

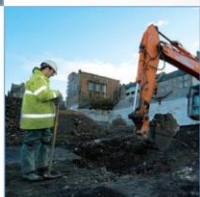
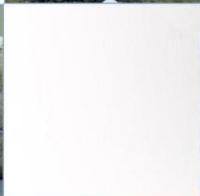
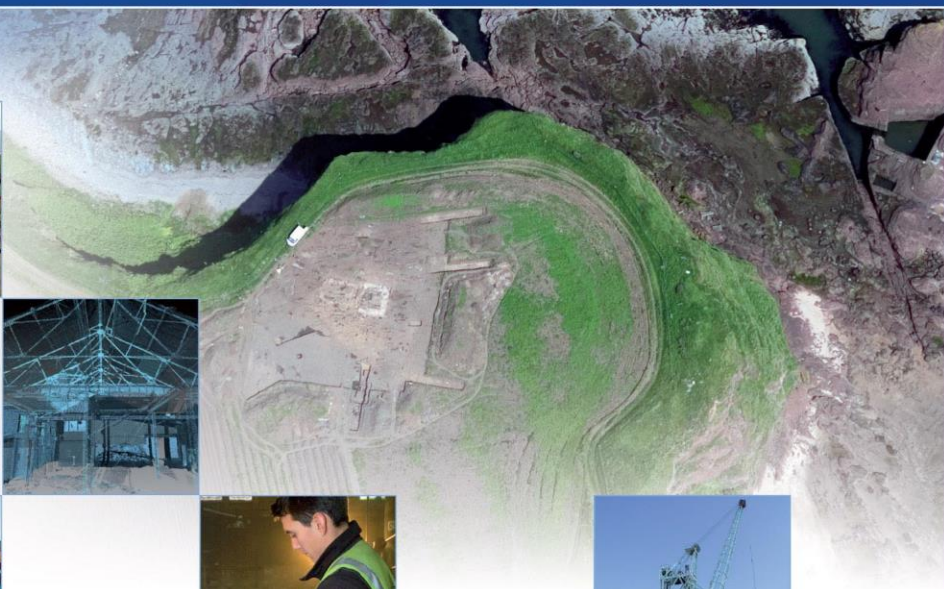
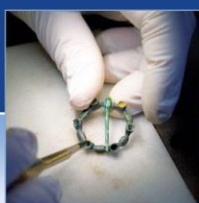
Phase 1A, Tornagrain, Croy, Inverness-shire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report

May 2018

AOC Project Number: 22827



Phase 1A, Tornagrain, Croy, Inverness-shire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: The Moray Estates Development Co. Ltd
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National Grid Reference (NGR): NH 7809 5022

AOC Project No: 22827

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was conducted on 30th August 2017 during groundworks to remove topsoil for a path between proposed parkland and housing. The watching brief was required due to the location of the path being close to a previously identified possible souterrain. One archaeological pit feature, possibly prehistoric, was uncovered. This was not excavated but recorded in situ and protected with terram prior to the path being constructed.

A further archaeological watching brief was conducted on 21st March 2018 during surface groundworks to remove vegetation from the possible souterrain site and landscaping of deposited topsoil material. The ground was not broken during these works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was required by Highland Council in respect to groundworks for the construction of a path and vegetation clearance around a possible souterrain at Phase 1A, Tornagrain, Croy. The proposed development lies within the administrative area of Highland Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Kirsty Cameron, Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Highland Council. The watching brief was specified in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.
- 1.2 The watching brief for the construction of the path was carried out on 30th August 2017 where topsoil was removed between an area of proposed parkland, where the possible souterrain is located, and newly constructed housing. One archaeological pit feature was uncovered.
- 1.3 The watching brief for the vegetation clearance over the possible souterrain site and landscaping of topsoil in its vicinity was carried out on 21st March 2018. No ground was broken during this work.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development site occupies mostly agricultural land located to the immediate southeast of the A96 opposite Inverness Airport. The overall development is focused around the farms at Mid Coul, Hillhead and Culair as well as including part of Tornagrain Wood (centred on NGR: NH 7809 5022) (**Figure 1**). The development comprises the construction of housing and associated amenities.
- 2.2 An archaeological evaluation was conducted on the site between January and April 2015 when several pits were identified alongside a possible souterrain and curvilinear feature of unknown function. Those features investigated revealed finds such as slag indicative of Iron Age smelting and smithing. Two pits indicated earlier occupation in the form of Late Neolithic pottery and Early Bronze beaker sherds (Dunbar 2015). The requirement for the archaeological watching briefs arose to mitigate the potential impacts of the path construction, vegetation clearance and landscaping works on the archaeological resources in the vicinity. As a result, an archaeologist was present to monitor all groundworks associated with site clearance.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) defines an archaeological watching brief as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons... where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive' (CIfA 2014a).

