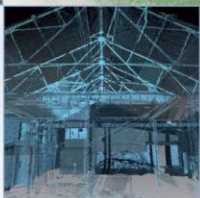
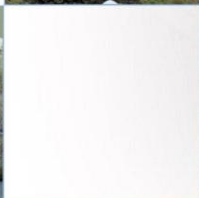
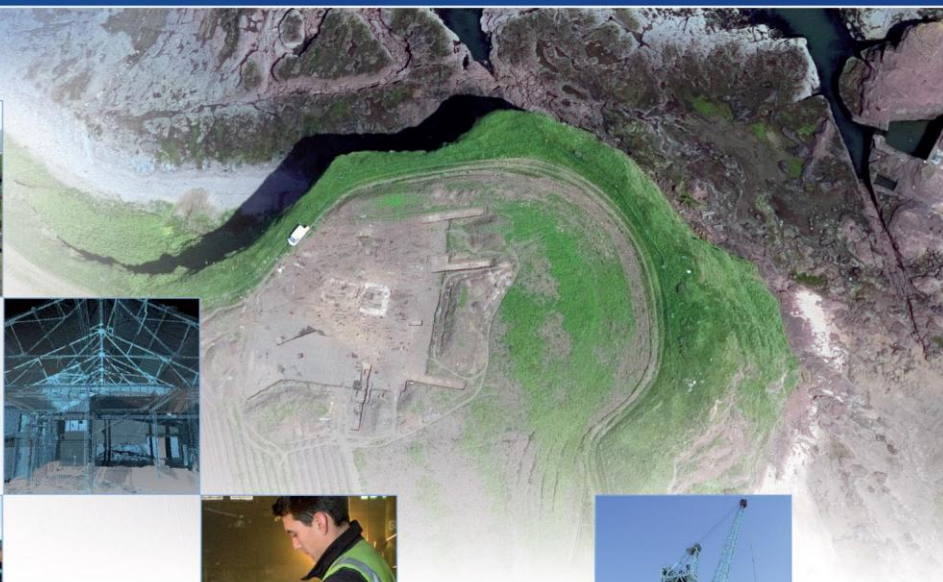
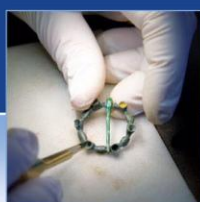


Erection of 68 houses and installation of drainage infrastructure at Whitehills, Alness

Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

AOC 70332
October 2018



Erection of 68 houses and installation of drainage infrastructure at Whitehills, Alness

Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Hamish Little, Pat Munro (Alness) Ltd
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NH 67126 70400 (centred)
AOC Project No:	70332
Planning Ref:	18/01500/FUL
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Date of Fieldwork:	2 nd -3 rd October 2018
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Abstract

This report details the findings of an archaeological evaluation carried out at Whitehills, Alness, in advance of the construction of 68 houses and installation of drainage infrastructure. The evaluation was required due to the presence of known archaeological sites within the immediate area.

Fieldwork was carried out on October 2nd to 3rd 2018. 16 trenches were excavated across the accessible southern portion of the development site, sampling an area totalling 1 286m² of the total 28 000m². No significant archaeological remains were uncovered. No further archaeological works have been recommended.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A 7% archaeological trial trenching evaluation was required on behalf of Hamish Little of Pat Munro (Alness) Ltd with regard to the erection of 68 new houses and drainage infrastructure at Whitehills, Alness (Planning reference:18/01500/FUL; **Figures 1 and 2**). This planning reference relates to Phase 1 of the wider 68no. housing development. The area evaluated reflects the wider 68no. housing development area. The requirement had arisen as the development site is located in an area with potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits.
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of the Highland Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Kirsty Cameron, Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Highland Council. A targeted programme of trial trenching across the site 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.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out on October 2nd to 3rd 2018 in wet and windy conditions, however visibility was good. 16 trenches were excavated across the southern portion of the development site. Recent (past ten years) clearance and soil storage activities along the western edge and in the northwest corner, and mature tree growth in the north east edge, prohibited trenching in these areas. Two rubble filled field drains were revealed in two trenches. No significant further archaeological remains or artefacts were uncovered.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The development site is located on vacant pastoral land north of Birch Road, Alness (centred at NH 67126 70400; **Figure 1**). The proposed development includes 19 house plots and drainage infrastructure which is Phase 1 of the wider 68no. housing development. The evaluation area has covered all accessible areas of the wider 68no. housing development site.
- 2.2 The proposed development is located in an area where significant archaeological sites are known to exist. No known features were located within the proposed development area or immediately adjacent. An evaluation undertaken by RoCAS in 2014 at Newfield North demonstrated that no archaeological features were present in land directly to the west of the development site (EHG4210). A bronze age axe was identified near Auchnagarron, in 1971, 500m to the south (MHG8039). A carved stone ball was identified 800m to the north at Balnaguisich (MHG34844).



