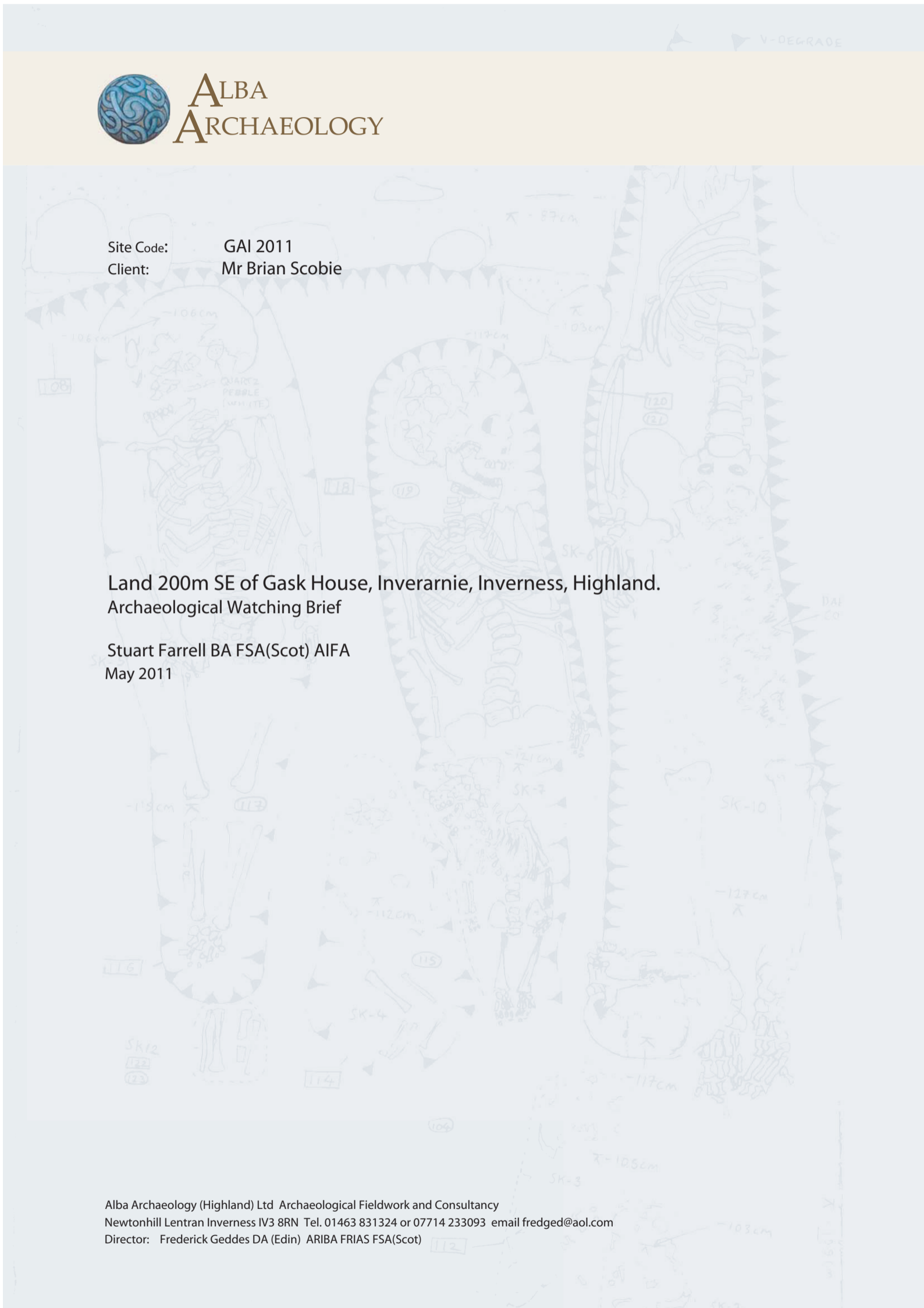


Site Code: GAI 2011  
Client: Mr Brian Scobie

Land 200m SE of Gask House, Inverarnie, Inverness, Highland.  
Archaeological Watching Brief

