

Archaeological Watching Brief

Cullnacnoc

by Staffin

Isle of Skye

PLANNING REF. 01/00149/FULSL

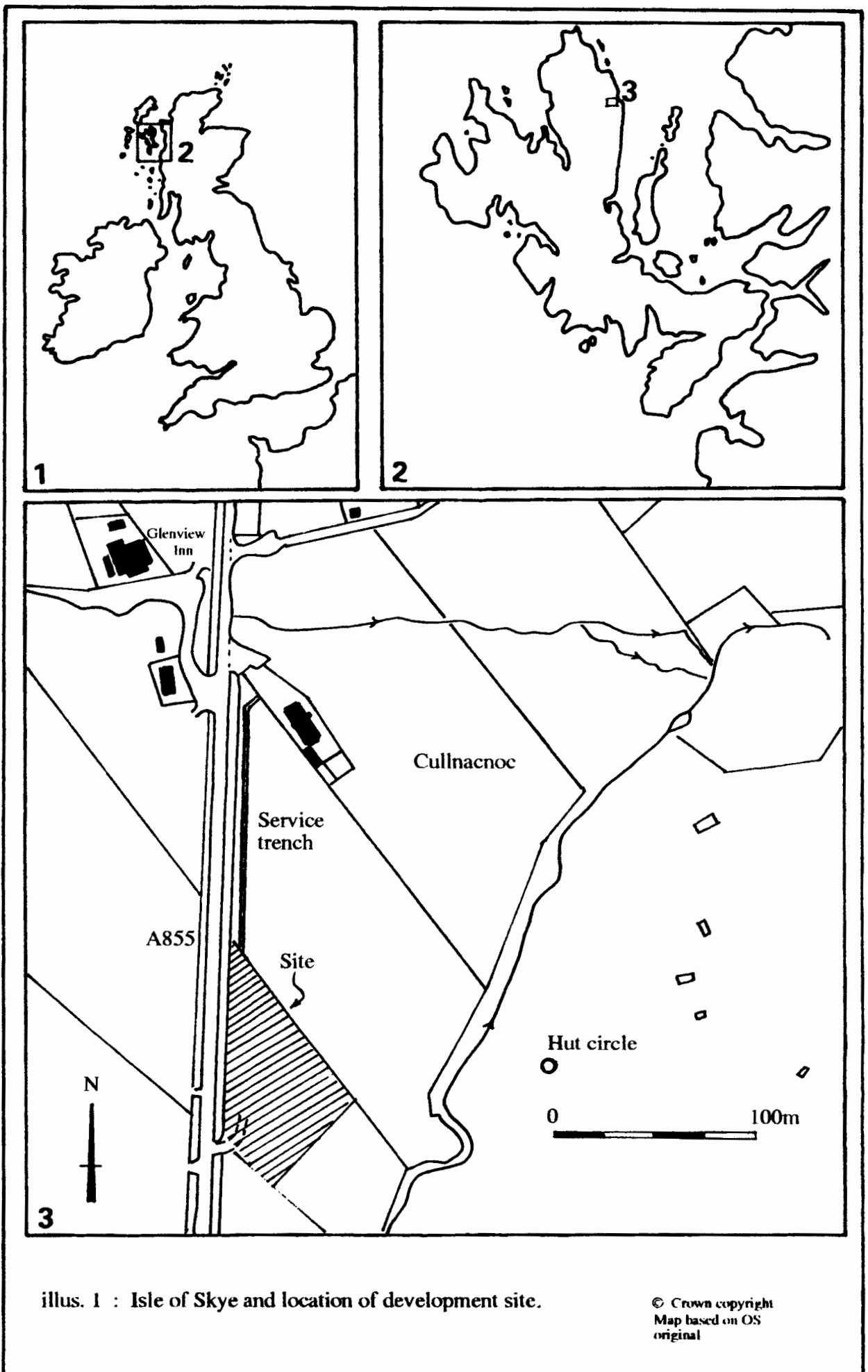
By

Martin Wildgoose

5th October 2001

For

Mr Donald MacLeod



Planning Application no. 01/00149/FULSL

A watching brief carried out during the excavation of a platform for a new house and it's associated service trenches. The watching brief was triggered by the sites close proximity to a recorded hut circle at NG 5172 6223

INTRODUCTION

The house site lies 140 metres to the west of the recorded hut circle, close to the east side of the A855, on a natural platform fronted by a small outcrop of Basalt. (illus. 1)

The proximity of the development to the recorded hut circle triggered the inclusion of a watching brief as an integral part of the approval of the planning application.