Plate 1: Pre-excitation view of the southern section of the development site, facing north

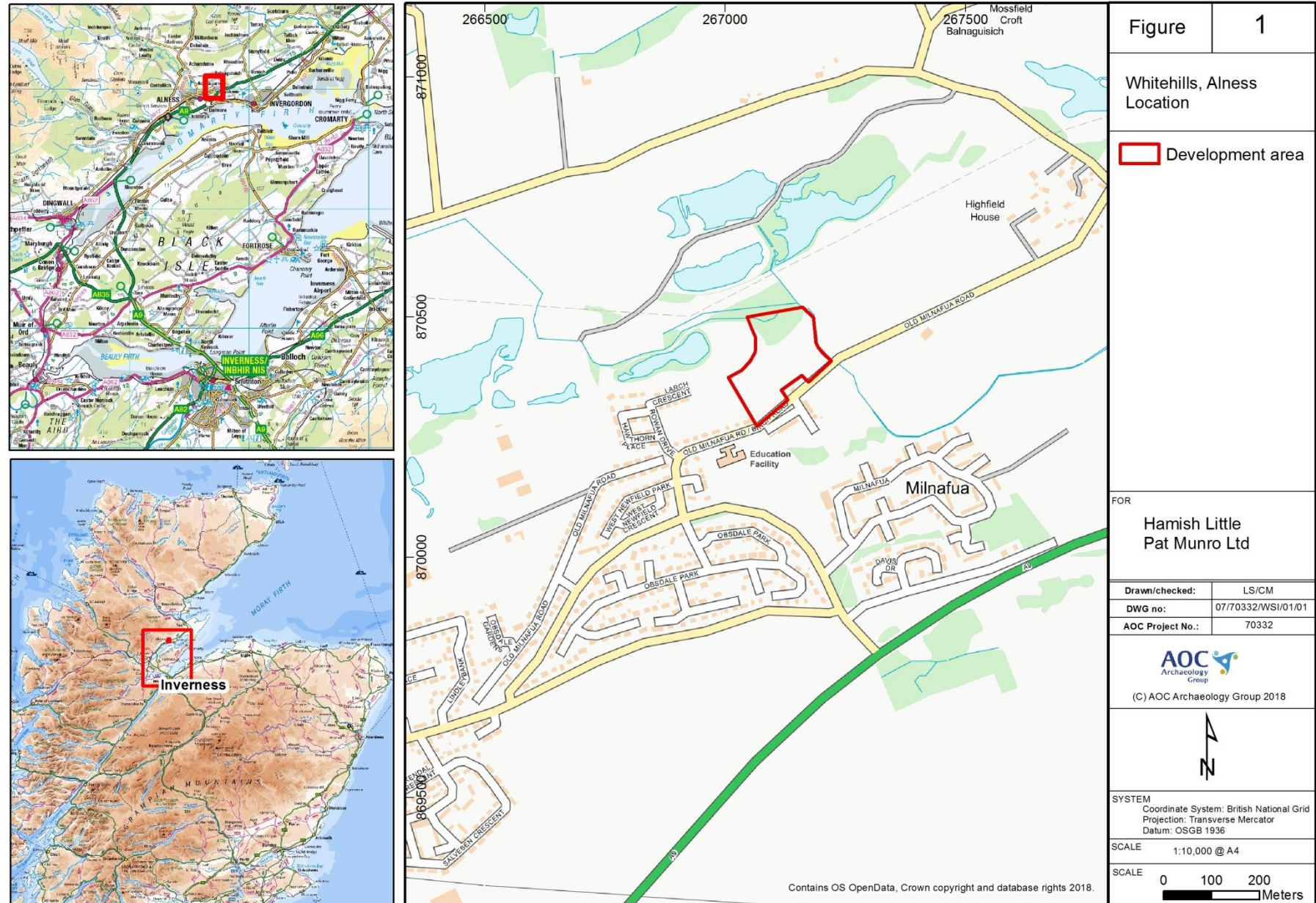


Figure 1: Site location map

