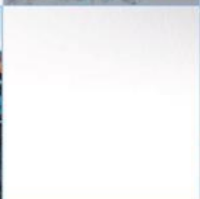
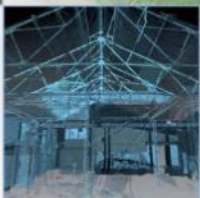
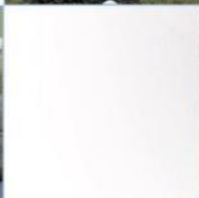
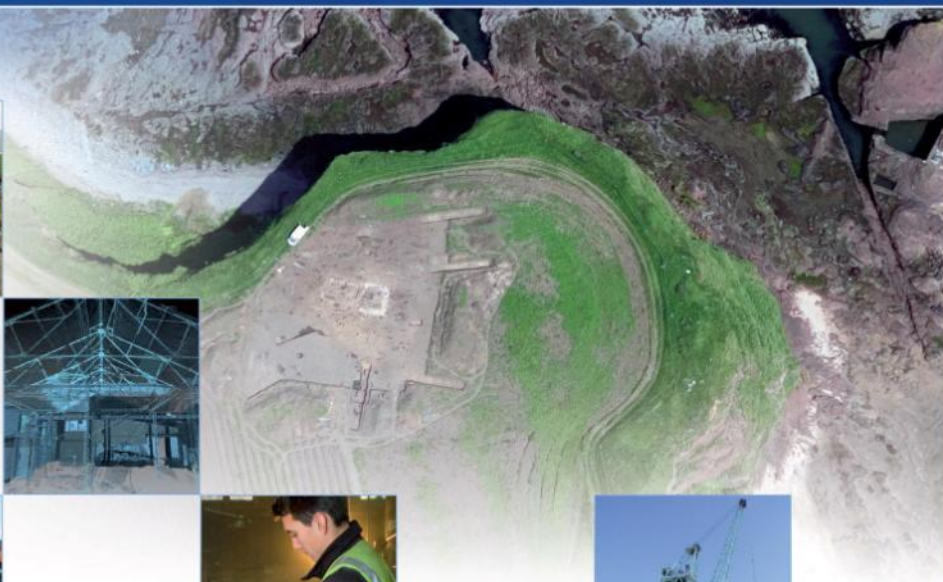


# Holiday pods at land 80m south of Bratach Ban, Lettermore, Ballachulish

## Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019

AOC Project Number: 70442



# Holiday pods at land 80m south of Bratach Ban, Lettermore, Ballachulish

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Laurence McP Young Ossian Developments Ltd Roshinish House Old Ferry Brae Ballachulish Argyll PH49 4JX
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NN 04484 59456
AOC Project No:	70442
Planning Ref:	18/05376/FUL
Prepared by:	C. Murray
Date of Fieldwork:	21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2019
Date of Report:	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019

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Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Report Stage: Final

Date: October 2019

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## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>List of figures</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>List of plates</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>List of appendices</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0 Project Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0 Desk-based Assessment</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1 Methodology .....	6
3.2 Cartographic Sources .....	6
3.3 Historic Environment Sources .....	8
3.4 Other Sources .....	8
<b>4.0 Objectives</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5.0 Methodology</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>6.0 Results</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>8.0 References</b> .....	<b>18</b>

### List of figures

- Figure 1: Location of the development site  
 Figure 2: Excerpt from Roy's Military Map of Scotland, Highlands, 1747-52  
 Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map  
 Figure 4: Watching brief area

### List of plates

- Plate 1: Excavated track and turning area at east end of site, facing SSE  
 Plate 2: Post-excavation of soakaway/septic tank area, facing SW  
 Plate 3: Post-excavation of Pod 1 hot tub area, facing W  
 Plate 4: Post-excavation of Pod 2 hot tub area, facing E  
 Plate 5: Post-excavation image of Pod 3 hot tub area, facing NE  
 Plate 6: Post-excavation of Pod 4 hot tub area, facing E  
 Plate 7: Post-excavation of Pod 5 hot tub area, facing SW  
 Plate 8: Post-excavation of Pod 6 hot tub area, facing SSW  
 Plate 9: Post-excavation of Pod 7 hot tub area, facing SW  
 Plate 10: Access track through trees to the road to Glenachulish, not excavated, facing W  
 Plate 11: Image of the unexcavated part of the access track towards the eastern end, facing SSW

