



**Fiddes electricity cable route, Stonehaven,  
Aberdeenshire:  
Desk-based Cultural Heritage Assessment  
Project 4589**

## Fiddes electricity cable route, Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire: Desk-based Cultural Heritage Assessment

**On behalf of:** WSP/ Parsons Brinckenhoff

**NGR:** NO 77761 79588 to NO 81753 81507

**Project Number:** 4589

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*This document has been prepared in accordance  
with GUARD Archaeology Limited standard operating procedures.*

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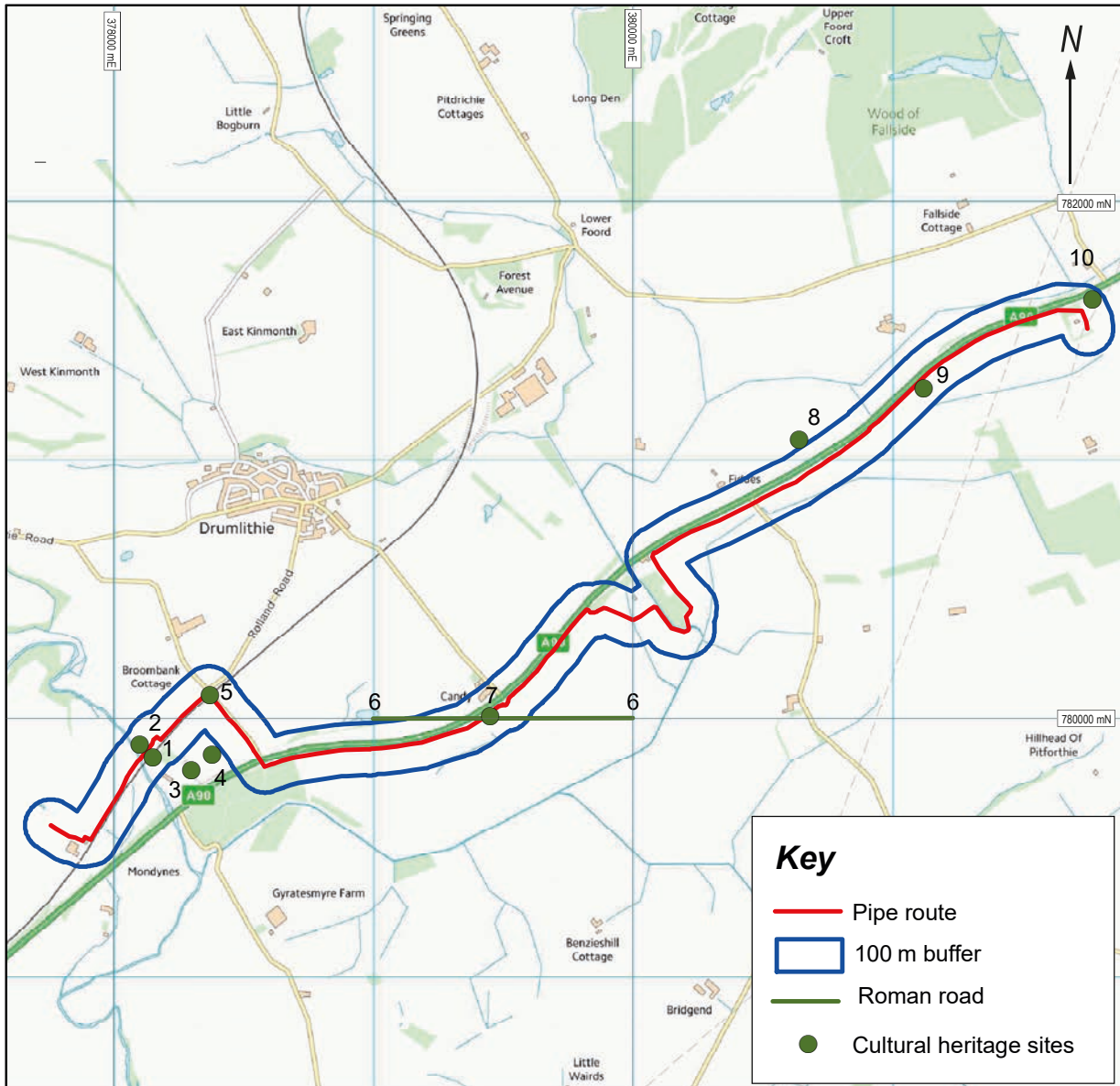
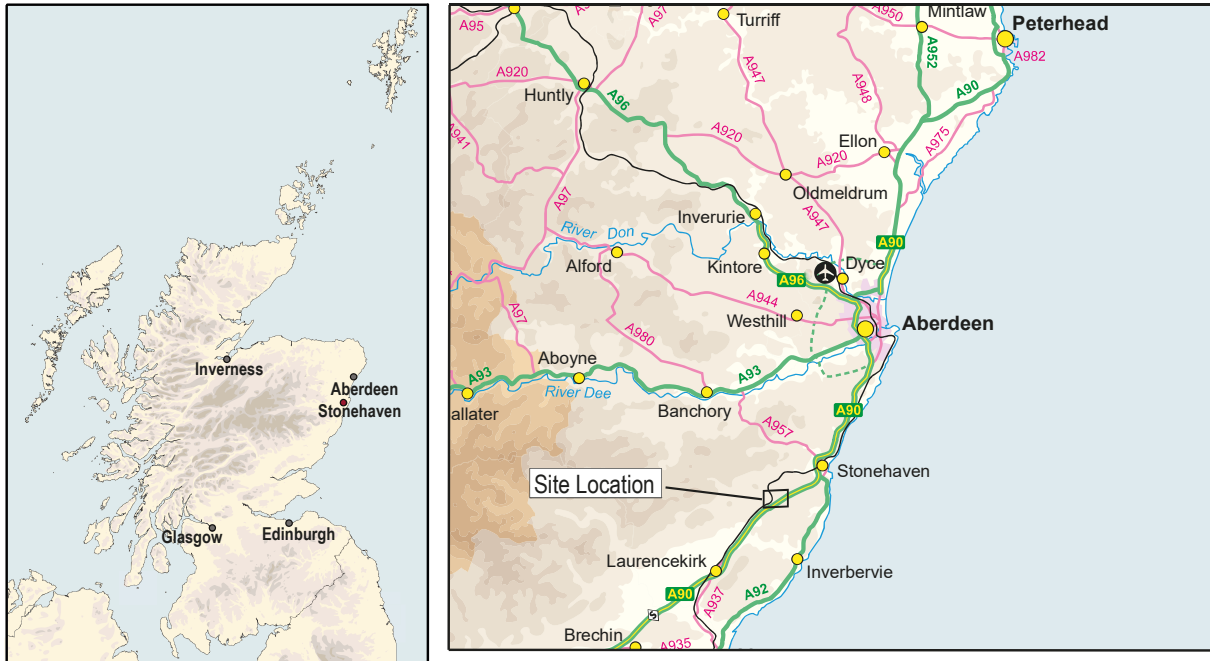


