

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF ON GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH AN
EXTENSION AT NORWOOD HALL HOTEL,
GARTHDEE, ABERDEEN
NGR NJ 9095 0294**



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CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	V
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT	6
2. BACKGROUND.....	7
2.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY	7
2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
3. RESULTS	8
3.1 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING	8
3.2 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS	8
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
4.1 CONCLUSIONS	11
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	11
5. REFERENCES	12
APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION.....	13
APPENDIX 2: FIGURES.....	22

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Location

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF AREA AFFECTED BY EXCAVATIONS.....	APPENDIX 2
FIGURE 2: AREA AS DEPICTED ON FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING, 1867	APPENDIX 2
FIGURE 3: AREA AS DEPICTED ON SECOND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING, 1901	APPENDIX 2
FIGURE 4: RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING.....	APPENDIX 2
PLATE 1: SOIL SCRAPE OF NORTHERN FOOTPRINT AREA, FACING NORTH-WEST	PAGE 8
PLATE 2: SOUTHERN FOOTPRINT AREA UNDER EXCAVATION, FACING NORTH-EAST	PAGE 9
PLATE 3: SOUTHERN FOOTPRINT AREA AT FINAL DEPTH, FACING EAST	PAGE 10

SUMMARY

An application for the extension of the existing Norwood Hall Hotel building with associated parking was approved by Aberdeen City Council Planning Authority (planning application reference: P080732) at committee on 8th December 2008. A condition of its approval (Aberdeen City Council planning condition number 8) was for a programme of archaeological mitigation works, outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Cameron 2009; Appendix 1). This recommended a scheme of archaeological monitoring on all excavation works relating to the development, in-line with Planning Advice Note 42, Scottish Planning Policy 23 and the Scottish Historic Environment Policies.

In January 2010, a representative of Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit undertook the programme of archaeological monitoring on excavation works relating to the development at Norwood Hall Hotel, Garthdee, Aberdeen (NGR NJ 9095 0294). The site is located within an area of known archaeological potential, particularly in terms of the location of the remains of a probable early medieval motte and bailey castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in the immediate vicinity of Norwood Hall.

The programme of archaeological monitoring occurred on all groundworks undertaken during the redevelopment, namely the initial excavation of the footprint of the new hotel extension.

Despite the high archaeological potential of the area, the watching brief monitoring did not encounter any archaeological features. The site showed some level of recent disturbance relating to made-up ground and modern service excavations which may relate to an earlier extension of the hotel to the immediate east.

In view of the lack of archaeological features discovered at this site, this report recommends that no further archaeological work is required in relation to the present development. Any future development may require further work. All final decisions on such matters rest with the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit would like to thank the client, Dougal Morgan, of The William Cowie Partnership for commissioning the project for Monument Leisure Limited, and the groundwork contractors, Robertson Construction for all information. In addition, further thanks are extended to the Keeper of Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council for all advice relating to the project.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cat Peters. The project was managed by Alison Cameron, Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An application for the extension of a hotel with associated car parking was submitted to the Aberdeen City Council planning authority (planning application reference: P080732). A condition of its approval was for a programme of archaeological mitigations works, which was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Cameron 2009; Appendix 1). This recommended the archaeological monitoring of all excavation works relating to the development, approved by the Keeper of Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council and in-line with Planning Advice Note 42, Scottish Planning Policy 23 and the Scottish Historic Environment Policies.
- 1.1.2 The affected area was situated to the immediate west of the existing Norwood Hall Hotel building (Figure 1). The development site, centred on NGR NJ 9095 0294, is within an area of archaeological potential and it was thought that deposits of archaeological significance might exist in the area of the associated groundwork.
- 1.1.3 This report comprises the results of the archaeological monitoring of the excavation works undertaken as part of the development.
- 1.1.4 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design, and with current UKIC (1990). The archive will be deposited at Aberdeen City Council in the first instance, and a copy of the report given to Aberdeen City Council Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1.1 The site is centred upon National Grid Reference NJ 9095 0294 to the south side of Inchgarth Road, Garthdee within the western part of the city of Aberdeen. The site consisted of a roadway and grassed area to the immediate west of the Norwood Hall Hotel building (Figure 1).