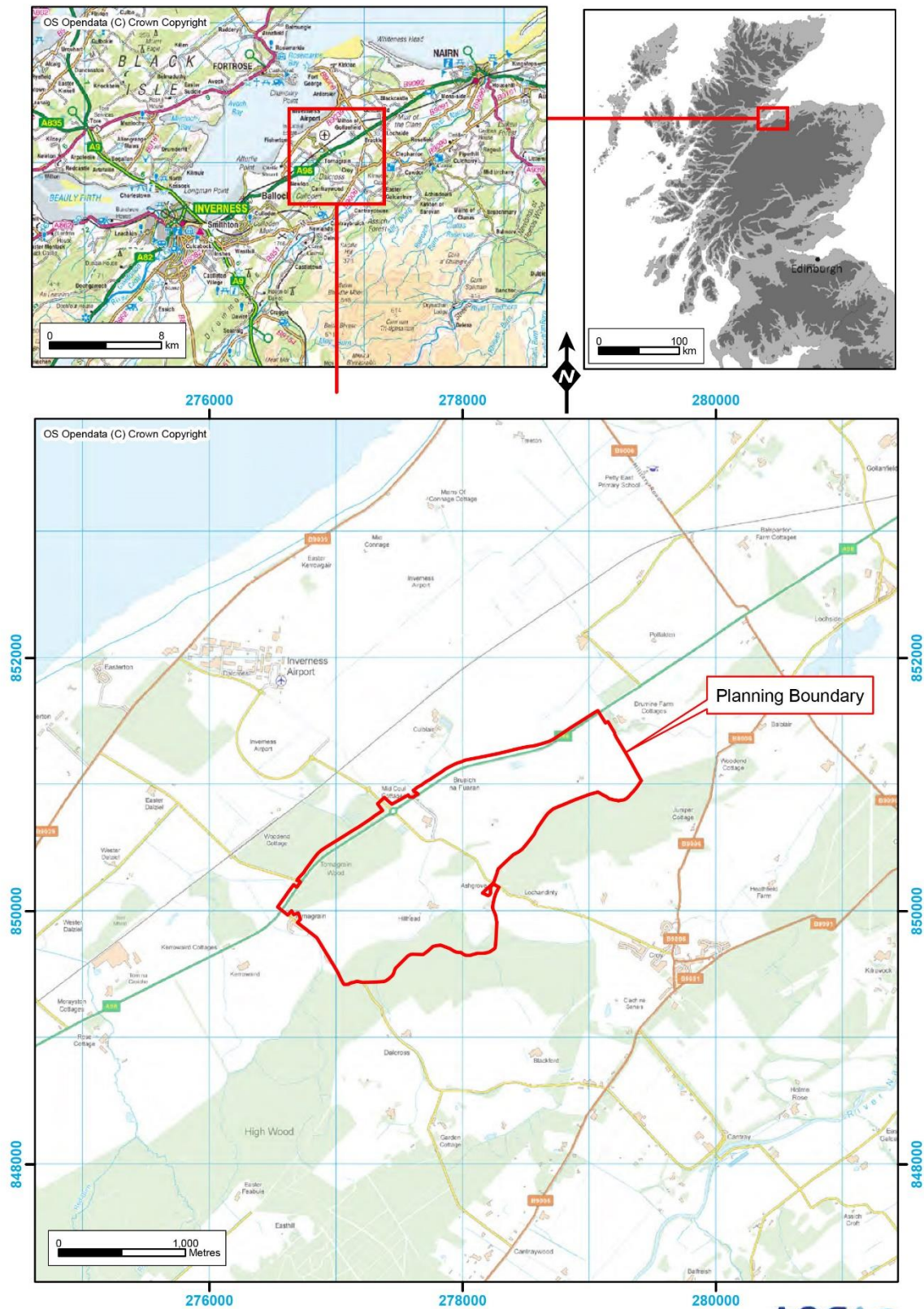


Figure 1: Site Location Plan



3.2 The aims of the archaeological works were:

- i) To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area prior to the destruction of any significant material
- ii) To remove by hand any overburden in order to expose the archaeological deposits
- iii) To excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
- iv) To sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating
- v) To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development
- vi) To make recommendations for post-excavation work

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist. The archaeologist directed digging by a mechanical excavator fitted with a straight-edged bucket in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains with the development area. All work was carried out in accordance with the Highland Council *Standards for Archaeological Work* (2012) and the ClfA *Code of Conduct* (2014b).
- 4.2 Where deemed necessary, all features of archaeological significance were excavated by hand to establish the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. Archaeological features were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and section drawings were drawn at a scale of 1:10. The archaeological monitoring was recorded using high resolution digital photography in order to record the process as well as any features or finds of interest.

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The watching brief for the footpath construction was carried out on 30th August 2017 when topsoil in a trench approximately 2.2m wide was removed between an area of proposed parkland and existing housing (**Figure 2; Plate 1**). Conditions were dry and sunny with good visibility.
- 5.2 The topsoil was up to 0.50m deep. The subsoil comprised loose, mid-orange coarse sand and gravel containing small and medium-sized stones.
- 5.3 One archaeological feature was identified during the watching brief. The feature consisted of a sub-circular pit measuring 1.40m NE-SW by 1.20m (**Plate 2**). The pit was not fully excavated, but a small investigation at its edge suggested that it had steep sides (**Plate 3**). Its fill, as observed on the surface, comprised dark brownish-black, fine silty sand, which was soft and loose. Some medium stones were visible around the edge suggesting that the pit is stone-lined; this could only be fully resolved through excavation. Some large pieces of charcoal were evident. The pit was protected with terram following recording and prior to the construction of the path over it.

