

CENTRE for FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY
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Kirkton Quarry, Sutherland
Archaeological Field Inspection

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PLATES (bound at rear)

Plate 1: general view of quarry scoop (northern)

Plate 2: general view of quarry scoop (southern)

Plate 3: possible old track

0. SUMMARY

- 0.1 This report describes the results of an archaeological field inspection undertaken by the Centre for Field Archaeology (CFA) on 2 December for the proposed extension of sand and gravel working at Kirkton Quarry, near Melvich, Sutherland (NGR: NC 891 631 centred).
- 0.2 The field inspection was designed to identify and evaluate any upstanding archaeological monuments visible within the proposed development area, in order to assess the likely impact of the development on this heritage, and to propose appropriate mitigation measures.
- 0.3 The results of this work suggest that no sites of archaeological significance exist within the area of proposed mineral extraction. Three sites identified within the development area (two quarries and a possible old track) are of recent origin and are not envisaged as being of archaeological significance.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological field inspection was undertaken by the Centre for Field Archaeology (CFA) on 2 December for the proposed extension of sand and gravel working at Kirkton Quarry, near Melvich, Sutherland (NGR: NC 891 631 centred). The work was based on a specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Service and was commissioned by John Fyfe Ltd.
- 1.2 The proposed extension to existing workings at Kirkton Quarry, near Melvich, Sutherland is as shown on the site location plan sent to CFA on 10th March 1997.
- 1.3 The objective of the field inspection was:
 - (a) to identify the nature and extent of any archaeological remains which may exist within the application area;
 - (b) to propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible and recording where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified;
 - (c) to ensure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the developer.
- 1.4 A previous desk-based assessment (Cressey 1997) had not identified any archaeological sites through desk-based sources within the application area.
- 1.5 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland following completion of all work for the project and approval by the client.