### List of appendices

- Appendix 1: Photographic Register

## **Abstract**

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This report details the findings of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at land 80m south of Bratach Ban, Lettermore, Ballachulish in advance of the construction of holiday pods and associated works. The watching brief was required as the development is situated within an area rich in prehistoric archaeology.

Fieldwork was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 when topsoil stripping was monitored for the installation of seven holiday pods, access roads and service arrangements. No archaeological features were found.

---

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was required as a condition of planning consent with respect to the installation of seven holiday pods, to include all site clearance work, access roads and service arrangements (Highland Council planning reference 18/05376/FUL) at land 80m south of Bratach Ban, Lettermore, Ballachulish.
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of Highland Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Kirsty Cameron, Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Highland Council. A programme of archaeological works has been specified in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011) to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 when topsoil stripping was monitored for the access track, soakaway, septic tank and an area in front of each of the seven pods to accommodate a hot tub and its services.

## 2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The site lies adjacent to the A828 trunk road at the north-western end of the Dragon's Tooth Golf Course at Glenachulish centred on NN 04484 59456 (**Figure 1**). The site comprises open grassland, with areas of trees, on the edge of the golf course. A stone wall bounds the site along the trunk road. The site slopes up from northwest to southeast (rises from the roadside boundary) and an existing path runs through the site.
- 2.2 The requirement for archaeological works arose due to the development lying within an area where there is believed to be the potential for survival of sub-surface remains. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey map shows the development site as forming part of the policies of Ballachulish House to the southeast and appears not to have been the subject of previous development.
- 2.3 While there are no previous records of archaeological sites within the boundary of the development area, there are the remains of a prehistoric burial cairn (Scheduled Monument 4166) a short distance to the east (HHER MHG14434). There are also further prehistoric features within the wider Ballachulish landscape such as a possible occupation site at Ballachulish Moss (MHG18008), in the vicinity of which a carved wooden figurine was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a burial cairn at Rubha Mor (MHG4308).