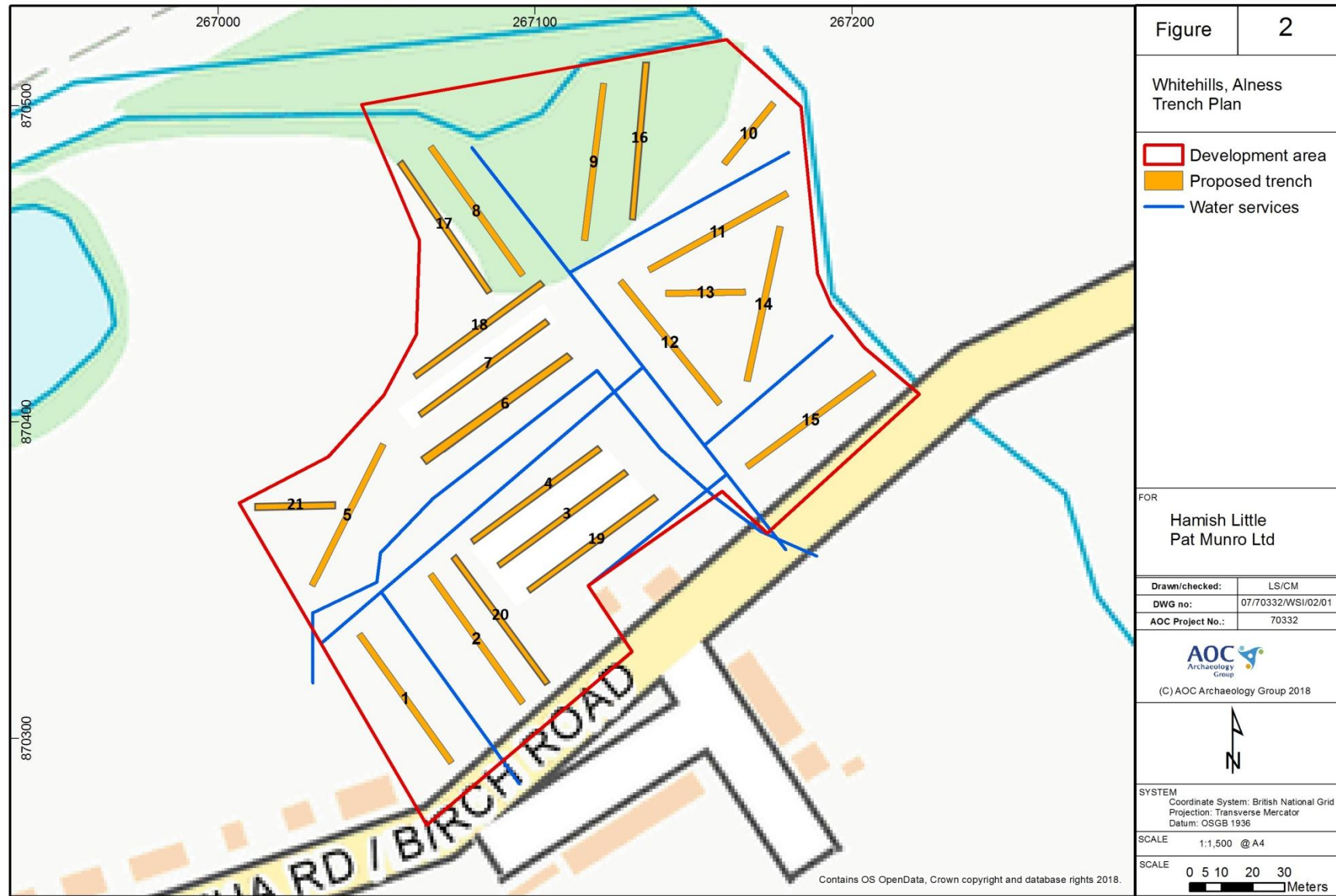


Figure 2: Proposed trenching plan as per the Written Scheme of Investigation (MacIver 2018)