Stuart Farrell BA FSA(Scot) AIFA  
May 2011



# **Archaeological Watching Brief of a Development at Land 200m SE of Gask House, Inverness, Highland.**

**Client:** Mr Brian Scobie

**Date:** May 2011

**Director:** Stuart Farrell FSA(Scot)

**Written by:** Stuart Farrell for Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd

**Planning Ref.** 09/0088/REMIN

**Grid Ref:** NH 268141 835836

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### Non-Technical Summary

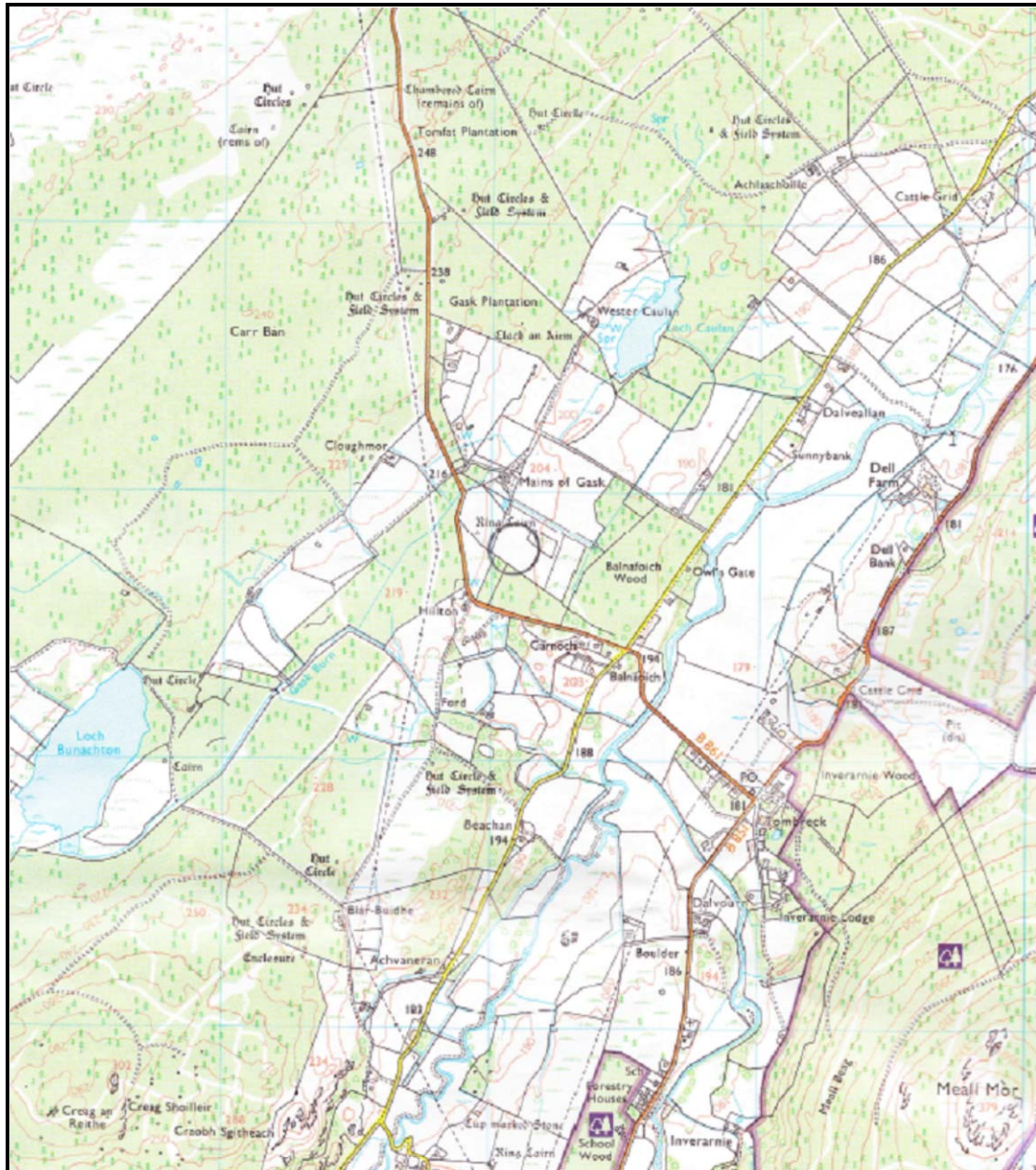
*Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd was commissioned by Mr Brian Scobie in May 2011 to undertake an archaeological watching brief for a development at Land 200m SE of Gask House, Inverarnie, Inverness-shire (NH 268141 835836) as part of a project for a new house and garage with associated access and services. Highland Council Historic Environment Team produced a specification for this work.*

*Work in May 2011 revealed no archaeological features or deposits, the site of the new house lying in an area of improved pasture.*

