

KIRKTON SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) AND ENERGY STORAGE FACILITY

Archaeological Assessment

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Kirkton Solar Farm
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This archaeological assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of 112.7ha of land proposed for a solar PV development near Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.

There are no designated heritage assets in the Site. The proposed development lies approximately 160m from St Fergus' church, which is a Scheduled Monument, and the associated churchyard, which is a Category B Listed Building. The design of the proposed development has taken the need to preserve the setting of these assets into account and includes mitigation embedded in the design in the form of separation and screening.

Whilst the proposed development may have the potential to affect the setting of these heritage assets it is considered that this will not compromise the integrity of their setting. Perceived impacts should be taken into account by the decision maker when considering the application, balancing these against the demonstrable public benefits of the proposed development in terms of its provision of renewable energy. When so doing, the decision maker should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the churchyard's setting in line with the statutory duty placed upon them by Section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

There are no known heritage assets within the Site. It is considered that there is moderate potential for Prehistoric archaeology to be present and low potential in relation to later periods. Any unrecorded archaeology present is likely to be of local importance.

The potential archaeological impacts of the proposed development may be addressed through a programme of further archaeological works undertaken during the construction phase. It is recommended that this comprises monitoring of topsoil stripping in areas to be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council. It is proposed that this requirement can be conditioned as part of any decision in respect of the application for consent.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Richard Conolly MA(Hons) MCIfA of RPS on behalf of Elgin Energy.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment, henceforth referred to as the Site, is an area of agricultural land approximately 2.7km to the north of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire (Fig. 1, site centre NGR 411000 851000). It takes in approximately 112.7ha of agricultural land, currently used for grazing. It is bounded to the west by the A90, beyond which is fields, to the south is an area of forestry and the Cuttie Burn, to the north is fields and to the east the large dune system that skirts the beach. The farmsteads of North and South Kirkton are excluded from the Site.
- 1.3 It is proposed to develop the Site as a solar photovoltaic (PV) and energy storage facility, with associated infrastructure (henceforth the Proposed Development).
- 1.4 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon heritage assets, with a focus on the potential for archaeological assets to be affected. It draws upon the following data sources:
- Historic Environment Scotland designations downloads;
 - National Record of the Historic Environment;
 - Aberdeenshire Historic Environment Record (HER);
 - Maps held by the National Library of Scotland;
 - Satellite imagery; and
 - Readily available published sources.
- 1.5 The study provides an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and the significance of heritage assets within and around the site. The study provides an informed judgement on the associated impact of the proposed development on the archaeological and cultural heritage baseline.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

Legislation

- 2.1 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provide the legislative basis for the protection of the historic environment. These were amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 does not contain any reference to setting and is not of great relevance in the current context. However, Section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 is potentially relevant:

59. General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions

- (1) *In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, a planning authority or the Secretary of State, as the case may be, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*
- (2) *Without prejudice to section 64, in the exercise of the powers of disposal and development conferred by the provisions of sections 191 and 193 of the principal Act, a planning authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest and, in particular, listed buildings.*
- (3) *In this section, “preserving”, in relation to a building, means preserving it either in its existing state or subject only to such alterations or extensions as can be carried out without serious detriment to its character, and “development” includes redevelopment.*

Scottish Planning Policy

- 2.3 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP; revised December 2020) provides national policy for dealing with the historic environment in the planning process in paragraphs 135-151 and Paragraphs 141, 145 and 150 is particularly relevant to this assessment:
141. *Change to a listed building should be managed to protect its special interest while enabling it to remain in active use. Where planning permission and listed building consent are sought for development to, or affecting, a listed building, special regard must be given to the importance of preserving and enhancing the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development which will affect a listed building or its setting should be appropriate to the character and appearance of the building and setting. Listed buildings should be protected from demolition or other work that would adversely affect it or its setting.*
145. *Where there is potential for a proposed development to have an adverse effect on a scheduled monument or on the integrity of its setting, permission should only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances. Where a proposal would have a direct impact on a scheduled monument, the written consent of Scottish Ministers via a separate process is required in addition to any other consents required for the development.*

150. *Planning authorities should protect archaeological sites and monuments as an important, finite and non-renewable resource and preserve them in situ wherever possible. Where in situ preservation is not possible, planning authorities should, through the use of conditions or a legal obligation, ensure that developers undertake appropriate excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving before and/or during development. If archaeological discoveries are made, they should be reported to the planning authority to enable discussion on appropriate measures, such as inspection and recording.*

- 2.4 SPP stresses that the planning system should promote the care and protection of the historic environment and that change should be sensitively managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on assets. Additional policy in relation to the historic environment is provided in Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019) and a strategy has been set out in 'Our Place in Time - the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland' (2014).
- 2.5 In July 2011, the government published the Planning Advice Note PAN 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology. It provides advice and technical information alongside SPP, HESPS and the Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes, which together set out the Scottish Ministers' policies and guidance for planning and the historic environment.
- 2.6 Sections 4-9 of the PAN, entitled Archaeology and Planning provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the policy of the Scottish Government relating to archaeological sites and monuments. Overall, the guidance can be summarised:
- Policy is to protect and preserve sites and monuments and their settings in situ where feasible. Where this is not possible planning authorities should consider applying conditions to consents to ensure that an appropriate level of excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving is carried out before and/or during development.
 - In consideration of applications, planning authorities should take into account the relative importance of archaeological sites. Not all sites and monuments are of equal importance. In determining planning applications that may impact on archaeological features or their setting, planning authorities may balance the benefits of development against the importance of archaeological features.
- 2.7 Section 14 of the PAN notes that when determining a planning application the desirability of preserving a monument (whether scheduled or not) and its setting is a material consideration. It reiterates that preservation in situ should be the objective but where not possible an alternative approach is recording and/or excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results.
- 2.8 Sections 15 and 16 note that prospective developers should undertake assessment to determine whether a property or area contains, or is likely to contain, archaeological remains as part of their pre-planning application research into development potential. Where it is known, or there is good reason to believe, that significant remains exist developers should be open to modifying their plans in order to preserve remains.
- 2.9 Section 20 notes that in many cases a desk-based assessment (this document) may be sufficient to allow authorities to make a planning decision. Where the judgement of the authority's archaeological advisor indicates that significant remains may exist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request an archaeological evaluation before the application is determined. Planning authorities should require only the information necessary for them to make an informed decision on the proposal, and this should be proportionate to the importance of the potential resource. Section 22 notes that developers should supply the results of desk-based assessments and evaluations as part of their planning applications.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.10 The site is located within the Aberdeenshire Council Area, which has adopted the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. This contains the following policies relevant in the current context:

Policy HE1 Protecting historic buildings, sites, and monuments

We will protect all listed buildings contained on the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for Aberdeenshire, archaeological sites and scheduled monuments. We will encourage their protection, maintenance, enhancement, appropriate active use and conservation.

We will not allow development that would have a negative effect on the character, integrity or setting of listed buildings, or scheduled monuments, or other archaeological sites.

Alterations to listed buildings will only be permitted if they are of the highest quality, and respect the original structure in terms of setting, scale, design and materials.

Development on nationally or locally important monuments or archaeological sites, or on their setting, will only be allowed if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, and there is no alternative site. It is the developer's responsibility to provide information on the nature and location of the archaeological features prior to determination of the planning application and either mitigate impacts or, where preservation of the site in its original location is not possible, arrange for the full excavation and recording of the site in advance of development.

