

Site Code: EWF07
Client: AMEC

Edinbane Wind Farm, Skye

Marking-out of sites and Archaeological Watching Brief

Interim Report – Borrow Pits 1 & 2

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Contents

1. Introduction and Background
2. Objectives and Methodology
3. Results
4. Conclusions and Recommendations
5. Sources
6. Acknowledgements

Illustrations

Figure 1 Borrow Pit 2, Test Pit 1

Figure 2 Borrow Pit 2, Test Pit 2

Figure 3 Borrow Pit 1, Test Pit 1

Figure 4 Borrow Pit 1, Test Pit 2

Summary

In August 2007, AMEC commissioned Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd to undertake a marking out exercise and an archaeological watching over the site of a proposed wind-farm development at Edinbane, Skye.

This report constitutes the interim report detailing the excavation of test pits within Borrow Pits associated with the proposed development.

While one known archaeological site, Site One, lies close the Borrow Pit 1, and was marked out with a protective barrier, no finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered during the excavation of the test pits.

No further archaeological work is recommended for this phase of the development.

1. Introduction and Background

In August 2007, AMEC commissioned Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd. to carry out an archaeological marking out exercise and watching brief in response to Highland Council's Brief for archaeological work over a proposed wind-farm development at Edinbane, Skye. The development occupies a steep hill with a dense covering of heather, which combined with poor weather conditions made the task of locating and marking out archaeological sites a challenging one. The previously identified sites within the development area consist of the remains of sheiling huts.

This interim report serves to present the results of the work carried out in association with the two Borrow Pits, as identified on Drawing Number 6114-700-ca-038 A, produced by AMEC.

A full report detailing all archaeological work undertaken will be presented in due course.

2. Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of the watching brief as stipulated in Highland Council's Brief are:

- To identify the location, nature and extent of any features or objects of archaeological importance that would be damaged or destroyed by this development.
- To propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible, and recording where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified. These will need to be agreed with Highland Council Archaeology Unit.
- To make sure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the development project.

To this end:-

- All topsoil will be removed to an archaeological horizon to the satisfaction of the archaeologist on site by means of a back acting machine using a straight-edged or ditching bucket.
- All archaeological features and deposits will be fully excavated by hand and recorded by using *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. All plans, sections, profiles and elevations will be drawn at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate. Drawings will be made in pencil on permanent drafting film. Plans, sections and elevations will be annotated with depths as appropriate. All features and sections will have photographs taken to produce a photographic record consisting of digital photographs.
- All work will be undertaken by Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd and will meet those guidelines stipulated by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999).

Operational Factors

The archaeological contractor will at all times follow and confirm to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other various regulations and the Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The Fieldwork for this section of the project was carried out on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th September in extremely poor weather conditions, with driving rain and mist hampering visibility, by Nick Garry for Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd.

3. Results

Watching Brief

Two test pits were excavated within each of the two Borrow Pit locations, as illustrated on Drawing Number 6114-700-ca-038 A, provided by AMEC.

One archaeological site, known as Site One, had previously been identified adjacent to Borrow Pit 1 (Wildgoose 2006), and is noted in the Brief for archaeological work issued by Highland Council. The site is a ruinous farmstead located at NG 3441 4396, close to Borrow Pit 1. As requested in the Archaeological Brief this site has marked out with a buffer zone by means of a protective barrier which should protect not only the farmstead but also the setting in which it sits, crucial to this being the crag beneath which it is situated.

No additional archaeology was encountered within any of the test pits.

Date: 05/09/2007

Borrow Pit Two - Test Pit One. 2.9m x 3.9m x 2.2m (depth)

Map reference: NG 3628 4776 Elevation 202m G.P.S. Accuracy 17m

Weather conditions driving rain and poor visibility.

Local conditions made it impossible to transport the flat bucket to the site and a tooth bucket was required to ensure safe transport of the JCB. Subsequently, the process of excavation was taken at a slower pace and with additional attention to the possibility that archaeology may be disturbed during excavation. Figure 1

0.45m Tree Roots.

1.1m Peat.

1.9m Soft Peat.

2m Gravel – weathered rock.

2.1m Rock

2.2m Bottomed

Conclusion: While there was no archaeology evident in the Test Pit or its immediate area, a small upstanding circular stone lined feature was noted East of Pit Two, at NG 36352 47935, outside of the Borrow Pit boundary.

Date: 05/09/2007

Borrow Pit Two, Test Pit Two. 2.8m x 3.7m x 2m (depth)

Map reference: NG 3631 4785 Elevation 199m G.P.S. Accuracy 6m

Weather conditions same as at Borrow Pit Two, Test Pit One.

Tooth Bucket used. Figure 2

0.8m Peat

1.3m Weathered surface of gravel rock and peat.

1.7m Rock

2.0m Bottomed

Conclusion: No archaeology was evident in the Test Pit.

Date: 06/09/2007 Borrow Pit One, Pit One. 2.5m x 3.9m x 3.3m (depth) Map Reference: NG 3442 4403 Elevation 106m G.P.S. accuracy 5m Weather conditions over cast but dry. Flat Bucket used. Figure 3	
0.5m	Fibrous peat, very soft vegetation.
0.8m	Soft Peat
1.0m	Roots from surrounding trees
1.6m	Peat and water channels
2.7m	Peat and glacial gravels.
3.2m	Glacial gravel
3.3m	Rock
Conclusion: No Archaeology was evident in the Test Pit.	

Date: 06/09/2007 Borrow Pit One, Pit Two. 2.3m x 3.6m x 3.3m (depth) Map Reference: NG 3456 4418 Elevation 111m G.P.S. accuracy 10m Flat Bucket used. Figure 4	
0.5m	Vegetation and Peat
1.4m	Peat
1.5m	Clay, sub-round glacial rock
3.1m	Water seepage
3.3m	Rock and water
Conclusion: No archaeology was evident in the Test Pit.	



Figure 1: Borrow Pit 2, Test Pit 1



Figure 2: Borrow Pit 2, Test Pit 2



Figure 3: Borrow Pit 1, Test Pit 1



Figure 4: Borrow Pit 1, Test Pit 2

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The test pitting did not in itself highlight or indicate the possible location of archaeology within the Borrow Pits. However, the identification of one new feature outside of the boundary of Borrow Pit Two, and one previously recorded archaeological site, known as Site One, does require that the Borrow Pit extractions take place with care and sensitivity.

Site One has been clearly marked out with a protective buffer zone around it, and should not therefore suffer any damage during any further excavations at Borrow Pit 1. An on-site visit was held at Site One between Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd and David Minchin of AMEC. In discussing this site it has been stated that Borrow Pit 1 and its access track will be kept a suitable distance away from the site so as to not interfere with it setting nor its present condition.

No recommendation for further archaeological work is made for the two Borrow Pits associated with this proposed wind-farm development.

5. Acknowledgements

The staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit
David Minchin and Nigel Moore, AMEC

6. Sources

Institute of Field Archaeologists

1999 *By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading: IFA*

Wildgoose, M.

2006 *Archaeological Assessment of Proposed sites of Borrow Pits 1 and 2.*
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