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**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief  
August 7<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2003  
Tullich Water Supply Project.**

Client: Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water

**By  
Stuart Farrell  
B.A A.I.F.A F.S.A.Scot.  
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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water in late June 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief on sections of pipeline as part of a water mains renewal project. This work followed on the recommendations of a previously conducted desktop and walkover survey.*

*Work revealed 2 possible features in the section of pipeline at Lower Tullich, whilst work at Preisthill Cottage and Upper Tullich revealed no features. Work at Delny House revealed no features associated with the proposed medieval moat.*

*No further recommendations for further work have been proposed.*

## **1. Introduction**

This report is for a number of sections of archaeological watching briefs conducted for Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water by the author for the Tullich Water Mains Renewal Project.

The fieldwork was conducted between August 7<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup> 2003.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

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

- Mr. A Barnett, of Halcrow Group Ltd;
- Mr. R Gunstennson, of Halcrow Group Ltd;
- Mr. S Ross, of CAL Solutions Ltd;
- Mr. S Murray, of Scottish Water Contracting;
- Staff of Scottish Water Contracting for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

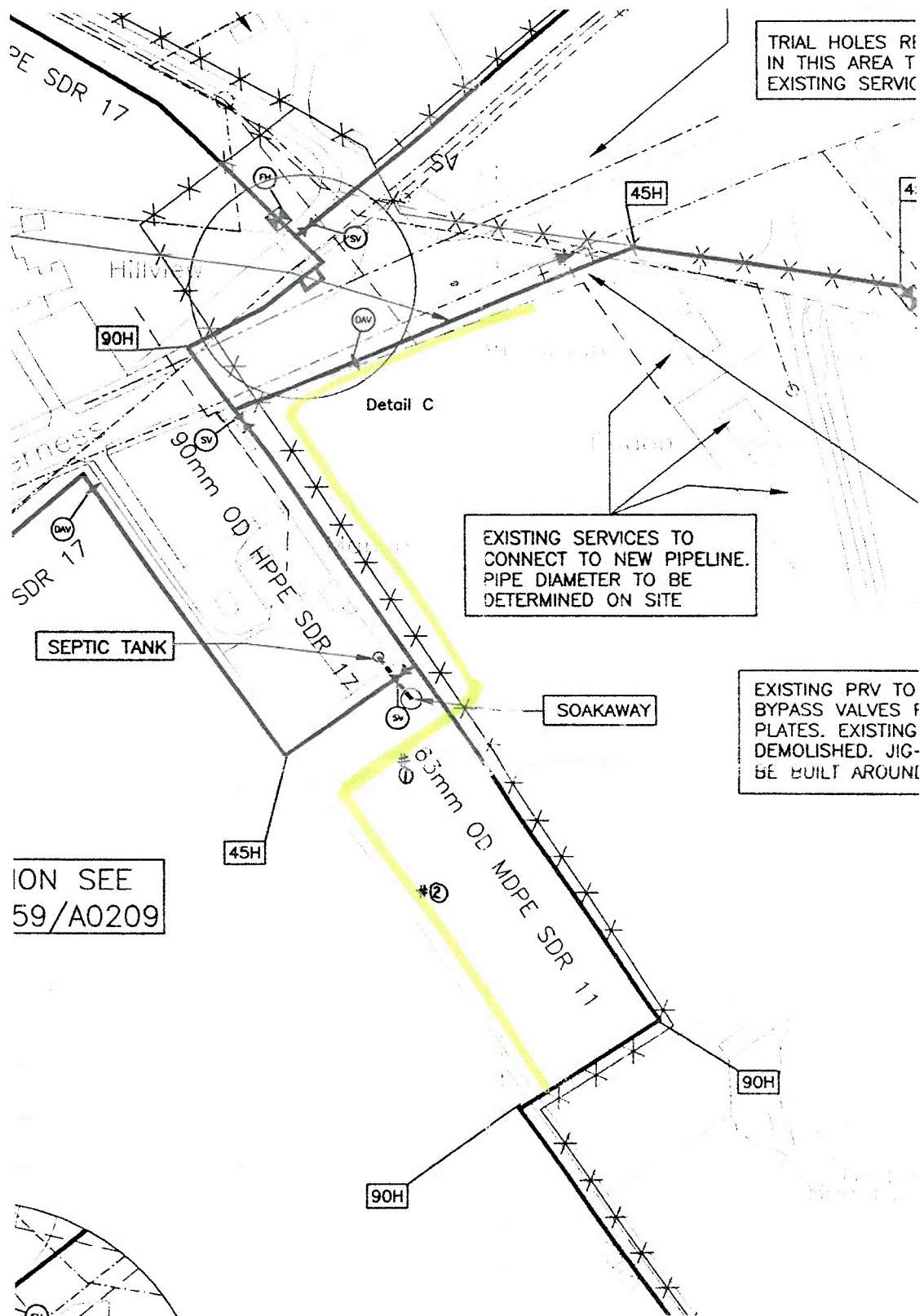
Stuart Farrell  
39a Park Street  
Nairn  
Highland  
IV12 4PP