3.0 Desk-based Assessment

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation. A full check of all available historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps was conducted using the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER), the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), Ordnance Survey Name Books, Historic Environment Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland, statistical accounts and other available records, literary sources or online resources about the site.

3.2 Cartographic Sources

3.2.1 Historical maps were consulted online at the National Library of Scotland (NLS 2018). Resaurie does not appear on the maps until the time of the Ordnance Survey First Edition, however the nearby settlements of Obsdale appears as *Obstell* on Blaeu's 1652 map.

- a) Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch-to-the-mile map**
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire – Ross-shire LXV.4 (Roskeen)
Survey date: 1874 Publication date: 1875

This map clearly shows the development area situated on an open field system east of the settlement Achnagarron. The dwelling situated at the centre point of the southern boundary of the development is present in this map. Depicted to the northwest is an area of woodland, and the drainage ditch along the east side of the development is also evident.

- b) Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch-to-the-mile map**
Ross-shire and Cromartyshire LXV.4 (Roskeen)
Revised: 1904 Publication Date: 1906

Very little has changed by the time of the 2nd Edition map apart from some woodland regrowth to the north of the site, and slight changes to the layout of the dwelling along the southern extent of the development boundary,



Figure 3: Excerpt from the OS 1st Edition 25-inch-to-the-mile map, 1875

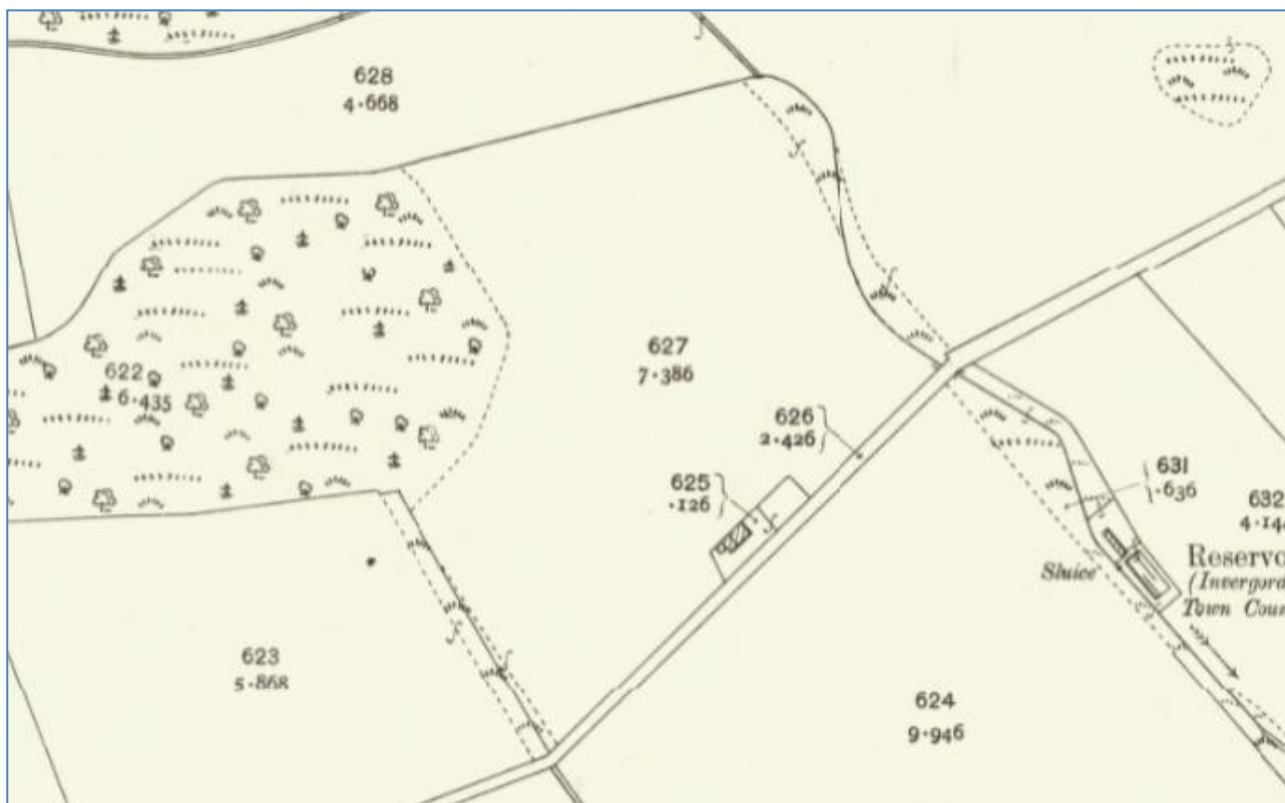


Figure 4: Excerpt from the OS 2nd Edition 25-inch-to-the-mile map, 1906

3.3 Historic Environment Sources

- 3.3.1 A full search of the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER) and the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), via Canmore, was carried out and three sites were found within a 500m radius of the development area.

MHG54956

NH 67065 70235

**Possible Early Roadway,
Tarradale to Tain**

It is suggested that an early roadway linked the whole length of the Earldom of Ross, extending approximately 50 kilometres from south to north. The monument is thought to be characterised by stretches of wide, straight trackway flanked by parallel turf embankments.

MHG351700

NH 669292 7032

**Culvert, Ditch, Pond,
Alness, Newfield North**

During trial trenching, 3 features of archaeological interest all associated with field drainage, were recorded. One feature was the remains of a stone-built culvert, which had been previously damaged by the landowner, and was located in line with a drainage ditch running from a pond.

EHG4210

NH 669292 7032

