

**HIGHFIELD, BY MUIR OF ORD**

**PRIVATE HOUSE DEVELOPMENT**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Client: Mr Paul Urquart**

H.C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE		
17 DEC 1998		
PASS TO	INITIALS	DATE
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FILE REF:		

Graham Robins  
North Highland Archaeology  
November, 1998

Figure 1: Location Plan  
Highfield, Muir of Ord

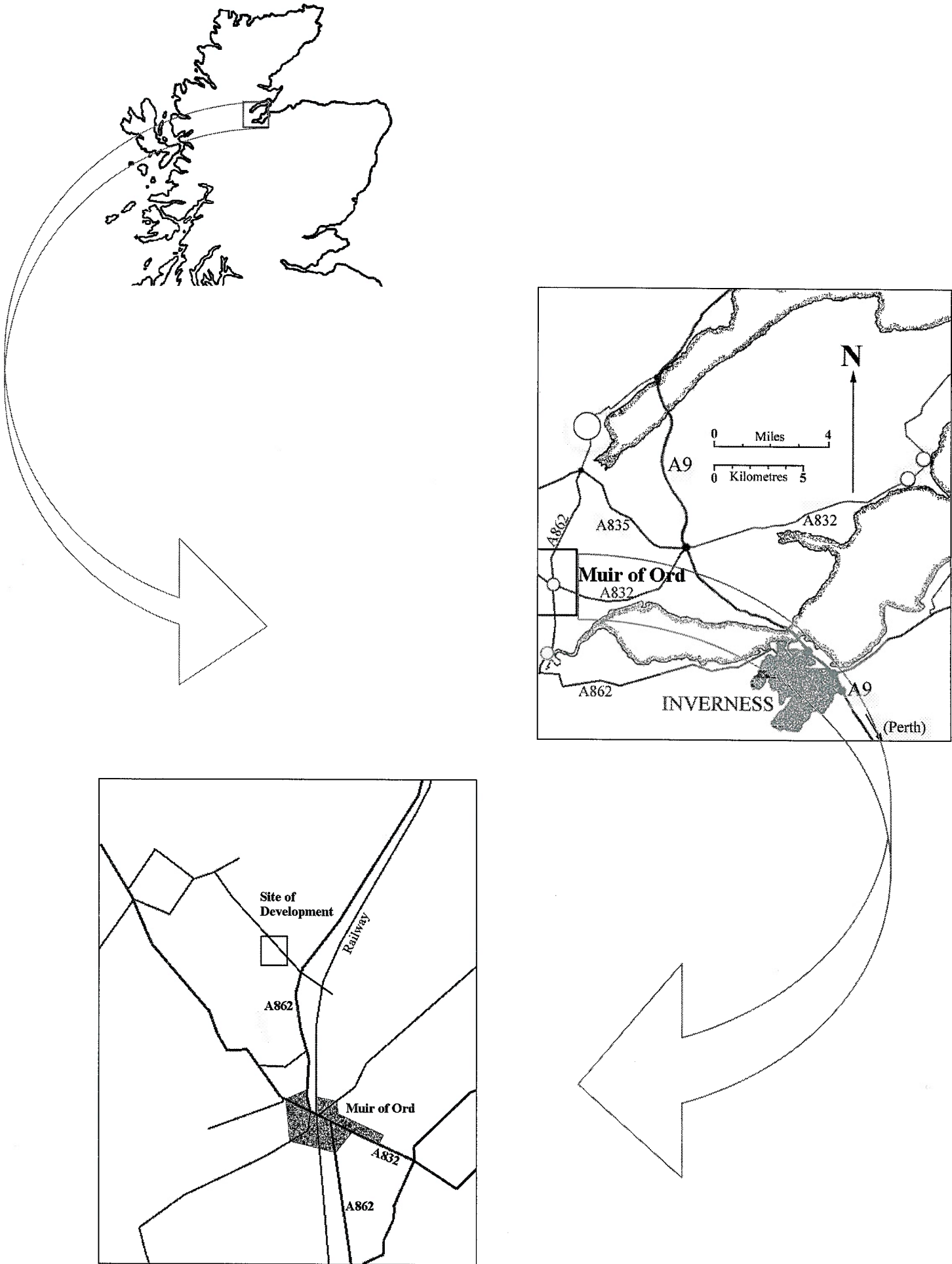