**Figure 1 – General Location 1: 50,000**





**Figure 2 – Route of Pipeline at Lower Tullich 1: 1250 (route marked in yellow)**  
(Possible features marked #)



PROPOSED MDPE CONNECTION TO EXISTING SERVICE PIPE. NEW PIPE TO SUIT EXISTING DIAMETER TO BE DETERMINED ON SITE

ROAD U221

45H

2 (AC) 1953

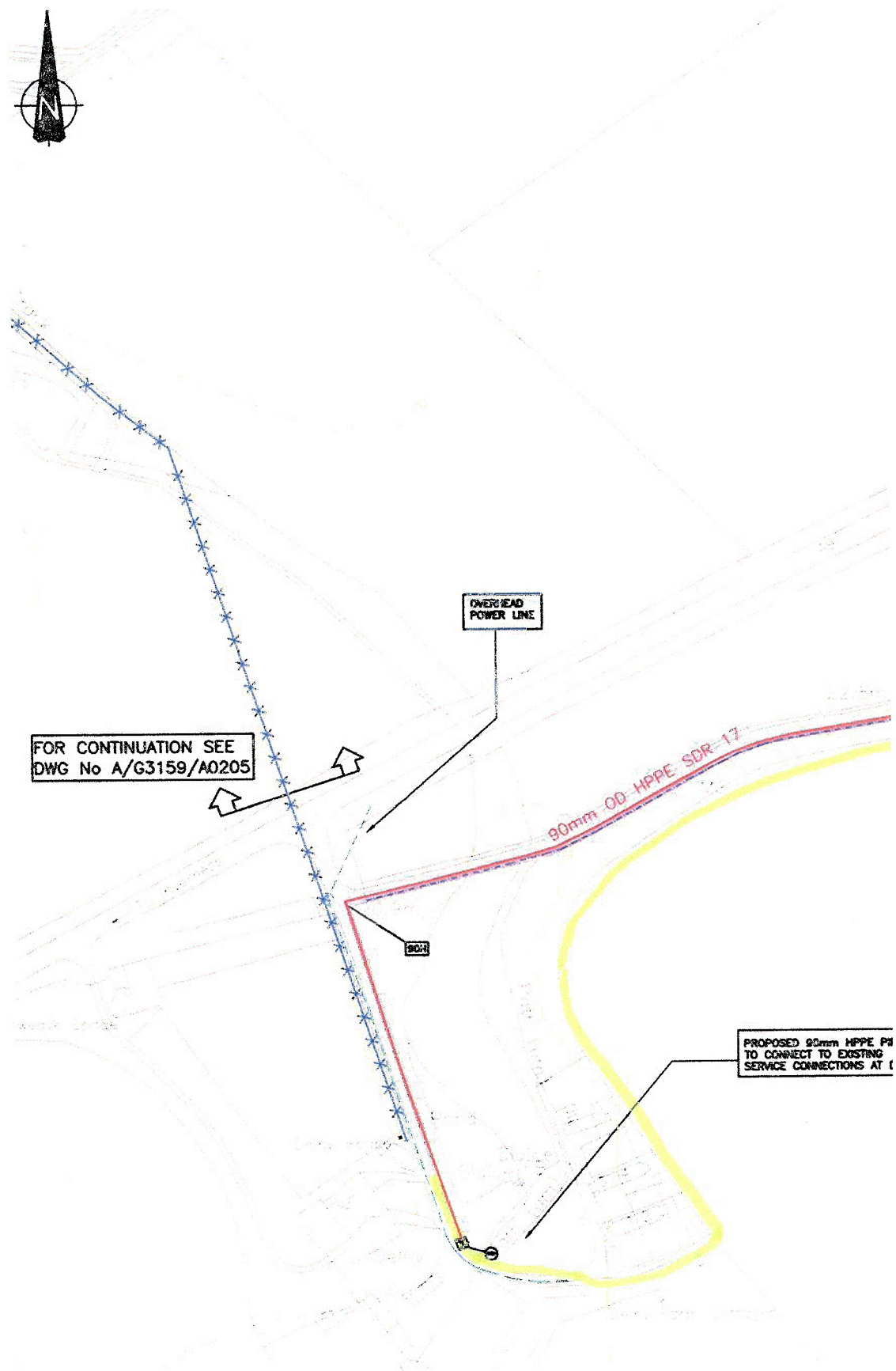
63mm OD MDPE SDR 11

TRIAL HOLES TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF EXISTING MAINS

TRIAL HOLES TO DETERMINE  
LOCATION OF EXISTING MAINS



**Figure 5 – Route of Pipeline at Delny House 1: 2500 (route marked in yellow)**





### **3. Archaeological Background**

The archaeological watching brief was to follow up on recommendations that had been made following 2 desk-based and walkover survey's conducted by Cathy Dagg (Dagg, 2003a & 2003b) where it was possible that prehistoric deposits could be revealed, especially in relation to cropmark sites and the high number of features located during previous excavation in the area. This recommendation related closely to the results of work in the vicinity by the Centre for Field Archaeology Ltd conducted in 1993 (Neighbour, 1998) where a number of features relating to a round house and ditch, a possible cist and other features were located.

### **4. Objectives**

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the pipe trenches to record those features revealed by excavation work.

### **5. Methodology**

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's by a back-acting machine with a toothed bucket cleared the topsoil and subsoil for trenches 320mm wide and up to 1.1m deep.

### **6. Watching Brief Investigation**

The watching brief 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.

#### Results

Results for areas of interest were as follows:

