



**ARO54: Aden Country Park, Aberdeenshire: a Neolithic enclosure, post-Reformation chapel, eighteenth century mansion house and a nineteenth century military training ground**

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## **Contents**

<b>Summary</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Fieldwork Results</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Neolithic enclosure</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Post-reformation chapel and associated ‘manse’</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>T-shaped structure (Structure 1)</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Rectangular ‘manse’ (Structure 2)</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Clearance cairn 154</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Wall 255</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Historical Assessment of the Chapel Ruins at Aden - Darren S Layne</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>The Mansion House</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Aden House Estate Features</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Nineteenth Century Military Training Camp</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Twin Lodges</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>The Finds</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>The lithic assemblage from 2016 and 2017 - Torben Bjarke Ballin</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>The window glass from 2016 - Helen Spencer</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Coins from 2016 - Stewart Thain</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>The charcoal from 2016 - Anne Crone</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>The other finds</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Spectacles from chapel site</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Copper alloy brooch from T-shaped chapel</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Inscribed slate from manse building</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Fireclay finds from Aden Mansion site</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Conclusions and Future Work</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Primary Sources</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>112</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location	12
Figure 2: Plan showing sites investigated during this project	13
Figure 3: Plan showing 2018 Trench 1 with features excavated	15
Figure 4: Sections through features (3-57)	16
Figure 5: Sections through features (59-117)	17
Figure 6: Sections through features (125-203)	17
Figure 7: Detailed plans and sections of features (95 and 97)	18
Figure 8: Plan of probable quarry pits (240 and 472)	20
Figure 9: Sections through quarry pits (240 and 472) showing tip layers created during infilling	20
Figure 10: Plan showing stone (479) and TPs with pit (477)	23
Figure 11: Possible interpretation of the post alignments as a possible mortuary enclosure, by Jan Dunbar	25
Figure 12: Plan of T-shaped and rectangular structures	25
Figure 13: 1st edition OS map showing location of two structures (not marked on this map)	26
Figure 14: Plan of T-shaped structure	27
Figure 15: Structure 1 north wing structure and floors	27
Figure 16: East 'wing' with east door (246), south door (228) and stone cobbled surface (256)	29
Figure 17: West wing walls with west door (212), south door (226) and stone features (221-225, 250-253)	30
Figure 18: Elevation showing door (212)	31
Figure 19: Elevation showing north wall west wing	32
Figure 20: Elevation showing exterior façade of south door (226)	32
Figure 21: Locations of 2021 test pit locations through building foundations	33
Figure 22: Plan (top) and section (bottom) of TP 30	34
Figure 23: TP 32	34
Figure 24: TP 35	35
Figure 25: Structure 1 Phase 3 rolled stones and flat stone (82) and Phase 3-4 stone settings (109)	37
Figure 26: Plan of rectangular 'manse'	38
Figure 27: Plan of Room 1	39
Figure 28: Section 15, wall (513), north façade	40
Figure 29: Plan of Room 2	42
Figure 30: Section 8 west wall of recess (505)	43
Figure 31: Plan of Room 3	44
Figure 32: Sections 7 and 16 showing large earthfast stone north wall (581) with infill small stone wall (508)	45
Figure 33: Section 9 showing threshold (628) at top	45
Figure 34: Section 14 through Room 3 showing pit (533) on top of cobbled floor (590)	46
Figure 35: Plan and section of fire-pit (552)	47
Figure 36: Plan of TP1, 11 and 13 showing wall (255)	48

## List of Figures *(continued)*

Figure 37: Relative positions of the Tiffery and Aden meeting-houses on the Roy Military Survey 1747 – 1755	50
Figure 38: Relative positions of the Tiffery and Aden meeting-houses to Kinmundy’s viewpoint at Hill of Coynach. 100050699	53
Figure 39: T-shaped chapel (left) and rectangular manse (right) set in early eighteenth century, by Jan Dunbar	55
Figure 40: Interior of south room showing minister preparing a sermon in front of the fire with hanging lum and cobbled floor set in early eighteenth century, by Jan Dunbar	56
Figure 41: Geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants	58
Figure 42: Interpretation of geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants	58
Figure 43: 1st edition OS map showing house and garden feature	59
Figure 44: Plan showing excavation trenches	59
Figure 45: West side of mansion showing trenches and main features	61
Figure 46: Section and side elevation of drain (122)	61
Figure 47: Plan and elevation of Trench 3	63
Figure 48: Plan and sections Trench 6	64
Figure 49: Plan of Trench 11	65
Figure 50: Section 1 of Trench 11	65
Figure 51: Section 2 of Trench 11	65
Figure 52: Plan on display board within Aden House showing room names	68
Figure 53: Features in Trench 17	68
Figure 54: Plan showing stone and earthen banks with TP20, TP22 and TP23	71
Figure 55: TP20 plan and section	72
Figure 56: Plan and section of TP22	72
Figure 57: Plan (top) and north elevation (bottom) of stone wall with steps (539)	73
Figure 58: Detail from orienteering map showing woodland features; this excavation is east of ‘5’ and the Murrays excavation south of ‘4’. The bulldozed features were NE of ‘14’	75
Figure 59: Detail from 1st edition OS map showing Structure 9	76
Figure 60: Plan showing structures, trenches and older trees	77
Figure 61: Plans and sections of Trenches 2, 3 and 4	78
Figure 62: Plan and section of Trench 5	80
Figure 63: Plans and sections of Trenches 6 and 9	81
Figure 64: Plan and section of Trench 8	83
Figure 65: Plan and section of Trench 10	83
Figure 66: Plan and section of Trench 12	85
Figure 67: Plan and section of Trench 13	85
Figure 68: Plan and section of Trench 14	86
Figure 69: Trench 16 plan and section	86

## List of Figures *(continued)*

Figure 70: Trench 18 plan and section	87
Figure 71: Trench 19 plan and section	88
Figure 72: Trenches on Perwinnes Moss, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen adjacent to WWII pillbox and Direction Finding Station	89
Figure 73: Location and contour plan	91
Figure 74: Plan of trenches and main structures identified	92
Figure 75: Plan of Trench 1	93
Figure 76: Trench 6, Structure 5	95
Figure 77: Assemblage 2017: The dimensions of all intact cores: blue diamonds = single-platform cores; purple crosses = cores w 2 platfs at angle; red squares = Levallois-like cores; green triangles = irregular cores; and black circles = bipolar cores	100
Figure 78: Assemblage 2017: The single-platform cores (red) and Levallois-like cores (blue) from Wester Clerkhill	100
Figure 79: Assemblage 2017: The single-platform cores (red) and Levallois-like cores (blue) from Aden	100
Figure 80: Assumed EBA end-scraper from Garthdee Road, Aberdeen (Ballin 2014, Illus 19.41), similar to CAT 17:97 from Aden; GD = c. 25mm	101
Figure 81: Lithics from 2017, Cat Nos 2 - truncated piece, 39 - short end scraper, 44 - microburin, 80 - Levallois-like core, 97 - end scraper, 105 - bi-polar core, 98 - single platform core, 128 - Levallois-like core, 130 - short end scaper, 167 - side scraper, 168 - single platform core and 171 - crested piece	102
Figure 82: Spectacles and lenses	108
Figure 83: Incised slate from floor of manse building	109

## List of Plates

Plate 1: Posthole base (33);facing SW	14
Plate 2: Posthole bases (17) to left and (117) to right; facing NE	16
Plate 3: Oval stone-filled pit (95) half sectioned showing large stone packing; facing SW	18
Plate 4: Shallow stone-filled pit (238); facing NW	18
Plate 5: Stone-filled pit, possible large posthole (230); facing NW	18
Plate 6: Shallow features (253) foreground and (236) background; facing NE	19
Plate 7: Furrow marked with flags and excavated to reveal features underneath; note that there are large earthfast boulders in a line with this furrow which must have been encountered by medieval farmers; facing west	19
Plate 8: Drone photo of (472) to left, prior to sondage, and (240) to right with sondages 1 and 2 excavated; facing N	21
Plate 9: Quarry pit 240; facing west	21
Plate 10: Large earth-fast stone and pit (281) showing digger teeth marks (top); facing SE	22

## List of Plates *(continued)*

Plate 11: Cup-marked stone north face showing geological strata, fissures possibly caused by frost fracturing and chisel marks where attempts have been made to fracture the stone; facing south	22
Plate 12: Possible cup mark in the upper surface of earthfast boulder (479)	23
Plate 13: Test-pit 5 with edge of pit (477), not bottomed; facing south	23
Plate 14: Modern plough marks showing ploughing in two directions at 90 degrees; facing SE	24
Plate 15: Entrance on north wall; facing north	28
Plate 16: Surface wall treatment (149); facing north	28
Plate 17: Clay flooring? (135); facing north	28
Plate 18: East wing under excavation; facing west	29
Plate 19: East door (246) with remains of interior cobbled surface (256) in the foreground; facing west	30
Plate 20: Door (228) with interior cobbles (230) in foreground and exterior cobbles (229) across the top; facing south	30
Plate 21: Door (212) showing blocking stones behind. The large stone (top left) is one of the Phase 3 stones; facing west	31
Plate 22: West wall (204) in the background; facing west	31
Plate 23: Stone features (221) to (left, with (222, 223, 224 and 225); facing north	31
Plate 24: Burnt wood on floor of north wing Structure 1; facing north	35
Plate 25: Stone demolition material (117) over wall (125); facing west, note the root tracks which have damaged the structures and moved stones	36
Plate 26: North wing east wall showing large stones (top) rolled onto the top of the wall foundation; facing east	36
Plate 27: Stone platform (82); facing north	36
Plate 28: Phase 3 or 4 stone setting (109); facing north	36
Plate 29: Drone photo of rectangular 'manse'	37
Plate 30: Hearth (83) surrounded by cobbled surface (24) with south wall (22) in background; facing south	38
Plate 31: Detail of hearth (83) with burnt deposit (84) in the centre and wall (87) attached to main south wall (22) to the bottom; facing north	40
Plate 32: SF 464 slate with scratch marks VV or W	40
Plate 33: Demolition material (551); facing north	41
Plate 34: Iron cauldron fragment SF 466	41
Plate 35: West wall (506) to the left contemporary with partition wall (601) to the right; facing NW	41
Plate 36: Recess (505) to the left; facing north	43
Plate 37: Room 3 west wall doorway (628), with cobbled surface (590), to the right; facing east	43
Plate 38: Room 3 east door with threshold stones (528) with cobbled surface (590) at the top; facing west	44
Plate 39: Cobbled floor (590)	46

## List of Plates *(continued)*

Plate 40: Stone-lined pit (81) with cobbled surface (590) below; facing west	47
Plate 41: Stone-lined pit (81) with cobbled surface (590) below; facing west	47
Plate 42: Fire-pit (552) with outer wall of pit (553) at top left, prior to cobbled floor (590) being uncovered; facing east	47
Plate 43: (255) in TP13 with TP1 and TP11 in background; facing SW	48
Plate 44: 1773 incised date stone reused upside down as the springer for an arch; facing west	57
Plate 45: AR (Alexander Russel) and EI (Eliza Innes) inscribed stone; facing SE	57
Plate 46: Drone photo of mansion during dig	60
Plate 47: Capping stones drain (122); facing east	60
Plate 48: Drain (122) facing west	62
Plate 49: Drain (122) facing east	62
Plate 50: Concrete fountain base (110); facing north	62
Plate 51: Mid-twentieth century photo of west façade of Aden House	62
Plate 52: Trench 2 drain capping stones (201); facing west	63
Plate 53: Trench 6 wall (610) at bottom right; note the stone top right is angled at 45 degrees to the current building and features AR/EI incised stone above; facing south	64
Plate 54: Trench 11 drain (1109) east wall mortared into the mansion's west wall foundation	66
Plate 55: Trench 11 relationship of the mansion wall and the foundation to drain (1106); facing east	66
Plate 56: Trench 12 showing foundation of the mansion 0.6 m deep; facing east	66
Plate 57: Trench 14 with the east wall of the mansion in the background; facing west	67
Plate 58: Pebble surface (1502); facing north	67
Plate 59: Trench 17 concrete floor (1702), to the left, bricks underneath and stone wall foundation (1703) to the right; facing north	68
Plate 60: Cart door (centre) showing infilling with stone and brick wall (1703); facing NE	69
Plate 61: Stone drain capping (1901); facing NE	69
Plate 62: Trench 20 pebble surface (2002); facing east	69
Plate 63: Copy of postcard owned by David Elrick showing two sets of steps from the west garden, no fountain but a smaller bird bath/planter NW of the house outwith the excavation area	70
Plate 64: Bank (570), facing south	72
Plate 65: Wall (539) showing steps (on the right of the ranging rod); facing south	74
Plate 66: Wall (539) with details of steps; facing south	74
Plate 67: Wall (539) with detail of drill mark on NW corner of stone on west side of Step 1; facing west	74
Plate 68: South façade of wall (539) showing soil infill behind steps and no evidence of steps on south side of wall; facing north	74
Plate 69: General Frank S Russell of Aden 1875 (© Aberdeenshire museums Service)	76
Plate 70: Trench 2 (centre); facing SW	78
Plate 71: Section through bank (3004) showing stones (3002) a dump of stones in the base of the bank; facing NW	79



## List of Plates *(continued)*

Plate 72: Trench 4 (foreground) through bank (4004); facing NE	79
Plate 73: Section through bank (4004) showing clay subsoil cast up from ditch; facing SE	79
Plate 74: Trenches 5 and 5A bank (5005) to left, ditch (5004), ditch (5015) to right; facing NNE	80
Plate 75: Trench 5, bank (5005); facing NNE	80
Plate 76: Ditch 6008 (left) and bank 6006 (right) showing light brown sandy clay (6002) cast up natural subsoil from digging the ditch; facing NW	81
Plate 77: Metal cables, 1930s glass bottle and marble floor tile in base of ditch (6008)	81
Plate 78: Trench 7 (bottom) and Trench 8 (centre) in Structure 5; facing NE	82
Plate 79: Trench 8 bank (8003) to right and ditch (8004) to left; facing SE	82
Plate 80: Trench 10 bank (10003) section; facing north	82
Plate 81: Trench 10 ditch (10005) section; facing south	84
Plate 82: Trench 10 glass bottle and textile in the ditch (10005) fill	84
Plate 83: Trench 12 bank (12011) to left and ditch (12012) to right; facing WNW	84
Plate 84: Trench 13 ditch (13006) to left and bank (13005) to right; facing NNE	84
Plate 85: Trench 14 ditch (14006); facing SW	87
Plate 86: Trench 14 bank (14007); facing NE	87
Plate 87: Ditch terminal (18004) partly excavated; facing NE	87
Plate 88: Corse Hill trench in woodland on Scotstown Moor	90
Plate 89: Soil and wood ramps being created around the Twin lodges structures; facing NW	91
Plate 90: Structure 1 showing large boulders (102) with small stones in centre (104); facing east	92
Plate 91: Trench 1 south end showing large stones (102) to the bottom and small stone 'foundation' (103) in the centre; facing west	93
Plate 92: Trench 2 facing SE	94
Plate 93: Trench 5, Structure 2; facing west	94
Plate 94: West edge of Structure 2 showing trees growing between stones and volunteers working on Structure 1 in background; facing east	94
Plate 95: Trench 6, Structure 5 stonework; facing NE	95
Plate 96: Quarry F2; facing east	95
Plate 97: Example of the different colours of the two types of window glass found at Aden. Type 1 is the dark green glass on the left and Type 2 the more colourless glass on the right	104
Plate 98: A piece of Type 2 glass showing the smooth straight edge (LHS) and a large elongated air bubble characteristic of the cylinder method of manufacture	105
Plate 99: Spectacle lens with part of copper alloy bridge SF 150 from the 2019 excavation	108
Plate 100: Copper alloy brooch front (left) and reverse (right)	108
Plate 101: Garnkirk stamped fireclay roof furniture from Trench 8	110
Plate 102: Fireclay objects from the roof of Aden House photographed in mid 1970s when Aberdeenshire Council carried out a survey of the buildings; they then disappeared	110

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1: List of radiocarbon dates secured from Neolithic structure</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Table 2: Radiocarbon dates from Structure 1</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Table 3: Further manuscript sources</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Table 4: Assemblage 2016: General lithic artefact list</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Table 5: Assemblage 2017: General lithic artefact list</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Table 6: Assemblage 2017: Reduction sequence of all unmodified flakes and blades</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Table 7: Assemblage 2017: Relative composition of the debitage</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Table 8: Assemblage 2017: Applied percussion techniques: definable unmodified flakes and blades</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Table 9: Combined alkali and manganese oxide content of Aden window glass</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Table 10: Catalogue of coins</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Table 11: Samples analysed</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Table 12: Radiocarbon dates</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Table 13: Sizes of spectacles</b>	<b>108</b>



## Summary

Archaeological work in Aden Country Park took place over more than 17 weeks from 2017 to 2021 involving approximately 120 professional archaeologists, archaeology students and volunteers. Staff with around 710 pupils from local primary schools, Mintlaw Academy and Aberdeen Young Archaeologists Club, and another 700 people visited each year. The work was carried out as part of the successful Aberdeenshire Council and Aden Country Park Restoration & Redevelopment application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Parks for People' programme.

The archaeological work at Aden Country Park was part of a larger grant for works within the park and the archaeological elements were managed by the main author. The archaeological work was instigated to:

- research the park which had not been previously subjected to archaeological or historical work
- investigate 'lumps and bumps' which had been reported by various people who were regular visitors to the park
- to train local volunteers, archaeology students and school pupils in various archaeological techniques, to look at landscapes as a whole, and to investigate discrete sites within that environment.

The project unexpectedly uncovered a Neolithic enclosure in a field which had been badly truncated by ploughing activity, and a post-reformation chapel and manse that had been previously discounted as a pre-improvement farm but was labelled 'Episcopalian church' in the park (probably the work of David Bertie, former head of Aberdeenshire Museums Service). Work at the Aden Mansion House showed that there was an earlier phase of building which could not be fully investigated owing to its position under the standing building which is filled to first floor level with soil and rubble. The military training grounds in the woods were proven to date to the nineteenth century or later; there are others in the wood previously assessed and a group which were machined away during park 'improvements'. It is now understood that the features investigated during the course of this programme of excavations have since been damaged during tree removal after Storm Arwen.

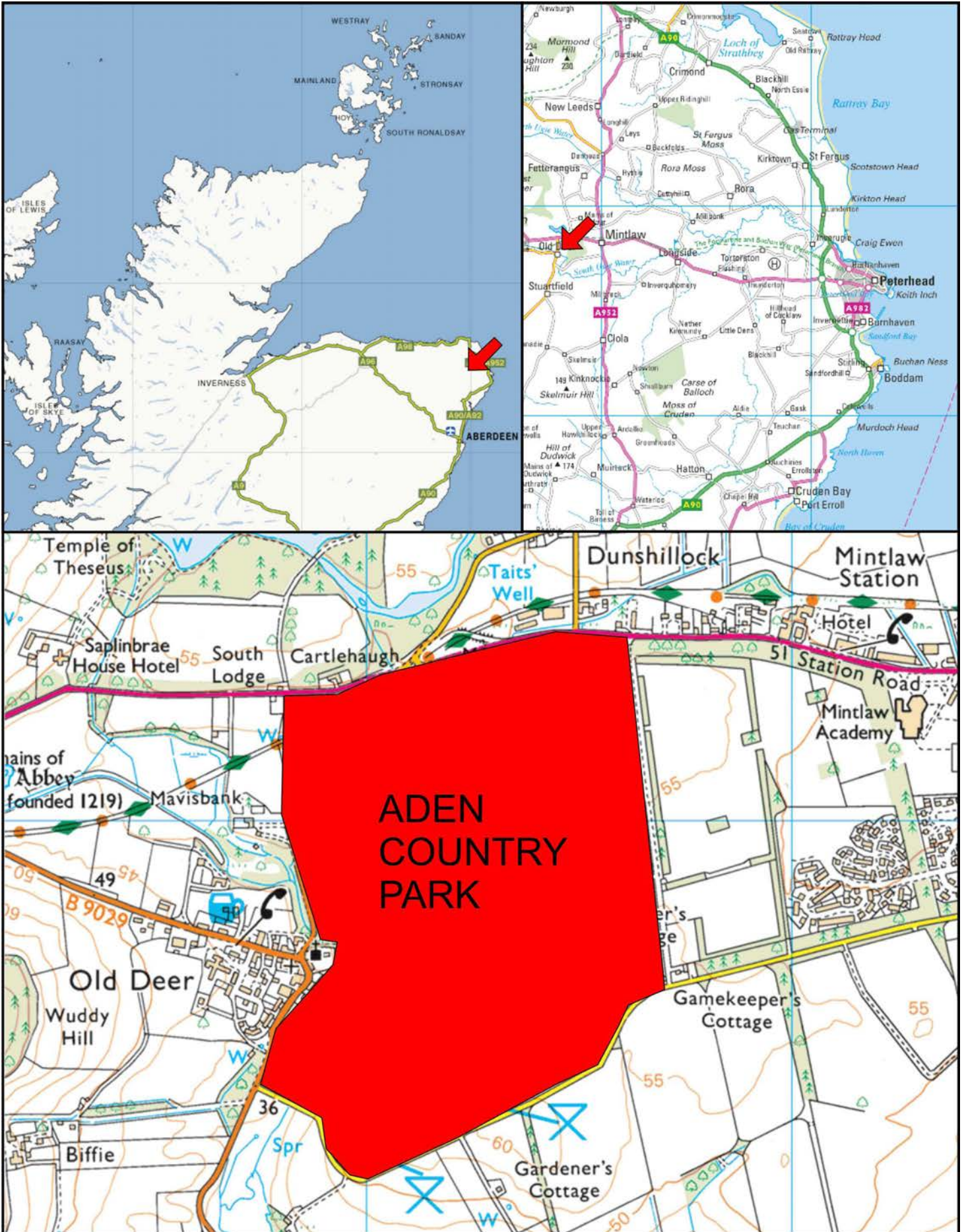


Figure 1: Site location (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024).

## Introduction

Aden Country Park is situated in woodland WNW of Hareshowe at NGR: NJ 9821 4755, in the parish of Old Deer and is located between 50-55 m OD (Figure 1).

This archaeological research project was carried out as part of a successful Aberdeenshire Council and Aden Country Park Restoration & Redevelopment application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Parks for People' programme, with additional funding from Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service, Historic Environment Scotland, and The Friends of Aden.

Aden Country Park is a 230-acre park owned by Aberdeenshire Council and has a rich variety of archaeological and historical remains in its grounds. Following ownership by the Keith family the Barony of Aden was sold by the Fergusons

of Kinmundy to Alexander Russell in 1758. The Russell family built a new house, and the policies were transformed with the introduction of native and exotic planting (Walker and Woodworth 2015, 319-21). In 1975 the then Banff & Buchan District Council bought the estate and transformed it into a Country Park see (<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-culture/country-parks/mintlaw-aden-country-park/>).

## Methodologies

A number of sites were identified by the current author with help and guidance from local volunteers (Figure 2) and after visual inspection a number of sites were identified for further work. Fieldwalking was only carried out on the fields at Hareshowe following ploughing as no other areas were suitable. Geophysical survey was carried out by Rose Geophysics on the fields where the Neolithic enclosure was uncovered as well

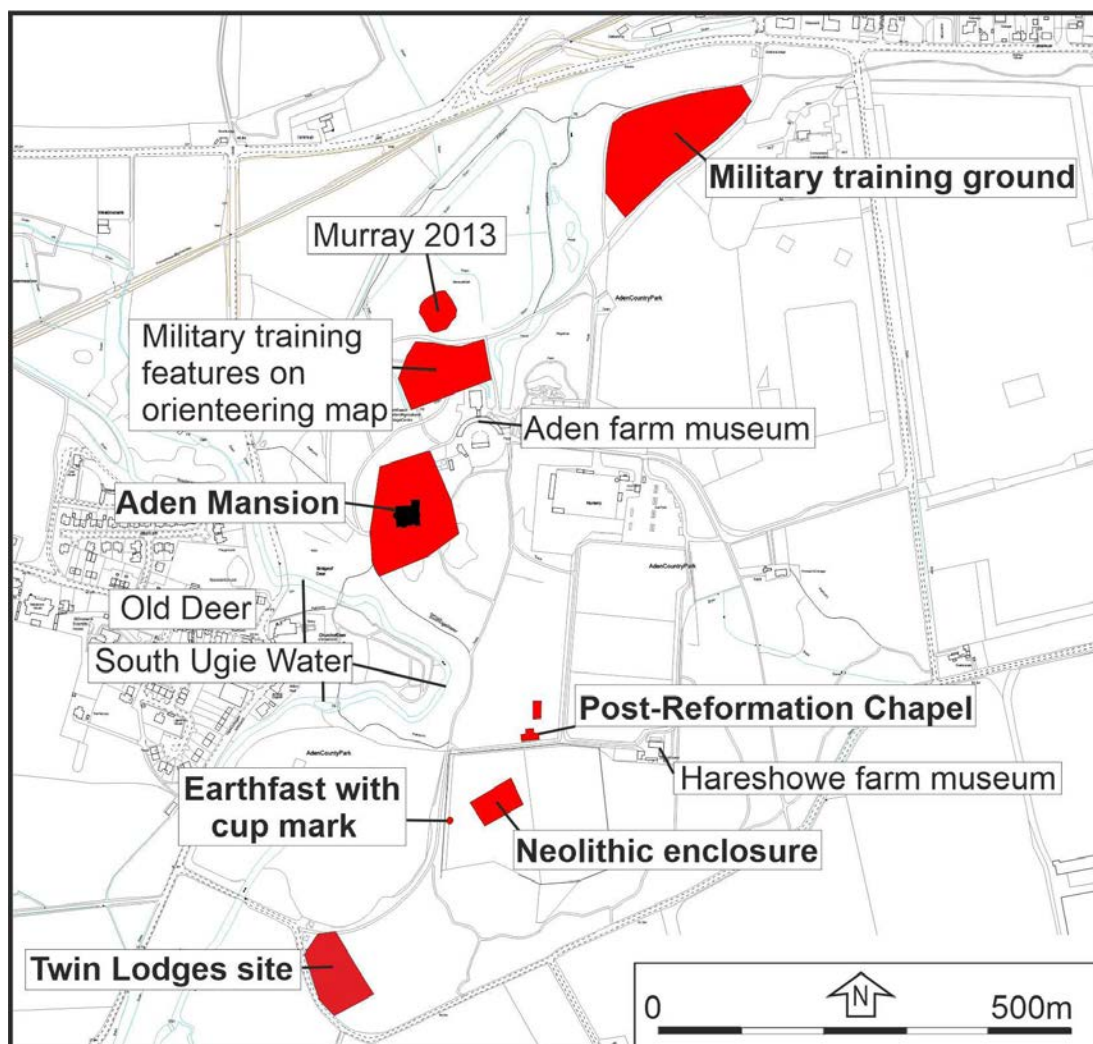


Figure 2: Plan showing sites investigated during this project (Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100017966).

as at Aden Mansion House itself. The survey at the Neolithic field did not reveal archaeological anomalies as they proved to be small and shallow; the survey of the Aden House environs is included below and formed the basis for trench locations. Two machine evaluations were carried out and the Neolithic enclosure site was stripped using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision and all areas were mapped with selected features subjected to excavation. Most of its features were half sectioned including 70 features in 2018 and 130 in 2019.

Two sites, the military training ground and a small site above the Twin Lodges, were recorded prior to archaeological excavation using a plane table. All other sites were hand excavated with the trench locations being chosen based on surface features.

## Fieldwork Results

### Neolithic enclosure

Following fieldwalking in a field centred on NGR: NJ 9816 147480 (see Lithics report, below) and geophysical survey (see the Project Archive) in early 2017, an evaluation took place between 3 and 10 June 2017 and open area excavations between 5 and 15 November 2018 and 24 June–7 July 2019. Small-scale trenching took place between 16 and 27 August 2021.

### Postholes

A series of c. 40 bases of heavily truncated postholes were half-sectioned (Figure 3). The field had been intensively ploughed including for ploughing contests, and modern finds including fragments of plastic were recovered from the base of the topsoil as well as the tops of some of the features. The features were mostly dug into a soft reddish-brown sandy subsoil, but the subsoil surrounding the structure was much more compact.

The bases of postholes appear to be the remains of a structure oriented roughly SW/NE approximately 14.5 m wide and at least 21 m

long. A clear alignment of postholes along the SE edge (3, 53, 55, 57, 59, 63, 201, 202 and 203, Figures 4-6) was generally circular, around 0.5 m in diameter and up to 0.1 m deep. Their fills were clayey loams with fragments of charcoal, peat and the occasional modern find. The NW alignment of features was less clear, due to them being more heavily disturbed than the SE alignment, but there were two lines of postholes (31, 33, Plate 1, 35, 37, 39, 43, 45, 47, 111, 113 and 115). In 2019 the NW alignment was further investigated, and posthole bases (277, 279, 338 and 367), as well as tree throw pits (253 and 236) seemed to form an alignment, which was probably the remains of the NW extent of the structure. The alignment of postholes (275, 300 and 428) may represent an entrance from the west and posthole bases (216, 218, 234, 251 and 321) may represent an entrance from the north. A further topsoil strip and mapping in 2021 failed to reveal any further archaeological features and it is assumed that the full extent of the surviving remains was uncovered during the previous excavations.



Plate 1: Posthole base (33);facing SW

The structure appeared to have rounded ends formed towards the SW and NE, with a mixture of very shallow and burrowed features at the NE end (9, 11, 13 and 15). However, the NE end may be represented by posthole bases (17 and 117, Plate 2, 19, 23, 125 and possibly 136 and 25) as this part of the structure has been disturbed by quarry pits (472 and 240, see below). The SW end included a larger posthole (69), which was 1 m in diameter with packing stones including a large earth-fast boulder (Figure 5).

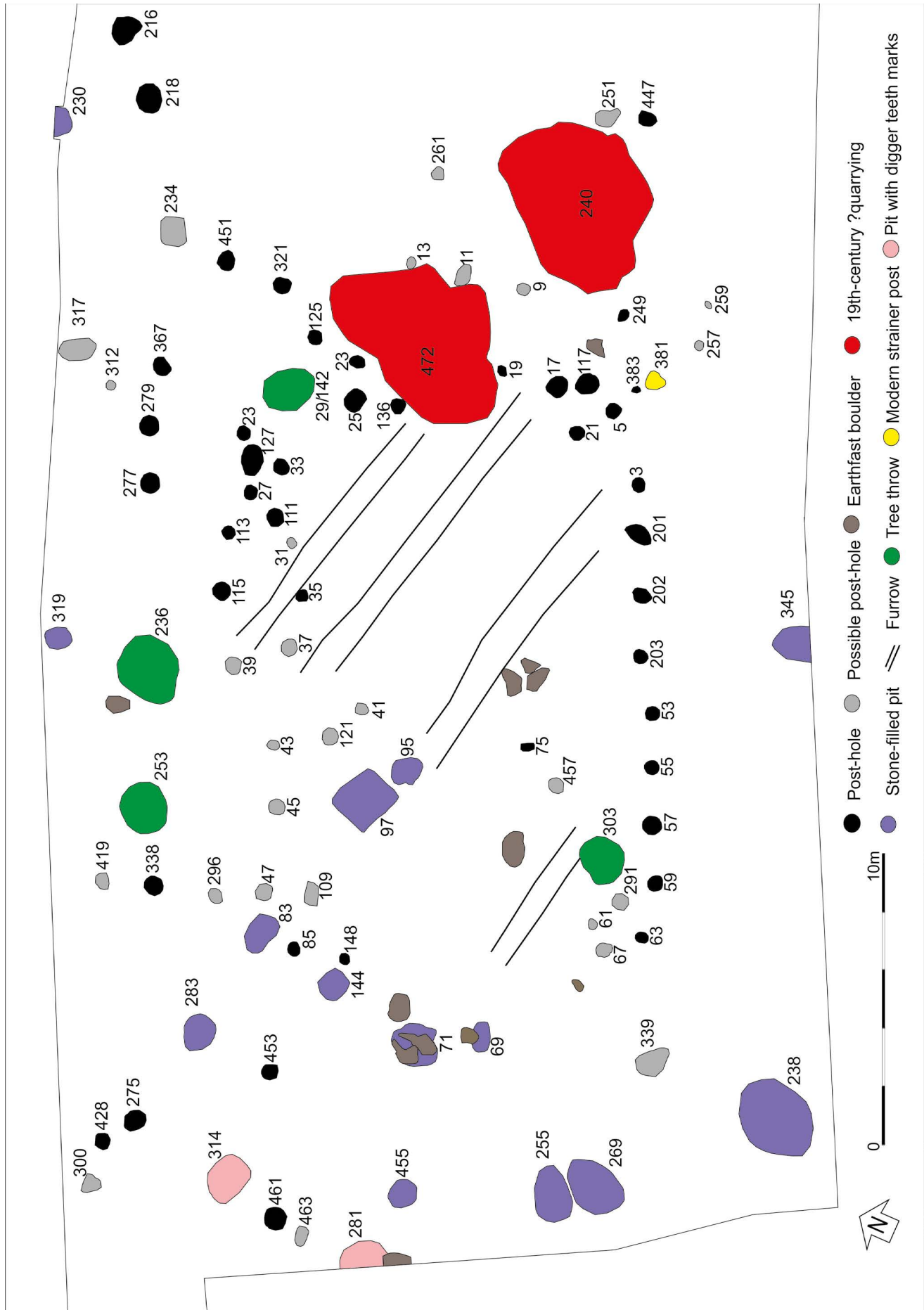


Figure 3: Plan showing 2018 Trench 1 with features excavated



Plate 2: Posthole bases (17) to left and (117) to right; facing NE

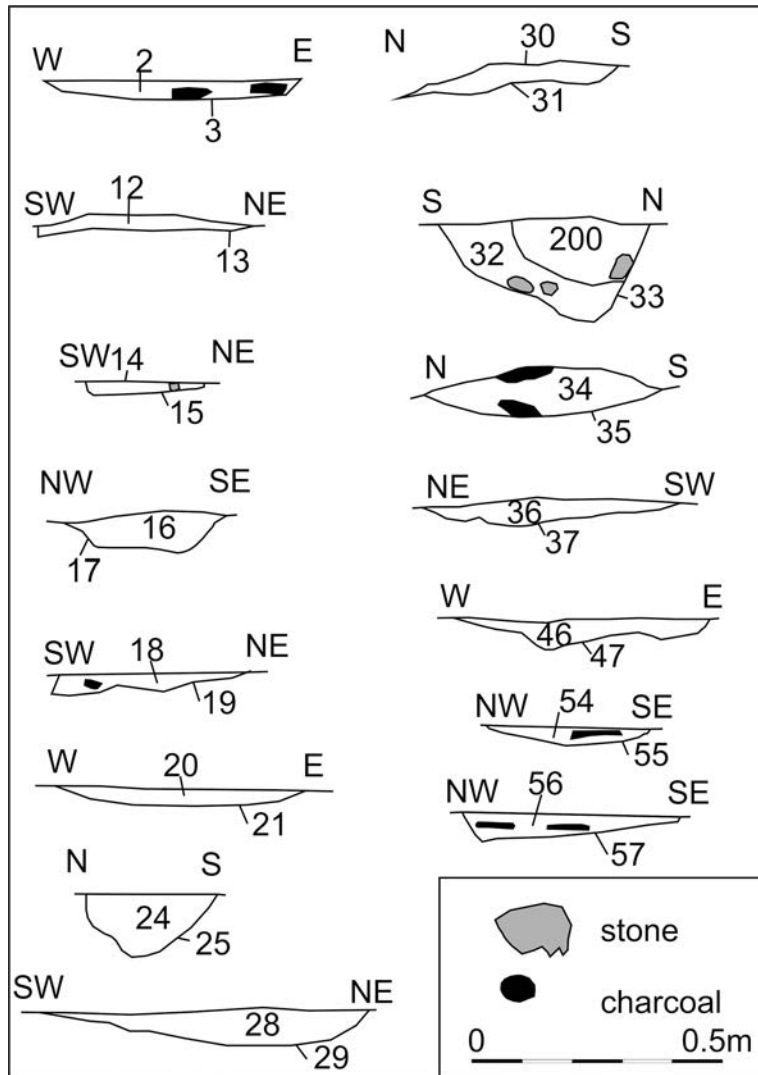


Figure 4: Sections through features (3-57)



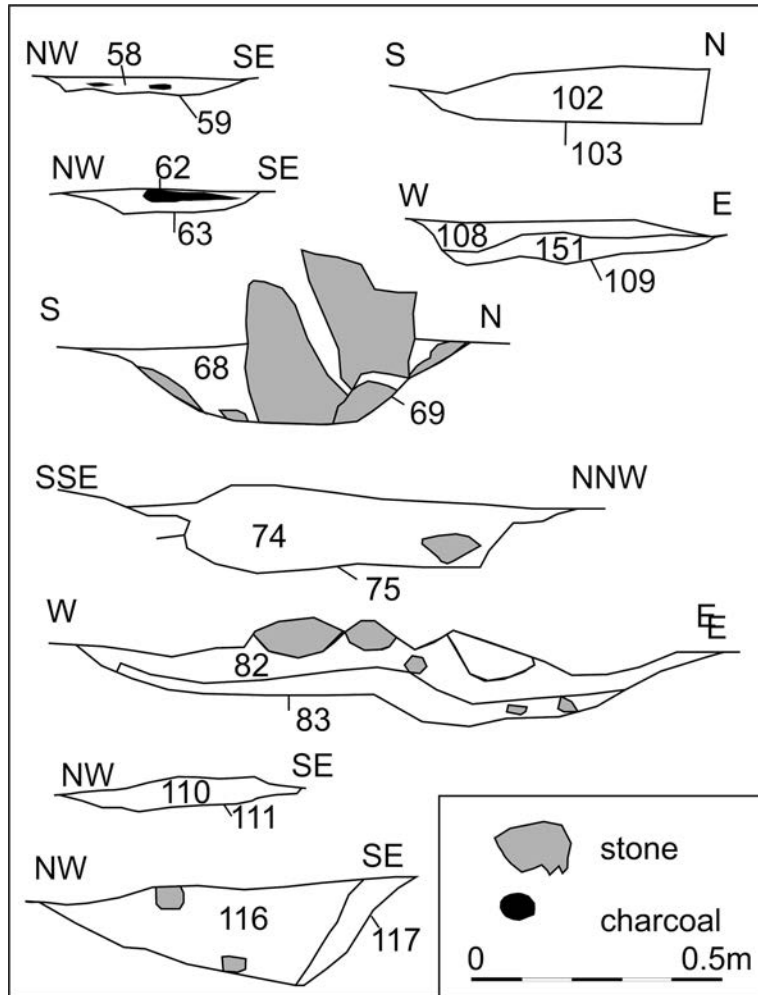


Figure 5: Sections through features (59-117)

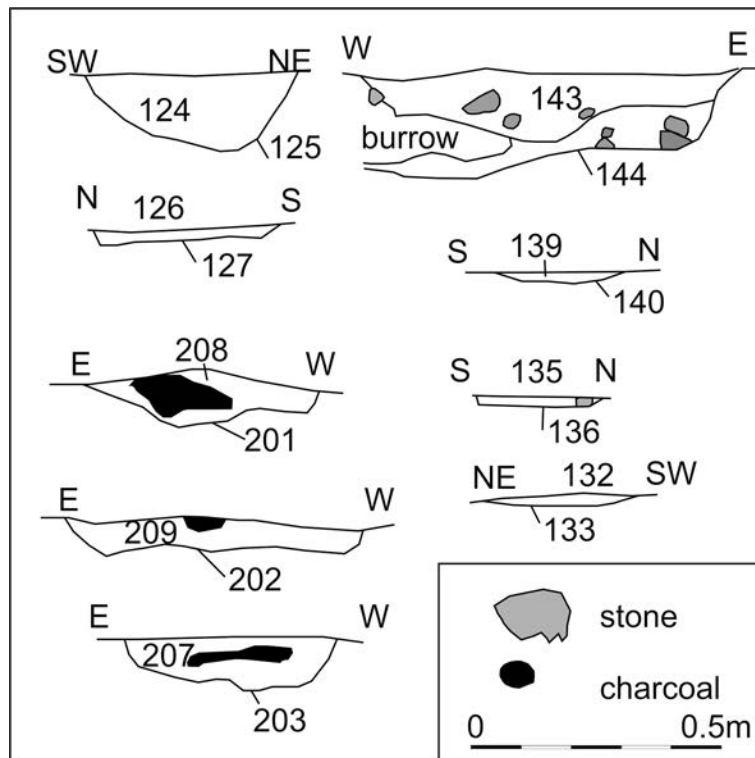


Figure 6: Sections through features (125-203)

### Pits and earth-fast boulders

Within the centre of the structure were a small number of features. They included a square pit or posthole base (97) and posthole (95). The latter was 0.9 m in diameter and survived 0.45 m deep (Plate 3 and Figure 7). It featured a large earth-fast boulder as part of the post-packing. Two large earth-fast boulders were also uncovered within the structure and between them was a shallow heavily disturbed feature (75) with a clayey loam and charcoal fill. The earth-fast boulders were both frost shattered and plough scored, and they may have been above ground during the lifetime of this structure.

The 2019 excavation extended this area revealing several large stone-filled pits (238, Plate 4, 230, Plate 5, 255, 269, 281, 314 and 455). The historical removal of stone from pits (314 and 281) with a toothed digger bucket is discussed below.



Plate 3: Oval stone-filled pit (95) half sectioned showing large stone packing; facing SW



Plate 4: Shallow stone-filled pit (238); facing NW

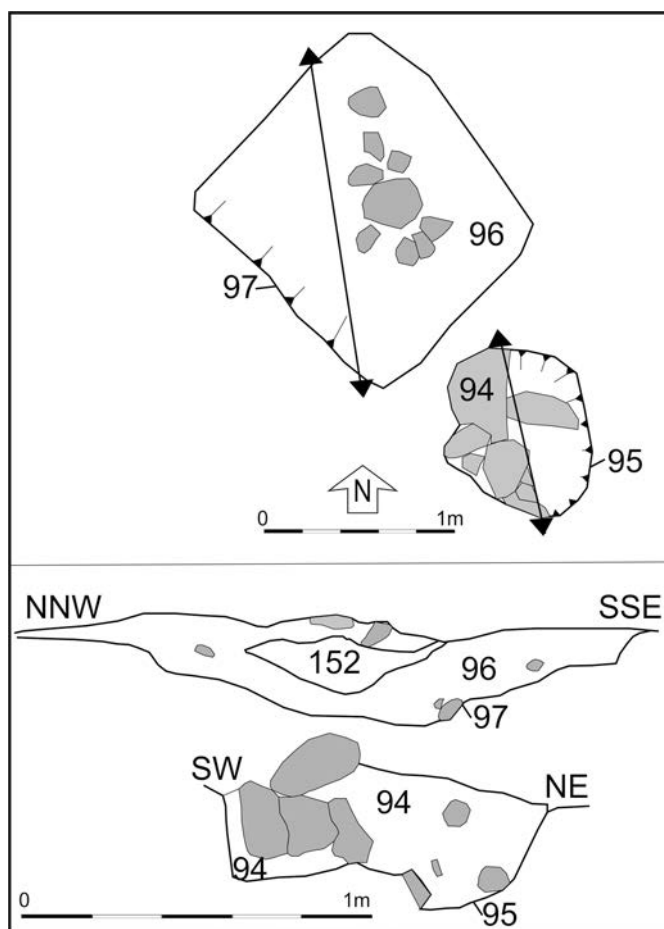


Figure 7: Detailed plans and sections of features (95 and 97)



Plate 5: Stone-filled pit, possible large posthole (230); facing NW

### Tree throws

At least four large shallow pits with typical ellipsoid profile (see Brophy and Barclay 2004, 2), were excavated and appeared to be tree throws. Shallow features (142, 236, 253, Plate 6 and 303) had a very distinctive tree throw profile and were on an alignment with some of the posthole bases. These may have formed part of the enclosure as living trees that were incorporated within the structure as it was being built, or planted as part of the structure.



