

Archaeological Watching Brief
New floodlighting,
Kirk of St Bride, Abernethy, Perth and Kinross



Kirk of St Bride, Abernethy looking north



17th September 2012

Introduction (Illus 1)

This archaeological watching brief on below ground excavation connected with the insertion of new floodlighting and a bulkhead light at the Kirk of St Bride, Abernethy was carried out for Mr Ian Cartwright to satisfy the archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development, as noted by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust in the Terms of Reference to Planning Application 12/00374/FLL, dated 16th August 2012. It was undertaken by the author on Monday 17th September 2012 (Site Code ABER01); weather conditions were bright and sunny.

Archaeological Background (Illus 2)

The site of the proposed new lighting lies within an archaeologically sensitive area and has a long history of religious activity. The ruins of the church of Abernethy stood in the centre of the present graveyard until 1802, when they were removed to build the present church of St Bride. The Pictish Chronicle attributes the foundation of the earlier church to King Nectan (AD 457 to 481). King Gartnaidh (AD584 to 599), founded a new church where the earlier one had been, and dedicated it to St. Bridgid who according to Spotswood died and was buried there. The church appears to have been monastic as well as parochial. There was a possibility that the excavation of the proposed cable trenches would disturb disarticulated human remains and buried archaeological fragments relating to the earlier churches.

Watching Brief (Illus 3-11)

Cable trench excavation was limited to a trench at the South Western corner of the church which ran across the modern path to floodlight 1, a trench at the South Eastern corner of the church which ran across the path to floodlight 2 and a trench from the Eastern graveyard wall which ran up to and adjacent to the Southern wall of the church before connecting with the junction box for floodlight 2. The floodlight cable was attached to the face of the Southern wall of the Kirk of St Bride at a height of 0.10m above modern ground level and the cable to the bulkhead light was attached at a similar height to the face of the Eastern graveyard boundary wall.

Floodlight 1 (Illus 3 and 6)

This cable track was dug to a depth of 0.13m below modern ground level from the South Western corner of the Kirk of St Bride to the site of floodlight 1 which lay in the graveyard. The graveyard turf was dug to a depth of 0.13m at the location of the slab to support the floodlight. The cable track and floodlight slab were dug through brown silty clay, there was no sign of anything of archaeological interest.

Floodlight 2 (Illus 3 and 7)

This cable track was dug to a depth of 0.13m below modern ground level from a point close to the South Eastern corner of the Kirk of St Bride across the path to the site of floodlight 2 which lay in the graveyard. The graveyard turf was dug to a depth of 0.13m at the location of the slab to support the floodlight. The cable track and floodlight slab were dug through brown silty clay, there was no sign of anything of archaeological interest.

Cable for Bulkhead light (Illus 3, 8-11)

A cable track was dug to a depth of 0.16m below modern ground level from the Eastern boundary wall towards the Eastern end of the Kirk of St Bride. This section was dug through a rich dark black graveyard soil. The track continued along the church wall face at a depth of 0.20m and then across to the South Eastern corner of the main church building where it connected with the junction box for floodlight 2. This section was dug through compacted dark brown silty clay; there was no sign of anything of archaeological interest.

Conclusions

Monitoring of the digging of cable trenches for two floodlights and a bulk head light located no archaeological deposits or features.

Cartographic Sources (<http://www.nls.uk/maps>)

1st Edition Ordnance Survey map Perthshire, sheet CX 1866

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the electricians Jimmy and Tam and for their help and interest during the watching brief.

Illustration List

Illus 1 Site location (red dot) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illus 2 site as shown on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illus 3 site plan showing location of excavated cable trenches, thicker red line indicates where cable has been attached to wall faces. Letters indicate locations of Illus 6, 7, 9 and 10. (Based on supplied architects plan Scale 1:200)

Illus 4 Kirk of St Bride looking north

Illus 5 Floodlight cable attached to South wall of Kirk of St Bride looking North West

Illus 6 Trench for cable to floodlight 1 looking north (A on Illus 3)

Illus 7 Trench for cable to floodlight 2 looking North (B on illus 3)

Illus 8 cable for bulkhead light attached to face of eastern graveyard wall looking north