**1 – Lower Tullich** - NH 74166/72820 to NH 74171/72627 (Work conducted August 7<sup>th</sup> – August 11<sup>th</sup> 2003) (See figure 2) Work to be conducted due to lying in area of potential archaeological deposits (Dagg, 2003a).

Route of pipeline ran from NH 74166/72820 westwards towards NH 74096/72791 then southeast to NH 74147/72717 then west again to NH 74121/72696 then finally southeast to NH 74171/72627. Trench was 320mm wide and 1.1m deep. Natural was on average 500mm deep but at the start of excavations was only 200mm onto a natural mostly of orange-brown sand but occasionally yellow-brown sand, area to end of trench was low lying with wet mixed yellow and brown sands. Total length of pipeline was c275m.

Work revealed 2 possible archaeological deposits or features.

1<sup>st</sup> at NH 74138/72707 on south facing section at a depth of 600mm 20.5m w from turn of corner. (Trench not wide enough for access) Partial cleaning revealed it to be a possible dumped deposit of charcoal or possibly the edge of a hearth as burnt sand below. Deposit 200mm in depth and 350mm wide and concave in section. Not visible on north facing section of trench.

2<sup>nd</sup> at NH 74134/72682 of possible shallow scooped pit at a depth of 600mm of 1.3m wide and 200mm depth composed of lenses of white sand, charcoal and

subsoil. Looks possibly like an in-filled natural depression (Trench not wide enough for access). Not visible on west facing side of trench.

Left: View of possible feature no.1.

Right: View of possible feature no.2 – scale 1m.



**2 – Presthill Cottage** - NH 72842/73087 to NH 73004/72966 (Work conducted August 11<sup>th</sup> 2003) (See figure 3) Work to be conducted due to lying in area of open field through potential archaeological deposits (Dagg, 2003a).