Policy HE2 Protecting historic and cultural areas

We will not allow development, including change of use or demolition, that would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. This applies both to developments within the conservation area and proposals outwith that would affect its setting. The design, scale, layout, siting and materials used in development within a conservation area must be of the highest quality and respect the individual characteristics for which the conservation area was designated. All details must be provided under the cover of a full application and any trees contributing to the setting should be retained. Appendix 6 provides details on the controls provided by the 38 conservation areas in Aberdeenshire.

Development on or outwith a battlefield, designated historic garden or designed landscape will only be permitted if the proposal would not have an adverse impact that compromises the objectives of the designation or the overall integrity, character and setting of the designated area, or any significant adverse effects are outweighed by long-term social or economic benefits of overriding public importance and there is no alternative site for the development. In either case, measures and mitigation must be taken to conserve and enhance the essential characteristics of the site as appropriate.

- 2.11 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this assessment seeks to clarify the site's archaeological potential and the likely significance of that potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The Site is underlain by metamorphic bedrock of the Crinan Subgroup and Tayvallich Subgroup. Superficial deposits recorded within the Site (Fig. 4) comprise wind-blown sands in the north-eastern part of the Site, part of the dunes to the east, lacustrine deposits of clay, silt and sand in the northern part of the Site and in the south diamicton till with (www.bgs.ac.uk). The BGS records an area of artificial deposits immediately to the east of the Site that possibly extends into it.

Topography

- 3.2 The Site is for the most part flat with gentle undulations across its extent. To the south of South Kirkton there is a small knoll rising and to the east of the Site is a dune system (Fig. 5).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 -	10,000 BC
Mesolithic	10,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age and Roman Iron Age	600 -	AD 410

Historic

Roman Iron Age	AD 43 -	410
Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1100
Medieval	AD 1100 -	1560
Post Medieval	AD 1560 -	1745
Modern	AD 1745 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This section of the Report reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of known archaeological assets within a 1km radius of the study site (Figs. 2-3), also referred to as the study area, held on the NRHE, together with historic maps from the 18th century onwards until the present day. A 1km radius was considered an appropriate study area to gather data to support the assessment of archaeological potential without taking in large amounts of extraneous material, and, given the nature of the landscape and proposed development, substantive effects upon the setting of heritage assets are highly unlikely to occur at distance in excess of 1km
- 4.3 Section 5 of this Report subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.4 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 4.5 Designated heritage assets within the study area comprise one Scheduled Monument and three Listed Buildings (Table 4.1, Fig. 2). There are no Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes (IGDL), Inventory Battlefields or Conservation Areas within the Study Area.

Table 4.1: Listed Buildings within the Study Area

Reference	Name	Status	Distance from Site
SM5622	St Fergus' Church	Scheduled Monument	160m
LB16536	Old Churchyard of St. Fergus, excluding Scheduled Monument No 5622 'St Fergus's Church, old parish church', St. Fergus Links, Peterhead	Category B Listed Building	150m
LB18976	Kinloch Farmhouse	Category C Listed Building	770m
LB19799	Lunderton House	Category C Listed Building	840m

4.6 There is no intervisibility between the Kinloch Farmhouse and Lunderton House and the Site. It is considered that there is no potential for the Proposed Development to affect their settings and hence their cultural significance. St Fergus Church lies approximately 160m east of the Site and the Proposed Development has the potential to affect its setting and that of the churchyard. They are discussed below in respect of archaeological potential and in Section 5 in respect of the potential impact. Full designation descriptions are contained in Appendix A.

Previously Recorded Assets

4.7 The Aberdeenshire HER holds the following records relating to the Site (Fig. 3):

- Polished stone axe (NK15SW0002);
- Canal/Anti-tank ditch (NK15SW0015)
- Sheepfold (NK15SW0024).

4.8 The exact findspot of the stone axe is uncertain. The Ordnance Survey Name Book records that it was found 'whilst cultivating the land' in 1849, but it would appear likely that the axe was found in the indicated field.

4.9 The 'canal' is a ditch appearing on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6). On some pre-Ordnance Survey maps it is annotated 'Canal' and shown as an extension of a canal linking the River Ugie with Inverunzie, hence the classification in the HER. However, it has been convincingly dismissed as a canal (Graham 1969). The ditch was incorporated into the Aberdeenshire Coastal Crust anti-invasion defences during the Second World War..

4.10 The sheepfold is depicted as a rectangular enclosure annotated as such on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. It does not appear on subsequent maps.

4.11 The HER also holds entries relating to the farmsteads and settlements of North and South Kirkton (NK15SW0025 and 27, respectively), Inverquinzie (NK15SW0026) and Drumline Village (NK15SW0004). These lie adjacent to the Site, but the exact location and extents of Drumline are unknown; it does not appear on any maps. These entries are discussed in the following assessment of archaeological potential where appropriate.

4.12 Most of the records held by the NHRE and HER relate to modern buildings and structures and are of no relevance in the current context.

Previous Archaeological Work

4.13 No archaeological work has been undertaken within the Site or study area previously.

Prehistoric

- 4.14 The HER holds one record for the Site relating to the Prehistoric period; a polished stone axe of Neolithic date was found at North Kirkton in 1849 (NK15SW0002).
- 4.15 In the study area, there is a scattering of evidence indicative of activity throughout the Prehistoric period. Another axe was found approximately 400m to the north-west of the Site during ditch-digging in the 19th century (NK15SW0003) and cropmarks of a probable settlement have been recorded approximately 760m to the south-west of the site (NK14NW0031). A small assemblage of worked flint has been found near the cropmarks (NK14NW0404).
- 4.16 Given the background of evidence of activity throughout the Prehistoric period, including the find of a Neolithic axe potentially within the Site, and the Site's size and location close to the coast, it is considered that it has moderate potential to contain previously unrecorded archaeology dating to the Prehistoric period.

Early Medieval

- 4.17 The HER and NHRE hold no records relating to the Early Medieval periods for the Site or study area.
- 4.18 Given the absence of recorded evidence for Early Medieval activity in the area, it is considered that the Site has low potential in respect of this period.

Medieval and Post-Medieval

- 4.19 The HER and NHRE hold no records relating to the Medieval period for the Site. The nearby St Fergus' church is certainly of Medieval date, though the exact date of its foundation is unknown. It is now isolated in the landscape, but when first established this may have not been the case. Eeles (1913, 484) surmised that 'it is probable that when the church of St Fergus was founded, the population was chiefly congregated in the district around it.' There is, however, no evidence of the existence of a Medieval settlement adjacent to the church; it was the parish church of Inverugie, but the village of Inverugie lies approximately 2.9km to the south.
- 4.20 By the early 17th century, the church was certainly isolated. The Presbytery recorded in 1603 that '*both kirk and kirkyard is ouircassin with the sand*' and 1612 that '*The Mother Kirk is now standin at the eastmost end of the paroch in ane wilderness oerblawin with sand*' (Eeles 1913, 483). Cartographic evidence corroborates this description. Pont's map (c. 1583-96) shows the church with the nearest settlement being 'Kirkton' with 'Kinloch' further to the west. From Pont's map alone, it is not possible to relate this with any modern-day settlement. However, later maps (eg Robertson 1828) names North Kirkton as 'Old Kirkton'. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that Pont's Kirkton corresponds with North Kirkton.
- 4.21 Roy's map (1747-52) is the first to show the area in any detail. The kirk is depicted as lying in an uncultivated strip of land between the road north from Peterhead and the dunes and beach. The land to the west of the road is, for the most part, depicted as cultivated and two unnamed settlements are shown. The easternmost, which is shown as comprising a single building in a rectangular walled enclosure with three buildings to the west, is presumably North Kirkton. The western settlement, comprising three buildings, one possibly being a row of cottages, may be identified with Inverquinzie, but this is uncertain.
- 4.22 Roy's map provides a good indication of the pattern of settlement at the end of the Medieval period and through the Post-Medieval period. Based on this it would appear that the greater part of the Site was farmland associated with the farmstead now known as North Kirkton, with the eastern part being uncultivated. If a Medieval settlement was present in close proximity to the church, it is unlikely to have extended into the Site, given that the church is over 150m from the Site.