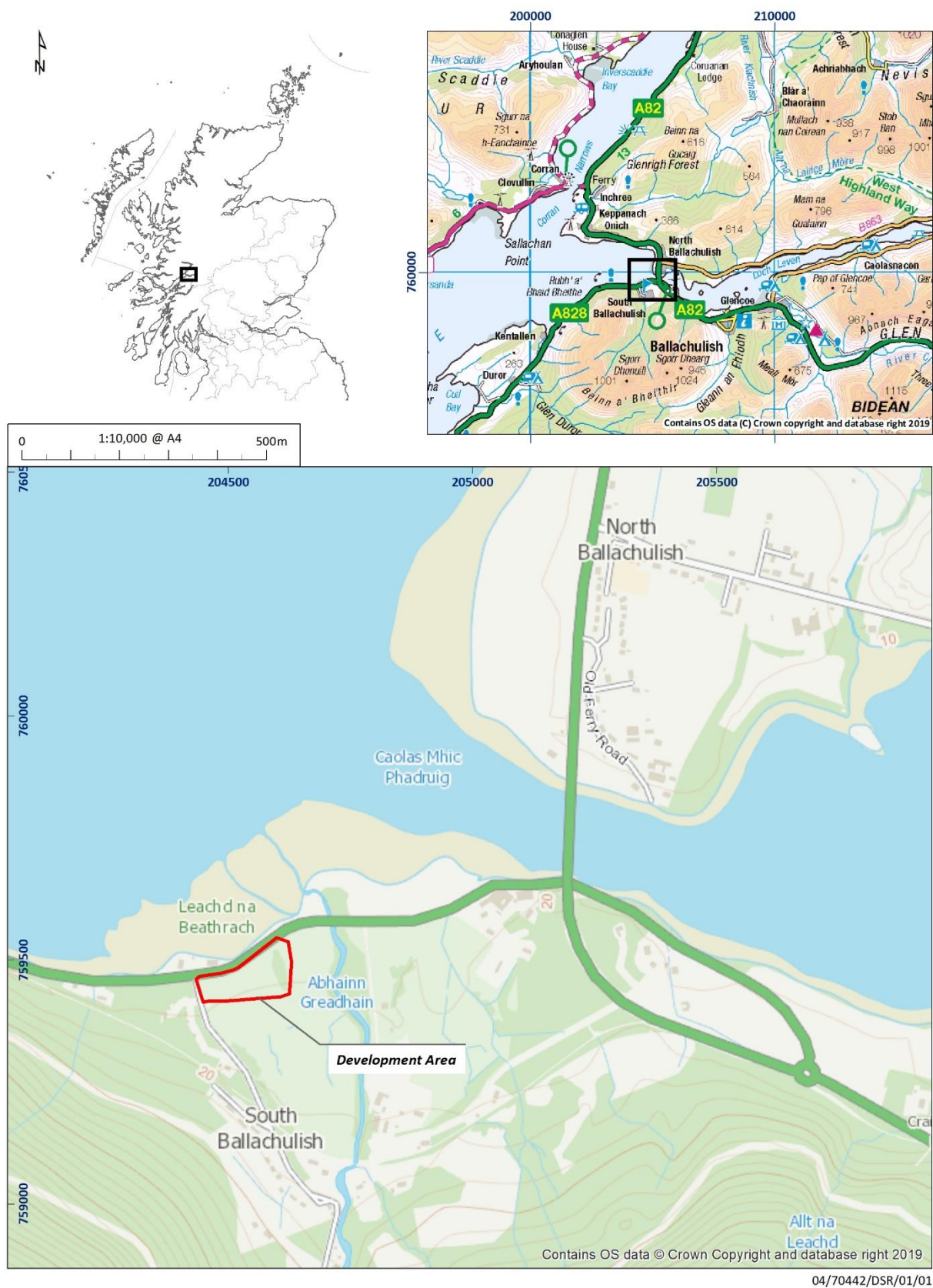


Figure 1: Location of the development site

### 3.0 Desk-based Assessment

#### 3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the watching brief 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), Historic Environment Record, 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 Historic maps were consulted online at the National Library of Scotland (NLS 2019). Early mapping such as Roy's Military map depicts the nearby settlement of "Ballochchulich" and the surrounding landscape. However, the development site is not depicted in detail until the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

**a) Roy Military Map of Scotland, Highlands, 1747-52**

The nearby settlement of "Ballochchulich" is depicted. The development area is depicted as open cultivation with a track or road to the north and light woodland and a watercourse to the east.

**b) James Dorret's General Map of Scotland and islands thereto belonging, 1750.**

"Baleholish" is depicted, but the development area is not shown in detail.

**c) Arron Arrowsmith's Map of Scotland constructed from original materials. South West section, 1807**

"Ballahulish" is depicted, but the development area is not shown in detail.

**d) John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland, Northern Part of Argyll Shire. Southern Part, 1832.**

This map depicts "Ballahulish" and the nearby settlement of Lettermore, but the development area is not shown in detail.

**e) Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map Argyllshire, Sheet XXX (includes: Kilmallie; Lismore And Appin)**

**Survey date: 1870 Publication date: 1875**

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition map shows the development area as forming part of the policies of Ballachulish House to the southeast. Mixed woodland is depicted to the west. The development area appears not to have been cultivated.

**f) Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map Argyll and Bute Sheet XXX.SW (includes: Lismore and Appin)**

**Publication date: 1900 Date revised: 1897**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition is similar to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition map.