Route of pipeline ran from NH 72842/73087 SE to NH 72924/73024 and again running SE to NH 72965/72996 then finally turning south to NH 73004/72966. Trench was 330mm wide and 1m deep. Natural was on average 300mm deep onto a natural mostly of a yellow-brown sandy marl. Work revealed no archaeological deposits or features, the field being on a SE facing slope.

**3 – Upper Tullich** - NH 73980/73356 to NH 74193/73419 (Work conducted August 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 2003) (See figure 4) Work to be conducted due to lying in area of potential archaeological deposits of former croft (Dagg, 2003a).

Route of pipeline ran from NH 73980/73376 E to NH 74039/73414 with limited topsoil of 200mm onto a yellow-brown sandy marl, then turning NE to NH 74032/73440 then curving 90° left to NH 74037/734555 following edge of field from NH 74083/73480 on a SE facing slope till NH 74161/73470 then finally turning S to NH 74193/73419.

Work revealed no archaeological deposits or features, the route of the pipeline being to the edge of the field.

**4 – Delny House** - NH 73514/72372 to NH 73444/72320 (Work conducted August 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2003) (See figure 5) Work to be conducted due to lying in area of potential archaeological deposits around Delny Moat (Dagg, 2003a). Site is noted in the Highland Sites and Monuments Record (NH77SW0021) as 'The earls of Ross had a residence at Delny, 'our manor house' of Delny appearing in at least one 15th-century MacDonald charter. Virtually all medieval traces have disappeared and the site at Delny is now occupied by a large farmstead and a late 19th-century villa. It is possible that Delny was a wet moated site similar to 'David's Fort' (NH55SW 4).' Site surveyed by SUAT Ltd as part of moated sites survey. (See copy of report and sketch to rear)



Route of Pipeline changed to area to E and SE of Delny House. Excavation starting at NH 73514/72372 revealed topsoil to a depth of 200mm onto a yellow-brown sandy marl following edge of field, then S to NH 73570/72291 turning W through gate to NH 73569/72281 then along south edge of track NW to NH 73520/72265 then crossing NW across existing road to NH 73511/7266 Then along edge of track ending at NH 73444/72320. Parts of track by Delny House were heavily cut by existing electricity and water services.

Work revealed no archaeological deposits or features of interest, a small dump of early 20<sup>th</sup> century glass and pottery was revealed at NH 73511/7266, probably relating to the occupation of Delny Cottages though road level here was raised when adjacent silage pit was constructed as former road level was visible in section. One feature of interest was noted at NH 73531/72230 - centred (to the south edge of the work) of a partly walled enclosure (?) though it was difficult to ascertain if it was originally a walled garden as it sits higher than the farm. It had 2 blocked up doorways one to the N and the other to the NW to its NW corner that has traces of an arch. In the west facing section of the trench to the entrance to Delny House was revealed a small of stretch of medium to large stones at a depth of 400mm possibly the remains of a wall footing, though it was not very level and was only revealed for a length of about 5m.

Left: View of N facing blocked up doorway – scale 2m

Right: View of NW facing blocked up doorway – scale 2m.



## 7. Overall Conclusions

Overall very limited archaeology was revealed though the size of the trench was a limiting factor on the results. Due to the finds of the CFA in 1992 the surrounding area warrants further study in the future. The farm and area around Delny House requires more research in its history and layout, especially the farm buildings and walled gardens.

## **8. Recommendations**

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to no further construction work being currently proposed with this project.

## **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.

## **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**

Dagg, C (2003a) Archaeological Evaluation of areas to be affected by Water Mains Replacements at Tullich, parish of Kilmuir Easter, Easter Ross. Unpublished report held by HSMR.

Dagg, C (2003b) Archaeological Evaluation of Additional Sections of Tullich, Strathpeffer and Urchany Water Mains Renewal. Unpublished report held by HSMR.

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

Neighbour, T (1998) Excavation of a Presumed Round House and Associated Features at Priesthill Farm, near Delny, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region 1993. *Northern Studies – The Journal of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies* 33, 67-91. Edinburgh.

