.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with Aberdeen Council Sites and Monuments Record.

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*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Facing
1	Location of memorial pre-excavation	S
2	Location of memorial pre-excavation	N
3	General working shot	E
4	General working shot	NE
5	General working shot	SE
6	General working shot	S
7	Wall 004/005 partially uncovered	S
8	Wall 004/005 general shot post-ex	W
9	Wall 004/005 general shot post-ex	N
10	Drain system 006	S
11	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	S
12	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	E
13	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	N
14	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	NW
15	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	S
16	Drain system 006	S
17	Dressed facing stone on wall 004	N
18	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	S
19	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	W
20	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	E
21	Wall 004/005 general post-ex shot	N

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

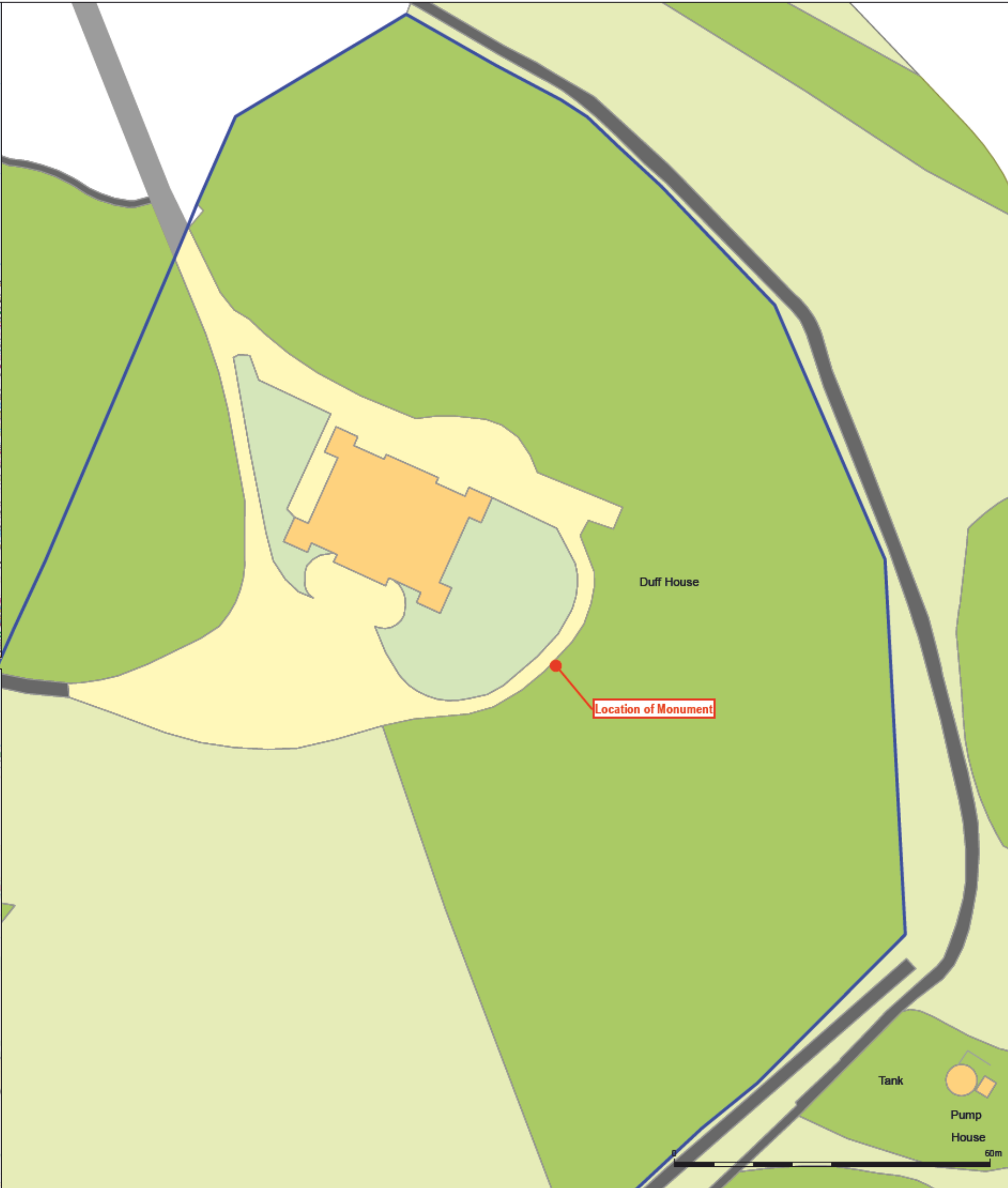
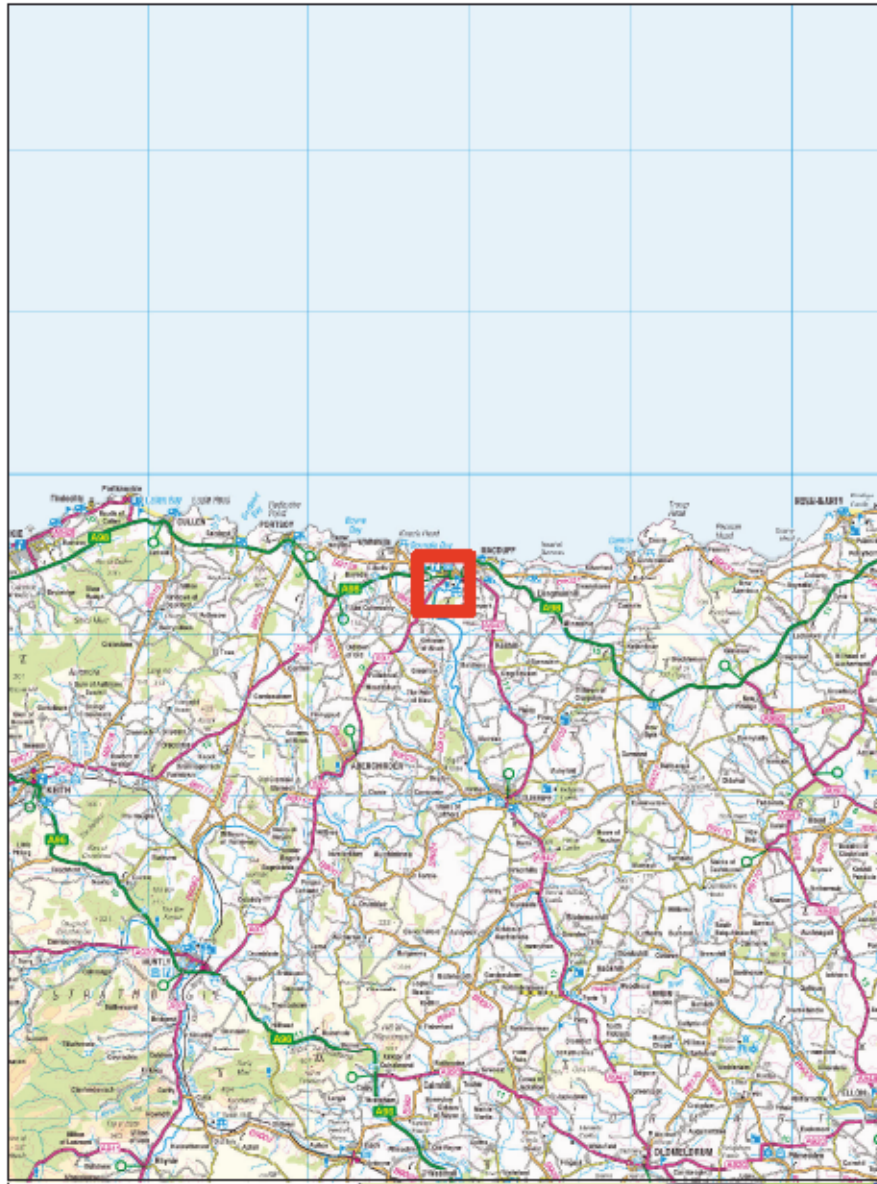
Context no.	Fill of	Type	Description
001		Deposit	Topsoil and turf, 0.05m deep
002		Deposit	Black ash and cinder hardcore layer, 0.1m deep
003		Wall	Made ground abutting building footings including mortar and stone fragments
004		Wall	Granite foundation slabs for wall [005]. L-shaped in plan measuring 3.3m S-N, 2.5m E-W, 1.2m wide. Survives to a height of 0.1m.
005		Deposit	Lime mortar bonded granite wall footings measuring 3.3m S-N, 2.5m E-W, 0.8m wide. Survives to a height of 0.25m.
006		Drainage	Drainage system
007		Deposit	Sandy gravel underlying 004. Possible natural.