*Plate 6: Shallow features (253) foreground and (236) background; facing NE*

### Furrows

A series of furrows were uncovered and excavated to reveal earlier features underneath (Plate 7); furrows of this type common locally represent the intensive use of the land for farming in the medieval and post-medieval period. They were typically 1-1.2 m wide and 3-4 m apart running NW/SE. They were filled with a distinctive stony sandy loam. Large earth-fast boulders and stone-filled pits which may be Neolithic in date were encountered by medieval farmers and it is possible that some of the stone was removed at this time.



*Plate 7: Furrow marked with flags and excavated to reveal features underneath; note that there are large earthfast boulders in a line with this furrow which must have been encountered by medieval farmers; facing west*

### Quarry pits

Two large sub-oval areas of redeposited subsoil were investigated (Figure 3) that had been cut through the furrows and through the earlier enclosure. Pit (240) measured 6 m N/S by 4.5 m E/W and pit (472) measured 7 m N/S by 4.5 m E/W (Figures 8 and 9, Plates 8 and 9). They both had steep hand-dug sides and were not bottomed during this project for health and

safety reasons. They were infilled with tip layers including redeposited subsoil of sand, clay, silt and layers of loam. The tip layers indicate that cart loads of material had been tipped into the pits from each side with the central area being infilled last. A small number of finds indicate that these were probably infilled in the nineteenth century. They may have originally been excavated to remove sand and stone and then been infilled with material from around the estate.

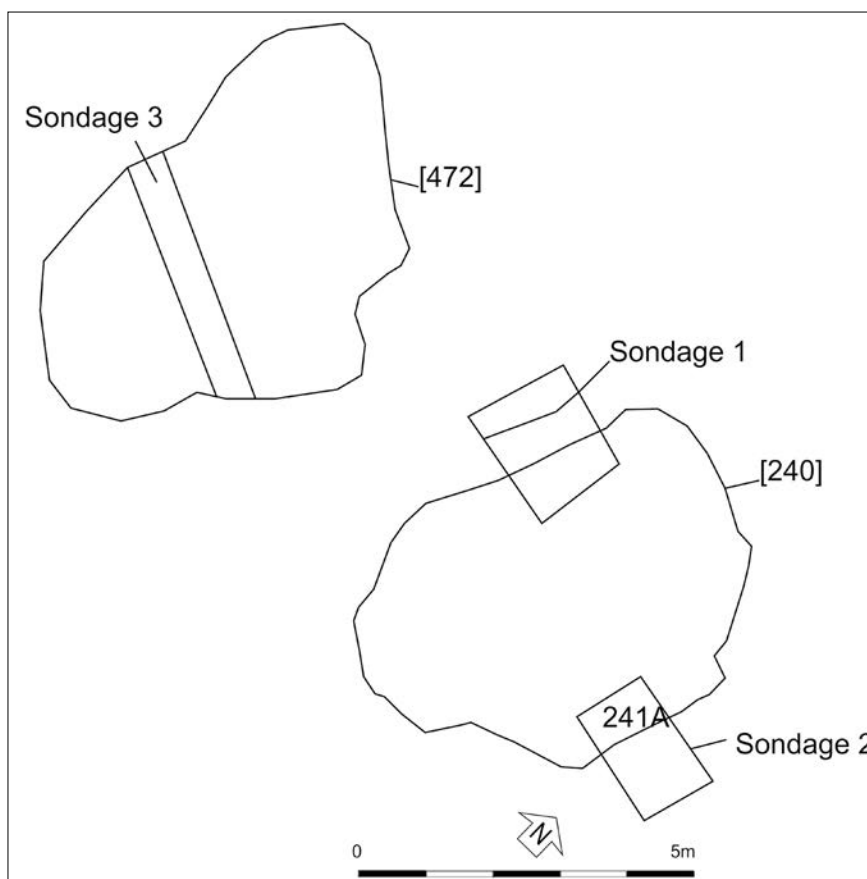


Figure 8: Plan of probable quarry pits (240 and 472)

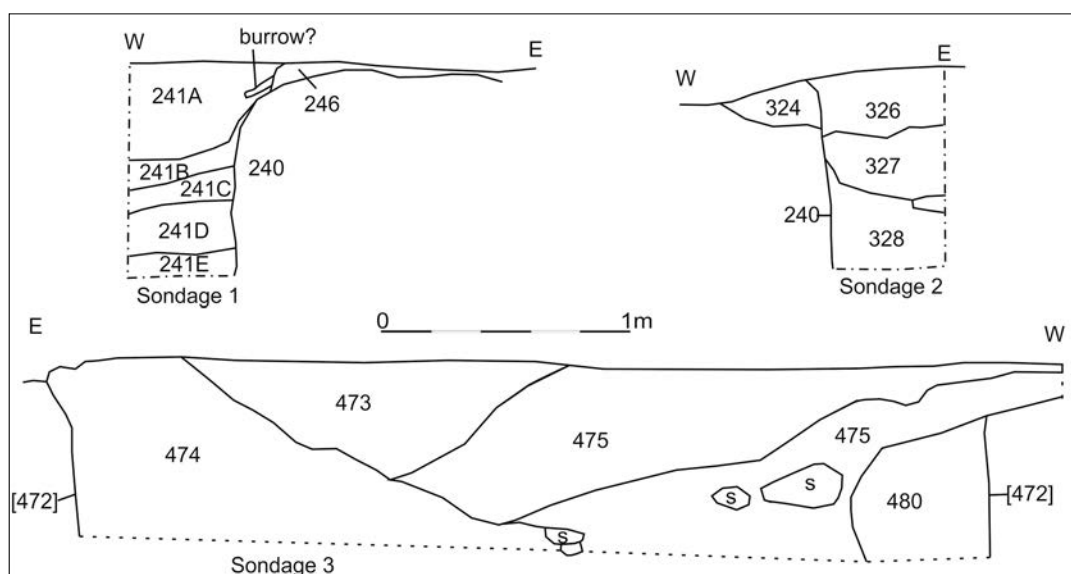


Figure 9: Sections through quarry pits (240 and 472) showing tip layers created during infilling



*Plate 8: Drone photo of (472) to left, prior to sondage, and (240) to right with sondages 1 and 2 excavated; facing N*



*Plate 9: Quarry pit 240; facing west*

### Machine excavated pits

In 2019 two pits were half-sectioned to reveal 0.25 m (10 inch) spaced scores down the side of vertical edges of the features (281, Figure 3, Plate 10 and 314). These had clearly been made with a toothed digger bucket; the machine driver who cleared trees and stones from the field in the 1980s does not recall that a toothed bucket was used to remove earth-fast boulders (Robbie Cadger pers. comm.) and so it is likely that they were removed at an earlier period probably during work to clear the fields for ploughing. It cannot be ruled out that pit (281) and possibly (314) were created by the removal of large stones from a stone circle; this was a running hypothesis throughout the programme of works as local volunteers were convinced that a stone circle existed in the area.



Plate 10: Large earth-fast stone and pit (281) showing digger teeth marks (top); facing SE

The very first excavator to use hydraulic technology was built in 1882 by Sir W. G. Armstrong & Company in England, where it was used in construction of the Hull docks. Unlike today's excavators that use hydraulic fluid, water was used to operate the hydraulic functions. Also,

it was not a true hydraulic machine, but a hybrid that used cables to operate the bucket but with a hydraulic cylinder operating a set of multiplying sheaves. The idea was not successful, neither on this machine nor on a machine of somewhat similar design built by the unrelated Frank F. Armstrong for Penn Iron Mining Company in the United States in 1914 (OEM Off-Highway 2024). It is possible that these pits were dug as early as the late nineteenth century and certainly could have been dug any time in the twentieth century. Knowledge about the history of land use in this area is poor and it is possible that this represents early land clearance by machinery.

### Cup marked stone (479)

Feature (479) is a large earth-fast erratic boulder located at the western edge of the field in which the Neolithic enclosure was excavated (Plate 11). The stone measures 4.1 m N/S and 2.8 m E/W with one possible cup mark in its upper surface (Plate 12). There is evidence of geological planes within the stone as well as cracks possibly caused by frost fracturing. There are also chisel marks particularly on the north face and existing cracks appear to have been made larger with a chisel. Five test pits revealed that the area around the stone was loams and redeposited natural subsoil. A pit (477, Figure 10, Plate 13) had been dug around the east and south sides of the stone, possibly to try to remove it. Finds from its fill included twentieth century glass 1 m down; the pit was not bottomed for health and safety reasons. It is assumed that there has been historical excavation around the stone, possibly as an attempt to remove it, or it is possible that the stone was moved there in the historic period.



Plate 11: Cup-marked stone north face showing geological strata, fissures possibly caused by frost fracturing and chisel marks where attempts have been made to fracture the stone; facing south



Plate 12: Possible cup mark in the upper surface of earthfast boulder (479)



Plate 13: Test-pit 5 with edge of pit (477), not bottomed; facing south

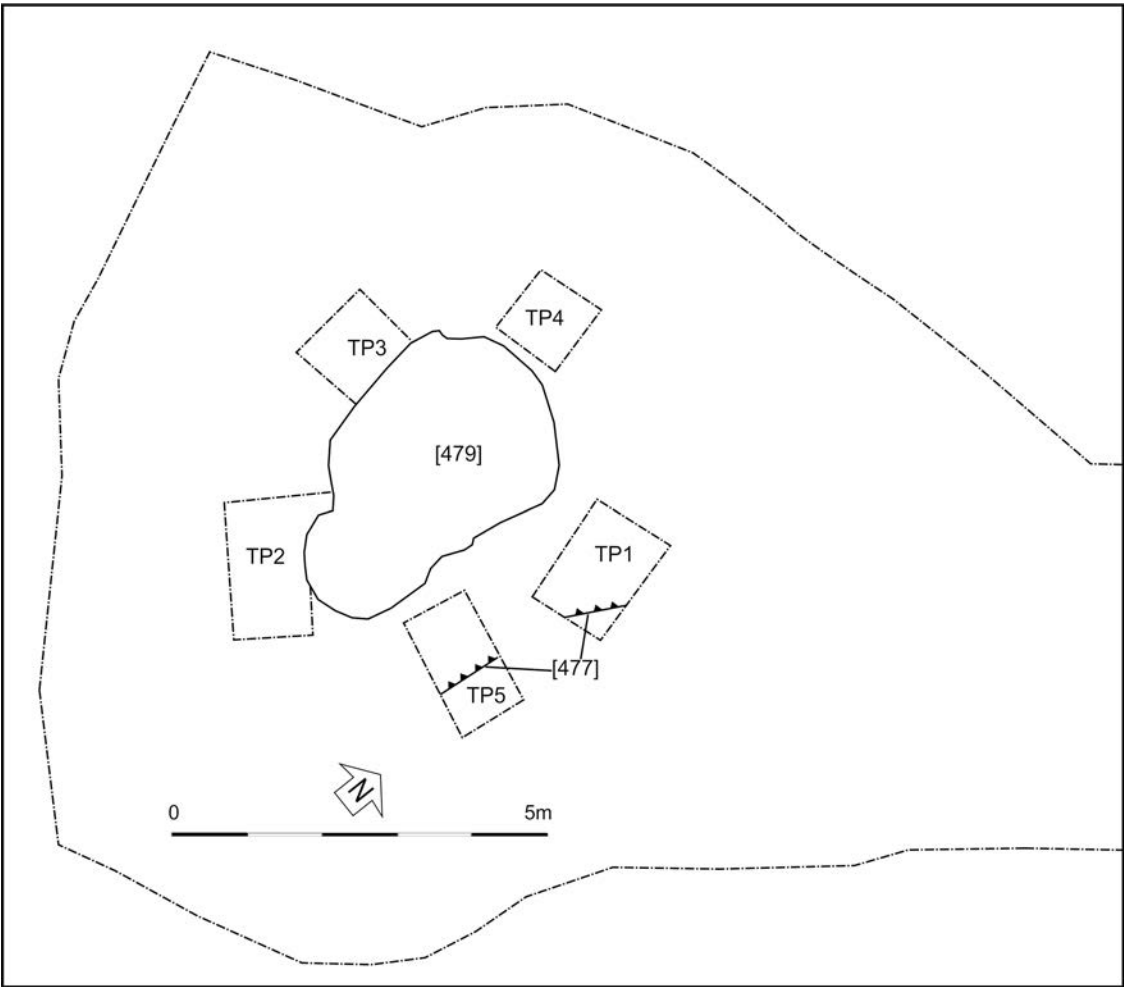


Figure 10: Plan showing stone (479) and TPs with pit (477)

### Modern plough marks

Modern plough marks were recorded over much of the site scored into the compact sandy subsoil causing a huge amount of damage to the fragile archaeological remains and truncation of all the features (Plate 14).



Plate 14: Modern plough marks showing ploughing in two directions at 90 degrees; facing SE

### Conclusions

The excavated structure is heavily plough damaged and burrowed but the bases of features excavated suggest that it was a structure 14.5 m wide and at least 21 m long consisting of posts set in postholes, with at least four tree-throw pits with typical ellipsoid profiles (see Brophy and Barclay 2004, 2), earth-fast boulders and a number of undetermined features. It is possible that some of the other features may also represent the remains of smaller trees or the location of posts but were too poorly preserved to determine.

It would appear that this structure was not roofed; there was certainly no evidence of large post-pits which would be required to support large central timbers. It would appear that the enclosure consisted of small and medium posts and possibly also trees (living or dead/fallen) and possibly also earth-fast boulders. One example of a similar structure at Cairsie Mains (Noble 2017, 84-6) is a rectilinear structure dated to

c. 3500-3000 BC that including 100 features of which only about a quarter were considered man-made, including postholes. Others were tree-throw pits, some of which cut through the postholes suggesting the area was reclaimed by woodland. It was not possible to determine the sequence of building at the Aden site as the trees may have been *in situ* within the man-made structure or they may have been felled prior to erection; none overlay the postholes (as far as could be determined) but some may represent re-forestation.

Dating the Aden structure has been problematic as many of the samples were contaminated with post-medieval finds, and the fragments of wood and peat were the best chance for a possible date for the structure. Table 1 shows the dates secured and these range from the Mesolithic, Neolithic to the medieval periods. An MBA date for peat was the first date commissioned as there was no other potentially dateable material at that time. Considering the evidence that this is a Neolithic structure it is likely that the peat formed in the posthole base in the MBA period.

The large earth-fast boulder at the west edge of the field, with a cup mark in the upper surface, has had several nineteenth and twentieth century attempts made to remove it, including a trench dug around it (filled with soil containing fragments of modern glass) and chisel marks on the stone. There is no evidence from the archaeological work that the stone and structure were connected, but based on the probable cup-mark it is likely that the stone was visible above ground in the Neolithic period.

The use of the structure as a possible mortuary enclosure has been considered but there is no evidence from within it, either structurally or finds related, as it has been so badly affected by medieval and later agricultural activities. The artists' impression of an enclosure (Figure 11) however is directly based on the plan of the 2018 excavated postholes and tree throws.

Laboratory ID	Structure/ feature	Context	Species	Radiocarbon age (BP)	95.4% probability
SUERC-74131	Neolithic enclosure	208	peat/organic	3119 ± 30	1449 – 1292 cal BC
SUERC-96637	Neolithic enclosure	30	charcoal:alnus sp	4657 ± 23	3516 – 3367 cal BC
SUERC-96638	Neolithic enclosure	217	charcoal: quercus sp	8739 ± 26	7841 – 7605 cal BC
SUERC-96639	Neolithic enclosure	368	charcoal: betula sp	803 ± 23	cal AD 1217 – 1273

Table 1: List of radiocarbon dates secured from Neolithic structure



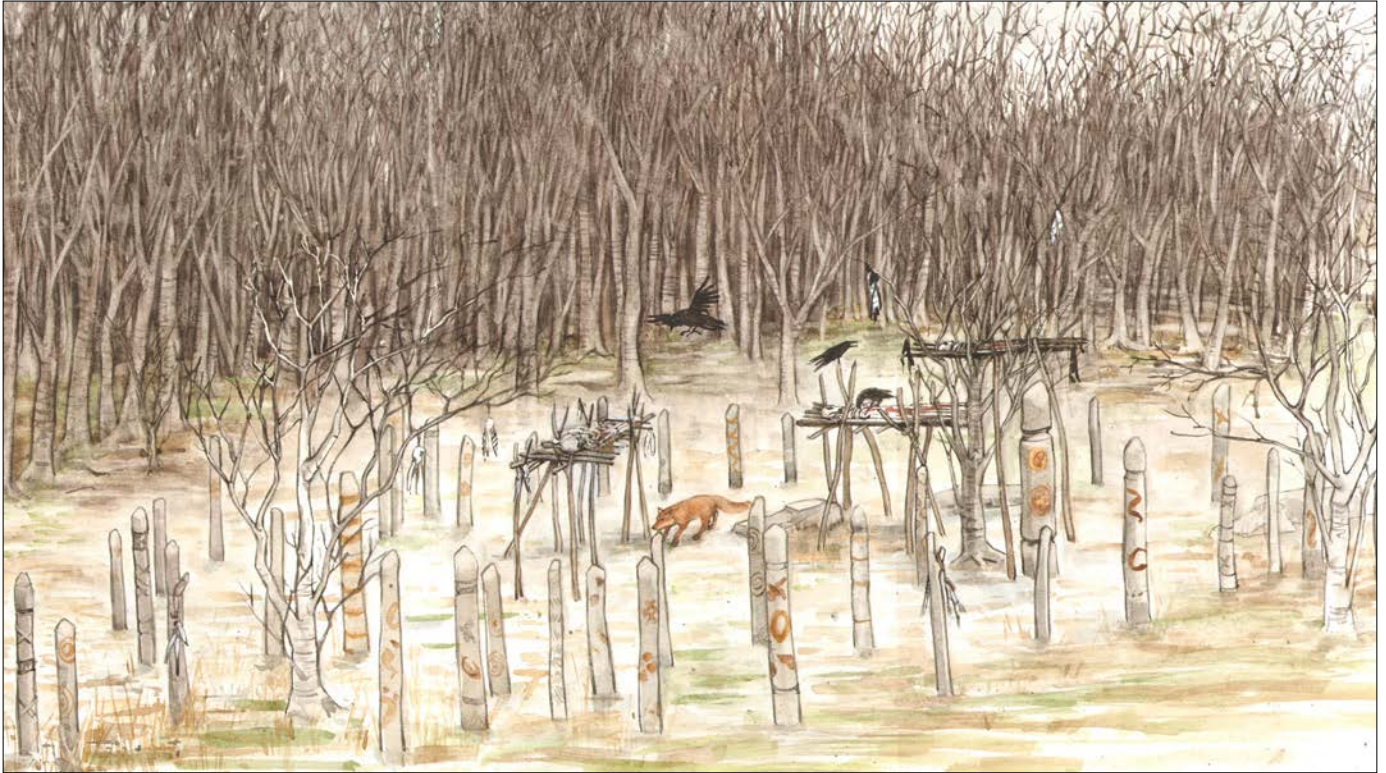


Figure 11: Possible interpretation of the post alignments as a possible mortuary enclosure; by Jan Dunbar

This area of Aberdeenshire is very stony and all excavations in this area reveal large earth-fast stones; the large earth-fast boulders uncovered on this excavation have all been frost-shattered and scored by the plough, and some have been partially removed, probably during the medieval period when rig and furrow cultivation was being carried out. The large earth-fast stone at the west edge of the field with a cup mark in the upper surface has no known relationship to the excavated structure.

### Post-reformation chapel and associated 'manse'

The overgrown remains of two stone structures, one T-shaped and the other rectangular (Figure 12), were identified by local dog walkers in woods near Hareshowe Farm Museum at NGR: NJ 98223 47557. These were first investigated archaeologically in 2015 with small trenches being inserted into both structures (as part of a pre-NLHF project); during this excavation it was realised that the structures were much more interesting than the farmstead that had been suggested and further work was planned as part of this project.

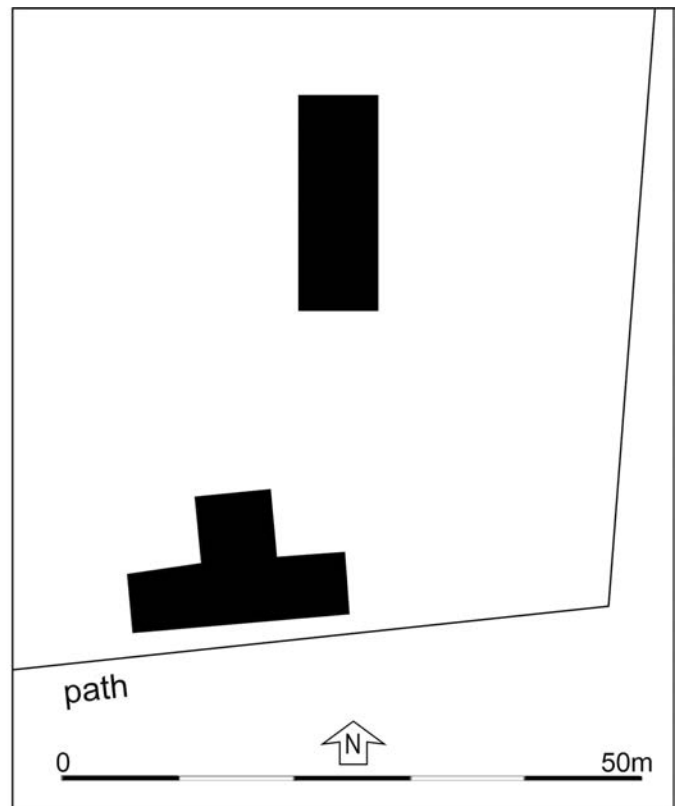


Figure 12: Plan of T-shaped and rectangular structures

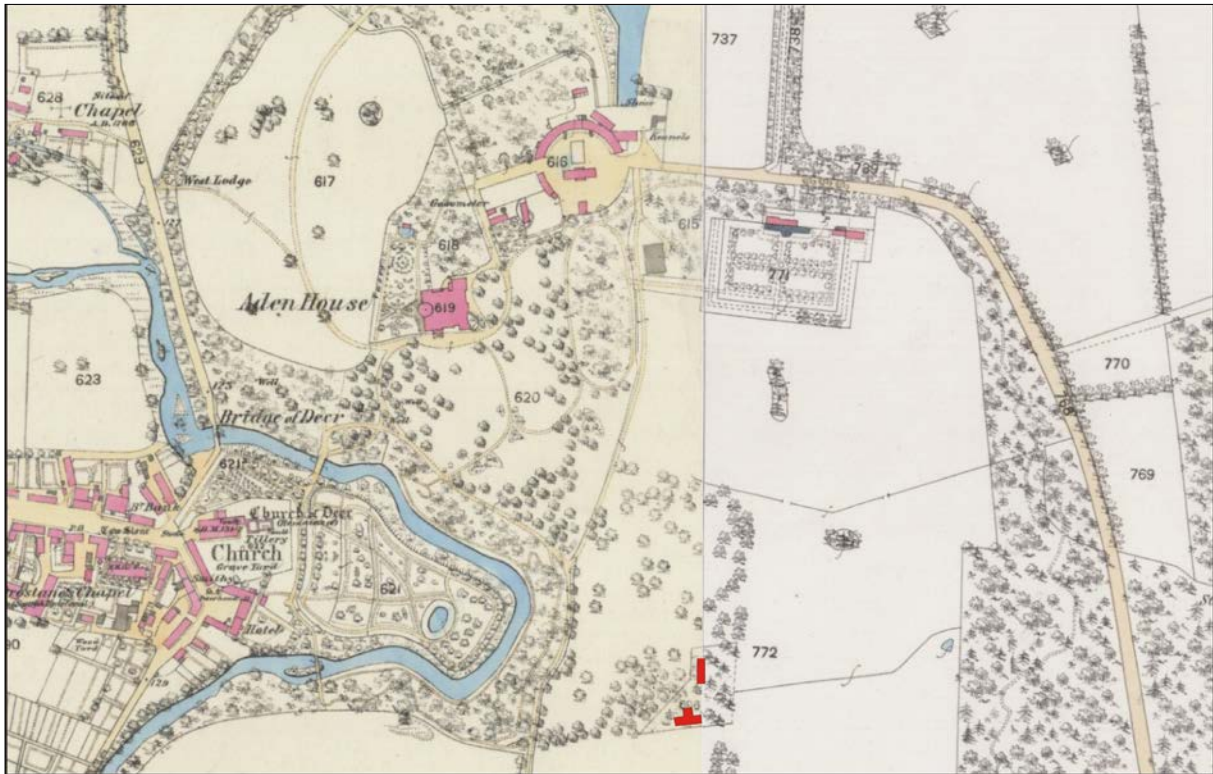


Figure 13: 1st edition OS map showing location of two structures (not marked on this map) (Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100017966).

Further larger excavations were carried out in 2019 in the T-shaped building, and in 2021 in the rectangular structure, after large trees were removed from it. A large team of volunteers, archaeology students, and school classes uncovered the remains of these structures, which have not been found on any maps including the historic Ordnance Survey maps (see Figure 13).

Storm Arwen in November 2021 was so devastating that it removed virtually all tree cover from the site and the remainder of the copse was removed by tree surgeons after the storm for safety reasons. Damage to the structures has still to be fully evaluated.

### T-shaped structure (Structure 1)

Structure 1 (Figure 14) was evaluated in 2015 and 2016, and fully revealed in 2019. Excavation into the foundations was carried out by University of Aberdeen Portfolio students in 2021. Stone demolition material was removed over the entirety of the interior of the building revealing burnt wood over clay floor levels. All of the walls had been heavily robbed (possibly to build the early phase of the Aden Mansion House after 1758 when the Russel family purchased the

estate) but the complete outline of the building was uncovered. Large stones were added on to the top of the demolished foundations; at least 20 mm of soil between these stones and the underlying foundations suggests that these stones were placed many years or decades (possibly in the twentieth century) after the building had been demolished.

### Phase 1

In Phase 1 a stone foundation was constructed in a T-shape, with the main rectangular part of the building being 22.3 m long and 5.62 m wide with the north 'wing' of the building being 5.7 m E/W and 7.5 m N/S making the total north/south length 11.32 m. The walls were on average 0.8 m wide and were constructed of large fieldstones, including granite and quartz boulders, with small stone hearting bonded with light brown sandy clay.

### North 'wing'

On the north wall a doorway (121, Figure 15) was 1 m wide with two flat threshold stones each being 0.3 m in width (Plate 15). The threshold stones have a socket at each end for the door

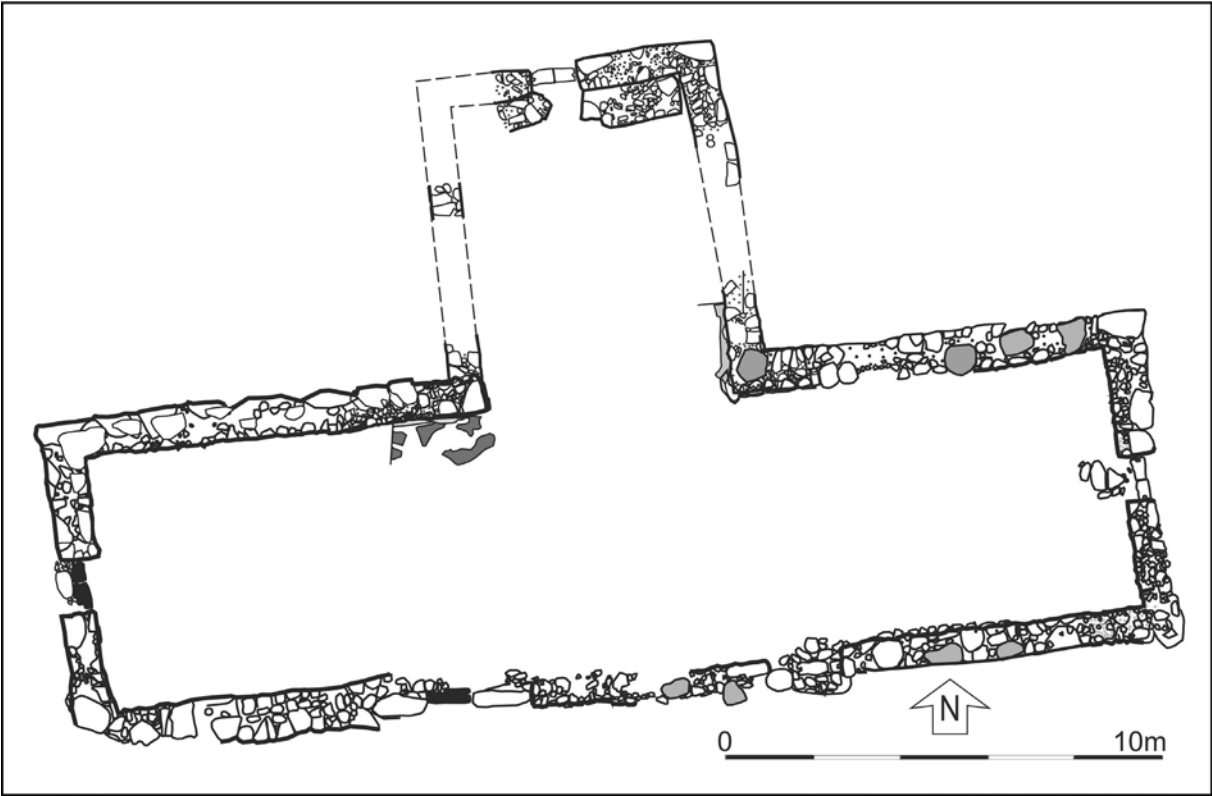


Figure 14: Plan of T-shaped structure

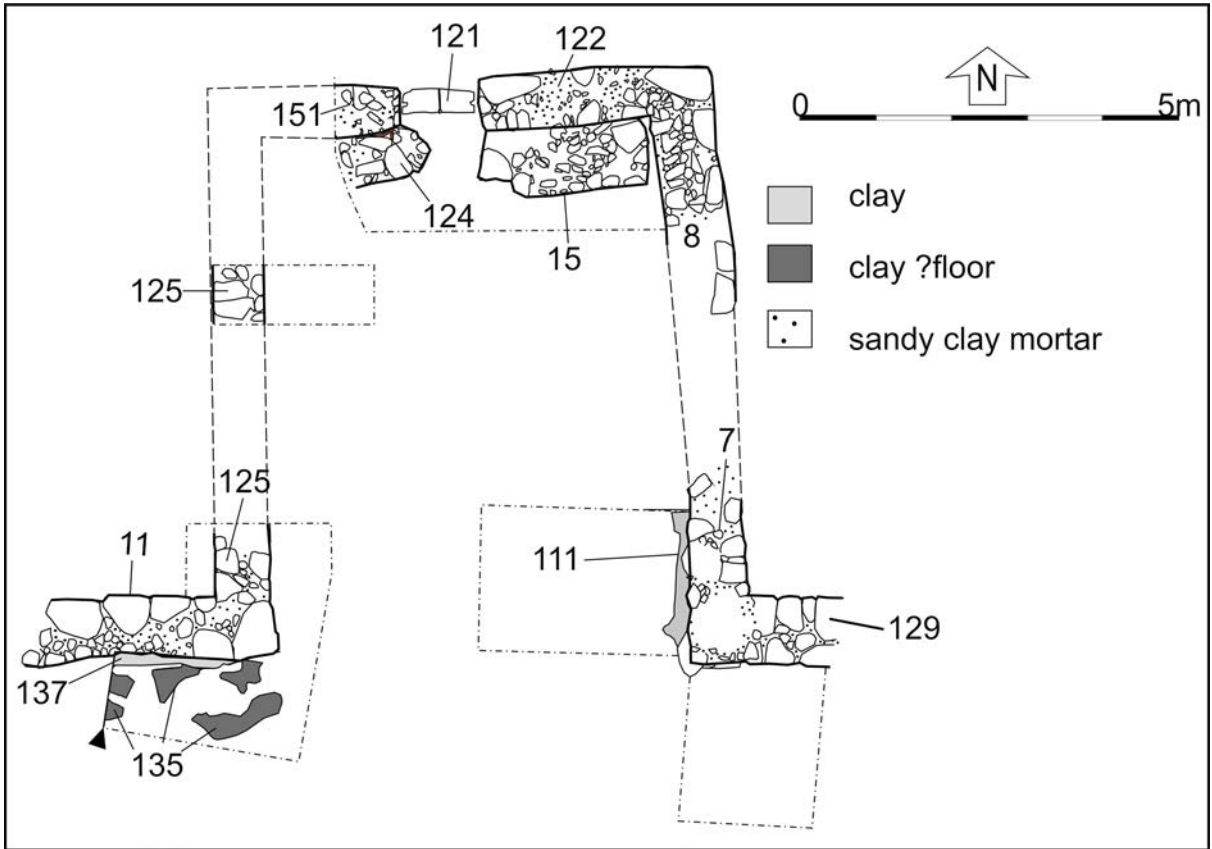


Figure 15: Structure 1 north wing structure and floors

jamb. The wall on the west side of the door, (151) has *in situ* wall surface treatment surviving on the inner (south) façade (149) which consisted of a layered clay-based concretion (Plate 16). The wall east of the doorway (122, Figure 15) was constructed of large granite boulders forming the main structure of the wall with small and medium stone hearting bonded with sandy clay. Parallel to the north wall and on the interior of the building is another substantial wall (15, Figure 15). Context (124) was small/medium stones with light brown sandy clay, and as excavated in 2019 was found to be demolition rubble. Context (15) was small/medium stones set in a medium grey clay loam, which may be contemporary with the main structure and could represent the remains of an internal structure such as stairs.



Plate 15: Entrance on north wall; facing north

of compact level clay deposits. Along the interior edge of the walls at floor level are strips of light brown clay (137 and 111), possibly sealing the top of the foundations. Under wall (7) is a shallow trench, (155), filled with medium grey clay loam, under clay (111). This was initially interpreted as a possible foundation trench, but the stones of the wall sit on top of (155) and not on the natural subsoil layer into which it was dug. This trench is not seen in other locations and further investigation would be required to determine whether this is an earlier feature such as a furrow into which the wall was unintentionally constructed. One rim sherd from a late medieval or early post-medieval jug was found associated with the construction of this building and there were no other finds from the Phase 1 structures.



Plate 17: Clay flooring? (135); facing north



Plate 16: Surface wall treatment (149); facing north

The junctions of the main rectangular structure and the north wing were investigated (walls 7/129 and 11/125, Figure 15) revealing that the whole of the T-shaped structure was built in one phase. In the interior of the structure several areas of possible floor levels were uncovered. In the main rectangular area of the building, areas of possible floor (135, Plate 17 and 114) consisted

### East 'wing'

The east wing (Figure 16, Plate 18) has a door in the east wall (246, Figure 16, Plate 19) and one in the south wall (228, Figure 16, Plate 20). Both are 1 m wide and the threshold is constructed of two flat stones with a socket for the door posts at each end. The south wall has a footing (259) to the east of door (228). The wall in the SE corner appears to have been rebuilt (257); further work in 2021 suggested that the foundation is consistent with the rest of the structure. The wall foundation is constructed of small to medium fieldstones with sandy clay bonding material.

There are the remains of a cobbled surface (256, Plate 19) to the interior of door (246). Door (228) has internal and external cobbled surfaces (230 and 229). There was no possibility of excavating farther south as there are living trees with large roots along this edge of the structure.

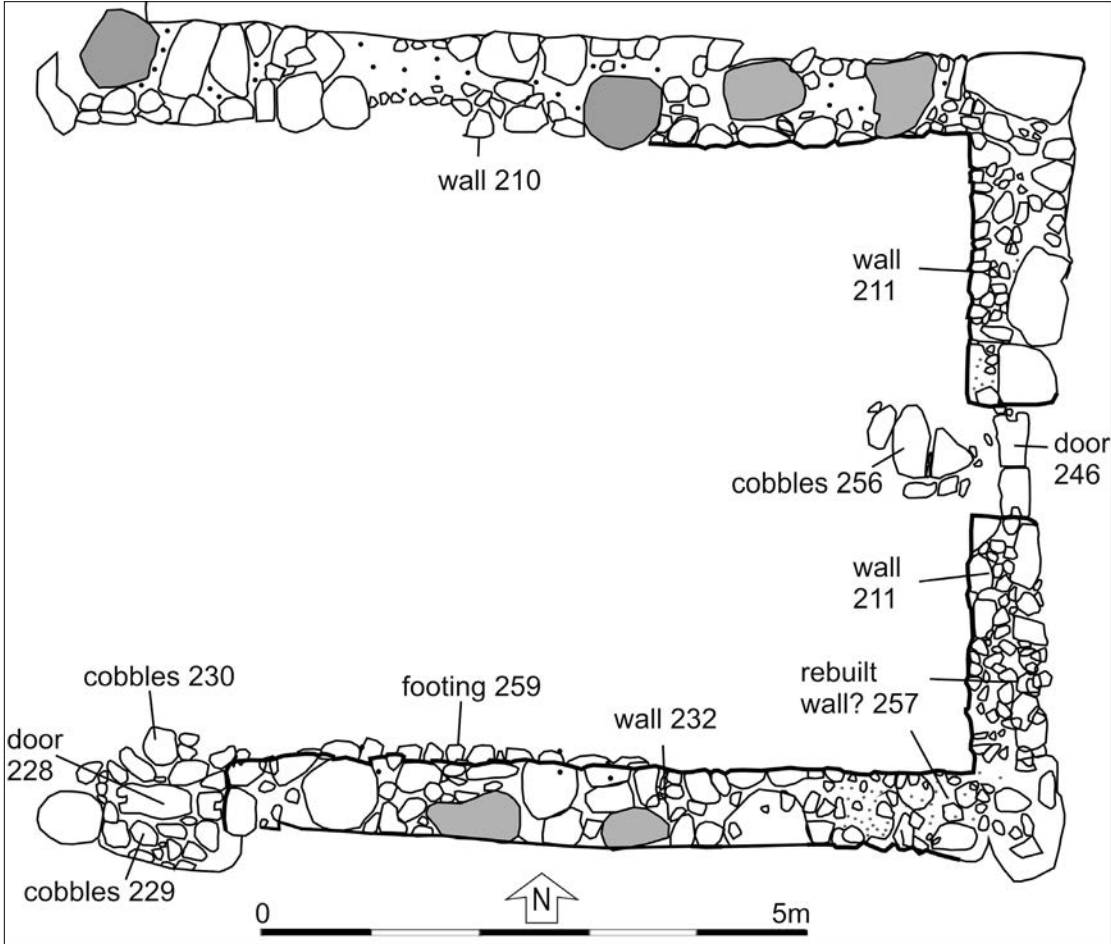


Figure 16: East 'wing' with east door (246), south door (228) and stone cobbled surface (256)



Plate 18: East wing under excavation; facing west



Plate 19: East door (246) with remains of interior cobbled surface (256) in the foreground; facing west



Plate 20: Door (228) with interior cobbles (230) in foreground and exterior cobbles (229) across the top; facing south

### West 'wing'

The west wing has a door in the south wall (226, Figures 17, 18, 19, 20, Plates 21 and 22). The jambs of this door are very unusual; on the exterior they are constructed of two large boulders (1.35 m by 0.5 m) which would have been visible on the exterior of the building if it was harled. This door is 0.9 m wide, slightly narrower than the other four doors, and it was initially thought that this might be an earlier door. Other evidence suggests that this structure was built in one phase so the difference in the jambs of door (226) cannot be explained. The threshold is constructed of two flat stones with a socket for the door posts at each end. The wall around this door has been disturbed by tree roots. There is a door on the west wall (212) which is 1 m wide and the threshold is constructed of two flat stones with a socket for the door posts at each end. This door has been blocked with large stones in mortar (258). Below the demolition level were a series of curious stone settings (221-224, 250-253, Figure 17, Plate 23), which appeared to be post settings, but when excavated they had been simply pressed into the underlying soil level. Context (225) was an ephemeral line of stones which appeared to be associated with stones

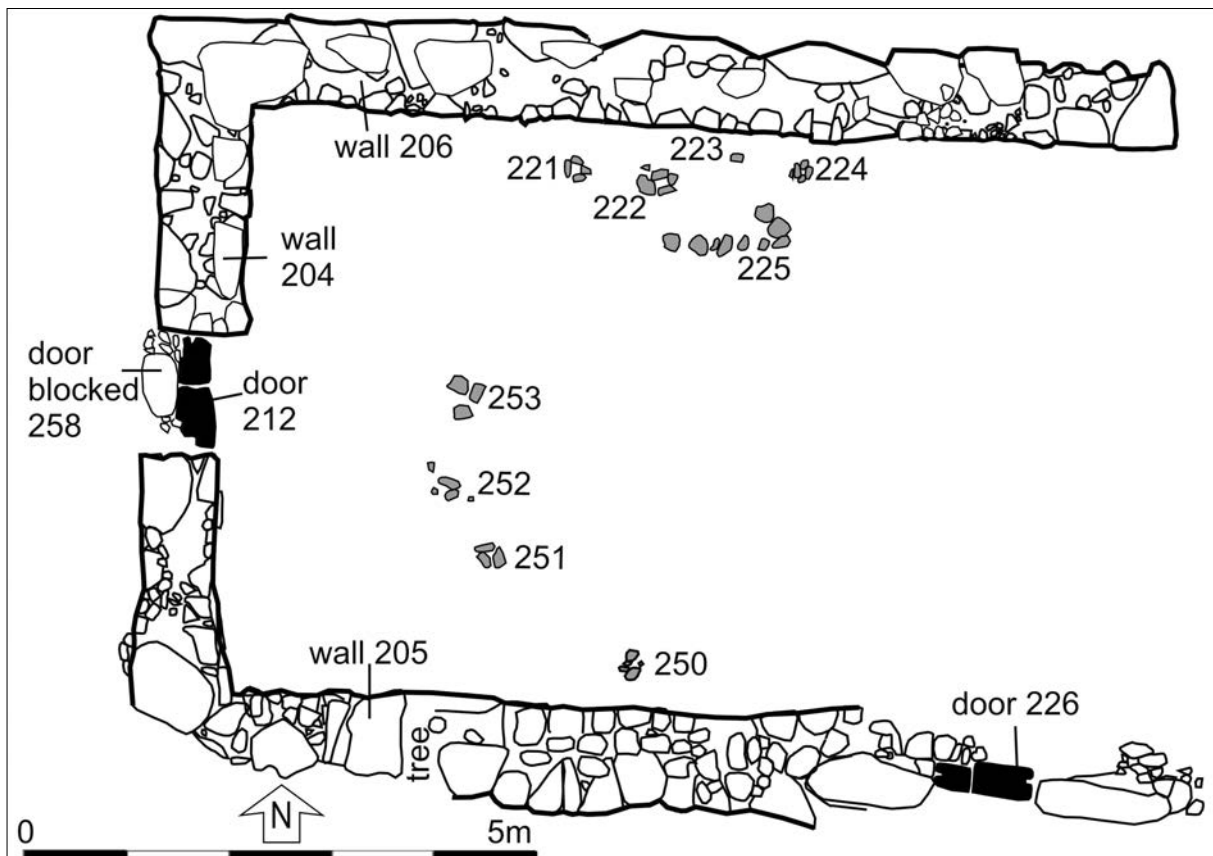


Figure 17: West wing walls with west door (212), south door (226) and stone features (221-225, 250-253)

(221-224, Plate 23); it appeared to be set out in an arc and may have been for 60-100 mm

diameter posts for an internal fitting such as an element of furniture.



