

**Report of Archaeological Recording  
March 2005  
Rear of 21/22 High Street, Dingwall.  
NH 5492/5869. (centred)**

Client: Atkins.

Planning Application No: 03/1038/FULRC

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April 2005**

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Atkins in February 2005 to undertake a project of archaeological recording at the rear of 21/22 High Street, Dingwall (NH 5492/5869) as part of a housing development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.*

*Work revealed the foundations of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century building with only one archaeological feature of interest of a ditch of an unknown date to the southern edge of the development. No finds were made of any feature older than the 18/19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*No recommendations for further archaeological work have been made.*

## **1. Introduction**

This report is for an archaeological recording project conducted on behalf of Atkins by the author for a housing development at the rear of 21/22 High Street, Dingwall. This work is to form part of the conditions for planning application 03/1038/FULRC.

The site is located to the south side of Dingwall High Street, in an area recently used as a car park.

The fieldwork was conducted between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2005.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

- Mr. F Jollise of Atkins;
- Mr. R Bruce, of William Gray Construction Ltd, for onsite help;
- Staff of Adrem Cartographic Services Ltd for site survey work;
- Staff of William Gray Construction Ltd for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of the RCAHMS;
- Staff of the NMRS;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

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**Figure 1 - General Location 1:25,000**  
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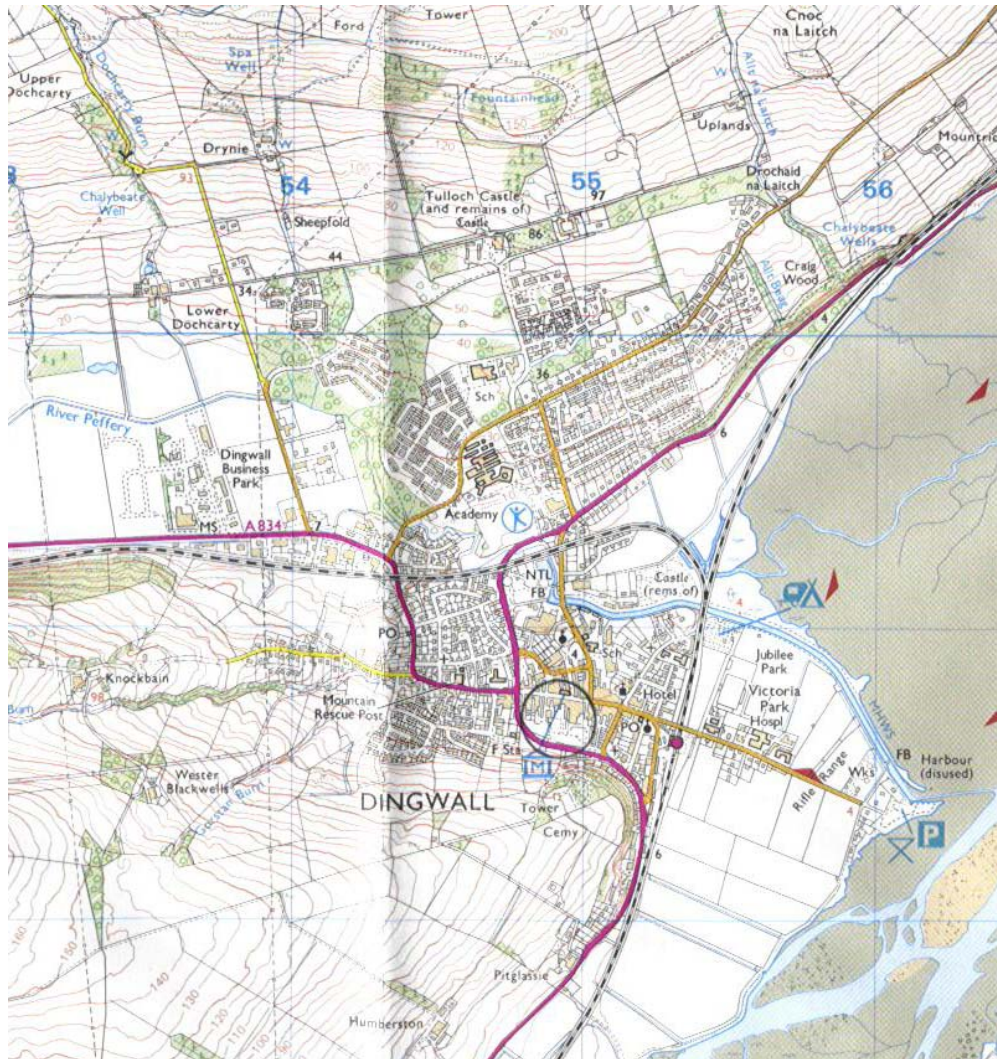
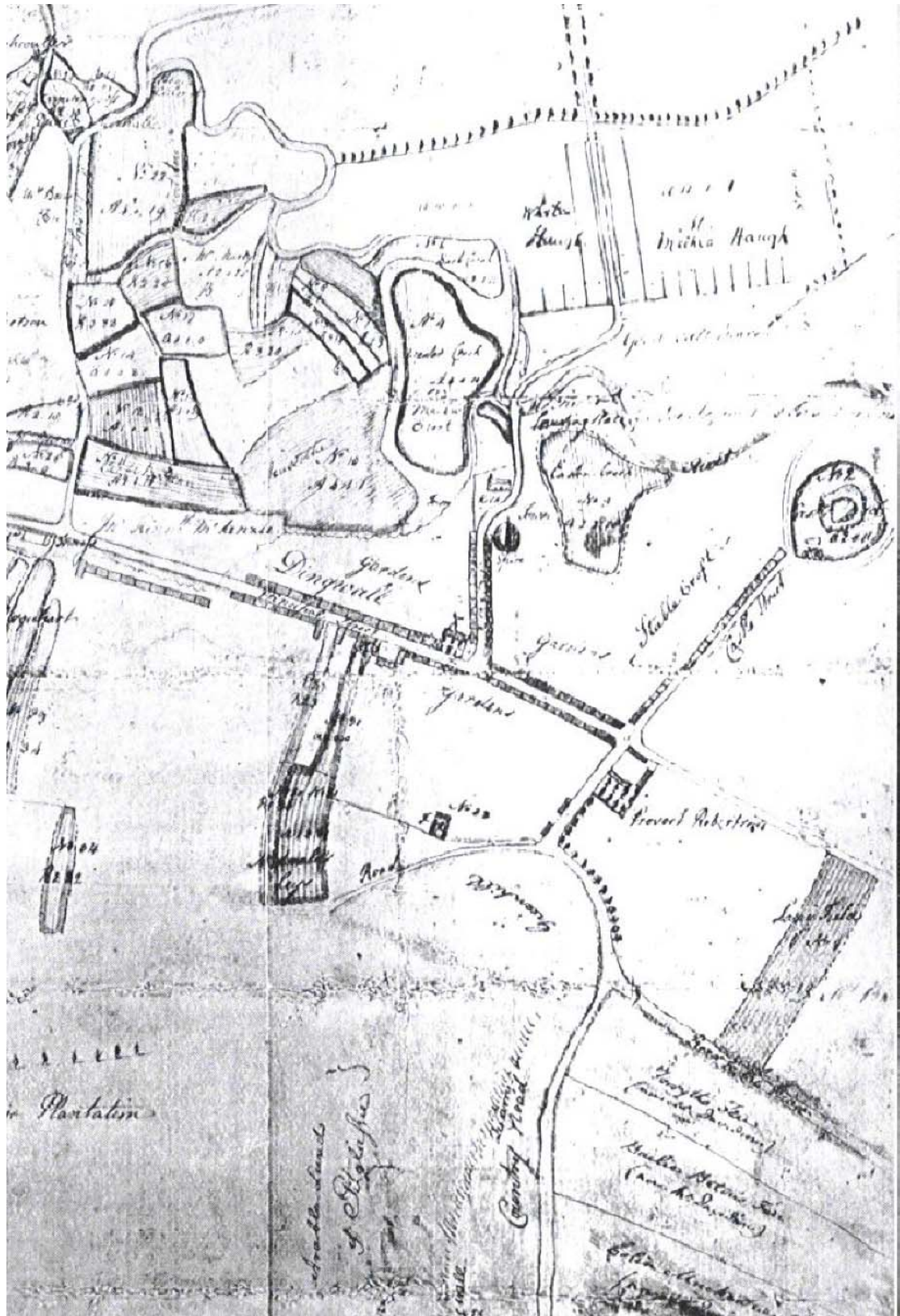