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- 4.23 It is therefore concluded that the Site has low potential to contain archaeological features of Medieval and Post-Medieval date, with the possible exception of agricultural features such as buried remains of rig and furrow and drainage ditches.

Modern

- 4.24 As noted above the HER holds two records of features dating to the Modern period within the Site: a canal/ditch (NK15SW0005) and a sheepfold (NK15SW0024). The former runs along the north-western boundary of the Site. Some pre-Ordnance Survey maps depict it as part of a canal built in the early 19th century for James Ferguson of Pitfour between the River Ugie and Inverquinzie. However, Graham (1969) has refuted this, noting that the section of supposed canal adjacent to the Site is over 10m below Inverquinzie. In all probability, this is a drainage ditch; part of a larger system of such ditches. It was subsequently adapted to form part of the anti-invasion defences built in the Second World War. The sheepfold appears on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map as a large rectangular enclosure in an area of unimproved land (Fig. 6). No trace of this now remains and it is likely to have been defined by a fence.

- 4.25 The HER holds a record for Drumlinie village (NK15SW0004). Drumlinie was also established by James Ferguson of Pitfour as a fishing village in the late 18th century. It was unsuccessful and abandoned by 1800 (Hossack 1995, 62). Consequently, its location was not mapped. Limited information is available from a 19th century description:

A small fishing village called Drumlinie now covered by sand drifts, lay on the seashore east of the churchyard. Within 100 yds of the churchyard was a farm called Rosie Hillock, but all traces of it have gone. A good number of inhabited houses survived, for a mile to the south of the churchyard, within living memory, but no trace of these remains.

(Scott 1890)

- 4.26 The location mapped by the HER for the village to the south of the Site is entirely indicative and bears little relation to the above description; the location and extent of the village is unknown, as is the location of the Rosie Hillock farm. Nevertheless, it is considered unlikely that they lie within the Site. The village is described as lying to the east and south of the churchyard and having been covered by 'sand drifts'. The mapped extent of wind-blown sand lies outside the Site. Consequently, there is negligible potential for buildings to have been covered completely by sand within the Site. In respect of Rosie Hillock, assuming the distance from the church is broadly correct, this could not have lain within the Site as it is described as being within 100 yards (91m) of the church and the Site is over 160 yards (150m) from it.

- 4.27 Cartographic evidence indicates that there has been little change within the Site during the Modern period, the main changes being the moving of the Peterhead road to its current line, which had occurred by the time of Robertson's map (1822), and the improvement of the eastern part of the Site in the early 20th century. However, the Defence of Britain (DoB) project has recorded features within the Site relating to anti-invasion defences dating to the Second World War. The main line of defence ran along the beach, outside the Site and comprised pillboxes and anti-tank blocks. Within the north-eastern part of the Site, to the north of the track serving St Fergus' church, there were anti-glider ditches (DoB e33252, not illustrated). These have been infilled and there is no surface trace of them and their extents are not recorded. A drainage ditch adapted to serve as an antitank ditch, however, remains, running along the Site's north-western boundary (NK15SW0005). These measures were accompanied by extensive minefields, which were removed after the war.

- 4.28 Lidar and satellite imagery show the slight remains of a modern pond and field boundaries. The base of a transmitter mast and associated anchor points survive in the north-eastern part of the Site. These remains are not considered to represent heritage assets.

- 4.29 Archaeological potential relating to the modern period is limited to the buried remains of the anti-tank defences. These would have limited potential as sources of archaeological data and are

considered to be of local importance. There may be buried remains of buildings associated with the colliery, but it is considered that these would have no cultural significance. There is negligible potential for previously unrecorded assets to be present.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

4.30 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below.

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Significance
Prehistoric	Moderate	Unknown, but potentially of regional importance if well preserved by windblown sand.
Early Medieval	Low	If present potentially of regional importance given rarity
Medieval	Low	If present most probably of local importance
Post Medieval	Low	If present most probably of local importance
Modern	Negligible	If present most probably of local importance

5 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON HERITAGE ASSETS

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The Site is currently in agricultural use, predominantly given over to grazing (Plates 1-5).

Proposed Development

- 5.2 The proposed development comprises a PV and energy storage facility and associated infrastructure:
- Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels erected on steel or aluminium frames;
 - 1 No. Primary Sub-station typically measuring 6m (l) x 3.2(w) x 3.4m (h);
 - 50 No. Inverter Substations typically measuring 7m (l) x 2.5(w) x 3m (h) to be located across the site;
 - 10 No. storage units typically measuring 12.2m (l) x 2.4(w) x 2.6m (h);
 - Perimeter post and wire "deer" fencing (2.45m high);
 - A number of strategically located CCTV security cameras (3m high);
 - Access is via an existing lane onto the A90 which is immediately west of the site;
 - 1 x temporary construction compound; and
 - Associated internal service tracks.
- 5.3 The extent of the developed area is yet to be confirmed.

Embedded Mitigation

- 5.4 In order to reduce potential effects upon the setting of St Fergus' church and churchyard, all infrastructure has been set back c.160m from the monument. The eastern boundary will also be planted with a linear hedge of approximately 730m in length which will also assist in screening views of the panels. This will incorporate staggered rows of locally appropriate species.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

- 5.5 The proposed development has the potential to affect the setting of St Fergus' Church, which is a Scheduled Monument, and the associated churchyard, which is a Category B Listed Building. The church lies within the churchyard, approximately 160m to the east of the Site.
- 5.6 The scheduled element comprises the ruins of the Medieval church, abandoned in the 17th century in the face of advancing sand dunes. Only the north and south walls of the church survive upstanding (Plate 6). These have been consolidated and topped with triangular copes (Plate 7). The northern wall is incorporated into that of the churchyard and numerous memorials dating from the early 17th century onwards, are incorporated into the walls. Consequently, the nature of the remains is not very clear on the ground and there are no interpretative panels etc. It must, however, be assumed that the informed visitor will understand what they are seeing.