Figure 1:  
Site location.

## Executive Summary

- 1.1 GUARD Archaeology Limited undertook an archaeological desk-based assessment of an area proposed for laying electric cable in the vicinity of Fiddes, Aberdeenshire. The aims of the assessment were to assess evidence for the past human use of the development area, its archaeological sensitivity and the potential impact of the development upon the archaeological resource.
- 1.2 The assessment found that there are five known cultural heritage sites on the proposed cable route. A further five cultural heritage sites are located within the 100 m buffer zone surrounding the proposed cable route. None of these cultural heritage sites is designated.
- 1.3 Cartographic regression showed that the bulk of the proposed electricity cable route has been agricultural land since at least the mid-eighteenth century. Since that time, the A90 road has been constructed, widened and re-aligned, the railway and associated infrastructure has been built and gas and oil pipelines have been installed.
- 1.4 As cultural heritage remains are known within the proposed cable route, there is some potential for the survival of sub-surface archaeological remains that could be disturbed by groundworks. In consequence, it is advised that Aberdeenshire Council is likely to require that a programme of archaeological works be carried out in order to monitor those parts of the proposed cable route that may disturb or destroy sub-surface cultural heritage remains, features or deposits.

## Introduction

- 2.1 In January 2017, WSP/ Parsons Brinckenhoff commissioned GUARD Archaeology Limited to undertake a desk-based assessment of a proposed electricity cable route in the vicinity of Fiddes, Aberdeenshire (NGR: NO 77761 79588 to NO 81753 81507). The proposed cable route is located to the south of Drumlithie (Figure 1).
- 2.2 All elements of the assessment have been undertaken in line with the following policies and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists of which GUARD Archaeology Ltd is a Registered Organisation.
  - *By-laws: Code of Conduct (2014);*
  - *Standards and Guidance for commissioning work on, or providing consultancy advice on, archaeology and the historic environment (2014), and*
  - *Standard and Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (2014).*

## Legislative Background

- 3.1 The statutory framework for heritage in Scotland is outlined in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act, and The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, both of which are modified by the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act (2011).
- 3.2 Cultural heritage resources consist of designated and non-designated sites, including individual monuments, related settings and the wider cultural landscape. Sites with statutory designations are defined in the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement 2016, and comprise:
  - Scheduled Monuments;
  - Listed Buildings
  - Conservation Areas; and
  - Designated Wreck Sites.

- Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and
- Historic Battlefields.

### National Planning Legislation

- 3.3 The implications of the acts noted above with regard to local government planning policy are described within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014a), Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) (2016a) and Planning Advice Note 2/2011 (2011). SPP and HESPS deal specifically with planning policy in relation to heritage.

### National Policy Guidelines

- 3.4 One paragraph of *Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014: Valuing the Historic Environment* are pertinent to this assessment of the proposed Fiddes development.

#### Archaeology and Other Historic Environment Assets

- 3.5 SPP paragraph 150 states: '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.'

#### National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and the local Historic Environment Record (HER)

- 3.6 Other cultural heritage and archaeological sites, not subject to other designations, are recorded within the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and the local Historic Environment Record (HER), and many such sites have not yet been identified or recorded. Such undesignated sites are frequently assigned to regional, local or lesser categories of significance. The regional or local importance of such a site is established on the basis of professional judgement, although the criteria for identifying nationally important sites (as outlined in SHEP 2011 Annex 1) will often be referred to in making such judgements. Some sites are also, variously, classed as of lesser importance, unknown importance or other importance. Unknown or other importance usually refers to examples where insufficient information exists to assign importance.

### Local Policy Guidelines

- 3.7 Local planning policy is defined in The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2012), SG Historic Environment 4, The Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan (2015) and Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014).

- 3.8 The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2012) contains the following policy pertaining to cultural heritage:

#### Policy 13 Protecting, improving and conserving the historic environment

Aberdeenshire Council supports the protection, improvement and conservation of the historic environment. There will be a presumption against development that would have a negative effect on the quality of these historic assets. Different parts of the historic environment require to be subject to specific guidance and controls to make sure that we maintain and improve their value.

- 3.9 Supplementary Guidance on implementing this policy includes SG Historic Environment 4: Archaeological sites and monuments.

- 3.10 The Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan includes the following policy relating to cultural heritage that is pertinent to this assessment:

Policy HE1 Protecting historic buildings, sites, and monuments (extract)

We will protect . . . 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.

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.

- 3.11 Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014) is the Strategic Development Plan that covers the proposed cable route. Detailed consideration of the historic environment falls beyond the remit of the Strategic Development Plan. However, it clearly adheres to SPP and one of the aims of the SDP is to "protect and improve our valued assets and resources, including the built and natural environment and our cultural heritage".
- 3.12 The proposed cable route is located within the local authority area of Aberdeenshire, which is advised on archaeological matters by Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS).