Figure 2 – Site Location 1:2500





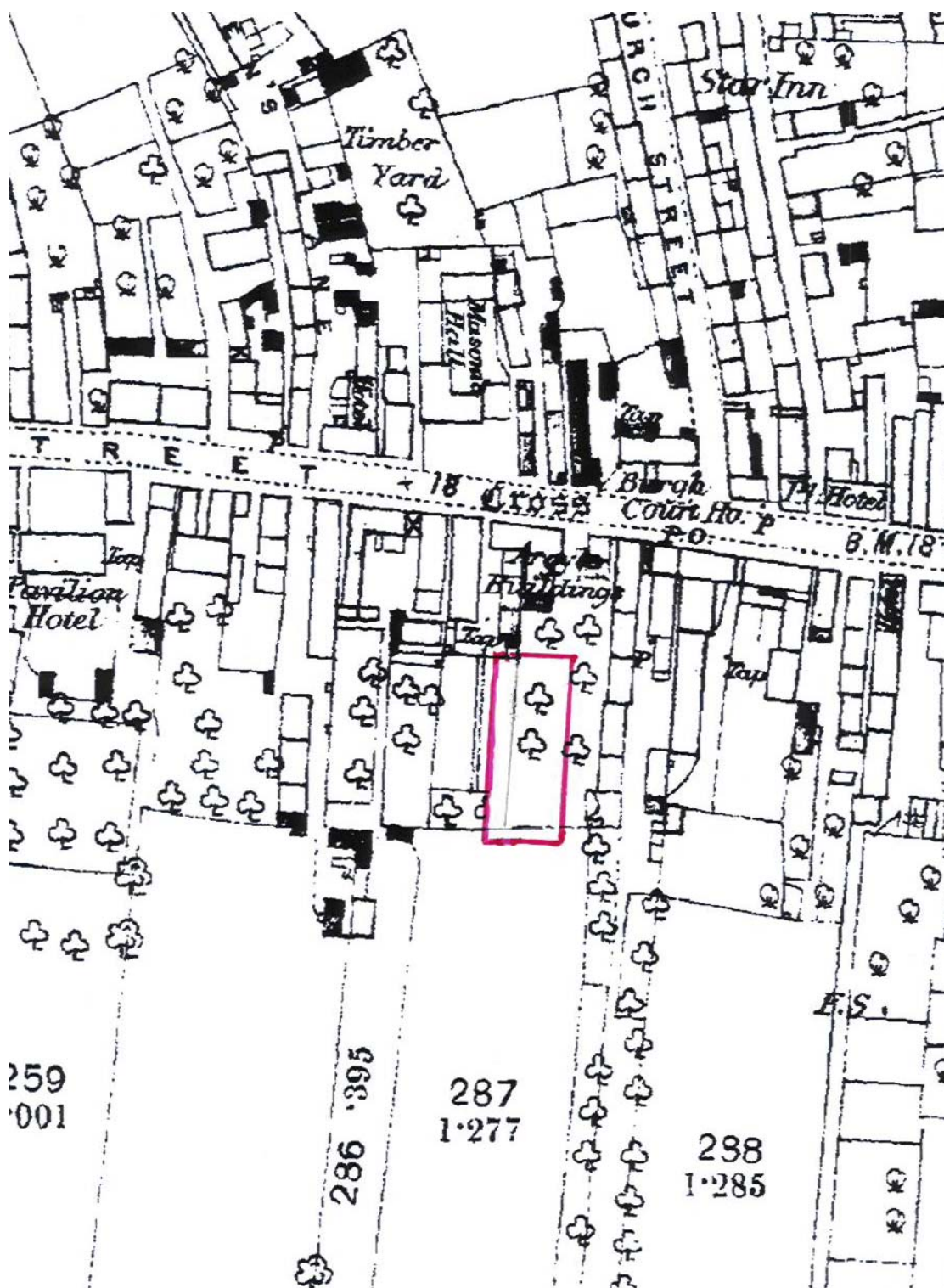
**Figure 3 – Plan of Dingwall of 1777.**  
 (From Macrae, 1923)