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.2.1 A general historical background of the site is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Cameron 2009; Appendix 1). The remains of a probable motte and bailey castle survive to the east of the hotel, and Pitfodels Castle, a 15th century castle, was replaced by Norwood, built in 1859. The area affected by the development has since that time, remained as part of the gardens associated with this house. The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1867 (Figure 2) shows the area at that time, where the development site itself seems to consist of a levelled garden area with formal walkways through it and a vase situated within the northern area. Norwood Hall was reworked in 1881, and the site is depicted shortly after this remodelling by the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 3). The building had been much altered, with a levelled terrace area to the west, extending into the present development site, and the western part of the development site retaining its lower levelled area.

3. RESULTS

3.1 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

- 3.1.1 The watching brief was carried out between Tuesday 12th January and Thursday 21st January 2010. It monitored the initial excavation of the footprint of the new hotel extension, in accordance with the written scheme of investigation (Cameron 2009; Appendix 1).
- 3.1.2 A soil scrape occurred across the northern footprint of the extension, a rectangular area of approximately 17m by 21.5m. A deeper excavation occurred across the southern footprint of the extension where a basement level is planned, and this covered roughly a rectangular area of maximum 14m width and 28m in length. The location of all groundworks monitored during the watching brief are illustrated in Figure 4.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 3.2.1 ***Soil scrape of northern footprint:*** the soil scrape was undertaken by an excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, removing up to 0.4m of material from the area due to house the northern half of the extension at ground floor level. The excavations revealed a mixed make-up deposit of mid-brown colour with brick and rubble deposits interspersed. Across the centre of the area was a tarmac road, beneath which was hardcore and concrete edging, as well as existing services. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.



Plate 1: Soil scrape of northern footprint area, facing north-west

- 3.2.2 **Excavation of southern footprint:** a deeper excavation occurred in the southern part of the extension's footprint, to allow for a basement level in this area. Due to the existing made-up levels, probable excavated material from the earlier building extension to the immediate east, this required a bund up to 2.0m height to be removed from the western part, and the removal of the road and make-up deposits from beneath across the northern part of this southern area, before excavating to a final depth of 0.9m below the present basement floor level of the hotel building. Further cables and services were observed leading from the present building westwards towards the existing electricity sub-station building, and these had run beneath the road. At the far southern extent of the excavation, make-up gravel deposits were encountered, suggesting an artificial levelling of the area at this point (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Southern footprint area under excavation, facing north-east

- 3.2.3 In addition, a sandy deposit was observed beneath further make-up deposits between the gravel and existing cables, which could be interpreted as natural (Plate 3). Two linear features were observed running north-west to south-east, and south-west to north-east in this area, and discussions with Robertson Construction on-site suggested this may relate to older services heading for the pre-extension eastern part of the existing hotel building. The features contained lumps of tarmac and broken modern glass and pottery, so were of little archaeological value. No spoil was removed from the site, it was levelled and deposited in the area to the west and north-west, where the new car parking area associated with the extension will be.



Plate 3: Southern footprint area at final depth, facing east

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Despite the high archaeological potential of the area, the watching brief did not encounter any archaeological features. The location of all groundworks monitored during the watching brief has been included within this report, and an archive has been kept for future reference.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1 In view of the lack of archaeological features discovered at this site, this report recommends that no further archaeological work is required at this site, in relation to the present development. Any further works within the areas may require archaeological mitigation. All final decisions on such matters rest with the Keeper of Archaeology at Aberdeen City Council.

5. REFERENCES

Cameron, A. (2009) 'A Written Scheme of Investigation, Norwood Hall, Garthdee, Aberdeen' *unpublished report by Aberdeen City Council (reproduced as Appendix 1)*

IFA (2002), *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

MCG (1992), *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections*

UKIC (1990), *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI) NORWOOD HALL, GARTHDEE, ABERDEEN



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

18 December 2009

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) Norwood Hall, Garthdee, Aberdeen

National Grid Reference: NJ 9095 0294

Written and researched by:

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Commissioning client:

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WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI) NORWOOD HALL, GARTHDEE, ABERDEEN

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Archaeological Background	4
Aims and Objectives	7
Method statement	9

1 INTRODUCTION

This Written Scheme of Investigation is for works to be carried out at Norwood Hall Hotel, Aberdeen. The work was commissioned by Dougal Morgan, The William Cowie Partnership, 6&7 Albyn Lane, Aberdeen, AB10 6SZ. The contractor is Robertson Construction (contact Dave Steel/Paul Cumming). The work relates to Aberdeen City Council planning application reference P080732, passed at committee 8 December 2008.