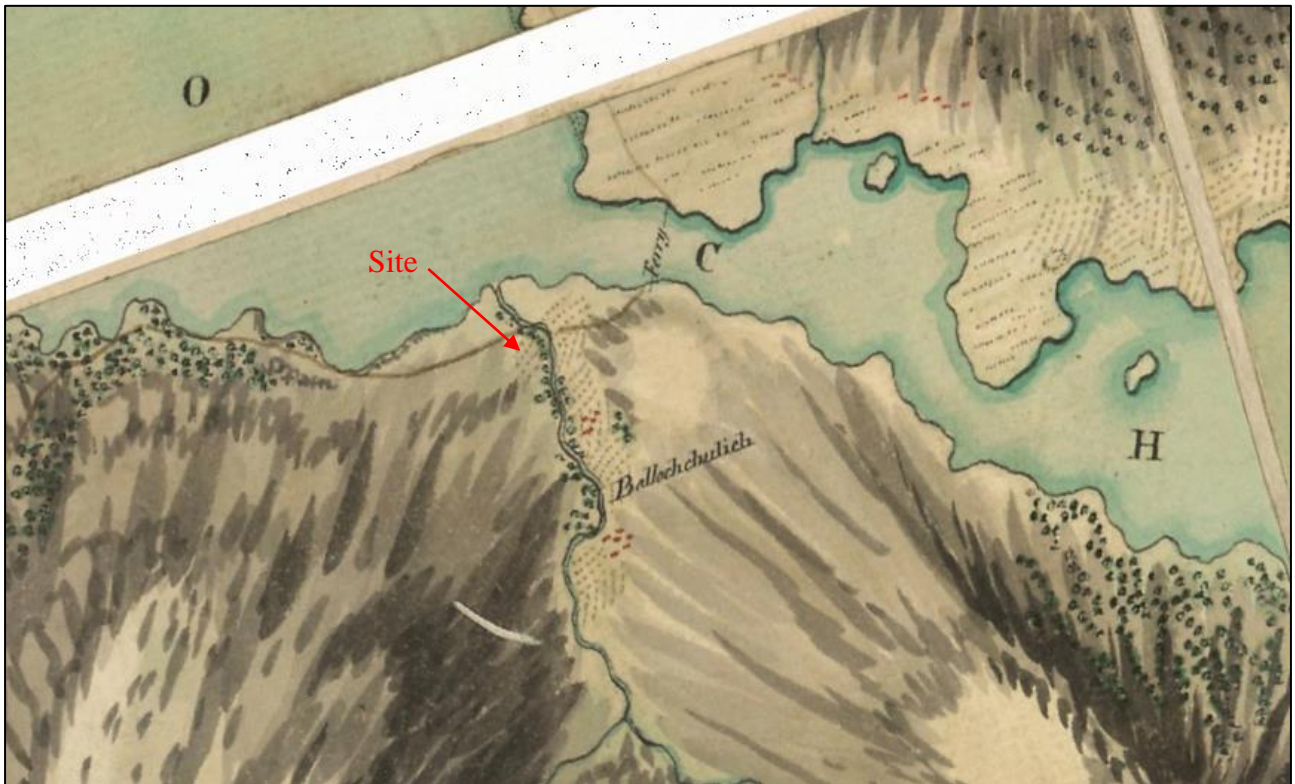


Figure 2: Excerpt from Roy's Military Map of Scotland, Highlands, 1747-52



Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map, 1875



### 3.3 Historic Environment Sources

3.3.1 A full search of the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER), Historic Environment Record and the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), via Canmore was carried out. A total of six archaeological sites were identified within 1km of the development site. Several listed buildings were identified within the area including Ballachulish House and associated features.

3.3.2 An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Ballachulish golf course by J. G. Robertson, in 2001. However, the groundworks for the construction of the golf course had already been completed and no excavated surface was visible for inspection. Some archaeological features may therefore have been removed (Robertson 2001).