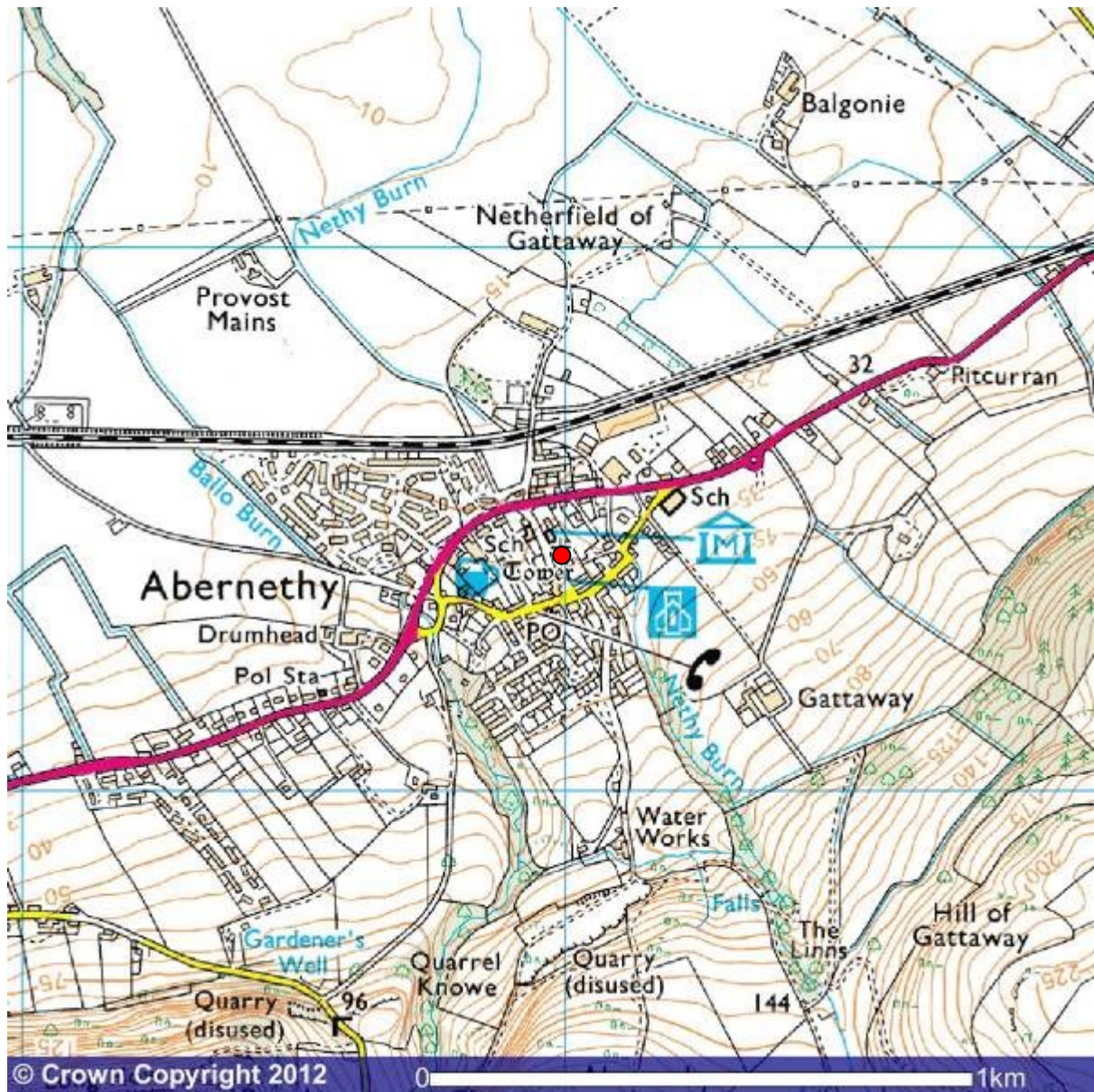
Illus 9 excavated trench for cable for bulkhead light looking North (C on illus 3)

Illus 10 trench for bulkhead light cable under excavation

Illus 11 Excavated trench for bulkhead light cable (D on illus 3)