Norwood Hall Hotel is situated on the north bank of the river Dee and on the south side of Garthdee Road. To the east is Grays School of Art, Robert Gordon's University and to the west, Drumgarth.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Programme of Archaeological Works has been requested by the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council (ACC planning condition No 8). This Programme includes site work, post-excavation, publication and archiving.



- 2.2 The main archaeological interest in the area is Pitfodels Castle (above) situated immediately east of the standing hotel building. This site may be the remains of a motte and bailey or early medieval castle and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The castle occupies a prominent position overlooking the river Dee. The castle originally belonged to the Murray family, passing in the late 14th century to the Reid family. The motte and bailey castle has a summit diameter of 9m and originally controlled a nearby ford across the river Dee.



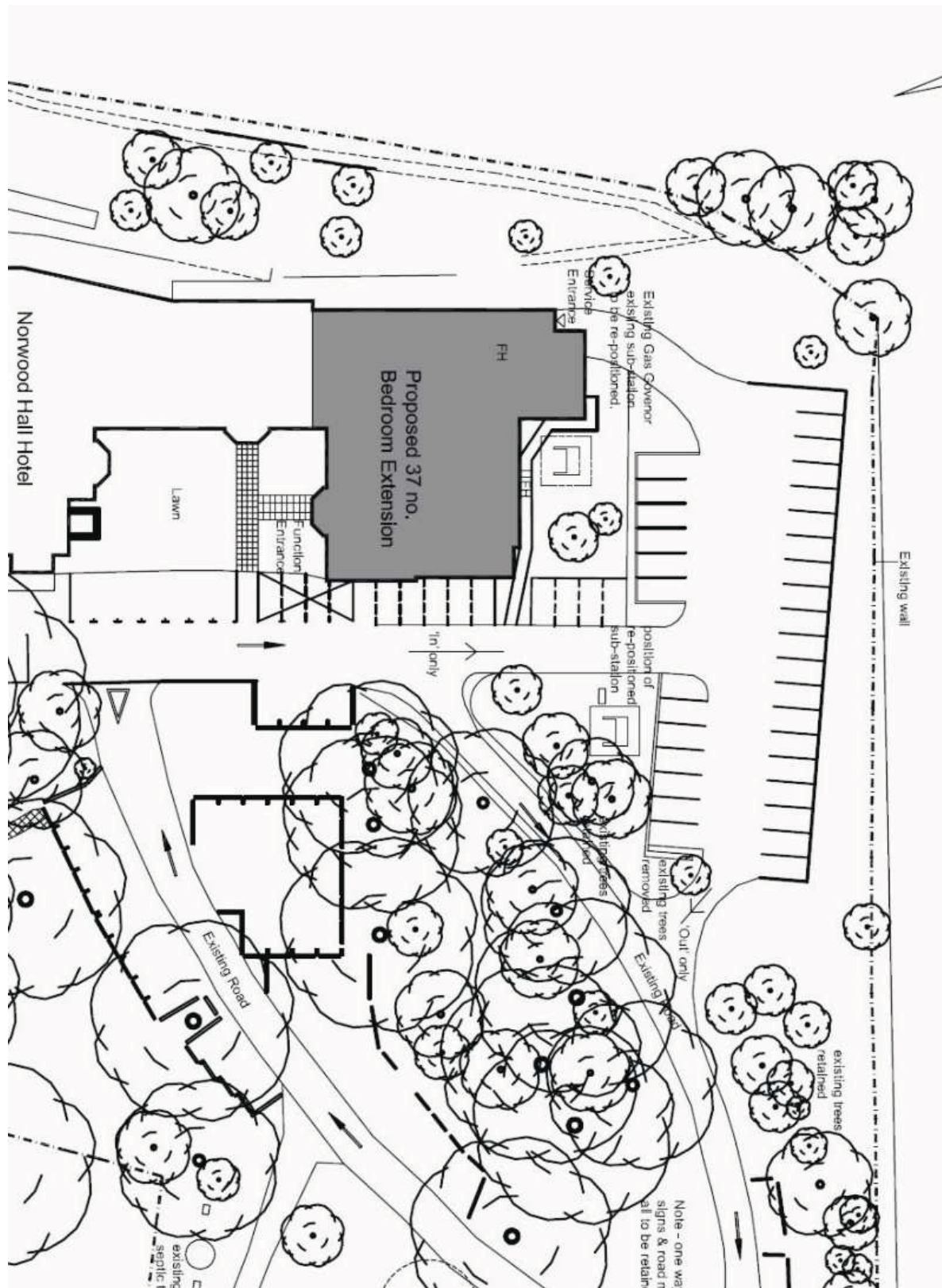
2.3 Norwood was built in 1859 on the site of the 15th-century Pitfodels Castle. It was reworked in 1881 by architect J Russell Mackenzie in 1881. Many of the interiors are by William Scott Morton, lavishly decorated with fine woodwork and stained glass. This photograph (above) shows the three gables at the front of the house with their pedimented roofs and Corinthian and Doric columns and pilasters framing the doorway and windows. Stone balustrades form balconies below the first floor windows. Norwood was converted into Norwood Hall Hotel in 1972 by architects M F Beattie and W Cowie.

