

**Carse Hub, Muirton Basin, Inverness, IV3 8EX
Data Structure Report on an
Archaeological Watching Brief
(Highland Council Planning application 18/05196/FUL)**



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CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
3	THE WATCHING BRIEF	7
4	CONCLUSIONS	7
5	REFERENCES	8
6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
	APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS	8

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Excavation commencing on Test Pit 5

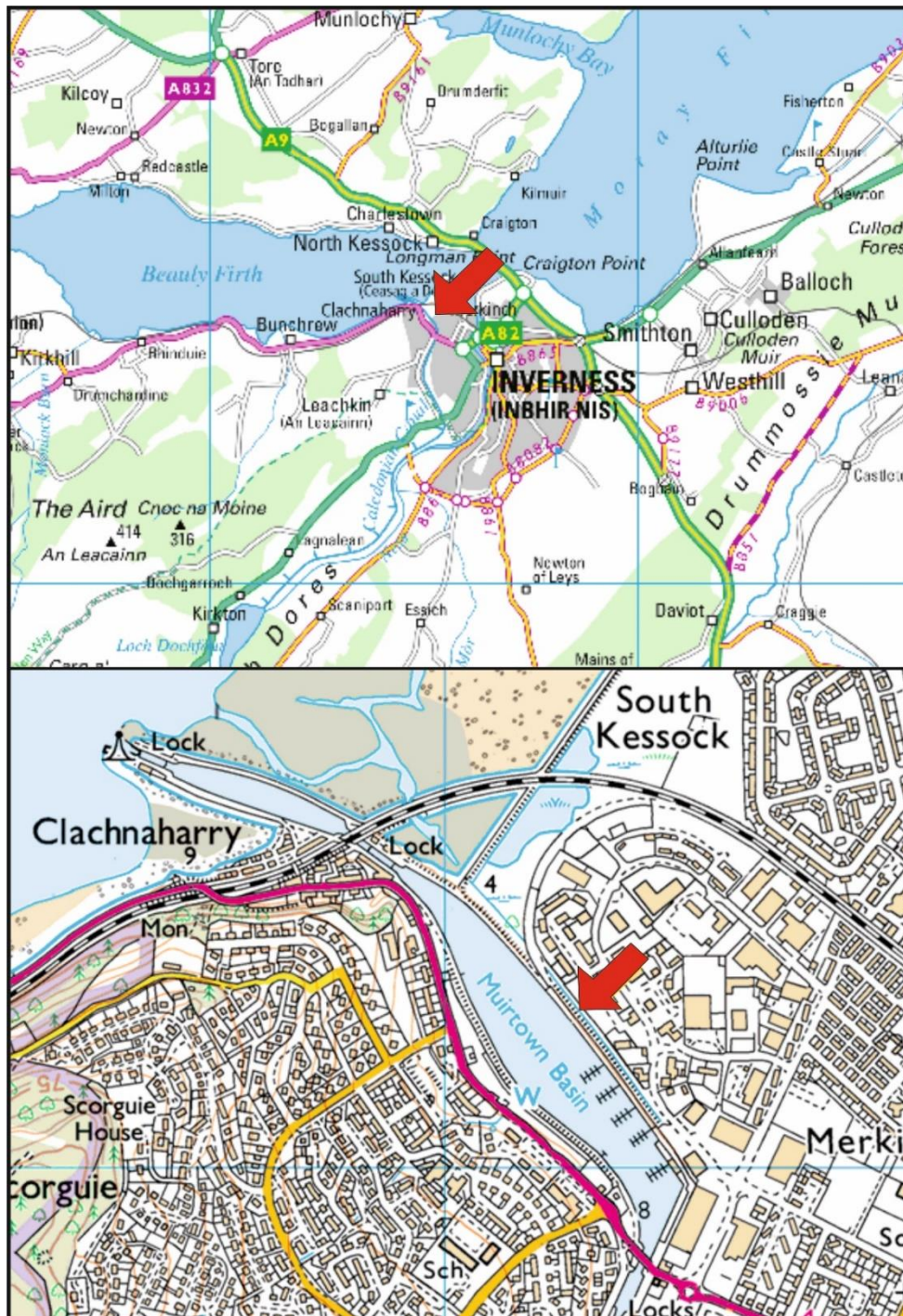
Illus 1	Location plan (<i>Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019</i>)	3
Illus 2	Site plan showing proposed development (<i>copyright Scottish Canals</i>)	4
Illus 3	Map of archaeological sites on HES database CANMORE (<i>copyright HES</i>)	6
Illus 4	Map of archaeological sites on Highland Council HER database showing structures to be impacted by the proposed works (<i>copyright Highland Council</i>)	6
Illus 5	Plan showing test pit locations (<i>copyright Scottish Canals</i>)	7

