

**Kenneth's Black Well, Culloden Estate:  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Data Structure Report**



**On behalf of:** Muir Homes  
Belleknowes Industrial Estate,  
Inverkeithing,  
Fife  
KY11 1HY

**National Grid Reference (NGR):** NH 7256 4603

**AOC Archaeology Project No:** 3620

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**Timing:** Watching brief  
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## 1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the removal of a structure from the area of Kenneth's Black Well at Culloden, Inverness-shire
- 1.2 The watching brief uncovered no trace of earlier structures or remnant structures as indicated by the cartographic evidence (Dunbar, 2000).

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The main development area lies approximately 5 km to the east of Inverness and on land to the south of Culloden House. It lies behind a number of modern housing developments on elevated ground overlooking the Moray Firth.
- 2.1.2 The development lies within the Highland Council's administrative area, which with respect to archaeological issues, is subject to curatorial advice provided by Highland Council archaeologist Ms. Dorothy Low.
- 2.1.3 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Muir Homes Ltd. to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the removal of a structure at the site of Kenneth's Black Well. This work entailed the machine removal of the standing structure and topsoil to the level of the natural subsoil (C-Horizon) or the first significant archaeological horizon. The programme of works was designed to assess the location, nature, extent, condition and significance of all archaeological remains concerned with the immediate area of Kenneth's Black Well.

### 2.2 Archaeological background

- 2.2.1 A 'Desk Based Assessment', was completed by AOC Archaeology on behalf of Muir Homes Ltd. as an earlier phase of works (Dunbar, 2000).
- 2.2.2 The DBA showed the development area to have been part of the designed landscape of Culloden Estate for approximately 300 years. For the majority of this time the development area has been within the boundaries of Culloden Wood. During this period it has seen little activity other than systematic forestry and felling and general estate management.
- 2.2.3 The only site recognised by the DBA (Dunbar, 2000) is Kenneth's Black Well. This site is first recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map of 1870. It appears as part of a system of land drainage with connecting channels towards Balloch Farm and 'The Kennels'. By the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS map of 1905 Kenneth's Black Well is part of a larger designed landscape. There is now a rectangular enclosing wall around the well. Also present

within the walled area is a small rectangular structure positioned to the north of the well. (See Figure 1)

- 2.2.4 For the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the area around Kenneth's Black Well has been forested. (See Figure 2) A preliminary site visit was undertaken after the removal of the trees. At the site of Kenneth's Black Well was found a small rectangular structure constructed of concrete with a curved roof and a single window. (See Figure 3)

### 3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the watching brief were:

- i) to identify the precise location, condition, character, nature, extent and significance of any archaeological features within the immediate area of Kenneth's Black Well during the removal of the existing standing structure and topsoil.
- ii) to fully excavate and record any archaeological remains identified within the immediate vicinity of Kenneth's Black Well.

### 4. METHOD

#### 4.1 Watching Brief

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was designed to monitor the removal and topsoil stripping of the existing structure at Kenneth's Black Well. Any archaeological remains uncovered during the course of the works would be fully excavated and recorded. All archaeological works were undertaken according to AOC Archaeology's standard practice.
- 4.1.2 A 360° tracked vehicle with a toothless ditching bucket removed the upstanding structure and topsoil under constant archaeological supervision. The immediate area was machine-excavated in shallow spits to the first archaeologically significant surface or C-horizon (subsoil).
- 4.1.3 Highland Council archaeologist, Ms. Dorothy Low was kept fully informed of the progress of the works

### 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The watching brief works were undertaken on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2001. The weather was mainly dry with intermittent rain.
- 5.2 The standing structure measured 2.7 m east to west by 1.3 m north to south. It stood at least 1.4 m above ground with a domed roof. It was dug into the surrounding hillside at least 1.0 m with an internal floor level some 0.5 m

below the ground surface surrounding the structure. In the eastern wall was the only opening into the structure. This opening measured 0.7 m wide by 0.4 m high. The walls of the structure were 0.3 m thick and the building was constructed of concrete.

- 5.3 No traces of any earlier structures were found. No evidence was found of the original well or square enclosing wall as shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS map.
- 5.4 An area approximately 10m<sup>2</sup> was investigated by the watching brief works during the removal of the standing structure

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The structure that was removed corresponds with the cartographic evidence in position and size. Figure 1 shows the detail of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition map of 1905 in which a comparable small structure similarly aligned is depicted. This building is not present in the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map of 1874 and therefore must date to the intervening years.
- 6.2 No trace of any other structure was found during the course of the works. There was no evidence recovered of the structure of the well itself or the enclosing wall.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 No significant archaeological features or *in situ* artefacts were located during the archaeological works and no further works would be recommended.

