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## Archaeological Report



## Borrowston Croft Thrumster, Caithness

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# Archaeological Report:

## Borrowston Croft Thrumster, Caithness

<b>Report No.</b>	HAS080303
<b>Project code</b>	HAS-THB07
<b>Client</b>	D Cowie
<b>Planning Ref</b>	
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### Summary

*A watching brief was carried out on site clearance and excavations for foundations, services and drainage at Thrumster, Caithness. No archaeological finds or features were identified and no further work is recommended.*

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## Acknowledgements

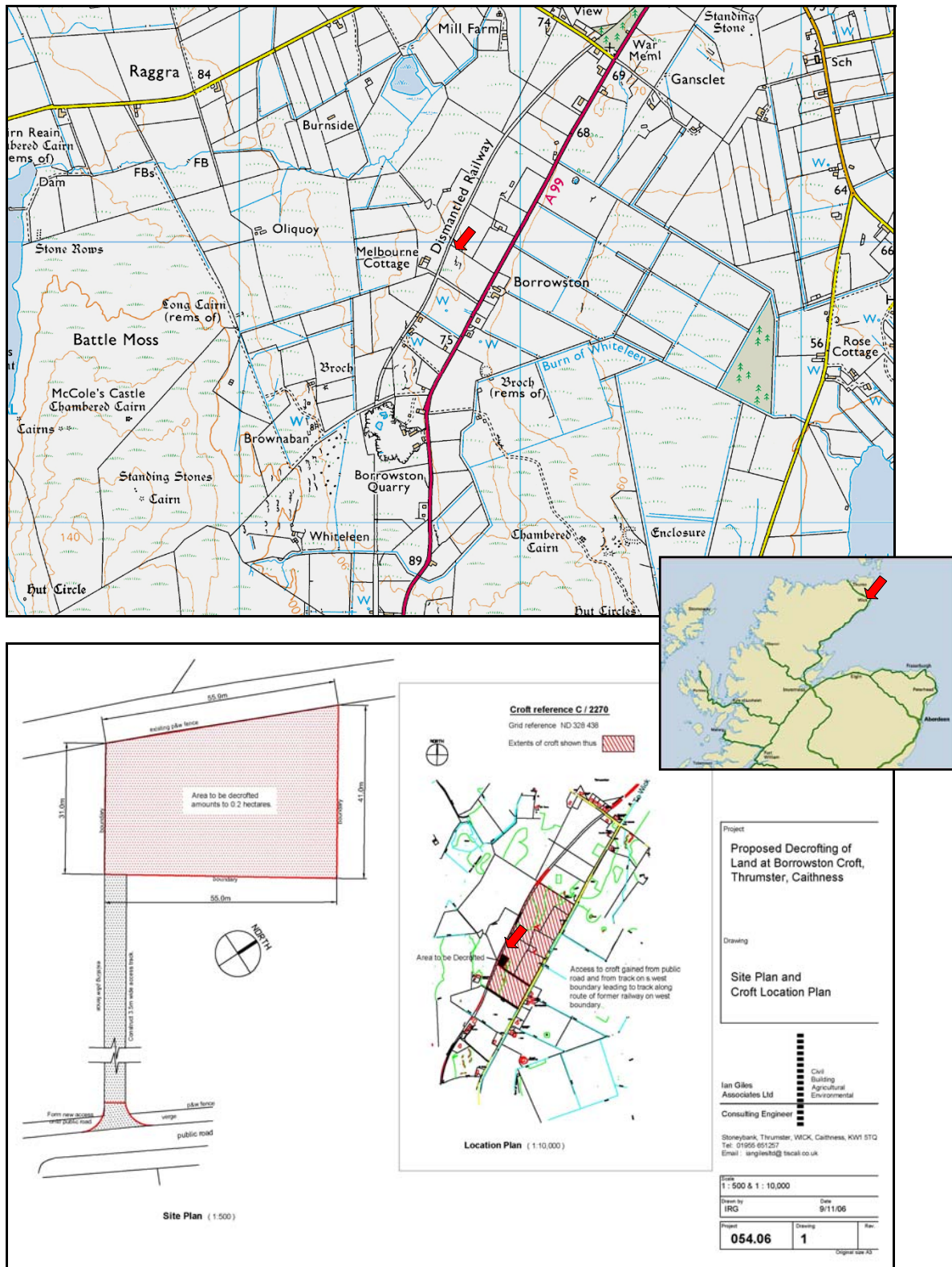
The fieldwork and photography was carried out by Paul Humphreys; the report was prepared by Paul Humphreys and edited by John Wood. We wish to thank David Cowie for commissioning this work and for his assistance. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217.