SUMMARY

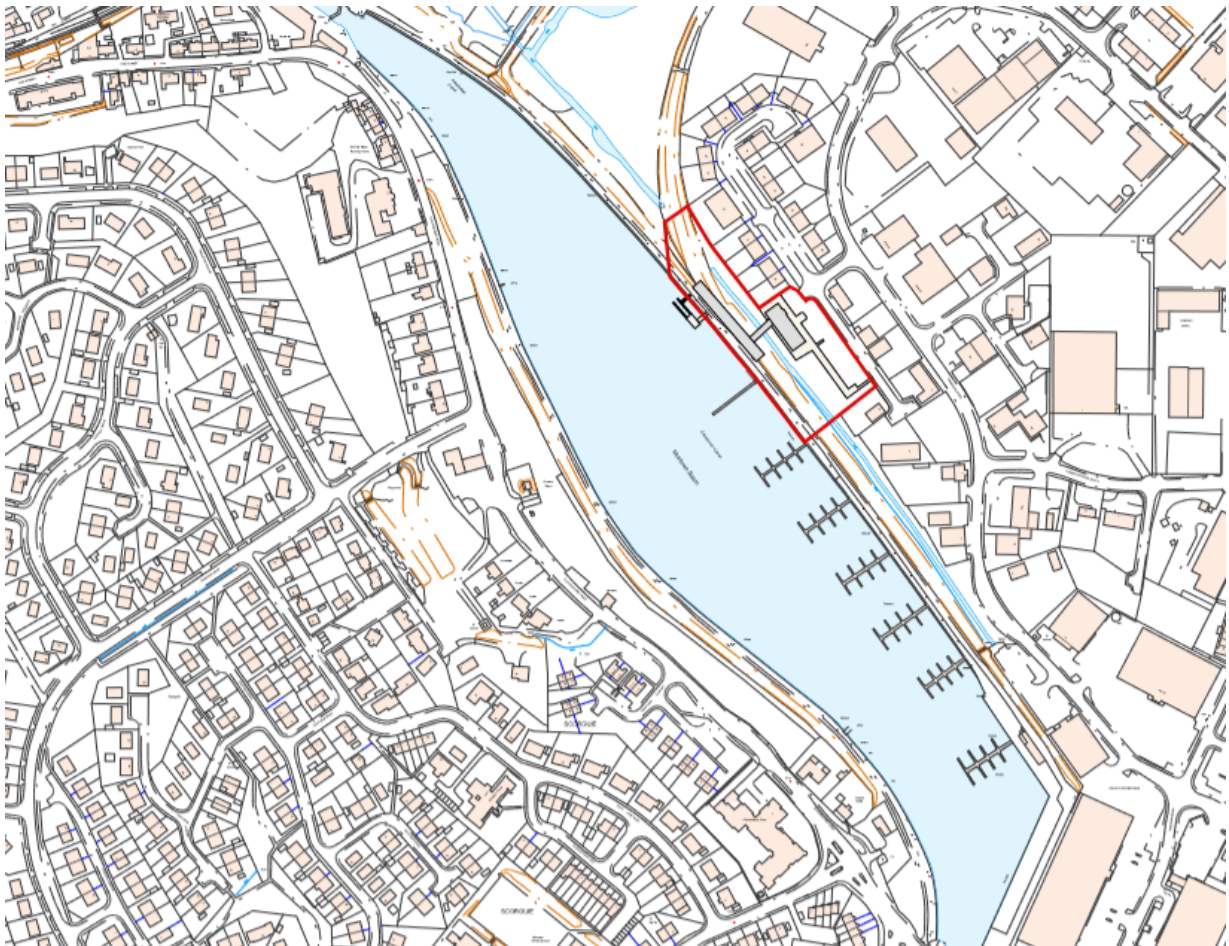
On February 5th and 6th, 2019, five test pits were dug to ascertain subsoil compaction and composition in advance of construction works. Close inspection of the pits did not reveal any archaeological finds or features.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the NE side of Muirton Basin, Inverness. It is centred on NGR NH 65664 45974, at 0-5m OD in the parish of Inverness and Bona.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by LDN Architects for Scottish Canals. Highland Council Planning application 18/05196/FUL for erection of office/multipurpose building and boat users/store building with cafe linked by foot bridge and formation of footpaths is under consideration.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement (HESPS) which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.



Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)



Illus 2 Site plan showing proposed development (*copyright Scottish Canals*)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore (HES) were consulted online within 1km of the proposed development.

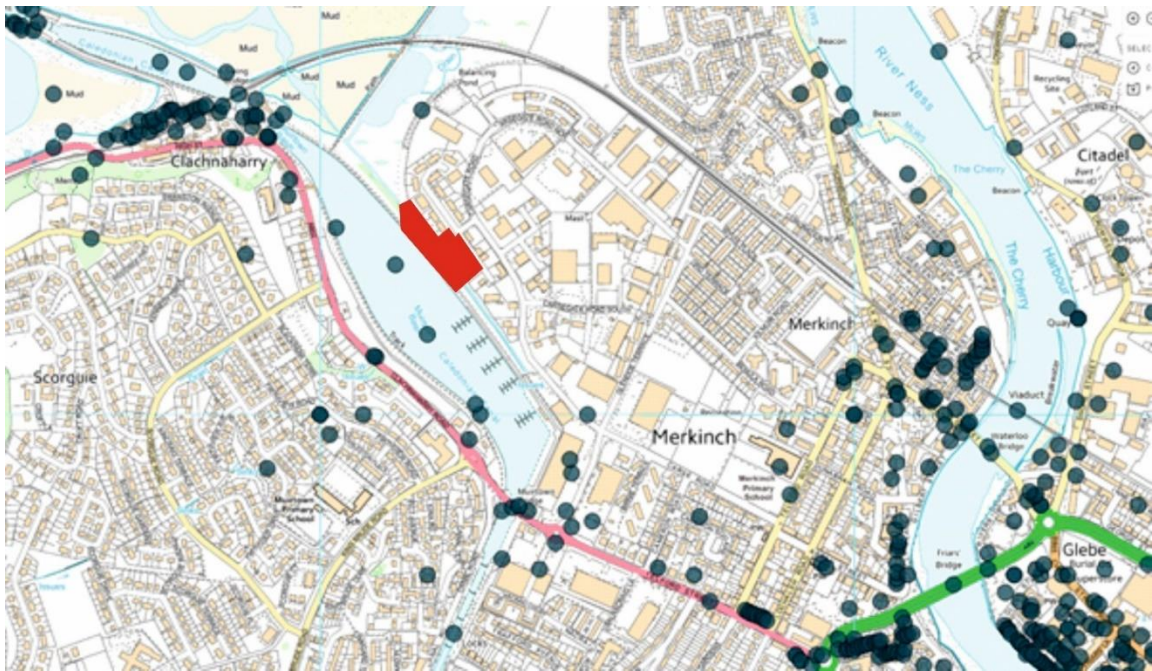
2.1 There is one Scheduled Monument within 1km of the proposed development; the proposed development includes part of that Scheduled Monument, the Caledonian Canal (SM5292) Clachnaharry Sea Lock to Muirtown Quay, and branch railway (MHG37122). The monument is of national importance as a major part of the Caledonian Canal, which was the largest canal in the world at the time of its design by Thomas Telford in 1803. The sea lock at Clachnaharry was one of the most difficult parts of the canal to build (Weir 1972). The monument consists of a stretch of the Caledonian Canal running from the Clachnaharry entrance lock to the S end of Muirtown Quay. Both the Clachnaharry lock and Muirtown quay are included in the area to be scheduled, in addition to Muirtown Basin and the 4 Muirtown locks and towpath and working areas associated with the operation of the canal. The road and rail swing bridges, modern lock gates and mechanisms, and lock-keepers' cottages are excluded from the scheduling, as are the walls and fences marking the boundary of the area owned by the British Waterways Board. The scheduled area is irregular in shape, about 2000m long by 220m at its widest. The boundaries are defined by the outer edges of the embankments supporting the canal bed, and by the boundary walls and fences separating British Waterways Board property from adjoining properties.