The site works were carried out on the 26th and 27th of September during a spell of fine sunny weather. The service trench was excavated on the 3rd of October on a wet and very windy day. The excavation was carried out by a 'Cat' tracked excavator, with a toothless ditching bucket, as specified in the watching brief outline supplied by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit. (see appendix 1)

1. THE WATCHING BRIEF

1.1 Objectives

To carry out a site evaluation and watching brief on the excavation of a 15 metre by 28 metre house platform and it's associated service trench at Cullnacnoc by Staffin, Isle of Skye.

1.2 Results

The site lies in the centre of a small field that has been intensively cultivated over many years. The service trench runs from the north corner of the site, parallel to the A855, for 120 metres in a northerly direction.

The plough-soil was stripped in 2 x 150mm levels revealing clean, orange, sand based subsoil. Four small features were visible cut in to the surface of the underlying subsoil. None of these features were visible during the stripping of the plough soil. Each of these features was photographed, half sectioned and recorded. Each is described below. (See illus. 2 for positions within the area stripped.)

1.2.1 Feature 1

A square cut, with sharply defined sides and bottom, measuring 250mm on a side and measuring 10mm deep at its south side falling to 20mm deep at its north side. A single deposit of black silty soil filled the cut. There were no finds.

1.2.2 Feature 2

A shallow 'U' shaped depression visible intermittently across the entire width of the stripped area on a northwest to southeast alignment. The depression was filled with plough-soil. The depression varied in width from 20mm to 150mm and also varied in depth - in some places barely scratching the surface of the subsoil, in others penetrating to a depth of 50mm.

1.2.3 Feature 3

An egg shaped depression lying on a roughly north to south alignment and measuring 450mm long by 300mm wide and 60mm deep at its deepest point. The depression was filled with plough-soil. A single sherd of Scottish Sponge Ware (brown pattern on white background) was recovered from the fill.

1.2.4 Feature 4

An irregular but roughly circular spread of orange peat ash lying in a shallow depression cut in the sub-soil. Measures some 550mm in overall diameter and was nowhere more than 5-6mm deep.

1.2.5 Finds

In addition to the pottery sherd recovered from feature 3, a further seven sherds of pottery were collected during the removal of the plough-soil.

2. CONCLUSIONS

2.1 Feature 1

This small feature was not visible during the stripping of the plough-soil. It must therefore be assumed that it either pre-dates the cultivation of the field or is later than the initial cultivation, in both instances its upper part appears to have been ploughed away. The sharply defined sides and sloping base of the feature are similar to that produced using a metal spade. The fill was a fine grained, black soil containing small char fragments.

Date and function unknown.

2.2 Feature 2

Again this feature was not visible in the plough-soil. The plough-soil formed its only fill. The alignment of this feature exactly parallels the field boundary and its position lies directly below a visible but grassed over ploughing furrow.

A cut in the sub-soil made by a plough point during cultivation of the field.

2.3 Feature 3

Once again this feature was not visible during the initial stripping. Its only fill consisted of plough-soil. It was noted, during excavation of the house site, that naturally occurring rounded boulders, lying part in the subsoil, left identical depressions when removed by the mechanical excavator.

The sherd of Scottish Sponge Ware provides a *terminus post quem** of circa 1830/40 for the fill of the hollow.

A depression, subsequently filled with plough soil, left by the removal of a natural rounded boulder at some point during the cultivation of the field. Post mid 19th century.

2.4 Feature 4

Again this feature was not visible during the removal of the plough-soil. It must therefore be assumed that it either predates the cultivation of the field or, if later than the initial cultivation that its upper part has been ploughed away.

A small ?hearth of uncertain date.

2.5 Finds

The seven sherds of pottery recovered during removal of the plough-soil consist of :-