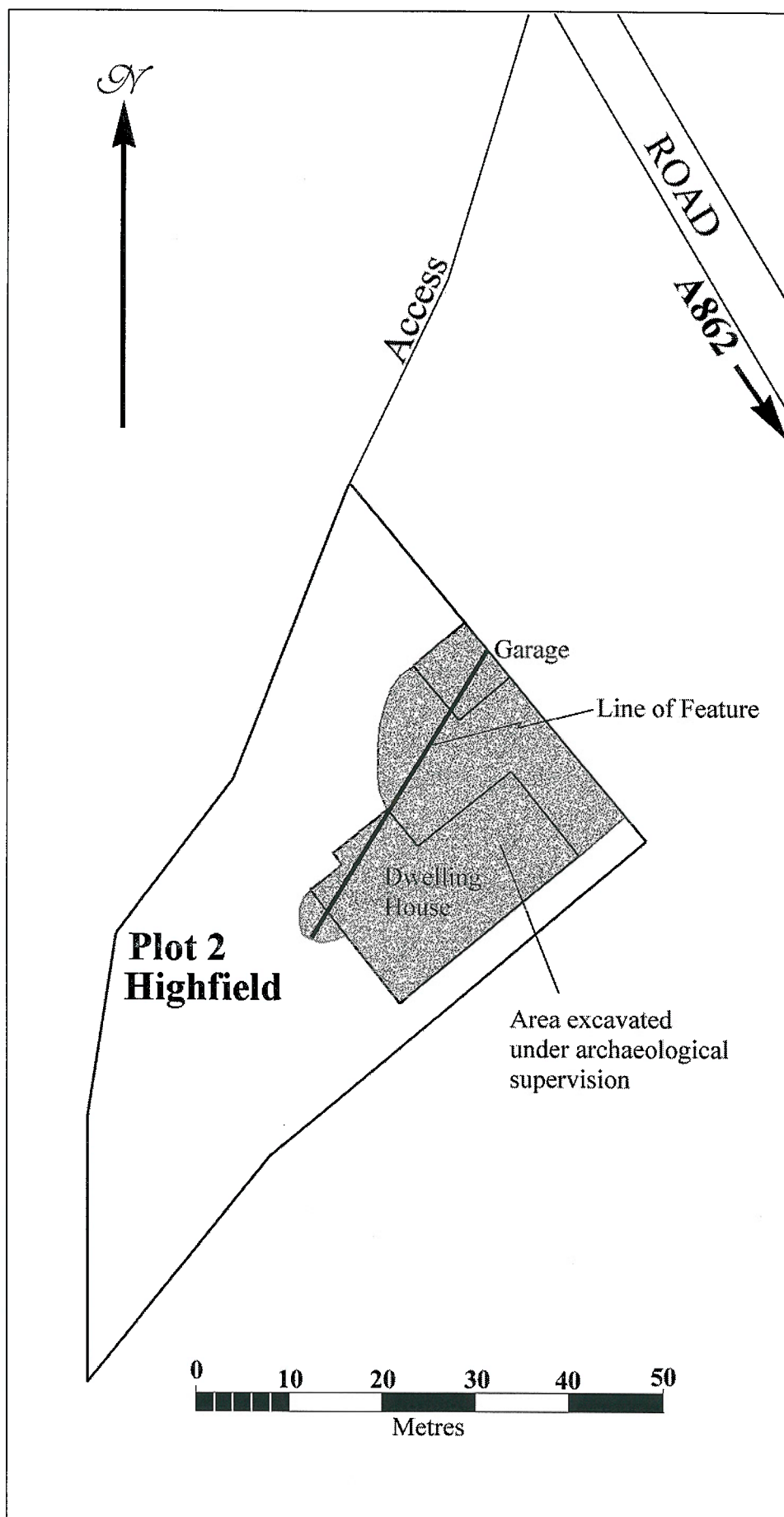


Figure 2: Location Plan  
Highfield Building Site



Client: Mr Paul Urquart, 5 Woodlands Cottages, Dingwall, IV15 9TT

Archaeologist: North Highland Archaeology, White Lodge, Kildary, Invergordon, IV18 0PD

### Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted on the machine excavation of a house foundation and associated structures at, Highfield, by Muir of Ord (NH 526 517). A linear feature was recorded, most likely a boundary marker.