The scheduled area includes

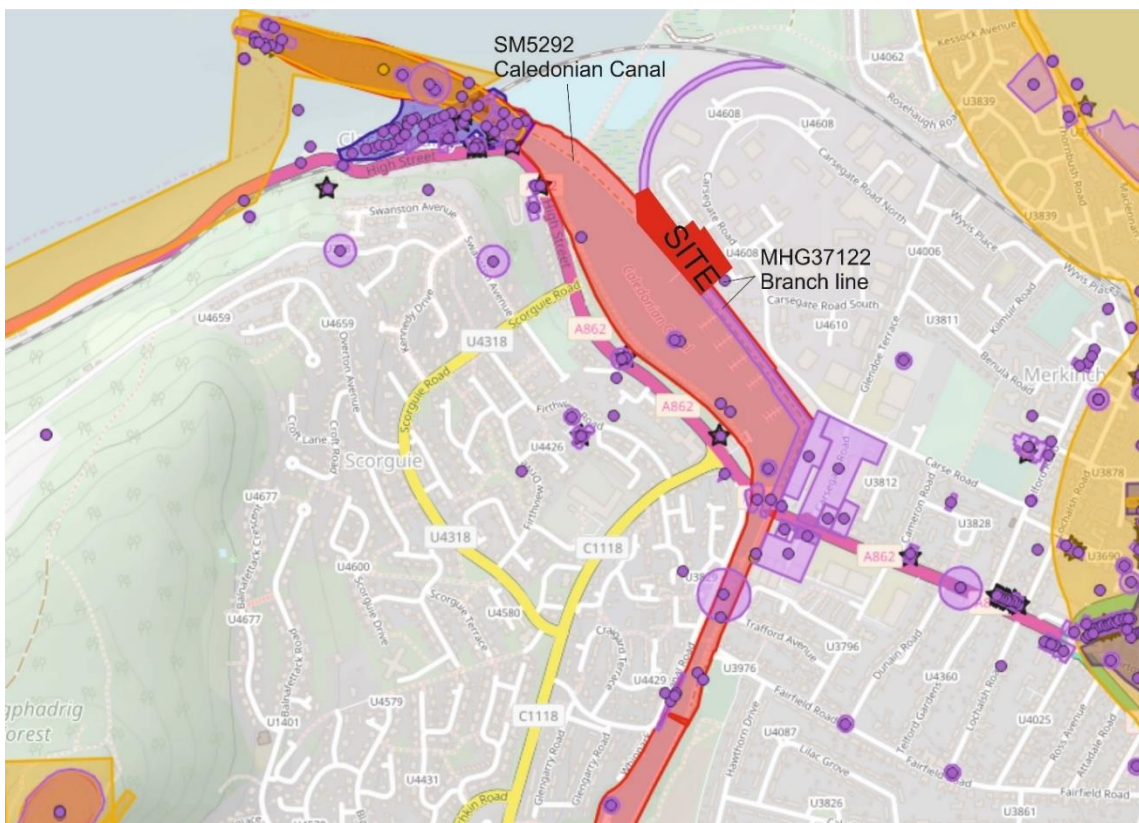
- Caledonian Canal, Canal Cottages, Clachnaharry (Monument) (MHG17891)

- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Lock (Monument) (MHG3814)
- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Lock, canal (Monument) (MHG25635)
- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Lock, Hand Cranes (Monument) (MHG3813)
- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Sea Lock (Monument) (MHG3817)
- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Sea Lock Basin (Monument) (MHG17477)
- Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry Sea Lock to Muirtown Quay (Monument) (MHG3868)
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Basin (Monument) (MHG3871). Aligned SE-NW and 800m in length the Muirtown Basin is c130m in width at its centre. Much of this section is within two embankments and elevated above the surrounding topography by some 2 to 4m. Both banks are grassy and several courses of pitching are seen just under the water, there are bollards at regular intervals. The west bank (known as the north bank) has a footpath and several benches whereas the east bank (known as the south bank) has a vehicular track (access to the Workshops at the Works Lock) only. Pontoons are anchored on the southern half of the east bank and their access is surrounded by a high metal security fence; a hand crane (NMRS No – NH64NE 120.01) is also within the fence. A stone quay lines the south part of the east bank from NH 65390 46040 (N end) to NH 65370 45819 (S end) with a bend at NH 65431 45955; this part of the basin is known as the Seaport Marina and has the Canal Offices. The quay is constructed of large dressed red sandstone and has a curved edge; there are a good number of inset rings and hooks (Cameron 1972, 140; Hutton 1992, 49, 50; Lindsay 1968, 147-50; Rolt 1979, 99-100).
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Basin, crane (Monument) (MHG3872). There is no hand crane at the grid reference noted. However, there is a crane depicted at NH 65410 45913 on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1874, sheet 4). This appears to have been removed.
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Locks (Monument) (MHG17446)
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Locks, crane (Monument) (MHG3869)
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Locks, Lock Keepers Cottages (Building) (MHG16087)
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Locks, Upper Wharf (Monument) (MHG17631)
- Caledonian Canal, Muirtown Swing Bridge, Inverness (Monument) (MHG3074)
- Early C19 Canal Workshops - Clachnaharry Lock, Caledonian Canal, Clachnaharry (Building) (MHG3818)
- Early C19 former Lock-Keeper's House - Clachnaharry Sea Lock, off Clachnaharry Road, Inverness (Building) (MHG15887)
- Early C19 Lock-Keeper's Store - Clachnaharry Sea Lock, Caledonian Canal off Clachnaharry Road, Inverness (Building) (MHG43892)

2.2 The area is marginal land or intertidal zone on the earliest maps (Illus 11) and the lock is marked on the maps from the early 19th century (Illus 12-16). The Caledonian Canal branch railway (MHG37122) is clearly marked on the 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1907, sheet iv; Illus 15) and the track is still visible on the current edition of the 1:10000 map (1992). It runs through the proposed development site.



Illus 3 Map of archaeological sites on HES database CANMORE (copyright HES)