**Trial Trenching Evaluation,
Alness, Newfield North**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in 2014 by Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services, the results of which are above.

4.0 Objectives

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) defines an archaeological evaluation as ‘a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land... field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate’ (CIfA 2014).

- 4.2 The aims of the archaeological works were:

- i. To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area
- 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

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 An archaeologist directed excavation by a 13-ton mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-wide straight-edged bucket in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- 5.2 All features of archaeological significance were excavated by hand in order to establish the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. Archaeological features and deposits were to be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and section drawings were to be drawn at a scale of 1:10. All significant archaeological features were to be sampled, in the event post-excavation analysis was deemed necessary.
- 5.3 The location of all archaeological findspots and features and the area covered by the evaluation, was plotted using a Trimble Geo-XR Rover capable of centimetre accuracy. The archaeological monitoring was recorded using high resolution digital photography in order to record the process as well as any archaeological features or finds of interest.

6.0 Results

- 6.1 Trenching was carried out on 2nd and 3rd October 2018 in wet and windy conditions, however visibility was good for identifying archaeological features. Various contributing factors prevented trial trenching in the north and west areas of the development site including: substantial ground clearance in the north west of the site for lay down areas and access roads; subsequent soil bunding along the western and northern peripheries of the development; and mature woodland in the northeast corner (**Appendix 1**). The trenching layout in the southwestern expanse was affected by the western soil bund, and the presence of extensive watermain and safety buffers across the entire area limited the placement of additional trenches. Five additional trenches were added to compensate for lost metreage overall (**Plate 2**; **Figure 5**; **Appendices 1- 3**). The subsoil comprised mid orange-brown sandy silts with areas of paler yellow sands and grey clays, particularly towards the eastern side of the site where the ground declined towards the drainage ditch. The topsoil varied between 0.2m – 0.69m deep, but was generally no more than 0.35m deep. The area excavated totalled 1286m² (4.6% of the development area's 28000m²).
- 6.2 Two rubble-filled field drains aligned east-west were identified in trenches 14 and 15. No significant archaeological remains were identified during the evaluation.