### Circumstances

This watching brief was requested by the Highland Council's Archaeology Service as a result of a planning application (RC/1998/770) for a private house development.

### Fieldwork

Fieldwork was conducted on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1998. Excavation was carried out by a wheeled machine using its back-actor. The overburden was removed down to a sterile gravel of fluvio-glacial origin. The intention of the operator to keep the top-soil and sub-soil separate was ideally suited for recovery of any extant archaeological features.

One feature was noted following the top-soil strip. This was a linear feature, tending in a north-east / south-west direction across the northern half of the stripped area (see Fig 2). The feature was recorded over a distance of 37 metres, and appeared to continue beyond the stripped area, both to the north-east and to the south-west. In plan the feature was consistently 0.80 metres wide. Three sections were excavated through the feature, and all were similar. The section cut through the middle of the exposed length of the feature is illustrated here (see Fig. 3). It consisted of a shallow, U-shaped cut (context3), scooped in profile, extending approximately 0.30 metres below the level of the exposed natural. This cut was filled with two fills;

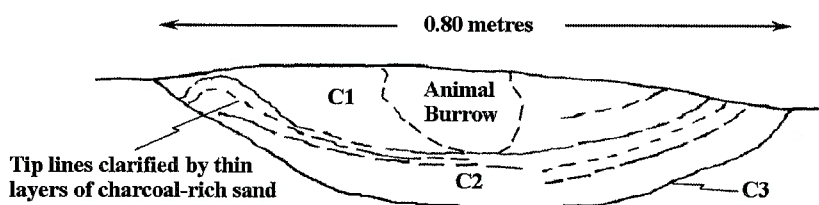
Context 1: a mixed, grey and greyish brown, silty sand, with some indication of tip lines within the fill. This implies that the deposit has developed through a process of natural silting.

Context2: a blackish grey, coarse sand, with charcoal inclusions. The charcoal served to highlight the tip lines present within this context, again indicating that the deposit developed through a process of natural silting.

Photographs were taken of the section, though poor light conditions produced a dark result. In an attempt to enhance the original, the photographs were scanned and a false colour application was employed. This was used both on the original colour image and on the monochrome image. The results indicate that this technique may be useful for enhancing particular areas of photographs for illustration purposes, though obviously, extreme caution must be taken to ensure that the interpretation of the section is not affected by any apparent emphasis originating from this. Originals of the section must always be produced to serve as comparisons.

The feature originally existed as an open ditch. In its present state it is most likely truncated and therefore the original depth is not known. There was a marked absence of stones of any size in the fill. This is not consistent with the feature being a drainage structure, as these normally have a high stone content. The regular layout of the feature, both in plan and in section, suggests that it served as a boundary marker, though no evidence for posts was noted, beside or within the feature. No artefacts were recovered to suggest a date for this feature.

Figure 3: Section SW-facing



**Context1: Deposit; grey and brownish grey silty sand**

**Context2: Deposit; blackish grey sand, with charcoal inclusions**

**Context3: Cut; scooped profile, shallow U-shape, clear boundary with underlying sub-soil**

### Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of Mr Paul Urquart in every stage of this project.