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- 5.7 The churchyard wall dates to 1751 with an enlarged gate repaired and enlarged in 1833 and a small morthouse adjoining. A series of rings are attached to the exterior of the graveyard wall for tying up horses. There are numerous ornate gravestones and monuments, including obelisks, present dating from the 18th and 19th centuries (Plates 8-10). An extension has been added to the churchyard's north, which remains in use (Plates 12-13).
- 5.8 As discussed above, the church sits in an isolated location (Plates 8-13). To the west, north and south are fields, currently under pasture, whilst to the east is the large dune system that separates the church and agricultural land from the beach and sea. The topography to the west of the dunes is largely flat, rising slightly to North Kirkton and slightly more appreciably to South Kirkton, next to which a distinct knoll is visible. North Kirkton is visible against a background of forestry; the three wind turbines at Ednie, approximately 2.6km to the north-west, appear beyond. South Kirkton is, however, screened from view by a small parcel of forestry. The fields are bounded by post and wire fences and hence are very open. The only exception to this is along the track leading to the church from North Kirkton, where there are hedges. Forestry is also present approximately 0.8km to the south, along the Cuttie Burn. The buildings and flare stacks of the St Fergus oil terminal are clearly visible approximately 3km to the north. The dunes occupy views to the south with the beach and Peterhead visible beyond.
- 5.9 The walls and monuments are visible from the surrounding area, particularly from within the Site (Plates 14, 16, 17 & 18). From some locations in particular, from the north-west, the obelisks are more prominent by dint of being silhouetted against the sky. Such views are occasionally available when moving along the track that serves the churchyard. This is lined by hedges which mostly curtail views (Plate 15), but there are occasional gaps, through which the churchyard walls, morthouse and monuments may be seen (Plate 16) and at the eastern end of the track the adjacent hedge is gappy and cluttered views are consequently available (Plate 17). Views are available over the churchyard from the top of the dunes to the east. The churchyard is seen from here against a backdrop of fields with forestry, farms and wind turbines beyond and an area of dumping in the foreground.
- 5.10 The cultural significance of the church and churchyard resides primarily in their fabric deriving from their archaeological, historic and, particularly in the case of the graveyard, architectural interest. They have potential to yield archaeological data regarding the development of the church and Medieval and Post-Medieval populations. The ruined church is primarily experienced within the churchyard and this forms the most important element of the Scheduled Monument's setting, allowing an appreciation of its architectural and historic interest, allowing an appreciation of its continued use by the parish, even after the church had been abandoned. The isolated location of the church and churchyard illustrates the changing pattern of settlement and hints at the role of the adjacent dune system in shaping this. It also lends them a distinct sense of place; set apart from local settlements. Views of the church and churchyard make a slight contribution to the appreciation of this, as the churchyard is seen as an isolated feature in the landscape. From some locations the silhouetted form of the obelisks and other elements of the churchyard is quite prominent, but this is primarily in incidental views from farmland and their aesthetic value of these views is considered to be very limited. Views from the surrounding landscape are therefore considered to make a slight contribution to the appreciation of the assets' cultural significance.
- 5.11 The proposed development will be visible from the church. As demonstrated by the appended photomontages (Appendix B), the exact appearance developing over time as landscape planting matures:
- Year 1 – 4: The proposed development will be overlooked from the churchyard and visible from its immediate environs. Solar panels will occupy the middle distance, the foreground being occupied by the churchyard and the field to the west. The rising ground and forestry beyond the Site, will be visible beyond the panels. Planting proposals will be established immediately which will help screen views and offset impacts.

-
- Year 5 – 40: the solar panels will be increasingly screened from view by landscape planting along the Site's eastern boundary as it becomes increasingly well established. This planting will be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

- 5.12 The proposed development will obscure views of the churchyard and the monuments within it from the surrounding fields. It must be noted, however, that such views are not generally experienced by those visiting the church and churchyard, who will approach by way of the track. Along the existing access track to the churchyard views are largely screened by existing hedges whilst, as set out in Section 5.10 above, views of the Church from the wider landscape are largely incidental.
- 5.13 The proposed development will not affect the fabric of the church or churchyard. It will, however, result in an appreciable change in its setting with currently open fields being covered by solar panels. This will not obscure or interfere with the general views from the churchyard, nor will it introduce noise or movement into the setting that might affect the sense of isolation. Nevertheless, the appearance of the solar panels is likely to be perceived as intrusive and at odds with the church and churchyard's isolated sense of place and the aesthetic appreciation of the gravestones. The degree to which this is likely to be the case will lessen over time as planting along the Site's perimeter becomes established. This will soften the edges of the proposed development and reduce its visibility; the latter will vary seasonally. The landscape planting itself will result in some change in the setting of the church and churchyard. It will curtail views inland and thereby diminish to a limited degree the sense of isolation, but the use of locally appropriate species will minimise any perception of the planting itself being intrusive; the overall impression will remain of the church and churchyard being isolated and separate from settlement.
- 5.14 It is concluded that the proposed development will adversely affect the setting of the church and churchyard, though not to the degree that their integrity will be compromised or their cultural significance substantively reduced.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.15 The construction of the proposed development will result in ground disturbance across a substantial part of the Site. However, the disturbance will for the most part relate to driven piles for the mounting of solar panels. Consequently, disturbance will be widespread but low intensity; typically an area equating to 1% of the area covered by panels will be disturbed. If archaeology is present in these areas, it is most likely to be unaffected or subject to slight disturbance. The excavation of cable trenches and the stripping of areas for compounds and substations also have the potential to disturb archaeology. If archaeology is present in these areas it is likely to be removed. The potential for this to occur is considered to be relatively low given the size of the disturbed areas.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This desk-based assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of 112.7ha of land proposed for a solar PV development near Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
- 6.2 There are no designated heritage assets in the Site. The proposed development lies approximately 160m from St Fergus' church, which is a Scheduled Monument, and the associated churchyard, which is a Category B Listed Building. The design of the proposed development has taken the need to preserve the setting of these assets into account and includes mitigation embedded in the design. Nevertheless, it is considered that the proposed development will affect the setting of these heritage assets. This will not compromise the integrity of their setting, and the impact whilst taken into account by the decision maker when considering the application, will be balanced against the demonstrable public benefits of the proposed development in terms of its provision of renewable energy. When so doing, the decision maker should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the churchyard's setting in line with the statutory duty placed upon them by Section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 6.3 There are no known heritage assets within the Site. It is considered that there is moderate potential for Prehistoric archaeology to be present and low potential in relation to later periods. Any unrecorded archaeology present is likely to be of local importance.
- 6.4 The potential archaeological impacts of the proposed development may be addressed through a programme of works secured through a condition of planning consent. It is recommended that this comprises monitoring of topsoil stripping in areas to be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council.