Plate 2: Post-trenching image, looking east across trenching area

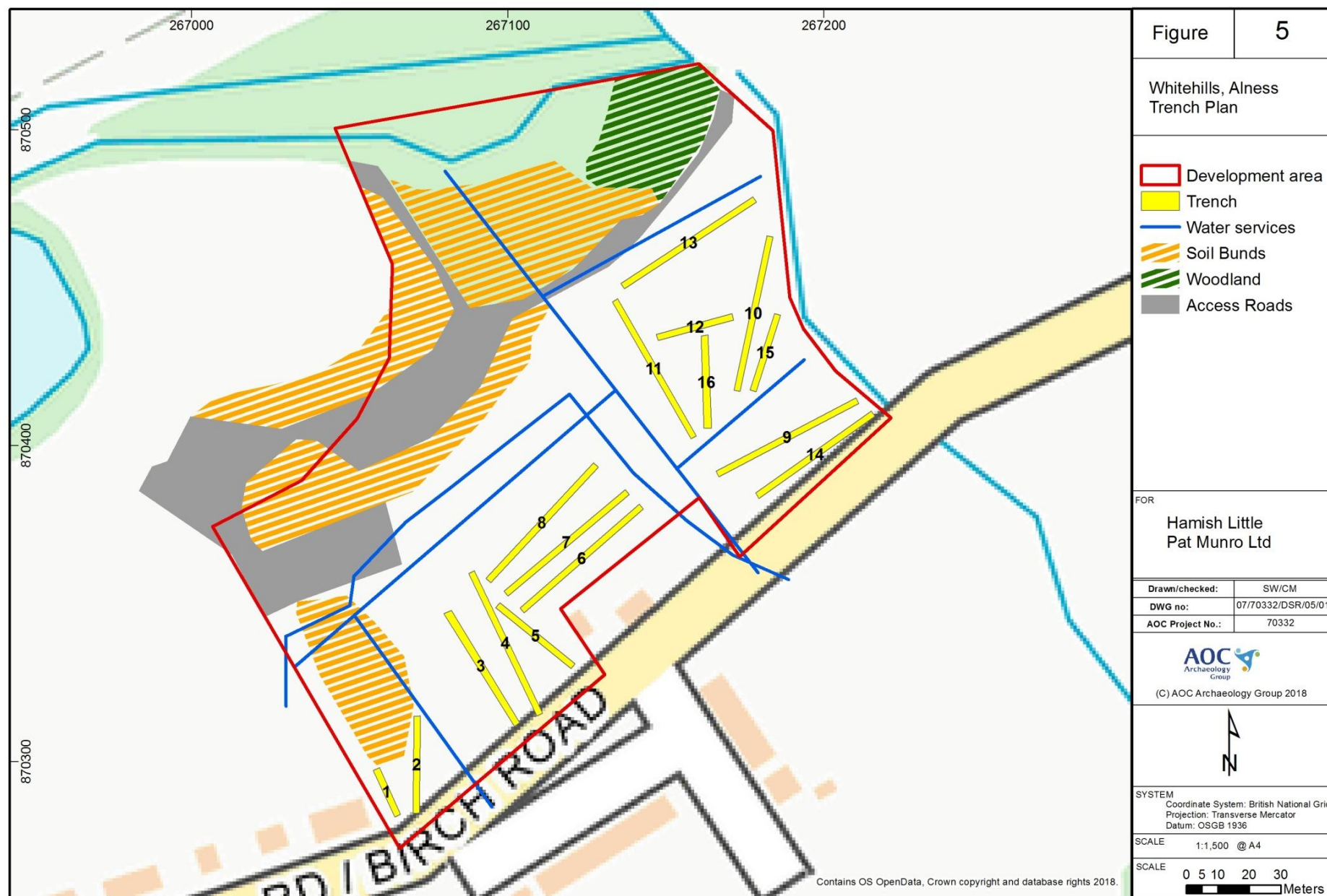


Figure 5: Trench location plan showing areas of soil bund, disturbance and woodland

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1 Trenching across the development area was restricted by disturbed ground and soil bunds in the northwest region of the site, a large soil bund along the western extent of the development, and soil bunds and mature trees along the northern extent. Additional trenches were placed where possible in the southern extent, however these too were limited by various water mains across this region. Given the lack of significant archaeological remains uncovered during this evaluation and the 2014 evaluation on adjacent land, combined with the disturbed nature of the site in the northwest region, no further archaeological works are recommended.