APPENDIX 3: Field drawings register

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	MK	Plan	Plan of wall 004 / 005
1	1	MK	Profile	S-N profile of wall 004 / 005

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeenshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract: Duff House
PROJECT CODE:	MINA66
PARISH:	Banff
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Leah Watt
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NJ66SE 8
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Country House
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 6911 6329
START DATE (this season)	25 th June 2018
END DATE (this season)	28 th June 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Duff House, Aberdeenshire to monitor excavations for the placement of a new war memorial. The memorial was designed to sit on the foundations of the wing which was bombed during WWII with the intention of the memorial being built on top of the original foundations. The foundations were uncovered, excavated, recorded and photographed accordingly.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
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)	Archive to be deposited with NRHE, reports lodged with Fife Council SMR.



Key:

PIC Boundary

Contains Historic Environment Scotland data
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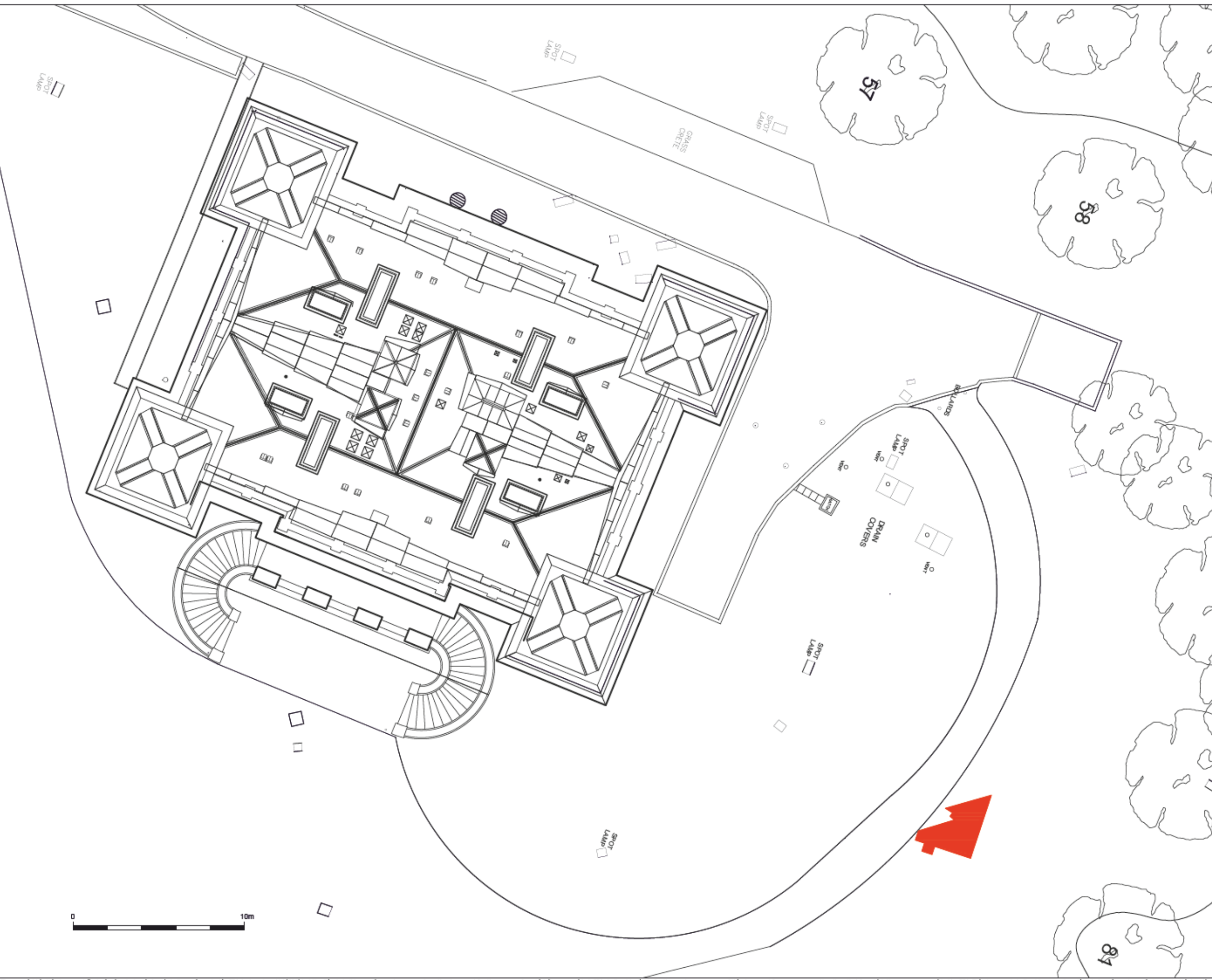
Title:
Location Plan

