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**ELLON CASTLE GARDENS
ABERDEENSHIRE**

Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation

1. Background

- 1.1 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd (MAS Ltd) has recently completed an Historic Garden Survey for Ellon Castle Gardens, Aberdeenshire. A PDF of the results will be sent separately.
As part of the survey, Rose Geophysical Consultants were contracted by MAS Ltd to undertake a resistivity survey of the gardens.
A number of anomalies were recorded that cannot be explained by any existing or former documented (19th C accounts, photos etc) features. These may relate to paths, or other features in the 18th-century garden.
- 1.2 It is proposed that 7 small test trenches should be targeted on these anomalies with the hope of establishing their nature.
This would not only aid in planning any future garden works, but could also aid future interpretation by clarifying some uncertainties about the layout of the garden prior to its redevelopment in the mid-19th century.
- 1.3 Following discussion with Alan Cameron, chair of the Ellon Castle Gardens Trust, the location of a series of proposed test pits has been established.



Illus 1: Plan of the Ellon Castle Garden, with proposed test pits (red marks 1-7) overlaid on the results of the resistivity survey undertaken by Rose Geophysical Consultants.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The object of the test pits is to establish the nature of a series of anomalies shown up in the resistivity survey of the gardens. These anomalies may relate to paths pre-dating the existing paths, some of which appear to be part of a 19th-century redesign of parts of the garden. Clarification of these features would give greater understanding of the 18th-century layout of the garden and allow the Ellon Gardens Trust to enhance future public interpretation of the history of the garden in accordance with the aims of HES policy statement 2016, para 3.19.
- 2.2 Test pits 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are designed to investigate N/S linear features which may be 18th-century paths.
Test pit 6 is designed to test an apparent E/W feature.
Test pit 7 is designed to investigate a large area of high resistance which may be rocky natural, or possibly may be a levelling of the ground within the walled garden.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 HES will be notified by email of the timetable for works at least 1 week prior to their commencement.
- 3.2 Each test pit will be a maximum of 2 x 1m and it is unlikely that they will be more than 1m in depth. The test pits will only be excavated to such depth as is necessary to understand the nature of the anomaly shown in the resistivity survey- for example path surfaces.
- 3.3 The test pits will be de-turfed and excavated by hand and reinstated after recording.
- 3.4 In the event of archaeological features or finds being discovered they will be recorded as follows:
 - All features or layers will be recorded on an individual Site Recording Sheet
 - Small finds will be bagged individually with the context clearly marked and recorded on a Finds Record Sheet
 - Environmental samples, if required, will be bagged or boxed individually and recorded on a Samples Record Sheet for analysis of biological remains
- 3.5 Detailed plans of archaeological features will be recorded at an appropriate scale and sections drawn at 1:10 or as appropriate.
- 3.6 A photographic record (using an SLR colour digital with publication standard megapixel resolution) will be maintained during the fieldwork and will include an appropriate scale and north arrow with the feature identified.
- 3.7 Should archaeological deposits or finds of significance be uncovered that cannot be dealt with immediately, then work will cease until a programme of work suitable to deal with such finds has been agreed by all parties concerned. This will include a strategy for excavation depending on the level of intervention required.

A programme of post-excavation requirements to take account of findings made and artefacts recovered would be formulated and the need for specialist reports identified.
- 3.8 Human Remains In the event of human remains being uncovered MAS Ltd would follow the guidance given in Historic Scotland Operational Policy Paper 5, *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology* (Historic Scotland:Edinburgh amended version 2006).Under Scots law all human remains have 'the right of sepulchre' and to violate a burial deliberately is a criminal act; the Historic Scotland paper notes that 'Archaeologists, while they

might have the legal right to investigate sites of archaeological interest, do not have any legal right to excavate human remains’.

Any discovery of human remains would be notified to the local police or the Procurator Fiscal as well as Historic Scotland and the Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service and work in that area would cease until agreement had been reached regarding future action.

- 3.9 Finds All finds are subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and Bona Vacantia and would be reported by MAS Ltd to the Secretariat of the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP) for disposal to an appropriate museum. It should be noted that there are long delays in the SAFAP disposal at the present time and that MAS Ltd could store the assemblage until disposal.

4. Reporting

- 4.1 A full written report on the results of the watching brief will be produced within 14 days, or sooner, of the completion of work on the site.
- 4.2 Copies of the report will be submitted in hard copy and in digital form to the Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council, Historic Environment Scotland and the Ellon Gardens Trust.
- 4.3 A summary of the findings will be published in *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland* and OASIS, the nation wide archaeological database.

5. Timetable

- 5.1 The work is timed to take place during autumn/winter 2016.

6. Staff Structure

- 6.1 The excavation will be carried out by J C Murray MIFA and Dr H K Murray MIFA.

7. Health & Safety

- 7.1 MAS Ltd work within the framework of a strict Health & Safety policy. Standard protective and safety clothing will be worn and the MAS Ltd archaeologists on site will observe and be governed by all Health & Safety procedures stipulated by the client.