Plate 21: Door (212) showing blocking stones behind. The large stone (top left) is one of the Phase 3 stones; facing west



Plate 22: West wall (204) in the background; facing west



Plate 23: Stone features (221) to (left, with (222, 223, 224 and 225); facing north

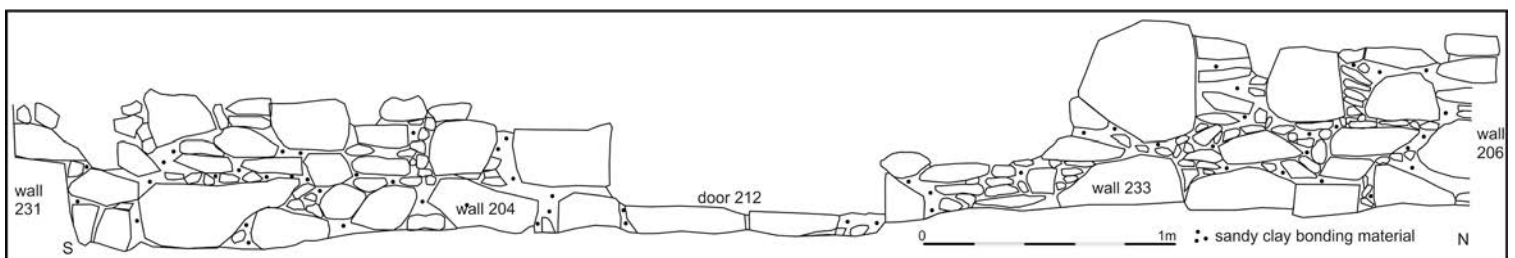


Figure 18: Elevation showing door (212)

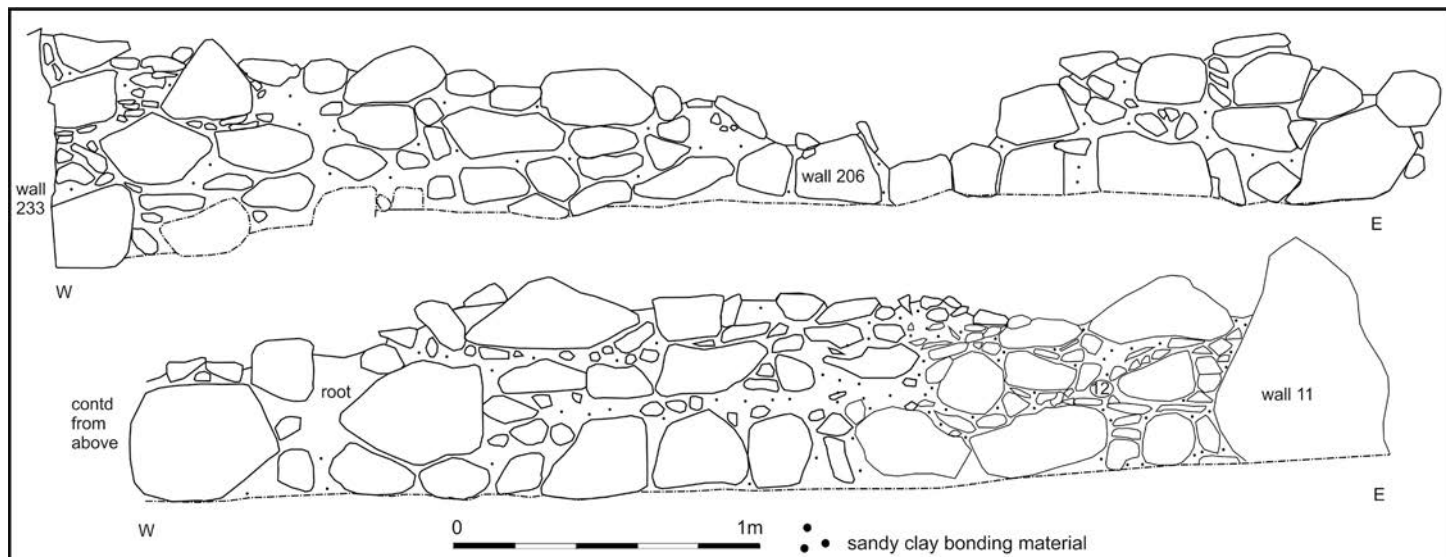


Figure 19: Elevation showing north wall west wing

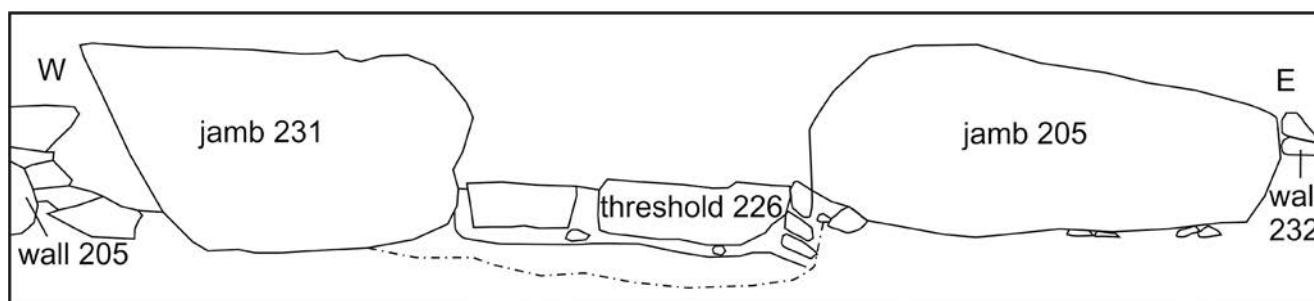


Figure 20: Elevation showing exterior façade of south door (226)

### Test pits through foundation (2021)

In August 2021 sections were cut through the foundations of the T-shaped structure by University of Aberdeen Portfolio students (Figure 21).

#### Test Pit 30

TP30 was excavated in the east wall south of doorway (246). The wall foundation consisted of large stones (549, Figure 22) set in sandy clay bonding material (546). The lower fill of the foundation trench (554) contained pockets of charcoal (582 and 583).

#### Test pit 31

This test pit was similar to TP30 with large foundation stones (564) set in sandy clay but it was not possible to achieve the base of the foundation trench.

#### Test pit 32

This was excavated through the south wall of the building between the two doors (Figure 23) showing large stone foundations, small stone and sandy clay infill, and demolition material spread on top. A sample of charcoal from the fill of the foundation trench gave a radiocarbon date of cal AD 1478–1637 (SUERC-106029,  $339 \pm 24$  BP). It is possible that the later part of this date range may represent the construction date of the building, or it may be historic charcoal (Table 2).

#### Test pit 35

Test pit 35 was excavated through the east wall of the north wing of Structure 1 (Figure 24). It revealed very large stones (575) in the bottom of a shallow foundation trench with smaller stones *in situ* above (574). A sample of charcoal from the fill of the foundation trench gave a radiocarbon date of cal AD 1735–1804 (SUERC-106028,  $209 \pm 21$ BP) and may have got into the foundation when the building was burned down as this is a similar range of dates to the burnt wood on the floor (Table 2).



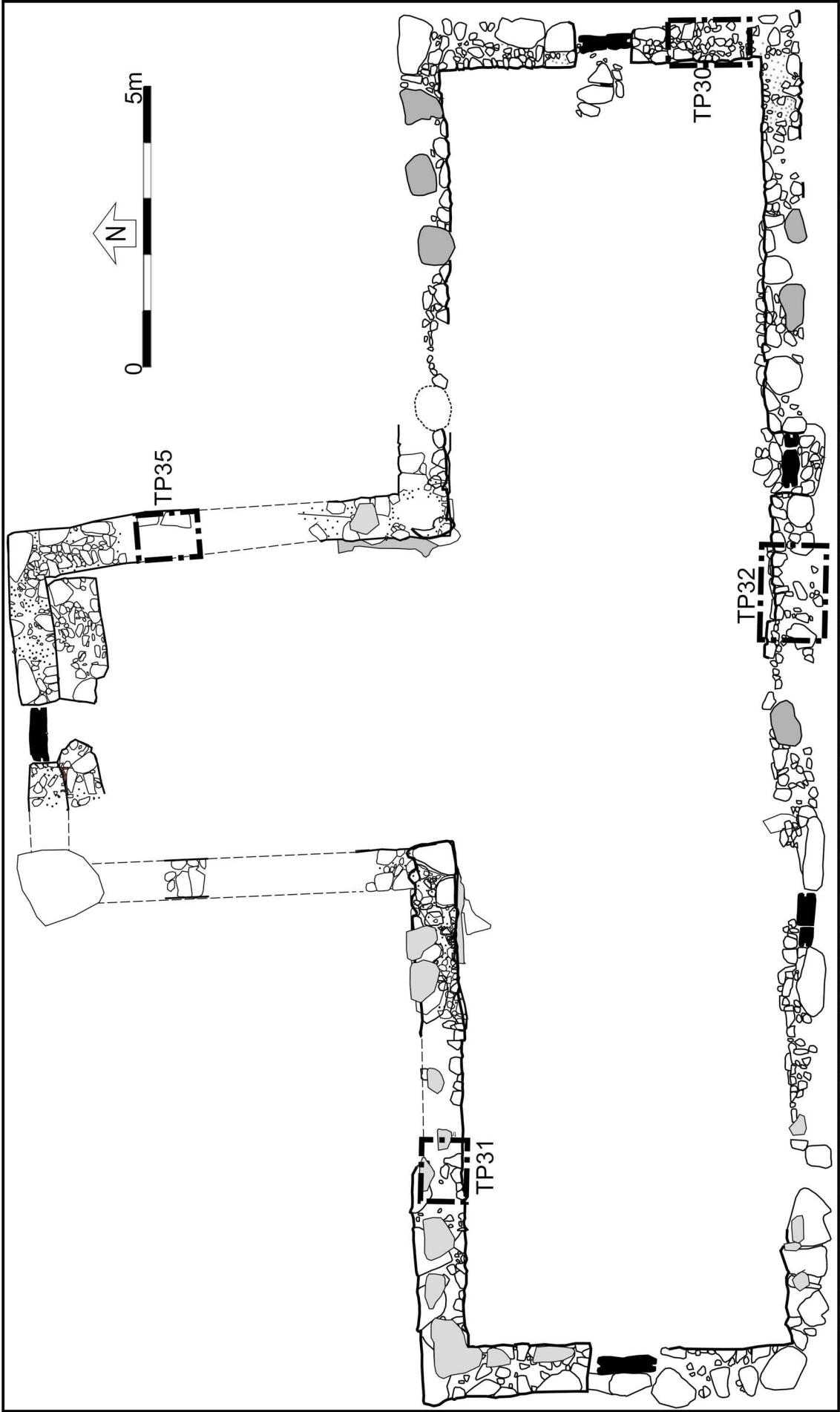


Figure 21: Locations of 2021 test pit locations through building foundations

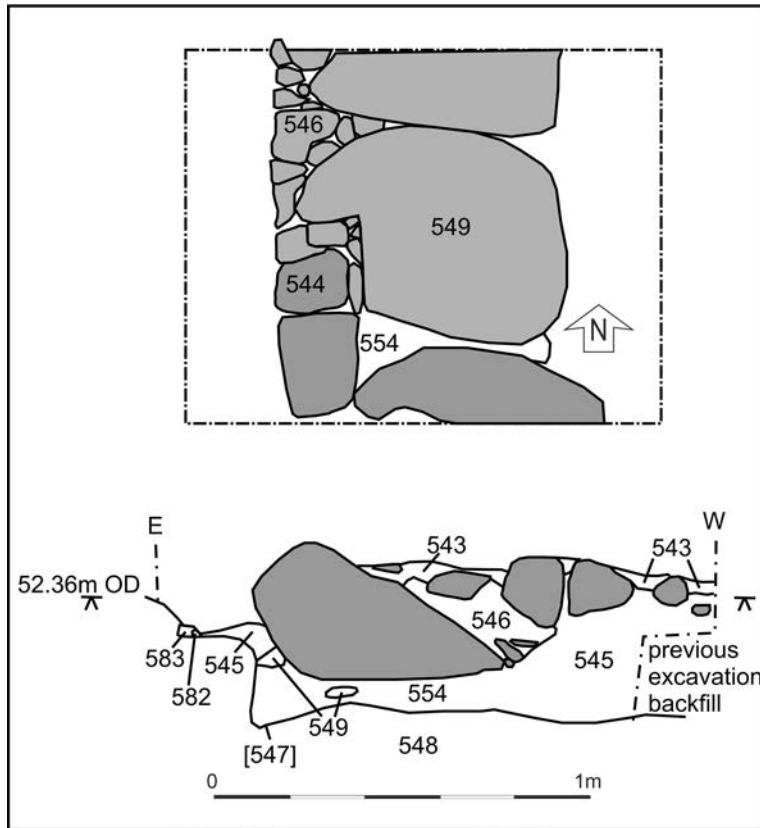


Figure 22: Plan (top) and section (bottom) of TP 30

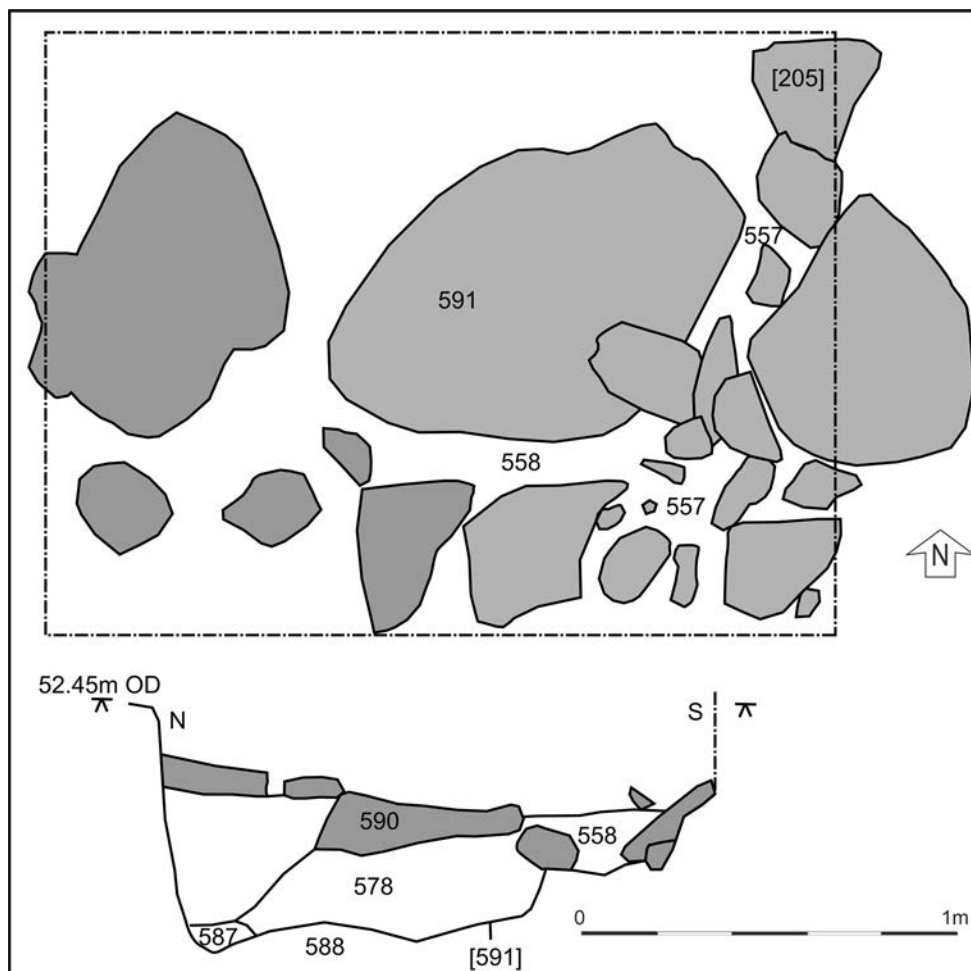


Figure 23: TP 32

Laboratory ID	Structure/feature	Context	Species	Radiocarbon age (BP)	95.4% probability
SUERC-106028	Chapel	210 wall foundation TP35	charcoal:pinus sp	209 ± 21	cal AD 1735 – 1804
SUERC-106029	Chapel	232 wall foundation TP32	charcoal:pinus sp	339 ± 24	cal AD 1478 – 1637
SUERC-72458	Chapel	141 burnt wood on floor	Charcoal: pinus sylvestris	182 ± 29	cal AD 1726 – 1814
SUERC-72462	Chapel	140 burnt wood on floor	Charcoal: pinus sylvestris	210 ± 25	cal AD 1736 – 1805
SUERC-72463	Chapel	142 burnt wood on floor	Charcoal: pinus sylvestris	209 ± 29	cal AD 1735 – 1806
SUERC-72464	Chapel	119 burnt wood on floor	Charcoal: pinus sylvestris	230 ± 29	cal AD 1635 – 1684

Table 2: Radiocarbon dates from Structure 1

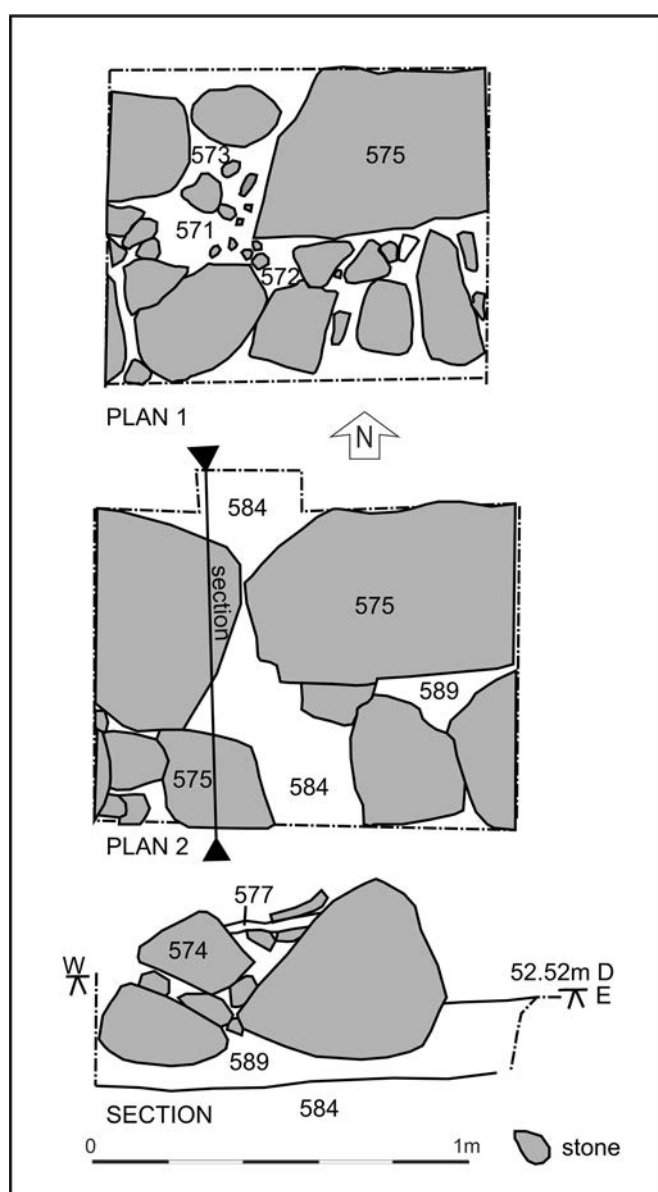


Figure 24: TP 35

### Phase 2a

On the interior of the north wing of the building and lying immediately above the floor levels, are areas of burnt wood (Plate 24). On the interior (south) side of doorway (121) were well preserved lumps of burnt wood (140, 141, 142, 143 and 144), along the west wall (119), to the west of the east wall (110) and to the south of this wall (116 and 117) and SF 14. These were sampled and were sent for wood identification and dating (Table 2 and Charcoal report, below).

### Phase 2b demolition

In the north wing of Structure 2 there was a large amount of burnt wood lying on the floor level (Plate 24). This was sampled (see Charcoal report, below) showed the samples to be mostly planks and all pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). This is thought to come from the demolished roof timbers and the radiocarbon dates (Table 2) suggest an early eighteenth to early nineteenth century date for the wood.



Plate 24: Burnt wood on floor of north wing Structure 1; facing north

In both 2016 and 2019 excavations, areas of stone demolition were removed (103, 112, 115, 117, 118 and 139, Plate 25). These consisted of small stones with lumps of walling (e.g. 118) and light brown sandy clay wall bonding material. These layers are interpreted as loose hearting material which was left *in situ* when the stone walls were dismantled for use elsewhere on the estate. These layers overlay the burnt wood layers of Phase 2a and because of their loose nature they were badly disturbed by tree roots.



Plate 25: Stone demolition material (117) over wall (125); facing west, note the root tracks which have damaged the structures and moved stones

Finds from these layers include seventeenth and eighteenth century coins, window glass, spectacles, copper alloy book fittings and a copper alloy brooch (see Finds, below).

### Phase 3

In Phase 3 large stones were rolled over the bank, which were the foundations of the demolished Structure 1 (context 2, Figure 25; Plate 26). A layer of soil between the top of the wall foundation (156) and the Phase 3 stones suggested there had been a considerable period between the demolition of the T-shaped structure and Phase 3. Some of the Phase 1 foundation stones had been left above the ground surface and they have been reused in the Phase 3 structure.

A large stone slab 1.05 m by 0.88 m in size (82, Plate 27) had been placed in the north wing of the T-shaped structure and there is a suggestion that this stone formed a platform. It had been situated over demolition material from the building and had been heavily burrowed underneath.



Plate 26: North wing east wall showing large stones (top) rolled onto the top of the wall foundation; facing east



Plate 27: Stone platform (82); facing north

### Phase 4

A semi-circular setting of medium stones (109, Figure 25, Plate 28), 1.2 m diameter was probably constructed for a fire setting. This feature sat on top of Structure 1 demolition material (106), and may therefore be associated with the Phase 3 stone setting, or may be later. The Phase 4 activity at this building includes at least two of the Phase 2 stones being relocated and a small number of modern finds from visitors to the park. There is low temperature burning within the setting but the stones are not themselves burned.



Plate 28: Phase 3 or 4 stone setting (109); facing north



Figure 25: Structure 1 Phase 3 rolled stones and flat stone (82) and Phase 3-4 stone settings (109)

### Rectangular 'manse' (Structure 2)

Structure 2 was located to the north of Structure 1 (Figure 13) and was a rectangular stone foundation 15.3 m long and 4.3 m wide on a N/S alignment (Figure 26, Plate 29). The structure was uncovered partially in 2016 but tree roots did not allow many areas to be investigated. The trees were then cut down and excavation continued in 2021.

The interior width is 3.2 m and some of the wall foundations had been badly damaged by tree roots and burrowing. Where they were well-preserved it was possible to determine that their construction was the same as Structure 1, 0.8 m wide trenches filled with large granite stones with smaller stone hearting with sandy clay bonding material (see above). The south wall was neatly constructed whereas the north wall foundation had been constructed using roughly placed larger boulders.



Plate 29: Drone photo of rectangular 'manse' (courtesy of Malachy Curran)

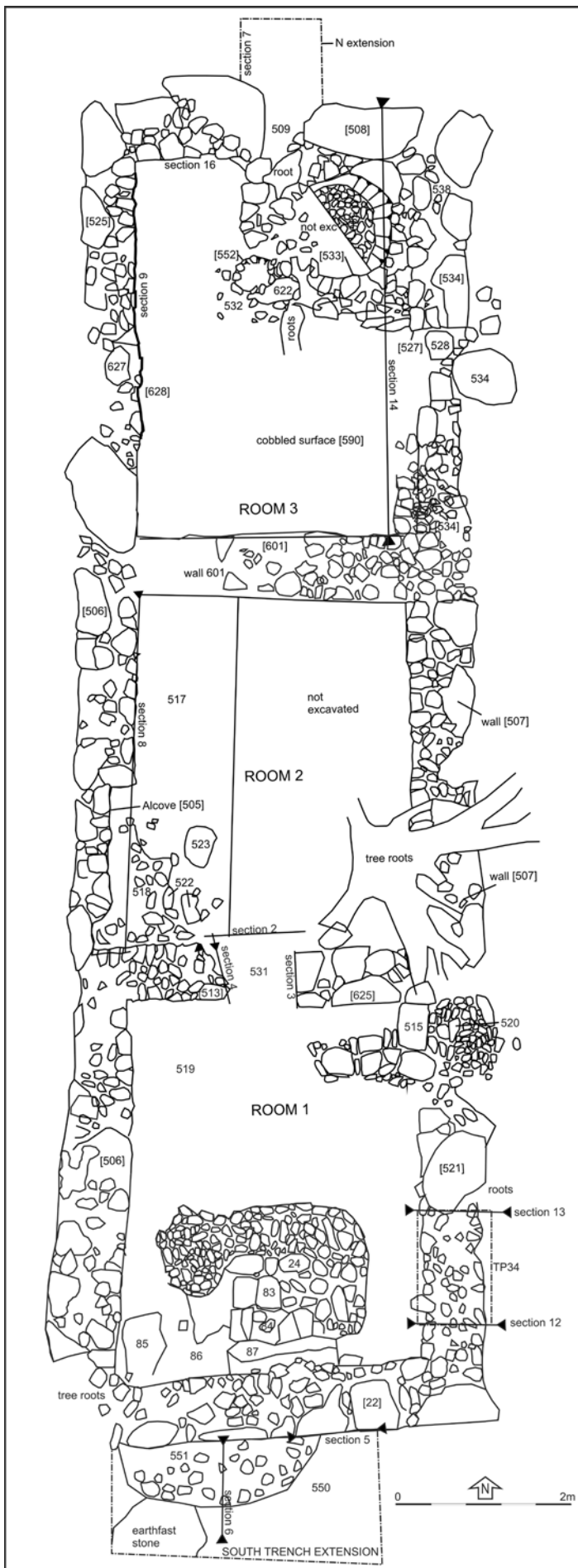


Figure 26: Plan of rectangular 'manse'

### Room 1 (south room)

The south room (Figure 27) was approximately 4 m long (N/S) and 3.2 m wide (W/E). The north and south walls of the room are not parallel with the west wall being slightly longer. A large tree in the centre obscured the building on the previous excavations and its removal allowed access to more of the building and revealing the partition wall between Rooms 1 and 2.

The walls are 0.8 m wide and stand to a maximum of 0.45 m high above the interior floor levels. The walls are constructed of large boulders with medium and small hearting stones. The walls are bonded with light brown sandy clay very similar to that used for Building 1.

### Cobbled surface 24 and fireplace

In the south end of Room 1 a cobbled stone floor (24, Figure 27, Plate 30) was roughly semi-circular in shape, 2.3 m by 1.4 m in size and constructed of well-laid rounded and angular small boulders set into a dark grey clay loam. One stone that appeared at first glance to be a brick was a red sandstone block. This floor surrounded a hearth (83) which consisted of five large flag stones and three smaller flat stones to the north.



Plate 30: Hearth (83) surrounded by cobbled surface (24) with south wall (22) in background; facing south

The hearth was laid in the centre of the south wall in front of a tapered wall fragment attached to the interior of the main south wall (87, Figure 27, Plate 31). The floor around the cobbled surface was light brown sandy clay (86) and in the interior SW corner of the building was a large flat slab (85).

There is an area stones at floor level on the east side of the room (90) and these may be part of a disturbed floor or stones pushed from the east

wall by an adjacent tree. The fireplace has been interpreted as the remains of a hanging lum as the remains do not represent the remains of a more traditional fireplace with flue through the adjacent wall. The hood of the lum would have hung over the area of the hearth (83) where

the fire would have been set. Hanging lums are not common archaeological finds but can be seen in historic properties such as Auchtavan (NO29NW0015 Aberdeenshire HER online) and at Moirlanich Longhouse in Glen Lochay (Moirlanich Longhouse online).

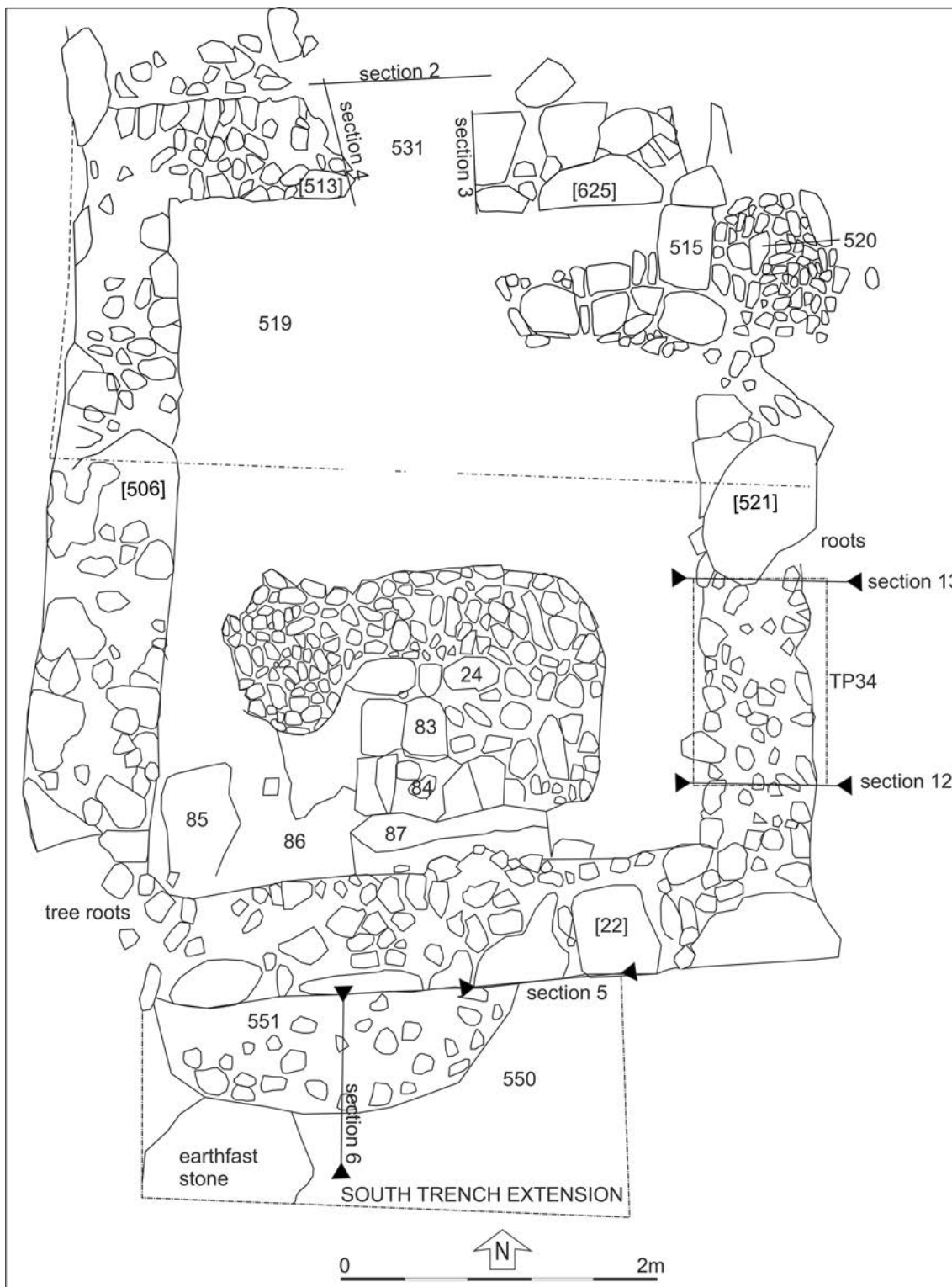


Figure 27: Plan of Room 1



Plate 31: Detail of hearth (83) with burnt deposit (84) in the centre and wall (87) attached to main south wall (22) to the bottom; facing north

There is no evidence of burning around the hearth (samples were sent for analysis but did not contain charcoal or other evidence of burning) or of slag, or indeed anything else suggesting an industrial use for the hearth.

A slate was found on floor surface (519) during the 2021 excavation (SF 464, Plate 32); it has incised marks on one surface VV or WW and has been suggested by several sources that they are apotropaic marks (Kevin Grant, HES pers. comm.). M, W and V are marks commonly found on mantle beams, doors, door frames, around windows and on ceilings of domestic buildings (Easton and Hodgkinson 2013, 14). Symbols like this were carved into domestic architecture to protect or ward off witches and their familiars and are commonly found on the hearth presumably because it is the only aperture in the house that could not be closed (ibid, 15). This stone may therefore have formed part of the structure of the house – it is tempting to think it may have been part of a stone roof tile but there is no other evidence that this structure had a stone roof.



Plate 32: SF 464 slate with scratch marks VV or W

### Wall 513/625

The wall between Rooms 1 and 2 was fully uncovered in 2021 following removal of tree roots. The wall is formed of two sections separated by doorway (531). The west half of the wall is 0.62 m wide and constructed of small and medium stones with sandy clay bonding; it is fully bonded into the west main wall of the building. The east half of the wall (625) is 0.68 m wide and constructed of large boulders with sandy clay bonding; the east end of the wall where it met the east main wall is disturbed by tree roots. The reason for the different thicknesses and constructions may be that the east half was rebuilt possibly when the door was inserted. Doorway (531) (Figure 28) has no threshold stones but the earthen floor continues between Rooms 1 and 2. Internal threshold stones may

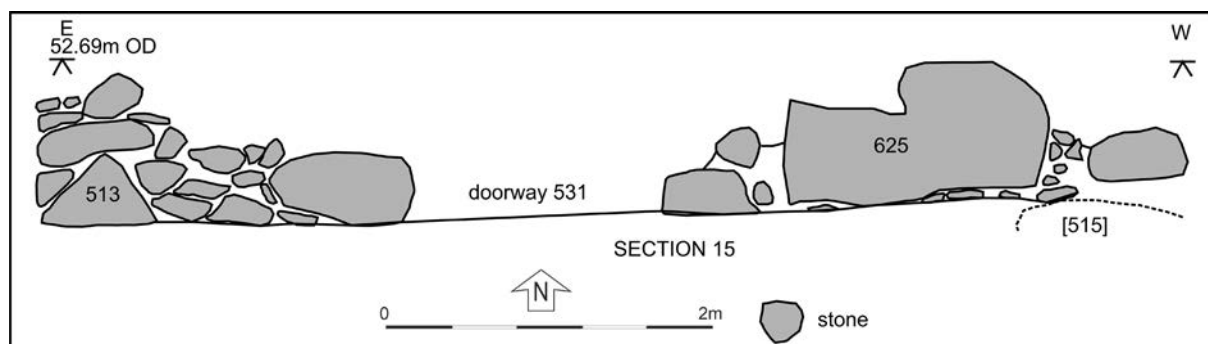


Figure 28: Section 15, wall (513), north façade



not have been required when moving between internal rooms, or they may have been robbed when the rest of the building stone was removed for re-use elsewhere.

#### TP34

TP34 was dug in an area where the east wall of Room 1 was very poorly preserved to allow access to investigate the foundation (Figure 27). Stone and mortar in a shallow trench (560 in 626) indicated that this is the remains of a robber trench and that the larger stone which had formed the wall foundation had been completely taken away.

#### South extension trench

A trench was excavated to the south of Structure 2; a semi-circle of small and medium angular stones with sandy clay bonding material was uncovered (551) measuring 2 m E/W and 0.7 m N/S (Figure 27, Plate 33). The dry sandy loam around (551) contained a fragment of iron cauldron (SF 466, Plate 34) and a large earth-fast stone was recorded at the SW corner of the trench. Context (551) is probably an area of demolition material where the south wall of the building was dismantled and larger re-usable stones removed for use elsewhere.



Plate 33: Demolition material (551); facing north



Plate 34: Iron cauldron fragment SF 466

#### Room 2 (central room)

Room 2 is 3.2 m E/W and 3.9 m N/S (Figure 29). The west wall is constructed of small and medium stones with sandy clay bonding (Plate 35), which is 0.63 m wide at the north end. There is a narrower portion of wall at the south end that is 0.38 m wide caused by an alcove or recess 0.26 m wide and 1.85 m long (505, Figure 30; Plate 36). It is possible that this recess was a bed-recess. These were often seen in cottages in eighteenth century Scotland and are built into recesses attached to the panelling and roof timbers. Bed-alcoves can be seen in structures such as the Highland Folk Museum but are rarely seen in wall recesses. A recess would allow more space within the room as part of the bed would be housed within the wall space. Robb in 1861 wrote that 'we find the double box-bed taking up so great a portion of the space ...' (Robb 1861, 13). The bed can either be a projecting outshot or as a recess within the thickness of the wall itself (Mackie 2013, 309, Figs 2, 3). The latter bed-recesses were a feature of the Hebridean islands of Lewis and St Kilda (ibid, 310).



Plate 35: West wall (506) to the left contemporary with partition wall (601) to the right; facing NW

The north wall (601) of Room 2 is 0.6 m wide. Stones have been removed from the central area of the wall and it was thought this was a possible door but further excavation in 2021 revealed that there was no doorway in this wall. The east wall (507) is 0.7 m wide and disturbed by a large tree root.

The western third of the soil within the room was removed to floor level but the remainder of the room was left unexcavated as it is heavily disturbed by tree roots.

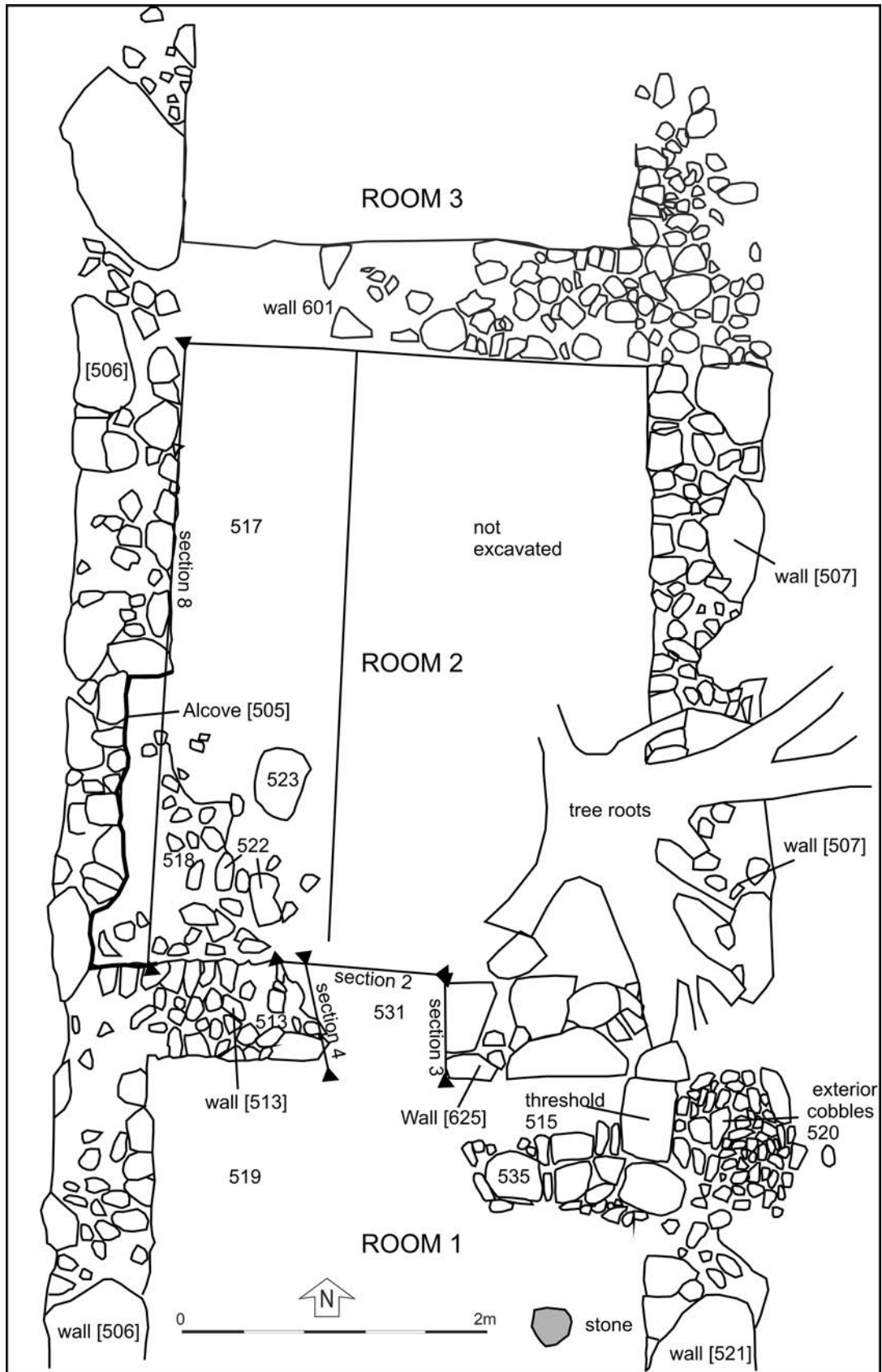


Figure 29: Plan of Room 2

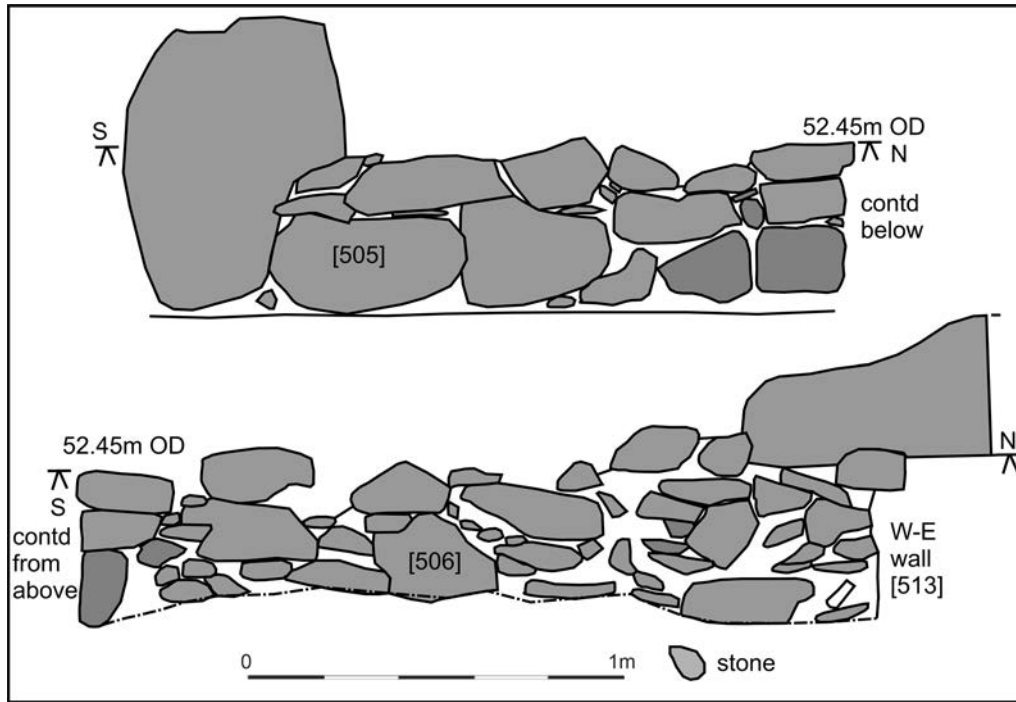


Figure 30: Section 8 west wall of recess (505)



Plate 36: Recess (505) to the left; facing north

### Room 3 (north room)

Room 3 is the northern room; it is 3.1 m wide E/W and 4.5 m long N/S (Figure 31). The west wall is 0.75-0.8 m wide and constructed of very large, medium, and small stones bonded with light brown sandy clay. A door in this wall (628, Figure 33, Plate 37), is 0.73 m wide, and consisted of a large flat stone, but during demolition loose stone had tumbled into the doorway. The east wall (534) is 0.67 m wide but is in poor condition over much of its length where it has been disturbed by tree roots. There is a door opposite the west door (528, Plate 38), 0.84 m wide, which consists of two threshold stones with a large flagstone on the exterior. The north wall is constructed of enormous earth-fast stones roughly placed in a line with fragments of constructed wall in between (Figure 32).