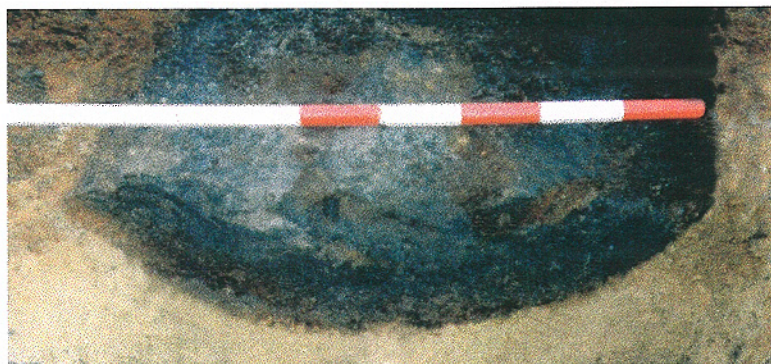


Illustration 1: Colour image of section

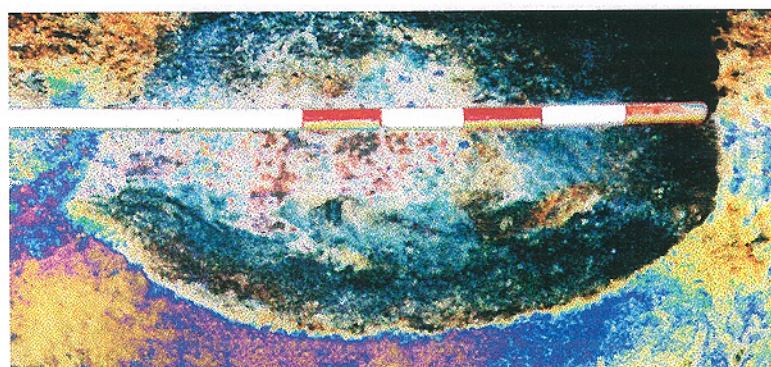


Illustration 2: False-colour image of section

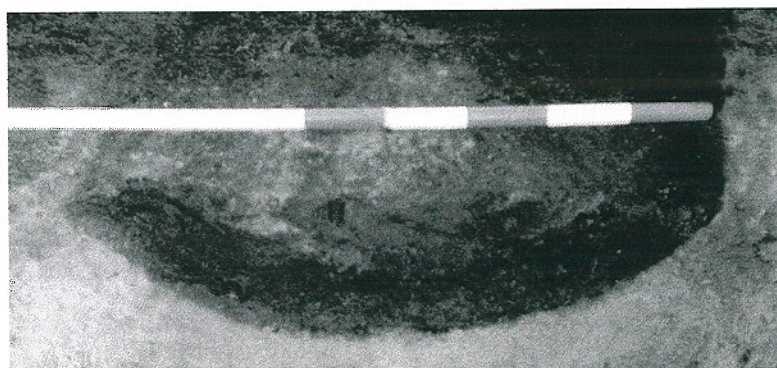


Illustration 3: Greyscale image of section

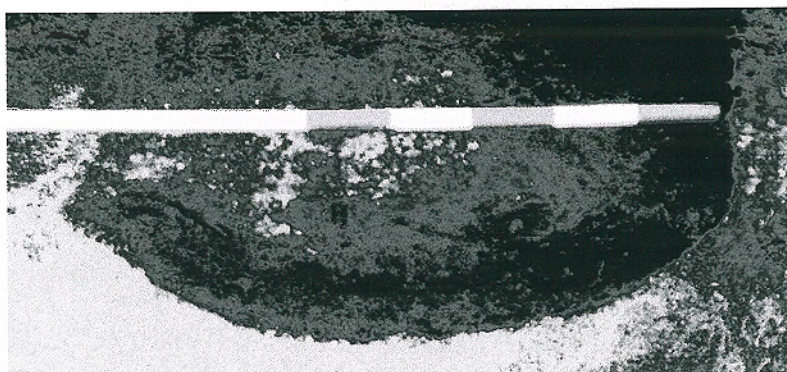


Illustration 4: False-greyscale image of section



The  
Highland  
Council

*The Highland Community*

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**HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE  
Archaeology Service**

**Specification for archaeological work  
prepared for Hydro-Electric  
Castle Linglas, by Keiss**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Background**

This specification has been produced in response to the need for an archaeological watching brief to be carried on site ground works. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted.

**Terms of Reference**

This specification is for archaeological recording work at Plot 2, Chapelton Farm. Occasioned by planning application no RC//1998/770. It is based on these documents. If these details are changed a new specification will be needed. It is valid until March 1999 after which if no work has been carried out a revised specification will be needed.