*No recommendations for further archaeological work are to be proposed.*

**Figure 1 – Site Location 1:25000.**

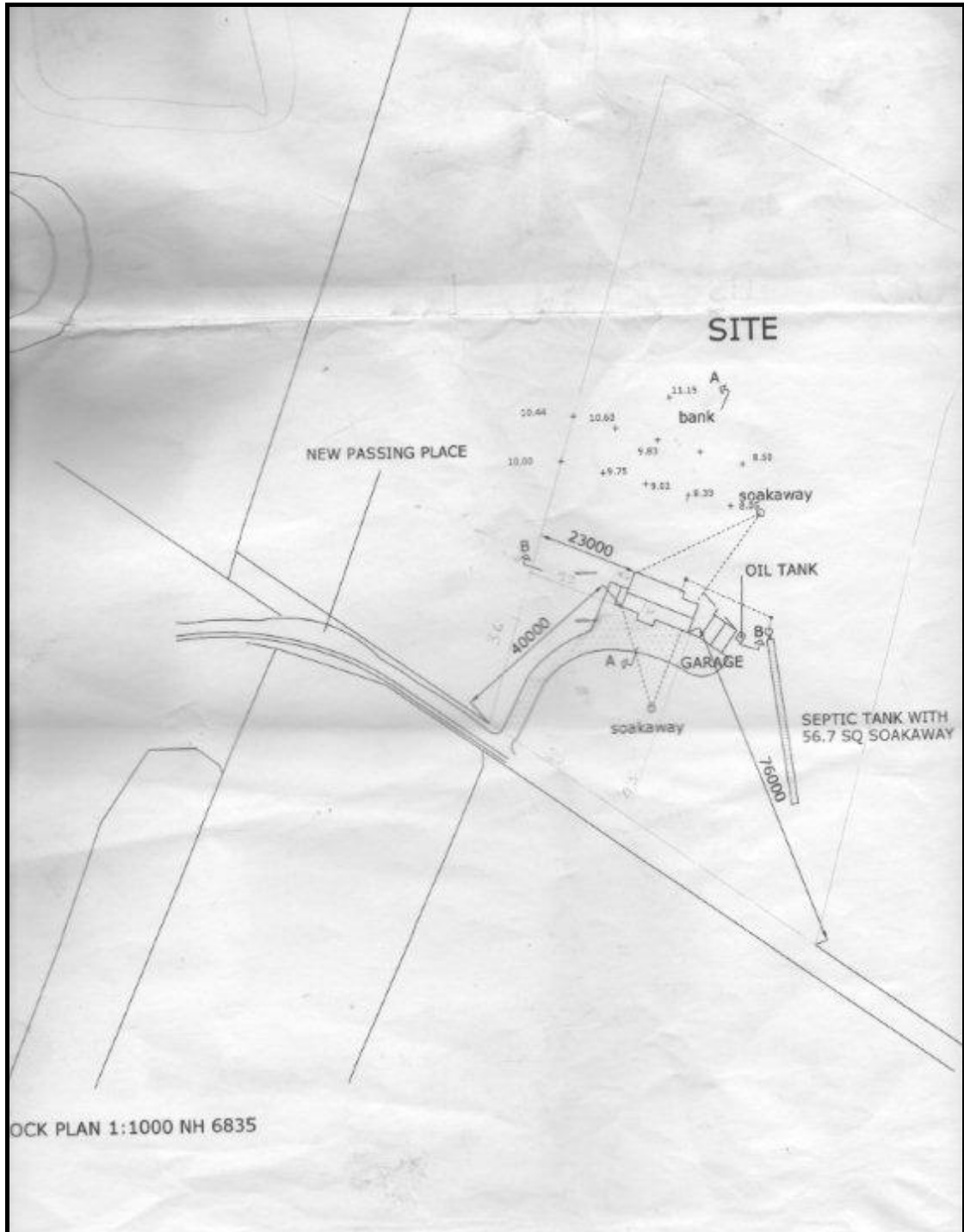
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**Figure 2 – Site Location (2) 1:5000**  
© Mr B Scobie.



**Figure 3 – Site Plan (2) 1:1000.**  
© Mr. B Scobie.





## 1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd on behalf of Mr. Brian Scobie in regard to a condition of planning as required as part of a planning application. The development site is a 'greenfield' site located at 200m SE of Gask House, Inverness-shire, Highland. The proposed development is to the SE of an archaeological site, of a ring-cairn.