## Aims and Objectives

- 4.1 The aims of this study were to assess the known or potential archaeological resource within the proposed development area and the likely impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource, and to recommend a strategy for mitigating this impact upon any known or potential archaeological remains.
- 4.2 The specific objectives of the assessment were:
- to identify any previously known archaeological monuments present within the proposed development area through a search of the National Monuments Record of Scotland and the local Historic Environment Record;
  - to identify any previously unknown archaeological sites through the examination of documentary and cartographic evidence;
  - to assess the potential impact of the development on the archaeological resource, taking into account its varied significance; and
  - to suggest appropriate mitigation measures for the protection of the archaeological resource or, where necessary, the investigation and recording of any sites likely to be affected by the development where preservation *in situ* cannot be achieved.

## Methodology for baseline assessment

- 5.1 The desk-based assessment examined the area proposed for development (the Site) and a buffer of approximately 100 m beyond its boundary (the Buffer Zone). Study of the surrounding landscape was necessary to establish the local archaeological and historical context, in order to provide a broader understanding of the historical development of the areas proposed for development and the potential for as-yet-unidentified archaeological remains within those areas.

5.2 The desk-based assessment of the Site and Buffer Zone employed the following methodology:

- GIS data on Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings was obtained from Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- GIS data on cultural heritage sites was obtained from the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), maintained by HES;
- Information from the Aberdeenshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was obtained from National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), maintained by HES;
- Pre-Ordnance Survey maps of the proposed development area, held by the National Library of Scotland (NLS), were identified and consulted on-line. Relevant maps, including manuscript maps, range in date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries;
- First, second and subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey maps of the area of interest, were identified and examined via NLS;
- Vertical aerial photographs were viewed online on the National Collection of Aerial Photography website in order to identify any unknown sites or features of archaeological interest: Eight series of vertical photographs, ranging in date from 1944 to 2004 were viewed;
- Readily accessible primary and secondary historical sources were consulted for information relating to the area's historical past, including details relating to earlier land-use;
- A walkover survey of the proposed development area was carried out on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

## Historical Background

6.1 The earliest maps consulted offer very little information about the area, but do note the existence of structures at Drumlithy [sic], M. Fiddes and L. Fiddes (Figure 2; Gordon and Blaeu 1654 & 1662).



Figure 2: Excerpt from Gordon's ca. 1636-52 manuscript map Aberdeen, Banf [sic], Murrey [sic] &c. to Inverness: [and] Fra the north water to Ross.



- 6.2 By the mid-eighteenth century, Roy's map (Figure 2) shows three structures at Mill of Mundens (Mondynes) and about nine structures each at Kandy (Candy) and Drumlithie; unenclosed field systems are located at Kandy and Drumlithie. Muckle Fidess (Meikle Fiddes) is a collection of four structures with an associated open field system. Mid Law, which may now be Collieston farm, contains about eleven structures. Roy also depicts Little Fiddus, now known as Castle of Fiddes, a late sixteenth century category A listed tower house (LB 6753).



Figure 3: Excerpt from Roy's 1747-55 Military Survey of Scotland. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of The National Library of Scotland.

## Baseline Assessment

- 7.1 The assessment identified ten cultural heritage sites within the study area. Five of these are located within the proposed electricity cable route, and a further five lie within the surrounding 100 m buffer zone. In the following assessment, the reference in parenthesis (CHS and number) refers to the cultural heritage sites noted at Appendix B. All archaeological sites are located on Figure 1.