## 8. REFERENCES:

Dunbar, L.J., 2000 *'Kenneth's Black Well, Culloden: Desk Based Assessment'* AOC Archaeology

Ordnance Survey 1870 *Inverness-shire* Sheet IV.16 (1:2500)

Ordnance Survey 1874 *Inverness-shire* Sheet IV (1:10560)

Ordnance Survey 1905 *Inverness-shire* Sheet IV.16 (1:2500)

Ordnance Survey 1907 *Inverness-shire* Sheet IV (1:10560)

## APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Colour slide/print Film No.1 9<sup>th</sup> October 2001

<b>Frame</b>	<b>F.No.</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>From</b>
1-2		Registration shot	
3-4		General view south to gateway	N
5-6		General view south to gateway	N
7-8		Views of machine stripping, 50m	S
9-10		Views of machine stripping, 50m	S
11-12		E-facing section of topsoil/subsoil	E
13-14		E-facing section of topsoil/subsoil	E
15-16		View of stripping at 65m -100m	S

## APPENDIX 2: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT

<b>Local Authority</b>	Highland Council
<b>Site name</b>	Kenneth's Black Well
<b>Parish</b>	Inverness and Bona
<b>Contributor</b>	Lindsay Dunbar (AOC Archaeology Group)
<b>Type of site</b>	Archaeological Watching Brief
<b>NGR</b>	NH 7256 4603

**Report** A watching brief was undertaken during the removal of a small structure from the area known as Kenneth's Black Well. The well was situated within Culloden Wood and was about to become part of a housing development. The well and associated structures were recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS maps and formed part of the overall designed landscape of Culloden House Estate. The existing structure was constructed of concrete and appeared to be a late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century building. The watching brief works found no traces of any earlier structures or evidence of the well itself.

Sponsor: Muir Homes Ltd.

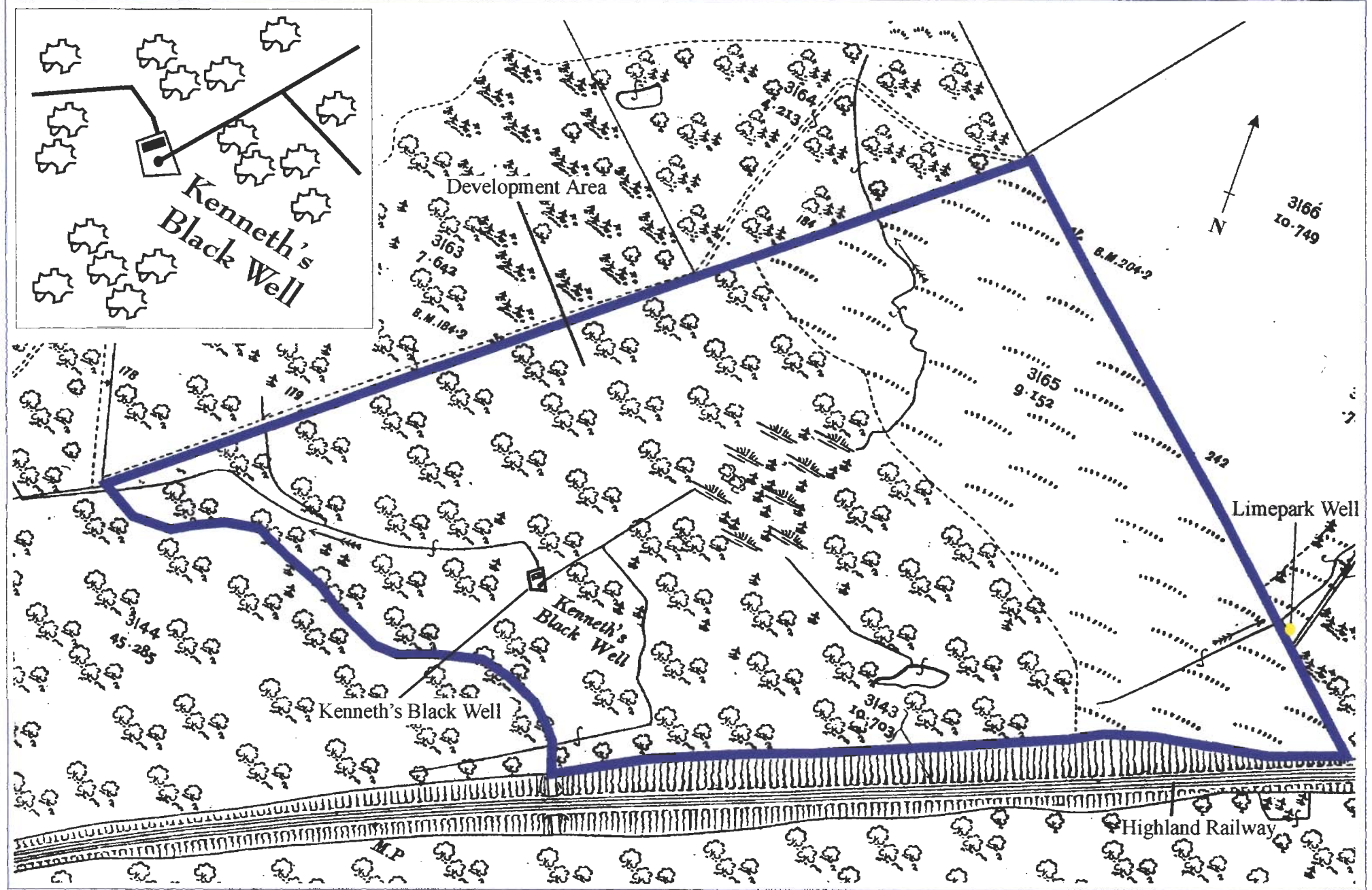


Figure 1 : 2nd Edition OS Map, 1905, Inverness-shire, Sheet 4.16, 1:2500 with detail of Kenneth's Black Well





Figure 2 View of structure before development



Figure 3 View of structure before immediately removal