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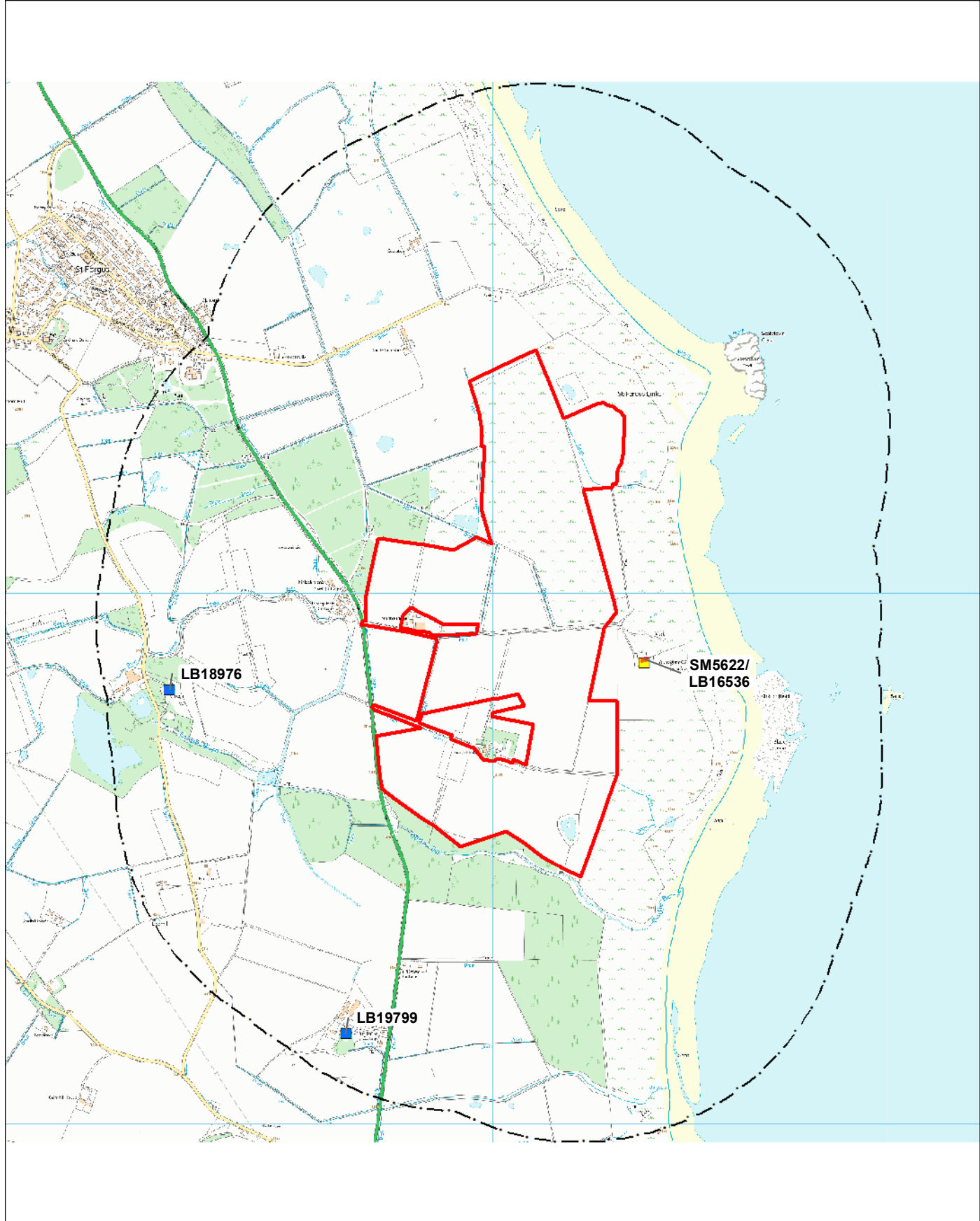
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



Ordnance Survey 1869, 1901-2, 1955-9, 1973-5

FIGURES





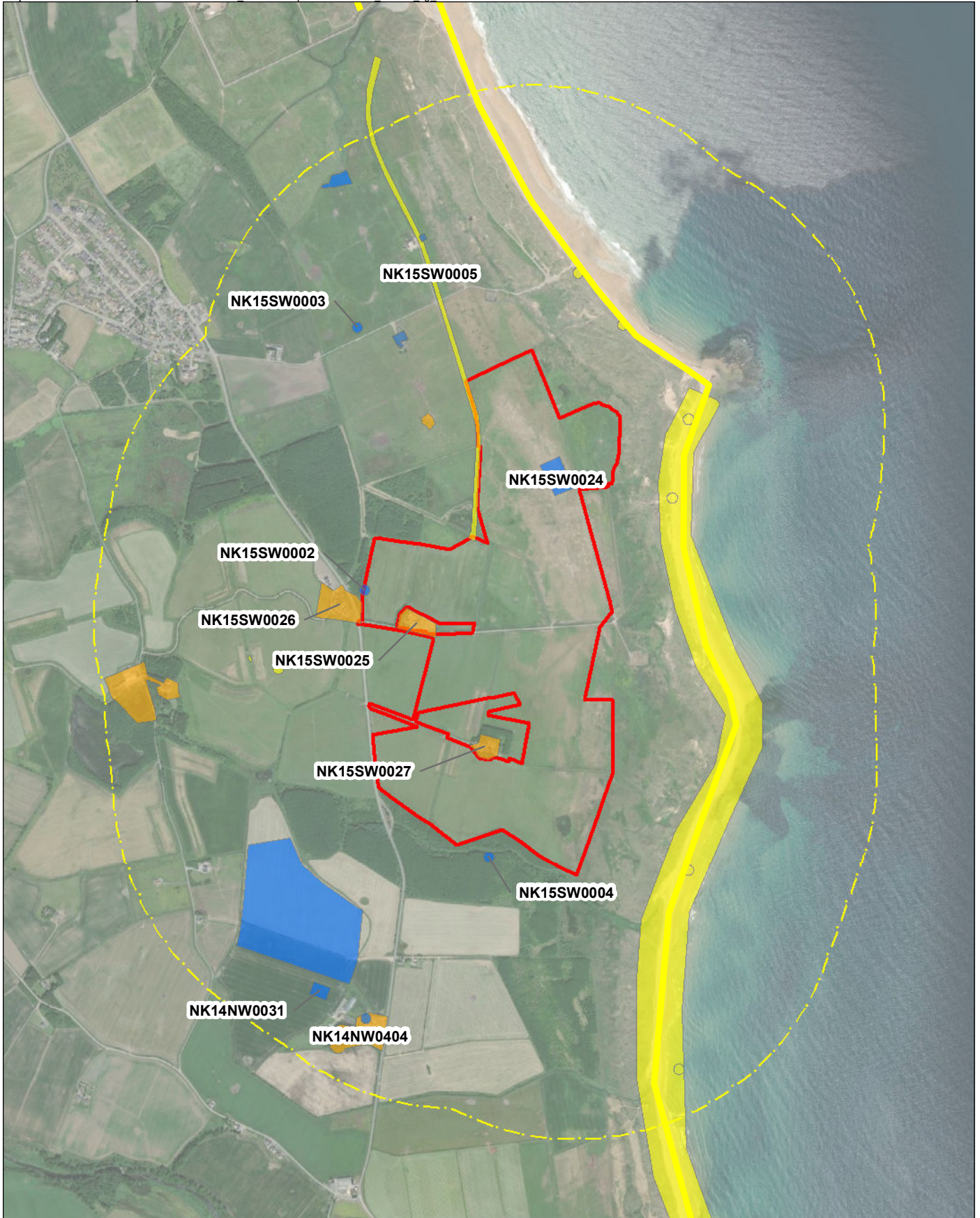
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- | | |
|--|--|
|  Site | Listed Buildings |
|  Study Area |  Category B |
|  Scheduled Monument |  Category C |