### Prehistoric, Roman and early historic sites (8000 BC – AD 600)

- 7.2 There is one possible prehistoric site and one possible Roman site on the proposed electricity cable route.
- 7.3 An earthwork and human remains (CHS 2) are said to have been disturbed during construction of the Scottish North Eastern Railway. The field where these remains were uncovered is named Grave Leys, which may add credence to this belief.
- 7.4 A Roman road (CHS 6) from Menmuir to Aberdeen via Stonehaven is said by W G Don to run through this general area. Its actual route is not indicated on any of the maps consulted for this assessment.
- 7.5 No other cultural heritage remains of prehistoric, Roman or early historic date are known to exist within the proposed electricity cable route, or within the surrounding 100 m buffer zone.
- 7.6 The wider area around Fiddes contains a number of prehistoric sites, including cists (NMRS NO78SE 10 and NO77NE 5), a standing stone (NMRS NO77NE 11), a possible souterrain (NMRS NO77NE 49) and a small concentration of remains at Pitdrichie Farm (NMRS NO78SE 71, NO78SE 17 and NO78SE 18).

### Medieval sites (AD 600 - AD 1600)

- 7.7 There is one known cultural heritage site of medieval date within the proposed electricity cable route.

- 7.8 The field at Pade o'France (CHS 4) has traditionally been known as the location of a battle that took place in 1559-1560 between Mary of Guise and the Scottish nobility. The battle is not listed on the Inventory of Battles maintained by Historic Environment Scotland, and no references to such a battle could be found in the documentary sources consulted for this assessment.
- 7.9 It is likely that some of the farms within the vicinity of the proposed electricity cable route have their origins in the late Medieval period. These will probably include Meikle Fiddes, which is recorded on Gordon's ca. 1636-52 map. Beyond the 100 m buffer zone is the Castle of Fiddes tower house, a category A listed building that dates from 1592 (NMRS NO88SW 4; LB 6753).

### Post-medieval and modern sites (AD 1600- Present)

- 7.10 There is one known cultural heritage site of post-medieval or modern date on the proposed electricity cable route. Four further cultural heritage sites of post-Medieval or Modern date are located within the surrounding 100 m buffer zone.
- 7.11 Of the nineteenth century maps, Robertson's 1822 map shows that the precursor of the A90 has been constructed but, since this is largely a topographic map, no real detail of the proposed cable route is shown.
- 7.12 By 1868, the Scottish North Eastern Railway had been built and the bridge (CHS 5) and viaduct (CHS 1) are both portrayed (Figure 4). The steading at Candy farm (location of CHS 7) and Mid Fiddes farm (CHS 9) are both depicted (*Kincardineshire, Sheet XX* and *Kincardineshire, Sheet XVII*). Mid Fiddes has what appears to be a mill pond to the north of the steading, and the annotation on the map indicates sluices. The same map also shows the unroofed structure at the north-east end of the cable route (CHS 10). No function is ascribed to this building, and it is not recorded on the 1904 map.