2.4 The hotel is situated in a mature garden with several garden features surviving. The wooded gardens include the valley of a (now dry) river or stream bed in which a pond (below) is situated. This small valley is now overgrown with mature trees.



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The aims of this WSI are to evaluate the extent and significance of and to minimize disturbance to archaeological deposits in the development area, and where deposits are disturbed to record remains *in situ*.
- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to determine the extent of the archaeological work required at this site.



Detailed plan of proposed extension and car parking

4 METHOD STATEMENT

- 4.1 All excavation work will be monitored by an archaeologist. This work is due to start on Wednesday 6th January 2010. CVs of staff can be supplied to the client on request.
- 4.2 This archaeological work follows Planning Advice Note 42, Scottish Planning Policy 23 and the Scottish Historic Environment Policies.
- 4.3 Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and Bona Vacantia and reported by the archaeological contractor to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel (Nicholas Holmes, National Museums of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1JD) for disposal to an appropriate museum.
- 4.4 Any human remains which are encountered will initially be left *in situ*. Their removal will be a matter of discussion with the Keeper of Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council (who must be notified within 12 hours of their discovery) and will comply with the provisions of Scots Law.

4.5 Access and Safety

- 4.5.1 All relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and codes of conduct will be respected.
- 4.5.2 The client must provide any information about contamination and live services before the work commences.
- 4.5.3 Staff will wear steel toe-capped boots, hard hats and hi-viz vests at all times. They will carry CSCS cards and present these during site induction. A health and safety risk assessment will be made and will be made available to all staff and contractors.
- 4.5.4 The local authority archaeologist Judith Stones, Keeper, Archaeology, Aberdeen City Council will monitor the progress and effectiveness of the archaeological work at this site.

4.5 Recording Systems

- 4.5.1 An Aberdeen City Council fieldwork number (O521) has been allocated to this site. This number will appear on all site records and finds and all post-excavation material. Aberdeen City Council Recording systems will be used on this project.
- 4.5.2 A site location plan will be produced which will tie in to National Grid and will locate Ordnance Survey bench marks and temporary bench marks (TBMs) used on the site.
- 4.5.3 Plans of contexts will be produced at 1:20 (or other scale as appropriate) and sections of features at 1:10. All site drawings will be on polyester-based drawing film.
- 4.5.4 The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of contexts will be calculated and recorded on plans, sections and level book.
- 4.5.5 For complex stratification, a Harris matrix will be prepared to record stratigraphic relationships.
- 4.5.6 A photographic record will consist of black and white and digital images for all main contexts as well as working shots in digital format only.

4.6 Treatment of finds and samples

- 4.6.1 Sampling strategies will depend on the perceived importance of the deposit or feature under excavation. Bulk samples for sieving will be taken as necessary. A selection of samples will be sent for analysis by specialist archaeological soil analysts.

- 4.6.2 Finds will be exposed, recorded, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in line with archaeological guidelines. All metalwork will be x-rayed and selected for conservation.
- 4.6.3 Organic samples will be collected or sampled and subjected to conservation, dendrochronology, carbon 14 sampling or other analytical technique as necessary.
- 4.6.4 Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit can confirm that arrangements are in place to carry out all necessary processing, conservation, specialist analysis and subsequent storage of finds and samples.
- 4.6.5 Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and Bona Vacantia and reported by the archaeological contractor to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel (Nicholas Holmes, National Museums of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD) for disposal to an appropriate museum.

