

Appendix 1

Archaeological monitoring of percolation test pits at Fairburn Tower, Muir of Ord, Highland – 28th June 2018. Interim Report (ATS)

Four geotechnical pits were excavated by a mechanical digger under close archaeological supervision in the grounds immediately south of the Category-A listed Fairburn Tower (LB14030), a late 16th- to early 17th- century square tower in the Muir of Fairburn, west of the Muir of Ord, Highland. These works were undertaken in order to assess the water absorption rate of the underlying drift geology. A percolation pit (0.3m x 0.3m x 0.3m) was excavated in the base of three of the geotechnical pits (PT1, PT2 and PT4) on the accompanying plan. The fourth geotechnical pit (TP1) served as a trial pit to assess the underlying drift geology. Excavation of one percolation test location (PT3) was frustrated by the presence of extensive clearance boulders on the west side of the survey area. In addition, all excavated geotechnical pits were shifted from their initial proposed locations; PT1 and PT2 were each moved approximately 11m south-east of their proposed locations; PT4 was moved approximately 12m north-west of its proposed location; and TP1 was moved approximately 12m north of its proposed location. The final position of each geotechnical pit is displayed on *figure 1*. A photographic record was made of each geotechnical pit – several of the photographs are reproduced below. The character of the trial pits is outlined below. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in any monitored location.

Each of the three excavated percolation test locations measured approximately 2m in length and 1m in width, dug to a depth of approximately 1m. As noted above, a smaller percolation test pit was excavated to a final depth of 1.3m in the base of these test location. In each instance, mid-grey sandy-silt topsoil was observed, between 0.15m and 0.25m thick, overlying the natural substrate, a light yellow-grey sand. No archaeological features or deposits were observed. The test pit (TP1) was greater in volume, measuring 2.5m by 1m; to a depth of 1.5m (the point at which bedrock was encountered). Again, topsoil to a depth of 0.2m overlay the natural substrate, both of identical character to that observed in the percolation test locations. As before, no archaeological features or deposits were observed.



Plate 1. Percolation test location 1, looking north-east



Plate 2. Percolation test location 2, looking north-east



Plate 3. Percolation test location 4, looking south-east



Plate 4. Trial pit 1, looking south-east

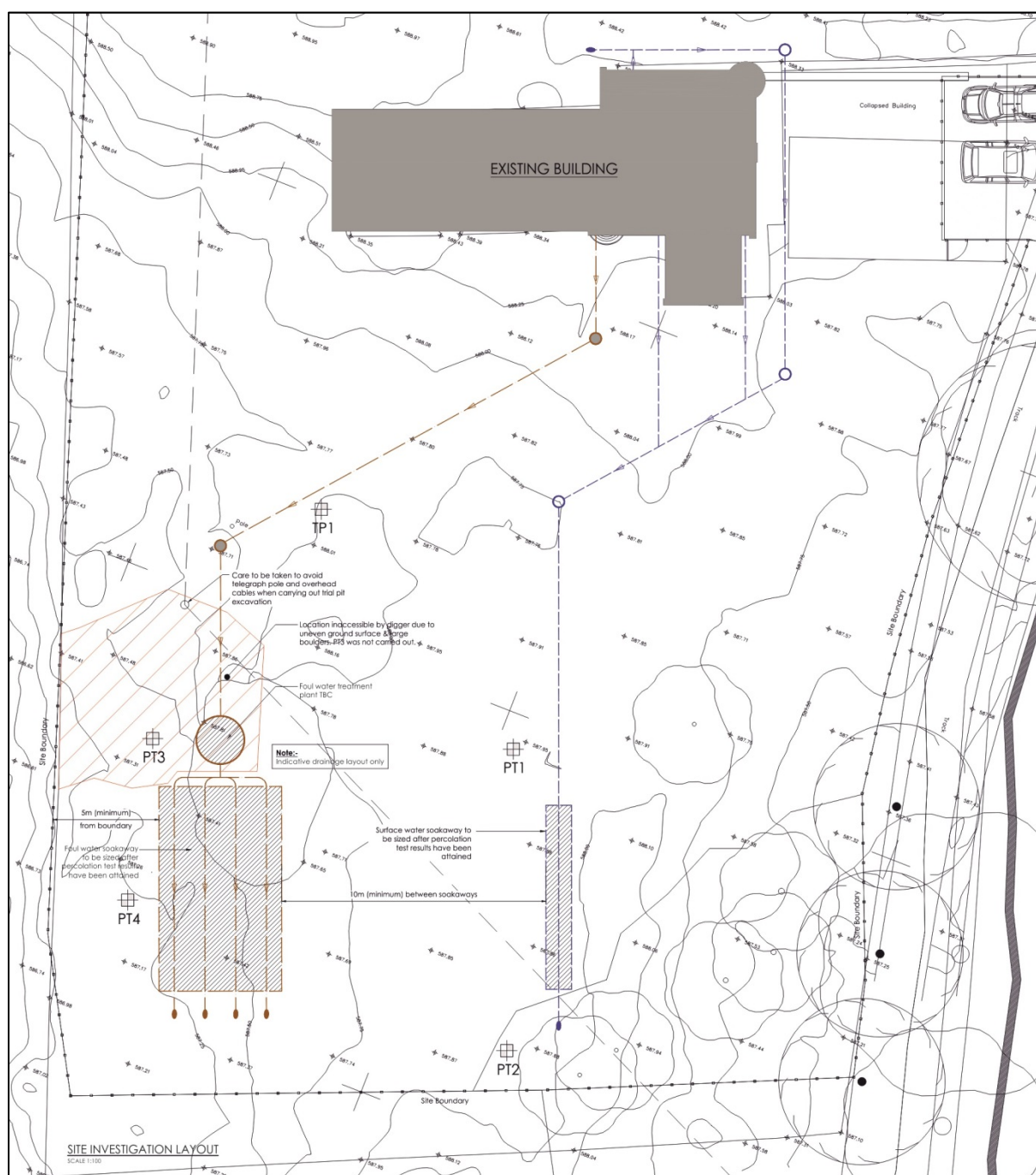


Figure 1: Site investigation layout. Drawing courtesy David Narro Associates 2018