

**Erection of New House  
29 Bornaskitaig  
Isle of Skye**

**NG 3756 7141**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on Site Clearance Works**

**15<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007**



illus. 1, 29 Bornaskitaig : The site before the start of site works. Bornaskitaig Broch in the left distance.

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For

Steven and Rachel Varwell  
Minch View  
1, Totescore  
Kilmuir  
Isle of Skye IV51 9YW

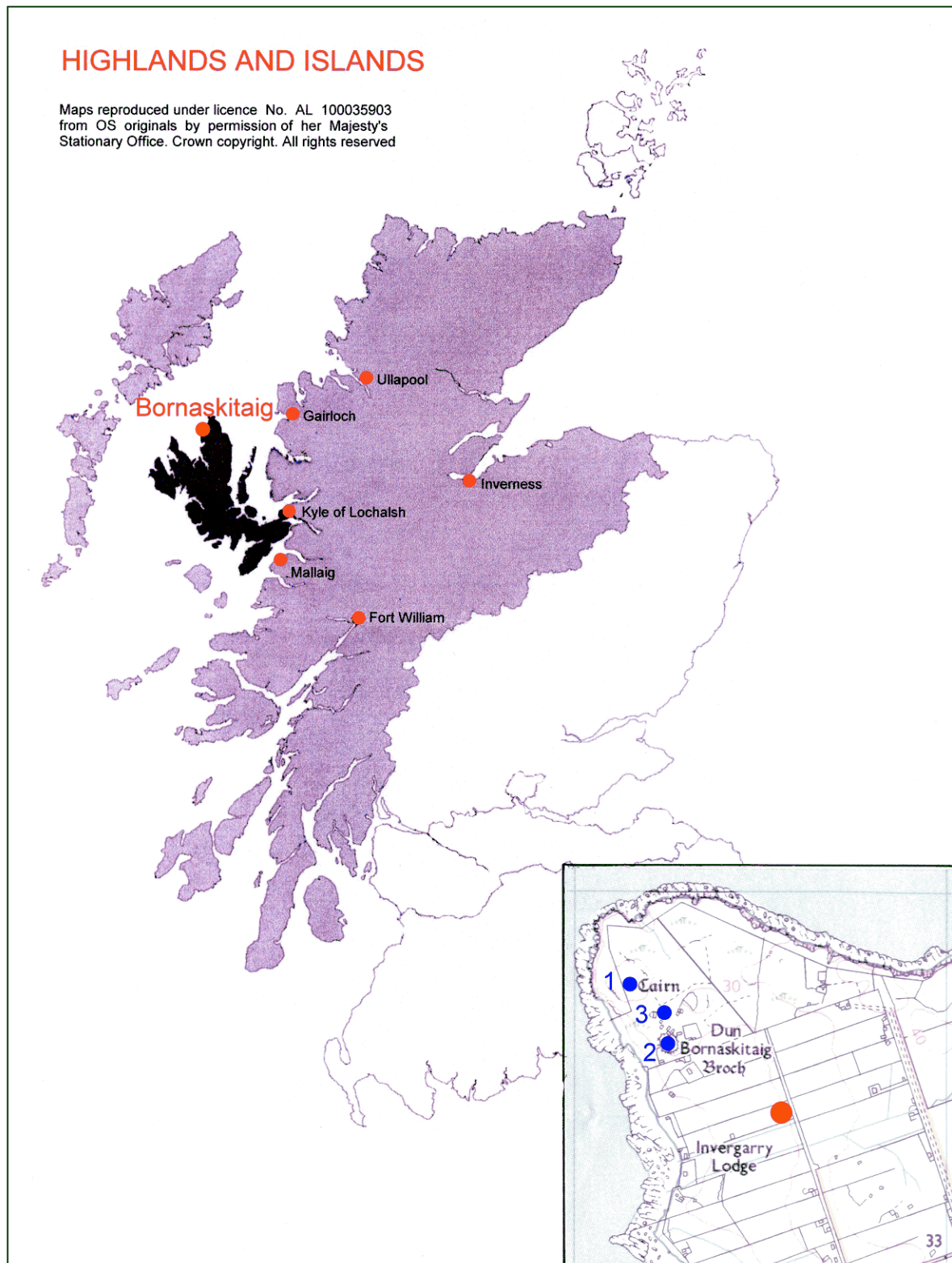
Planning Ref. SL-06-285

By

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Report No. 176

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Illus. 2, Location : Bornaskitaig and development site (red) with recorded archaeological sites in blue, (see Table 1 for details).