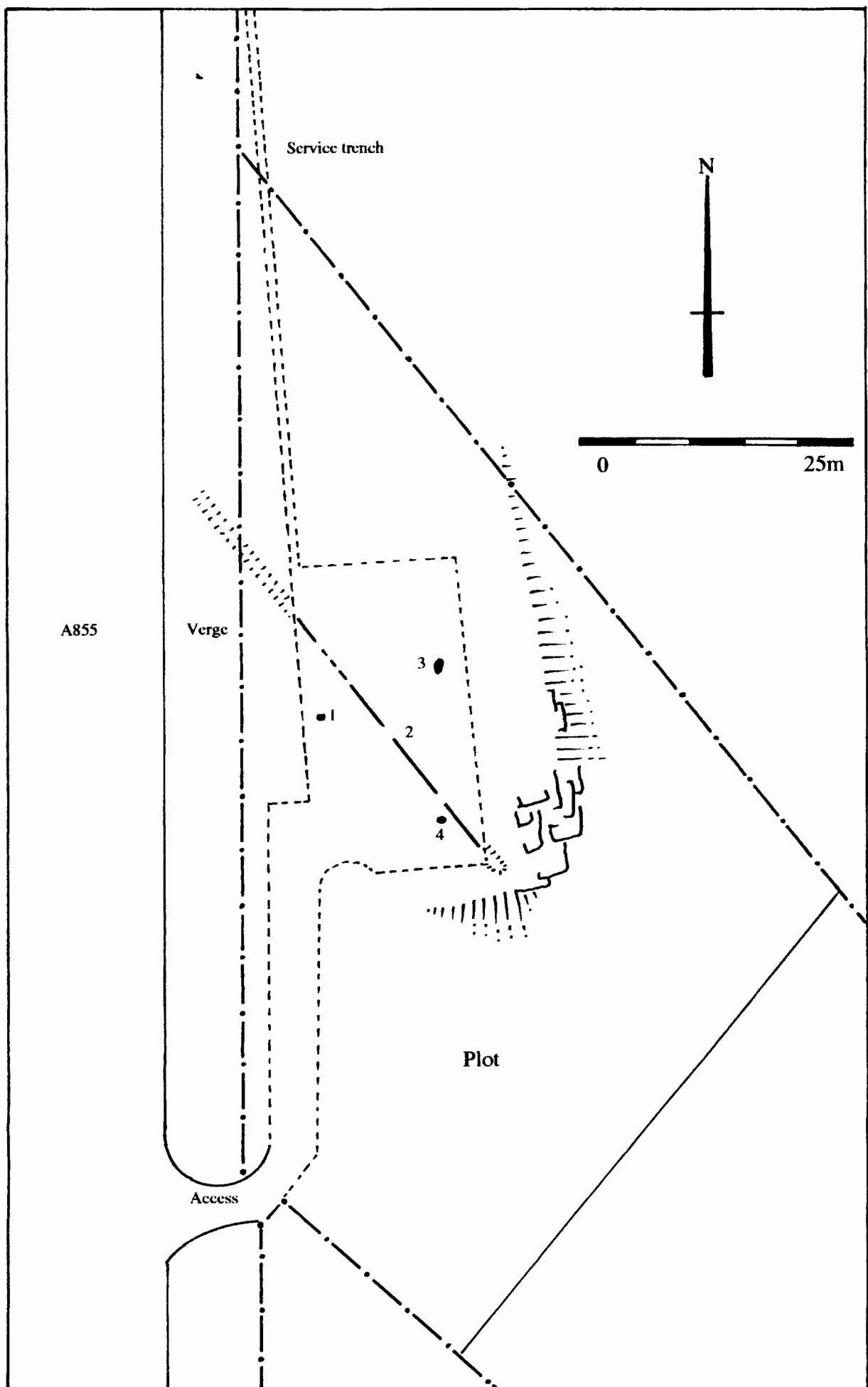
One large and one small sherd of blue on white Scottish Sponge Ware.

Four small sherds of white under glaze ware.

One small sherd of blue and white striped ware (milk jug)

All seven sherds are 19th/20th century in date. They were discarded at the end of the watching brief.

A date **after which the fill of this feature must have been deposited i.e. the fill of this hollow could not have been deposited before the pottery sealed within it was made, in this case the first half of the 19th century.*



Illus. 2 : Location of features 1 - 4 within excavated area.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The four features recovered during the watching brief, although interesting, are not of an archaeologically sensitive nature and should not affect the continuation of development on the site.

There are no further recommendations regarding this site.

4. LOCATION OF RECORDS

All records and site drawings are held in the archive of :- Martin Wildgoose
Tigh an Dun
Dunan
Broadford
Isle of Skye
IV49 9AJ

Tel. 01471 822562

A set of colour slides is deposited with the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

5. REFERENCES (Hut circle)

Dualchas Sites and Monuments Record Card no. NG56 SW 06

End

Martin Wildgoose
5th October 2001

Appendix 1

The Archaeological Brief

Brief for archaeological work at:

Culnaknock

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

1. Background

This specification has been produced in response to the need for an archaeological watching brief to be carried on site ground works. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted

2. Terms of Reference

This specification is for archaeological recording work occasioned by planning application no. 01/00149/FULSL. It is based on these documents. If these details are changed a new specification will be needed. It is valid until August 1st 2002 after which if no work has been carried out a revised specification will be needed.

The specification has been produced for the applicant, who will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements. Estimates should be obtained from archaeological contractors on the basis of this specification

Any reference to 'archaeologist' in this specification is to be taken to mean a qualified and experienced practitioner acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist. This is to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The project should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists or an archaeologist of equivalent standing.

Before site works commence, the proposed arrangements, including a timetable for the work must be agreed with the Area Planning Manager, and the Senior Archaeologist in writing.

If this is for a road or water or sewerage proposal the area to be covered is the entire wayleave except where otherwise indicated.