3.3.3 Sites located within the surrounding landscape:

**SM4166      NN 4897 59513      Ballachulish Home Farm, burial mound**

The monument comprises a prehistoric burial mound, probably of Bronze Age date, situated approximately 0.40km east of the development area. It has a burial cist, now empty, exposed in its northeast arc. A number of large stones set in the underlying gravel on the southeast side of the mound are probably the remains of an outer kerb.

**MHG4254      NN 0500 5999      North Ballachulish, Burial (Bronze Age)**

A prehistoric grave was found near North Ballachulish, approximately 0.75km northeast of the development area. A unique urn was discovered made of peat, with powdered granite and mica-schist kneaded in to give strength.

**MHG4253      NN 0500 5999      North Ballachulish, Stone Disc**

A perforated stone disc 81mm in diameter of unknown date was found approximately 0.75km northeast of the development area.

**SM3289      NN 5144 60070      Rubha Mor, Cairn**

The monument comprises a large oval pile of stones located approximately 0.85km northeast of the development area.

**MHG4151      NN 0542 5990      Carn an Rudha, Cairn**

A large cairn is situated close behind the hotel at the north side of Ballachulish Ferry, approximately 1km from the development area. Excavations revealed two similar cists situated at the southwest and northeast corners of the cairn. The remains of a kerb consisting of six flat slabs on edge survive around the southwest arc.

**SM7849      NN 5431 60101      North Ballachulish, prehistoric ritual site**

The monument, which is located approximately 1km northeast of the development area, consists of a possible Bronze Age crannog and burial cairn. Several cists, bog butter and the well-known Ballachulish Goddess were found in this general area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.4 Other Sources

The New Statistical Account (1845) refers to antiquities within Ballachulish:

*“There are several of these tumuli on the property of Mr Stuart of Bailechelish, who, a few years ago, began to remove one of them with a view to clear the field in which it stood, of what he believed to be merely a heap of stones, but as the workmen proceeded, they found in the centre of the tumulus a rude stone coffin containing nothing within it, and instead of removing the whole, as was first intended, Mr Stuart, with proper feeling, ordered the sacred relic to be left undisturbed”*

## **4.0 Objectives**

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014a) 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’
- 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 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 within the development area. All work was carried out in accordance with the Highland Council *Standards for Archaeological Work* (2012) and the CIfA *Code of Conduct* (2014b).
- 5.2 The watching brief was carried out as per the programme of works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Fraser 2019).
- 5.3 All features of archaeological significance were cleaned and excavated by hand to establish the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and section drawings were drawn at a scale of 1:10. All significant archaeological features were sampled, in the event post-excavation analysis is deemed necessary.
- 5.4 The archaeological monitoring was recorded using high resolution digital photography to record the process as well as any archaeological features or finds of interest.

## 6.0 Results

- 6.1 The watching brief was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 in conditions that varied from dry and sunny to overcast with some rain. Archaeological visibility was good to fair. The ground-breaking monitored included topsoil stripping for the access track (**Plate 1**), soakaway and septic tank (**Plate 2**), and an area in front of each of the seven pods to accommodate a hot tub and its services (**Plates 3-9**) (**Figure 4**).
- 6.2 The western end of the access track, adjacent to the unclassified road leading to Glenachulish, was not excavated for a distance of 45m as it runs through a tree root zone (**Plate 10**). A second stretch of the access track towards the eastern end was also not excavated for this reason (**Plate 11**). Both sections will simply have terram laid on the surface, which will be covered with tar planings. A few short stretches of the track were not stripped to subsoil level as this depth was not required for the formation of the track. The track as a whole will be lined with terram before being filled with tar planings, thus preserving any potential archaeological features in situ.
- 6.3 The topsoil comprised dark brown loam with occasional sherds of fairly modern pottery. It varied in depth across the site from 0.15m at the top of the slope to 0.60m in lower areas.
- 6.4 The subsoil varied across the site. It generally comprised dark orange/red/brown coarse sand with pea-sized gravel and small stones. Larger stones were visible within the area around Pods 1 and 2, and stones were more frequent on the north side of the site where the ground slopes towards the loch shore. The subsoil changed to coarse sandy silt within areas of the track and Pods 1-4 where sub-surface water was evident.
- 6.5 Faint traces of stone-filled field drains were present within the access track footprint, particularly in the vicinity of a small pond, and similar, better-preserved field drains were found in the hot tub areas for Pods 1 and 2.