Plate 37: Room 3 west wall doorway (628), with cobbled surface (590), to the right; facing east

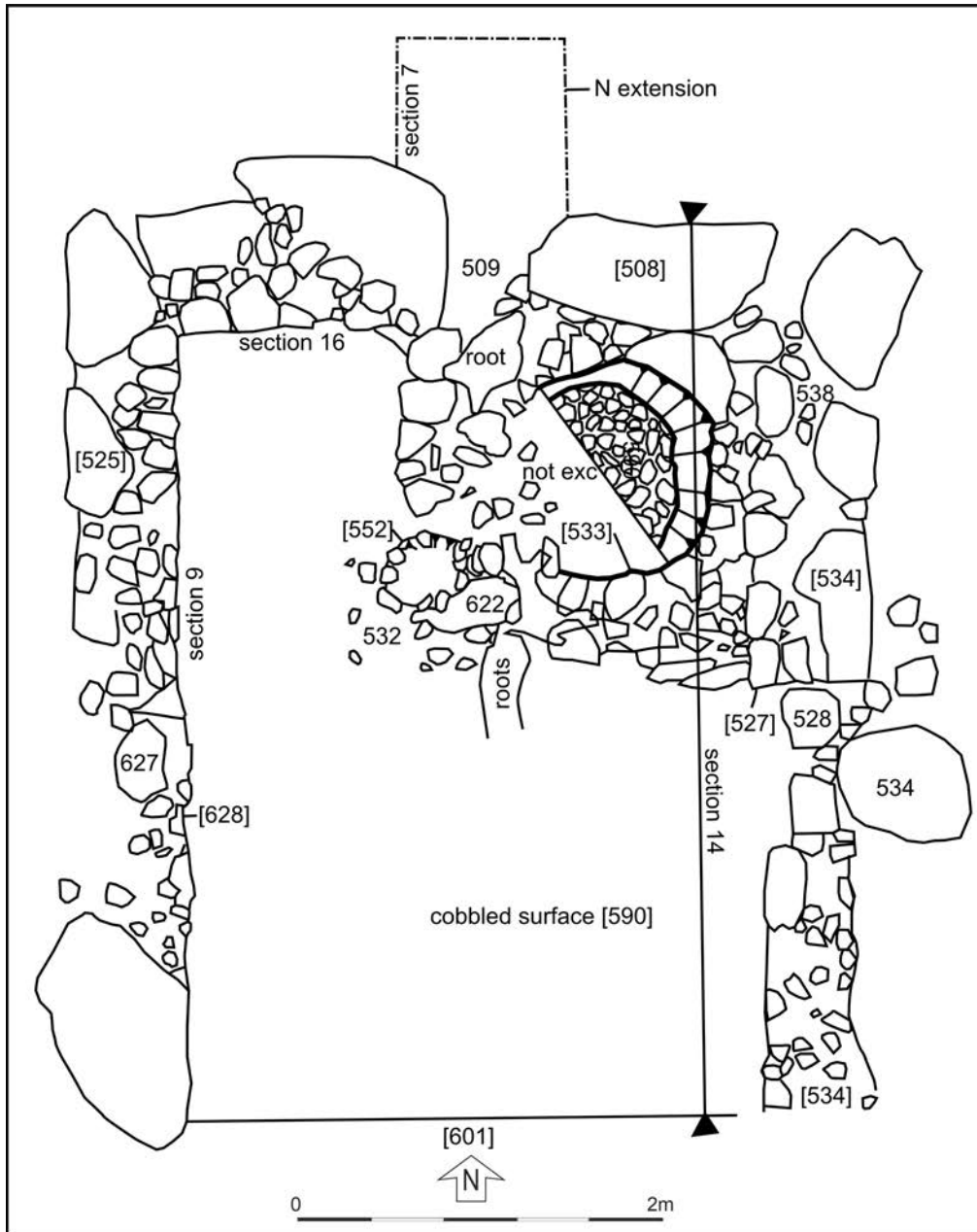


Figure 31: Plan of Room 3



Plate 38: Room 3 east door with threshold stones (528) with cobbled surface (590) at the top; facing west

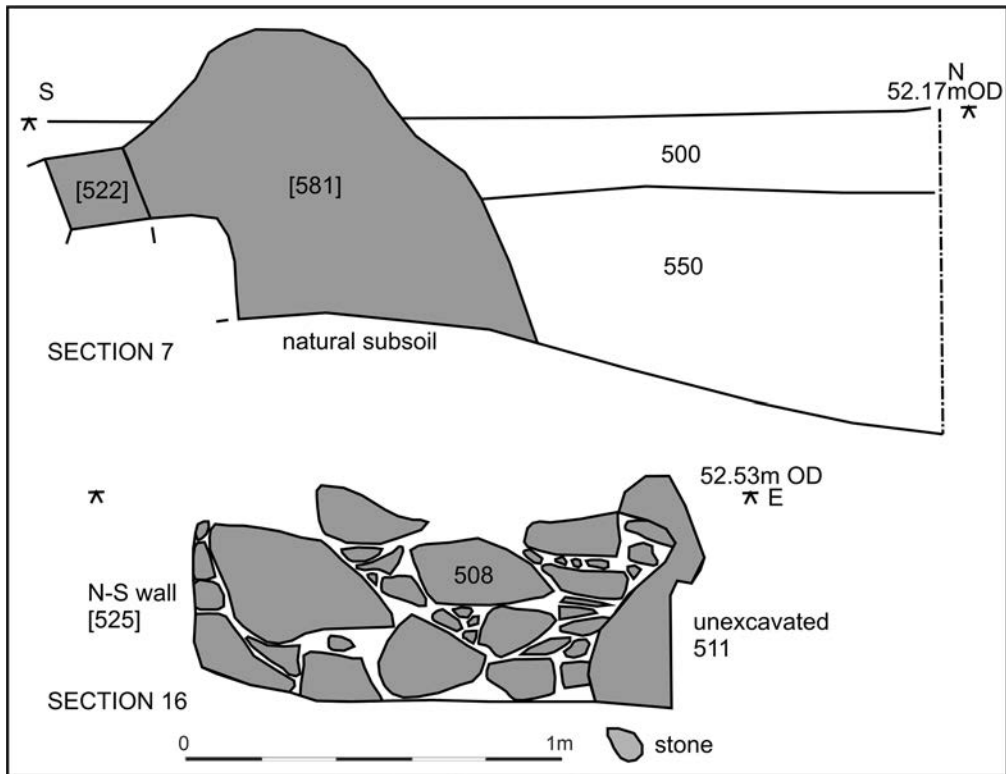


Figure 32: Sections 7 and 16 showing large earthfast stone north wall (581) with infill small stone wall (508)

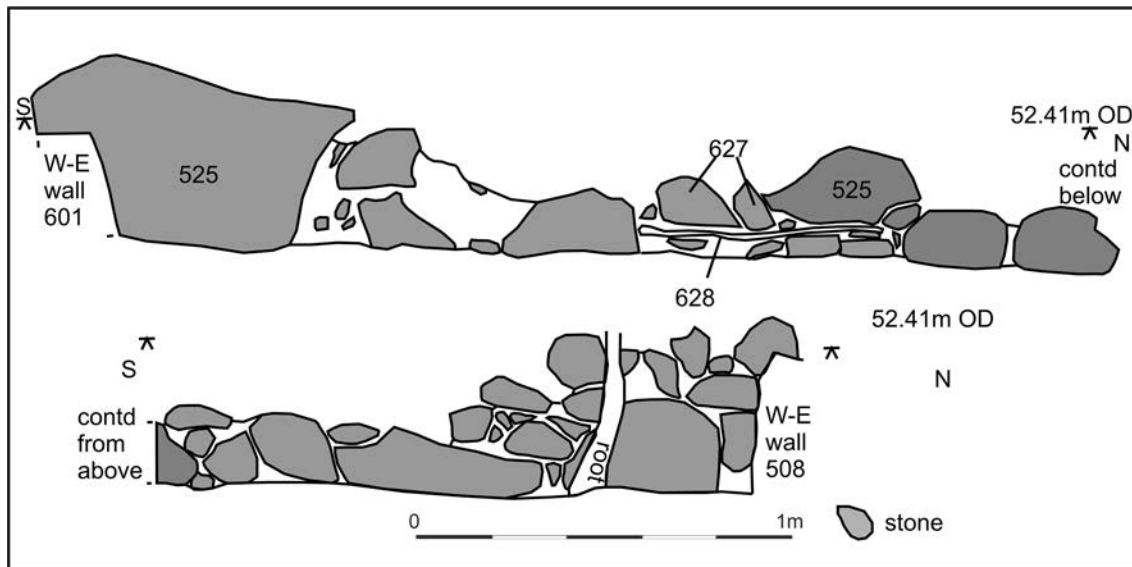


Figure 33: Section 9 showing threshold (628) at top

Prior to 2021 the floor of this room was dirty light brown clay (532) but trial excavation below this surface in 2021 revealed a complete water-washed cobble floor (590, Figure 34, Plate 39) tightly packed and bonded with clayey sand. It sloped down to the north-west corner of the room.

In the NE corner a circular stone-lined pit, 81 (=Pit 533; Plates 40 and 41) was about 1.2 m diameter, although a tree was growing on its NW edge which it had damaged and loosened stones. There is a base course of large stones with upper courses in small and large stones. The stones had been bonded with light brown sandy clay

mortar and the base was the natural light brown sandy clay. The pit fills were demolition materials including stone and sandy clay mortar lumps but had been disturbed by root activity, and there were no finds and nothing dateable from it. In 2021 the pit was investigated further, and it was

discovered that it sat on top of the cobbled floor of Room 3 (590, Plate 41) and appears to be partially constructed of demolition material from Structure 2. It is therefore later than the structure and probably constructed after the building went out of use.

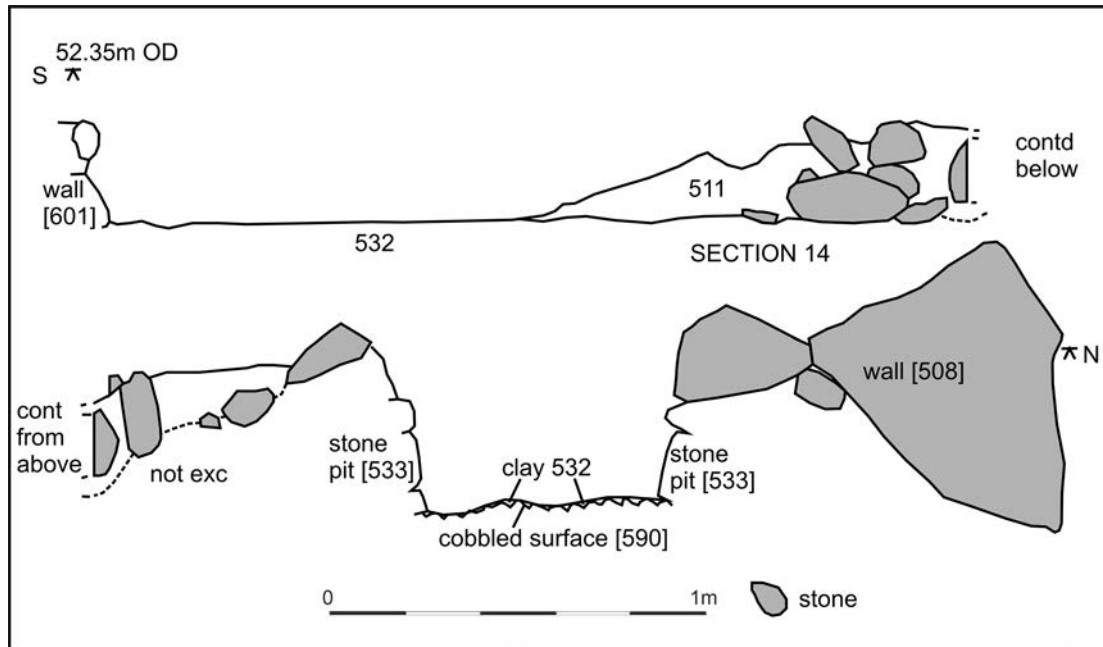


Figure 34: Section 14 through Room 3 showing pit (533) on top of cobbled floor (590)



Plate 39: Cobbled floor (590)



Plate 40: Stone-lined pit (81) with cobbled surface (590) below; facing west



Plate 41: Stone-lined pit (81) with cobbled surface (590) below; facing west

Cut into cobbled floor (590) is a shallow pit (552) which is heavily burned, surrounded by and filled with burnt clay (622, Figure 35, Plate 42). The area between the pits (533 and 552) was very disturbed but there was burning under the roots suggesting that there was probably a shallow flue joining the two pits. It was decided not to excavate further as the risk of damaging pit (533) was high. This pit is likely to have been a corn-drying kiln with (552) being a heat source for it; the samples produced no dating material.

### Building 2 demolition

The layer removed above Building 2 contained no charcoal, no traces of burning and very few finds. There was little demolition material, few stones and only two fragments of slate and a small number of ceramic roof tile fragments suggest that this building may have been demolished much later and all materials systematically removed from site.

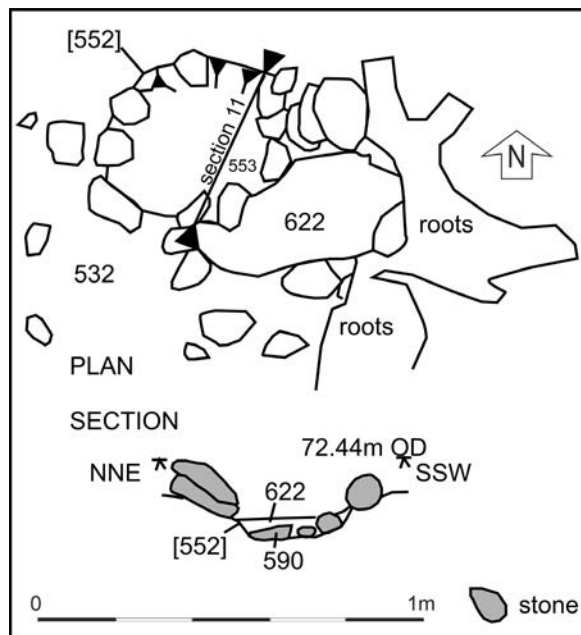


Figure 35: Plan and section of fire-pit (552)



Plate 42: Fire-pit (552) with outer wall of pit (553) at top left, prior to cobbled floor (590) being uncovered; facing east

### Clearance cairn 154

A walkover of the wood revealed a possible stone structure (154) that was uncovered and identified as a clearance cairn. It was recorded and backfilled and all details can be found in the site archive.

### Wall 255

This wall (recorded in TPs 1, 11, 13) is formed by large boulders which have been roughly worked on one side to form an edge on the NW façade (Figure 36, Plate 43). The boulders are set on to the subsoil and a depth of loam has built up around them. It is likely that this formed one side of the 'boot-shaped' enclosure seen on the

1st edition OS map (Figure 13) around the two structures which were retained after they had been demolished.

Test pits were excavated in the woods between Structures 1 and 2. A bank was recorded, probably associated with tree planting and large earth-fast stones were recorded. No other structures were identified and details are in the site archive.

The use of these structures has been extensively discussed with archaeologists (HK and JC Murray, Piers Dixon and Edwina Proudfoot, who all visited the site) and it is thought most likely that these buildings were a post-reformation chapel and manse. As a result the historical report was commissioned.



Plate 43: (255) in TP13 with TP1 and TP11 in background; facing SW

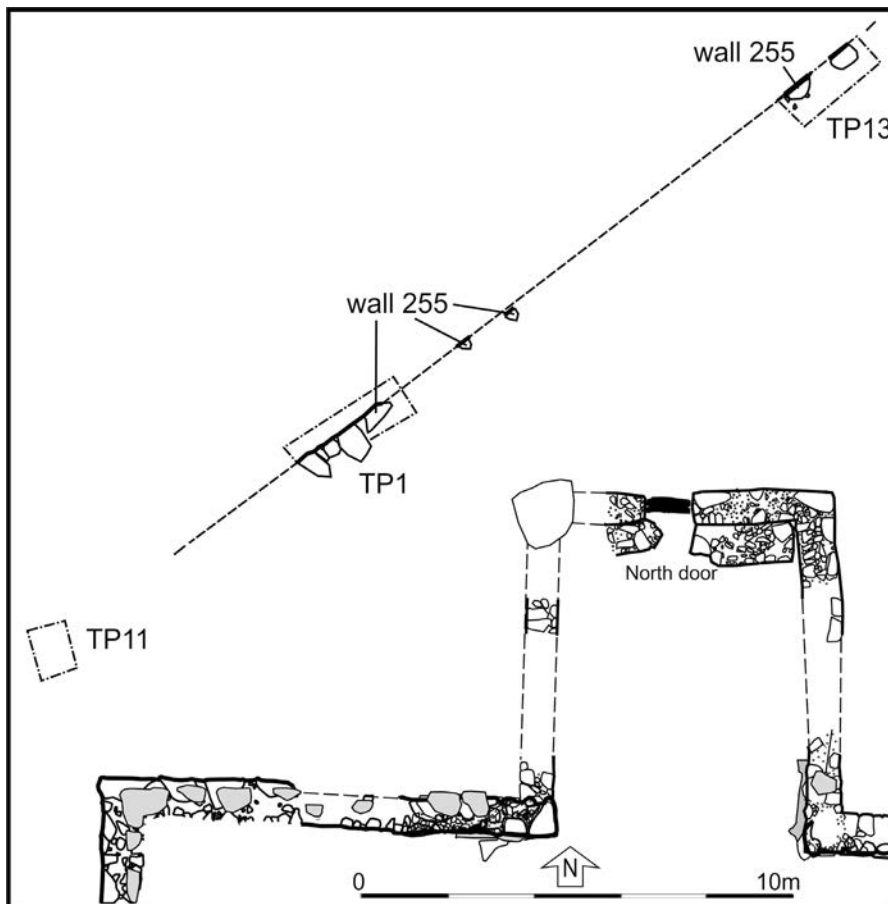


Figure 36: Plan of TP1, 11 and 13 showing wall (255)



## Historical Assessment of the Chapel Ruins at Aden

By Darren S Layne

### Objectives and methodology

This report attempts to confidently identify both the historical identity and the context of the possible Episcopal Meeting House, described above, to supplement the recent archaeological work undertaken on the site. Initial assessments from the archaeological team suggest that the excavated T-shaped structure appears to be a chapel from the early modern era (likely seventeenth century) and its destruction was occasioned by fire, probably between the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Given the region in which the ruins of this structure lie and that region's historic links to both non-juring Scottish Episcopalianism<sup>1</sup> and concentrated Jacobite sentiment, it would make sense that the site could describe one of the many non-juring meeting-houses destroyed by British Army soldiers in the months after the Battle of Culloden in April 1746. Historical research, therefore, centres upon both primary and secondary sources explicitly connected to the Episcopalian ministers in the area who would have presided over non-juring congregations in the parishes of Old Deer, Longside, and other neighbouring areas. Supplementary archival research was also conducted within a broad scope of government and military records in both Scotland and England to determine if specific evidence can be found either commanding or condoning the destruction of the structure at Aden, thereby supporting the initial archaeological hypothesis.

### Addressing earlier reports

Initial historical source analysis can be supported and updated with more recent historical evidence. Setting aside the time and purpose of its original construction, the professional dating of structural detritus within the ruins has been shown to encompass the middle of the eighteenth century, which lends plausibility to the theory that this could have once been a non-juring meeting-house during the last Jacobite rising in 1745-6. Furthermore, the excavation of this structure demonstrates that the burnt

structural elements could feasibly have been caused by its destruction at the hands of British Army soldiers during the government's campaign of pacification after Culloden.

Two amendments to the historical source analysis can be made:

- *'Walker and Woodworth record that near Hareshowe there is the ruins of the former Episcopal Meeting House of Rev John Skinner burnt by Hanoverian troops after the 'Forty-five'. (Walker and Woodworth 2014, 48).*

David Walker and Matthew Woodworth note the location of the original Hareshowe estate at Ironside, ten miles northeast of Aden. The modern Hareshowe Working Farm, a Victorian building, was deconstructed in the 1980s and rebuilt at Aden Country Park just to the east of the Episcopalian Meeting House (Aberdeenshire Council HER: N94NE0047) in the early 1990s (Aden Museum staff pers. comm.). They mistake the nearby ruins as being the meeting-house of John Skinner, a storied historian, poet, and non-juring minister whose congregation gathered near Longside, a little over four miles to the east toward Peterhead (Walker and Wordsworth 2014, 320).

- *'Other references [referring here to William Walker's biography of Skinner] record Skinner's chapel as being near his house at Linshart, Longside'. (Walker 1883, 48).*

William Walker is correct that Skinner's meeting-house was located in the parish of Longside near his abode at Linshart, rather than in Old Deer. Differentiating these two parishes and their constituent non-juring chapels (and ministers) is vital to properly identifying the ruins at Aden.

### Historical personae

John Skinner, Episcopal minister of Longside

William Livingstone, Episcopal minister of Old Deer

Elisabeth Ferguson (née Dean), wife of James Ferguson of Kinmundy

John Forbes of Pitnacaddell (Pitnacalder, Pitneycalder), Presbyterian minister of Pitsligo

1 Non-jurors were those who refused to swear allegiance to the de facto monarch, in this context George II.

## Assessment

### Distinction

Secondary sources bear out the presence of two distinct non-juring meeting-houses in this region of Aberdeenshire, one each in Longside and New Deer parishes, each overseen by a different Episcopal minister. John Skinner's congregation met at the farm at Tiffery a half-mile from his home at Linshart, just to the south and slightly east of Longside village. This leaves the chapel ruins at Aden likely to be the former pulpit of William Livingstone, Aberdeen Diocesan cleric for Old Deer 1711-51 (Pratt 1901, 208-9; Bertie 2000, 82). Numerous accounts present evidence that these two chapels are distinct, the most compelling of which may be that both were destroyed on the same day by British Army troops in the summer of 1746, and that witnesses could see both burning from the same place at once.

The Rev John Pratt writes that the first Episcopal chapel at Old Deer 'stood in the grounds of Aden, a short distance eastward from the house', lending credence to the theory that the ruins could indeed be Livingstone's old property (Pratt 1901, 134). Though he does not mention a date, Alexander Lawson also records that Livingstone and his congregation had built their new meeting-house 'on the Earl Marischal's land of Aden' after falling out with the Presbyterian minister of Pitsligo and zealous Whig, John Forbes of Pitnacadell (Lawson 1896, 58). This brings up

the question of when the structure was actually built, as the archaeological evidence is strongly supportive of a late-medieval establishment (see Fieldwork Results, above), but such a scenario does not preclude an existing structure subsequently being built upon and used as a place of worship by Livingstone's flock.

The former buildings at Aden currently under investigation are not present on historical maps and the ruins of the Meeting House are not shown on the 1st and 2nd editions OS maps, but the site of Skinner's chapel at Tiffery was known to government officials in the eighteenth century even after it was destroyed in 1746. William Roy's military survey explicitly features a 'Meeting house' just east of 'Tuffery' and there can be little doubt this refers to the remnants of Skinner's building; interestingly this is the only named structure of this kind in the entire survey, suggesting that a comprehensive record of non-juring chapel sites was either not kept, remains elusive, or is no longer extant (The Roy Military Survey Map of Scotland 1747-1755), Figure 37. Searches were undertaken with the Roy gazetteer, which was completed in July 2022 via a crowdsourced transcription project led by Christopher Fleet at the National Library of Scotland.

A list of Church of Scotland parish kirks and their presiding ministers from around 1746, however, helpfully registers the distances between Presbyterian congregations, and includes John



Figure 37: Relative positions of the Tiffery and Aden meeting-houses on the Roy Military Survey 1747 – 1755, © British Library Board.

Forbes representing Old Deer and [John] Brown supervising Longside, roughly three miles apart according to the recorder (ACA Archives: List of Churches in the Neighbourhoods of Peterhead and Fraserburgh, ACA Parcel L/S/3. For Brown, see Scott 1926, (vi), 227)).

We may assume that this provides a general frame of reference as to locational jurisdictions of the respective non-juring clergy, as well, and the presence of discrete services in each of these parishes. Thus we may move forward with the assertions that Skinner's chapel in Longside is distinct and separate from whatever once stood at the location of the Aden ruins, and also that William Livingstone was the Episcopal minister in charge of the congregation in the parish of Old Deer.

### Identification

Persuasive secondary-source evidence further suggests, but does not verify, that the ruins of meeting house are likely comprised of at least the partial remnants of the building in which Livingstone preached. In addition to the accounts of Pratt and Lawson who place the chapel in the Aden estate, Alexander Smith also states that the non-juring congregation 'built a church within the grounds of Aden' after Livingstone was forced to relinquish control of the existing parish church to Presbyterian oversight in 1716 (Smith 1875, 1067; sources do not identify the precise location on the estate, though Pratt mentions it was 'a short distance eastward' from Aden House, which was built after 1758 and now also lies in ruins. The excavation, however, showed that the chapel ruins were around 300 m south and only 100 m east from the remnants of the manse (see Fieldwork Results, above; Pratt 1901, 134). Pratt further notes that after the destruction of Livingstone's chapel, a second 'large, unsightly building' that could hold 500 worshippers was built in 1766 'on the north bank of the [Ugie] river, at a little distance of the bridge'. Lawson refutes this, claiming that a legal intervention by Forbes of Pitnacaddell prevented another Episcopal chapel from being erected in the area (Lawson 1896, 58-9).

Even with this inconsistency, there are a number of further compelling reasons to have confidence in the positive identification of these ruins as the former meeting-house of William Livingstone.

There is no other relevant archaeological site of significance as of yet found within the historical bounds of the Aden estate, and while the absence of material alternatives is not the deciding evidence, its general location, the shape and context of the structure, and scientific evaluations of the structural materials all point to its plausibility (compare with plans of Aden Portion of Aden Estates, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire, NRS RHP85453; University of Aberdeen MS3860/19009/1). Though assessments of glass fragments and coinage found at the site are generally dated to the late seventeenth-century, radiocarbon dating of numerous charcoal samples indicate that some of the structural wood is likely from the early eighteenth century. A traditional account of its destruction in 1746 places the site of the ruins within the clear sightline of an eyewitness in the Clola region, less than two miles due south. These results combine to suggest that this building was originally erected in an earlier era and reused with added construction by Livingstone's congregation after being ousted from the parish kirk of Deer, and that it was subsequently burned in the months after the Jacobite Rising of 1745 (See Spencer and Thain assessments below for glass and coinage, respectively, and Table 2: Radiocarbon dates from Structure 1 in the main archaeological report. For the eyewitness account see Walker 1883, 43).

### Historical context and destruction

While the historiography of Jacobite and Episcopalian suppression after Culloden features many general accounts of chapel-burnings taking place in the north-eastern counties of Scotland, specific detailed descriptions from manuscript sources are rarer. Over two dozen meeting-houses were allegedly destroyed in Aberdeenshire, Morayshire, and Angus alone, and scores of others in larger towns and burghs were either 'pulled down' or chained and padlocked so they could no longer be used as houses of worship (Lawson 1843, 291; Luscombe 2004, 28-9; Memorandum Concerning the Act Anent the Nonjurant Meeting Houses, 1746, NLS MS.17527 f. 123; Some Hints Anent Disarming the Highlands and Suppressing the Jacobites' Meeting Houses, TNA SP54/30/30f; Fletcher to Newcastle (13 June 1746), TNA SP54/32/17; Letter from Humphrey Bland (14 December 1747), NLS MS.3044 f. 123). Official burning orders from either government

officials or military officers remain elusive; despite the parliamentary laws in October 1745 enacted to condone compulsory qualification for Episcopal ministers and the tighter enforcement of those laws subsequent to the rising, the lack of a well-documented paper trail is understandable considering the ruthlessness of the actions (Terry 1902, ii, pp. lxxv; 529-35). Alistair and Henrietta Tayler place the onus for this destruction squarely upon the shoulders of William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland, who they claim gave the explicit orders to carry out upon his arrival at Aberdeen at the end of February 1746. Cumberland himself bears this out, admitting to Thomas Pelham-Holles, the 1st Duke of Newcastle, at the end of April that ‘the Scottish clergy are in an uproar...as I have demolished all Mass houses and Meeting houses as we marched allong’ (Tayler and Tayler 1928, 65; Cumberland to Newcastle (30 April 1746) reprinted in Warrand 1923-30, v, 72).

A greater quantity of published information about these razings refers to this region of Aberdeenshire than most others thanks to the prominence of the Rev John Skinner and his immediate family. Indeed, numerous antiquarian accounts mention the destruction of his chapel at Tiffery as a particularly egregious demonstration of martial law by British Army troops. We have the benefit in this case of contextual evidence that Livingstone’s chapel at Aden was burned on the same day, and so while the discrete accounts of each are often correlated, they tend to focus more on Skinner’s survival and the process of rebuilding his congregation in Longside (Pratt 1901, 208-9; Walker 1883, 40-1, 54-5). Skinner himself describes the mood of his hearers during the summer in which these laws were enforced, who were torn ‘between pity for their ministers and fear for themselves’ (Skinner 1788, ii, 663). The date of the burnings varies according to the source but, like most acts of suppressing recalcitrant Scottish communities after the rising, the majority of chapel razings took place in the summer of 1746 within three months of the final battle, once the government could more comfortably divert martial resources to the regulation of civilians. Lawson cites Thursday 19 May as the date in which British soldiers converged upon Tiffery, while Walker’s biography of Skinner claims it was the evening or night of 29 July, and possibly the next day. David Bertie’s entry for William Livingstone in his

prosopographical collation of Episcopal ministers states his meeting-house at Old Deer was burned on Saturday 30 July (Lawson 1896, 58; Walker 1883, 41-3; Bertie 2000, 82. Some of the sources that Bertie cites do not contain any information about Livingstone at all, and there is no mention of Lawson in his references). This likely makes the most sense, as some unnamed but ‘well-attested’ sources that Walker uses allegedly confirm it happened in the daytime and on a day of worship. According to the Rev Robert Forbes, however, Skinner said in his own words that after his chapel was burned he was alarmed but ‘never in danger till July 29’ when soldiers actually came to his abode at Linshart (Forbes 1895-6, ii, 259). This gives some credence to Lawson’s assertion of an earlier date, but in any case it is appropriate to believe that both ministers lost their houses of worship on the same day sometime between May and July.

The absence of official orders or government directives in the archives means that a reliable identification of the perpetrators remains elusive. Pratt and Lawson simply say it was the work of ‘the King’s troops’, while Walker claims it was the Campbells – by which he means the independent Highland companies under John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun (Pratt 1901, 134, 208; Lawson 1896, 58; Walker 1883, 41). Other accounts agree that it was Loudoun’s men or the ‘Campbell militia’ in cooperation with Lord Mark Kerr’s (11th) dragoons, while similar burnings of nearby meeting-houses, like the one at Lonmay, were reputedly commanded by William Kerr, Lord Ancrum, who was then in charge of British Army troops garrisoned at Aberdeen (Skinner’s letter states that dragoons burned the chapel but that Loudoun’s men later came to seek him at his home, Forbes 1895-6, ii, 259-60; Ferguson and Ferguson 1885, 268; Pratt 1901, 232). Regimental returns and cantonment orders show that both options are plausible, but the answer cannot be discerned without more explicit archival evidence (For example, Return of Loudoun’s Highland Regiment (21 May 1746), TNA SP54/31/24f; Dispositions of Quarters for the Troops in Scotland (14 July 1746), RA CP/Main Box 17/283 and (8 August 1746), RA CP/Main Box 18/45; Cumberland to Newcastle (30 April 1746), TNA SP54/30/30a. See also Tayler and Tayler 1928, 111).

The point on which most of the published sources agree is the person who was ultimately responsible for the burning of these two chapels. Elisabeth Ferguson, Lady Kinmundy, is universally described as an exceptionally zealous Whig who harboured extreme disdain for both Jacobitism and ‘popery’ in all of its guises. While she did not light the fires herself, if these accounts are to be believed, she most certainly escalated the drama by alerting the British Army to the ‘illegal’ congregations and openly relishing in the upheaval that ensued. Walker calls her a lady of rank ‘belonging to the district’ who called in the militia on both of the meeting-houses and exulted in their eradication. H G Reid represents her as ‘riding in triumph’ around a blazing pile of furniture and prayer books at Tiffery, while Lawson characterises her as being ‘eminently eager for the destruction of Episcopal churches’ (Walker 1883, 41-3; Reid 1859, xiii; Lawson 1896, 57). A softer treatment is given by Victorian authors of her own surname, explaining her ardour by noting that Lady Kinmundy’s family home was ‘plundered and almost burnt’ by John Gordon of Glenbucket’s soldiers in the midst of the rising, and that contemporary Jacobite propaganda satirically framed her as a biblical harlot (Ferguson and Ferguson 1885, 267-70). Ferguson’s activities nonetheless appear to have

left a lasting memory in the region, as recorded by a local Presbyterian minister who wrote that “she sought to locally change the name of Deer parish to ‘Dear William’ in praise of Cumberland” (Bissett 1841, 396, extract from the Diary of the Reverend John Bissett 23 May 1746). Other reports were made of her watching the flames of both the Tiffery and Aden chapels from the nearby hill at Coynach just a couple of miles to the south, ‘clapping her hands’ and enjoying the sight (Ferguson and Ferguson 1885, 43).

Whether or not this colourful anecdote is true, it might offer a hint about the position of Livingston’s chapel in the region’s geospatial context. If the Lady Kinmundy’s vantage point is accurately represented and plotted on James Robertson’s topographic map from 1822 and the more general OS 1900s map of the area Figure 38, she would have been standing on a larger rise (355 m) presiding over both New Deer and Longside parishes, with a relatively clear line of sight to the positions of both alleged chapel sites. Looking northward less than two miles over the South Ugie Water to the Aden estate and eastward twice that distance past Millhill to Tiffery, if she could not make out the burning structures, then she may have been able to see the plumes of smoke.



Figure 38: Relative positions of the Tiffery and Aden meeting-houses to Kinmundy’s viewpoint at Hill of Coynach. 100050699.(Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100017966).

## Summary of research

Taking into consideration the archaeological, historical, and geospatial evidence – all of which is incomplete and demands further research and assessment – it appears probable that the excavated ruins at Aden in the parish of Old Deer once stood as the non-juring Episcopal meeting house of the Rev William Livingstone. The physical context and location of the ruins are not perfectly corroborated by documentary evidence, but neither are they convincingly refuted. Both the key points of import and the general progression of the narrative that can be pieced together from published accounts and limited archival sources suggest that the ruins are in the correct place to be identified as Livingstone’s chapel, and that it was indeed burned to rubble by British Army soldiers sometime in the summer of 1746.

Perhaps fittingly, the story comes back to the Rev John Skinner, who lost his own place of worship on the same day. Lawson relates that from the death of Livingstone in December 1751 until May 1753 when Skinner was imprisoned, he took charge of both congregations at Longside and New Deer at the request of his fellow clergyman, still preaching to his flock nearly seven years after the violent incursions by the government in the shadow of the last Jacobite rising (Lawson 1896, 60).

## Further Sources

The preceding assessment, while thorough, is not comprehensive and there is room for further work to be done on the historical aspects of the case: namely, finding manuscript evidence that more granularly describes orders, locations, dates, and specific perpetrators. To this end, the following sources may be helpful to consult, on Table 3.

Institution	Reference	Title
National Records of Scotland	GD113/5/78i	Papers of the Innes Family of Stowe - Rental of Aden and other lands in the parish of Longside, 1757
NRS	GD45/13/187	Papers of the Maule Family - Scheme of locality of the stipend of the parish of Old Deer, 23 Feb 1751
NRS	RHP85453	Plan of Aden portion of Aden Estates, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire
NRS	CH2/89/5	Presbytery of Deer - Minutes
NRS	CH2/1217	Deer Kirk Session - Minutes and Poores’ Fund Accounts
Aberdeen Council Archives	Parcel L/C/39	List of total valued rents and loads of peat due from Parishes of Old Meldrum, Bowrty, Daviot, Fivie, Methlick, Tarvis, New Deer and Old Deer (1746)
ACA	Parcel L/C/88	Letter from James Barrack, Ellon, to Mr John Clerk, writer, stating that he had ordered the forage to be sent to Aberdeen (1746)
ACA	Parcel L/G/1	Recommendation by John Forbes, Minister of Deer, of William Phillip, as a volunteer for the militia, 24 Mar 1746
ACA	AET/5/4/1/4	AET Elrick and Annochie Estates: “Old Locality Papers”
ACA	DD980	Papers of the Rev. Arthur Ranken (1806-1886), clergyman at Old Deer Episcopal Church, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire
Royal Archives	CP LR1-13	Cumberland’s Letter Registers 1745-1748 (needs further examination)
National Library of Scotland	Acc.12092/22	Documents, mainly legal, of the Russell family in Aden, Aberdeenshire
NLS	MS.296 f. 83	A manuscript copy of William Meston, ‘Mob contra mob’ (1738). A note on the title-page states that Meston wrote the poem on the occasion of disturbances attending the ordination of his comrade John Gordon as Minister of Old Deer, placing the incident in 1708 or 1709
University of Aberdeen	MS.3860/19009/1	Plan Of The Aden Portion Of The Aden Estates, Aberdeenshire, Centred on Old Deer Village
UofA	MS.3634/1	Papers of Alexander Russel of Montcoffer, 1st Laird of Aden (1758-1798)
UofA	MS.3816	Ferguson of Kinmundy Papers
UofA	MT.021.003	Episcopal Church of Scotland Records, Contracting & Marriage Book, Old Deer Episcopal Chapel, Aberdeenshire, Jul 1683 - Nov 1732
Huntington Library, California	LO 1-6999	Some evidence of official orders or accounts could be amongst Loudoun’s papers at Huntington Library in California

Table 3: Further manuscript sources

## Conclusions

These two structures are rather enigmatic; an artists' impression by Jan Dunbar of these buildings gives an impression of the buildings in the early eighteenth century (Figure 39). They appear to have been constructed in approximately the same period although their construction methods, trenches filled with large boulders with smaller stone hearting and locally-dug clay, is used in many periods in North-east Scotland. The T-shaped building would appear to have been a chapel. The finds including two phases of window glass (late sixteenth/early seventeenth century and a group of late seventeenth century; see Glass report, below) suggests that the structure may have been built in the seventeenth century. The coins are mainly seventeenth century in date (see Coin report, below) and fragments of spectacle frames and lenses (see Finds, below).

There is no domestic rubbish associated with these structures; no pottery, no middens and no other domestic finds. In fact there were virtually no finds from Building 2 which is recognised as a manse. It was either a very well-maintained

structure or the cobbled floor had been swept prior to abandonment.

Much discussion took place about the lost tower house thought to have been at Aden and mentioned in charters of 1525, 1592 and 1612 (Charter 1525, Charter 1592, Charter 1612; thanks to Liz Tough 'not the archaeologist' for bringing these charters to our attention); the structure itself does not support this interpretation. The walls are fairly narrow and much of the stone is small to medium in size. There is also a lack of internal partitions and discussions with various experts (Piers Dixon, Hilary Murray and Bruce Mann) suggested that the building is a single storey, single room space which would suggest that the interpretation as a post-Reformation chapel fits the archaeological evidence. A comment from one expert that this would have been a large space seating over 100 people hints at the importance of this building (Hilary Murray pers. comm.). The historical report above suggests that this is the remains of the meeting-house of Rev William Livingstone and burnt to the ground by British troops in the summer of 1746.



Figure 39: T-shaped chapel (left) and rectangular manse (right) set in early eighteenth century, by Jan Dunbar

The rectangular building, Structure 2, if seen as contemporary, would suggest an associated manse. An artists' impression by Jan Dunbar shows the interior of Room 3 the south room in the early 18th century (Figure 40). The south room has a domestic hearth surrounded by cobbles and with a hanging lum. The middle room has a recess which may have been a bed recess suggesting a domestic bedroom and the north room has a small-stone cobbled floor suggesting a space for animals.

After the manse was partially demolished (which may be later than Structure 1 as there is no evidence this building was also burnt down) a stone-lined pit was built into the demolition material above the cobbled floor level and with the associated fire-pit this may be interpreted as a later corn-drying kiln



Figure 40: Interior of south room showing minister preparing a sermon in front of the fire with hanging lum and cobbled floor set in early eighteenth century, by Jan Dunbar



## The Mansion House

Aden House was built after 1758 and remodelled by John Smith in 1832-3 (Walker and Woodworth 2015, 319-21) and sold to the Russell family in 1937. It was bought by Aberdeenshire Council in 1975 and is now a roofless shell which has been infilled with rubble for safety. Murray Archaeological Services (MAS; Murray and Murray 2015; 2016, 27) were called when demolition of access steps exposed the 1832 entrance hall. MAS recorded granite steps and a tiled floor with stone skirting. Test pits revealed that there is cellarage throughout the mansion which had been infilled with loose mixed building materials.

### Introduction

The excavation took place from 29 April-12 May 2019 with a total of 70 volunteers. These included people new to digging as well as a number who had been excavating on other Aden sites and archaeological projects in the wider area.

A total of 12 school classes took part in the project including feeder primaries to Mintlaw and Peterhead, Dyce Primary as well as secondary pupils from Clydebank High School Archaeology Club, and Ellon Brownies, totalling 304 school pupils who participated.

Aden House (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ94NE0034) is the remains of a now roofless mansion house. It is a two storey, six-bay, asymmetric house with advanced end bays and a 2-window quoined ashlar pedimented centre-piece in golden granite. Smith's remodelling in 1832-3 saw the west wing rebuilt with a higher ground floor, and the addition of a tetrastyle *porte cochere*, in grey ashlar granite, with paired Roman Doric columns built out from the west intermediate bay. The rebuilt west elevation is symmetrical with two bays on each side of a Roman Doric colonnaded bow, formerly with a dome, and a large top lit atrium in the centre of the house accommodated a library. It originally had fireclay balustraded parapets, but these were removed (possibly in 1983) along with the roof and many internal walls. The building was requisitioned as a billet for troops during World War II. In 1975 the house and grounds were acquired by the

then Banff and Buchan District Council. There are a number of reused stones within the structure including one inscribed with the date 1773 (Plate 44) possibly indicating the date of building by Alexander Russel of Montcoffer, and an initial inscribed stone (Plate 45) AR (Alexander Russel) and EI (Eliza Innes) who was his second wife who he married in 1767.



Plate 44: 1773 incised date stone reused upside down as the springer for an arch; facing west



Plate 45: AR (Alexander Russel) and EI (Eliza Innes) inscribed stone; facing SE

Geophysical survey was carried out by Rose Geophysics (Figures 41 and 42) and twenty trenches were excavated targeting geophysical anomalies and features on the 1st edition OS map (Figures 43 and 44) to investigate the ruined mansion and search for evidence of earlier structures. A drone was used to locate the mansion house in its grounds and some of the trenches (Plate 46).