4.7 Post-excavation and publication

- 4.7.1 A Data Structure Report will be prepared for the client within 4 weeks of the end of fieldwork.
- 4.7.2 At the end of the fieldwork a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) will be produced which will detail the costs for the post-excavation work.
- 4.7.3 This will include specialist analysis of finds and samples, conservation and all subsequent reports.
- 4.7.4 Publication will take place in a suitable journal.

4.8 Archive

- 4.8.1 Copies of the fieldwork report and PERD will be sent to the Keeper, Archaeology, the applicant and the Planning Authority.
- 4.8.2 A brief survey of results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, along with the appropriate fee.
- 4.8.3 An OASIS report will be completed for this site within 4 weeks of the end of fieldwork.
- 4.8.4 The site archive will be lodged with Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit and a copy to RCAHMS.

References

Brogden, W A. *Aberdeen: an illustrated architectural guide* Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 1988

SCRAN <http://www.scran.ac.uk/>

The material in the WSI is and remains the sole property of Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit and is not for publication by third parties without prior consent. Whilst every effort has been made to provide detailed and accurate information, Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit cannot be held responsible for inaccuracies or errors within the document.

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES

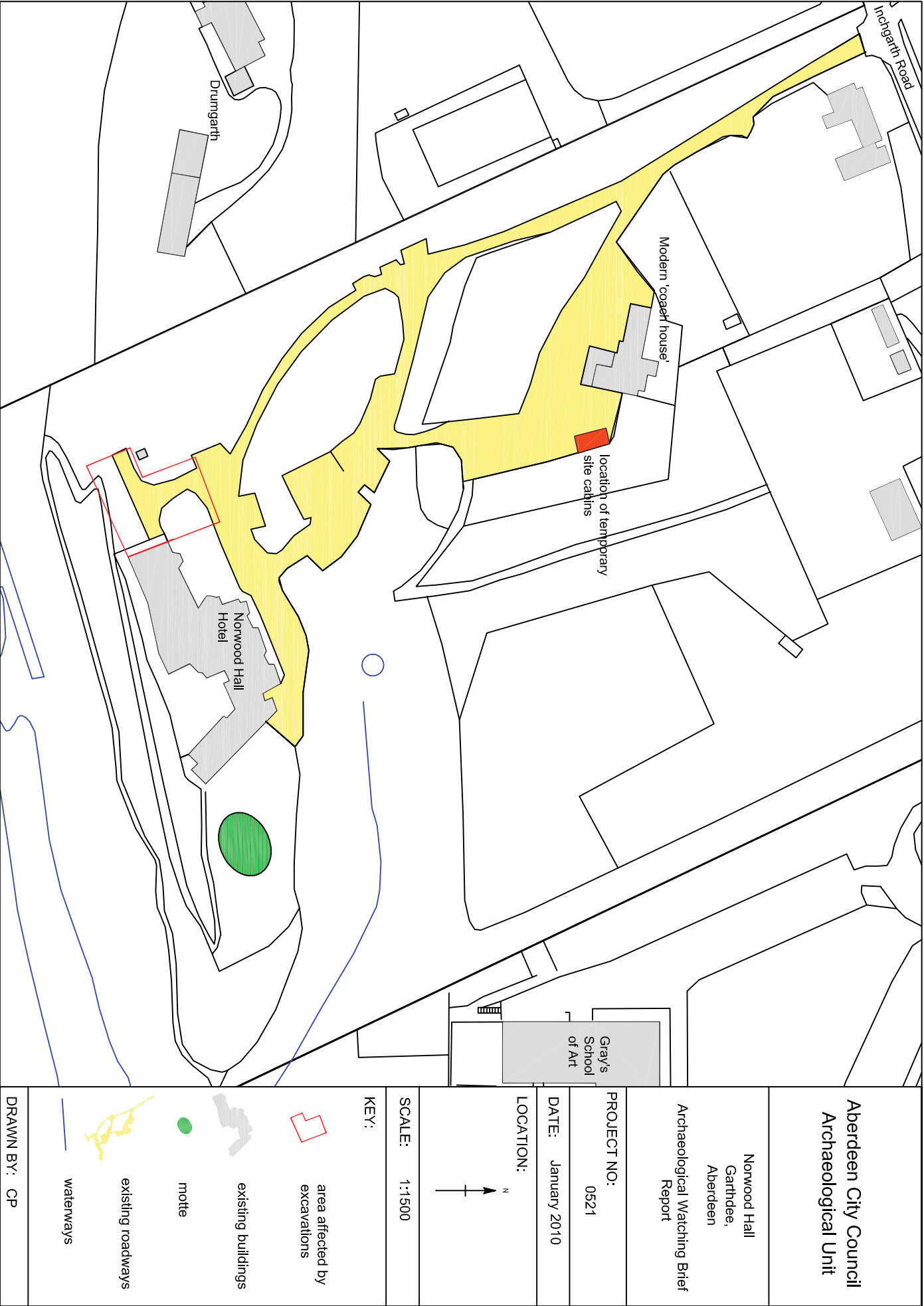
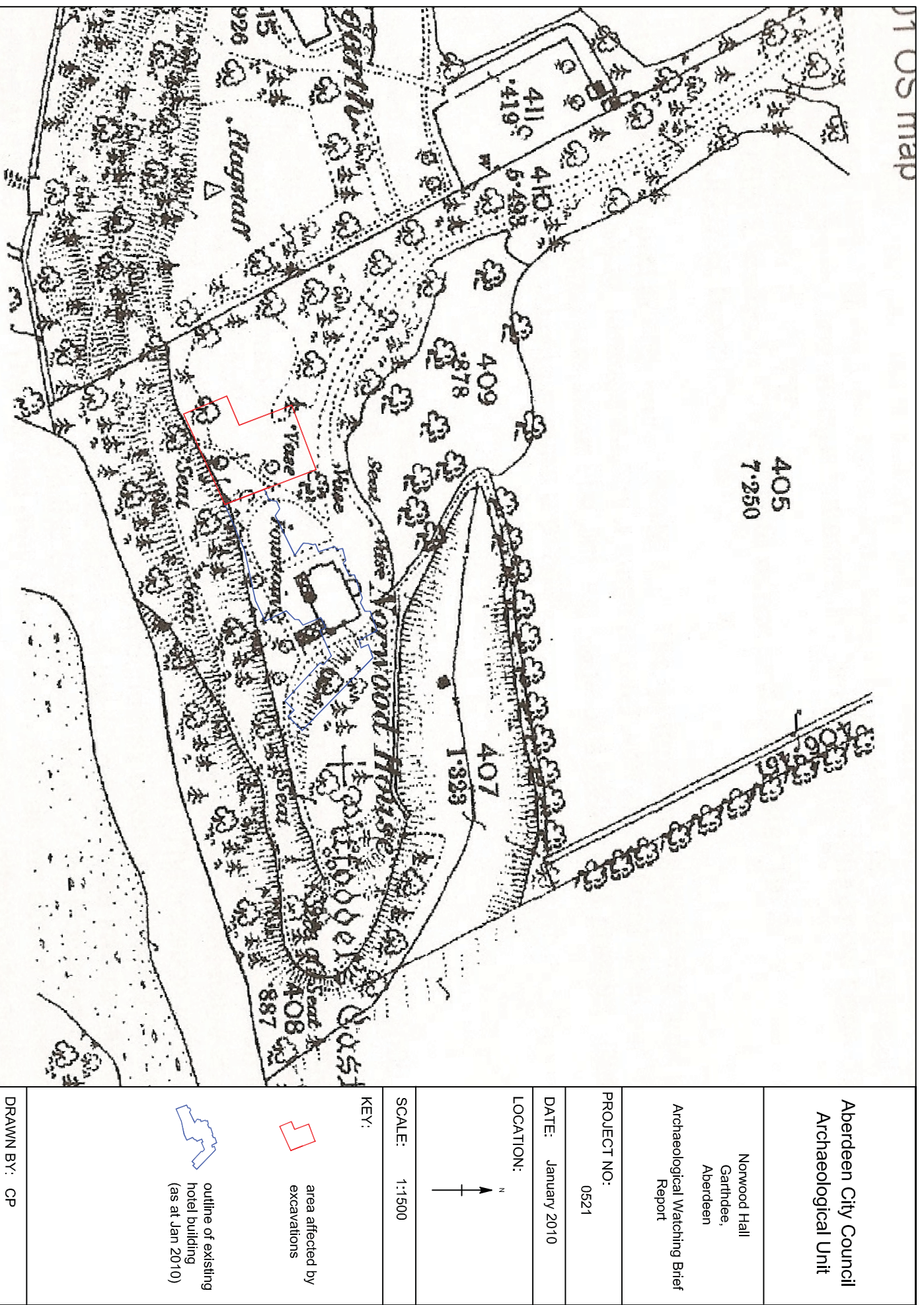
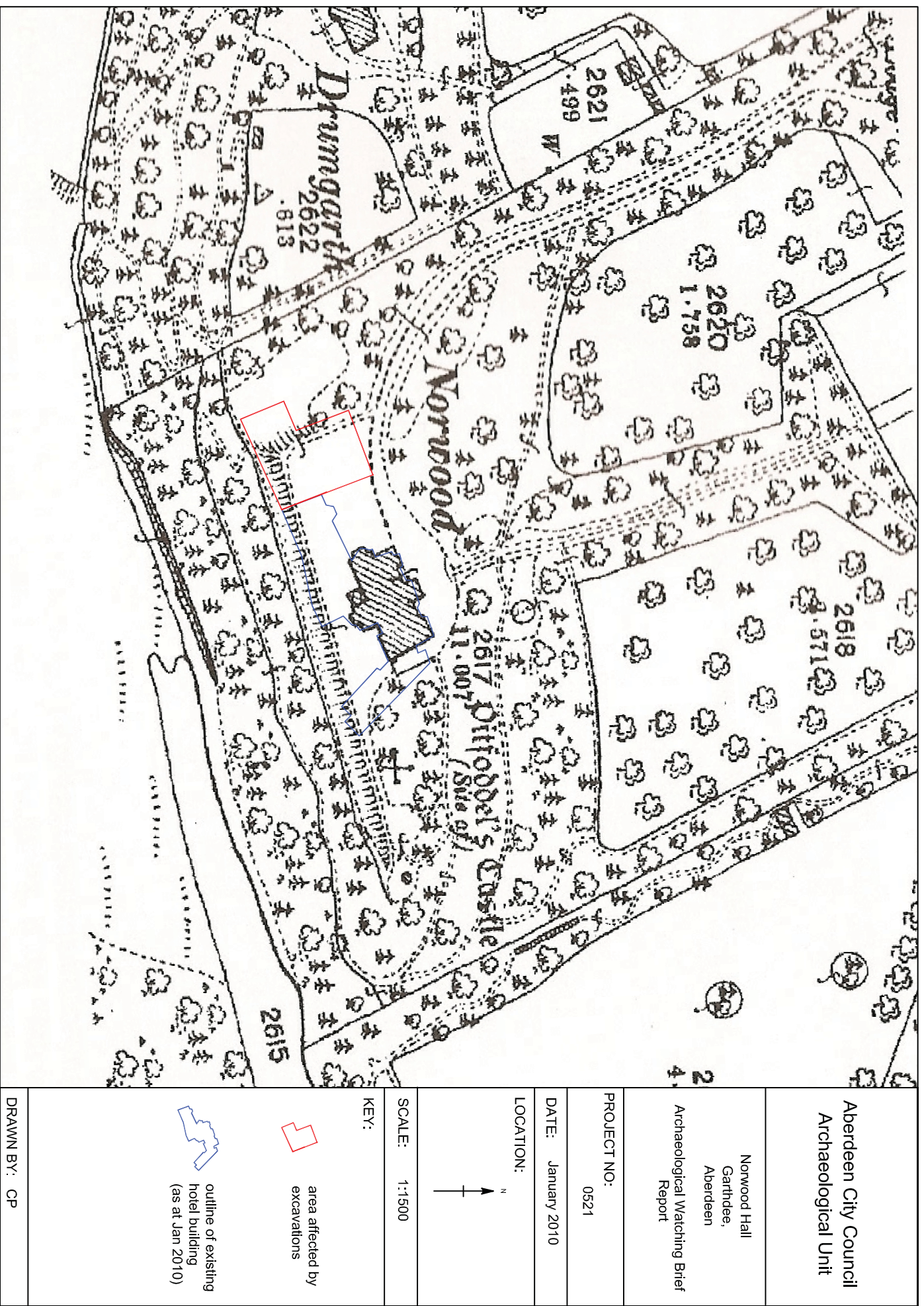


