

# West Coast Archaeological Services

## Kilmuir Water Treatment Works

### Trotternish, Isle of Skye

## Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

<b>On Behalf of:</b>	Scottish Water
<b>National Grid Reference (NGR)</b>	NG 39620 68670
<b>WCAS Report No:</b>	66/KIL/17
<b>OASIS No:</b>	westcoas1-302598
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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was required by Scottish Water in respect of the construction of a new water treatment plant and associated developments on land to the east of Kilmuir, Trotternish, Isle of Skye (Planning ref. 12/03087/FUL).
- 1.2 The programme of archaeological works was specified by the Highland Council Historic Environment Team in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011). The watching brief was requested in order to identify the presence of any surviving archaeological features uncovered during development.
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017 on a small area located on a fairly steep slope on the south side of a hut circle for the siting of a tank. The watching brief was required due to the site being immediately adjacent to the hut circle; digging was to take place within one metre of the edge of the hut circle. Topsoil was relatively shallow across the area stripped. No finds or features were uncovered.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The development is located approximately 0.9km to the east of Balgown, Trotternish, Isle of Skye (**Figure 1**).
- 2.2 This work is part of ongoing improvements at the Kilmuir Water Treatment Works. The Highland Council Historic Environment Team was consulted about the proposed works and recommended an archaeological watching brief. The requirement for this watching brief came as a result of the site lying within close proximity to the well-preserved remains of a prehistoric hut circle and the more ephemeral remains of a possible prehistoric cairn. In 2012, a field evaluation at the cairn site and a watching brief near the hut circle failed to recover any significant additional evidence to support the initial interpretation and potential function of the two archaeological features (Birch 2012).

## **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological works were:
  - i) to monitor ground-breaking works associated with excavation of the rising main
  - ii) to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains prior to their destruction