Figure 41: Geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants

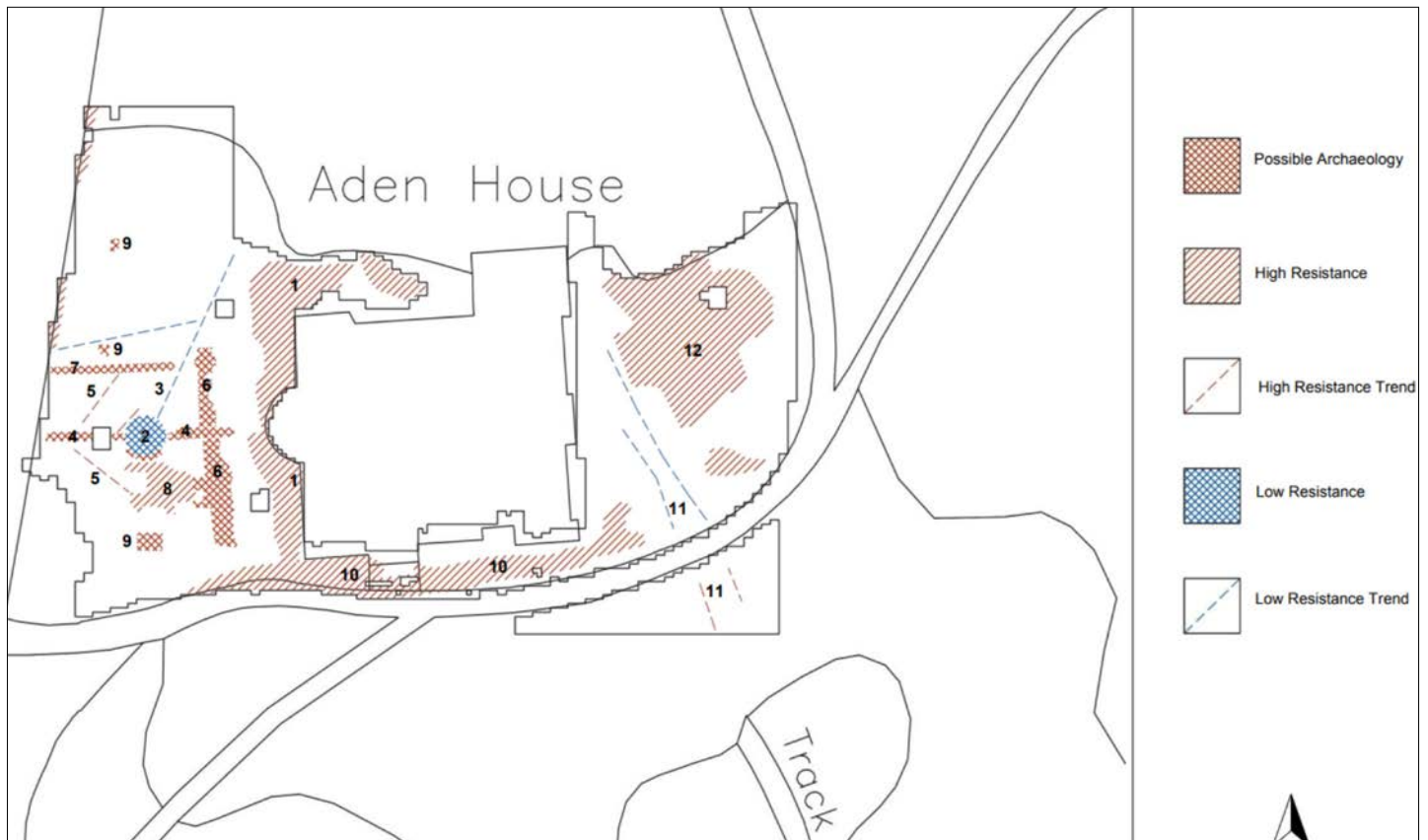


Figure 42: Interpretation of geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants

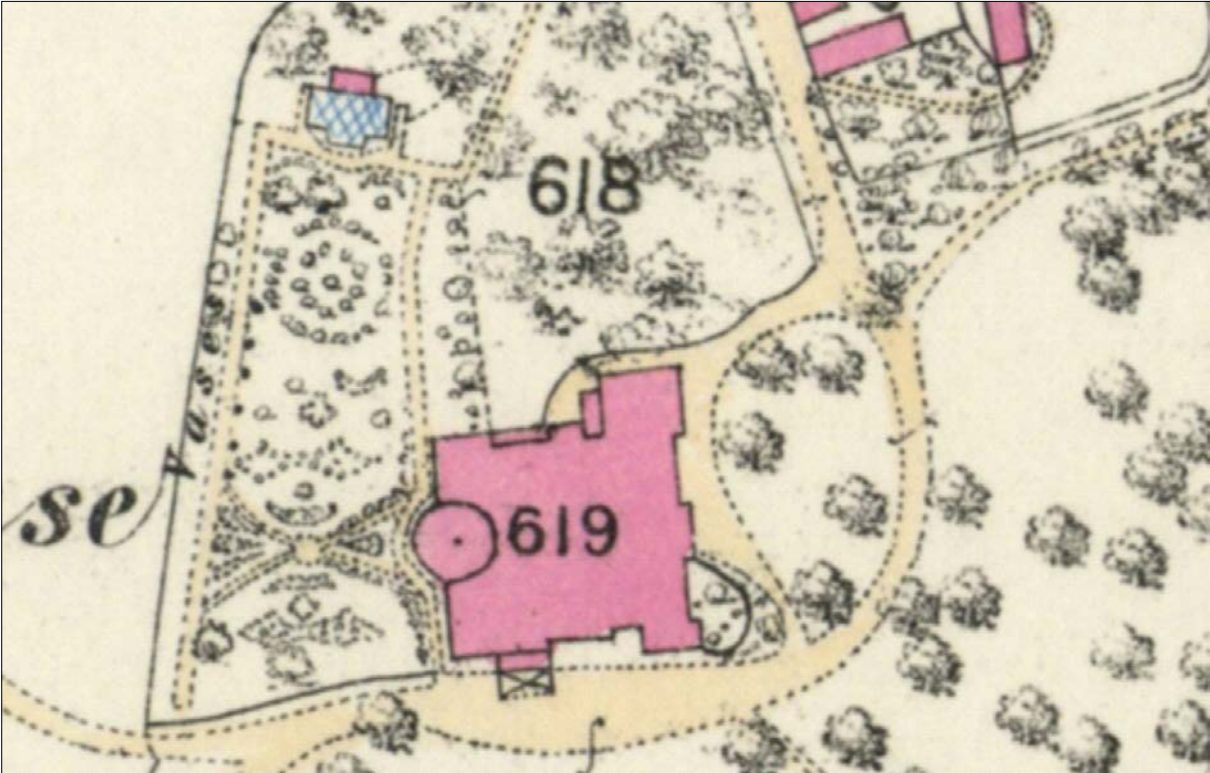


Figure 43: 1st edition OS map showing house and garden features. (Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100017966).

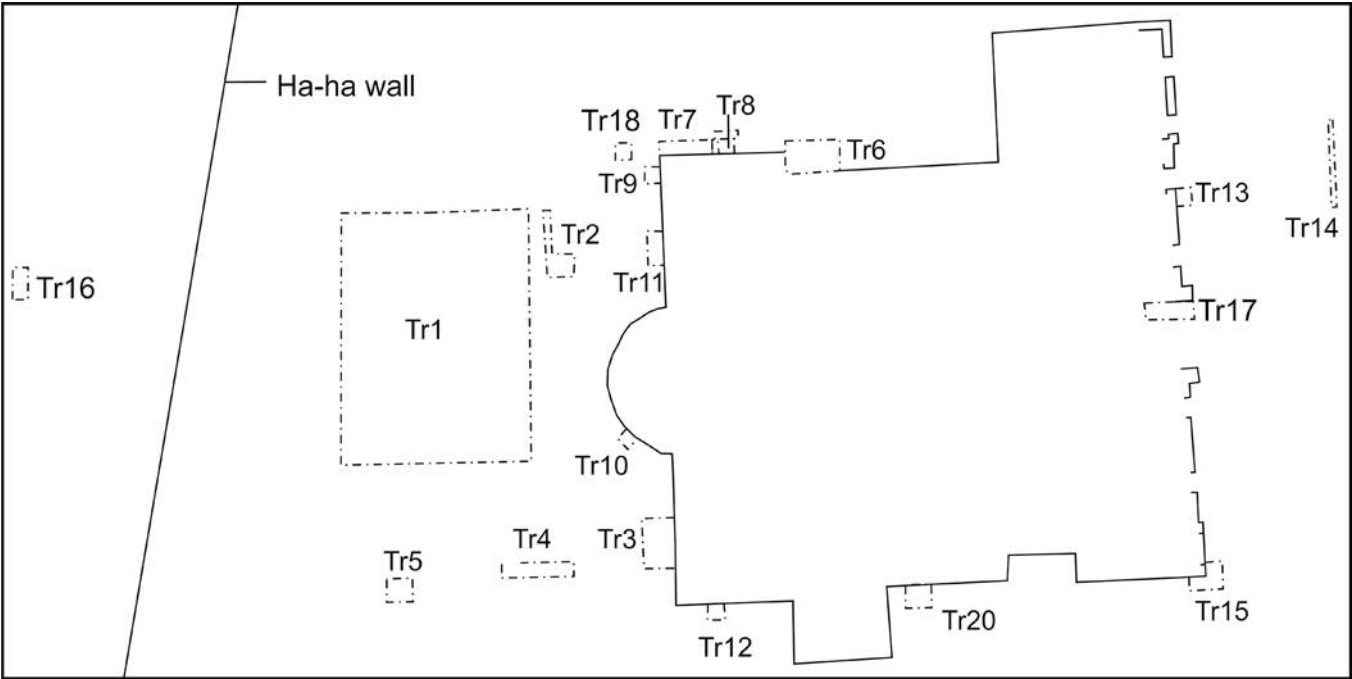


Figure 44: Plan showing excavation trenches



Plate 46: Drone photo of mansion during dig

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was 15 m by 11 m in size and positioned on the west side of Aden House to identify the anomalies seen on the geophysical survey. A large stone-lined drain (122) was recorded (Figure 45). Its capping stones (124; Figure 46; Plate 47) were at least 0.8 m long and the stone-lined passage was 0.6 m wide at the top, 0.3 m wide at the base and 1.05 m deep (Plates 48-49). The sides are constructed of larger fieldstones with smaller packing stones. The silt layer in the base was sampled, and below that was a c. 0.4 m deep layer of sand which was trenched but not bottomed. The drain was traced through Trench 1 into Trench 2 and further through trenches 9, 11, 18 to 19 (see below).

The resistance survey showed a possible fountain or pond (Anomaly 2; Figure 42) and a central focus can be seen on the west side of the house on the 1st edition OS map (Figure 43). A circular 4 m diameter, 0.7 m deep pit for a pond had been cut into the centre of the garden aligned with the central bay window on the west façade. The pond was not *in situ* but a large section of concrete fountain base (Plate 50) was found dumped into the base of the pit. The base had been 3 m diameter internally and probably dates to the late nineteenth or early

twentieth century. By the mid twentieth century photographs (e.g. Plate 51) show that the pond and fountain had been removed. During removal lumps of concrete foundation, fountain base, ceramic garden ornaments and bricks had been



Plate 47: Capping stones drain (122); facing east

dumped into the foundation pit. A cast iron valve box was uncovered (Figure 45) which would have regulated the water going into the fountain.

This trench also contained up to 0.5 m depth of garden soil with areas of small stones (103 and 106) and a dump of coal (102).

### Trench 2

This trench was excavated between Trench 1 and the mansion house to investigate the drain (122, Figure 46). Its capping stones (201, Plate 52) were uncovered but they were not lifted and the trench was backfilled.

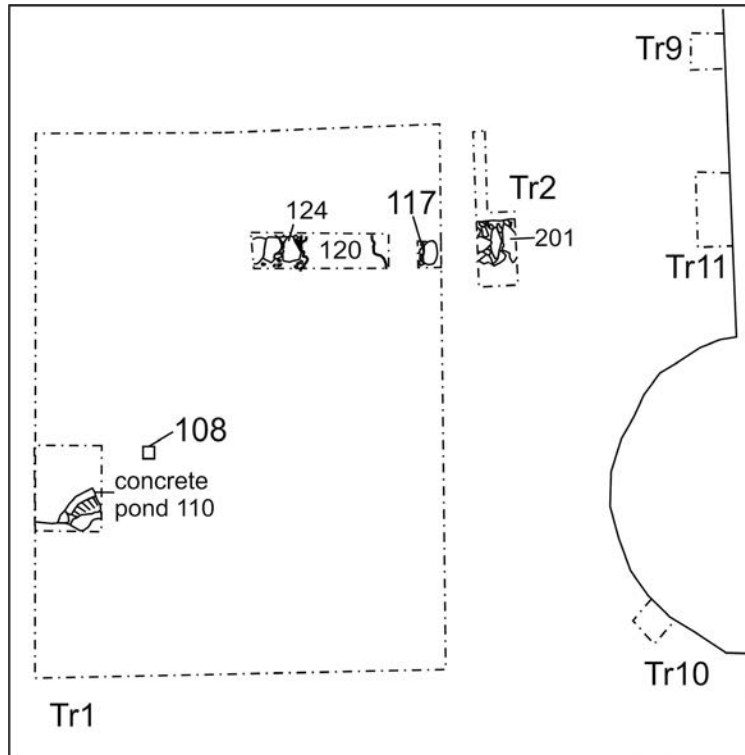


Figure 45: West side of mansion showing trenches and main features

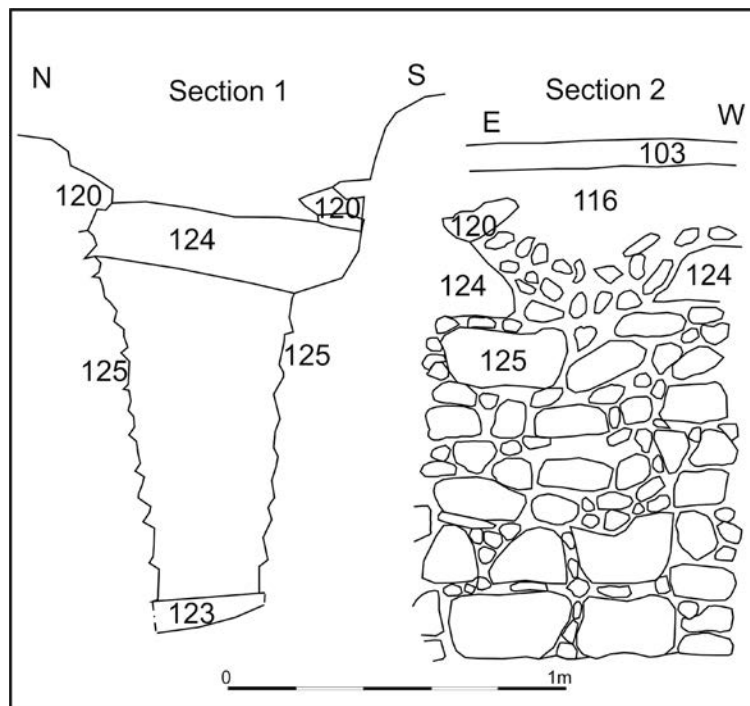


Figure 46: Section and side elevation of drain (122)



*Plate 48: Drain (122) facing west (thanks to Jamie Cutts, Aberdeenshire Council)*



*Plate 49: Drain (122) facing east (thanks to Jamie Cutts, Aberdeenshire Council)*



*Plate 50: Concrete fountain base (110); facing north*



*Plate 51: Mid-twentieth century photo of west façade of Aden House (Courtesy of Aberdeenshire Council)*



Plate 52: Trench 2 drain capping stones (201); facing west

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated on the west side of the house to investigate the foundations and any earlier structures. A mortared stone stepped foundation (304, Figure 47) was uncovered and it is possible that this is from an earlier structure.

mortar (401) at the east end of the trench with garden soil above and below. This may have been laid as a path or surface.

### Trench 5

Trench 5 was also excavated to investigate an anomaly on the geophysical survey (Figures 41 and 42). A 0.5 m depth of garden soil with a dump of stones at the west end was found but no other archaeological deposits were recorded.

### Trench 4

Trench 4 was excavated to investigate an anomaly on the geophysical survey (Figures 41 and 42). There was a demolition layer of small stones and

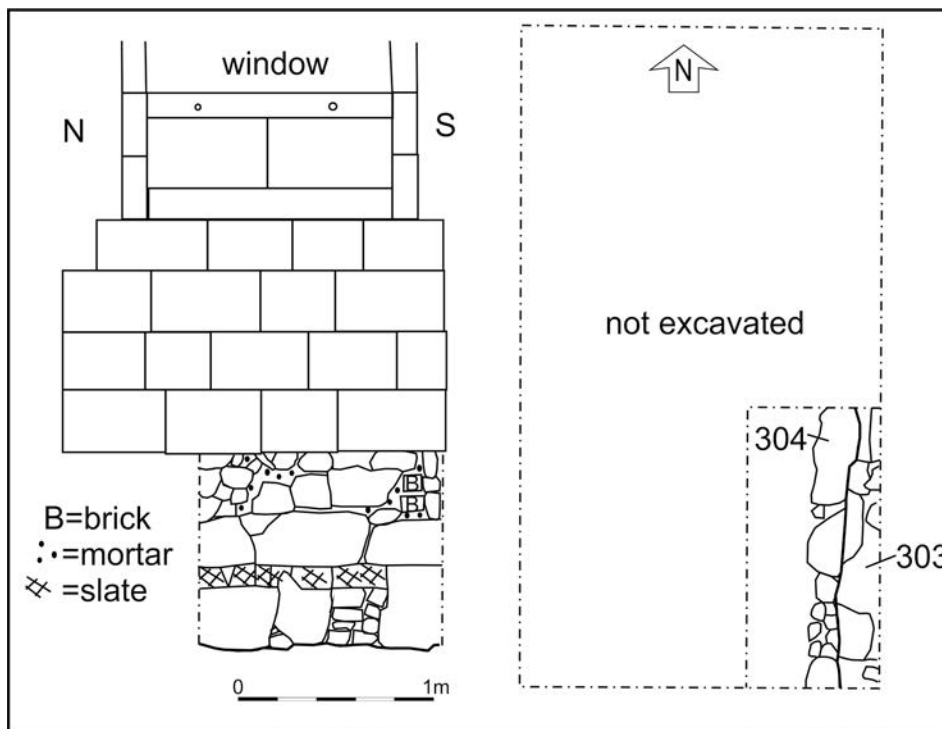


Figure 47: Plan and elevation of Trench 3

### Trench 6

Trench 6 was located at a corner of the house abutting the north wall where there is an unusual stone feature angled at 45 degrees to the current house with a stone inscribed 'AR/EI' (Alexander Russel and Eliza Innes, Plate 45). The trench had layers of slate, coal and linoleum on top of *in situ* drain pipes and dumped stone and loam. Under the current structure is what appeared to be a stepped foundation but removal of drainpipes revealed that is probably the corner of an earlier building (611/612, Figure 48, Plate 53).



Plate 53: Trench 6 wall (610) at bottom right; note the stone top right is angled at 45 degrees to the current building and features AR/EI incised stone above; facing south

There is no access to the rest of this structure from the exterior but excavation within the building might help to determine more about this earlier structure and whether it is a pre-1750s structure or represents Alexander Russel's earliest building.

### Trench 7

Trench 7 was deturfed by Clydebank High School Archaeology Club but was not excavated.

### Trench 8

Trench 8 is a coal access on the north wall of the mansion house. It had been filled with rubble during the demolition of the house in the mid-twentieth century. The mainly nineteenth to early twentieth century finds are recorded in the archive.

### Trench 9

Trench 9 was excavated on the west wall of the mansion house to investigate its foundations. The stone foundation was 0.9 m deep and capping stones from drain (1109, see below) were recorded. These were bonded into the foundation and the capping stones were not removed. The drain was accessed only by drain rods and remote photography from Trench 11.

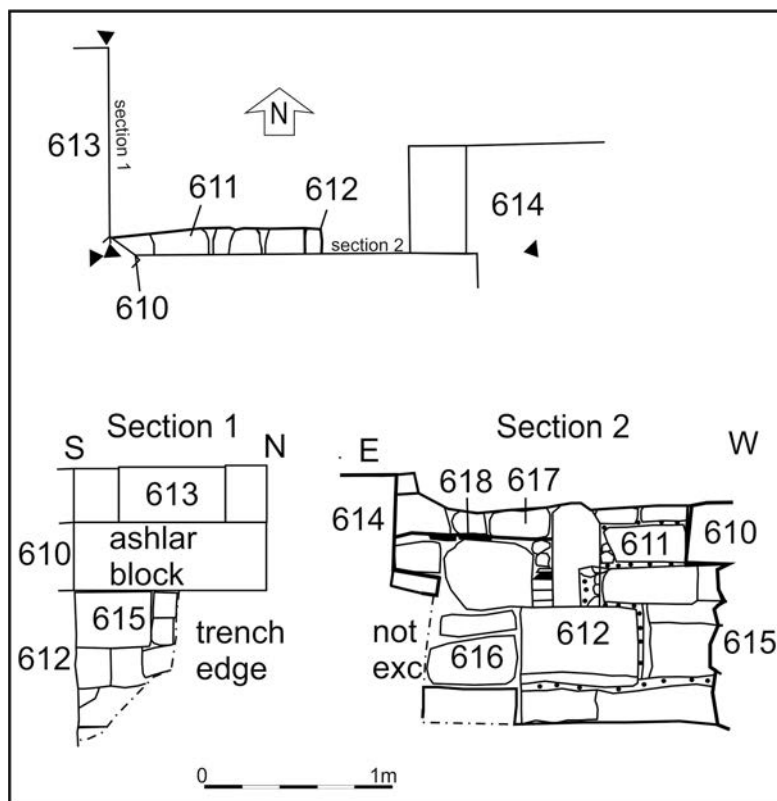


Figure 48: Plan and sections Trench 6



### Trench 10

This trench was situated below one of the bay windows in the west wall of the mansion house (Figure 44) to investigate the foundations of the structure. The stone foundation was 0.3 m deep and built onto the natural bedrock.

### Trench 11

This trench was excavated next to the west wall of the mansion house to investigate the drain (122) and the foundations of the house. Two drains were recorded in this trench. One (1105/6) runs E/W and joins with the drain in Trenches 1 and 2 (Figure 49). It is stone-lined, 0.5 m wide and 1.25 m high, although to the west of this trench the roof is lower and the drain is only 0.95 m deep (Figures 50 and, 51). This may be the original height of the drain and the deeper section was rebuilt when drain (1109) was joined in from the north; drain (1109) is 0.45 m wide and at least 0.6 m deep; its capping stones were recorded in trenches 9, 11 and 18. All drains are stone-lined with large granite capping stones. There was little access to the interior of the structure and while drain rods with a camera were inserted into it no photographic recording was captured.

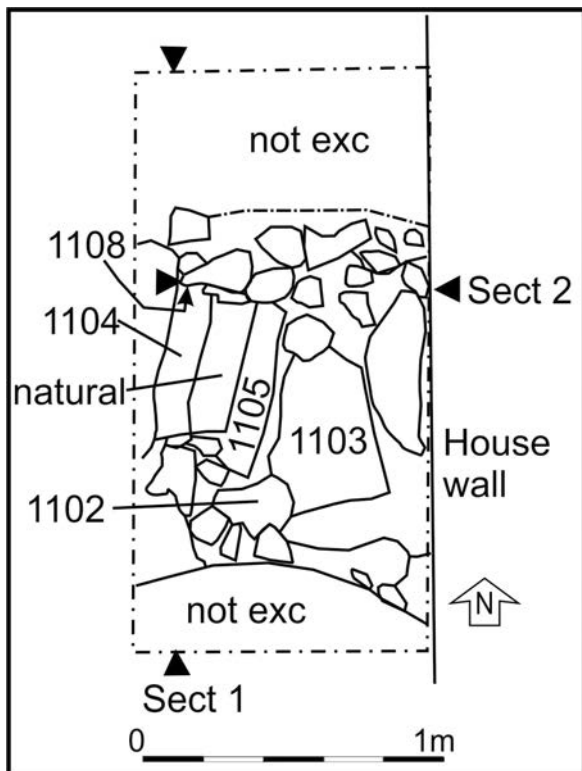


Figure 49: Plan of Trench 11

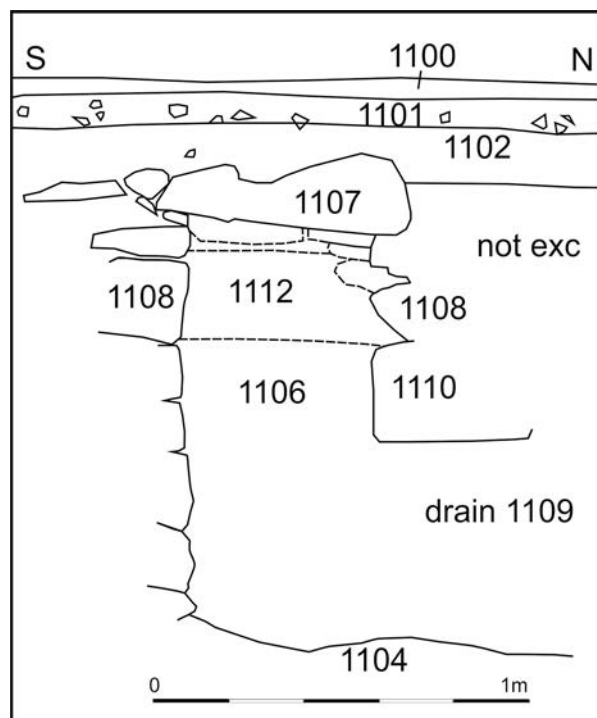


Figure 50: Section 1 of Trench 11

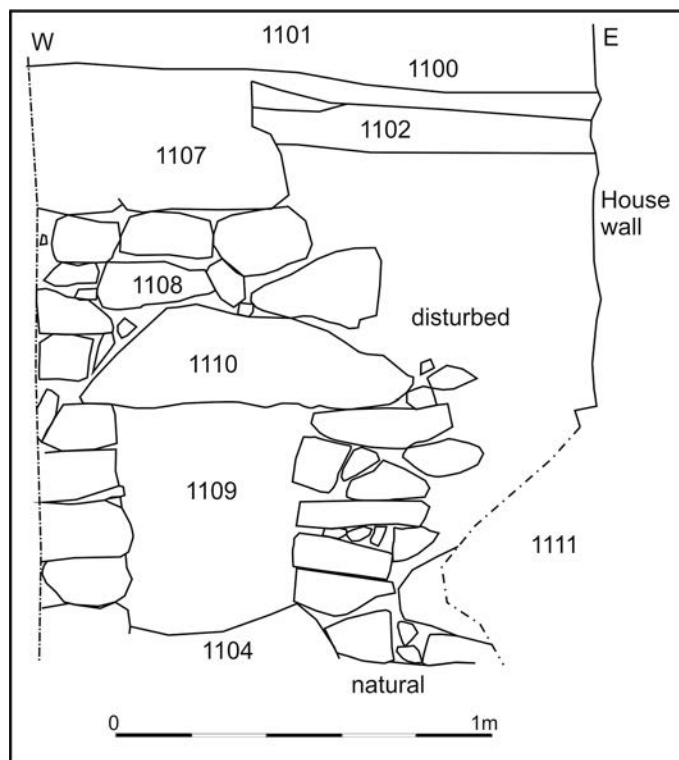


Figure 51: Section 2 of Trench 11

The north drain (1109, Plate 54) comes from the north and possibly around the NW corner of the house. It may have been used for taking excess water from the mid-eighteenth century laundry or from the laundry attached to Aden House. The E/W drain (1106) was blocked by the west foundation of the house (Plate 55) and is therefore associated with this structure or is earlier than the house. Excavation within the house may reveal further evidence of the drain as it is too deep to appear on the ground radar survey.



Plate 54: Trench 11 drain (1109) east wall mortared into the mansion's west wall foundation



Plate 55: Trench 11 relationship of the mansion wall and the foundation to drain (1106); facing east

### Trench 12

This trench was excavated on the south side of the house to investigate the foundations and any earlier structures. There was a layer of iron, pottery, glass, and other rubble under the turf and above the sandy subsoil. The foundations were 0.6 m deep (Plate 56) and there was no suggestion of an earlier structure in this trench.



Plate 56: Trench 12 showing foundation of the mansion 0.6 m deep; facing east

### Trench 13

Trench 13 was excavated on the east side of the house to investigate the foundations and any earlier structures. The foundations were 0.6 m deep but there was no evidence of an earlier structure.

### Trench 14

Trench 14 (Plate 57) was excavated on the east side of the house in an area of possible archaeological deposits. The turf capped 50 mm of soil on top of natural clayey sand and the trench was recorded and backfilled.

### Trench 15

This trench was excavated at the SE corner of the house to investigate the foundations and any earlier structures. The foundation of the building here is only one stone (0.3 m) deep and there was no evidence of earlier structures. There were loam garden soil layers under the turf and a water-washed pebble surface (1502, Plate 58). These were stratigraphically late in date probably mid-twentieth century and may have been laid around planting beds as a decorative feature.

### Trench 16

Trench 16 was dug on the west side of the Ha-ha wall in a line with drain (122, Figure 44). It contained bark and podsol indicating that it had been in a wooded area (Jack Grant, Aberdeenshire Council park manager, pers. comm). No evidence of the drain was recorded and it is presumed that it was removed when the garden was landscaped and the Ha-ha wall built.

### Trench 17

Trench 17 was excavated in the cart door entrance to the Gun Room (Figure 52). Under the concrete floor (1702, Figure 53) was a stone floor (1706) possibly from the mid-eighteenth century house. The cart door had been blocked with a wall (1703) that was edged with bricks (1705, Plates 59-60). This blockage can be seen on the mid-twentieth century photograph.

### Trench 18

Trench 18 was excavated NW of Aden House to trace the drain recorded in trenches 11 and 9, but the soil was too deep to safely excavate the drain and the trench was backfilled.



*Plate 57: Trench 14 with the east wall of the mansion in the background; facing west*



*Plate 58: Pebble surface (1502); facing north*

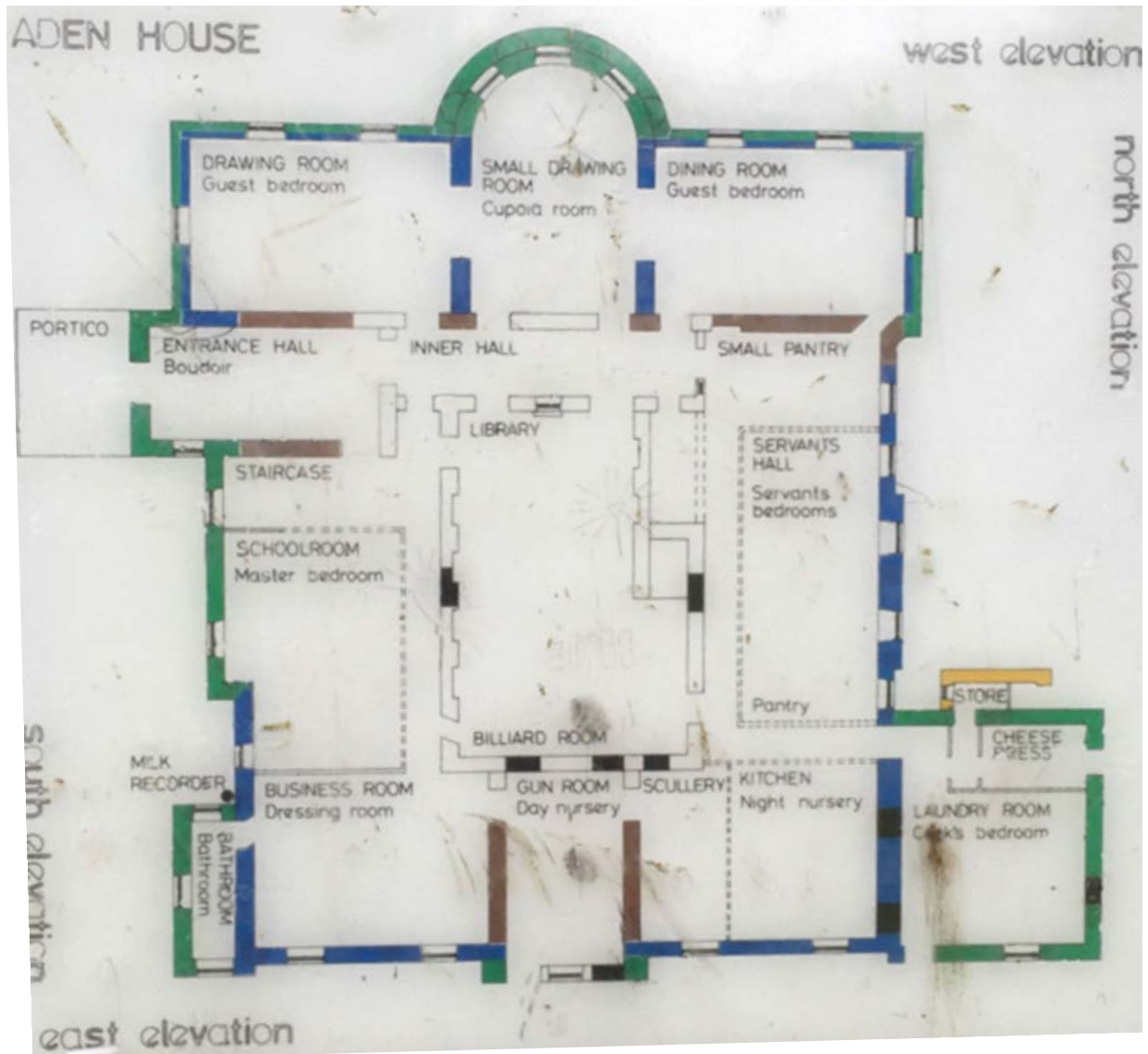


Figure 52: Plan on display board within Aden House showing room names

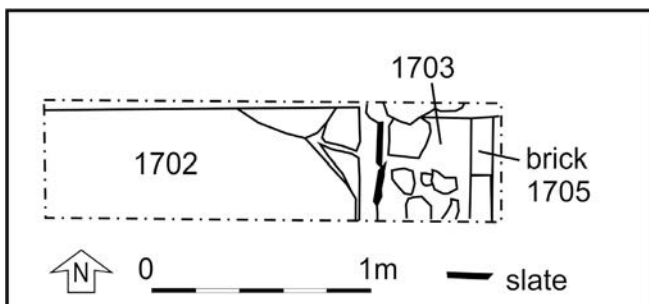


Figure 53: Features in Trench 17



Plate 59: Trench 17 concrete floor (1702), to the left, bricks underneath and stone wall foundation (1703) to the right; facing north



Plate 60: Cart door (centre) showing infilling with stone and brick wall (1703); facing NE (@ Aberdeenshire Council)

### Trench 19

Trench 19 was excavated at NGR: NJ 97885 47790 at the location near the river that the park manager dug and found a stone drain with large stone capping (Plate 61). This is an extension of the drains found in Trenches 1 and 2.



Plate 61: Stone drain capping (1901); facing NE

### Trench 20

This trench was excavated on the south side of the house to investigate the foundations and any earlier structures. A shallow 0.3 m foundation was recorded and a water-washed pebble surface (Plate 62), like that seen in Trench 15. These were stratigraphically late in date probably mid-twentieth century, and may have been laid around planting beds as a decorative feature.



Plate 62: Trench 20 pebble surface (2002); facing east

### Conclusions and recommendations

This excavation was carried out to determine the nature of the current Aden House, the dates for the structure, reveal any earlier evidence of buildings on the site, and to look at the development of the gardens. The geophysical survey suggested that the main formal gardens were on the western façade, and this is where the main trenching took place. Areas of pebbled surfaces and gravel were uncovered indicating surfaces and paths. Areas where trees had been located were identified but no evidence of formal planting was recorded.

The drain was an impressive structure which was well built and would have been capable of channelling large quantities of water from the

house and surrounding area. It is thought that the main E/W drain may pre-date the house and excavation in the interior of the building may answer this question. A later drain was constructed after the house that joined into the main drain. It may have taken water from the laundries to the north of the house.

The excavation of the pond/fountain revealed that the concrete base for the fountain was 3 m in diameter and the original pit for the structure was 4 m in diameter. A central garden feature is recorded on the 1st edition OS map but it likely that this pond was built in the late nineteenth century and removed in the early twentieth century prior to when a series of photographs were taken. There is no photograph of this pond/

fountain although there are postcards showing the north end of the garden. These show that the Ha-ha wall (Figure 44) which is still *in situ* did have two sets of steps to access the lower gardens. These can be seen on photographs (for example Plate 63).

The excavation of the trenches adjacent to the foundations of the house revealed one area of older structure on the north wall (Trench 6), where a masonry corner was not aligned to the current building. This could be investigated by excavation of internal trenches within the building but the deep infill within the structure it precludes the work at this time.



*Plate 63: Copy of postcard owned by David Elrick showing two sets of steps from the west garden, no fountain but a smaller bird bath/planter NW of the house outwith the excavation area.*

## Aden House Estate Features

Walkover surveys across the park revealed a number of intriguing features. Some were excavated (noted above) and a small number were investigated with smaller trenches.

A stone and earthen bank (539) was traced across the Aden estate (Figure 54) and in 2021 three locations were identified to determine the date of it.

In TP20 the bank was 0.65 m high and c.3 m wide (Figure 55). A section was cut through one half and there was a stone and earth layer (556) 0.8 m wide under the topsoil. The earthen bank was wider and sat on sandy subsoil. No dating evidence was located. There was a shallow water channel on the north side of the bank, but it was felt that this was not archaeological.

TP22 cut through the bank (Figure 56, Plate 64) showing that it was constructed of large stones 0.6 m wide with small stones banked up on the south face. The stones are surrounded by sandy loam (567 and 568) and the structure built on sandy subsoil. There was no dating evidence within the structure.

TP23 was opened adjacent to a modern path which had cut through the feature a few years previously. Here the undergrowth was cleared and immediately it became apparent that there were at least 4 steps built into the north face of the wall (Steps 1 to 4, Figure 57, Plates 65-68). The wall at this point was well-faced on the north side. It was 1.2 m high and 4.4 m in length as exposed and cleaned. The full thickness of the wall could not be determined as the rear face of the wall was not safe to be uncovered. There were drill marks on some of the stones suggesting that this part of the construction was nineteenth century date or later (Plate 67).

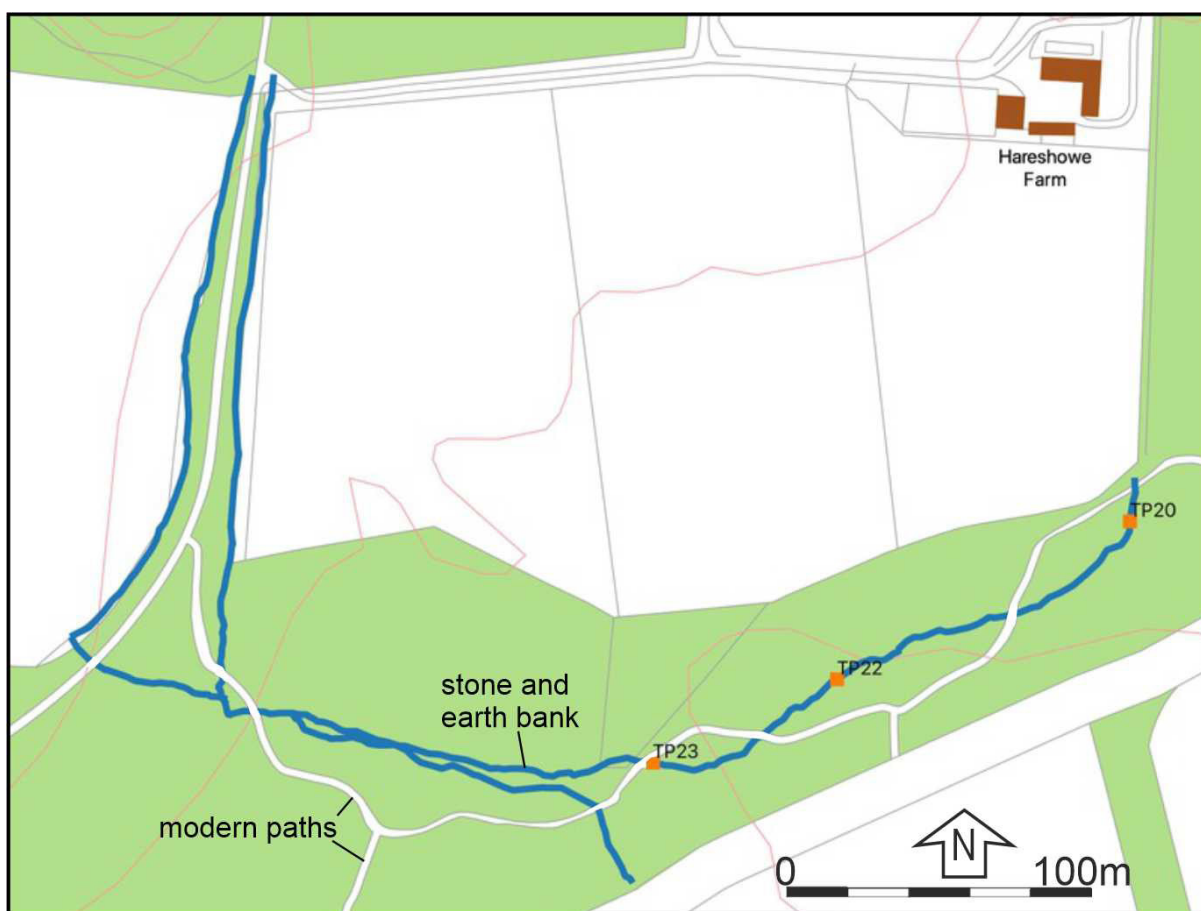


Figure 54: Plan showing stone and earthen banks with TP20, TP22 and TP23

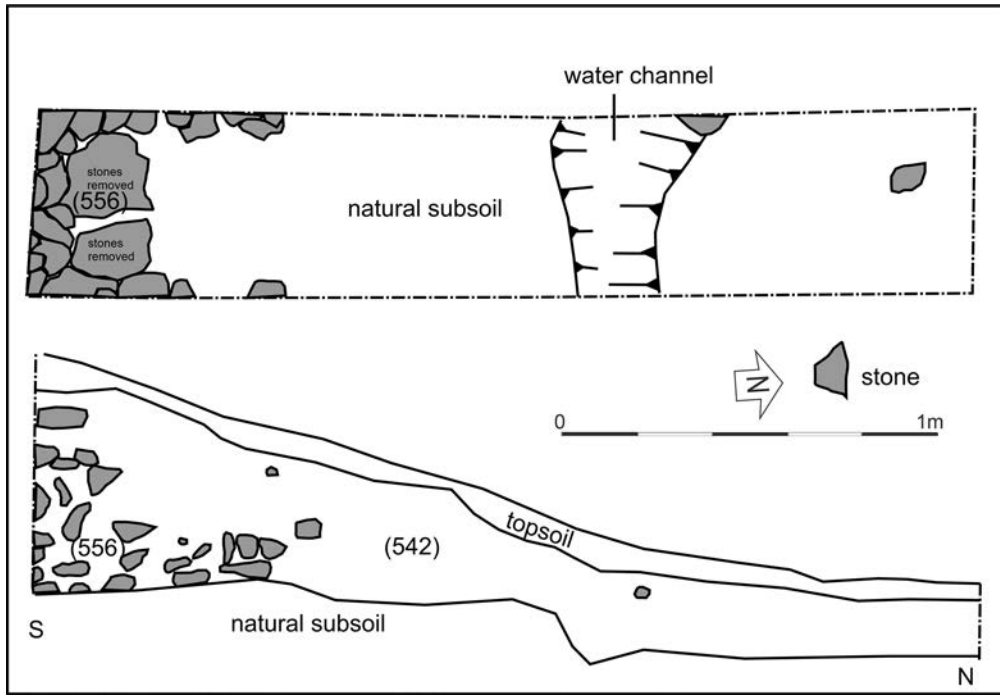


Figure 55: TP20 plan and section

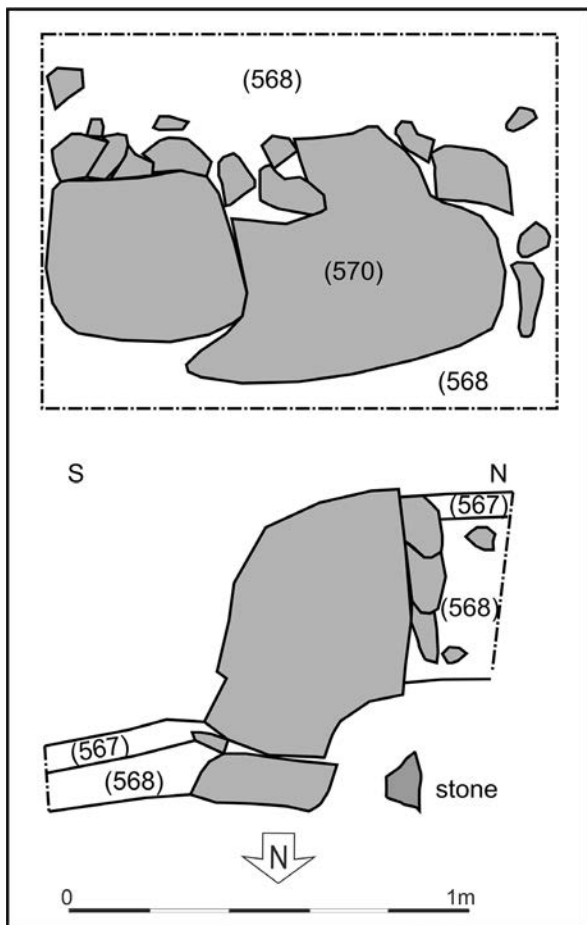


Figure 56: Plan and section of TP22



Plate 64: Bank (570), facing south



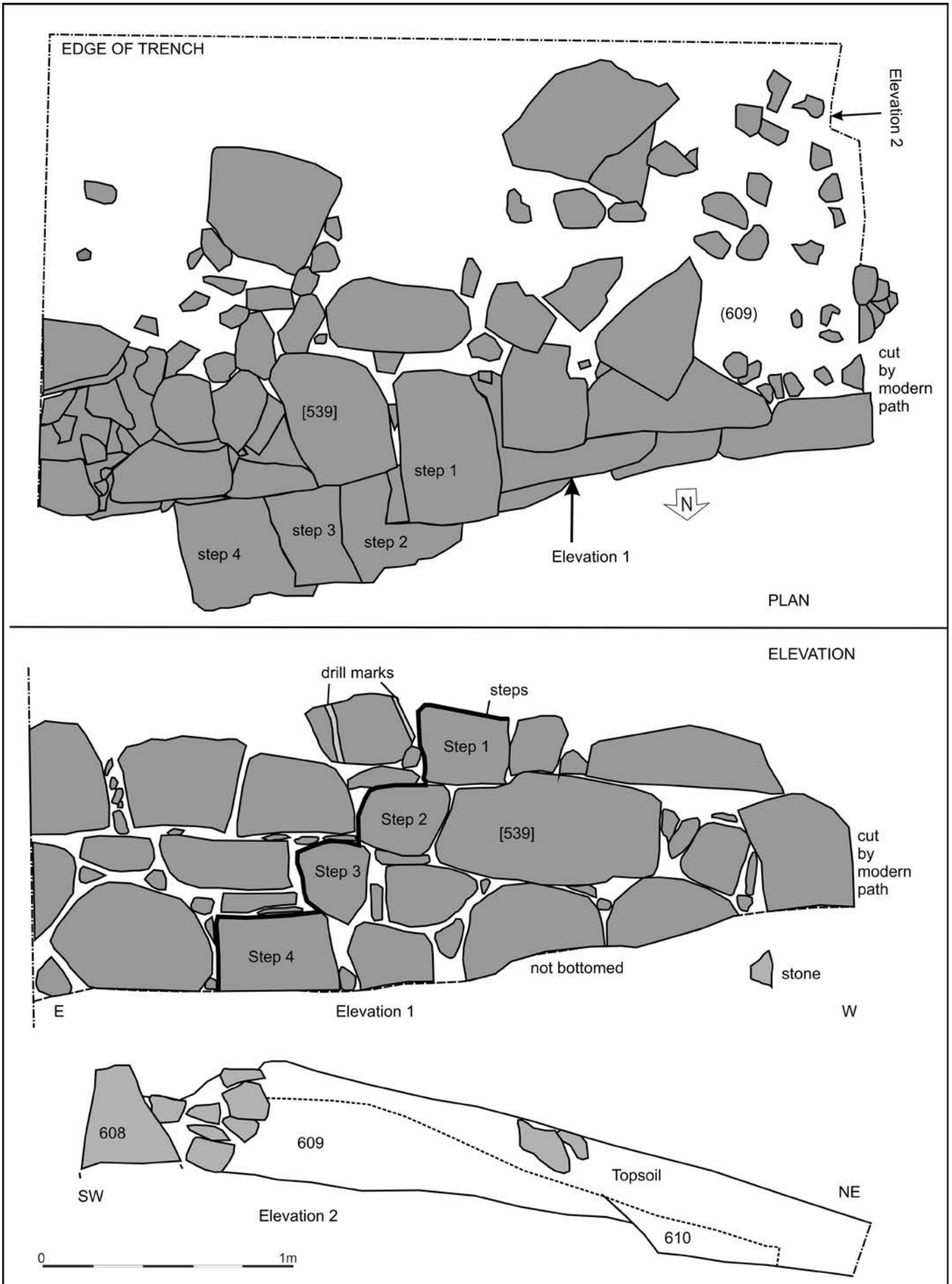


Figure 57: Plan (top) and north elevation (bottom) of stone wall with steps (539)



*Plate 65: Wall (539) showing steps (on the right of the ranging rod); facing south*



*Plate 66: Wall (539) with details of steps; facing south*



*Plate 67: Wall (539) with detail of drill mark on NW corner of stone on west side of Step 1; facing west*



*Plate 68: South façade of wall (539) showing soil infill behind steps and no evidence of steps on south side of wall; facing north*

## Nineteenth Century Military Training Camp

An evaluation was carried out by Murray Archaeological Services (Murray 2014, 28) of a group of 27 circular enclosures or possible huts which lie in a plantation 40 m north of the former stables of Aden House between NGR: NJ 9805 4798 and NJ 9811 4819 (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ94NE 88). The Murrays thought that the structures they evaluated were 'likely to be of later prehistoric date' (Murray and Murray 2013, 23). These bear similarities to the features under investigation at this military training camp.