The work was required as part of planning condition no.4 by Highland Council Planning Department (ref. 09/0088/REMIN), which stated the following:

*Prior to the commencement of development, a programme of archaeological work for the preservation and recording of any archaeological features affected by the proposed development, including a timetable for investigation, all in accordance with the attached specification, shall be submitted to and require the approval in writing of the Planning Authority. All arrangements thereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable for investigation.*

*Reason: To safeguard the archaeological interest of the site.*

A specification for the work was supplied to the client by the Highland Council Historic Environment Team (see Appendix 1).

## 2. BACKGROUND

The site is located east of the private road east of the public road from Inverarnie to Inverness. Access to the site is gained from the existing access track to the west of the development site. The development site is a 'greenfield' site within an area of arable pasture. An archaeological site of a ring-cairn lies to the northwest of the development area.

The following archaeological site is located to the Northwest of the development site:

1 – Mains of Gask  
HER: MHG 3476  
NMRS: NH63NE 10  
NGR: NH 6794 3585  
Site type: Ring-Cairn  
Status: Scheduled Ancient Monument

Recorded in HER and NMRS of: 'The ring-cairn is situated in undulating agricultural land above the west side of the valley, on a slight rise. The cairn is the largest of the Clava group, having a diameter of 88 feet. The kerb is almost complete though many of the stones have fallen outwards from their original positions. The largest stones are set on the south-west arc, varying between 4 feet 6 inches and 2 feet 9 inches high. Some of these have fallen but there is still an impressive length of kerbing of massive and closely set boulders towards the south side. The stones decrease in size towards the north-east and many of them only just project through the turf. Inside the kerb there remains 2 or 3 feet of cairn material mixed with earth, much disturbed and turf-covered. Through this there project two contiguous flat slabs which appear to be part of the east side of the inner circular setting. They are 27 feet from the outside of the kerb, so if the central area was concentric its diameter would be about 34 feet. Another stone which appears to be earthfast can be seen on the south but only 20 feet inside the kerb. Three upright stones belonging to a circle of monoliths survive. The dominating feature of the site is a thin flat slab standing on the west-south-west 17 feet from the kerb and opposite the largest stones. It is 11 feet in height, 9 feet 9 inches in width and only 9 inches



thick. Unlike this stone the other two monoliths on the east side are irregular boulders set on end, 3 feet and 5 feet high, and set 11 feet and 13 feet from the line of the kerb. On the south east side three fallen slabs, the longest 7 feet 6 inches, are spaced evenly between the upright stones and apparently lie where they have fallen, as also a slab on the north-west side. Part of an eighth monolith lies on the north-east and another large stone 6 feet long bearing three cupmarks (W Jolly 1882) lies against the kerb on the north-north-east. It appears to be part of a ninth monolith. A S Henshall, visited 8 April 1957; W Jolly 1882.

There are at least three cupped stones in the Gask concentric stone circles.

(1) A large slab of red sandstone 10 1/2 feet high by 10 ft. wide and 7 to 12 ins. thick stands erect in the S.W. quadrant. It bears eleven cups between 3 1/2 and 1 1/2 in dia., and 1/4" and 5/8" deep.

(2) In the middle circle, on the S.W. side stands a block of grey granite 3 1/2 feet high by 3 feet wide. It bears sixteen cups on the front face and a single cup on the left side 6 inches from the ground. (3) A flat recumbent slab of red sandstone in the outer circle a little west of the abode, and 9 yards west of a line drawn from the centre of the circle to the middle of the large slab of red sandstone bears three cup marks. The stone is about 4 feet long and the same broad. W Jolly 1882.

"The tallest stone at the south side of this circle of Gask, mentioned by Mr. Jolly (W Jolly 1882) as bearing cup marks seems to me to be simply a shaly sandstone flag of rough ripple-marked stratification, in some places roughly imitating cup markings." J Fraser 1884.

The remains of this ring cairn are as described by A S Henshall (1963). No cup-marks were seen on the tall stone at the south side of the cairn (W Jolly 1882, fig. 24) but the other two described were located. Visited by OS 5 September 1963.

A small clearance cairn has recently been carefully deposited on the boundary of the scheduled area, to the NW of the cairn. The cairn has a diameter of about 1m and seems to have been constructed to reflect the kerb-cairn tradition - with larger stones placed in a ring containing a more rubble-filled core. It is not known who built the cairn, but the cleared stones are presumed to have come from around the stone dyke rather than the main cairn itself. (KC 11/12/03).'

