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**Culduthel Farm, Inverness:  
Results of an Archaeological Evaluation**

*13<sup>th</sup> December 2000*

*Client: Tulloch Civil Engineering Ltd*

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## CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Methodology
4. Results
  - 4.1 Desk-Based Assessment
  - 4.2 Archaeological Field Evaluation
5. Discussion
6. Recommendations
7. Acknowledgements

Appendix 1: Context Register  
Photographic Register  
Drawing Register

## Summary

*This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation undertaken on the site of three proposed borrow pits. The remains of three plough furrows and one stone-filled drain were identified and probably relate to late eighteenth/early nineteenth century cultivation and field improvement. They are not thought to be archaeologically significant. No other features were identified. The evaluation was monitored by Highland Council Archaeology Service and no further work is recommended.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This report details the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by Headland Archaeology Ltd, on behalf of Tulloch Civil Engineering, in advance of planning permission being granted for three borrow pits to supply sand and gravel for the proposed Southern Distributor Road in Inverness. The site lies to the south of Inverness (NGR: NH 665 418 Site Centre). Evaluation was required by Highland Council in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits. A programme of trial trenching was undertaken following a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Headland Archaeology. The work was undertaken on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2000.

## **2 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this evaluation were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the area of the proposed development
- To establish the extent and nature of any archaeological deposits identified and their vulnerability to development activities
- To determine the archaeological significance of such deposits.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in advance of fieldwork. This encompassed research at the National Monuments Record of Scotland (hereafter NMRS) and the National Library of Scotland, Map Library. Based on the results of this research and a walkover of the site, a series of trial trenches, representing 5% of the total area, were excavated under direct archaeological control. The trenches in the area of the first borrow pit were excavated using a CAT 428 excavator with a 1.5 m wide ditching bucket, while the trenches in the other two borrow pits were excavated using a 360<sup>0</sup> tracked excavator with 1.8 m wide bucket. All turf, topsoil and modern overburden were removed by machine and the exposed natural subsoil was cleaned and investigated for archaeological features or deposits. Any features that were identified were sample excavated and recorded. The layout of the trenches and features were recorded by total station and related to the National Grid.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

The following records were held at the NMRS for the immediate area:

NH64SE 26: Ring Cairn

NH64SE 30: Cist; Jet Necklace; Bronze Awl; Charcoal; Stone Flake

NH64SE 33: Cist

NH64SE 36: Cist; Beaker; Flint Arrowheads; Amber Bead, Stone Bracer; Bone Toggle

NH64SE 37: Pit-Circle; Ring-Ditch

NH64SE 48: Flints; Bronze

NH64SE 49: Flints; Glass Bead

NH64SE 71: Barrow (Possible)

NH64SE 72: Postholes; Charcoal

The numbers of prehistoric sites in the immediate area around the proposed borrow pits suggested that the possibility of archaeological deposits in the development area was relatively high. Two cists have been found in the surrounding area. One, discovered in 1928, contained a crouched female inhumation with accompanying jet necklace and bronze artefacts (Low 1929). The other, found in 1970, also contained a crouched inhumation but had no associated artefacts. The ring-cairn in the same field as Borrow Pit 1 is assumed to be of the Clava-type, but only a few stones survive on its south side.

All available Ordnance Survey maps, held at the National Map Library, were consulted. Maps, earlier than the Ordnance Survey, were found to be of too small scale to be of any use. The following maps were consulted:

Ordnance Survey 1874 *Inverness-shire 1:10560 sheet XII* (Surveyed 1868-70)

Ordnance Survey 1906 *Inverness-shire 1:10560 sheet XII* (Revised 1902-3)

Ordnance Survey 1959 NH64SE Scale 1:10560

Ordnance Survey 1968 NH64SE Scale 1:10560

Ordnance Survey 1978 NH64SE Scale 1:10000

Ordnance Survey 1984 NH64SE Scale 1:10000

These maps yielded no information on pre-existing features in the proposed development area.

The following vertical aerial photographs, held at the NMRS, were consulted:

Date	Sortie	Frames	Scale
09/08/1947	CPE/Scot/UK 252	4087 - 4089	1:10000
24/07/1948	58/A/397	5003 - 5005	1:5000
08/05/1953	58/RAF/1116	F22: 0019 - 0020	1:10000
03/02/1959	58/RAF/2703	F22: 0087 - 0088	1:15000
14/05/1988	61188	066 - 067	1:24000

### **Borrow Pit 2: Trench 5**

This trench was orientated south-west to north-east and measured 47 m in length. The topsoil was, on average, 0.7 m deep. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

### **Borrow Pit 3: Trench 6**

This trench was orientated north-east to south-west and measured 46 m in length. The topsoil was, on average, 0.6 m deep, but had a maximum depth of 0.8 m at its north-east end. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

### **Borrow Pit 3: Trench 7**

This trench was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 80 m in length. The topsoil was, on average, 1 m deep, but was 0.6 m deep at the north-west end. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

Only four features were identified during this evaluation. Three of these features are thought to be the remains of plough furrows, while the fourth feature was a stone-filled drain, typical of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century field improvement.