3. Tendering

Tenders must be accompanied by a project design, statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director, and other staff where possible.

4. Objectives

1. To record, to professional standards, any features and objects of archaeological importance that will be damaged or destroyed by this development. This is often achieved by clearing the topsoil to a clean surface in which archaeological features can be identified by the archaeologist.

5. Method

- A watching brief will be conducted by an archaeologist on site groundworks, including service trenches so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards.
- Those carrying out site works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. Where machinery is to be used for topsoil stripping, a straight-edged bucket must be used on a back acting machine. Care will need to be taken to avoid over excavation, and the advice of the archaeologist on-site should be adhered to regarding this.
- The archaeologist must be given every aid by contractors to enable the archaeological work to be carried out. Contractors may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. This must be catered for and adhered to.
- **Should archaeological remains be encountered during the work, the archaeologist must be allowed up to one hour to record each feature. If longer than this is required, refer to paragraph 6.IV.**
- Where this is a watching brief for road, water, or sewerage proposals the specification includes drainage and other ancillary works as well as the carriageway itself.

6. Monitoring

- The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor projects to ensure that specifications are met.
- Monitoring will normally be by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
- Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names and local addresses, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Senior Archaeologist by the archaeologist contracted to carry out the work.
- **Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or any other unexpected occurrences or conditions which might affect the agreed project work or its timetable or cost must be notified immediately to the client and the Senior Archaeologist. Revised arrangements will be required and the archaeologist must organize a site meeting with the applicant/agent and senior archaeologist to agree a course of action. No further archaeological work should take place upon the features requiring extra time until the meeting has been held and appropriate arrangements agreed. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.**
- Where archaeological work fails to meet this specification the applicant will be in breach of the planning condition until matters are rectified.

7. Reporting

Project report

At least five copies of the project report must be produced.

- I. One paper copy for the applicant.
- II. One paper copy for the Area Planning and Building Control Manager,
- III. One paper copy for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX where it will be available for immediate consultation by the public.
- IV. A copy of the complete report in Adobe Acrobat format (ie a pdf file). This can be supplied by email or on a computer disc. Please ensure that all drawings and photographs are included.
- V. One paper copy to be deposited with Norman Newton, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness.

The report must be submitted to all of the above within 2 weeks of the completion of the field work.

The report must include, as a minimum,

1. Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected. Grid references must be included.
2. Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification
3. Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork
4. Scale plans, and photographs of all archaeological features noted
5. A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location

6. A brief analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of the results for future research. Note that a negative result may itself be significant.
7. General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project
8. A set of colour slides illustrating the project progress from start to completion.

The completed report will be available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, the Archaeology Unit reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. Subject to this, copyright will remain with the author unless specifically transferred in writing, and the Archaeology Unit will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. Copyright will be acknowledged in all cases by the Archaeology Unit.

This specification includes arranging a presentation of the project results to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. Arrangements must be agreed with the Senior Archaeologist.

8. Treasure Trove

The Archaeological Contractor must liaise with the Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery prior to the start of fieldwork, regarding possible emergency conservation needs and future storage arrangements. The Assistant Curator will in turn notify the local museum of the fact that there is archaeological work ongoing in the area. Should museum staff wish to visit the site whilst the archaeological work is in progress, they must first gain permission from the site owner/agent. **The site owner/agent must be aware that no one, other than the Council's Planning Officer, in consultation with the Archaeology Unit, has the authority to vary the terms of this specification.**

Provision must also be made for a cataloguing system for artefactual material, which will be compatible with the needs of the institution receiving these finds. Any report to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer must be copied to the Senior Archaeologist, and the Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery. Any finds, where appropriate, should also be reported to the Receiver of Wreck.

9. Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council For Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The cost of this must be included in any tender document.

10. General

1. The archaeologist appointed must be of a professional standing acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist and must carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
2. The main contractor has responsibility for the Health and Safety of any archaeological staff on site.
3. The archaeologist is responsible for taking all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurance.
4. Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.
5. The archaeologist must agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Senior Archaeologist
6. The archaeologist appointed will not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the Senior Archaeologist
7. Proper provision must be made for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.
8. The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this specification.

Dorothy Low

Archaeologist

Friday, 31 August 2001

Appendix 2

List of slides (Highland Archaeology Unit copy only)

Slide no.	Subject (scale in cm divisions)
1.	Site at start of stripping
2.	Site at start of stripping
3.	Feature 1 in plan
4.	Feature 1 in section
5.	Feature 2 in plan
6.	Feature 2 in section
7.	Feature 3 in plan
8.	Feature 3 in section
9.	Feature 4 in plan
10.	Feature 4 in section
11.	General view of site after stripping
12.	General view of site after stripping
13.	Service trench from south end
14.	Service trench from south end