## Introduction

Planning consent for the erection of a single dwelling and garage for Mr D Cowie, required a watching brief be conducted during all topsoil stripping and trenching works. This report describes that work and its outcome.

## Location

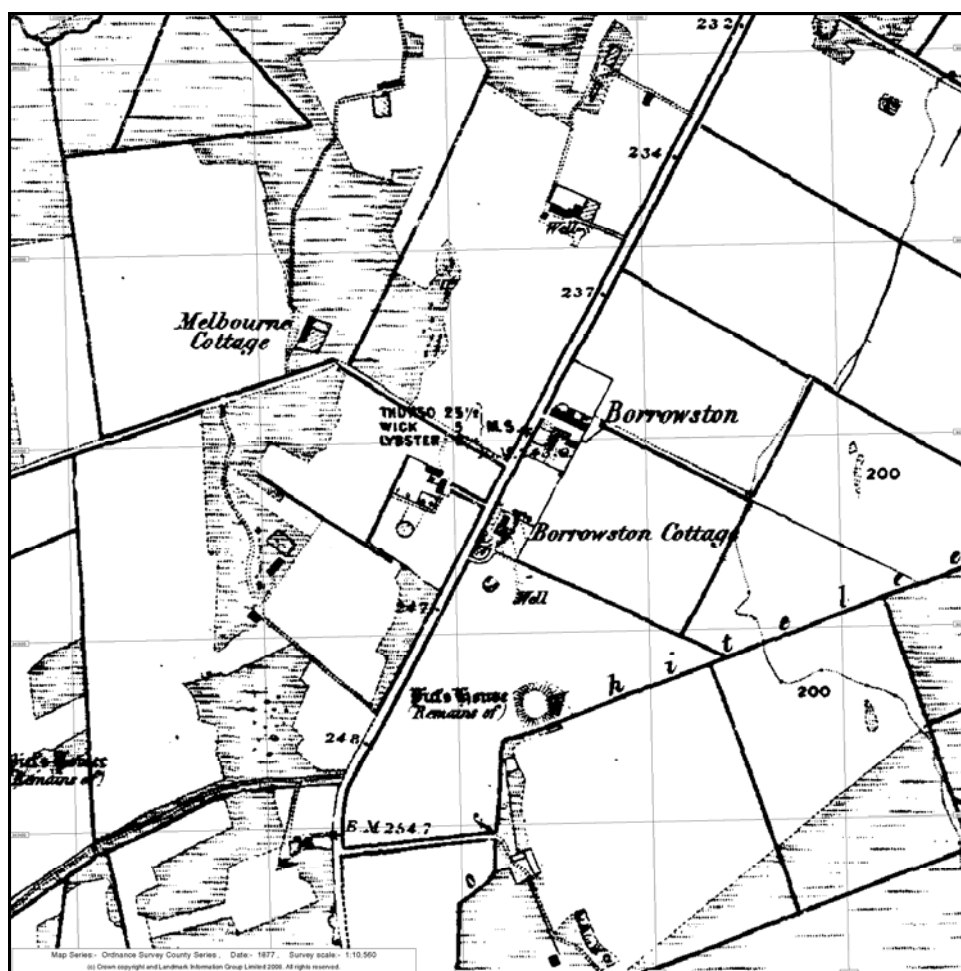
The site is located at Borrowston Croft, Thrumster, Caithness (ND 3276 4400) at 82m above sea level in an area of improved pasture.



## Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains; and to preserve these where possible and record where necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.
- To ensure that any artefacts or human remains are dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and current Historic Scotland policy guidance.

## Site details and archaeological background



**Figure 2 Extract from 1st Edition OS 1:10560 Map (1877)**

*Derived from digital version by Landmark Information Group. Modern OS grid superimposed.*

An archaeological watching brief was requested for this site because there was potential for finds or features of interest to be discovered during site works. Caithness generally is rich in archaeology and the Thrumster area is particularly so. Although no sites are recorded within the development area itself, and close to the site the only recorded sites appear to be disused quarries and associated buildings, two



brochs, as well as other prehistoric features are to be found within 500m. Along the north-west side of the site runs the line of a former light railway.

Although now in pasture, evidence of rig and furrow ploughing indicates that it was formally arable land (see Plate 1, below). The area is shown as open unfenced ground on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2)

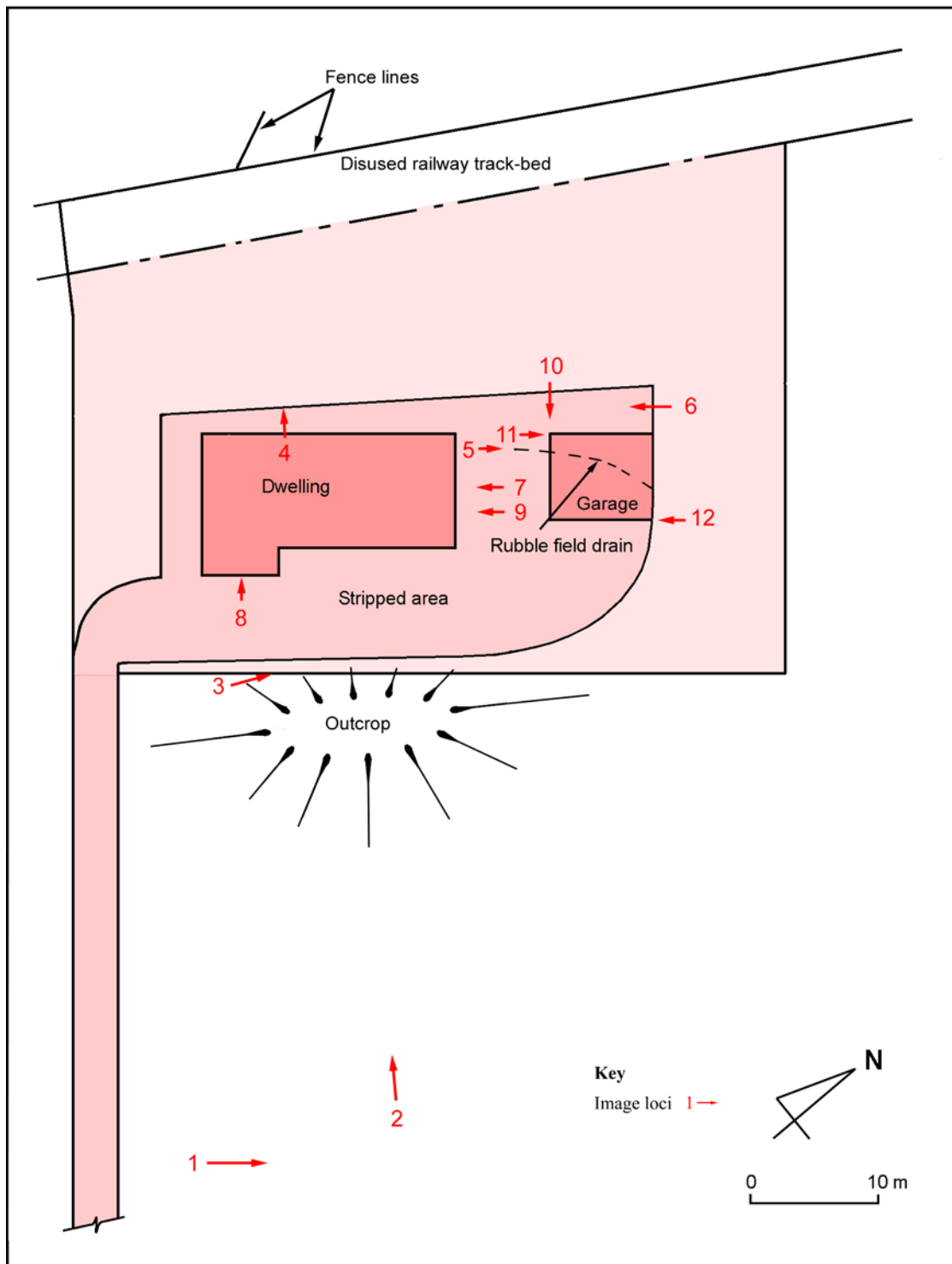


Figure 3 Sketch plan of site showing photo locations.

## Method

### ***Desk Based Assessment***

A check of all relevant archaeological / historical records, maps and aerial photographs was undertaken as specified. No recorded sites or features would be affected by the scheme.

### ***Watching Brief***

Working in co-ordination with the contractor, a watching brief was carried out on all ground-works. The site stripping and foundation trenches were done on 25 June 2007; the drainage and soakaway were completed in late February 2008.

Excavation took place under archaeological supervision, using a mechanical back-acting digger fitted with a straight-edged bucket. Trenches were cleaned by hand where necessary to clarify any possible archaeology, but no features or artefacts were recorded.

No archaeological excavation was undertaken as part of this work beyond the minimum necessary to achieve the objectives above.