**Archaeological Watching Brief : New House Development, Bornaskitaig, Isle of Skye****NG 3756 7141****Planning Ref. SL-06-285****1. Introduction** (See illus. 1 & 2)

The development covered by this report lies on gently sloping formerly cultivated ground on the west coast of the Trotternish peninsular. The Bornaskitaig crofting township lies immediately to the south of the development, with enclosed croft lands to the west, north and east. There are no recorded archaeological sites within the development area, however the site lies close to recorded prehistoric burial cairns, (500 meters to the NW), a ruinous broch, (300 meters to the NW) and the cleared Clachan which pre-dates the current settlement of Bornaskitaig, (300 meters to the NW around the broch).

**2. Methodology**

As there was the possibility that archaeological features, and finds, might be found during the initial site works, the Highland Council Archaeology Unit imposed a planning requirement that a watching brief be carried out during initial site clearance works. The watching brief consisted of 3 elements: -

- A desk-based search of relevant archives and documentary sources in order to establish the recorded archaeological baseline of the area.
- A walkover survey of the area to be affected by the developments site-works.
- A watching brief during the site works.

The results of these 3 elements are detailed below.

**3. The Archaeological Works****3.1 The Desk-based Research**

The desk-based research was carried out prior to the site works. The following sources and archives were consulted:

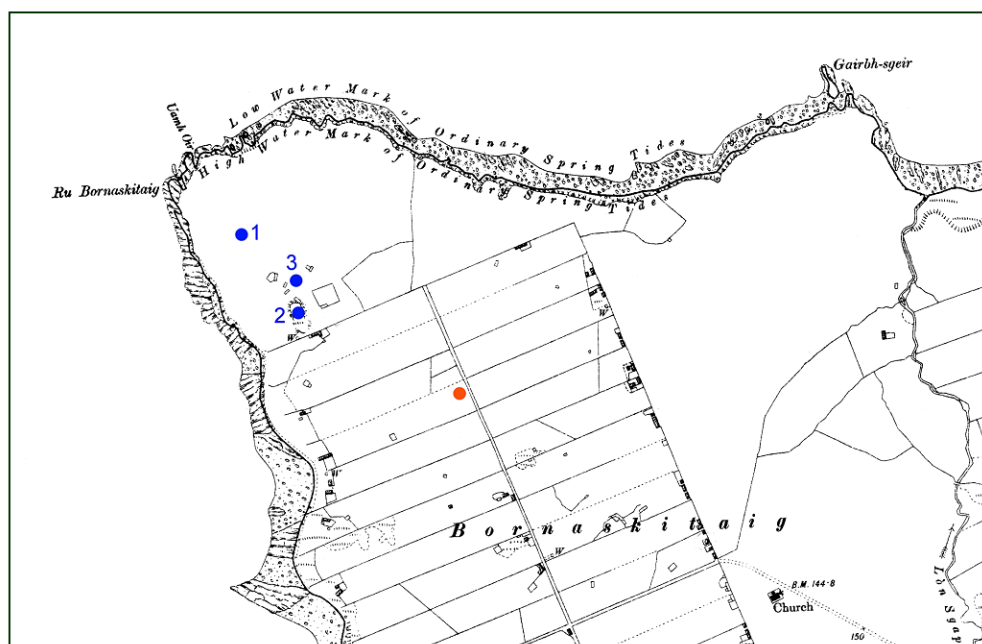
- The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
- The National Monuments Record (NMR)
- The Dualchas Map Archive, Air Photo Archive and SMR in Portree.
- The SNH Aerial Photo Archive (copies of relevant air photo's kindly supplied by the developer).
- The Archive of Archaeological and Ancient Landscape Survey

## Results of the desk-based search

A search of the above archives revealed that 3 recorded archaeological sites lie within 500 meters of the proposed development, (See Table 1 and illus. 3 below). The SNH and Dualchas aerial photo collections confirmed the existence of the above sites, and revealed that a complex pattern of early enclosure and cultivation lies beyond the boundaries of the enclosed crofting lands. Crop marks visible within the enclosed crofts, and running at a contrary angle to the crofts boundaries, show that the earlier pattern of enclosure, to some extent, lies fossilised within the present grassland farming regime. The recording of this early landscape lies beyond the scope of this watching brief.