[illegible]

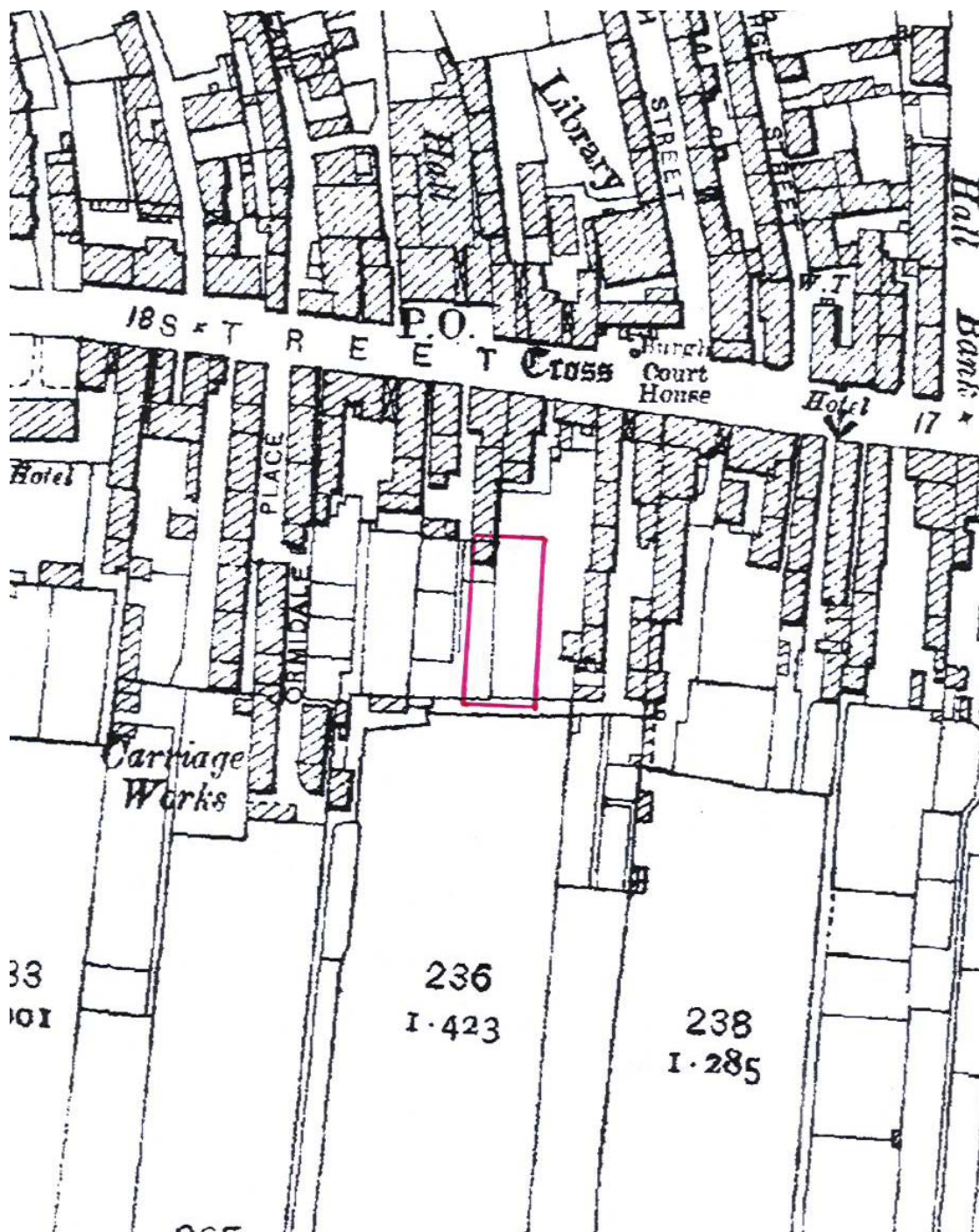


**Figure 5 – 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1880.**  
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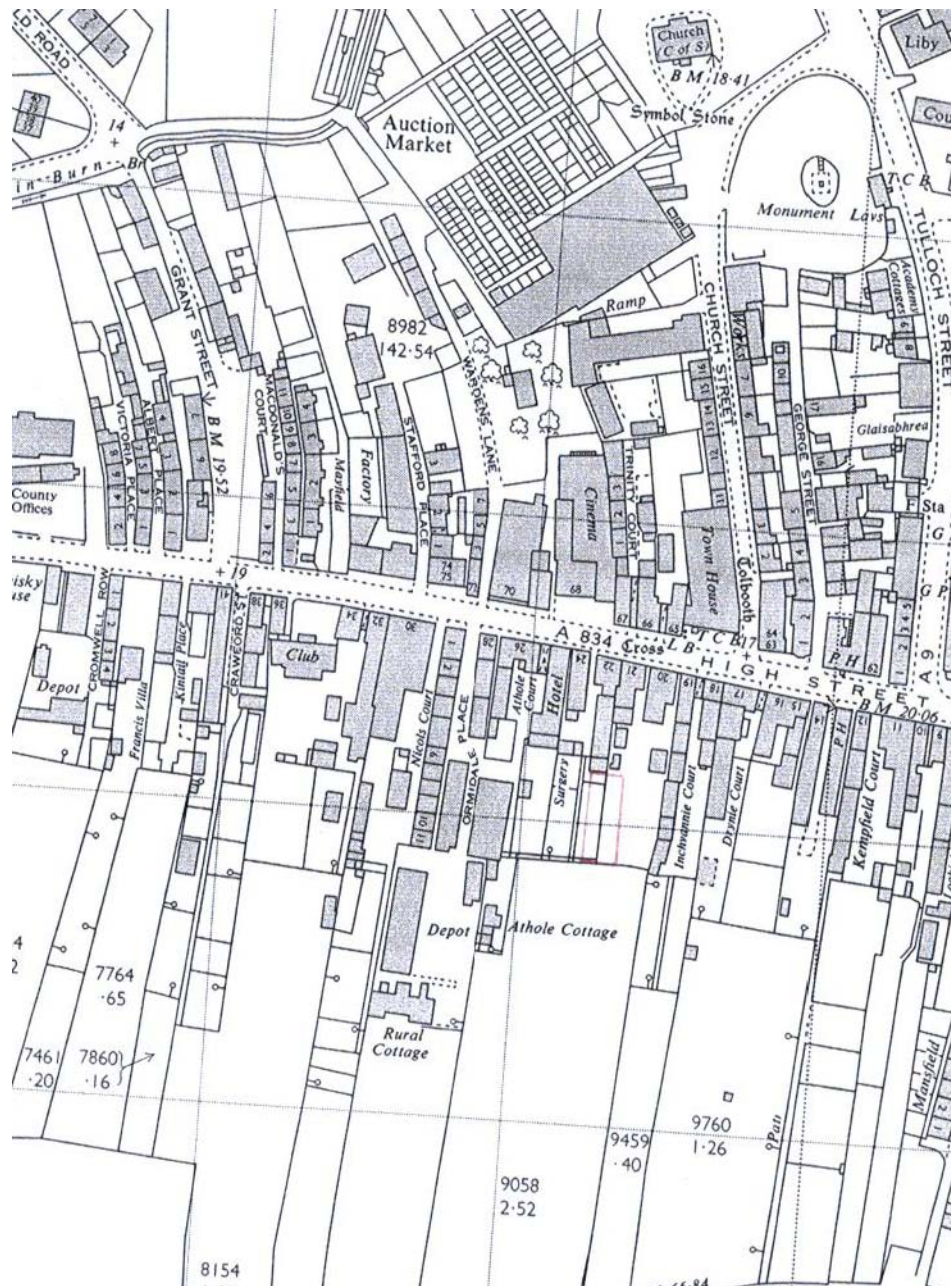