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Scale at A4: 1:20,000



Figure 2
Designated Heritage Assets



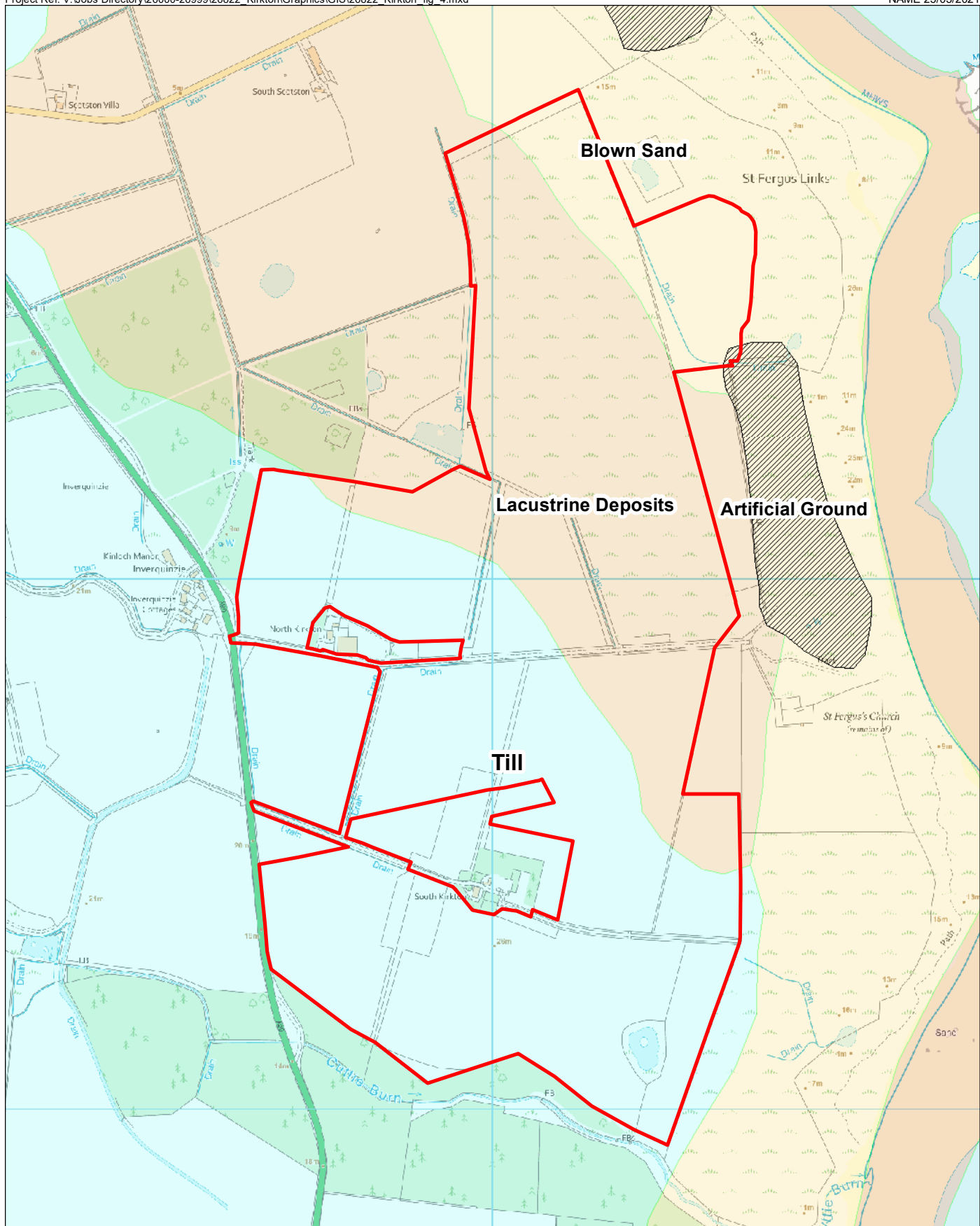
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-  Site
-  HER - other
-  Study Area
-  HER - farmstead
-  HER - defence

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Scale at A4: 1:20,000



Figure 3
HER Entries



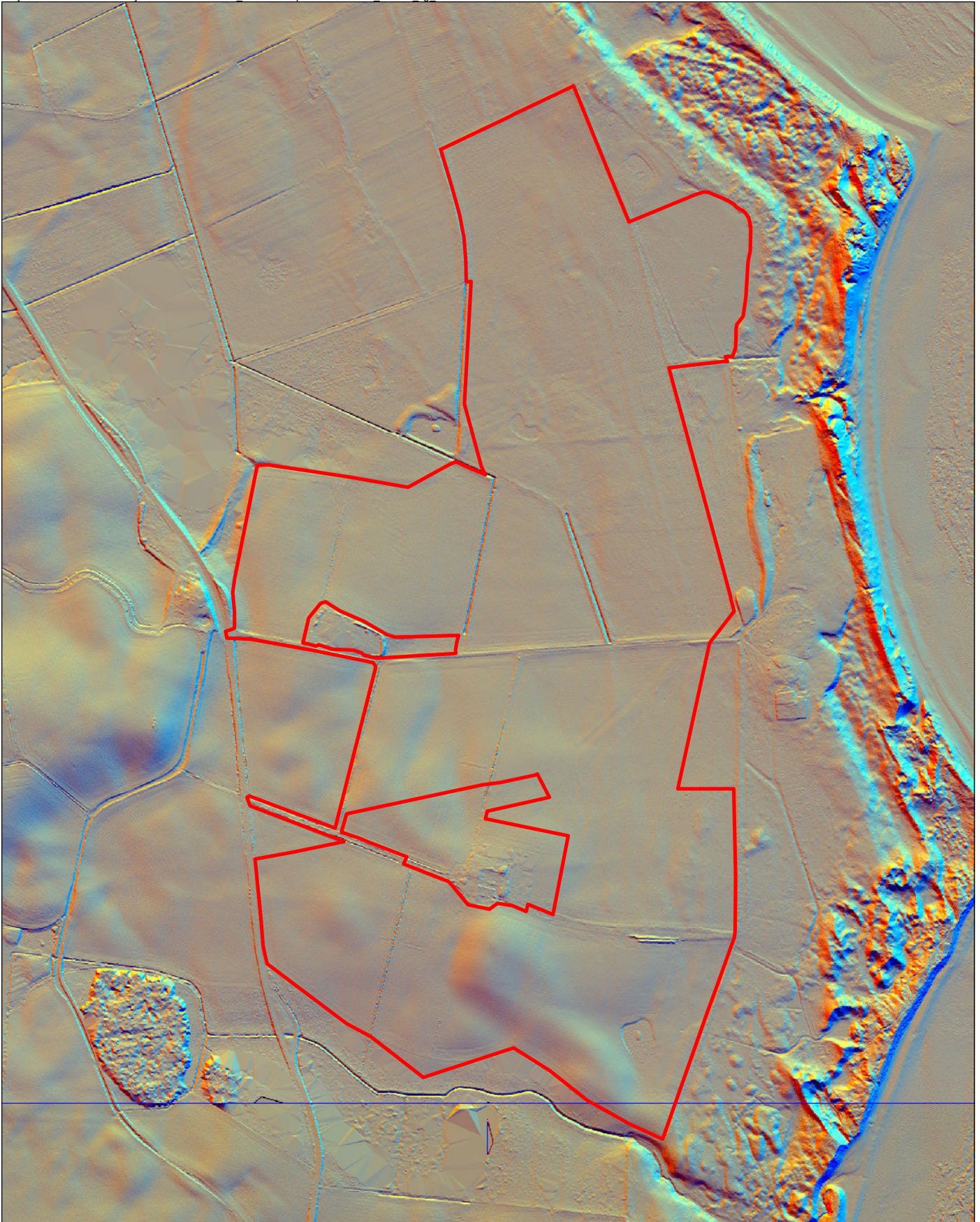
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 Site

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Figure 4
Superficial Geology