8.0 References

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014. *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists: Code of Conduct*.

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

Appendix 1 Selected Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Overlooking pre-existing soil bund on west site boundary



Photograph 2: Overlooking disturbed ground and soil bunds in northwest area of development site



Photograph 3: Looking northwest over T1



Photograph 4: Looking north over T2



Photograph 5: Looking south southeast over T3



Photograph 6: Looking south southeast over T4



Photograph 7: Looking west northwest over T5



Photograph 8: Looking northeast over T6



Photograph 9: Looking southwest over T7



Photograph 10: Looking southwest over T8



Photograph 11: Looking northeast over the southwest end of T9



Photograph 12: Looking northeast over the northeast end of T9



Photograph 13: Looking north northeast over the south southwest end of T10



Photograph 14: Looking north northeast over the north northeast end of T10



Photograph 15: Looking northwest over T11



Photograph 16: Looking east over T12



Photograph 17: Looking northeast over T13



Photograph 18: Looking northeast over T14



Photograph 19: Looking north northeast over T15



Photograph 20: Looking north over T16

Appendix 2 Photographic Register

Photo No.	Trench/ Feature	Description	Direction Facing	Date
1	-	Pre-works image from E side of development boundary, overlooking southern portion of site	E	02/10/2018
2	-	Pre-works image looking NW from site access point across stored soil bund	NW	02/10/2018
3	-	Pre-works image looking NE from site access point across southern portion of site	NE	02/10/2018
4	-	Pre-works image from beside dwelling along south site boundary, overlooking southern portion of site	WSW-N	02/10/2018
5	-	Pre-works image from SE corner of site, overlooking eastern portion of site	W	02/10/2018
6	-	Pre-works image showing ground disturbance and soil bunding for old lay down area and compound in NW of site	NE	02/10/2018
7	T1	Post-excavation of T1	NW	02/10/2018
8	T2	Post-excavation of T2	N	02/10/2018
9	T3	Post-excavation of T3	SSE	02/10/2018
10	T4	Post-excavation of T4	SSE	02/10/2018
11	T5	Post-excavation of T5	WNW	02/10/2018
12	T6	Post-excavation of T6	NE	02/10/2018
13	T7	Post-excavation of T7	SW	02/10/2018
14	T8	Post-excavation of T8	SW	02/10/2018
15	T9	Post-excavation of T9, overlooking SW end of trench	NE	02/10/2018
16	T9	Post-excavation of T9, overlooking NE end of trench	NE	02/10/2018
17	T10	Post-excavation of T10, overlooking SSW end of trench	NNE	02/10/2018
18	T10	Post-excavation of T10, overlooking NNE end of trench	NNE	02/10/2018
19	T11	Post-excavation of T11	NW	02/10/2018
20	T12	Post-excavation of T12	E	02/10/2018
21	-	Record image of access road through northern portion of site leading to laydown area	SW	03/10/2018
22	-	Record image of access road through northern portion of site leading from laydown area	NE	03/10/2018
23	-	Record image of minor road through northern portion, leading from access road to laydown area	NNW	03/10/2018
24	T13	Post-excavation of T13	NE	03/10/2018
25	-	Record image showing soil bunds covering northern portion of site	E	03/10/2018
26	-	Record image showing soil bunds covering northern portion of site	E	03/10/2018