Past archaeological work has been conducted to the adjacent house to the NE of the current development in the form of a watching brief undertaken by the author in 2003 (Farrell 2003) which revealed no archaeological deposits or features. Survey work by the author (Farrell 2005) to the forestry to the South revealed no features close to the development area. In the wider area there have been recorded prehistoric hut-circles and field systems but most of these have been lost due to forestry operations.

A survey of maps held in the National Library of Scotland, indicates that the development site is indicated on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875 as an area of open ground in an enclosed field with some rough ground to the Southern boundary close to existing woodland. The adjacent ring-cairn is marked 'Stone circles'. The same is shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905, though the cairn is now marked 'Stone circle'. Same shown on OS map of 1965. Early historical maps do not provide enough detail for the development site.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological watching brief was to be conducted on areas where any new sub-surface ground works were to be carried out ie house plot, garage and access road and services. Topsoil was removed to an average depth of 35cm across the site.

The house site lies on a slight southeast facing slope, of arable pasture under grass for silage, with a natural ridge to N part of the site, bounded on all sides by post & wire fencing. There are no upstanding features on the site.

## **4. RESULTS**

The archaeological watching brief took place on the site on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2011. Weather during the work was slightly overcast with sunny periods and slight showers. Work on the house plot and garage plot was excavated using a 14-ton back-acting machine with a 1.6m wide straight-edged bucket.

Work conducted onsite was for the house plot and the area of the garage. A total area of 470.56m<sup>2</sup> was stripped of topsoil on average 35cm in depth across the site (to an area roughly 17.3m NNE by 27.2m WNW).

The topsoil and subsoil consisted of a loose light brown soil; it lay on top of loose soft yellow-orange-brown sandy silt natural with a large amount of angular sandstone, with patches of rotten-rock with small to medium rounded stones of granite with patches of mud-clay was revealed. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered on the site.

No monitoring of services was necessary, as road was only going to be stripped of turf with geo-textile being put down and level being brought up with quarry gravel and scalplings, proposed passing place in area of ground already heavily disturbed by existing drainage ditch and trees; electricity and water supply was already insitu – to be taken from existing access road which had previously been excavated, and location for trench for electricity to house from gate was less than 20m in length from edge of house plot, with percentage left on balance would be probably be uneventful given area excavated had no indication of any archaeological deposits or features and that only a narrow trench would be required.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The archaeological watching brief conducted on this site to an area of c471m<sup>2</sup> revealed no archaeological features or deposits. The map and documentary evidence available indicate that the development site has previously been an area of arable pasture. Although there are archaeological remains in the wider vicinity of the development site there was no indication of it being an area of archaeological activity, though the 'agricultural improvement' could have removed archaeological deposits. A pile of stones by the existing access gate could be an indication that the field has recently been replanted, therefore requiring ploughing and harrowing, the field at the time of the watching brief was under grass for silage.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is no further archaeological work recommended for this site as comprehensive monitoring work has taken place and no archaeological deposits or features were identified. The desk based assessment has also been carried out by the author and although there is recorded archaeology in the vicinity of the development site (ring-cairn); no associated features were identified within the development site.

## **7. REFERENCES**

Farrell, S (2003) Report of Archaeological Watching Brief 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003 Mains of Gask, Strathnairn. Unpublished report – copy held by HCHER EHG.931.

Farrell, S (2005) Report of Archaeological Desktop & Walkover Survey Inverarnie Woods, Farr, Highland. Unpublished report – copy held by HCHER EHG.1305.

Highland Council HER entries MHG 3476.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE entries NH63NE 10.

### Maps Consulted

1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map 1:10,560 Inverness-shire sheet 20 surveyed 1867-70 published 1875.

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map 1:10,560 Inverness-shire sheet 20 published 1905 revised 1902-3.

Ordnance Survey sheet NH6836 1:2500 of 1965 .

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

- Mr Brian Scobie;
- Mr Kenny Adam of Culloden Contracts for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Historic Environment Team;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

## **9. ARCHIVE**

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:

- Notebook of results
- Copy of this report

A set of digital images showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Historic Environment Record. Digital images used in this report have been deposited with Highland Council HER on disc as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

## **10. DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND**

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*. OASIS report no. 101463.

Plate 1 – View of house and garage plot before excavation facing NW.



Plate 2 – View of house and garage plot before excavation facing E.



Plate 3 – View of house and garage plot during excavation facing NW.



Plate 4 – View of house and garage plot during excavation facing NW.