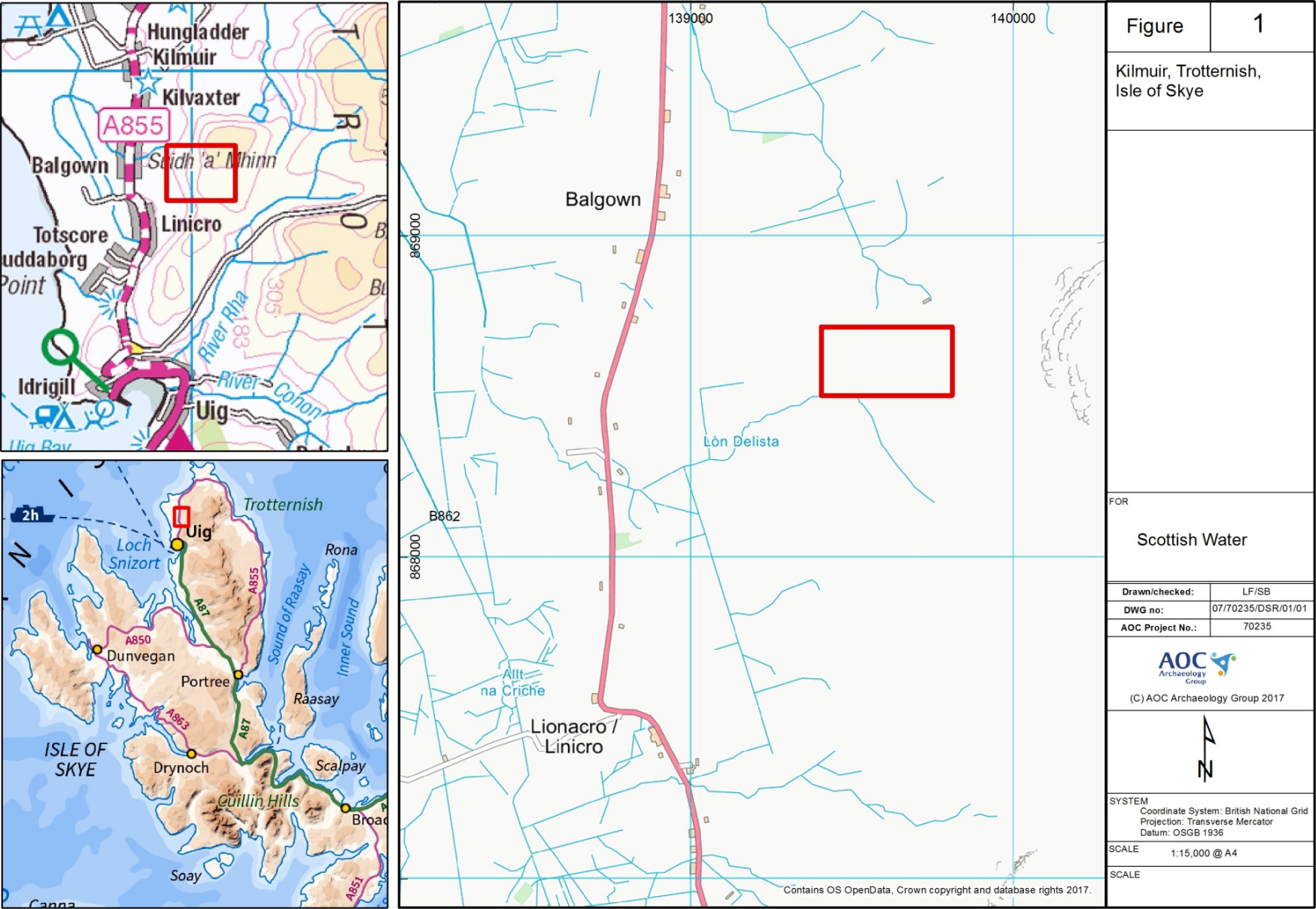


Figure 1: Location of the site

- iii) to remove by hand any overburden in order to expose the archaeological deposits
- iv) to excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
- v) to sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating
- vi) to liaise with the client in the event of significant archaeological features and /or small finds being unearthed as to the most appropriate response for safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording;
- vii) to make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development
- viii) to make recommendations for post-excavation work
- ix) to report on the results of the watching brief

## **4.0 WATCHING BRIEF**

### **4.1 Methodology**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken for the initial groundworks at the locations of a new water tank and site compound (**Figure 2**). It comprised archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping of the designated areas. The watching brief included the excavation of any archaeological features encountered, in order to establish the extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological features impacted by these works.
- 4.1.2 The ground breaking works were by means of a mechanical excavator equipped with a **smooth-bladed** ditching bucket. Excavation was in shallow units/spits. All machine excavation was guided by an experienced field archaeologist. Fieldwork was recorded by written and photographic means and all features were recorded in accordance with standard practice.

### **4.2 Results**

- 4.2.1 Fieldwork was carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Weather conditions consisted of high winds and driving rain. Archaeological visibility was, however, good.
- 4.2.2 The compound area had been previously stripped of a thin layer of topsoil (**Plates 1-2**) and there were no requirements for further excavation. The compound site was inspected by the archaeologist with no archaeological features being observed. The site is located adjacent to a previously recorded post-medieval dyke, which had not been compromised during the topsoil stripping.