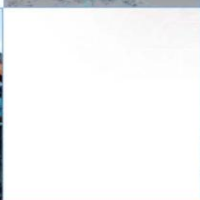
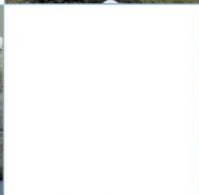
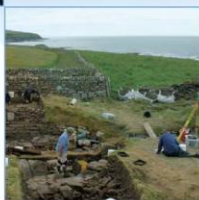
Photo No.	Trench/ Feature	Description	Direction Facing	Date
27	T14	Post-excavation of T14, showing field drain	NE	03/10/2018
28	T15	Post-excavation of T15	NNE	03/10/2018
29	T16	Post-excavation of T16	N	03/10/2018
30	-	Record image showing mature trees across NE corner of site	NNE	03/10/2018
31	-	Post-trenching image	SE-SW	03/10/2018
32	-	Post-trenching image	NE	03/10/2018

Appendix 3 Trench Records

Trench No	Aligned	Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (m ²)	Depths (m)	Archaeology	Natural
1	NW-SE	16	2	32	0.15m (NW), 0.23m (mid), 0.23m (SE)	None	Orangey brown sandy silt with some small subrounded stones up to 0.15m long.
2	N-S	30	2	60	0.5m (N), 0.52m (mid), 0.5m (S)	None	Mottled brown and orange sandy silt with some fairly large subrounded stones up to 0.35m long, but predominantly small to medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long. Bands of pale yellow sand throughout.
3	NNW-SSE	42	2	84	0.38m (SSE), 0.4m (mid), 0.36m (NNW)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
4	NNW-SSE	50	2	100	0.43m (SSE), 0.3m (mid), 0.3m (NNW)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
5	NW-SE	30	2	60	0.27m (ESE), 0.36m (mid), 0.41m (WNW)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.

Trench No	Aligned	Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (m ²)	Depths (m)	Archaeology	Natural
6	NE-SW	50	2	100	0.2m (SW), 0.51m (mid), 0.62m (NE)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
7	NE-SW	50	2	100	0.31m (SW), 0.4m (mid), 0.34m (NE)	Rubble filled field drain aligned E-W, 0.5m wide.	Mottled pale orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
8	NE-SW	50	2	100	0.26m (SW), 0.38m (mid), 0.42m (NE)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
9	NE-SW	50	2	100	0.62m (NE), 0.32m (mid), 0.33m (SW)	None	Pale orange and brown silty sand, sandier towards the NE end of the trench where it starts to decline towards the ditch running along the E extent of the development boundary.
10	NNE-SSW	50	2	100	0.32m (NNE), 0.49m (mid), 0.29m (SSW)	None	Either trench end comprised mixed orange and brown sandy silt, but the centre of the trench was much darker and clay rich, reflecting the decline in natural topography. Some standing water and reeds either side of the trench at this point.

Trench No	Aligned	Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (m ²)	Depths (m)	Archaeology	Natural
11	NW-SE	50	2	100	0.36m (NW), 0.29m (mid), 0.30m (SE)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas. Some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long, occasionally a larger stone up to 0.35m long. Some paler sandier patches.
12	E-W	25	2	50	0.69m (E), 0.42m (mid), 0.23m (W)	None	From 0m - 20m from the E end, grey sandy clay with some small subrounded stones up to 0.25m long. Remaining 5m comprised orangey brown sandy silt with some small - medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.2m long.
13	ENE-WSW	50	2	100	0.28m (ENE), 0.39m (mid), 0.37m (WSW)	None	Mottled orange-brown sandy silt with some manganese/iron rich areas and medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.3m long. From 10m - 30m from the ENE end is a greyish silty clay with some small to medium sized subrounded stones up to 0.25m long.
14	NE-SW	45	2	90	0.54m (NE), 0.36m (mid), 0.31m (SW)	None	Pale orange and brown silty sand, sandier towards the NE end of the trench where it starts to decline towards the ditch running along the E extent of the development boundary.
15	NE-SW	30	2	60	0.26m (SW), 0.34m (mid), 0.29m (NE)	None	Either trench end comprised mixed orange and brown sandy silt, but the centre of the trench was much darker and clay rich, reflecting the decline in natural topography. Some standing water and reeds either side of the trench at this point.
16	N-S	25	2	50	0.32m (S), 0.41m (mid), 0.29m (S)	None	Orangey brown sandy silts with some small to medium sized stones up to 0.2m long.



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