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

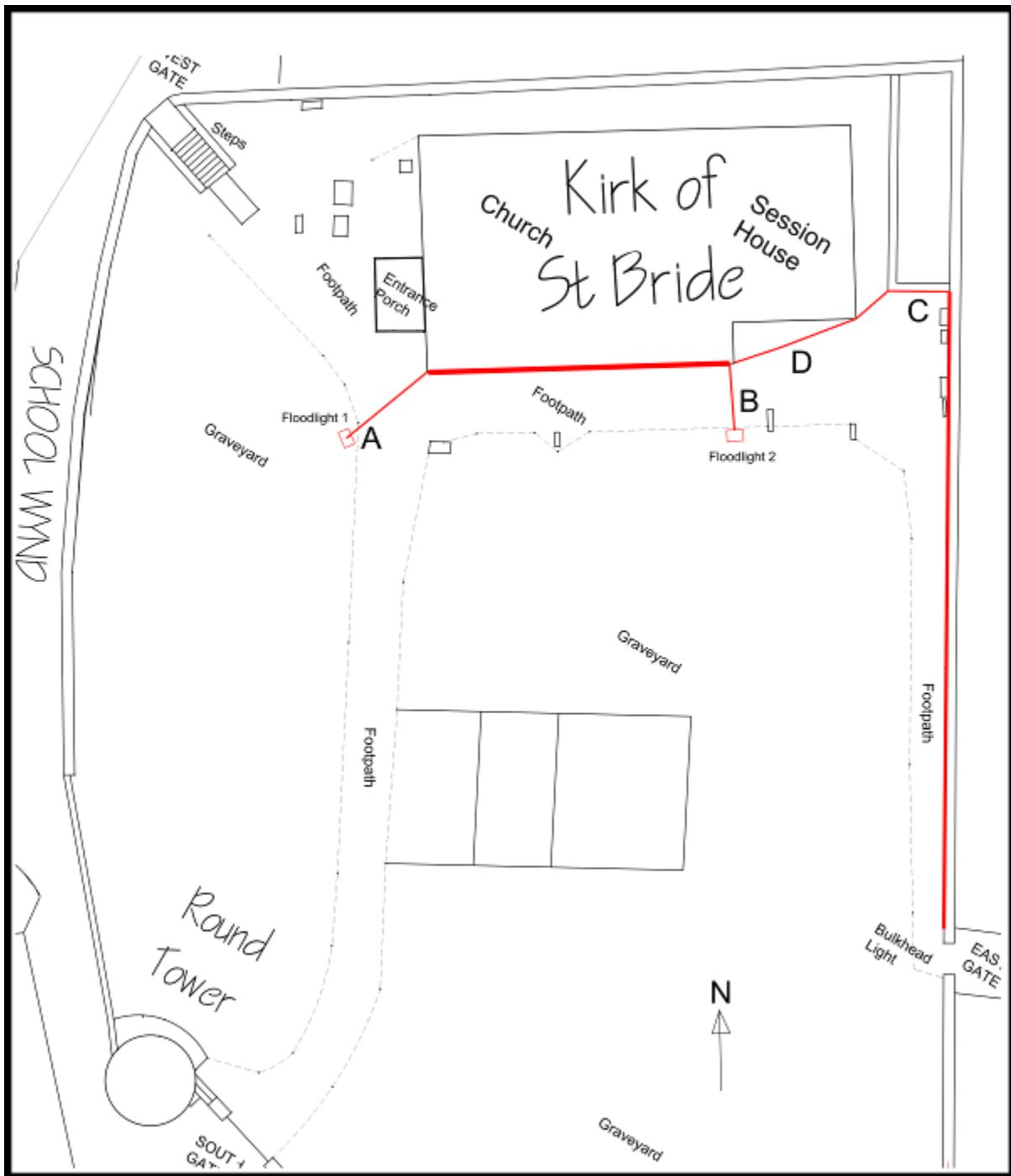
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth and Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	New floodlighting, Kirk of St Bride, Abernethy
PROJECT CODE:	ABER01
PARISH:	Abernethy
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	N0 696 492
START DATE	17th September 2012
END DATE	17th September 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out on the digging of new cable trenches for two floodlights and a bulkhead light adjacent to and in the graveyard of the Kirk of St Bride, Abernethy. No archaeological deposits or features were located.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Ian Davidson
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk



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Illus 2 Site as shown on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



Illus 3 Site plan showing location of excavated cable trenches, thicker red line indicates where cable has been attached to wall faces. Letters indicate locations of Illus 6, 7, 9 and 10. (Based on supplied architects plan Scale 1:200)



Illus 4 Kirk of St Bride looking North



Illus 5 Floodlight cable attached to South wall of Kirk of St Bride looking North West



Illus 6 Trench for cable to floodlight 1 looking north (A on Illus 3)



Illus 7 Trench for cable to floodlight 2 looking North (B on illus 3)



Illus 8 Cable for bulkhead light attached to face of eastern graveyard wall looking north



Illus 9 Excavated trench for cable for bulkhead light looking North (C on illus 3)



Illus 10 Trench for bulkhead light cable under excavation



Illus 11 Excavated trench for bulkhead light cable (D on illus 3)