Legend

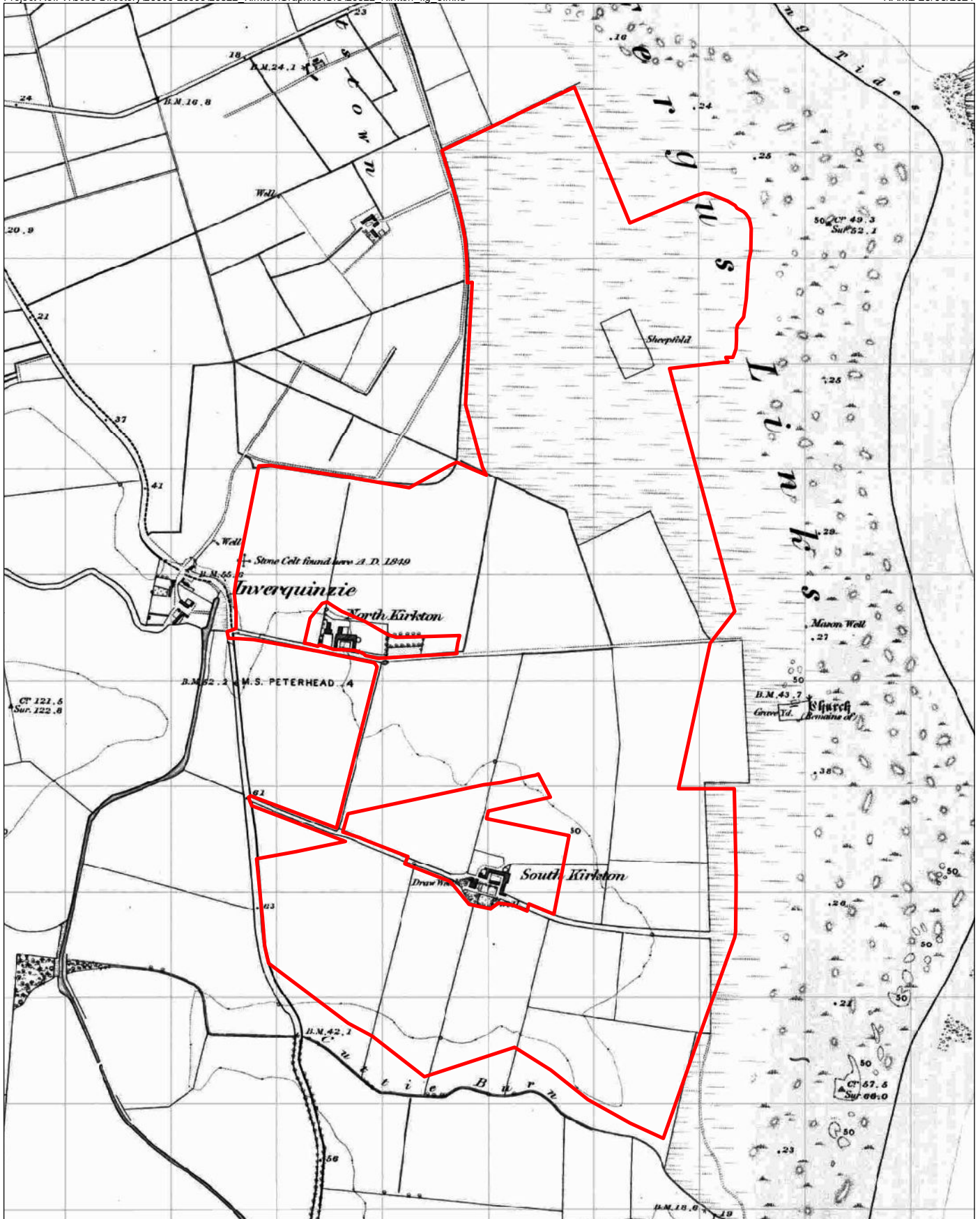
 Site

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Scale at A4: 1:10,000



Figure 5
Lidar Data



Legend

 Site

0 100 200 300m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000



Figure 6
Ordnance Survey Map
(1869)

PLATES

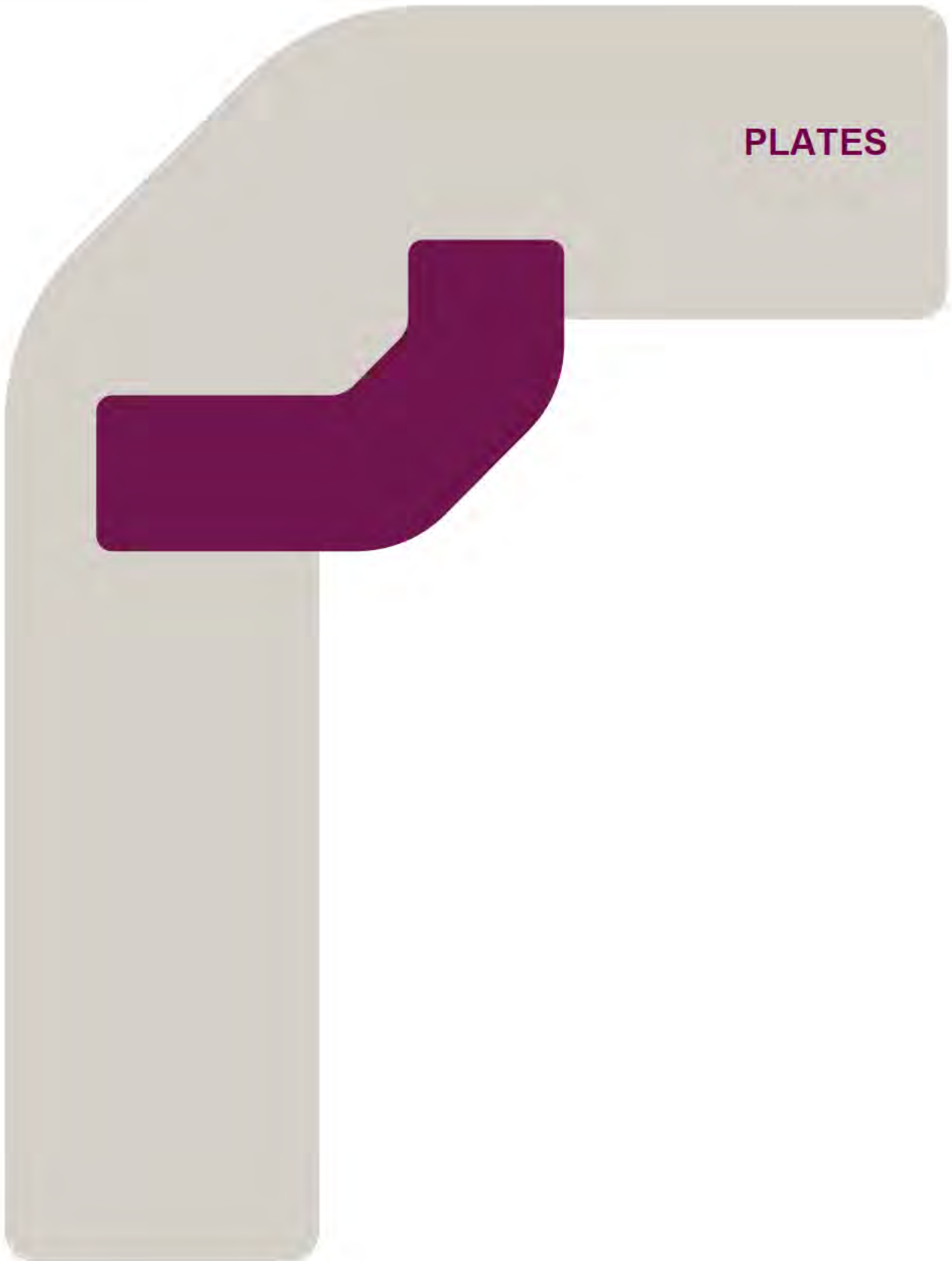




Plate 7: General view across northern part of the Site



Plate 8: Southern part of the Site looking north-west towards South Kirkton



Plate 9: View north across northern part of Site; St Fergus Oil Terminal on the skyline



Plate 10: Looking west across the Site, to the west of St Fergus' Church and churchyard



Plate 11: Site to the north-east of North Kirkton



Plate 12: St Fergus' Church seen from the south-west



Plate 13: St Fergus' Church seen from the east



Plate 14: View north-west towards Site from western end of St Fergus' Church



Plate 15: View west towards Site St Fergus' churchyard (left of shot)



Plate 16: St Fergus' churchyard looking south-east



Plate 17: View south from St Fergus' churchyard



Plate 18: Looking south-west from the modern extension to St Fergus' churchyard; Site visible beyond.