Project:
Duff House

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:800

Drawn by: MP	Checked: MJ	Date: 25/07/2018
Report No: 3774	Fig. No: 1	



Key:

█ Trench Location

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Title:
Location Plan of Memorial

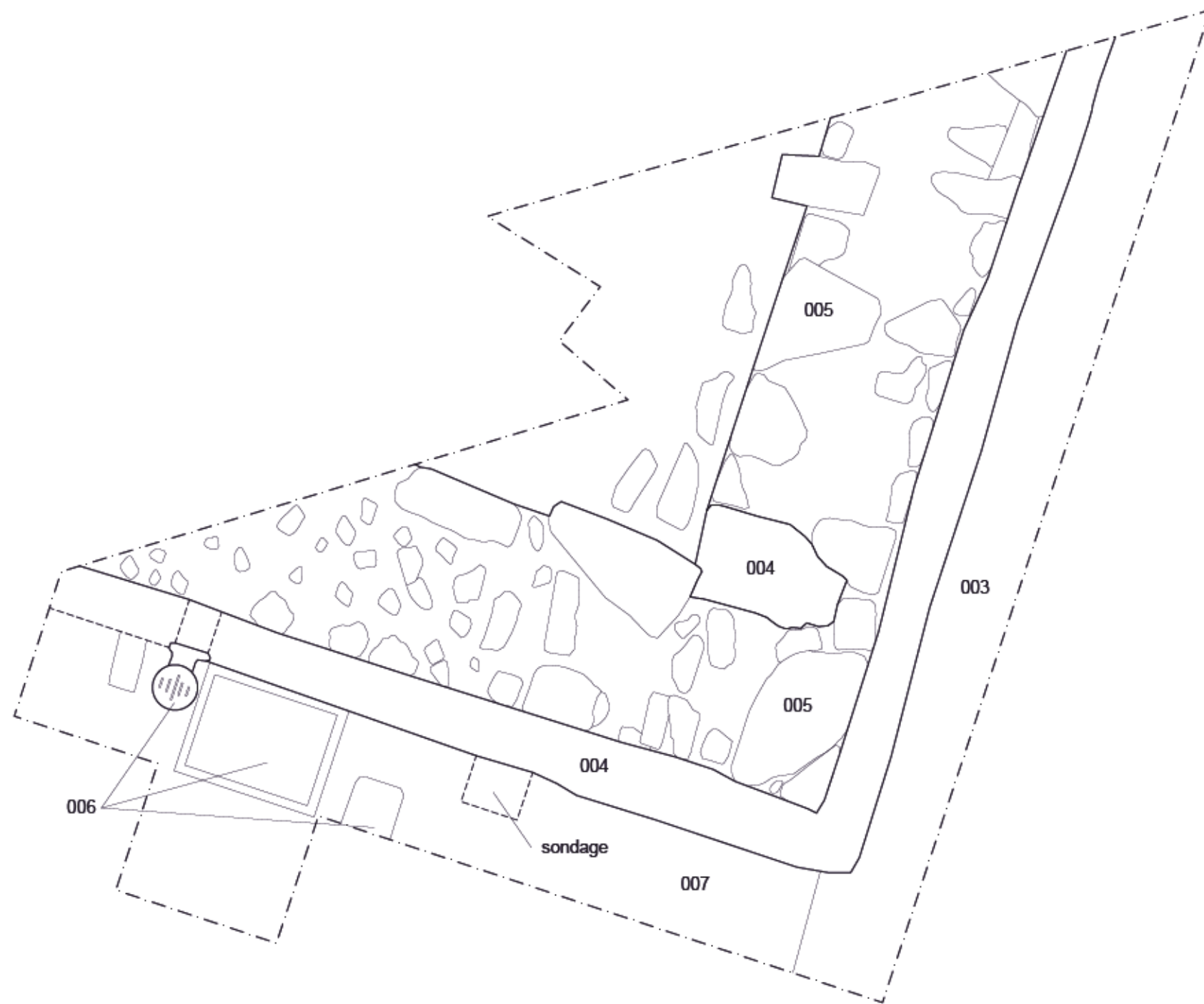
Project:
Duff House

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:200

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 19/07/2018
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Report No: 3774	Fig. No: 2
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Title:
Plan Drawing of Foundations of
Building

Project:
Duff House

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:50

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 19/07/2018
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Report No: 3774	Fig. No: 3
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Fig. 4 - Foundations 004 and 005 from south



Fig. 5 - Drainage 006 from south

Project:
Duff House



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Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 24/07/18
Report No: 3774		Fig. No: 4-5



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