## 7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1 The site is located within an area rich in prehistoric archaeology. However, during the work undertaken no archaeological remains were uncovered.
- 7.2 The development area is depicted as uncultivated open grassland on the 19th century Ordnance Survey map. However, the fairly modern pottery found within the topsoil, and several field drains recorded on the site suggests the area has been cultivated in the past. This was confirmed by the client.
- 7.3 Service trenches to link into, and to connect the individual pods to, the existing water and electricity supplies were not completed during the watching brief. However, considering the lack of archaeological features from what constitutes most of the topsoil clearance, it was recommended to the Kirsty Cameron that the watching brief be suspended on the remainder of the works. This was agreed to. No further archaeological works are required.



04/70442/DSR/04/01

Figure 4: Watching brief area





**Plate 1: Excavated track and turning area at east end of site, facing SSE**



**Plate 2: Post-excitation image of soakaway/septic tank area, facing SW**





**Plate 3: Post-excitation image of Pod 1 hot tub area, facing W**



**Plate 4: Post-excitation image of Pod 2 hot tub area, facing E**





**Plate 5: Post-excavation image of Pod 3 hot tub area, facing NE**



**Plate 6: Post-excavation image of Pod 4 hot tub area, facing E**





**Plate 7: Post-excitation image of Pod 5 hot tub area, facing SW**



**Plate 8: Post-excitation image of Pod 6 hot tub area, facing SSW**





**Plate 9: Post-excavation image of Pod 7 hot tub area, facing SW**



**Plate 10: Access track through trees to the road to Glenachulish, not excavated, facing W**





**Plate 11: Image of the unexcavated part of the access track towards the eastern end, facing SSW**

## 8.0 References

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

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## Appendix 1      Photographic Register

Photo No.	Description	Direction Facing	Date
1	Working shot of track excavation	E	21/10/2019
2	Track through tress to the road to Glenachulish, not excavated	W	21/10/2019
3	Track route around golf course	NE	21/10/2019
4	Excavated track	WNW	21/10/2019
5	Excavated track	NE	21/10/2019
6	Excavated track and turning area at east end of site	SSE	21/10/2019
7	Excavated track and turning area at east end of site	NNW	21/10/2019
8	Unexcavated area through trees towards east end of site	SSW	21/10/2019
9	Unexcavated area through trees towards east end of site	SW	21/10/2019
10	Moving west along excavated track	SW	21/10/2019
11	Moving west along excavated track	NW	21/10/2019
12	View west towards end of track	W	21/10/2019
13	View west towards end of track	W	21/10/2019
14	Starting to strip soakaway	N	22/10/2019
15	General view of Pod 4 area in the foreground	NNW	22/10/2019
16	Post-excavation image of soakaway/septic tank	SW	22/10/2019
17	Location of Pod 4, pre-excavation	W	22/10/2019
18	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 4	E	22/10/2019
19	Location of Pod 3, pre-excavation	NW	22/10/2019
20	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 3	NE	22/10/2019
21	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 2	E	22/10/2019
22	Location of Pod 2	SE	22/10/2019
23	Location of Pod1	NW	22/10/2019
24	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 1	W	22/10/2019
25	Location of Pod 5	SE	22/10/2019
26	Location of Pod 5	SE	22/10/2019
27	Location of Pod 6	E	22/10/2019
28	Location of Pod 7	ENE	22/10/2019
29	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 5	SW	22/10/2019
30	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 6	SSW	22/10/2019
31	Post-excavation image of hot tub area for Pod 7	SW	22/10/2019





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