No.	OS Ref. Number	Type of Site	Period	OS Grid Ref.
1.	NG37SE 3	Burial Cairns (3)	?Bronze Age	NG 3716 7174
2.	NG37SE 4	Broch	Iron Age	NG 3726 7176
3.	NG37SE 8	Cleared Township	17 <sup>th</sup> –19 <sup>th</sup> C	NG 3720 7160

Table 1 : Archaeological sites recovered during the desk-based search.



Illus. 3 : Extract from the 1904 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 6'' OS map, Sheet III, Isle of Skye, showing the development site in red and the recorded archaeology in blue.

## 3.2 The walkover survey

The walkover survey was carried out on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, prior to the start of the watching brief. The entire area of the croft was very wet with water standing in several places. A modern, surface-water drain cuts through the site on a NE to SW alignment, (see

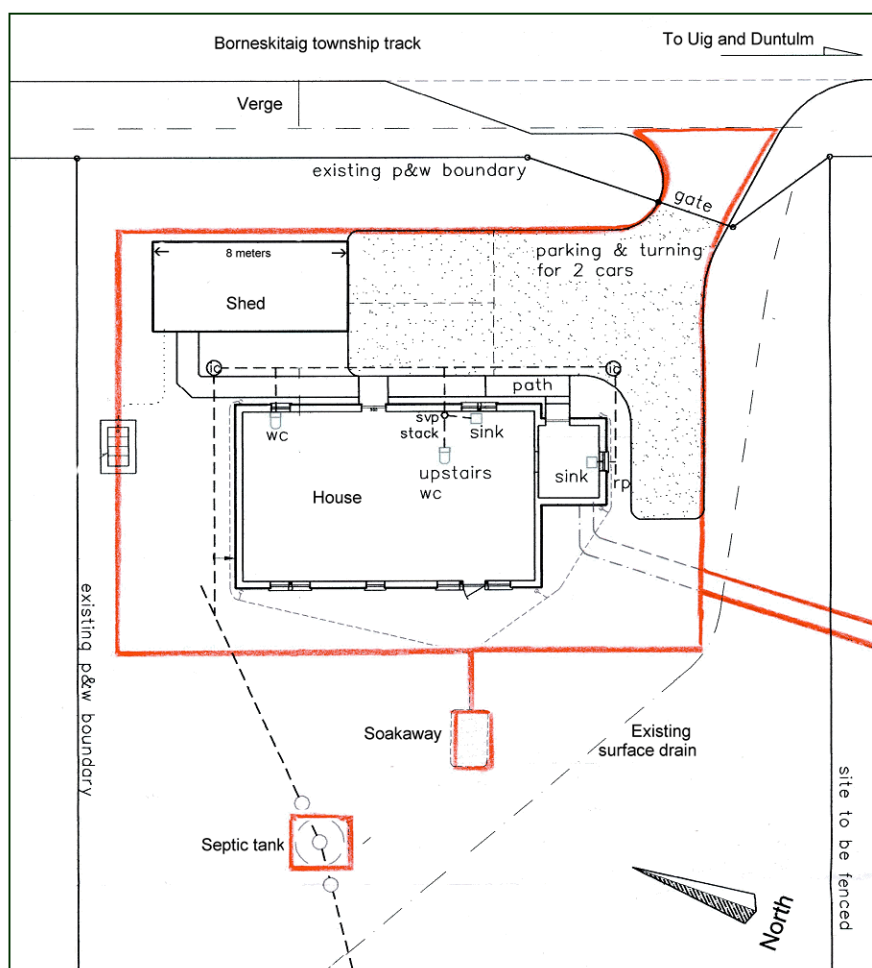
illus. 4) and a degraded field dyke lies beside the access track, (see illus. 5) otherwise no archaeological features were visible within or close to the area under development.

### 3.3 The Watching brief

The site excavations and the watching brief were carried out on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, a wet and very windy day with occasional sunny periods. A tracked excavator, with a 2 meter wide straight-edged bucket, was used for the site clearance works. The entire area of the house, shed, driveway, parking and all associated drains etc. was stripped of circa 200mm of plough-soil revealing a natural sub-soil consisting of a slick, heavy orange clay. The service trenches (water & electricity) were not stripped as their exact position was not then known.