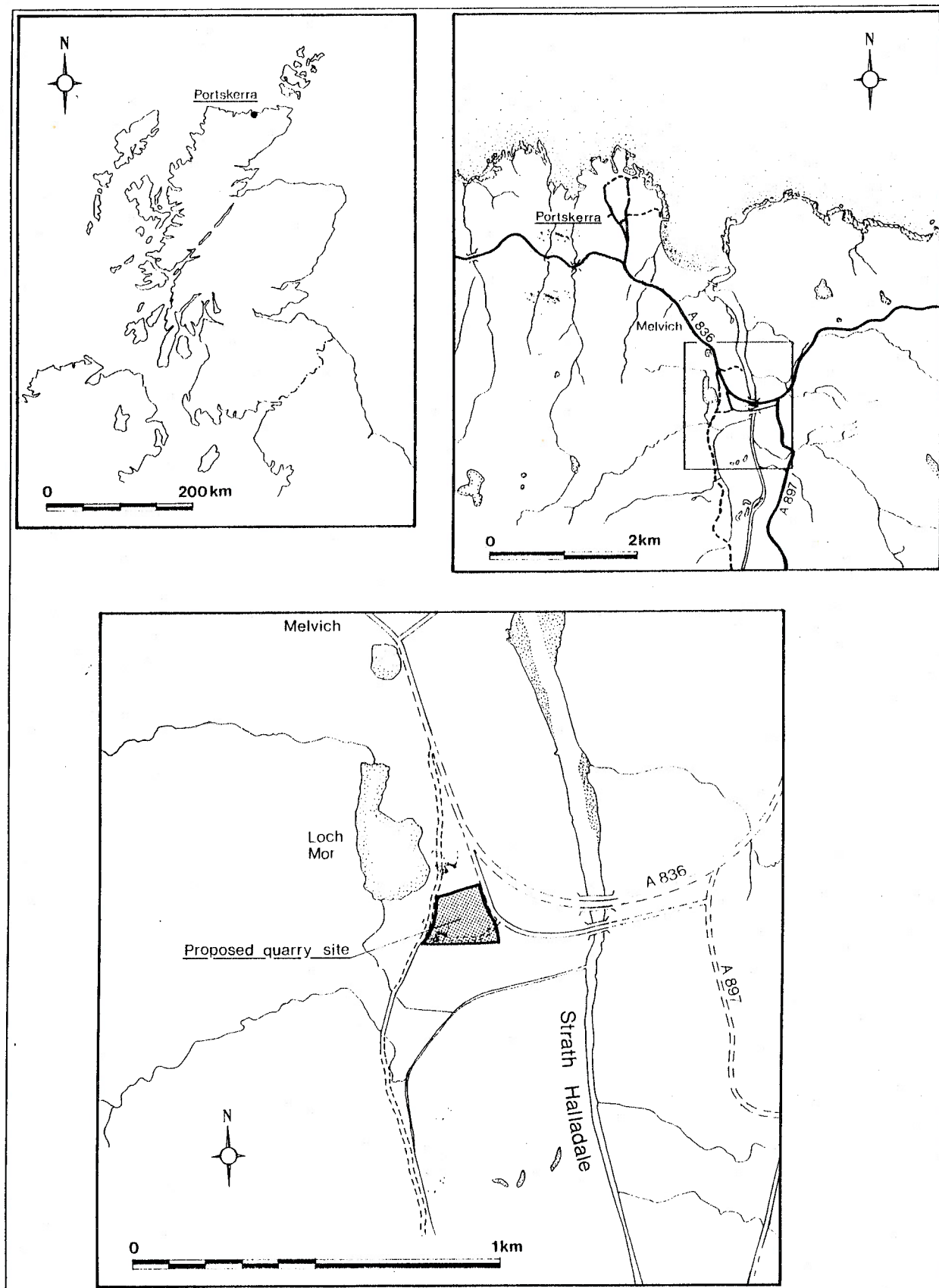


Figure 1: Location plan

2. METHODS STATEMENT

- 2.1 An effective standard for this type of project has been established by previous research undertaken by CFA. CFA follows the principles and standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists as appropriate. This Methods Statement outlines the necessary elements of the work. Recording of all elements was conducted following established CFA methods.
- 2.2 The field inspection consisted of a rapid walk-over survey of the area proposed for development.
- 2.3 Weather at the time of field inspection was fine and sunny, and the ground was clear of snow.
- 2.4 The southern and particularly the eastern margins of the application area were covered in intermittent patches of dense gorse. The rest of the area was under pasture, and sheep were present within the field at the time of inspection.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Previous desk based study (Cressey 1997) produced no evidence for archaeological remains in the area proposed for mineral extraction.

3.2 Archaeological Results

- 3.2.1 No features of archaeological significance were noted within the area of the proposed development.
- 3.2.2 Three features of recent origin were identified during the field inspection. These consisted of two quarries and the alignment of a possible track. All of these features were located along the inner eastern margin of the survey area, and were under dense gorse cover.

Quarries

- 3.2.3 A single quarry scoop (Plate 1) measuring 12m (north-south) by 9m (east-west) was located at NGR: NC 8913 6317. It formed an oval depression approximately 0.8m in depth.
- 3.2.4 A kidney-shaped quarry scoop (Plate 2) measuring c. 41m (north-south) by 32m (east-west) was located at NGR: NC 8913 6314. It was partially filled with rounded stone clearance and was c. 1-1.2m in depth. Its western limit was defined by an extant bank c. 2m wide by 0.7m high. The cutting of this quarry scoop appears to have truncated part of the possible old track (see below).

Possible Old track

- 3.2.5 The partial remains of a possible old track (Plate 3) were located at NGR: NC 8915 6313. The track was defined as a linear spread of stones c. 1.2m wide by 3m in length set between two slight parallel field banks. It is possible that this feature represents the remains of the track depicted on the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map (1908, map sheet X).

4. EVALUATION

4.1 Policy context

4.1.1 Archaeological sites and landscapes represent a non-renewable resource. The main thresholds of archaeological significance proposed in the National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG 5) on Archaeology and Planning from the Scottish Office (SOEnD 1994a) are:

- a) sites of National Importance
- b) sites of Regional and Local Importance
- c) other sites of Lesser Importance.

4.1.2 Sites of National Importance comprise those sites protected by scheduling under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979, Section 2, or as listed buildings designated under the Town and Country Planning legislation, and sites of "schedulable quality". Scheduling is an ongoing process and not all sites of "schedulable" quality are currently scheduled.

4.1.3 Sites of Regional and Local importance are those that do not merit scheduling but which have significance within a local context. This may, for example, apply to their importance to local history, or they may be the only local example of a widespread monument type. The Ancient Monuments legislation makes provision for local authorities to protect such sites, although they cannot be scheduled other than by central government.

4.1.4 The third category of sites are those of lesser individual importance, although they may however comprise component parts of a landscape rich in archaeological monuments, and thereby gain greater significance.

4.2 Evaluation

4.2.1 The various features identified all appear to be of recent origin and are not considered to have archaeological significance. However this evidence alone cannot be accepted as proof that no buried archaeological remains are present.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The desk-based assessment (Cressey 1997) did not identify any archaeological remains within the proposed area of mineral extraction.
- 5.2 The rapid walk-over field inspection did not identify any sites of archaeological significance.
- 5.3 On the basis of these results no further archaeological work is recommended.

6. REFERENCES

6.1 Cartographic

1908 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition map sheet X, 6 inch to the mile.

6.2 Bibliographic

Cressey, M 1997 *Kirkton Quarry, Sutherland: Desk-based Archaeological Assessment*. CFA Report NO. 327, commissioned by John Fyfe Ltd, March 1997.

Appendix One: Photographic Register

Colour		B/W		Description	Comment
Film	Photo	Film	Photo		
1	1-6	2	1-6	Kidney-shaped quarry scoop	From S
	7-8		7-8	Possible old track	From E
	9-10		9-10	Quarry scoop	From NE
	11-16		11-16	General shots of Loch Mor and broch	From S
	17-18		17-18	General shots of survey area	From SW
	19-20		19-20	General shots of Loch Mor broch	From NE
	21-22		21-22	Loch Mor broch	From NE

pl. 1



pl. 2



pl. 3