Plate 5 – View of house and garage plot upon excavation facing NW.



Plate 6 – View of house and garage plot upon excavation facing SE.



## Appendix 1 – HCHET Specification



### HIGHLAND COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

#### **New House and Garage to SE of Gask House, Inverness** (09/00088/REMIN) NGR 268141 835836

#### **1) Summary**

This project may impact on valuable features of historic and archaeological importance. In view of the archaeological potential/sensitivity of the site, HCAU advised that archaeological mitigation is required. The implementation of this brief will meet the concerns raised.

This brief is for a Watching Brief which will enable any discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently as they appear with minimum delay or disruption to the development. If significant deposits are encountered, recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development must be made.

This brief has been produced for Mr B Scobie who will be responsible for the work and costs, including any tendering and contractual arrangements. This brief must be read with reference to the HCAU Development Guidance that sets out in detail who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Development Guidance is available on our webpage at [www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology) or a printed copy is available from this office on request.

#### **2) Archaeological Background**

The application site lies in a wider area where prehistoric remains have been identified. Specifically a large ring cairn of the Clava group lies to the west. This cairn is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Historic Scotland ref: 4651). There is potential that unrecorded buried remains survive within the application site and will be impacted by the proposed development.

#### **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) Methodology**

All fieldwork must be informed by a desk-based assessment undertaken in advance of the start of works.

*Fieldwork*

Archaeological monitoring (a Watching Brief) is required during all site groundworks for this application. Topsoil stripping of the building footprints, the access road and all services must be monitored by an archaeologist so that any buried archaeological features can be identified, recorded and/or appropriate mitigation put in place to ensure their preservation.

All recovered artefacts and ecofacts must be subject to a programme of post-excavation analysis and the results incorporated into a final report.

The Archaeological Contractor must refer to the minimum standard requirements as laid out in HCAU Development Guidance. This brief itself is not comprehensive or definitive - tendering Archaeological Contractors will need to determine for themselves the methodology that will deliver the required product. This should be laid down in a Project Design (or Written Scheme of Investigation) and agreed with HCAU in advance of the start of site works. The start of archaeological work will be subject to the submission and approval of this document.

#### **5) Schedule & Monitoring**

The Archaeological Contractor is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with HCAU 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 HCAU by the Archaeological Contractor.

The Archaeological Contractor must make a short progress report (by telephone) to HCAU for every week of fieldwork undertaken. 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 Archaeological Contractor immediately to the applicant and HCAU. 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.

#### **6) Products**

Following completion of the fieldwork, an archive and report will be produced and disseminated according to the standards set out in the HCAU Development Guidance. The report should describe the nature of the field work undertaken; the conditions and limitations within which the work was carried-out; the results that were obtained and recommendations for mitigation and/or further work, as appropriate.



**All work will be undertaken according to the Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.**

**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. Where work is not carried out in full within that time, a revised specification may be issued.**

**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*

*Monday, 23 May 2011*

[www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology)

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## **Appendix 2 – Photograph Register**

- 1 – View of house plot before excavation facing SE.
  - 2 – View of the new neighbours!
  - 3 – View of house plot before excavation facing NW.
  - 4 – View of house plot before excavation facing NW.
  - 5 – View of house plot before excavation facing E.
  - 6 – View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 7 – View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 8 – View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 9 – View of site upon removal of turf facing SE.
  - 10 - View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 11 – View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 12 – View of excavation in progress facing NW.
  - 13 – View of house plot upon excavation facing SE.
  - 14 – View of house plot upon excavation facing SE.
  - 15 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NW.
  - 16 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NW.
  - 17 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NW.
  - 18 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NW.
  - 19 – View of house plot upon excavation facing SE.
  - 20 – View of house plot upon excavation facing SE.
-

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Highland
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Land 200m SE of Gask House, Inverarnie
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	GAI 11
<b>PARISH:</b>	Daviot and Dunlichity
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Stuart Farrell
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	N/a
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	N/a
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NH 68141 35836
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	May 2011
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	May 2011
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	n/a
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was conducted in May 2011 for a new house, garage and associated services to the south-east of the site of Gask Henge (NMRS NH63NE 10). Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits to the area of the house plot and garage, the site lying in an area of improved pasture.  Full Report submitted to HCHER and NMRS.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	n/a
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Mr B Scobie
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alba Archaeology Ltd, Newtonhill, Lentrán, Inverness, IV3 6RN
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	fredged@aol.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	To be deposited with NMRS