The service trenches were stripped on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, a showery but sunny day, revealing the same heavy orange clay.

No archaeological features, or finds, were recovered during the site clearance works.



Illus 4 : The house site with the areas covered by the watching brief outlined in red.





Illus. 5 : The site during topsoil stripping with the remains of the field dyke clearly visible by the side of the track.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Although the development site lies within a landscape containing evidence of intensive occupation during a number of earlier periods (Bronze Age, Iron Age and Late or Post Medieval) not a trace of archaeological features, or finds, were recovered during the watching brief. This would seem to indicate that the area in question, now enclosed as croft land, has been cultivated from earliest times with occupation sites lying only on the higher and dryer ground to the north west. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fossilised landscape visible on aerial photographs.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The archaeological requirements regarding this site have been fulfilled. There are no further recommendations regarding this site.

#### **6. Location of Records**

All field records and research relating to this site are held in the archive of:

Archaeological and Ancient Landscape Survey

C/o Martin Wildgoose

Tigh an Dun

Dunan

Broadford

Isle of Skye DIV49 9AJ

Tel. 01471 822562, e-mail: [jwildgoose@aol.com](mailto:jwildgoose@aol.com)

End.

1<sup>st</sup> March 2007

#### **Appendix A: The Highland Council Archaeological Brief (over)**



*Brief for archaeological work at:*

**New House to NE of 29 Bornisketaig,  
Kilmuir, Isle of Skye  
(SL-06-285)**

## **WATCHING BRIEF**

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

**Archaeology Unit**



### 1) Background

The proposed development lies within a wider area where later prehistoric settlement remains are recorded. An archaeological watching brief is needed at this site because there is a potential for associated finds or features of interest to be discovered during site works. A watching brief enables any discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently as they appear with minimum delay or disruption to the development.

This brief sets out in detail who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

### 2) Terms of Reference

This brief specifies what is considered to be the minimum acceptable standard of work; proposals that present a higher standard may be offered and accepted. It is assumed that this will form the basis of an agreed approach unless changes are agreed with Highland Council Archaeology Unit in writing before the start of any site works.

This brief has been produced for Stephen & Rachel Varwell, who will be responsible for the work, including any tendering and contractual arrangements. It sets out in detail who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The area to be covered by this assessment should be the entire development area: this means the access road, together with any proposed services, works compounds, borrow pits or other ancillary works.

The work should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The Archaeology Unit may refuse to accept work from, or otherwise take action against, archaeologists who fail to carry out work to these standards.

The brief has been produced specifically for this scheme based on documents supplied at the time it was issued. It is valid for one year from the date of issue.

Before site works start, the proposed arrangements, including a timetable for the work should be agreed with the Highland Council Archaeology Unit in writing.

### 3) Objectives

To identify and record any features or objects of archaeological importance that could be damaged or destroyed by this development, while minimising any delays or disruption to the development project.

### 4) Method

#### a) Desk-based Assessment

A check of all relevant archaeological / historical records, maps and aerial photographs should be undertaken. The following sources are recommended as a minimum:

- The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). *Please note - the online SMR 'Am Baile' is not designed for use in development control or for constructing management policy of sites. In order to source the full SMR information required for such studies all consultants should approach the Highland Council Archaeology Unit directly.* ✕

- The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) ✓
- Vertical stereo aerial photographic coverage held by RCAHMS and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit. ✓
- Ordnance Survey map coverage from 1850 onwards, and any other readily available early cartographic sources held at the National Library of Scotland Map Library. ✓
- Bibliographic references and early parish accounts. ✓

*a) Watching Brief*

A watching brief will be conducted by the Archaeological Contractor on all site ground-works, so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards. The Archaeological Contractor will endeavour wherever possible to work with the contractor to ensure that any recording required is done with minimum delay to the site works.