An orienteering map produced in 2006 (Figure 58) shows features in the area of woodland subjected to this excavation. There was an extensive area of circular structures in the park immediately north of the Farming Museum which was bulldozed in the 1990s to landscape this area for open grassland. The area had previously been extensively covered with trees (see OS 1st and 2nd edition maps).

Other features were recorded on this map to the west side of North Lodge. Three sub-circular features were investigated and they are the remains of drainage features.

Structure 9 appears on the 1st edition OS map (Figure 59) surveyed in 1870. No other features appear on this map, but it may not necessarily have been the only structure extant at this time. There are no features recorded in this area on the 2nd edition OS map.

The Russell family owned the Aden estate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. General Russell (pictured in 1875; Plate 69) commanded the 3rd (or Buchan) Administrative battalion. In 1871 armed with Snyder rifles, the riflemen were one of the first in Scotland to go under canvas. They pitched camp near the South lodge at Aden in a field sloping down towards the River Ugie. The innovation was a success and two years later the battalion camped again at Aden. In subsequent years successful camps were held on estates owned by the current commanding officers at the time: at Pitfour under Lieutenant

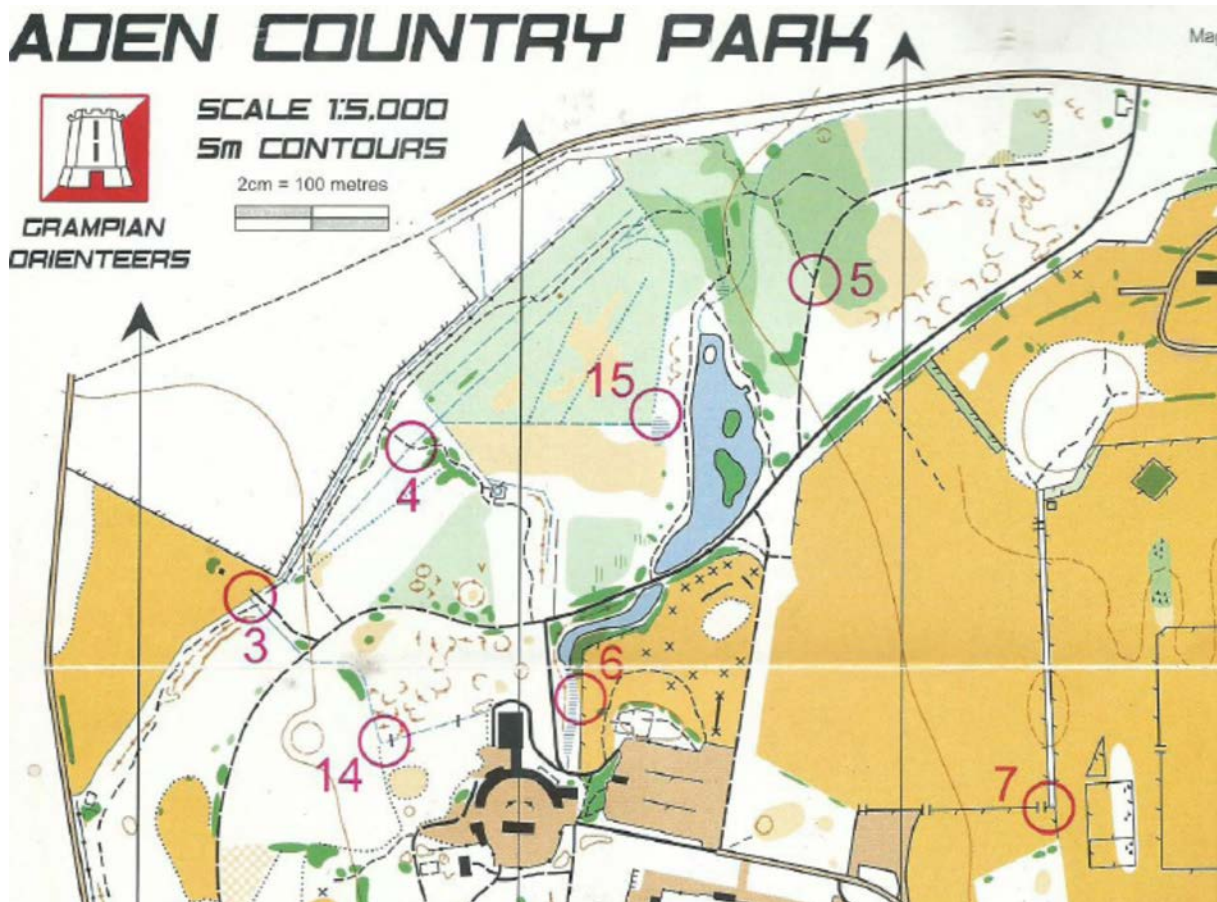


Figure 58: Detail from orienteering map showing woodland features; this excavation is east of '5' and the Murrays excavation south of '4'. The bulldozed features were NE of '14' (© Grampian Orienteers 2006).

Colonel John Ferguson and at Shevado near Brucklay Castle under Lieutenant Colonel Fordyce (Buchan 1997). An extensive family history is

available in MS 3634 (University of Aberdeen, Special Collections).

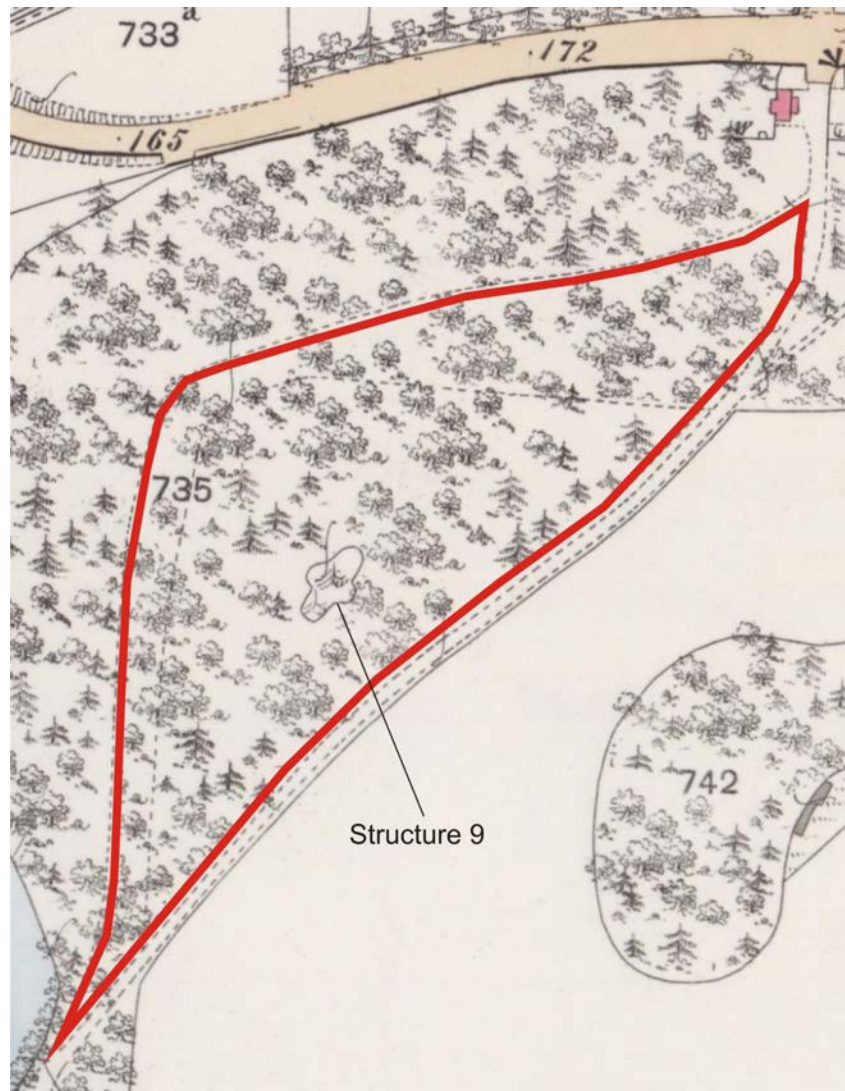


Figure 59: Detail from 1st edition OS map showing Structure 9. (Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100017966).



Plate 69: General Frank S Russell of Aden 1875 (© Aberdeenshire museums Service)

## The excavation

Following a plane table survey by staff and volunteers (Figure 60) an excavation took place from 27 March to 7 April and 2-11 May 2017. 40 volunteers helped with the excavation, and a total of 251 pupils from 11 classes from local primary schools dug with the team. Nineteen trenches were excavated over a range of banks and ditches and the interiors of features. A group of 10 structures were recorded (see below). The banks and ditches form various irregular shapes. Structures 4 and 5 are circular banks and ditches with an entrance. Structures 1, 9 and 10 are oval or sub-oval and Structures 2 and 3 are linear with rounded embanked ends. Some of the structures are poorly preserved and trees have been removed from the site while others that have fallen are rotting *in situ* and forming mounds. There are fallen trees and leaf litter over most of the site and the structures at the north end of the wood are less visible. Structures such as Structure 7 may have been more extensive when constructed.

## Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 3.5 m by 4.5 m in size and located within the centre of circular bank of Structure 4 (Figure 60), and was mainly excavated by local primary classes. The material encountered was a medium grey sandy clay loam to a depth of 0.35-0.45 m. A number of copper alloy fly buttons were recovered along with iron nails, a bolt, flints and eighteenth to nineteenth century ceramics. Charcoal was recovered from the NW corner of the trench but it was scattered throughout the layer and thought to originate from a burnt tree rather than a hearth.

## Trench 2

Trench 2 was 4 m by 2 m in size dug within the south end of Structure 3 (Figure 61, Plate 70). It contained a medium grey sandy clay loam up to 0.35 m in depth but no evidence of structures was recorded. A number of copper alloy fly buttons were recovered from the trench.

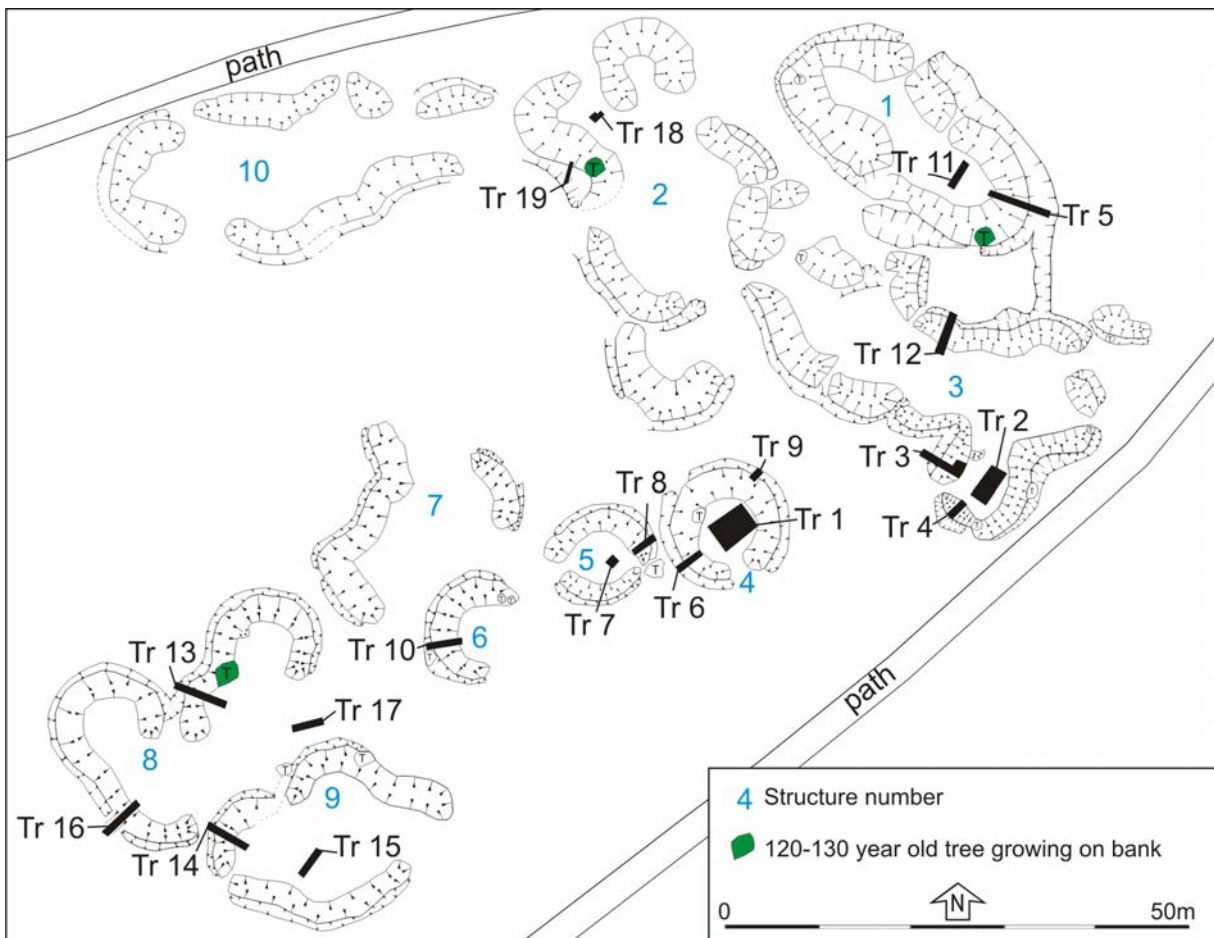


Figure 60: Plan showing structures, trenches and older trees

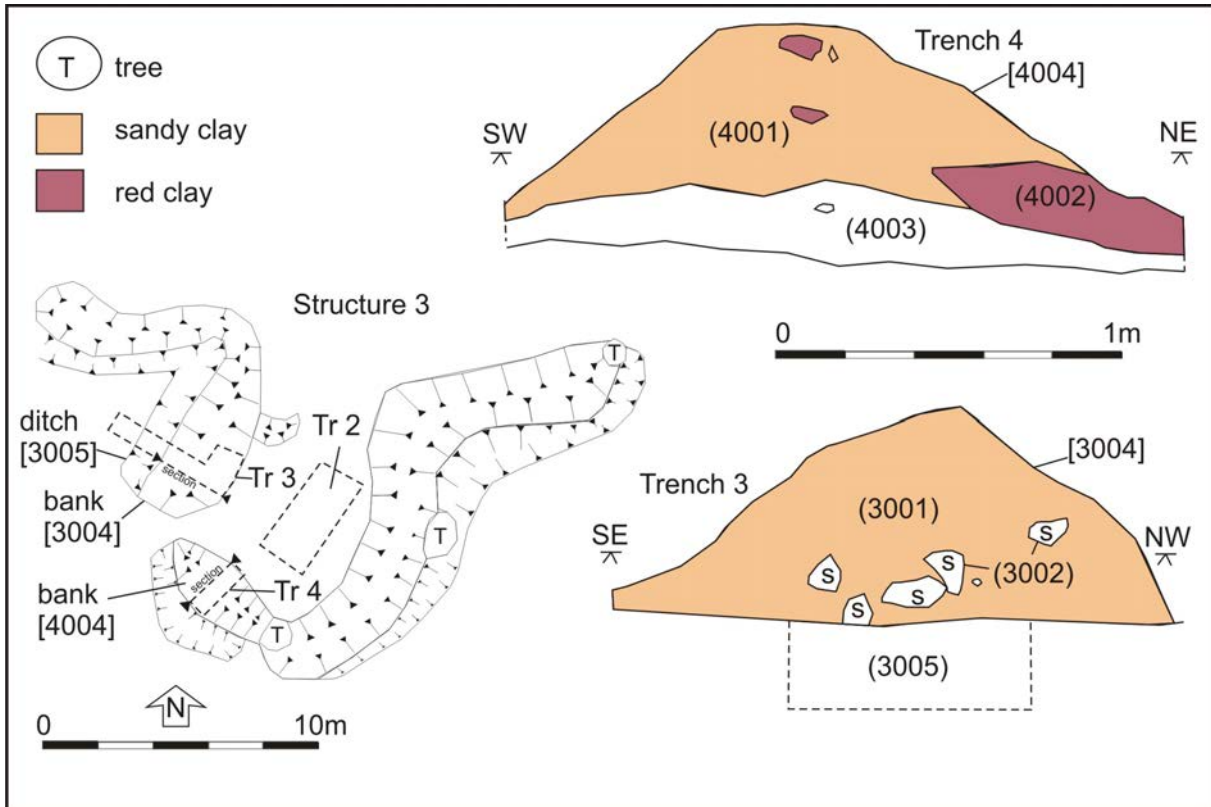


Figure 61: Plans and sections of Trenches 2, 3 and 4



Plate 70: Trench 2 (centre); facing SW

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was 5 m long and a maximum of 2.5 m wide and dug through bank and ditch (3004 and 3005) at the south end of Structure 3 (Figure 61). Bank (3006) was 1.6 m wide by a maximum of 0.6 m high and consisted of stones in light brown sandy clay interpreted as redeposited natural cast up whilst digging the ditch. A layer of stones (3002, Plate 71) was investigated but was revealed to be a dump of stones within the base of the bank.



*Plate 71: Section through bank (3004) showing stones (3002) a dump of stones in the base of the bank; facing NW*

### Trench 4

Trench 4 was 2.5 m long and 1 m wide and dug through the bank (4004) on the SW side of the south end of Structure 3 (Figure 61). The bank (4004, Plates 72 and 73) was 1.8 m wide and a maximum of 0.5 m high consisting of light brown sandy clay with patches of red clay. The soil under the bank (4003) contained fragments of pantiles and brick as well as iron nails.



*Plate 73: Section through bank (4004) showing clay subsoil cast up from ditch; facing SE*



*Plate 72: Trench 4 (foreground) through bank (4004); facing NE*

## Trench 5

Trench 5 was 3.5 m long and 1 m wide and was dug through the bank and ditches on the SE side of Structure 1 (Figure 62). The bank (5005) was 3.3 m wide and a maximum of 0.6 m high. It consisted of light brown sandy clay (5001) dug from the ditch and cast up on top of the main bank fill of grey loam (5010, Plates 74 and 75). Structure 1 was built on a sandy knoll consisting of light brown sandy clay under a layer of reddish brown sand. It is the highest point of the site and one of the earlier structures with a 120-130 year old tree growing on the bank.

Ditch (5004) ran parallel to the bank and was 0.7 m wide and 0.5 m deep with a flat base. The wider ditch (5015) to the SE was 0.9 m wide and 0.3 m deep and it ran at a slightly different angle that was not parallel to the bank. There were brick and tile fragments in the fill as well as an empty tube of Palmolive shaving cream. The ditch (5015) appeared to have been dug between Structures 1 and 3 possibly for drainage purposes.

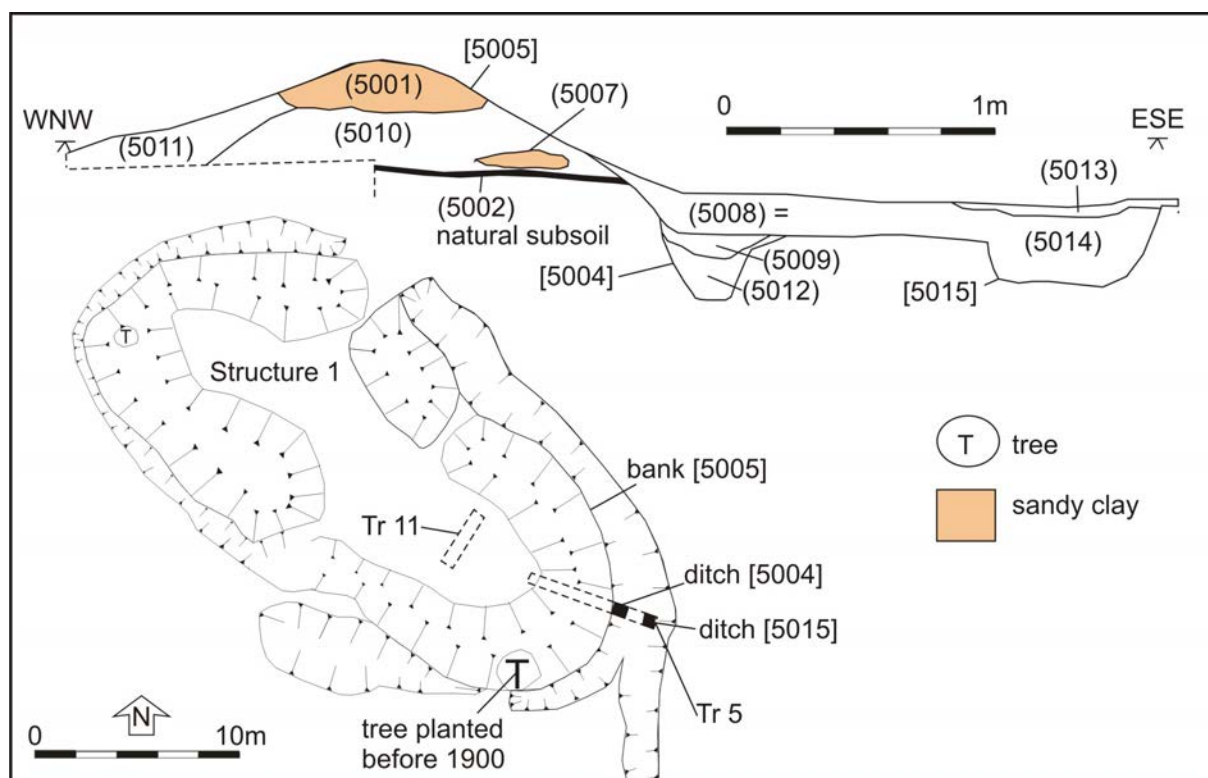


Figure 62: Plan and section of Trench 5



Plate 74: Trenches 5 and 5A bank (5005) to left, ditch (5004), ditch (5015) to right; facing NNE



Plate 75: Trench 5, bank (5005); facing NNE



## Trench 6

Trench 6 was 2.5 m long and 1 m wide dug through the SW bank of Structure 4 (Figure 63). The bank (6006) is 2.2 m wide and survives to 0.5 m in height and consists mainly of light brown sandy clay (6002) on top of a medium grey clay loam. The ditch (6008, Plate 76) is 0.7 m wide and 0.6 m deep with a wide flat bottom. It appeared to have been quickly backfilled with

two layers. The lower layer (6007) contained part of a marble floor tile placed on the bottom of the ditch next to iron wires and a complete glass bottle inscribed “Wm Thomson/ABERDEEN/LTD/BY APPOINTMENT TO/THE LATE GEORGE V/ABERDEEN” making the bottle post-1936 (Plate 77).

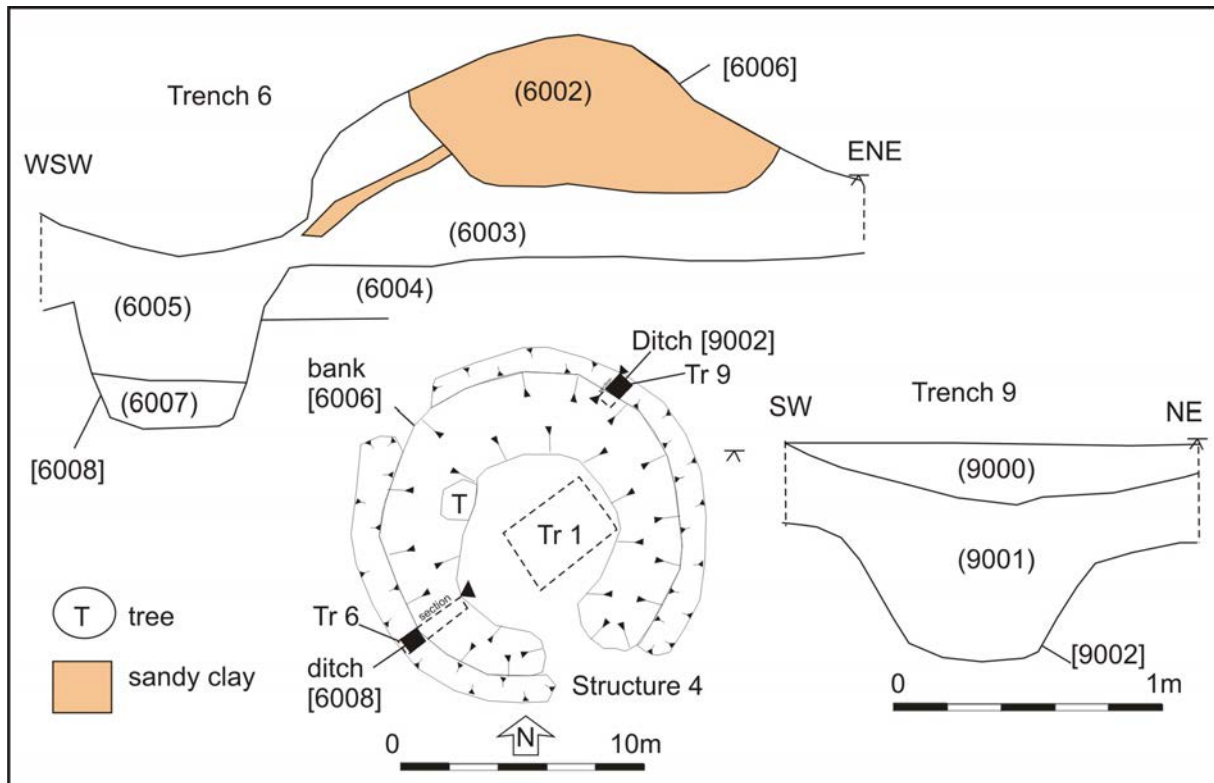


Figure 63: Plans and sections of Trenches 6 and 9



Plate 76: Ditch 6008 (left) and bank 6006 (right) showing light brown sandy clay (6002) cast up natural subsoil from digging the ditch; facing NW



Plate 77: Metal cables, 1930s glass bottle and marble floor tile in base of ditch (6008)



Plate 78: Trench 7 (bottom) and Trench 8 (centre) in Structure 5; facing NE

#### Trench 7

Trench 7 was 1 m by 1 m in size and located in the centre of Structure 5 (Plate 78). The medium grey sandy clay loam was 0.3 m deep and no structures or finds were recorded.

#### Trench 8

Trench 8 was 2.5 m long and 1 m wide and dug through the bank and ditch on the NE side of Structure 5 (Figure 64). Bank (8003) was at least 2 m wide and 0.5m high with light brown sandy subsoil dug from the ditch (8004) cast up on to the top of the bank (8002, Plate 79).



Plate 79: Trench 8 bank (8003) to right and ditch (8004) to left; facing SE

#### Trench 9

Trench 9 was 1.2 m long and 0.75 m wide and dug through the NE ditch of Structure 4. The ditch (9002, Figure 63) is 1 m wide and 0.55 m deep with a flat bottom and single fill with numerous roots.

#### Trench 10

Trench 10 was 3.5 m long and 0.75 m wide (Figure 65). The bank (10003, Plate 80) is 2.3 m wide and 0.5 m high and is constructed mainly of light brown sandy clay cast up from the ditch. The ditch is 0.7 m wide and 0.55 m deep with a single loam fill with roots and a flat base (Plate 81) containing a glass bottle and textile, and possibly the remains of a sock (Plate 82).



Plate 80: Trench 10 bank (10003) section; facing north

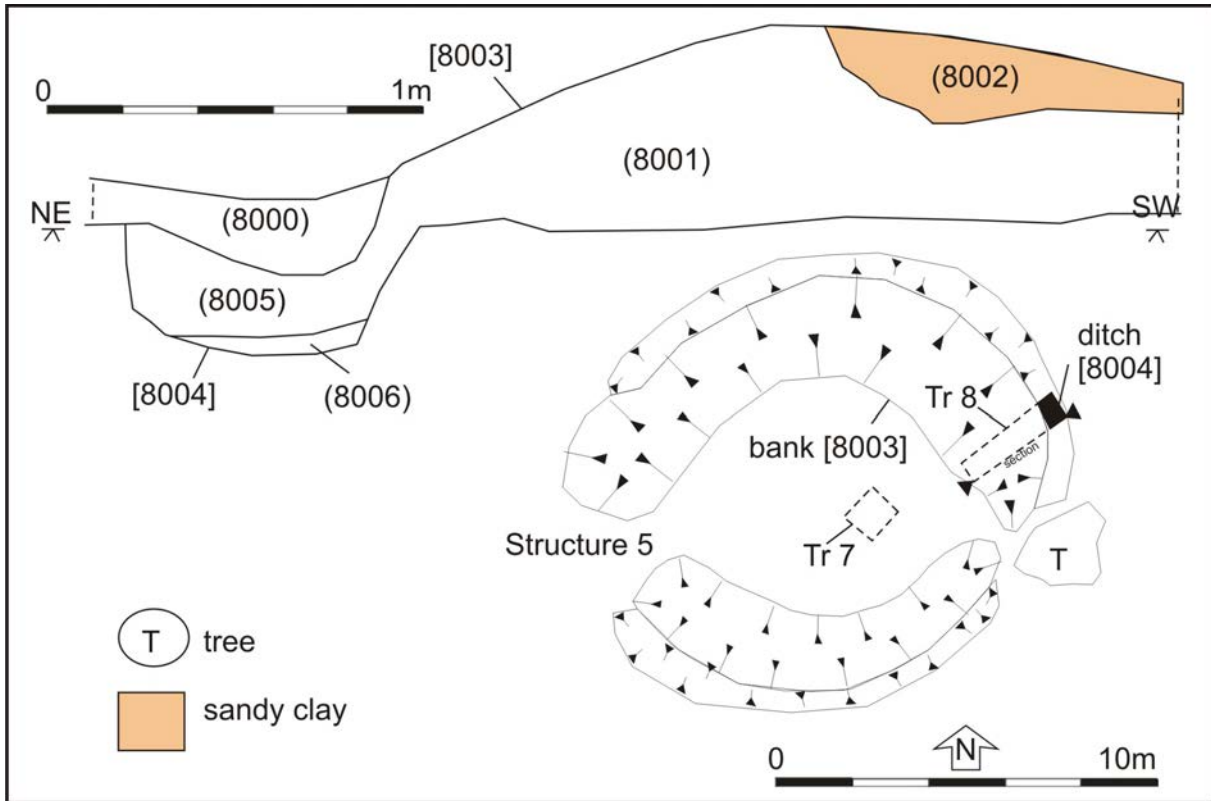


Figure 64: Plan and section of Trench 8

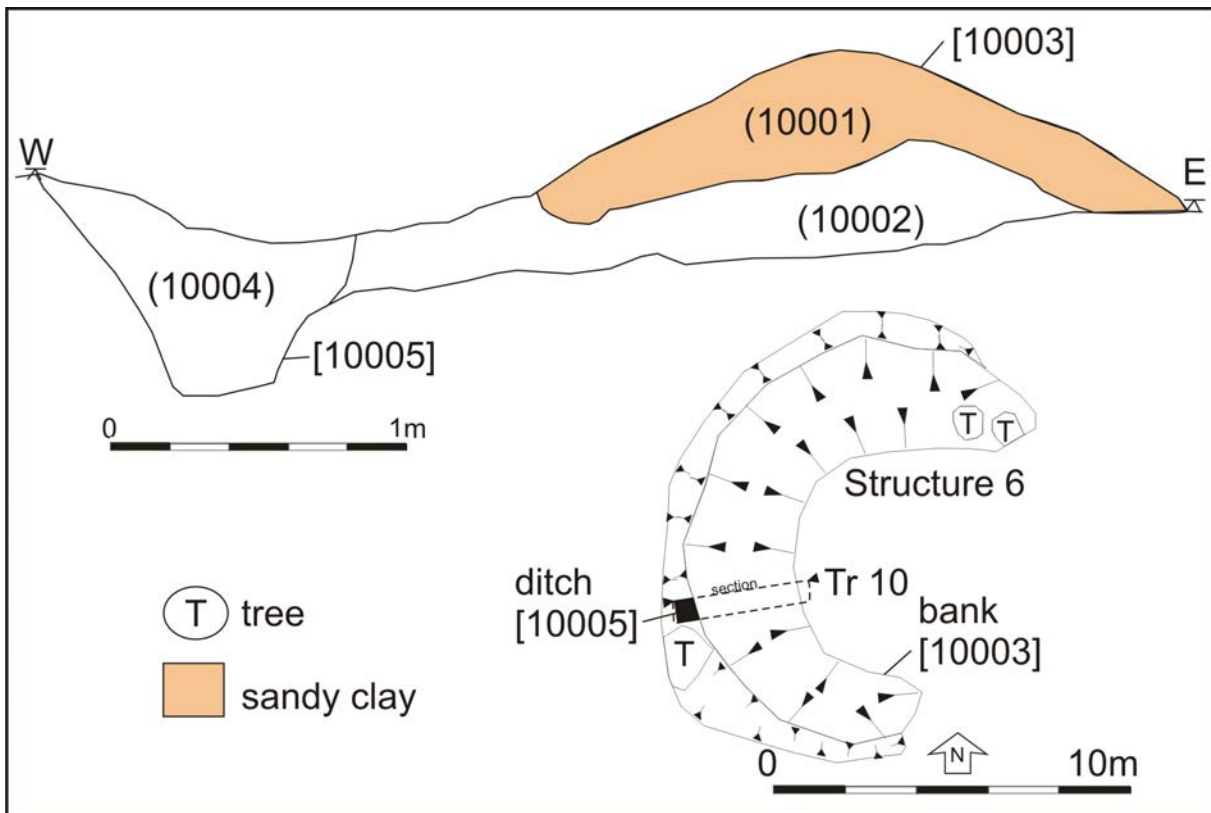


Figure 65: Plan and section of Trench 10



Plate 81: Trench 10 ditch (10005) section; facing south



Plate 83: Trench 12 bank (12011) to left and ditch (12012) to right; facing WNW



Plate 82: Trench 10 glass bottle and textile in the ditch (10005) fill



Plate 84: Trench 13 ditch (13006) to left and bank (13005) to right; facing NNE

### Trench 11

Trench 11 was 3 m long and 0.75 m wide and was excavated in the middle of Structure 1 to check for postholes or remains of structures. No features or finds were noted.

### Trench 12

Trench 12 was 5 m long and 1 m wide (Figure 66). Bank (12001) is 2.2 m wide and 1 m high and ditch (12012) is 1 m wide and up to 0.8 m deep with a flat base (Plate 83). There was a 'step' of clay (12009) on the inner side of the base of the trench which may have been packed into one side of the ditch to aid access.

### Trench 13

Trench 13 was 5.5 m long and 0.75 m wide (Figure 67). The bank (13005) is 2.5 m wide and up to 0.55 m high and the ditch (13006) is up to 1 m wide and 0.55 m deep with a stepped side, narrow flat base (Plate 84) and a single rooty loam fill.

### Trench 14

Trench 14 was 4.5 m long and 0.75 m wide (Figure 68, Plates 85 and 86). The bank (14007) is 2.5 m wide and 0.55 m high and the ditch (14006) is 0.8 m wide and 0.7 m deep with a small flat base and a single rooty loam fill.

### Trench 15

Trench 15 was 1.5 m long and 0.75 m wide (Figure 60). It was dug to check for features within Structure 9 but no features were identified. The four-lobed banks forming Structure 9 are shown on the 1st edition OS map (Figure 59).

### Trench 16

Trench 16 was 4 m long and 0.75 m wide dug through a possible ramp (16003, Figure 69). A slight slope had been built up using natural light brown sandy clay but there was no ditch within this trench suggesting that it had been a ramped area from the original construction of Structure 8.