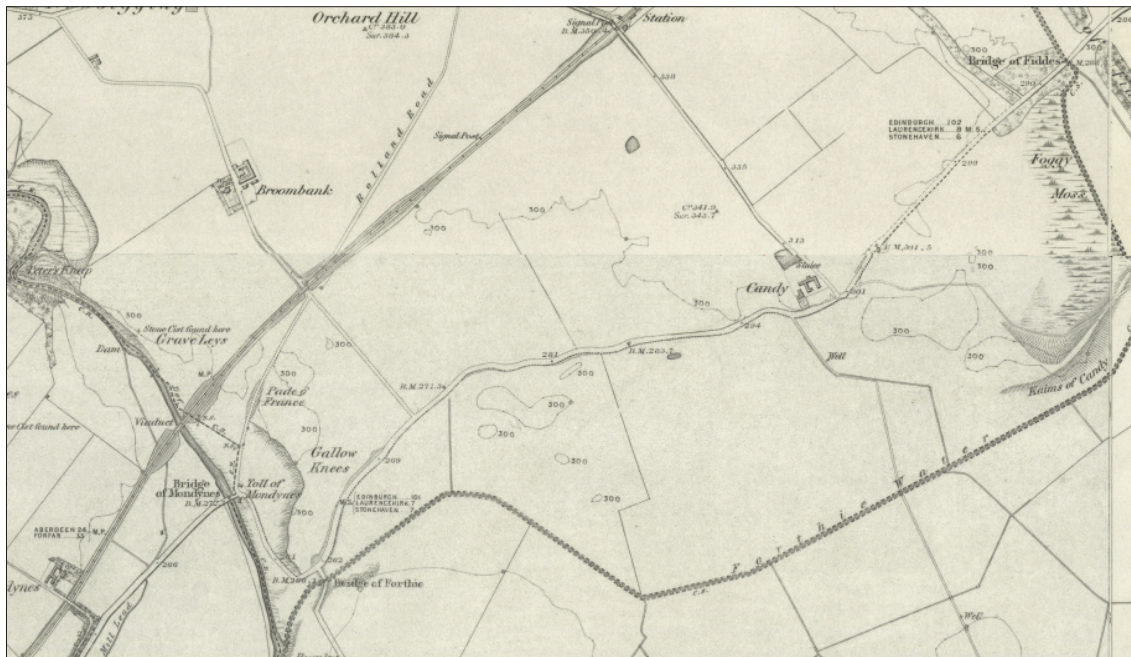


Figure 4: Excerpt from 1868 Ordnance Survey 6" map Kincardineshire, Sheet XX.

- 7.13 The land that comprises the proposed electricity cable route was, in the late nineteenth century, a rural landscape consisting of individual small farms. The field boundaries have scarcely changed between 1868 and today and, aside from the realignment and widening of the A90 road, very few changes are recorded on subsequent Ordnance Survey maps.

### Vertical Aerial Photographs

- 7.14 Eight sets of aerial photographs from the second half of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century were consulted for this assessment (see Appendix A).

- 7.15 The photographs generally show the re-alignment and widening of the A90 road which took place between 1957 and 1988. All of the upstanding cultural heritage sites (CHS 1, CHS 5, location of CHS 7 and CHS 9) are recorded throughout this period.
- 7.16 At Pade o’France, the cropmarks (CHS 3) are visible on several of the images, and appear as a series of amorphous patches. No regular shapes or patterns can be discerned, as might be expected if the source of the cropmarks was archaeological and, on balance, these are most likely to originate from underlying geology.
- 7.17 The cropmarks at Meikle Fiddes (CHS 8) were identified from oblique aerial photographs, and were not noted on the vertical images consulted. The possible origin(s) of these cropmarks is discussed below.
- 7.18 The aerial photographs did not reveal any previously unrecorded cultural heritage remains within the proposed electricity cable route.

### Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 7.19 As far as can be ascertained, no archaeological investigations have been carried out on the route of the proposed electricity cable.
- 7.20 The cropmarks at Meikle Fiddes (CHS 8) were investigated via trial trenching, and were found not to represent underlying cultural heritage remains. The excavators conclude that these marks were probably of geological origin. This work was undertaken prior to the installation of the Aberdeen to Lochside natural gas pipeline.
- 7.21 A building survey was carried out at Mid Fiddes farm (CHS 9) in 2014 prior to the construction of a new building.

### Walkover Survey

- 7.22 The proposed electricity cable route was walked on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in wet and windy conditions. All of the cultural heritage sites likely to be directly affected by the installation of the cable were visited.
- 7.23 At Grave Leys (CHS 2), the ground was found to have been cut away and no indications of an earthwork were found (Plate 1). Pade o’France had been recently ploughed, and neither of the cultural heritage sites within this field (CHS 3 and CHS 4; Plate 2) was visible.



*Plate 1: View of location of earthwork and human remains at Grave Leys.*



*Plate 2: Pade o’France viewed from NNW.*

- 7.24 The Roman road (CHS 6) said to exist within this area could not be located. The National Grid map references for this road are very general, and are unlikely to reflect its actual location as recorded in the late nineteenth century.
- 7.25 Mid Fiddes farm (CHS 9) is still in use, although a modern building now occupies the location of the mill pond.