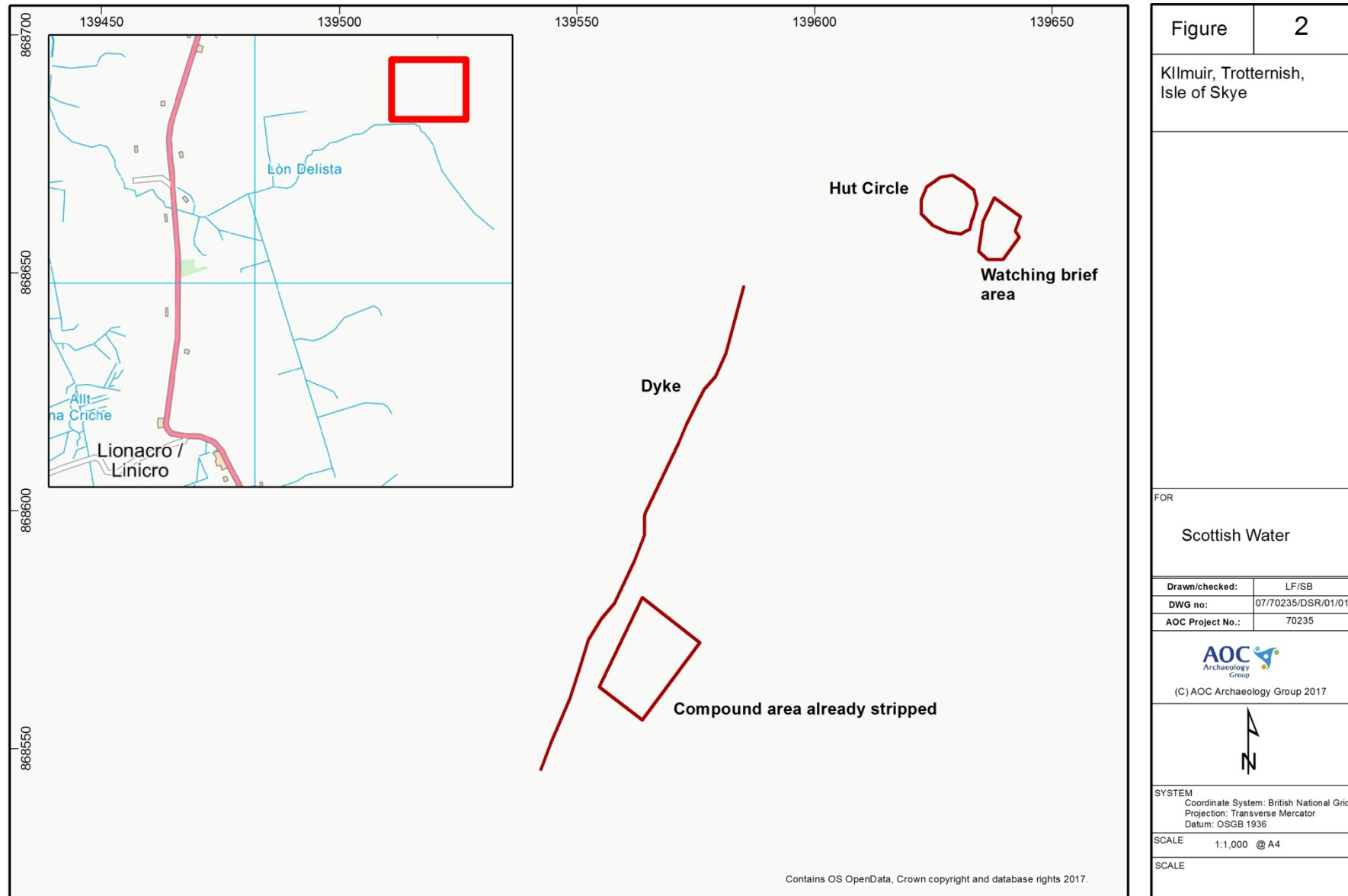


Figure 2: Location of the watching brief area and compound site



- 4.3.3 A small area situated on a fairly steeply sloping bank (**Plate 3**) and measuring approximately 11m x 7m to the southeast of the hut circle was stripped under close archaeological supervision. Topsoil stripping came within 1m of the hut circle in places. The topsoil comprised dark brown loam, which varied in depth from about 0.10m at the base of the bank, adjacent to the hut circle, to 0.25m at the top of the bank. The subsoil consisted of orange/brown compact silty sand, with pockets of clay (**Plate 4**). No archaeological features or finds were observed.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The hut circle had been marked out with flags prior to the topsoil stripping. It is recommended that heras fencing be erected during the water tank construction works to protect the hut circle from being inadvertently compromised.



**Plate 1:** The area that had already been stripped for the site huts, looking N





*Plate 2: The area that had already been stripped for the site huts, looking NW*



*Plate 3: The location of the tank site (indicated by the people) with the hut circle to their left above the road, looking N*





*Plate 4: The area that had already been stripped for the site huts, looking S*

## 6.0 REFERENCES

**Birch, S.** 2012. *Kilmuir Water Treatment Works, Trotternish, Skye Archaeological Watching Brief and Field Evaluation*. Unpublished report: West Coast Archaeological Services.

**Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)**, 2014. *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. Reading: CIfA

**Scottish Government.** 2011. *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology*.

**Scottish Government.** 2014. *Scottish Planning Policy*.

**APPENDIX 1: List of Photographs**

<b>Photo No.</b>	<b>Site No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>Date</b>
1		Area for the site huts, which had been stripped prior to the WB visit	N	08/11/2017
2		An area that was under consideration for stripping (subsequently decided not to strip)	E	08/11/2017
3		Area for the site huts, which had been stripped prior to the WB visit	W	08/11/2017
4		Area for the site huts, which had been stripped prior to the WB visit	NW	08/11/2017
5		Hut circle and tank area prior to stripping	N	08/11/2017
6		Hut circle and tank area prior to stripping	NW	08/11/2017
7		Tank area post-stripping	S	08/11/2017
8		Tank area post-stripping	NW	08/11/2017
9		Tank area post-stripping	NNW	08/11/2017
10		Tank area post-stripping	NNW	08/11/2017