The specification has been produced for Mr Paul Urquhart who will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements. Estimates should be obtained from archaeological contractors on the basis of this specification

Any reference to 'archaeologist' in this specification is to be taken to mean a qualified and experienced practitioner acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist. This is to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The project should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists or an archaeologist of equivalent standing.

Before site works commence, the Senior Archaeologist must agree, in writing, the proposed arrangements, including a timetable for the work.

If this is for a road or water or sewerage proposal the area to be covered is the entire wayleave except where otherwise indicated.

## **Tendering**

Tenders must be accompanied by a statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director, and other staff where possible.

## **Objectives**

1. To record, to professional standards, any features and objects of archaeological importance that will be damaged or destroyed by this development. This is often achieved by clearing the topsoil to a clean surface in which archaeological features can be identified by the archaeologist.

## **Method**

A watching brief will be conducted by an archaeologist on site groundworks so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards.

Those carrying out site works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. Where machinery is to be used for top soil stripping, 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 regarding this.

The archaeologist must be given every aid by contractors to enable the archaeological work to be carried out. Contractors may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. This must be catered for and adhered to.

Where this is a watching brief for road, water, or sewerage proposals the specification includes drainage and other ancillary works as well as the carriageway itself.



## **Monitoring**

1. The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor projects to ensure The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor that specifications are met.
2. Monitoring will normally be by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
3. Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names and local addresses, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Senior Archaeologist.
4. Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or any other unexpected occurrences or conditions which might affect the agreed project work or its timetable or cost must be notified immediately to the client and the Senior Archaeologist so that revised arrangements can be made.
5. Where archaeological work fails to meet this specification the applicant will be in breach of the planning condition until matters are rectified.

## **Reporting**

### **1. Project report**

At least FOUR copies of the project report must be produced.

- One paper copy for Mr Paul Urquhart, 45 Woodlands Cottages, Woodlands Farm, Dingwall IV15 9TT..
- One paper copy for the Highland Sites and Monuments Record, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX where it will be available for immediate consultation by the public.
- One paper copy to be deposited in the local public library
- One copy for the Highland SMR as above, on a computer disk in a format compatible with Microsoft Office 95 for Windows.

The report must be submitted to the all of the above, including the Senior Archaeologist within 3 weeks of the completion of the field work.

The report must include, as a minimum,

- Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected
- Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification
- Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork
- Plans, drawings and photographs of archaeological features noted
- A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location
- Details of any measures proposed to mitigate the impact of the application on the archaeological resource
- A brief analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of these results for future research. Note that a negative result may itself be significant.
- General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project
- A set of colour slides illustrating the project progress from start to completion.

The completed report will be available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, the Archaeology Service reserves the right to make the report available for research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. Subject to this, copyright will remain with the author unless specifically transferred in writing, and the Archaeology Service will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. Copyright will be acknowledged in all cases by the Archaeology Service.

This specification includes arranging a presentation of the project results to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. Arrangements must be agreed with the Senior Archaeologist.

## **2. Treasure Trove**

The Project Director must liaise with the Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery prior to the start of fieldwork, regarding possible emergency conservation needs and future storage arrangements. Provision must also be made for a cataloguing system for artefactual material which will be compatible with the needs of the institution receiving these finds. Any report to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer must be copied to the Highland Archaeologist.

Any finds, where appropriate, should also be reported to the Receiver of Wreck.

## **3. Discovery and Excavation in Scotland**

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council For Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The cost of this must be included in any tender document.

### **General**

- The archaeologist appointed must be of a professional standing acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist and must carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- The main contractor has responsibility for the Health and Safety of any archaeological staff on site.
- The archaeologist is responsible for taking all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurances.
- Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.
- The archaeologist must agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Senior Archaeologist
- The archaeologist appointed will not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the Senior Archaeologist
- Proper provision must be made for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland
- The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this specification.

- **The Archaeology Service will not recommend archaeologists or archaeological units for contract work if they fail to meet specifications.**