*Important Note for architects, builders and site contractors*

Those carrying out site clearance and excavation works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. They may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. For example:

- Where excavating machinery is used, a straight-edged bucket must be used on a back-acting machine. Care will need to be taken to avoid over excavation, and the advice of the archaeologist on-site should be adhered to on this.
- Archaeologists may need to get quickly into recently cleared areas and this may mean that drivers of excavators may sometimes need to wait briefly, or switch to working other areas.
- Each excavating machine needs to be watched by at least one archaeologist at all times (1:1 ratio). Work should not begin on site until this cover has been set up.
- Because the archaeologist must be able to record any archaeological remains encountered during the work to professional standards, site clearance works may take slightly longer than normal. This should be allowed for in the development project timetable. Occasionally, more extensive excavation may be needed since there will be limited opportunities to preserve features *in situ*. If discoveries are made that would cause significant delays, see paragraph 5 below.
- Human remains must be immediately reported to the local police and to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit and should not be excavated as part of this work.

Once areas have been cleared, and any archaeology recorded, there should be no need for further archaeological work in these areas.

## **5) Report**

A report must be produced which sets out the results of the work and makes recommendations for any required further work.

The Council will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. However, HCAU reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. The completed report will be made available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record, and through the public library service. The Archaeology Unit will acknowledge copyright in all cases.

*a) Content*

The report must include as a minimum:

- Location plan (bound into the report) showing the project area; area of watching brief; and relevant archaeological sites and features in the vicinity. The location plan must also show the position of features identified during the work.
- A detailed site background, including reference to previous work conducted in the wider area on similar developments and the results of such work.
- The circumstances and objectives of this work.
- An analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data; a statement regarding the potential for, and survival of, buried prehistoric sites in this area; and a statement of the significance of the results.
- Scale plans, sections and photographs of all significant archaeological features noted.
- A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including the archive location.
- A list of finds, as appropriate, set out in the required format for Treasure Trove reporting.
- Details of the sampling and finds retention policies and their justification.
- A copy of this Specification for the required work, presented as an Appendix.
- Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork.
- Proposals for presenting the results of the work to the local community where appropriate.

*b) Distribution*

The archaeologist appointed is responsible for making sure copies of the report have been received by the recipients listed below. The archaeologist appointed should allow for all costs when estimating for the work. We require archaeologists to submit satisfactory reports within the agreed deadline.

Apart from any copies required by the client, at least **four** copies of the project report must be produced by the archaeologist. These must be submitted to all of the following **within 4 weeks** of the completion of the field work.

- One paper copy for the Council's Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, Kings House, The Green, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9BS.
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Senior Librarian Information Co-ordinator, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UA. This will be available for public consultation through the public library service.
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Assistant Curator (Archaeology), Museum & Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EB (*This copy will only be required if there are finds*).
- One digital copy for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX : The report should be supplied by email or on a computer disc as a *pdf* file. Please ensure that all drawings and photographs are included.

*c) Other Products of the Work*

Where significant archaeology has been found, the archaeologist must arrange a presentation of the project results, to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. This is the responsibility of the Archaeological Contractor, and will not be funded by the Highland Council.

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

**6) Monitoring**

The archaeologist appointed is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with Archaeology Unit staff. We will monitor projects as necessary to ensure that minimum standards are met.

Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates - with contact names, telephone numbers and arrangements for access - must be given to the HC Archaeology Unit by the archaeological contractor.

Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and /or the development must be notified by the archaeologist immediately to the applicant and the Senior Archaeologist. The finds or features must be left *in situ* until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.

#### **7) Finds**

Chance finds can be made during any archaeological fieldwork. Archaeologists should note that advice and facilities for emergency conservation and temporary storage can be offered by Inverness Museum. All finds should be notified for Treasure Trove.

#### **8) Insurance**

The archaeologist appointed must take all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurance. Section 24 of the Highland Council's revised Contracts Standing Orders states:

"All specifications issued by and contracts entered into with the Council in connection with the carrying out of work or the provision of services shall provide that the contractor holds a valid insurance policy, approved by the Council, for:-

1. Employers liability - minimum limit - £10m (statutory limit)
2. Public liability - minimum limit £5m."

#### **9) General**

The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this brief, including the following:

The archaeologist appointed must:

- carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- agree a timetable for the work with the client and the HC Archaeology Unit.
- not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the applicant and HC Archaeology Unit.

This brief has been produced by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit, to whom any enquiries should be addressed. No one else has authority to vary its terms.

*Highland Council Archaeology Unit*

*Wednesday, 19 July 2006*

End.

1<sup>st</sup> March 2007