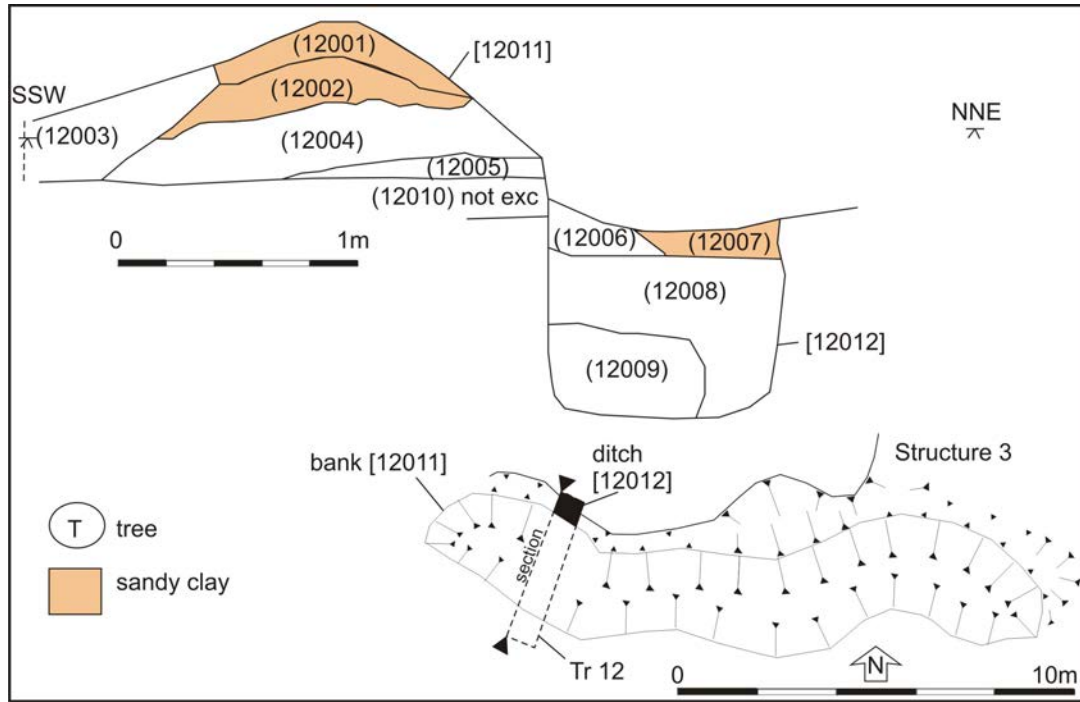


Figure 66: Plan and section of Trench 12

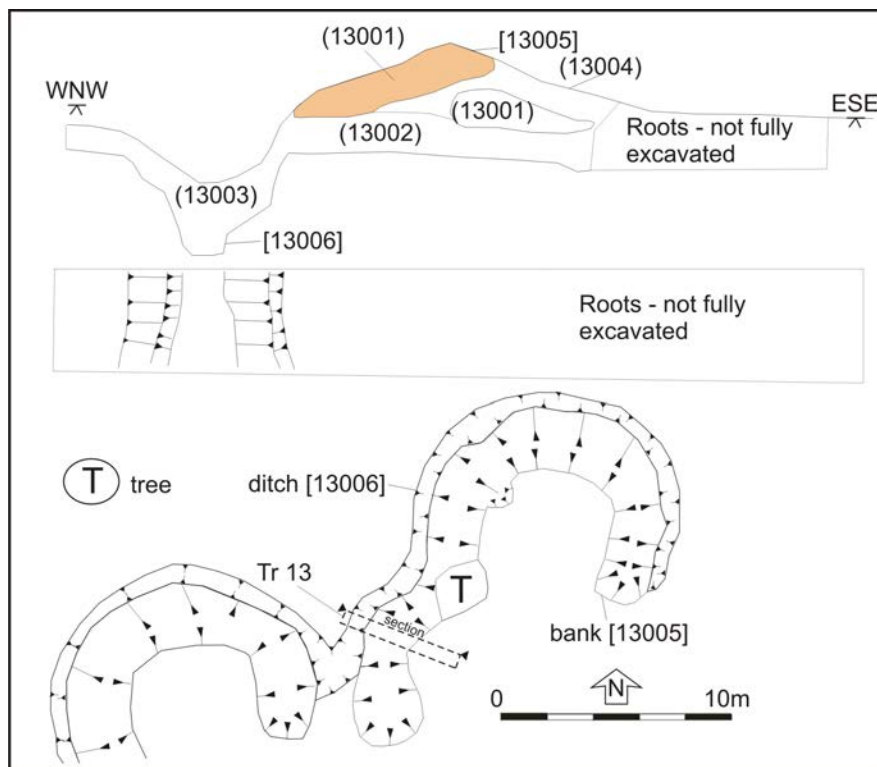


Figure 67: Plan and section of Trench 13

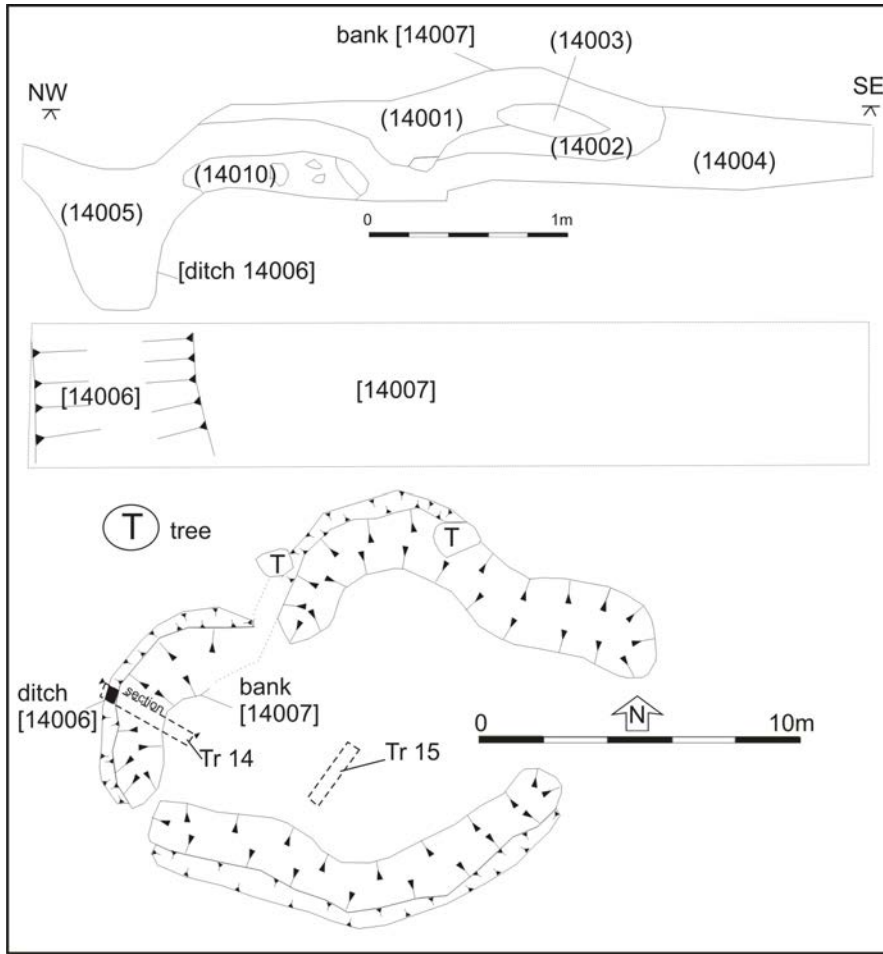


Figure 68: Plan and section of Trench 14

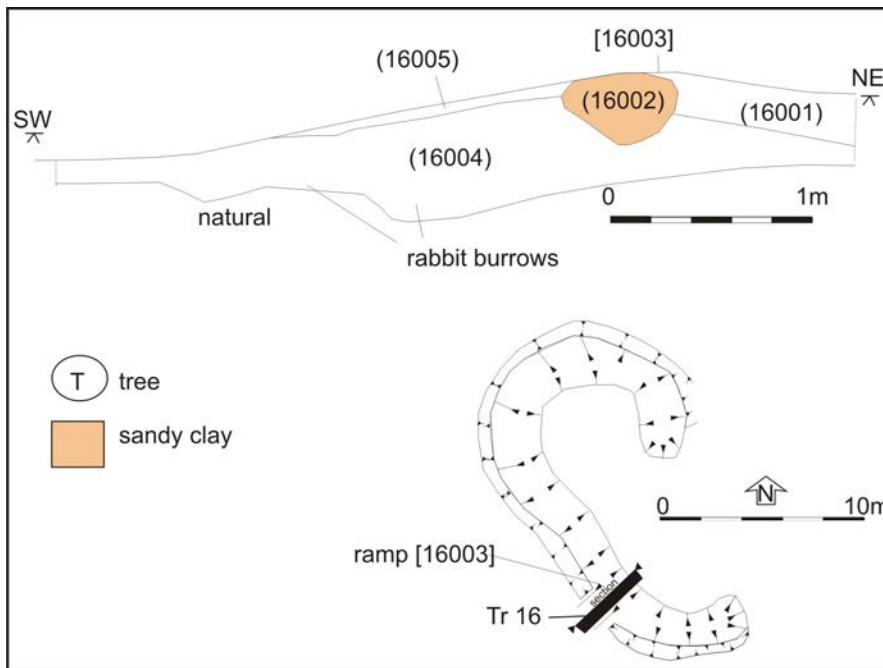


Figure 69: Trench 16 plan and section



Plate 85: Trench 14 ditch (14006); facing SW

### Trench 17

Trench 17 was 2 m long and 0.75 m wide (Figure 60), dug to check for the presence of a ditch but none was identified.

### Trench 18

Trench 18 was 2 m long and 0.75 m to 1.2 m wide and was dug to check for a ditch between the wings at the north end of Structure 2 (Figure 70). The terminal of a ditch (18005) was recorded (Plate 87). The ditch is square ended and filled with dark brown loam.



Plate 86: Trench 14 bank (14007); facing NE



Plate 87: Ditch terminal (18004) partly excavated; facing NE

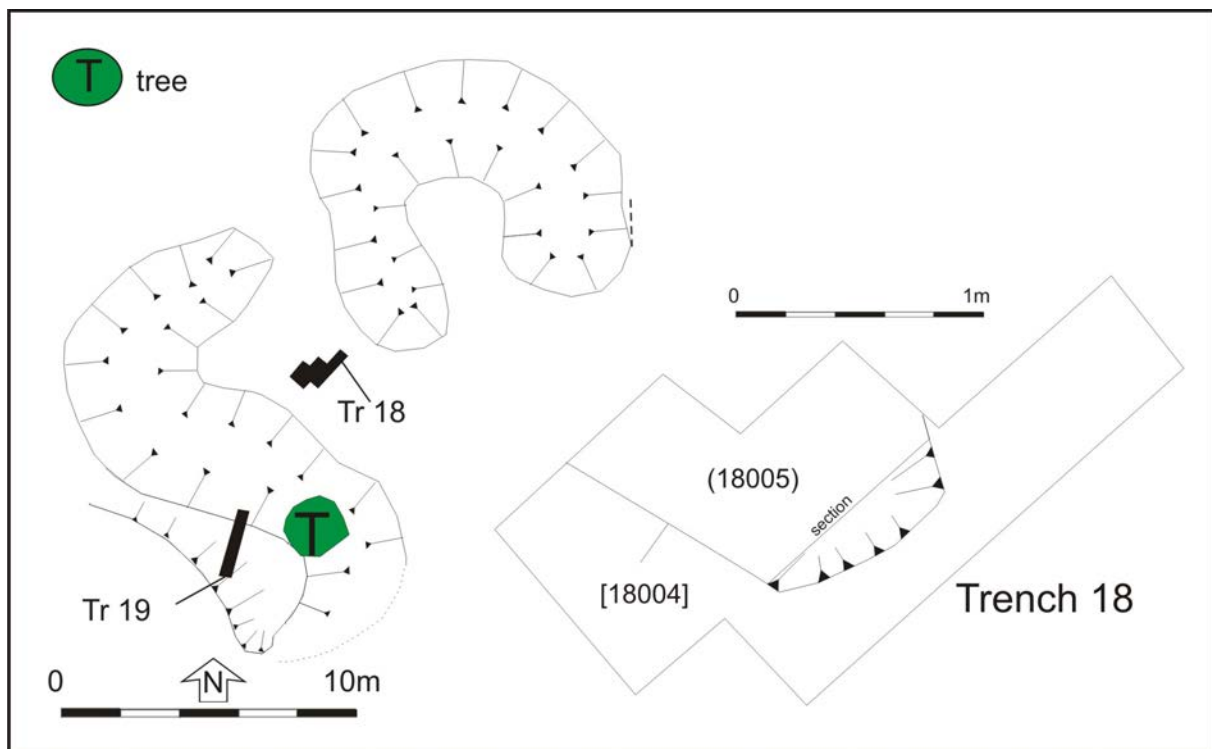


Figure 70: Trench 18 plan and section

### Trench 19

Trench 19 was 2 m long and 0.75 m wide dug through the ditch on the west side of Structure 2 (Figure 71). The ditch (19003) was 1.7 m wide and 0.2 m deep with an uneven base. This is not a defensive structure and was probably dug to provide material for the adjacent bank (19006), possibly for drainage purposes.

### Conclusions and recommendations

Nineteen trenches were excavated throughout the ten structures identified in woodland in Aden Country Park. The trenches were positioned within structures to look for internal features and through banks and ditches to answer specific questions relating to phasing and dating of the structures.

It would appear that some of the structures date to the mid-nineteenth century. Structures 1, 2 and 8 have trees growing on the bank which are 120-130 years old (Tree 4463 was recorded by Alan Motion as part of the tree survey of the park). Structure 9 appears on the 1st edition OS map (Figure 59) surveyed in 1870. No other

features appear on this map, but the author does not feel that this was necessarily the only structure extant at this time. It may just have been the most obvious one visible from the tracks and roadways. The track running on the south side of this woodland led from the North Lodge to Aden House. There are several larger beech trees lining this roadway which are also a similar size to the aged beech tree on the bank of Structure 1.

Structure 3 appears to date to the period around World War I. This structure is made up of zig-zag trenches with parallel banks on one side. Trench 12 cut through this bank and ditch system and although the bank was similar to the other earlier structures, the ditch was 1 m wide with a flat base and 0.8 m deep. This would appear to be more in keeping with trench training for World War I.

The banks and ditches form several irregular shapes. The assumption is that the various shapes were for training in different military disciplines such as weapons training and hand-to-hand combat. The shallower ditches (e.g.

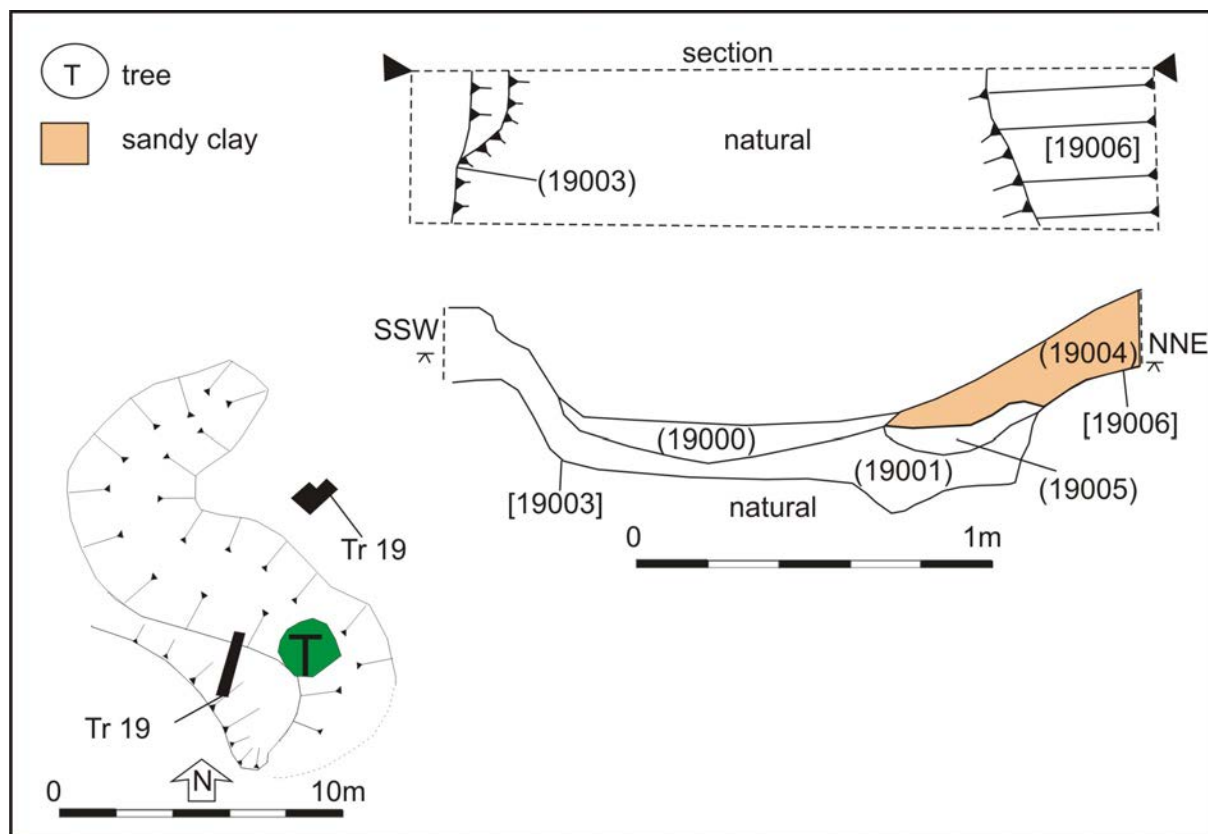


Figure 71: Trench 19 plan and section



Trench 19) are clearly not for defensive purposes whereas the deep narrow ditches (e.g. Trench 13 and 14) were constructed as 'ankle-breakers' to temporarily halt the progress of the attacker.

The features were presumably created during the ownership of the Russell family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. General Russell pictured in 1875 (Plate 69) commanded the 3rd (or Buchan) Administrative battalion who pitched camp at Aden on several occasions (Buchan 1997) and it is possibly that the banks and ditches were created at this time.

### Finds

Finds do not help with the dating of these structures as the ditches are filled with later material, possibly from the late 1930s or 40s. There is nineteenth century pottery, glass and other finds in the layers below the ditches, and although there are flints within these layers, there are no surviving prehistoric contexts.

No lead bullets were recovered from these trenches even though sieving was carried out in most trenches. We know that they would have collected used shells for re-use but it might have

been interesting to carry out a controlled metal-detector survey of these areas.

### Comparative sites

There are few similar sites known in Scotland. This makes the excellent survival of these features even more culturally significant. The group of 27 circular structures, the remains of a larger group bulldozed for the new arboretum after 1996, may also have been part of this military site. These features were excavated by Murray and Murray (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ94NE0111) who found little dating evidence apart from two fly buttons and a small number of flints. It is likely that this is a similar site to the present features and may benefit from another small number of trenches to complete the evaluation of it.

There is a series of ditches on Perwinnes Moss (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ91SW0155; NRHE NJ91SW 93; Figure 72, Plate 88) which is associated with a WWII radio station and are assumed to be World War II in date owing to their appearance as zig-zag trenches. The site was recorded by the current author in 2014 but would benefit from excavation to assess the date and nature of these trenches, and to compare them with the ones found at Aden.

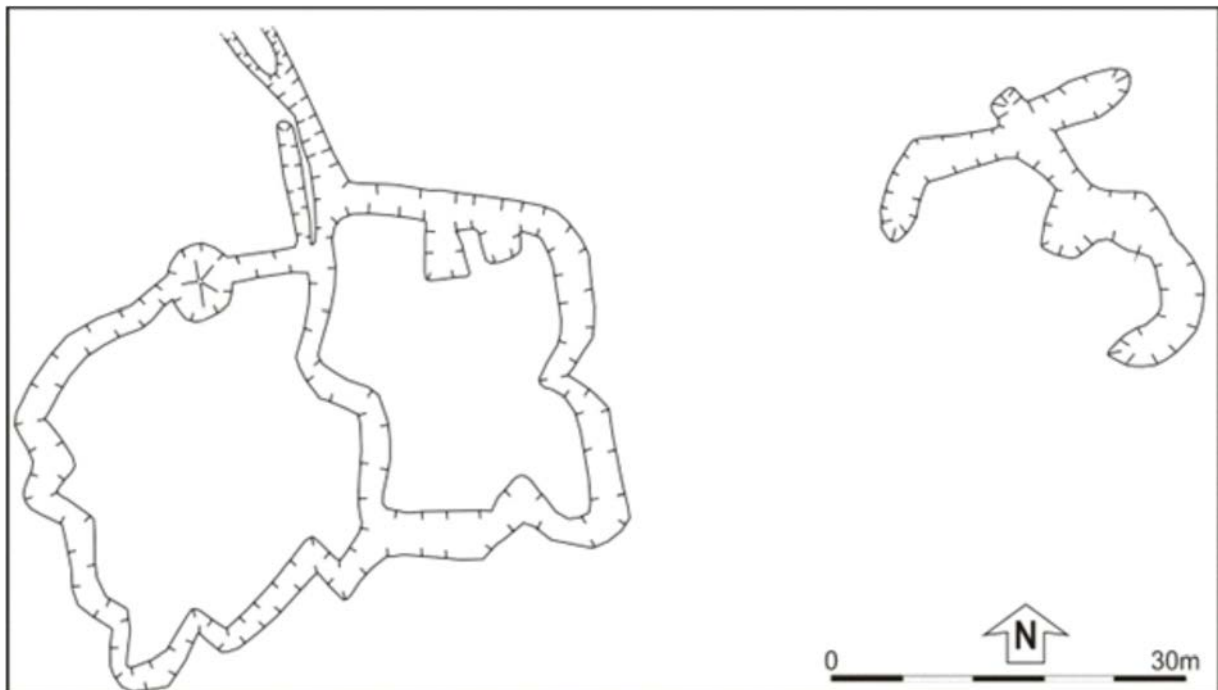


Figure 72: Trenches on Perwinnes Moss, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen adjacent to WWII pillbox and Direction Finding Station



*Plate 88: Corse Hill trench in woodland on Scotstown Moor*

There are a few excavated nineteenth century or WWI sites in Aberdeenshire. World War 1 sites include drill halls, for example, Oldmeldrum (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ82NW0112), Turriff (NJ74NW0085), Fraserburgh (NJ96NE0112), Strichen (NJ95NW0061), Peterhead (NK14NW0386) and Banff (NJ66SE0236), and defensive sites include pill-boxes at Balmedie which may date to WWI (Aberdeenshire HER NJ91NE0020, 21, 22). There were auxiliary hospitals in Banff used during WWI such as Chalmers Hospital (NJ66SE0233), Fyvie Guide House (NJ73NE0131) and in Drumrossie House, Inch (NJ62NW0056), and WWI prisoner-of-war camps at Boddam (NK14SW0097) where men were probably occupied in either Stirling Quarry or in the construction of the massive breakwaters of Peterhead harbour. Airfields which date from World War I include Ellon (NJ93SE0108) and Edzell (NO67SW0110).

The remains of an airship station at Lenabo, Forest of Deer (Aberdeenshire HER: NK04SW0025)

dates to World War I. The station was built on the site of a peat bog in the early months of 1915 by Tawse of Aberdeen. The site of a seaplane base at Loch of Strathbeg (NK05NE0023) was opened in 1916. It was the base of 400 Flight of 249 Squadron in 1918. There are remains of several bomb craters caused by a WWI Zeppelin on the 3rd May 1916 at Waulkmill west of Inch (Aberdeenshire HER: NJ62NW0099). There is still a surviving cracked window in Freefield House that was caused by the bombing.

Within this wider context the remains at Aden are only highlighted further in terms of rarity and significance. Following the devastation of Storm Arwen in November 2021, which removed virtually all tree cover from this site, an unsupervised clearance of the fallen trees by machines was undertaken. This resulted in damage to the site and many of the structures, the impact of which has still to be evaluated.

## Twin Lodges

The woodland at Twin Lodges is currently being damaged by the creation of bike ramps and the burning of trees (Plate 89). Walkover surveys with volunteers through the steeply sloped woodland revealed possible stone alignments (Figures 73 and 74) which were subjected to an archaeological evaluation on 6-12 December 2017.



Plate 89: Soil and wood ramps being created around the Twin lodges structures; facing NW

## The excavation

A small team carried out a plane table survey and an archaeological evaluation from 6-12 December 2017 in cold snowy weather. Ten volunteers were involved in the work over four days, and a group of three pupils and two teachers from Mintlaw Academy came to help with the excavation.

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated within Structure 1 (Figures 74 and 75) which consists of large boulders on the north, east and south sides which appear to have been large boulders rolled into place to form basic walls (Plate 90). There is a layer of small stones in clay loam (103) forming a basic platform or foundation (Plate 91) and there is a lot of smaller stone within the structure, possibly forming a basic floor. Trees have disturbed the interior and the west side of the structure, and it is not certain if there was ever a large stone forming the west wall, or if one existed. One flint was recovered from topsoil (101) as well as quartz and a modern mammal pelvis bone. No charcoal or other dating evidence was recovered.

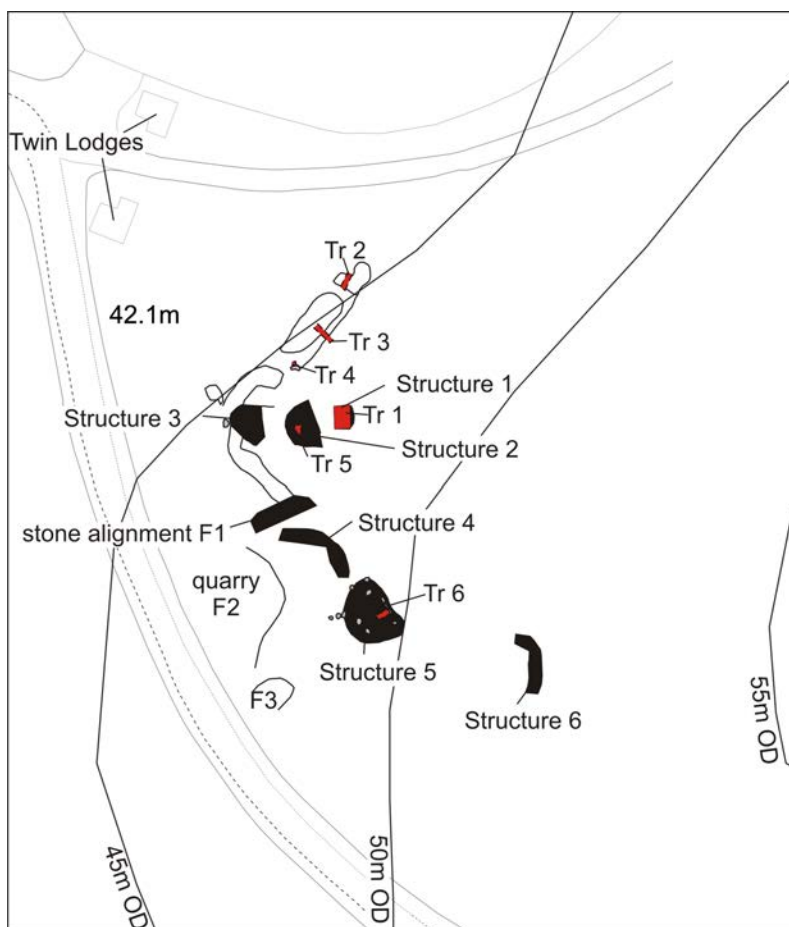


Figure 73: Location and contour plan

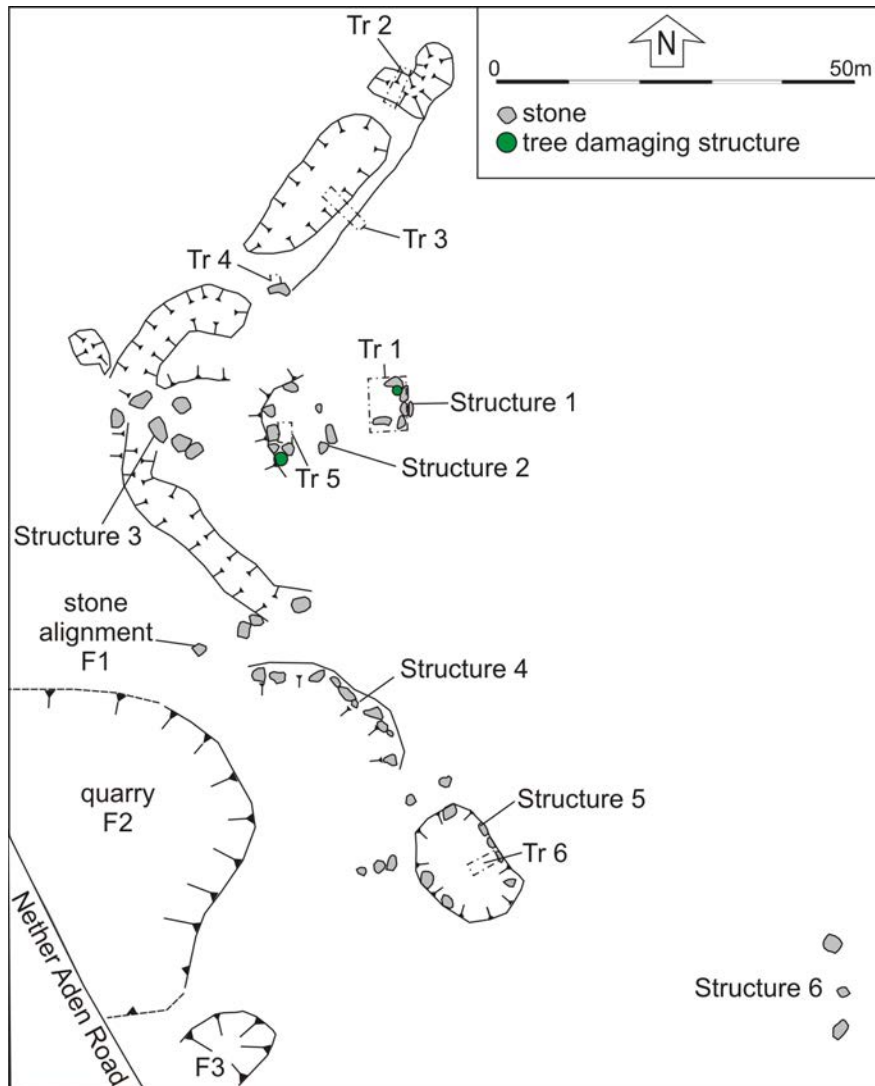


Figure 74: Plan of trenches and main structures identified



Plate 90: Structure 1 showing large boulders (102) with small stones in centre (104); facing east

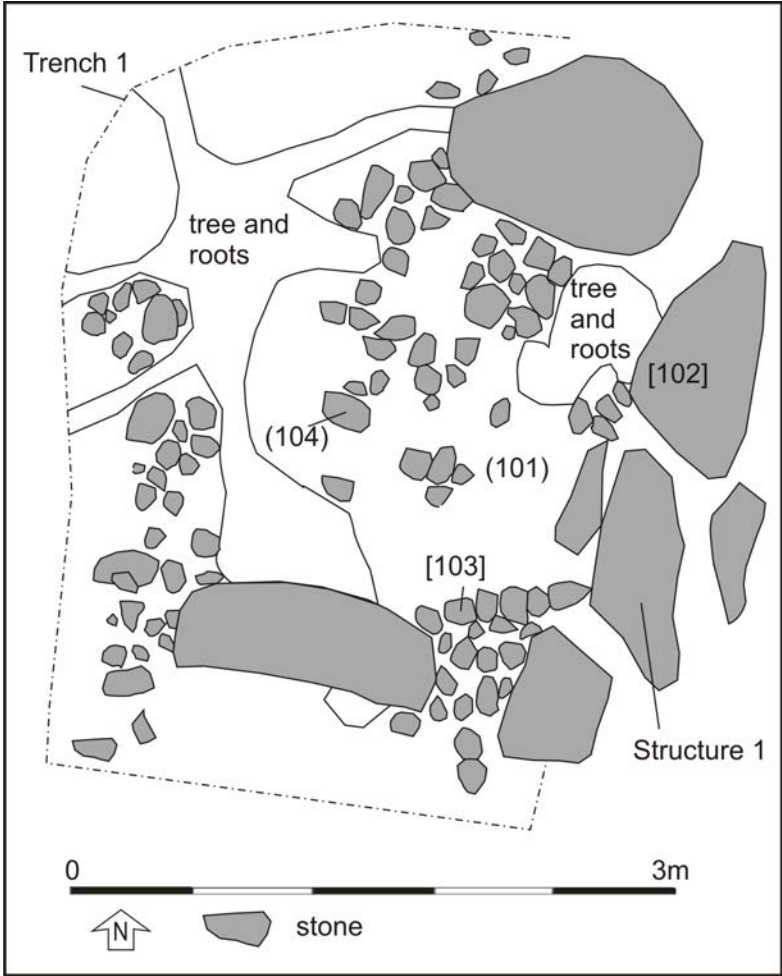


Figure 75: Plan of Trench 1



Plate 91: Trench 1 south end showing large stones (102) to the bottom and small stone 'foundation' (103) in the centre; facing west

## Trench 2

Trench 2 was 4 m by 0.8 m in size and dug through a bank and ditch (Figure 74; Plate 92). These features were not archaeological as the bank is thought to be part of the woodland management and the ditch a result of water running down the slope.



Plate 92: Trench 2 facing SE

## Trench 3

Trench 3 was 3.5 m by 0.8 m in size and was dug through a shallow ditch (Figure 74). Stone in grey sandy loam was excavated and a large number of earth-fast boulders uncovered, but nothing archaeological was detected. This may be a weathered channel down the slope with extensive burrowing at the NW end.

One flint was recovered from disturbed sandy loam in the centre of the trench, but no other finds were recovered.

## Trench 4

Trench 4 was a 1 m by 1m trench excavated next to a large earth-fast boulder (Figure 74). Leaf litter and grey sandy loam were 0.25 m deep and nothing archaeological was detected.

## Trench 5 (Structure 2)

Structure 2 is a sub-oval area of large stones (Figure 74, Plates 93 and 94) on a plateau of soil. There are trees growing within the structure. A 1 m by 2 m trench was dug in the SW corner of the structure. The fill was grey sandy loam, and it contained several large sherds of nineteenth century pottery, but no other finds were recovered. The subsoil was encountered 0.2 m below the surface.



Plate 93: Trench 5, Structure 2; facing west



Plate 94: West edge of Structure 2 showing trees growing between stones and volunteers working on Structure 1 in background; facing east

## Trench 6

Trench 6 was 1 m wide and 2 m long and excavated to reveal the large stones of Structure 6 (Figure 74). Large boulders (602) had been placed in a sub-oval shape and smaller stones packed in between to create a basic wall (Figure 76, Plate 95). The fill of the trench was a depth of 0.2 m of sandy loam on top of sandy subsoil; no finds or internal features were recorded. This type of structure might have been for agricultural use such as a sheep fold or may be a basic enclosure of earlier, possibly prehistoric date. Further excavation to try to recover dating evidence would be required.



Plate 95: Trench 6, Structure 5 stonework; facing NE

## Stone alignment F1

A line of four large stones (Figure 74) may be part of a structure but was not investigated during this work. It may also have been the result of clearing for tree planting or paths.

## Quarry F2

'Gravel pit' F2 (Plate 96) was identified from 1st and 2nd edition OS maps; when in use it was accessed from the Nether Aden Road.

## Depression F3

A depression 10 m wide which may be associated with the quarry F2 was not investigated during this work.



Plate 96: Quarry F2; facing east

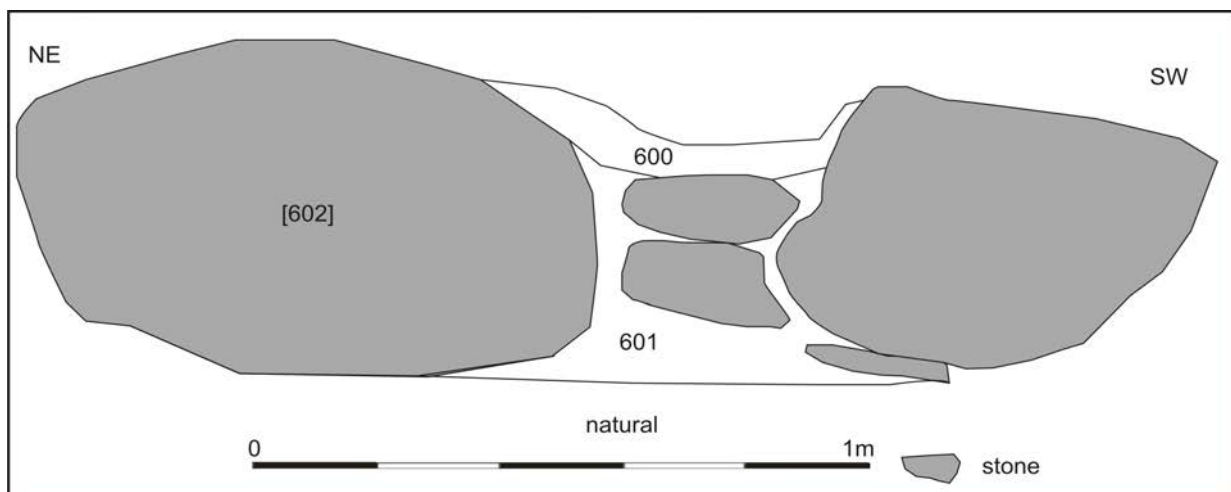


Figure 76: Trench 6, Structure 5

## Discussion

Structures 1-5 are constructed of large boulders and trenching has revealed that there are underlying structures or foundations. Structure 1 appears to have a small stone foundation whereas Structure 5 has a basic walling. These structures are most likely to be associated with the estate management or military use of the land. Uses such as grouse butts have been considered for Structure 1, but it appears to face the Twin Lodges and open fields to the north and west which would be unsuitable for grouse shooting. There also appear to be three structures in a line on a slope with Structure 1 being set slightly higher than Structure 2 which is above Structure 3. If these were for military training, then firing would have been to the north only. Structures 4 and 5 may have a farming use such as sheep folds but this land has been within a wooded area since at least the 1st edition OS map and so this is unlikely.

A slight possibility exists that these structures are much earlier in date, possibly prehistoric, or that they date to several periods. Two flints were recovered from the excavated soil but that might be expected in an area known to contain prehistoric sites. Nineteenth century pottery was recovered from the topsoil within Trench 5 (Structure 2) but this may have been from a later use of the site in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. No lead bullets were recovered from these trenches even though sieving was carried out in most trenches. Used shells would have been collected for re-use but it might be interesting to carry out a controlled metal-detector survey of these areas.

These features should therefore be protected from future damage from tree planting and felling as well as from use for recreational activities such as bike ramps; further archaeological investigation may reveal the origins of these enigmatic features.

## The Finds

During this series of archaeological interventions many finds were recovered. Most were from topsoil or disturbed contexts, and many were recorded and returned to the trenches. All finds are catalogued in the site archive and there are grey literature reports for each site (Cameron 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2021).

Lithics from the Neolithic Enclosure and Chapel sites from the excavations in 2016 and 2017 are reported below; there are a small number of other lithic finds, but none from secure contexts, so these remain unreported but are listed in the archives.

The window glass from the Chapel site was reported from the initial excavation in 2016 (see below); there are also a small number of glass sherds from the later excavations, but they are the same types of glass as from the 2016 assemblage. No glass was found associated with the rectangular manse building.

The coins reported on below all came from the 2016 excavation of the T-shaped Chapel; there was evidence of metal-detecting at the site on an evening during the dig and it was decided to do a controlled metal-detector survey of the interior of the structure after the excavation had shown that the deposits on the interior were heavily disturbed by root activity, demolition and other activities at the site. Therefore, most metallic objects were removed from the site after that date and are reported here. No other historic coins were found on other sites within the park.



## The lithic assemblage from 2016 and 2017

By Torben Bjarke Ballin

### Introduction

In 2015, Cameron Archaeology evaluated two buildings at Aden Country Park, Aberdeenshire followed by the excavation of these structures in 2016 (see Fieldwork results, above). The two buildings were identified as post-medieval but amongst the building remains and rubble a small number of residual lithic artefacts were recovered. The 17 lithics are clearly of a prehistoric date. In addition, a total of 169 lithic artefacts were recovered during fieldwalking of the Neolithic enclosure field (HH1).

The finds from 2016 are from the excavation of the T-shaped building (see above) and as a result are redeposited, whereas those from 2017 were plotted during organised fieldwalking and may have a slightly higher research potential. The two assemblages were kept separate, and below they are presented, characterised, and discussed separately.

The purpose of this report is to characterize the lithics from the two assemblages briefly, with special reference to raw-materials and typo-technological attributes. From this characterization, it is sought to date and discuss the finds and, in the case of the finds from Field HH1, their distribution across this field. The evaluation of the lithic material is based upon two detailed catalogues and in this report the artefacts are referred to by their number (CAT no.) in the two catalogues. Each CAT no has been given a prefix to identify which assemblage the individual artefacts are from (e.g., CAT 16:1 and CAT 17:1).

The definitions of the main lithic categories follow Ballin (2021). The abbreviation GD = greatest dimension.

### The assemblage 2016

From the excavation in 2016, 17 lithic artefacts were recovered. They are listed in Table 4. In total, 64% of the assemblage is debitage, whereas 18% is cores and 18% tools.

Type	Flint	Quartz	Total
Flakes	9	2	11
Levallois-like cores	1		1
Bipolar cores	1		1
Core frags	1		1
Plano-convex knives	1		1
Short end-scrapers	1		1
Piercers	1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 4: Assemblage 2016: General lithic artefact list

### Raw materials – types, sources and condition

Apart from two pieces of milky quartz (CAT 16:14, 16:15), all artefacts are of flint. The flint is generally fine-grained red or light brown, but several pieces (CAT 16:11, 16:17) are of mottled grey flint, which may be exotic, possibly deriving from north-east England (Ballin 2011b). The flint generally has abraded cortex, and the curvature of the cortical surfaces of the pieces suggests a modest original pebble size. Most likely the red and brown flint was obtained from coastal sources, such as beach walls. In contrast to the flint from the Buchan Ridge Gravels near Peterhead (Bridgland 1997; Suddaby and Ballin 2011), the reduction of which was hampered by impurities and internal flaws, the flint recovered from the present site appears to be fairly pure. It is uncertain whether the quartz was procured from veins or as pebble quartz (Ballin 2008).

### Debitage

The 11 pieces of debitage are all flakes. Apart from CAT 16:10 and 16:12, which are intact, all are fragmented to some degree. The GD of the flakes and flake fragments varies between 11 mm and 65 mm. Of seven technologically definable pieces, five are hard-hammer flakes and two are bipolar. CAT 16:6 and 16:13 have finely faceted platform remnants, defining them as Levallois-like flakes, and dating them to the middle/late Neolithic framework. Eight flakes are tertiary, whereas three are secondary.

### Cores

This category includes three specimens, namely one fragment of a Levallois-like core (CAT 16:8); one bipolar core (CAT 16:3); and one core fragment (CAT 16:5).

At a first glance, CAT 16:8 seems to be the broken-off working-edge of a scraper, but the lower face of this piece is characterized by negative flake scars, suggesting that the modification may instead be the fine platform-faceting of a flat Levallois-like core (GD 30 mm). CAT 16:3 is a bifacial bipolar core with two reduction axes (two sets of opposed terminals), and it measures 44 by 36 by 14 mm. CAT 16:5 is a core fragment, and parallel dorsal flake or blade scars indicate that this *may* be a fragment of relatively sophisticated single-platform core (GD 30 mm).

### Tools

Only three implements were retrieved during the investigations in 2016, namely one plano-convex knife (CAT 16:1); one short end-scraper (CAT 16:11); and one piercer (CAT 16:16). CAT 16:1 is a well-executed plano-convex knife based on a hard-hammer blade blank (43 by 20 by 5 mm). It has extensive scale-flaking along its left lateral side (reaching 8-9 mm from the edge), and less extensive scale-flaking along its right lateral side (c. 3.5 mm from the edge). Both edges are slightly convex to straight, and acute, and they are both fully modified. CAT 16:11 is a short end-scraper on a robust hard-hammer flake (32 by 30 by 11 mm), and it has a convex, steep working-edge at its distal end. CAT 16:16 is an expedient piercer on a bipolar flake (41 x 29 x 13 mm), and it has a simple tip at its distal end, formed by a short retouch at either side of this point.

### 2016 assemblage discussion

As the entire assemblage is residual, with the finds having been extracted from a post-medieval building parts and building/demolition rubble, it is by no means certain that the pieces are of the same date. However, this small assemblage does come across as being typo-technologically homogeneous, and the finds could well be contemporary.

No finds indicate that the site was visited in the earlier part of prehistory, whereas several details suggest a date after the Mesolithic period, such as 1) the dominance of flakes over blades; 2) the fact that the only blade present (the blank of scale-flaked knife CAT 16:1) is short and broad (LW 43 by 20 mm); 3) the presence of a broken Levallois-like core (CAT 16:8); and 4) the application of invasive retouch (CAT 16:1). The fragmented

Levallois-like core, as well as two flakes struck off such cores (CAT 16:6, 16:8, 16:13), suggest a date in the middle/late Neolithic period (Ballin 2011a; 2011b; Suddaby and Ballin 2010). Plano-convex knives occur throughout the Neolithic/early Bronze Age period (Ballin 2021), but the Bronze Age versions of the tool form tend to be relatively short (thus the use of the now obsolete term ‘slug knives’; Finlayson 1997; Ballin 2006), whereas later Neolithic ones tend to be based on broad blades, like the period’s edge-polished knives (e.g. Manby 1974, 88-9). If, as proposed above, the raw material of scraper CAT 16:11 and flake CAT 16:17 is indeed Yorkshire flint, this supports the suggested later Neolithic date, as the importation of flint into Scotland from north-east England was mainly a middle/late Neolithic phenomenon (Ballin 2011b).

### The assemblage 2017

From the excavation in 2017, 169 lithic artefacts were recovered. They are listed in Table 5. In total, 78% of the assemblage is debitage, whereas 7% is cores and 15% tools. Five raw pebbles (four of flint and one of stone) were also collected, but they are not included in the table.

Type	No.
Debitage	
Chips	11
Flakes	94
Blades	11
Microblades	5
Indeterminate pieces	9
Crested pieces	1
Total debitage	131
Cores	
Single-platform cores	4
Cores w 2 platforms at angle	1
Levallois-like cores	4
Irregular cores	2
Bipolar cores	1
Total cores	12
Tools	
Microburins	1
Short end-scrapers	5
Side-scrapers	3
Scale-flaked knives	2
Truncated pieces	2
Pieces with edge-retouch	12
Pieces with invasive retouch	1
Total tools	26
Total	169

Table 5: Assemblage 2017: General lithic artefact list

### Raw materials – types, sources and condition

Apart from one flake of an igneous type of rock (CAT 17:106) and an indeterminate piece of quartz (CAT 17:125), all finds from the 2017 excavation are of flint. Most of the flints are red, orange or honey-brown, supplemented by some grey and olive-coloured pieces. Most flints are relatively vitreous and fine-grained, whereas others are more chalcedonic with a ‘greasy’ hue. Most, however, are characterized by impurities of internal chalk balls, micro-crystals or fossils and they tend to be riddled with fault planes and thermal cracks. These impurities and flaws caused a large proportion of the site’s flint nodules to fracture in an uncontrollable manner when prehistoric knappers attempted to reduce them, or in modern times, when hit by the plough or possibly the archaeological investigation’s digger.

By comparison with the flint from the Stoneyhill site (Suddaby and Ballin 2010) immediately on top of the flint-bearing Buchan Ridge Gravels c. 15 km south-east of Aden (Hall 1993; Bridgland *et al.* 1997), it is obvious that the present assemblage is based on Buchan Ridge flint. The largest pieces have greatest dimensions of almost 53 mm, but the fact that several of the largest pieces are fragments of cores suggests that, most likely, nodules of considerable size were available. Although mining of Buchan Ridge flint did take place during the later Neolithic (e.g. Saville 2005; 2006; 2008; 2011), it is most likely that any flint transported out of the quarry complex would have been ‘tested’ and the most heavily flawed pieces deselected prior to transportation. The fact that some fairly small natural flint pebbles were recovered from the site (generally c. 3-3.5 mm across) indicates that nodules may have been available in the investigated field, probably in the form of erratics.