There was a great depth of topsoil, up to 1 m in places, in the south-east corner of Borrow Pit 1 and this is thought to have come from the adjacent slope to the south being a result of recent cultivation, evidenced by the modern finds in the topsoil. The layer of silty sand (002) under topsoil is thought to be an older topsoil that has not been subject to recent ploughing due to its depth.

The absence of any features or deposits that could be classified as archaeologically significant is surprising given the presence of the Clava-type cairn and two prehistoric cists in the immediate vicinity of Borrow Pit 1. However, the evidence from this evaluation would suggest that the potential for significant archaeological remains is slight. This is also the case for Borrow Pits 2 and 3 where no features of archaeological significance were identified.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

During the evaluation, a visit was made to the site by Dorothy Low of Highland Council Archaeology Service who recommended that no further work be undertaken.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The fieldwork was carried out with the assistance of Jonathan Millar. A curatorial role was provided by Dorothy Low of Highland Council. The illustrations were drawn by Laura Speed. Plant was provided by Tulloch Plant.



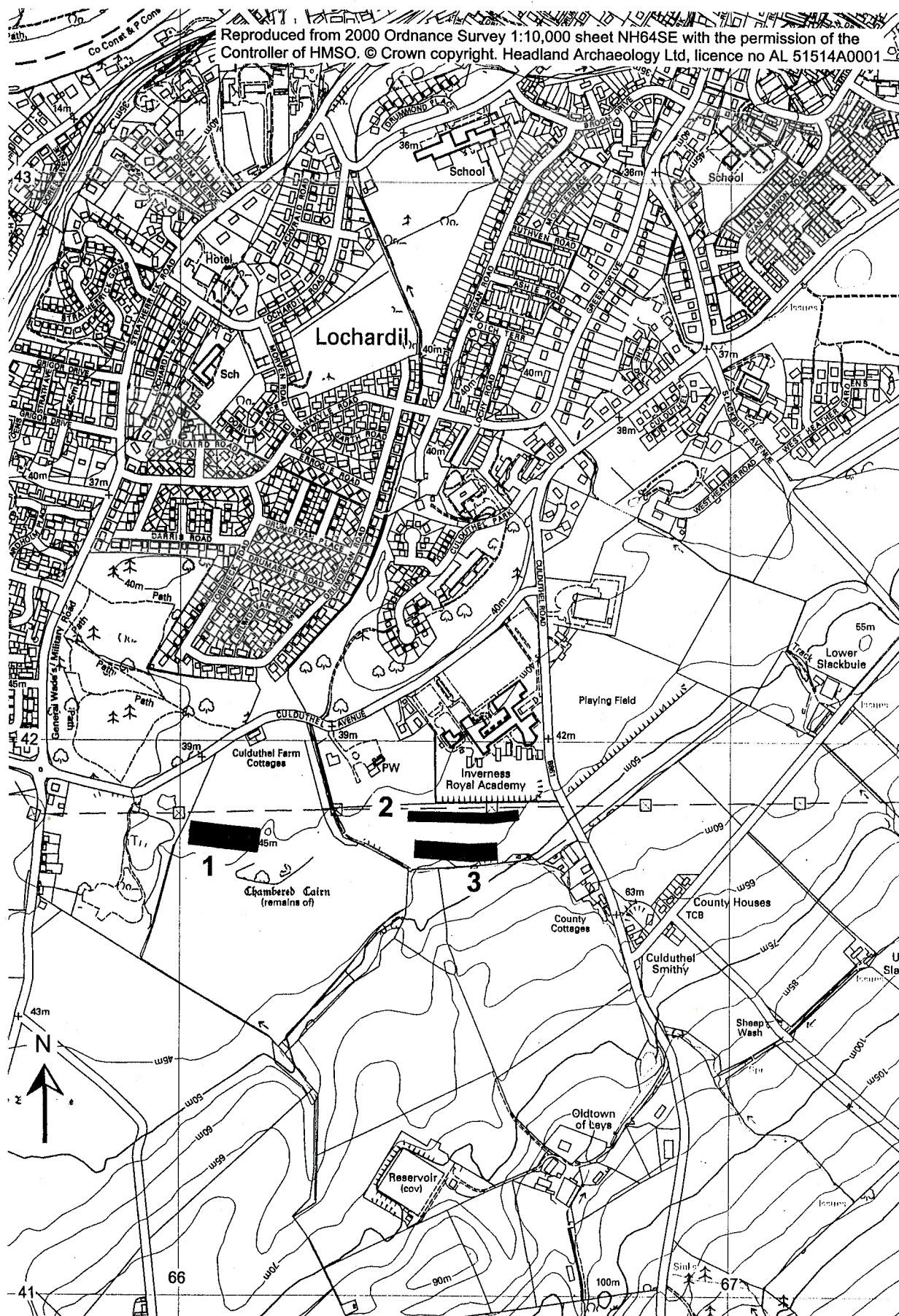


Figure 1. Site location

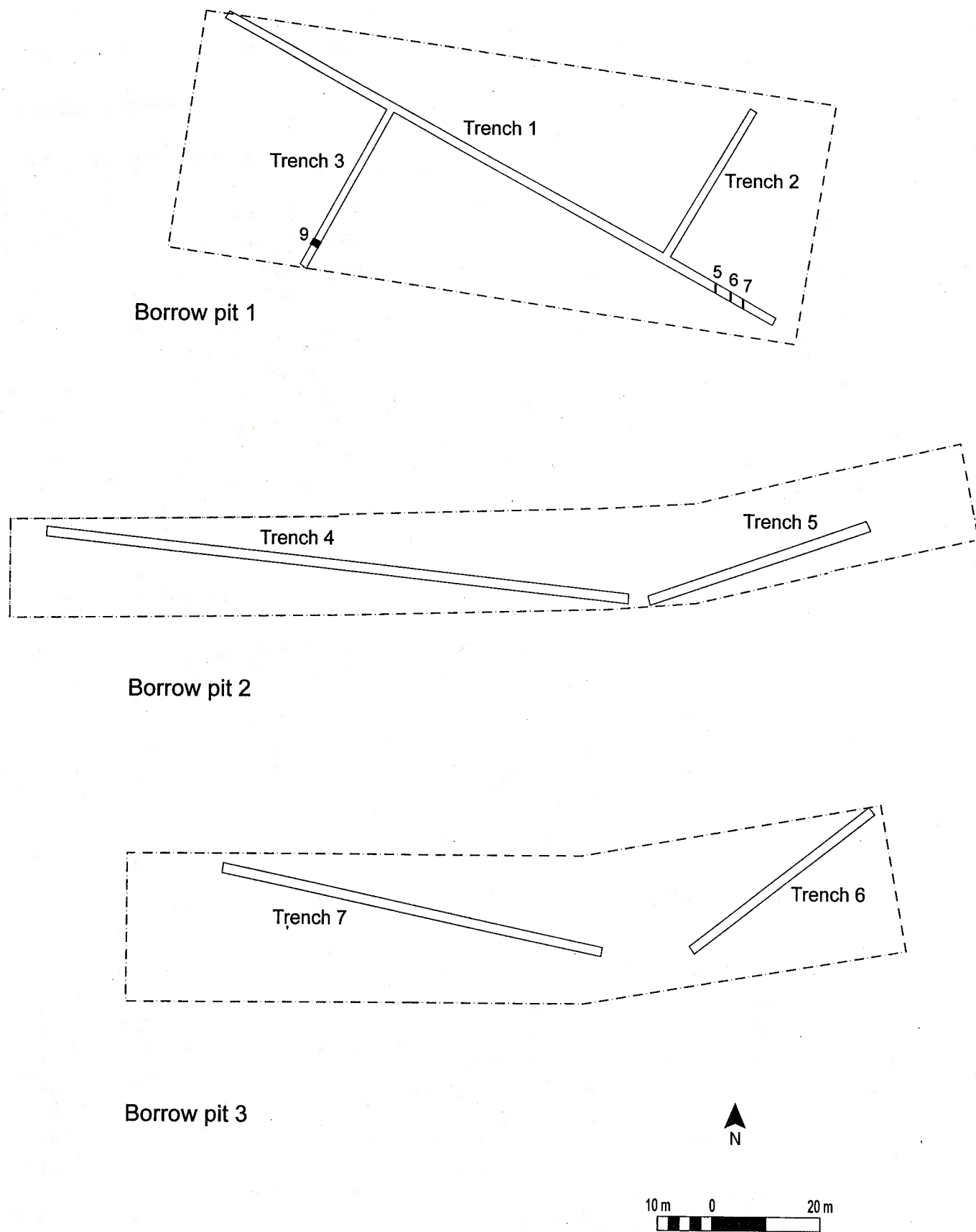


Figure 2. Trench and feature location



23	*	*	NE	Trench 5 – General
24	*	*	SW	Trench 6 – General

### Drawing Register

No	Area	Scale	Description
1	Tr. 1	1:10	Sample south-west facing section of trench
2	Tr. 2	1:10	Sample south-east facing section of trench
3	Tr. 3	1:10	Sample north-west facing section of trench
4	Tr. 4	1:10	North facing section of trench – west end
5	Tr. 4	1:10	North facing section of trench – middle
6	Tr. 4	1:10	North facing section of trench – east