## Observations and Discussion

### ***Site stripping***

The house site is located to the west of a flagstone outcrop the bedrock dipping slightly to the west (fig 1, plate2).

Stripping of the site revealed nothing of note; the soil profile of c 30 cm of undifferentiated top soil overlying whitish clay till that thinned towards the outcrop (plates 3 and 4). The only feature noted during excavation work was a short section of rubble field drain (plate 5).

### ***Foundation Trenches***

Cutting of the foundation trenches revealed nothing of note; the excavation for the septic tank and soak-away was delayed until after house construction is well advanced to avoid heavy lifts over drain runs.

### ***Drains and Soak-away***

The watching brief was finally completed in late February 2008 with the excavations for the drains and soak-away. The soak-away was cut into solid rock; shallow plough soil overlying this contained only 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds, apparently from manuring.



**Plate 1: Relic rig and furrow**



**Plate 2: Flagstone outcrop**





**Plate 3: Bed rock detail**



**Plate 4: Soil profile**





**Plate 5: Rubble field drain**



**Plate 6: Stripped garage area**





**Plate 7: Stripped dwelling area**



**Plate 8: Foundations dwelling 1**





**Plate 9: Foundations dwelling 2**



**Plate 10: Foundations garage 1**





**Plate 11: Foundations garage 2**



**Plate 12: Foundations garage 3**



## Conclusions and Recommendations

A watching brief was carried out on the site of a proposed dwelling and shed for Mr Cowie (Site code HAS-TBH07) in accordance with WSI HAS070601. Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed and no further work is proposed.

## Appendix 1: Index of Photographs

Copies of photographs are included on the enclosed CDROM. Photo locations are shown in Figure 3 on page 6.

Photo No.	Notes	Taken by	Date
1	Relic rig and furrow	PDH	22/06/2007
2	Flagstone outcrop	PDH	22/06/2007
3	Bed rock detail	PDH	22/06/2007
4	Soil profile	PDH	25/06/2007
5	Rubble field drain	PDH	25/06/2007
6	Stripped garage area	PDH	30/06/2007
7	Stripped dwelling area	PDH	25/06/2007
8	Foundations dwelling 1	PDH	25/06/2007
9	Foundations dwelling 2	PDH	25/06/2007
10	Foundations garage 1	PDH	25/06/2007
11	Foundations garage 2	PDH	25/06/2007
12	Foundations garage 3	PDH	25/06/2007