**Figure 6 – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1906.**  
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**Figure 8 - Ordnance Survey of 1977 1:2500.**  
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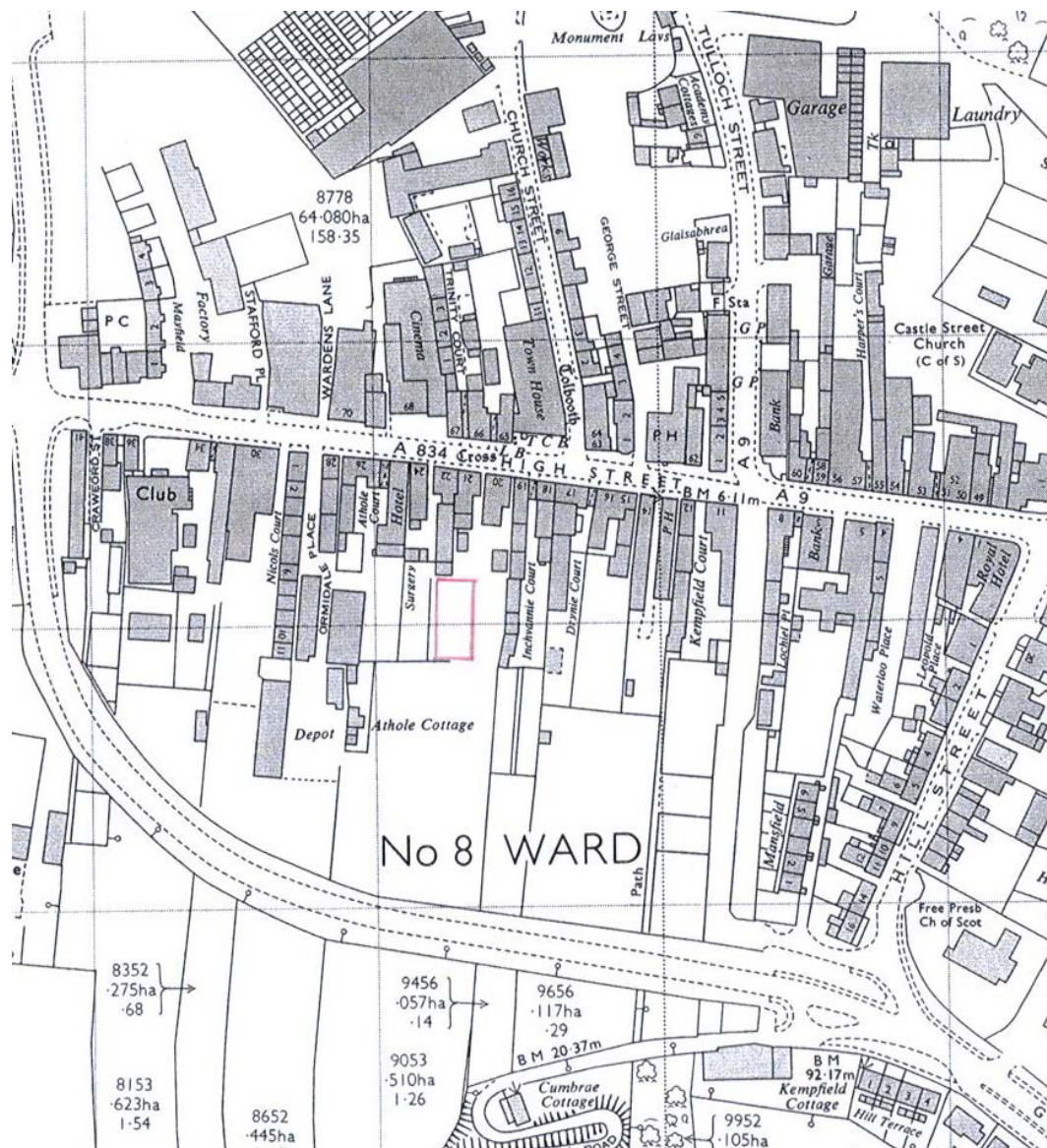
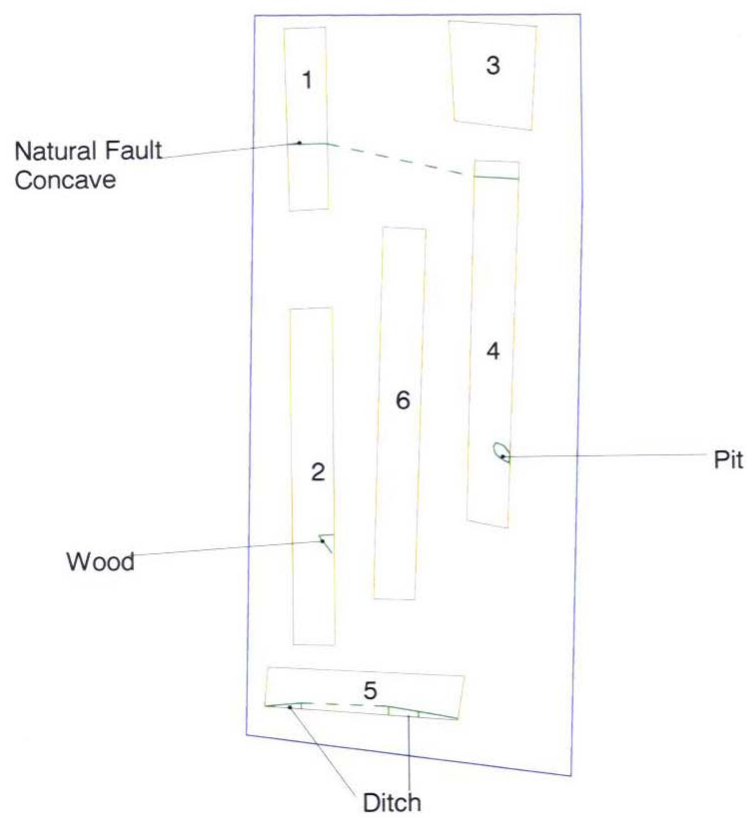


Figure 9 – Site Plan 1:250.

## 21/22 High Street, Dingwall





### 3. Historical Background

The Burgh of Dingwall is thought to date back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and have Norse links through its name, though to date there is no evidence for this. The Burgh was granted Royal status in 1226 by Alexander II, and had a castle in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Received Royal charters in 1497 and 1589. Noted in the Old Statistical Account (1792) that burgh had shrunk by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Only in recent history did the burgh become important, becoming the 'County Town' after Act of Parliament in 1843.

Currently only very limited archaeological work has been undertaken in Dingwall, with the majority of it to the edge of the burgh (AOC 2001, 2003). A watching brief in 1992 in the High Street by J Wordsworth (NMRS NH55NW 48) revealed timber foundations of a building and a midden containing bottle glass. A trench made by SUAT Ltd in 1985 in advance of a supermarket extension revealed an old ground surface but no finds earlier than the 1800's (NMRS NH55NW 30).

A single archaeological site is recorded to the development area of:

HSMR – NH55NW 24

NMRS – NH55NW 33

Grid Ref: NH 549/587

Type – Iron Axe

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'An iron axe was found during construction works at the edge of this High Street frontage. Found apparently over 2m below the present ground surface amongst a layer of charcoal and shells. It has been tentatively identified as a medieval carpenter's axe (Museum of London catalogue type II).'

Actual location of find is unknown.