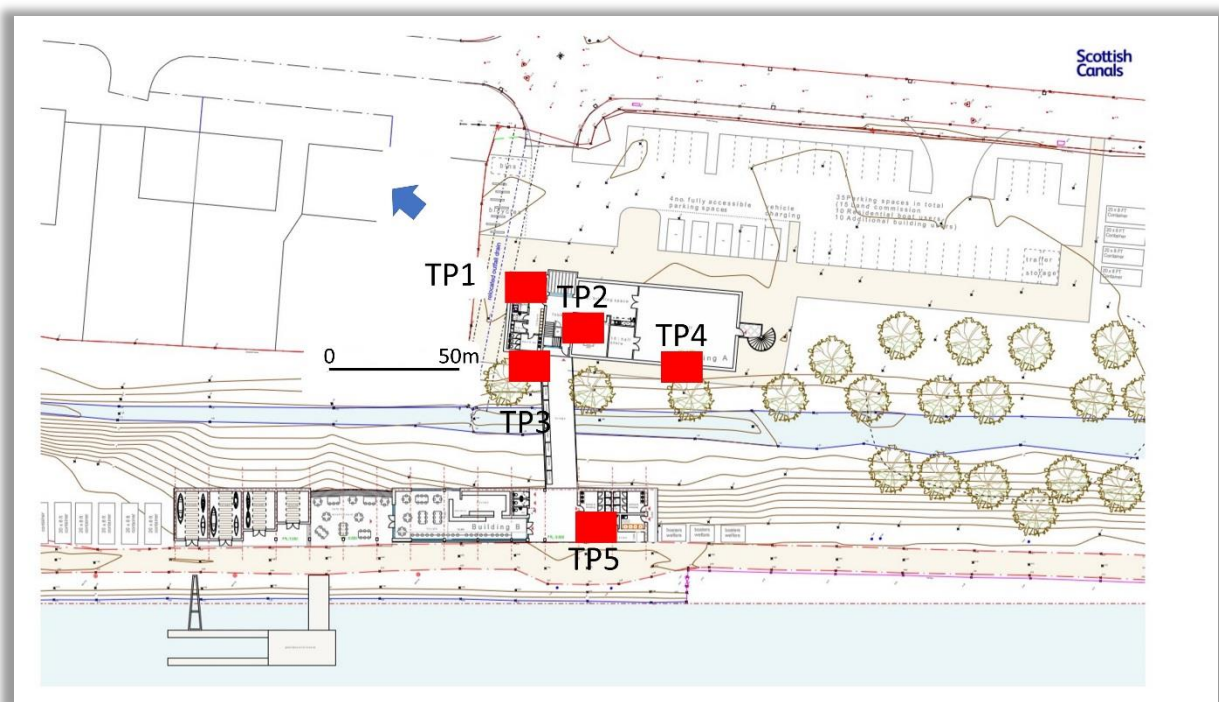
Illus 4 Map of archaeological sites on Highland Council HER database showing structures to be impacted by the proposed works (copyright Highland Council)

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

On February 5th and 6th, 2018, five test pits (Illus 5) were machine excavated to determine to composition of the subsoils in advance of construction works at Carse Hub within the Muirton Basin, Inverness, along the NE side of the entrance to the Caledonian Canal.

The test pits were excavated using a 0.50m wide toothed ditching bucket, and frequently were excavated down to the existing water table, typically around 2m in depth. Test Pit 4 was the only pit where the water table was not reached.

For obvious health and safety reasons, the instability of the soils along the test pit section, combined with the overall depth, prevented the archaeologist from entering to test pits or placing ranging rods within them, but photographs with a high-resolution 24mp camera were taken as close to the edges as deemed practical.



Illus 5 Plan showing test pit locations (copyright Scottish Canals).

4 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of the test pits, and modern materials such as styrene blocks discovered at lower levels indicate that the existing land surface throughout the site has been built up with imported materials within recent years. Therefore, it is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation is required within this portion of the project area.

5 REFERENCES

Cameron, A D. (1972) *The Caledonian Canal*. Lavenham, Suffolk.

Hutton, G. (1992) *Caledonian: the monster canal*. Glasgow.

Lindsay, J. (1968) *The canals of Scotland*. Newton Abbot.

Rolt, L T C. (1979) *Thomas Telford*. Harmondsworth.

Weir, T. (1972) '150 years of the Caledonian Canal', *Country Life*, vol. 152, 3930, 19 October 1972.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Gillian Mackenzie and Peter McIlhenny for initiating this project and to Scottish Canals and Kirsty Cameron, Highland Council for her advice during this work.

APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo ID	Direction Facing	Comments
DSC8029	NE	Test Pit 1: excavated down to water table
DSC8030	NW	Test Pit 1: excavated down to water table
DSC8033	NE	Test Pit 2: excavation in progress
DSC8037	NW	Test Pit 2: Excavated down to water table
DSC8040	NW	Test Pit 3: Excavation in Progress
DSC8046	NW	Test Pit 4: Excavated down to desired level – no ground water encountered
DSC8049	--	Large styrene block recovered from lower levels of Test Pit 4 indicating modern disturbance or recent built up land surfaces.
DSC8050	NW	Test Pit 5: Commencing
DSC8052	NW	Test Pit 5: Nearing desired depth
DSC8053	NE	Test Pit 5: Final depth down to water table



_DSC8029



_DSC8030



_DSC8033



_DSC8037



_DSC8040



_DSC8046



_DSC8049



_DSC8050



_DSC8052



_DSC8053