- 7.26 Two notices warning of the presence of buried gas and oil pipelines were noted on the south side of the A90 road cable route between Mid Fiddes and the electricity sub-station.
- 7.27 No previously unrecorded cultural heritage remains were noted within the proposed development area.

## Conclusions

- 8.1 This desk-based assessment has identified five cultural heritage sites on the proposed electricity cable route at Fiddes, Aberdeenshire, four of which could be directly affected by groundworks. These consist of the location of human remains and an earthwork (CHS 2), indeterminate cropmarks (CHS 3), an undesignated battle site (CHS 4) and the possible location of a Roman road (CHS 6). Although recorded by NMRS as a cultural heritage site, the indeterminate cropmarks at Pade o'France may have a geological origin.
- 8.2 The land over the proposed electricity cable route has largely been agricultural land since at least the mid-eighteenth century. However, since that time, the A90 road has been constructed, widened and re-aligned, the railway and associated infrastructure has been built and gas and oil pipelines have been installed.
- 8.3 As four cultural heritage sites have been identified within the proposed cable route, there is some potential for the survival of sub-surface archaeological remains that could be disturbed by groundworks. In consequence, it is advised that Aberdeenshire Council is likely to require that a programme of archaeological works be carried out in order to monitor those parts of the proposed cable route that may disturb or destroy sub-surface cultural heritage remains, features or deposits.

**Fiddes electricity cable route,  
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Desk-based Cultural Heritage  
Assessment**

**Section 2: Appendices**



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: References

#### Documentary Sources Consulted

- Anon 1796 'Parish of Arbuthnot' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 17*, 385-393.
- Brown, T 1842 'Parish of Kineff' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 11*, 309-323.
- Drummond, J 1838 'Parish of Glenbervie' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 11*, 165-169.
- Mylne, J 1838 'Parish of Arbuthnot' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 11*, 153-164.
- Stewart, P 1793 'Parish of Kineff' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 6*, 197-211.
- Thom, A 1794 'Parish of Glenbervie' in *The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 11*, 449-454.

#### Cartographic Sources Consulted

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- Roy, W 1747-55 *Military Survey of Scotland*.
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- Thomson, J & Johnson, W 1826 *Northern Part of Aberdeen & Banff Shires. Southern Part*. Edinburgh: J. Thomson & Co.
- Ordnance Survey 1868 *Kincardineshire, Sheet XX*. Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882.
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- Ordnance Survey 1868 *Kincardineshire, Sheet XVII*. Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882.
- Ordnance Survey 1904 *Kincardineshire Sheet XX.SW*. Six-inch 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1960.
- Ordnance Survey 1904 *Kincardineshire Sheet XX.SW*. Six-inch 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1960.
- Ordnance Survey 1957 *NO77 1:25,000 maps of Great Britain - 1937-1961*.
- Ordnance Survey 1957 *NO88 1:25,000 maps of Great Britain - 1937-1961*.

#### Vertical aerial photographs consulted

Sortie	Date	Frame(s)
106G/Scot/UK/0057	8/5/46	3290, 3291, 3378, 3380, 3381
82/1020	18/9/54	125-130
58/2108	15/2/57	F21: 162 – 164; F21: 091-095

Sortie	Date	Frame(s)
58/4206	7/3/61	F21: 034
ASS/50288	14/5/88	124-125; 134-135
ASS/60589	4/4/89	0231-232
OS/85/0117	15/9/89	480-482
OS/04/0933	27/5/04	3103-3104

## Appendix B: Gazetteer of Cultural Heritage Sites

CHS No: 1  
 Name: Railway viaduct, Mondynes  
 NGR: NO 7815 7985  
 NMRS No: NO77NE 46  
 HER No: NO77NE0017  
 Significance: Local  
 Description: The viaduct was opened c. 1850 by the Aberdeen Railway and rebuilt c. 1880. This bridge carries the Aberdeen line of the former Caledonian Railway over the Bervie Water, which here forms the boundary between the parishes of Glenbervie and Arbuthnott.