#### Documentary Evidence

Unfortunately County Valuation Rolls from 1855 are listed by Street and Name with no numbers given until 1877 when 21 High Street is listed as House and shop as is 22 High Street. A study of the Burgh census returns for 1841 to 1861 again lists only by Street and Name with no house number given, making any attempt to backtrack occupiers difficult and therefore possible use of the buildings and land very limited. There is also no Burgh Sasine index by place, to attempt to find out when 21/22 High Street were built.

At time of desk-based survey no access was possible to Dingwall Museum to check their record holdings, including Burgh Minutes, as it was closed for the season. Noted by MacRae (1923) that no burgh records survive prior to 1708.

#### Cartographic Evidence

A study of early maps of the county does not provide enough detail for the development area. A plan of the town dated 1777 (see figure 3) shows the area of development as gardens but the plan was made for sale of Burgh lands to the North and West of the town and the buildings on the High Street might be a representation only as Woods Plan of 1821 (see figure 4) shows gaps in the High Street frontage. No other early maps exist (RSGS, 1973). Wood's plan of 1821 (see figure 4) shows the development area to be undeveloped though 22 High Street has been built by this time. Possibly site owned by a Mr. Morrison. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of 1880 (see figure 5) denotes the development area to be comprised of 2 gardens, one possibly an orchard to the rear of 21 High Street; a possible boundary division is shown. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS of 1906 (see figure 6) a square extension has been built to the rear of 22 High Street, the ground to the south is still divided but possibly now only gardens. Again by the later editions of

1964 (see figure 7) it is unchanged whilst by 1977 (see figure 8) area is depicted as open ground.

#### Aerial Photographs

A study of aerial photographs held in the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh revealed coverage from 1946 to 1975 but only showing the development area to be as follows:

1946 – Area visible as garden (4203) Building to NW corner of site still visible.

1957 – Again visible as garden.

1968 – garden to rear of no.22, road leading from no.21. Building to NW removed.

1975 – Area visible as car park.

#### Conclusions

Area of development though forming gardens off the High Street and lying in an area of archaeological interest, sources gives no indication to former use or potential of archaeological deposits. Previous archaeological work in the High Street noted no deposits earlier than 1800.

#### **4. Objectives**

To conduct a recording project on the development to record those features revealed by excavation work. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed. This work is to include the following:

- Desk based survey
- Evaluation
- Watching brief
- Report on results

#### **5. Methodology**

A monitoring was made of the removal of the car park to a maximum depth of 0.6m to an area of 230m<sup>2</sup>. A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the site and excavated the trenches with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand.

Trenches and location of features were surveyed using an EDM total station.

Weather on the days of work (11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2005) was generally overcast, with some rain and snow showers.

#### **6. Recording results**

The recording project was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

#### Site Location

The site is located to the south side of Dingwall High Street, in an area recently used as a car park.

A monitoring of the excavation of the car park revealed that existing car park overlay an earlier car-parking surface both made up of gravel, sand and tarmac and patches of concrete. On average this was to a depth of 0.5m, within the mixed fills there was modern rubbish including metal and brick. To the NW corner of the site were revealed the stone footings of a building as depicted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS measuring 4.2m NS x 5.8m EW with walls 0.42m thick. Concrete to the southern edge of this building at same level may indicate building formerly being a garage.

Top: View of building facing W – scales 2m.

Below: View of building facing N – scales 2m.



Upon removal of the car park surface, a series of machine-made trenches were carried out under direct supervision with excavation being conducted in spits. Ground having a heavy clay content, would have made hand-dug trenches very difficult.

Results of trial trenching was as follows:

**Trench 1** – Aligned N-S 1.8m x 7.9m. Initial work revealed a rubble drain with find of white glazed pottery within fill. Drain was 0.7m wide and 0.15m deep.

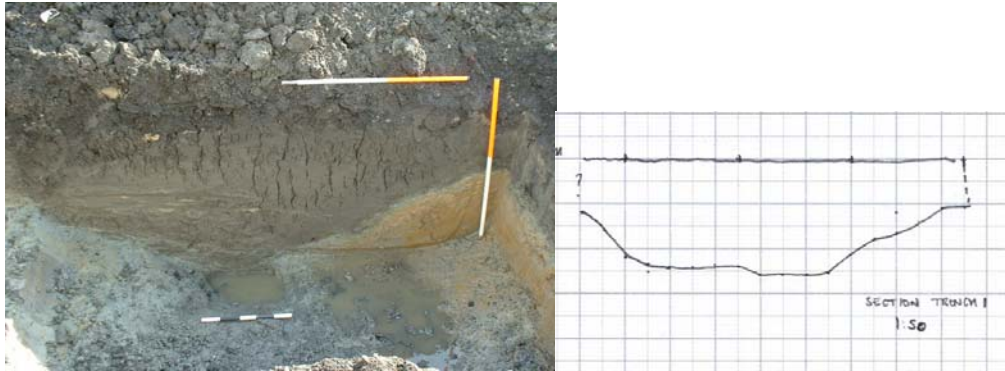
Below: View of rubble drain facing E – scales 1m.



At the SE corner of the trench was revealed a natural channel, more visible in the W facing section rather than E. Though some bone fragments were found to the base of this feature there was no indication of it being cut rather that it was a natural feature. The fill within was quite clean and no other finds were made. A small sondage at its base, again revealed no indication of it being man-made. Depth of natural varied throughout trench.

Below left: View of W facing section – scales 1m & 0.5m.

Below right: Section drawing.



**Trench 2** – Aligned N-S 1.8m x 14.5m. Find made of two pieces of wood [201] that were maybe joined together; a single shard of 19<sup>th</sup> century glazed pottery was found with the wood. Almost lay directly atop natural in water table, upon attempt to lift wood fell apart, no indication of use could be ascertained. Spar EW 59cm in length and 4cm wide, 2<sup>nd</sup> NS 74cm in length and 7cm wide. Topsoil to a depth of 0.6m.