## **Appendix 1 – Photographic Register**

- 1 – Lower Tullich Section – View of north part of field before excavation facing N.
- 2 – Lower Tullich Section – View S of trench to W of Delny Manse.
- 3 – Lower Tullich Section – View of area to S of Delny Manse facing SW.
- 4 – Lower Tullich Section – View of trench along N edge of field facing E.
- 5 – Lower Tullich Section – View of trench S of Delny Manse facing W.
- 6 – Lower Tullich Section - View of trench S of Delny Manse facing S.
- 7 – Lower Tullich Section – View of possible feature no.2 facing SW.
- 8 – Lower Tullich Section - View of trench S of Delny Manse facing S.
- 9 – Priesthill Section – View of trench facing SE.
- 10 – Priesthill Section – View of trench facing NW.
- 11 – Priesthill Section – View of trench at Priesthill Cottage facing N.
- 12 – Upper Tullich Section – View of trench facing E.
- 13 – Upper Tullich Section – View of trench along field edge facing NE.
- 14 – Upper Tullich Section – View of site of trench facing NW.
- 15 – Upper Tullich Section – View of trench along edge of field back towards Upper Tullich facing W.
- 16 – Upper Tullich Section – View from approx location of croft NW to Upper Tullich.
- 17 – Delny Section – View of trench to E of Delny facing S.
- 18 – Delny Section - View of trench to E of Delny facing N.
- 19 – Delny Section - View of edge of track facing W before excavation.
- 20 – Delny Section – Bottles recovered from dump.
- 21 – Delny Section – View of modern dump facing NE.
- 22 – Delny Section - View of edge of track by farm facing W before excavation.
- 23 – Delny Section - View of existing electricity trench.
- 24 – Delny Section – View of north range of farm.
- 25 – Delny Section – View of west range of farm.
- 26 – Delny Section – View of Delny House facing N.
- 27 – Delny Section - View of trench to edge of track facing W.
- 28 – Delny Section – View of blocked up doorway no.1 facing S – scale 2m.
- 29 – Delny Section - View of blocked up doorway no.2 facing NE – scale 2m.
- 30 – Delny Section – View of excavated trench facing SE.
- 31 – Delny Section – View of possible wall footings in trench facing NNE – scale 2m.
- 32 – Delny Section – Ibid but facing E.
- 33 – Delny Section - View of excavated trench facing S.



**DELNY**

NMRS No: NH77SW 10

**Location**

Map reference: (centred around) NH 734 723

Parish: Kilmuir Easter

Council: Highland

Delny lies immediately to the south of the A9 trunk road, approximately 6 miles NE of Alness and 1 mile NW of the village of Barbaraville.

**Site Description (22 Nov 2001)**

This site lies immediately adjacent to the south of the former route of the A9 trunk road, which has recently been moved c 100-150 m to the north, leaving an abandoned stretch of road. A small cluster of buildings at Delny centres around a large red sandstone house, marked on the OS map as a 'hotel' and presently a residential house and B&B establishment. To the east is a row of three cottages, and to the south is a cluster of semi-derelict farm buildings used as stables, stores and workshops.

The house itself occupies an area of raised ground and is surrounded by gardens. The gardens or open ground to the north of the house are overgrown and neglected. To the south of the house is a driveway leading to the road, and to the west of this is a partially walled area of lawn (in better condition than the ground to the north but also slightly neglected). Across the road, to the east of the house, the ground is lower and there is a pond, from which a stream runs southwards, turning westwards and running underneath the road and under a courtyard surrounded by semi-derelict farm buildings. The stream re-emerges at the other side of this courtyard and then turns sharply southwards again, running out into open fields to the south.

Several photographs taken. Sketch plan made of site.

**Comments:**

The layout of the buildings and watercourses here tentatively suggests a previously moated arrangement. The house occupies a slightly raised area, partly encircled by watercourses, now draining towards the south. Possibly apart from the shallow pond to the east of the house, there is no actual evidence of a moat.

There are no obvious threats to any sub-surface archaeology here, although the farm buildings etc are in a dilapidated condition and it seems possible that the owner may seek to develop this area in the future.

AC

DELNY

Rough sketch plan

AC 22.11.01

(not to scale).