CHS No: 2  
 Name: Grave Leys, earthwork and human remains  
 NGR: NO 781 799  
 NMRS No: NO77NE 6  
 HER No: NO77NE0006  
 Significance: Cited on HER as being of Regional significance  
 Description: Local people say that, when the Scottish North Eastern Railway was being constructed, a stratum of earth resembling a trench and embankment and a great quantity of human bones were found. The railway cuts through a low rise at NO 7820 7993, but there is no sign of an embankment or ditch.

CHS No: 3  
 Name: Pade o'France, cropmarks  
 NGR: NO 783 798  
 NMRS No: NO77NE 42  
 HER No: NO77NE0030  
 Significance: Unknown  
 Description: Cropmarks of an indeterminate nature are visible in an arable crop.

CHS No: 4  
 Name: Pade o'France, battle site  
 NGR: NO 7838 7986  
 NMRS No: NO77NE 64

- HER No: NO77NE0039  
Significance: Potentially Regional  
Description: Traditionally the site of a battle between Mary of Guise, Queen regent, with French soldiers, and the Scottish nobles, in 1559-60.
- CHS No: 5  
Name: Mondynes, railway bridge  
NGR: NO 7837 8009  
NMRS No: NO78SE 25  
HER No: -  
Significance: Lesser  
Description: A single-span segmentally arched coursed rubble bridge which carries the railway over the public road.
- CHS No: 6  
Name: Menmuir northwards, Roman road  
NGR: NO 79 80; NO 8 8  
NMRS No: NO78SE 36, NO88SW 24, NO88NE 77 and NO88SE 29  
HER No: -  
Significance: Unknown  
Description: W G Don (1896) asserts that a Roman road, parts of which were later used as a drove road, ran from Menmuir to Aberdeen via Stonehaven. Its course would have taken it through this area.
- CHS No: 7  
Name: Candy, carved stone  
NGR: NO 79450 80099  
NMRS No: -  
HER No: NO78SE0065  
Significance: Local  
Description: Fragment of a carved stone, possibly masonic. The surviving relief comprises an inverted V, crossed by two other lines on one arm. It is incorporated into the inner wall of the east side of the steading, and has been exposed through partial collapse of the outer wall.
- CHS No: 8  
Name: Arbuthnott/Meikle Fiddes, cropmarks  
NGR: NO 8064 8108  
NMRS No: NO88SW 63  
HER No: NO88SW0021  
Significance: Lesser



**Description:** This site was identified from oblique aerial photographs, which showed traces of two large enclosures, three smaller enclosures, and two possible ring-ditches. Eight evaluation trenches were excavated; no features or artefacts of archaeological interest were found. The features responsible for the cropmarks were not located; it is probable that these were of geological origin. This is named as Meikle Fiddes on HER.

**CHS No:** 9

**Name:** Mid Fiddes, farm

**NGR:** NO 81121 81276

**NMRS No:** -

**HER No:** NO88SW0057

**Significance:** Local

**Description:** The farmstead is depicted on the 1st edition OS map of 1868 as a U-shaped steading with open court to the SW. A large millpond lies to its north. To its SW and NW are two single buildings. By the 1888 edition the open court has been built over. Another small single building lies to the south but the building to the NW has now one. The pond is still evident. Today the pond has gone and a later building lies within part of the area. A building survey was carried out in 2014 prior to development.

**CHS No:** 10

**Name:** West Bendings/Temple of Fiddes, structure

**NGR:** NO 8177 8162

**NMRS No:** NO 8177 8162

**HER No:** NO88SW0046

**Significance:** Lesser

**Description:** One unroofed building of two compartments is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Kincardineshire 1868, sheet xvii), but it is not shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1992). This is named as Temple of Fiddes on HER.

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