Below left: View of spar facing E – scale 0.5m.

Below right: View of wood in situ facing N – scales 1m & 0.5m.



**Trench 3** – Box trench 4.5m x 3.8m. No features or deposits revealed. Natural blue-grey clay at depth of 0.8m.

**Trench 4** – Aligned N-S 1.8m x 15.6m. Trace was made again of the natural feature at the northern end of the trench, fill here had some rounded stones within. As previously in trench no.1 no finds were made.

A second feature was revealed of a shallow oval shaped pit [402] with finds of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and glass within [401]. Excavation proved difficult due to water table. Finds included about 24 bottles, a large red-ware ashet with cream glaze, domestic white and blue & white pottery, glass jars and the stem of a wine glass. Upon excavation it was



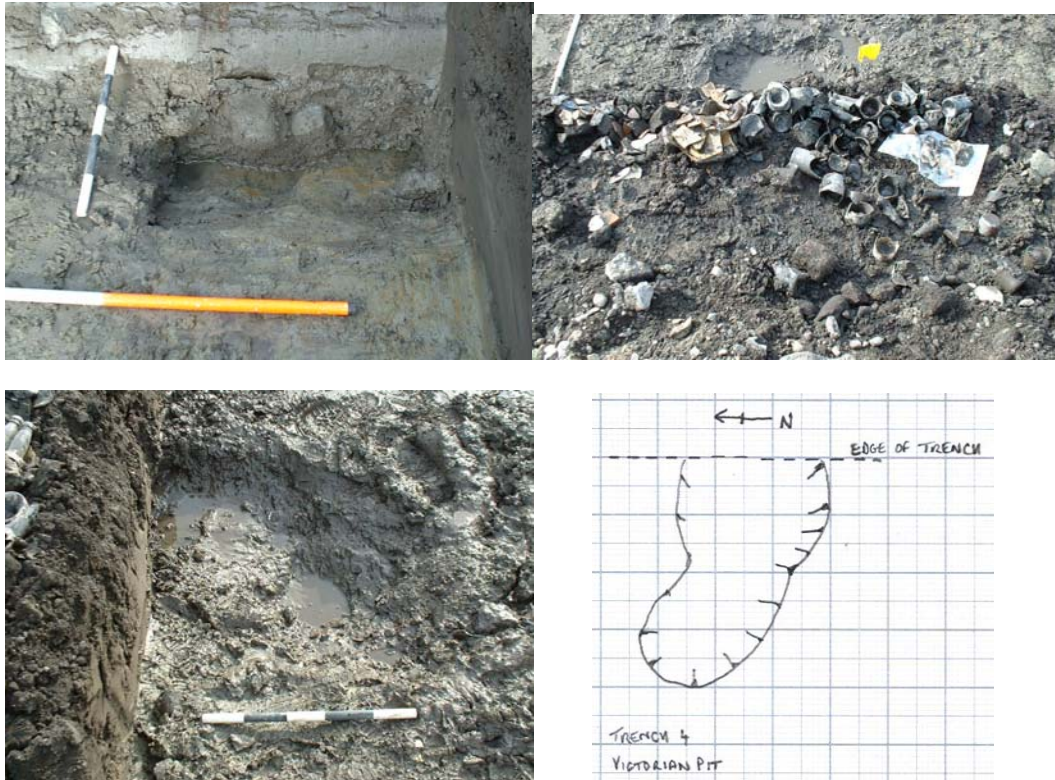
noted that the pit may have been two small pits, of a depth of 16cm. Overall size was 1.1m E-W by 0.6m N-S.

Top left: View of natural feature facing N – scales 1m & 0.5m.

Top right: View of finds from pit facing W.

Below left: View of pit upon excavation – scale 0.5m.

Below right: Plan of pit [402].



**Trench 5** – Aligned E-W 1.8m x 10.6m. A single feature was revealed of a ditch of unknown date to the southern edge of this trench. No finds made, excavation revealed it to be 0.45m wide and 0.17m deep. Looked modern, in similar location as southern boundary as denoted on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition maps. Possibly a former drainage ditch.

Top: Sondage through ditch – scale 0.5m.

Below: View of ditch facing W – scale 0.5m.



**Trench 6** – Aligned N-S 1.8m x 15.6m. No features or deposits revealed. Natural blue-grey clay at depth of 0.45m.

A monitoring of the excavations for the foundations (see figure 10) revealed no additional archaeological features or deposits. Overall the excavations were very water logged due to a high water table.

## **7. Conclusions**

Overall the excavations were very water logged due to high watertable that made for difficult cleaning and excavation of features. That two possible drainage ditches were revealed in a small area may be related to that noted by Mowat (1981) in the Burgh Minutes in 1765 that 'in an attempt to improve the hygiene and appearance of the place, channels were ordered to be dug to drain away surplus water' (ibid, 70).

That no earlier deposits or features were noted may indicate that this part of the High Street was not developed until the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This is further possible that the nearby Tolbooth was only built in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century (RCAHMS, 1996, 70). Noted in the Old Statistical Account (1792) that burgh Cross formerly stood to the east (depicted on burgh plan of 1777 at corner of Castle Street and High Street), and that its current location outside the Tolbooth reflects this side of the burgh only being developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and not earlier. It is therefore possible that the medieval burgh is more to the area of Castle Street rather than the west end of the High Street.

Only with more archaeological work within the core of the burgh will this idea be proved or disapproved.