This suggestion is supported by a map in Hall (1993, Fig. 8.1), which shows the ice movements in north-east Scotland. Although Fig. 2.1 in Sutherland and Gordon (1993) defines the north-eastern tip of Scotland as being unaffected by glacial erosion, there is no other way nodules of Buchan Ridge flint could have been deposited across this area.

Table 6 shows the proportions of cortical against inner pieces at the site, and the fact that approximately half of all flints are cortical

(primary + secondary) supports the suggestion that no – or few – prepared (for example, partially decorticated and tested) cores or blanks were imported into the area from the Buchan Ridge quarry sites, despite the proximity of these locations. A similar scenario is represented by the site of Wester Clerkhill, immediately outside Peterhead, c. 10 km east of Aden (Cameron and Ballin 2018), where the local area seems to have been covered in erratic flint from the Buchan Ridge flint sources.

Reduction	No.	%
Primary	8	5
Secondary	68	43
Tertiary	82	52
Total	158	100

Table 6: Assemblage 2017: Reduction sequence of all unmodified flakes and blades

### Debitage

In total, 131 pieces ofdebitage were retrieved from the site (Table 7). Due to the fact that sieving was not carried out, thedebitage only includes 11 chips. The remainder of thedebitage embraces 94 flakes, 11 blades, five microblades, nine indeterminate pieces and one crested piece (CAT 17:171, Figure 81). Six mainly unmodified flakes and blades have finely faceted platform remnants, indicating that they were detached from Levallois-like cores (CAT 17:10, 17:23, 17:27, 17:92, 17:148, 17:167). Levallois-like flakes, blades and cores date to the middle/late Neolithic period (Ballin 2011a; Suddaby and Ballin 2010).

Category	No.	%
Chips	11	8
Flakes	94	72
Blades	11	8
Microblades	5	4
Indeterminate pieces	9	7
Crested pieces	1	1
Total	131	100

Table 7: Assemblage 2017: Relative composition of thedebitage

The technologically definable flakes and blades are mostly hard percussion specimens (69%), supplemented by 13% soft-hammer flakes (Table

8). No unmodified bipolar flakes were recovered although end-scrapers CAT 17:97 is on a bipolar flake (Figure 80), and one bipolar core was also recovered (CAT 17:105, Figure 81).

Technique	no.	%
Soft percussion	8	13
Hard percussion	42	69
Indeterminate platform technique	4	7
Platform collapse	7	11
Bipolar technique	0	0
Total	61	100

Table 8: Assemblage 2017: Applied percussion techniques: definable unmodified flakes and blades

One medial-distal fragment of a broad blade (W = 15 mm) has a dorsal crest. A total of 20 pieces (12%) were crazed from exposure to fire, which suggests that prehistoric fireplaces were present on the prehistoric site, probably in the form of domestic hearths. However, a flake and an indeterminate piece (CAT 17:31, 17:116) are not only burnt but vitrified, indicating that processes producing higher temperatures also took place at the site. Prehistoric vitrified pieces have been associated with cremation pyres (cf. Ballin 2012).

### Cores

The assemblage includes four plain single-platform cores (CAT 17:98, Figure 81, 17:104, 17:127, 17:168), one core with two platforms at an angle (CAT 17:1), four Levallois-like cores (CAT 17:36, 17:53, 17:80 and 17:128, Figure 81), two irregular cores (CAT 17:4, 17:61), and one bipolar core (CAT 17:105). The assemblage is clearly dominated by plain single-platform cores and Levallois-like cores which are defined in greater detail below. Figure 77 shows the main dimensions of the intact cores.

The two main core types are similar in many respects: they are both characterised by having one striking-platform, one main flaking-front, and one cortical 'back-side'. The characterisation (width:thickness) of the cores from Wester Clerkhill outside Peterhead (Cameron and Ballin 2018) showed that generally single-platform cores and Levallois-like cores are easily distinguishable – the Levallois-like cores tend to be longer and thinner (Figure 78). As shown by Figure 79, this is not the case at Aden, where the two core types are of roughly the same dimensions.

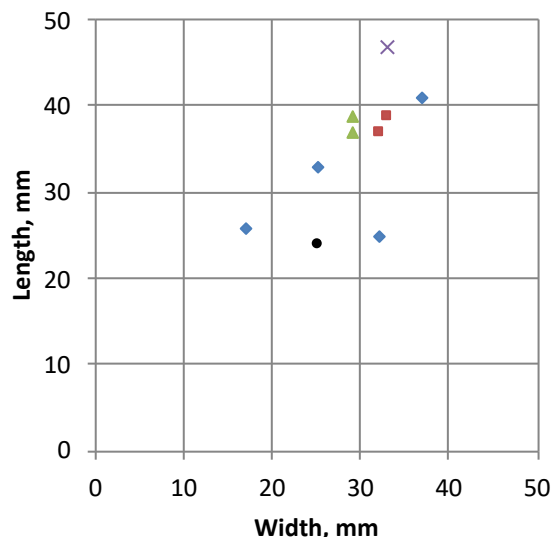


Figure 77: Assemblage 2017: The dimensions of all intact cores: blue diamonds = single-platform cores; purple crosses = cores w 2 platfs at angle; red squares = Levallois-like cores; green triangles = irregular cores; and black circles = bipolar cores

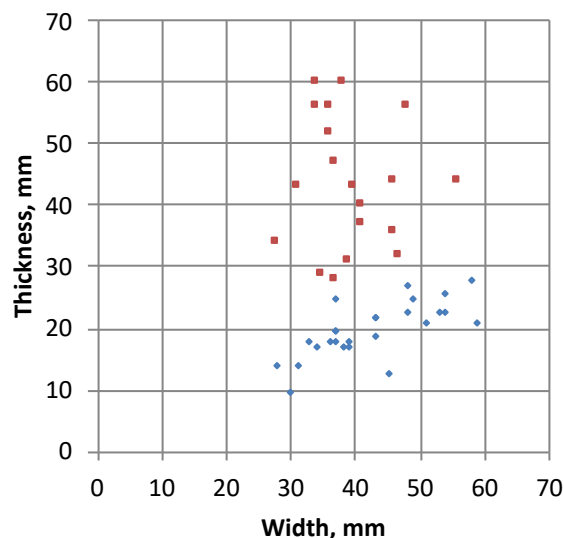


Figure 78: Assemblage 2017: The single-platform cores (red) and Levallois-like cores (blue) from Wester Clerkhill

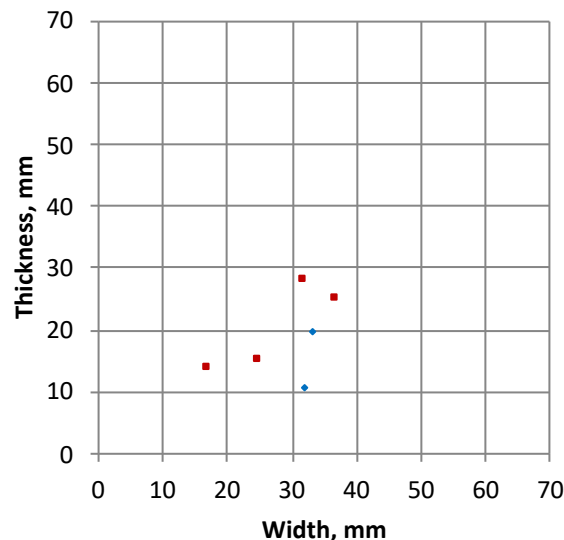


Figure 79: Assemblage 2017: The single-platform cores (red) and Levallois-like cores (blue) from Aden

However, it is still fairly easy to identify the Levallois-like cores, as they are first and foremost defined by their elongated, finely faceted platforms, and they frequently have the remains of one or more lateral crests. One small single-platform core (CAT 17:168, Figure 81) is a small conical micro-blade core, probably dating to the late Mesolithic.

Three cores have more than one platform, namely one core with two platforms at an angle (CAT 17:1), and two irregular (or multi-directional) cores (CAT 17:4, 17:61). All three cores have relatively cubic shapes. One bipolar core (CAT 17:105) is a bifacial piece with two reduction axes (two sets of opposed terminals).

### Tools

The 26 tools (Table 5) include a number of implement categories, such as one microburin, eight scrapers, two scale-flaked knives, two truncated pieces, 12 pieces with edge-retouch, and one piece with invasive retouch. The scrapers and edge-retouched pieces (31% and 46% of the tools, respectively) are the two numerically largest tool categories.

**Microburins:** One microburin (CAT 17:44, Figure 81) is a waste product from the manufacture of a microlith (W = 8 mm). It has a microburin notch in its left lateral side, and when it broke successfully a proper microburin facet (*a piquant triédre*) was formed.

**Scrapers:** This category includes five short end-scrapers and three side-scrapers. CAT 17:85 is a fairly irregular piece on the distal fragment of a thick flake. It has a straight, steep scraper-edge on the proximal break facet of the piece, and it measures 32 by 21 by 9 mm. The remaining end-scrapers are quite regular pieces with convex, steep scraper-edges. CAT 17:129 has its working-edge at the bulbar end of the proximal fragment of a crested blade (32 by 21 by 9 mm). CAT 17:39 (Figure 81) is based on a tertiary hard-hammer flake (23 by 24 by 8 mm); CAT 17:130 (Figure 81) is based on a primary hard-hammer flake (29 by 23 by 9 mm); and CAT 17:97 is based on a primary bipolar flake (32 by 34 by 13 mm). The working-edge of the latter is highly regular and somewhat acute, probably pressure-flaked, and the character of the working-edge, in conjunction with the fact that the blank is a primary bipolar flake, suggests a date in the early Bronze Age (cf.

similar, probably intrusive scrapers from the early Neolithic site at Garthdee Road in Aberdeen; Ballin 2014; Figure 80).

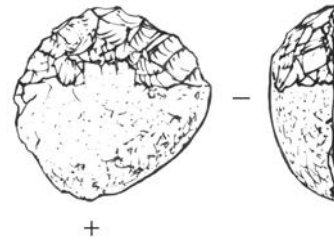


Figure 80: Assumed EBA end-scraper from Garthdee Road, Aberdeen (Ballin 2014, Illus 19.41), similar to CAT 17:97 from Aden; GD = c. 25mm (artist: Jan Dunbar).

Three side-scrapers (CAT 17:28, 17:167, 17:169) are relatively irregular, probably expedient pieces based on whichever blank was available at the time. CAT 17:167 (Figure 81) has an almost archetypal Levallois-like platform remnant, showing that this broad flake blank was struck off the central part of the main flaking-front of a Levallois-like core.

**Scale-flaked knives:** The two scale-flaked knives differ somewhat in terms of appearance. CAT 17:110 is based on a broad blade (28 by 18 by 9 mm), and only the distal part survives. It has a scale-flaked cutting-edge along its left lateral side (dorsal retouch), with some supplementary scale-flaking of the ventral face. CAT 17:139 is the medial segment of a broad flake (30 by 31 by 9 mm) with scale-flaking of its right lateral side.

**Truncated pieces:** The two truncated pieces form a heterogeneous group, with CAT 17:2 (Figure 81) being an irregular flake with an oblique distal truncation (24 by 12 by 4 mm), and CAT 17:174 a small broad blade with a straight proximal truncation (25 by 11 by 3 mm). It is thought that these pieces are small knives.

**Pieces with edge-retouch:** This category comprises 12 specimens, which differ considerably in terms of shape and size (GD = 11-53 mm). This tool group probably includes artefacts and fragments of artefacts with different functions.

**Pieces with invasive retouch:** This category includes one solitary piece (CAT 17:111), namely a plain probably hard-hammer flake (21 by 23 by 3 mm) with inverse invasive retouch along its left lateral side and sporadic edge-retouch of the opposed edge. This may be an expedient scale-flaked knife.

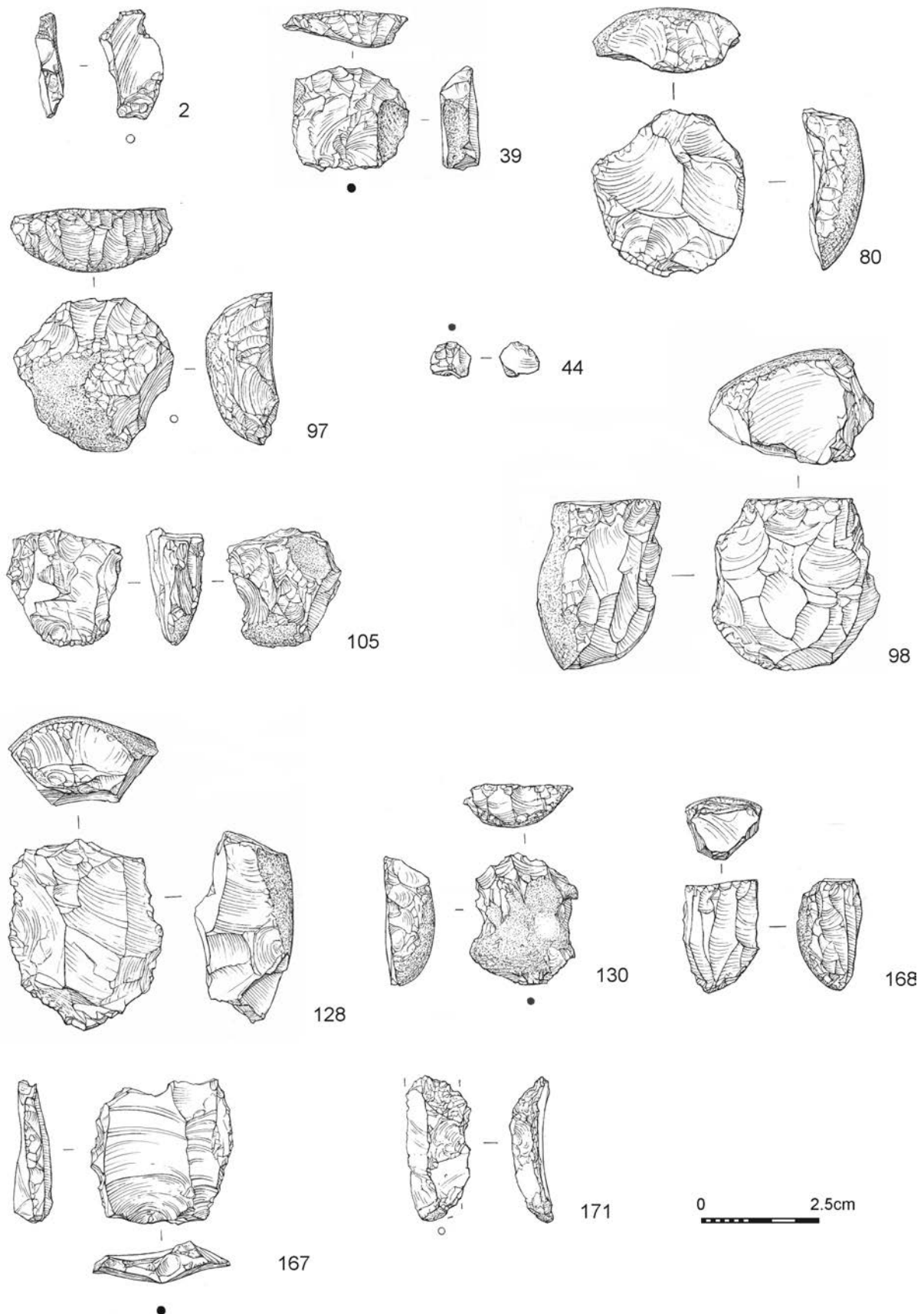


Figure 81: Lithics from 2017, Cat Nos 2 - truncated piece, 39 - short end scraper, 44 - microburin, 80 - Levallois-like core, 97 - end scraper, 105 - bi-polar core, 98 - single platform core, 128 - Levallois-like core, 130 - short end scraper, 167 - side scraper, 168 - single platform core and 171 - crested piece.

## Distribution and dating

The distribution of finds from the fieldwalking of the Neolithic enclosure field suggests a central area with few finds, but this impression may be wrong. An evaluation trench at the centre of this area yielded several interesting objects. They include one Levallois-like flake, one crested flake, one side-scraper on a Levallois-like flake, and one conical microblade core.

The field quadrants with the most finds are the SE quadrant and the NE quadrant. The former includes two Levallois-like cores, two Levallois-like flakes, one microburin, and three microblades. In addition, an evaluation trench on the northern edge of this area yielded several other cores and scrapers. The NE quadrant included no diagnostic material other than one Levallois-like flake. The assumed early Bronze Age end-scraper (CAT 17:97) was retrieved from an evaluation trench in the site's NW quadrant.

Bearing in mind that this picture of artefact distribution across the site is based on relatively few objects and a combination of fieldwalking and trial trenching, the general impression is that middle/late Neolithic finds are present across the site, but with most of these finds deriving from the south-eastern corner of the site. This is also where potential late Mesolithic finds were found, with a microburin and several microblades deriving from the area immediately south of an evaluation trench in the south end of the field. A possible early Bronze Age end-scraper was recovered from an evaluation trench towards the NW of the field.

## Assemblage 2017 discussion

As mentioned above, one of the purposes of the investigation of the 2017 assemblage was to produce a picture of the prehistory of Field HH1. As indicated, the distribution patterns of artefacts recovered by fieldwalking and by trial trenching are not entirely compatible – the finds from the fieldwalking suggests a *hiatus* of finds at the centre of the field, around Trench 2, whereas the finds from the excavation of this trench (one Levallois-like flake, one crested flake, one side-scraper on a Levallois-like flake, and one conical microblade core), in conjunction with the discovery of Structure 1, indicate notable activity in this part of the field. Basically, the

finds from the fieldwalking and the excavation, in conjunction with finds recovered previously (2016), suggest activity throughout the field in the middle/late Neolithic period, possibly centred around an area just south of Trench 3. Mesolithic finds (a conical microblade core, a microburin, and several microblades) indicate late Mesolithic activity in the southern half of the field, possibly centred around an area immediately south of Trench 3. And a likely early Bronze Age end-scraper and a radiocarbon-date suggest a Bronze Age presence in the field, possibly most notably in the northern half of the field. However, it should be borne in mind that the evidence is presently scant, including two numerically small lithic assemblages (Assemblage 2016 and 2017) and one truncated structure.

## Conclusion

As shown the two assemblages contain some of the same later Neolithic elements, such as five Levallois-like cores, several Levallois-like flakes and blade-based scale-flaked knives, with the distribution suggesting that the entire Field HH1, as well as an area north of this field, may have been the focus of middle/late Neolithic occupation. In addition, late Mesolithic objects (conical microblade cores, microblades and one microburin) were recovered from the SE Quadrant, and an early Bronze Age thumbnail-scraper was also retrieved from this field.

Overall, the most interesting element of the lithic finds is arguably its later Neolithic component, with the combined assemblage from Aden forming part of a growing number of middle/late Neolithic assemblages from the north-eastern corner of Aberdeenshire, shedding light on the typology and technology (Levallois-like technique) of this period, as well as its procurement patterns. These assemblages include Stoneyhill Farm and Wester Clerkhill. The former assemblage was recovered from sites right on top of the Buchan Ridge Gravels, and it is uncertain whether the flint was obtained by combing the surface or whether it was procured from the periods flint mines at Den of Boddam and Skelmuir Hill (Saville 2005; 2006; 2008; 2011). The latter assemblage is clearly based on erratic flint, which had been picked up by glaciers from the Buchan Ridge Gravels and dumped locally, a scenario identical to that characterising Assemblage 2017 from Aden.

Considering the number of later Neolithic finds recovered from this and neighbouring fields, there is little doubt that a considerable collection of flints from the period could be accumulated by further fieldwalking of the site.

## The window glass from 2016

By Helen Spencer

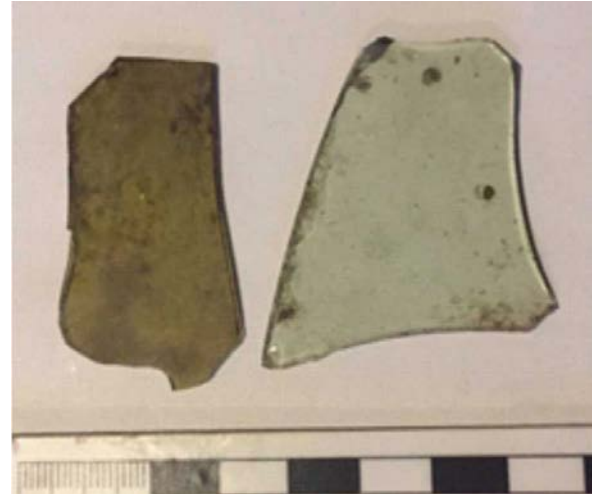
### Introduction

A total of 388 fragments of window glass were excavated during the 2016 excavation at the T-shaped chapel site. The fragments of glass were visually inspected for signs of the method of manufacture and installation. They were visually separated into a number of groups to enable selection for chemical analysis. Appendix 6A in the site archive shows the list of window glass finds and the breakdown of glass by visual type. 44 samples of glass were selected for analysis by portable X-ray Fluorescence (p-XRF) and of these 20 samples were analysed by Scanning Electron microscopy with energy dispersive spectroscopy (SEM-EDS). The selection was made both on visual appearance and to give a representative selection from the different finds numbers and contexts/trenches. The SEM-EDS analysis is a more precise technique for measuring the compositions of the lighter elements – in particular, the amounts of sodium, aluminium, and magnesium. P-XRF has been used to provide the composition of all elements heavier than iron. The full methodology for the analysis is detailed in Spencer 2020.

### Results

Visually the window glass can be separated into two main types of glass (Plate 97). The chemical analysis has confirmed the visual assessment that there are two types of window glass at Aden. Most of the pieces are broken in an irregular fashion. This is likely to have happened when the glass was taken out of the building – possibly as a result of the glass being broken while the more valuable lead came was recovered for recycling. The glass was most likely originally cut into lozenge/diamond shapes, which were fitted together with lead came. The window would then be in a wooden frame. Most domestic Scottish buildings at this time only had the top half of the windows glazed, with the bottom half being wooden shutters that could be opened

and closed. The full analytical results (combined SEM-EDS for elements up to iron and p-XRF for elements with a higher atomic number than iron) for twenty of the samples are shown in Appendix 6b in the site archive.



*Plate 97: Example of the different colours of the two types of window glass found at Aden. Type 1 is the dark green glass on the left and Type 2 the more colourless glass on the right.*

Both types of window glass are of the high lime low alkali type (HLLA) being rich in Calcium (20 – 23%). Glass of this composition was only made in England from around 1567 and known to be made in Scotland from at least 1610 (possibly earlier, although neither documentary or archaeological proof of glass manufacture prior to this date has been found). Glass of this composition may also have been imported from the continent earlier than these dates. The production of HLLA window glass was discontinued around 1700 when it was replaced with glass with much lower calcium content and a higher alkali content. However, bottles were still made from HLLA glass well into the eighteenth century. The HLLA glass can however be split into two groups based on its chemical composition. This can be clearly seen in Table 9 which shows a plot of the combined alkali content (sodium and potassium oxides) compared to manganese oxide.

Type 1 (168 fragments) is visually an olive-green glass. Most fragments have cut or broken edges. On a small number there are cutting marks, where a straight line was etched prior to the piece being cut. None of the pieces show signs of grozing. The glass appears to be made by the cylinder blowing method. Some pieces have a characteristic smooth straight edge along one



side where the cylinder of blown glass would organically have been cut when still hot. Some pieces also have internal elongated gas bubbles which are typical of this technique. Chemical analysis shows that the samples are rich in calcium (>20%) with a combined alkali (sodium and potassium oxides) composition of between 4.2 and 6.2%. They have a relatively high iron content of around 1.5% +/- 0.5% and manganese in the region of 0.6 - 1.0%. Dungworth (2012) has produced a chronology for the composition of English made window glass. Glass of this composition is suggested to be made in England between 1567 and c. 1610 and is termed high-lime low alkali 1 (HLLA1). However, this type of glass was made much earlier in parts of the continent – starting in the Rhineland region from the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century. There is no known Scottish manufacture of glass from raw materials until around 1610, and therefore this glass is most likely imported from England or Europe.

Type 2 (220 fragments) is a clear, more colourless glass with a pale blue tinge. The glass is cut in a similar way to type 1 and also appears to be cylinder blown with some of the pieces having straight edges (Plate 98) along with elongated gas bubbles which are typical of this technique (Plate 98). Type 2 is clearly of a superior optical

quality to type 1 glass, being more colourless and translucent than the earlier type 1 glass. It has a more stable composition and is less weathered than type 1. It has a higher combined alkali value of 7-8 %, particularly noteworthy for higher sodium than type 1. It also has a higher silica content and fewer impurities, in particular lower aluminium and iron, implying a better quality or more purified silica (sand) source was used. The manganese level is much less being <0.2% in all of the type 2 fragments.



Plate 98: A piece of Type 2 glass showing the smooth straight edge (LHS) and a large elongated air bubble characteristic of the cylinder method of manufacture

### Combined alkali and manganese oxide content of Aden window glass

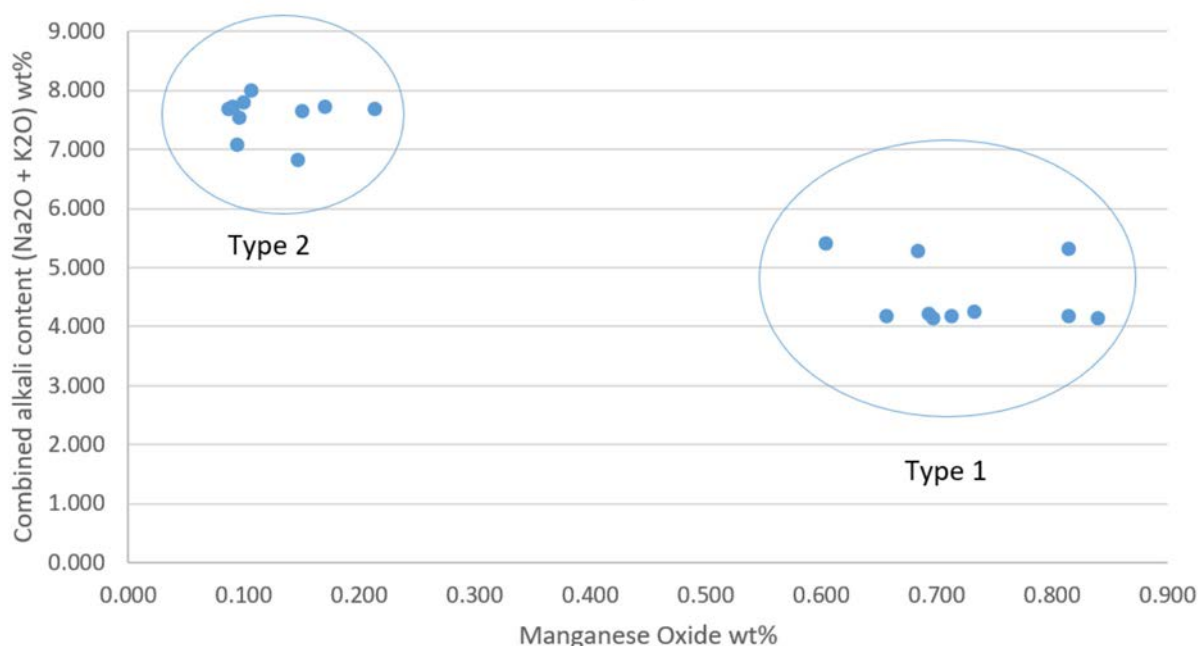


Table 9: Combined alkali and manganese oxide content of Aden window glass

This glass is considered to be of a high-lime low alkali 2 (HLLA2) composition typical of the seventeenth century according to Dungworth’s English dating model due to >18% CaO and <0.2% MnO. The glass does not have a high enough alkali content to be consistent with a mixed alkali glass window glass of 1700-1835. The levels of strontium are also below 0.2% which is the level at which the glass would be considered ‘kelp fluxed’ glass – where seaweed was used as an alkali source. In most type 2 sherds the strontium oxide percentage is between 0.15 and 0.2% which may be due to the use of coastal sands or indicative that the glass may be partially fluxed with kelp, however it was not the main ash used which was likely to have been a hardwood such as oak.

Current research has shown that in Scotland, as in England and Ireland, there appears to be a series of intermediate glass recipes in use during the latter half of the seventeenth century (Kennedy *et al.*, 2013). This period was a time of great innovation in the glass manufacturing industry and it is suggested that the Type 2 window glass from this excavation comes from this period. Glass of a similar HLLA2 composition has been found to be manufactured at a number of English and Irish sites.

### Summary

The visual appearance and chemical composition of the window glass suggests there were two phases of window glazing at the site. The first stage of glazing is most likely to have occurred in the latter half of the sixteenth century or early seventeenth century (Type 1) and the second glazing phase in the middle to latter half of the seventeenth century (Type 2).

It must be noted that window glass was often recycled and moved from one building to another, so although the Type 1 window glass would have been made in late sixteenth century, it is a possibility that the window glass panes were recycled from another building and installed at a later date.

None of the window glass analysed was of a composition consistent with being made later than around 1700. No glass typical of either a mixed alkali or fully kelp fluxed glass (dated 1700-1835) or a synthetic soda glass (made from 1835) was found.

## Coins from 2016

By Stewart Thain

The coins from CA26 were excavated mostly from within the T-shaped chapel building; some were found during a controlled metal detector survey by a local metal-detectorist after some evidence of illicit digging was detected. The coins recovered (Table 10) are mostly Scottish copper bawbees (six pence) and turners or bodles (two pence) minted in Edinburgh in the reigns of Charles II, William and Mary or William II and therefore ranging in date from 1677 to 1697. One Bawbee and two Turners may be of Charles I’s final issue (1642-50) while another of the turners could be of an earlier type issued in 1629. Three modern British pieces are also present, two of these being copper-alloy halfpennies of the reigns of Queen Victoria and George V respectively, the other is probably also Victorian. Unfortunately the degree of corrosion and wear present on most of these specimens makes more accurate identification particularly difficult.

SF no	Context	Identification
14	116	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, William & Mary? 1691-94
22	108	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, Charles II, 1677-79
23	52	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, Charles II, 1677-79
24	152	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, William & Mary? 1691-94
25	152	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, William & Mary? 1691-94
26	152	British Copper Halfpenny, Queen Victoria?
27	152	Scottish Copper Bawbee? Charles II - William II, 1677-97
28	152	Scottish Copper Turner, Charles I, 1629 (or possibly James VI 1613)
29	152	Scottish Copper Bawbee, Charles II, 1677-1679
30	152	Scottish Copper Turner, Charles I, 1642-50
31	31	Scottish Copper Turner, Charles I, 1642-50
32	152	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, Charles II?, 1677-79
33	1	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, Charles II, 1677-79
34	79	British Copper-alloy Halfpenny, George V, 1929
38	1	British Copper-alloy Halfpenny, Queen Victoria ('old-head' type), 1900?
41	117	Scottish Copper Turner or Bodle, Charles II 1677-79
42	1	Scottish Copper Bawbee, Charles II, 1677-1679
44	108	Scottish Copper Bawbee, Charles II, 1677-79

Table 10: Catalogue of coins

## The charcoal from 2016

By Anne Crone

The results of the sample processing and charcoal analysis are presented in Table 11.

Samples 1-6 were not brought to AOC for examination. Samples highlighted in red did not contain any charcoal or waterlogged wood; Sample 11 contained only nails while three samples, 10, 15 and 24, contained large lumps of daub.

The charcoal was, without exception, identified as Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The bulk of the samples contained large fragments of planking, all of which had been rift-sawn rather than cleft. Large roundwood was present in four samples.

Fourteen samples are potentially suitable for radiocarbon dating. None of the charcoal displayed the bark edge but it would be possible to sample the outermost surviving rings on some of the planks and on some of the roundwood, particularly Sample 22. The radiocarbon dates are set out in Table 12.

Sample no	Charcoal sp	Date @95.4% probability
7	pine	cal AD 1726 (53%) 1814
12	pine	cal AD 1646 (30.4%) 1684 cal AD 1736 (48.3%) 1805
13	pine	cal AD 1735 (48.7%) 1806
19	pine	cal AD 1635 (45.4%) 1684 cal AD 1736 (39%) 1805

Table 12: Radiocarbon dates

Sample	Context	Species	No fragments identified	Round wood	C14 possibilities	Comments
7	141	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	1		Yes	Large plank fragment
8	139	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	4		Yes	Plank fragments
9	144b	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	10	?	Yes	Small fragments probably of roundwood
10	118				No	All daub/no charcoal present
11	130				No	All nails/no charcoal present
12	140	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	10		Yes	Large fragments
13	142	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	5		Yes	Large plank fragments
14	132	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	1		No	Waterlogged plank, breaking down into fibres
15	123	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	1		Yes	Daub fragments including 1 fragment of plank
16	106	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	3		Yes	3 large plank pieces, one only part charred
17	144	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	2		Yes	x2 squared lengths with original surfaces intact, 40 by 32 mm across, one with a chopmark across one surface
18	135				No	No charcoal present
19	119	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	10	Y	Yes	Large roundwood fragments
20	84				No	No charcoal present
21	143	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	10	?	Yes	Fragments probably of roundwood
22	120	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	9	Y	Yes	Roundwood fragments, 40 mm radius
23	126	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	4		Yes	Large plank fragments, falling apart into thin laths
24	126	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	1		Yes	Daub fragments including 1 fragment of plank
25	116				No	Desiccated wood fibres - not identified
26	128	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>			Yes	Plank fragments, some partially charred
27	80				No	No charcoal present

Table 11: Samples analysed

## The other finds

Due to the lack of funding at the end of this project only a selection of finds are reported on here. All finds are recorded in the site archive.

### Spectacles from chapel site

The spectacles include a copper alloy wire frame and lens in situ (SF 150) and parts of 4 lenses (SF 174, 222, 233 and 247). Spectacles of type first appeared in the seventeenth century and these are similar to examples in the National Museum of Scotland called 'Nuremberg' spectacles which date to the period c. 1680-1730 (see NMS.ac.uk blog). (Plate 99, Figure 82 and Table 13)



Plate 99: Spectacle lens with part of copper alloy bridge SF 150 from the 2019 excavation

SF no	Size
SF 150	36 mm diameter, 2 mm lens
SF 174	35 mm diameter, 2 mm lens
SF 222	35 mm diameter, 2 mm lens
SF 233	33 mm diameter, 1.5 mm lens.
SF 247	34 mm diameter, 1.5 mm lens

Table 13: Sizes of spectacles

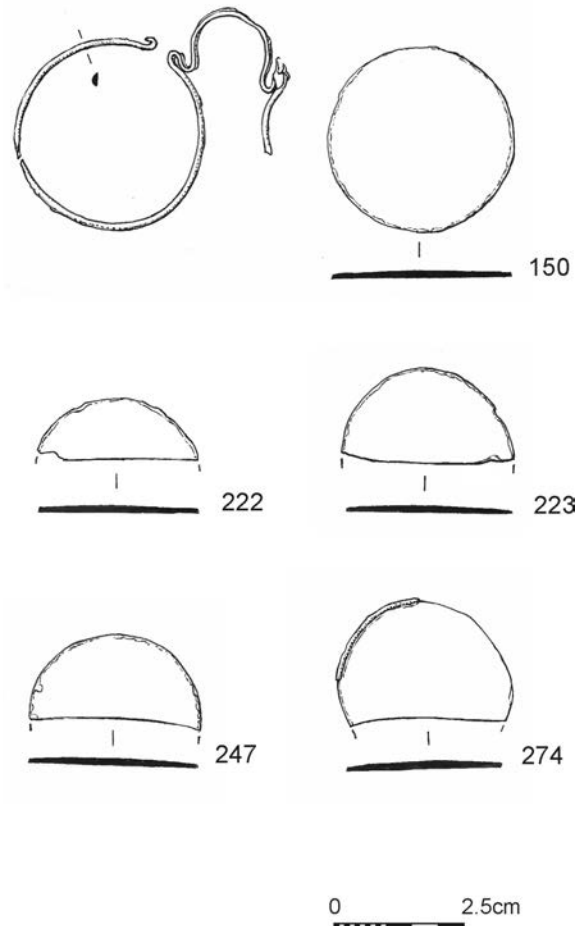


Figure 82: Spectacles and lenses

### Copper alloy brooch from T-shaped chapel

A copper alloy heart-shaped brooch (SF 20 context 152) was recovered during the metal-detector survey of the topsoil of the chapel building. The brooch is 30 mm long and 19 mm wide (Plate 100). The copper alloy pin is present and there is a stylised crown on the top. There are mould marks visible on the reverse. There is a similar example from Banff of an early eighteenth century silver Scottish heart or 'Luckenbooth' brooch claimed as Treasure Trove and allocated to NMS (Shiels 2001, 8).



Plate 100: Copper alloy brooch front (left) and reverse (right)

### Inscribed slate from manse building

A slate fragment SF 464 (Figure 83, Plate 32) was found on floor surface (519) of Structure 2 during the 2021 excavation featured incised marks on one of its faces. These appear to be a V-shaped marking, and on the right of that and slightly below, either a conjoined 'VV' or a 'W' marking. To the left lower corner of the V-shaped marking, there is a cluster of shallower incised marks that are less clearly discernible. It is uncertain whether all of these marks were made at the same time. Discussions with (Kevin Grant pers. comm. Historic Environment Scotland) have led to the suggestions that the slate may have been part of a hearth, window frame, or other architectural element, made and placed with apotropaic intent. Excavation revealed no evidence of a stone roof, and the slate fragment is an anomaly when compared with the construction material used in the surviving wall courses and floor surfaces.

If the two more deeply incised markings are 'VV' marks, they may be part of a wider corpus of graffiti in the British Isles connected to varying combinations of devotional, apotropaic, and commemorative intent. In a medieval context, the 'VV' symbol has long been associated with

the cult of the Virgin Mary and suggested to be an abbreviation of the Latin term *Virgo Virginum* ('Virgin of Virgins'). It's also been suggested that the Marian association is twofold when turning the symbol upside down to resemble an 'M' (Champion 2015).

Surveys of English sites have demonstrated that 'VV' symbols, often conjoined, were incised into the fabric and furniture of churches and domestic buildings well into the early modern era (Easton 2004; Duck 2015). Some authors have posited that these marks continued into early modern contexts as a traditional and popular practice to bring good fortune and keep away harm, with no clear continuing relationship to Marian or broader Christian devotion (Champion 2015; Davies 2015).

A possible comparable example of early modern Scottish graffiti has been recorded at Wilkhouse, an eighteenth century drovers' inn in Sutherland (Iraia Arabaolaza pers. comm. GUARD Archaeology Ltd; Adamson and Bailey 2019: 12-13). An incised inverted cross was found on an *in situ* orthostat framing one side of a hearth. The proximity of this marking a 'threshold' that being various entry ways into a dwelling including hearths and windows as well as doors, has been

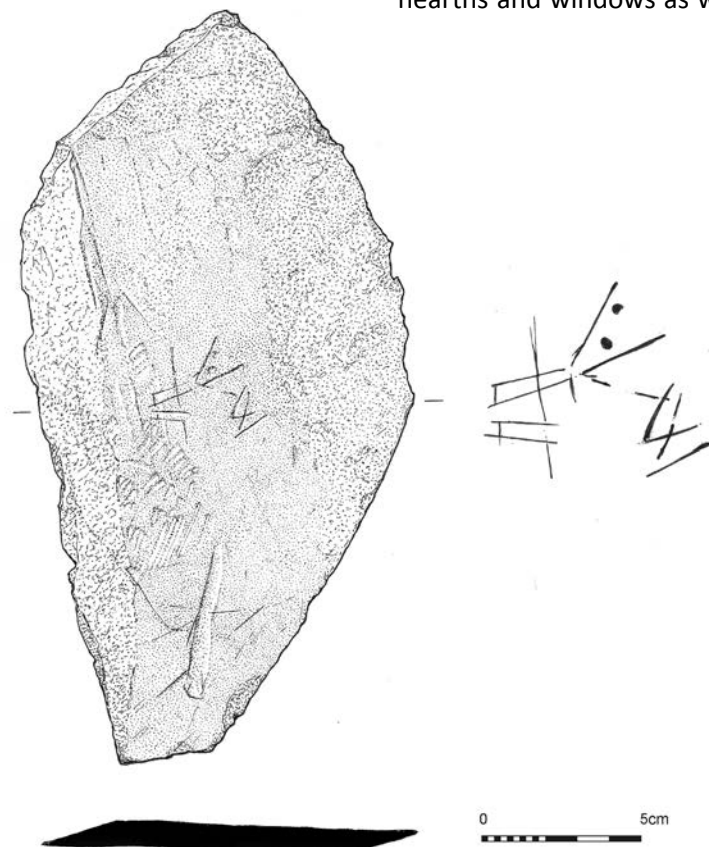


Figure 83: Incised slate from floor of manse building

interpreted as being a deliberate placement for apotropaic function (Gordon 2015). 'VV' and 'M' symbols are also known to appear on sixteenth and seventeenth century iron firebacks (Davies and Houlbrook 2018).

There is also a possibility that SF 464 was recycled from another site; in which case, the graffiti might be considered earlier, and its possible original meaning and function diminished in the context of this later site. Slates with graffiti have also been found at several Scottish late medieval and early modern sites, featuring various gaming boards, doodles, motifs, and letter practice that do not indicate apotropaic intent (Ewart and Triscott 1996; Ewart and Pringle 2004; Hall 2014).

That being said, SF 464 being an anomaly amongst the rest of the remaining construction material lends weight to interpretation that the markings on this slate contributed to its presence and function at the site. The specific recurrence of VV graffiti within churches and domestic buildings suggests an enduring significance of this symbol, be that explicitly Christian, or as a popular motif that had since shifted from religious association.

The possibility that the seventeenth-eighteenth century Structure 2 at Aden Country Park was

a manse would certainly make it an interesting context in which to find possible evidence of apotropaic practice and intent.

### Fireclay finds from Aden Mansion site

Finds include eighteenth and nineteenth century domestic waste including pottery and glass, building materials including window glass, brick, ceramic roof furniture (Plates 101 and 102) and garden furniture including ceramic garden planters (Plate 51) and plant pots, and concrete pond fragments.



Plate 101: Garnkirk stamped fireclay roof furniture from Trench 8



Plate 102: Fireclay objects from the roof of Aden House photographed in mid 1970s when Aberdeenshire Council carried out a survey of the buildings; they then disappeared.

## Conclusions and Future Work

The archaeological work at Aden Country Park was carried out by a keen and hard-working group of volunteers led by staff from Cameron Archaeology. Far more interesting archaeological sites were uncovered than were expected, and the budgets were stretched to accommodate the extra excavation required. It was felt that the Neolithic enclosure site was under current threat – the park allowed digger driver training for its staff within this field after we had partly excavated the remains, and this was only halted by vigilant volunteers who contacted the current author who got this work stopped. More money was therefore spent on this site, but it has meant that the full extent of the surviving remains were uncovered and sampled.

Excavations of Neolithic enclosures of this type are uncommon and it is unfortunate that this one is not better preserved.

The post-Reformation chapel and manse were an exciting find for this project, and underline the opportunities and benefits of historical research undertaken in tandem with archaeological investigation

The archaeological work at the park will hopefully contribute to the North East Scotland Regional Framework for the Neolithic (Mann 2019) and for later periods when they are compiled.

Further work could include:

- Further historical research into the chapel site and the events of 1746.
- Chapel and manse site – full clearance of the fallen trees from Storm Arwen to be completed, damage assessed, and then the area opened back up again to visitors.
- Structures dug by Murray Archaeological Associates could have additional trenches put in to see if we can tease any further dating out of the site. This, along with the Scotstown Moor site, could be a couple of short-lived community projects in the future.
- No lead bullets were recovered from the site (even though much sieving was carried out) and it would be useful to metal-detect some of the military-related areas.

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## Abbreviations

HES = Historic Environment Scotland

NLS = National Library of Scotland

NRHE = National Record of the Historic Environment, Canmore.

NRS = National Records of Scotland

RA = Royal Archives, Windsor with CP = William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland's military papers.

TNA = The National Archives

All links were active at the time of publication

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