Figure 1 : Location of Area Affected by Excavations





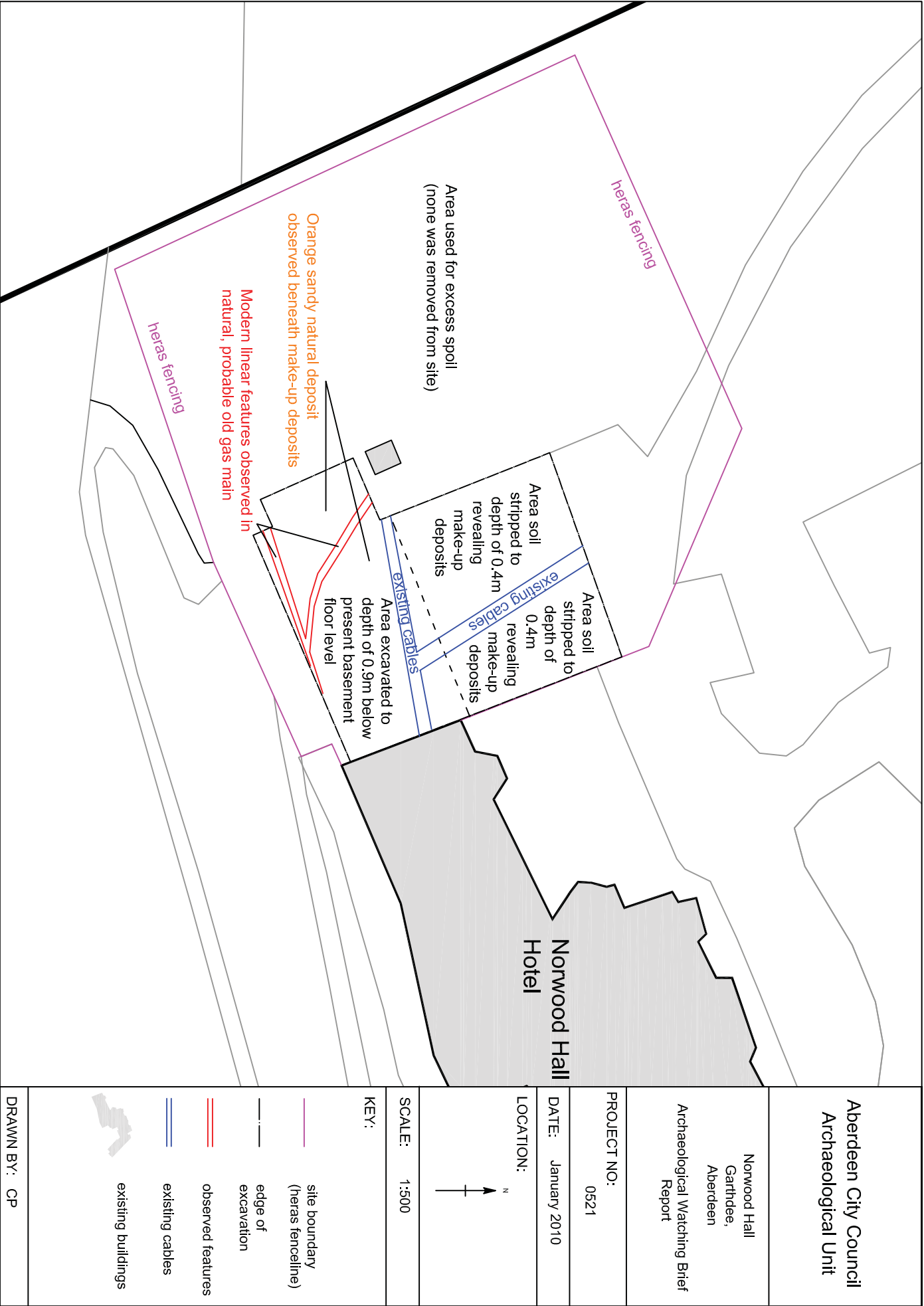


Figure 4 : Results of Archaeological Monitoring