## **8. Recommendations**

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to the limited number of features that were revealed, and it is likely that few other features would be revealed with further work.

## **9. Archive**

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:

- Notebook of results
- Copy of this report

A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. Digital images used in this report have been deposited with HSMR on disc as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

## **10. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland**

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

## 11. References

AOC (2001) Tesco, Dingwall – Archaeological Desk-based Assessment. AOC Archaeology Group. Unpublished report – copy held by HSMR (report no.886).

AOC (2003) Tesco, Dingwall Auction mart Site– Archaeological Work. AOC Archaeology Group. Unpublished report – copy held by HSMR (report no.1179).

Census Returns for Dingwall 1841 to 1861.

County Valuation Rolls Burgh of Dingwall.

Historic Scotland (1996) Historic Dingwall: the archaeological implications of development. Historic Scotland. Edinburgh.

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

MacRae, N (1923) The Romance of a Royal Burgh: Dingwall's Thousand Years. North Star Office. Dingwall.

Mowat, I R M (1981) Easter Ross 1750-1850: The Double Frontier. John Donald Publishers. Edinburgh.

RCAHMS (1996) Tolbooths and Town-Houses: Civic Architecture in Scotland to 1833. Stationery Office. Edinburgh.

RSGS (1973) Early Maps of Scotland to 1850. Royal Scottish geographical Society. Edinburgh. 2 volumes.

Simpson, A T & Stevenson, S (1982) Historic Dingwall: the archaeological implications of development. Scottish Burgh Survey. Glasgow.

### Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet 88.3 Ross-shire of 1880 surveyed 1876.

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet 88.3 Ross-shire of 1906 revised 1904.

Ordnance Survey 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet NH5458-5558 Dingwall of 1965 revised 1964.

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet NH5458-5558 Dingwall of 1977 revised 1976.

Woods Town Plan of Dingwall 1821.

Blaue, J 1654 - Map of Scotland.

Moll, H 1745 - The shires of Ross and Cromarty.

Thomson, J 1826 – South Inverness-shire.

Thomson, J 1826 – East Inverness-shire.

Dingwall Parliamentary Boundary plan of 1832.

### Aerial Photographs Consulted

RAF 106G/Scot/UK 114	4203-4	23-5-1946	1:10,000
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RAF 58/RAF/2337	F21/11-9	31-12-1957	1:10,000
OS OS/68/67	34-33	21-4-1968	1:6,200
Fairey 7343/32	785-783	17-5-1975	1:10,000

## **Appendix 1 – Photographic Register**

### **Colour Slides**

#### Film 1

- 1 – View of car park facing N.
- 2 – View of car park facing S.
- 3 – View of building to NW corner facing W – scales 2m.
- 4 – Ibid.
- 5 – Ibid.
- 6 – View of building to NW corner facing N – scales 2m.
- 7 – Ibid.
- 8 – View of building to NE corner facing W – scales 2m.
- 9 – Ibid.
- 10 – View of machining of car park in progress facing SW.
- 11 – View of machining of car park in progress facing S.
- 12 – View of trench 3 facing N – scales 1m.
- 13 – View of trench 3 facing NNW – scales 1m.
- 14 – View of site upon removal of car park facing N.
- 15 – View of site upon removal of car park facing S.
- 16 – Ibid.
- 17 – View of site upon removal of car park facing SE.
- 18 – Detail of rubble drain – scales 1m.
- 19 – Detail of drain in trench 1 – scales 1m.
- 20 – View of natural depression in trench 1 facing E – scales 1m.
- 21 – Ibid.
- 22 – Ibid but facing SE.
- 23 – Ibid but facing E.
- 24 – Wood in trench 2 – scale 0.5m.
- 25 – Wood in trench 2 facing N – scale 1m & 0.5m.
- 26 – Ibid.
- 27 – Ibid.
- 28 – Ibid but facing E.
- 29 – View of trench 1 upon excavation facing N – scales 1m.
- 30 – Ibid.
- 31 – View of trench 2 upon excavation facing N – scales 1m.
- 32 – Ibid.
- 33 – View of site facing N.
- 34 – Edge of natural depression in trench 4 facing N – scales 1m & 0.5m.
- 35 – Ibid but facing NE.
- 36 – Ibid – facing N – scales 1m.

#### Film 2

- 1 – View of pit within trench 4 during excavation facing SE.
- 2 – View of trench 4 upon excavation facing N – scales 1m.
- 3 – View of trench 4 upon excavation facing S – scales 1m.
- 4 – Detail of slot through ditch trench 5 – scale 0.5m.
- 5 – Ibid.
- 6 – View of slots in ditch facing W – scale 0.5m. Flags in slots.
- 7 – View of trench 5 upon excavation facing W – scales 1m.
- 8 – View of pit in trench 4 upon excavation facing S – scale 0.5m.



- 9 – View of pit in trench 4 upon excavation facing E – scale 0.5m.
- 10 – View of trench 6 upon excavation facing S – scales 1m.
- 11 – Ibid.
- 12 – View of foundations to N facing W – scale 2m.
- 13 – View of foundations to W facing N – scale 2m.
- 14 – Ibid.
- 15 – Ibid.
- 16 – View of foundations to SW corner facing S – scale 2m.
- 17 – View of foundations to centre of site facing E – scale 2m.

## **Appendix 2 – Context Register**

- 200 – Topsoil – dark black silty clay.
- 201 – Wood.
- 400 – Topsoil – dark black silty clay.
- 401 – Fill of oval pit, grey black.
- 402 – Cut of oval pit.
- 500 – Topsoil – dark black silty clay.
- 501 – Fill of ditch, grey black
- 502 – Cut of ditch.