- 5.4 The watching brief for the vegetation clearance over and around the possible souterrain together with the topsoil landscaping was carried out on 21st March 2018. This work did not involve any ground breaking and the possible souterrain was not compromised in any way (**Plate 4**).

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The watching briefs identified one pit feature, which has tentatively been interpreted as prehistoric in age. This is likely due to the presence of other prehistoric pits identified in 2015 in the vicinity. There are no recommendations for further work.

7.0 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a. *Standards and guidance: Archaeological watching brief*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014b. *Code of Conduct*

Dunbar, L. 2015. *Phase 1A, Tornagrain, Croy, Inverness-shire Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report*. Unpublished AOC report.

Highland Council 2012. *Standards for Archaeological Work*

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

Scottish Government 2014. *Scottish Planning Policy*.



Figure 2: Location of the watching briefs (plan supplied by the client)



Plate 1: A working shot of the path trench being excavated, looking NW



Plate 2: The possible prehistoric pit, looking NE



Plate 3: Image showing the minimal excavation at the edge of the pit, looking E



Plate 4: Image showing the location of the possible souterrain site after vegetation clearance and topsoil landscaping, looking W

APPENDIX 1: Photograph Register

Photo No.	Site/Feature No.	Description	Direction Facing	Date
1	-	Start of works on the path area	NW	30/08/2017
2	-	Working shot of topsoil clearance	NW	30/08/2017
3	-	Possible prehistoric pit	NE	30/08/2017
4	-	Possible prehistoric pit	NE	30/08/2017
5	-	Possible prehistoric pit	NE	30/08/2017
6	-	Possible prehistoric pit	SW	30/08/2017
7	-	Image of the minimal excavation at the edge of the pit	E	30/08/2017
8	-	Image of the minimal excavation at the edge of the pit	E	30/08/2017
9	-	Image showing the location of the pit in the trench	NW	30/08/2017
10	-	Post-vegetation and topsoil landscaping on and around the possible souterrain site	NW	21/03/2018
11	-	Post-vegetation and topsoil landscaping on and around the possible souterrain site	W	21/03/2018



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