Plate 19: View north-west towards Site from St Fergus' churchyard extension. St Fergus Oil terminal is visible on the skyline.



Plate 20: St Fergus' Church and churchyard (centre of shot) from the south-west, seen from within the Site



Plate 21: Typical view east along track to St Fergus' Church



Plate 22: Glimpsed view of St Fergus' Church and churchyard from the track leading to them



Plate 23: St Fergus' Church and churchyard seen from the track; the Site includes the field beyond the gate



Plate 24: St Fergus' Church and churchyard (left of shot) with Site beyond, seen from the sand dunes to the east



APPENDICES

Appendix A

Designation Descriptions

St Fergus' Church (SM5622)

Type: Ecclesiastical: church

Description

The monument consists of the remains of a medieval church dedicated to St Fergus, originally the parish church of Inverugie.

The much-reduced remains of the church stand in an old graveyard amidst an area of sand-dunes. The church was abandoned when the people moved landward to escape the encroaching sand. In 1603, the presbytery recorded that "Both kirk and kirkyard is ourcassin with the sand." All that survives upstanding of the church are stretches of the opposing N and S walls.

The area to be scheduled is rectangular, extending 2m from the exterior walls of the church and measuring a maximum of 23.5m by 10.7m, as shown in red on the accompanying map.

Statement of National Importance

The monument is of national importance as an example, albeit incomplete, of a Medieval parish church abandoned in the early 17th century. It provides evidence and has the potential to provide further evidence, through excavation, which may contribute to our understanding of parish and settlement evolution, ecclesiastical architecture, society and material culture during the later Medieval period.

Old Churchyard of St. Fergus, excluding Scheduled Monument No 5622 'St Fergus's Church, old parish church', St. Fergus Links, Peterhead (LB16536)

Category: B

Description

Churchyard wall 1751 with arched gate enlarged and repaired 1833. Small morthouse with wall steps adjoining. Hooks in churchyard wall for horses.

Statement of Special Interest

Note at South Kirkton nearby, too altered for inclusion in list single-storey farmhouse with 2 long back wings, parts of which may date late 17th/early 18th century.

'St Fergus's Church, old parish church' is Scheduled Monument No 5622 and is excluded from the listing.

Listed building record and statutory address updated in 2015. Previously listed as 'Old Churchyard of St. Fergus, St. Fergus Links.'

Appendix B

St Fergus Churchyard Photomontage



Baseline image



Map image



Tripod location

Camera	Nikon D600	Easting	411537
Date	21.11.20 - 09.30	Northing	850745
View height	1.56 m AGL	Direction	227°
Field of View	90°	Distance	150 m

Title:	VP05 - North Kirkton Cemetery Baseline
Figure 11.0	
Projection: OSGB36	
Data Source: RPS 2020	
Status: Final	

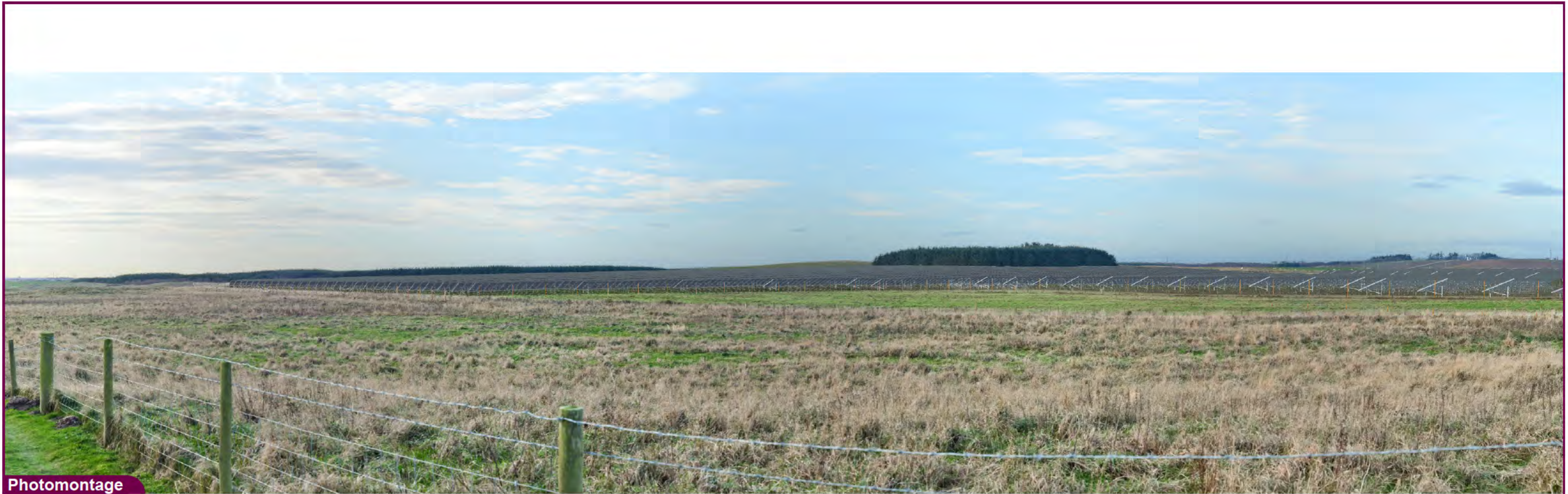
Drawn by:	PM
Checked:	SA
Job Ref:	NI 2290
Date:	Mar 2021

Project:	Kirkton Solar PV & Energy Storage Facility
Client:	

Client:




Elmwood House, 74 Boucher Road
BELFAST, BT12 6RZ
028 9066 7914



Photomontage



Map image



Tripod location

Camera	Nikon D600	Easting	411537
Date	21.11.20 - 09.30	Northing	850745
View height	1.56 m AGL	Direction	227°
Field of View	90°	Distance	150 m

Title:
**VP05 - North Kirkton Cemetery
 Photomontage**

Figure 11.1	Drawn by: PM
Projection: OSGB36	Checked: SA
Data Source: RPS 2020	Job Ref: NI 2290
Status: Final	Date: Mar 2021

Project:
**Kirkton Solar PV
 & Energy Storage Facility**

Client:





Photomontage with planting



Map image



Tripod location

Camera	Nikon D600	Easting	411537
Date	21.11.20 - 09.30	Northing	850745
View height	1.56 m AGL	Direction	227°
Field of View	90°	Distance	150 m

Title:	VP05 - North Kirkton Cemetery Photomontage with Planting
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Figure 11.2	Drawn by: PM
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Data Source: RPS 2020	Job Ref: NI 2290
Status: Final	Date: Mar 2021

Project:	Kirkton Solar PV & Energy Storage Facility
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Client:	
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