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Croft 4, Gillen

Waternish, Isle of Skye

NG 26755960

An

Archaeological Recording Brief

July 1999

Martin Wildgoose

On behalf of

Mr and Mrs Alasdair MacLeod

For

The Highland Council Archaeological Unit

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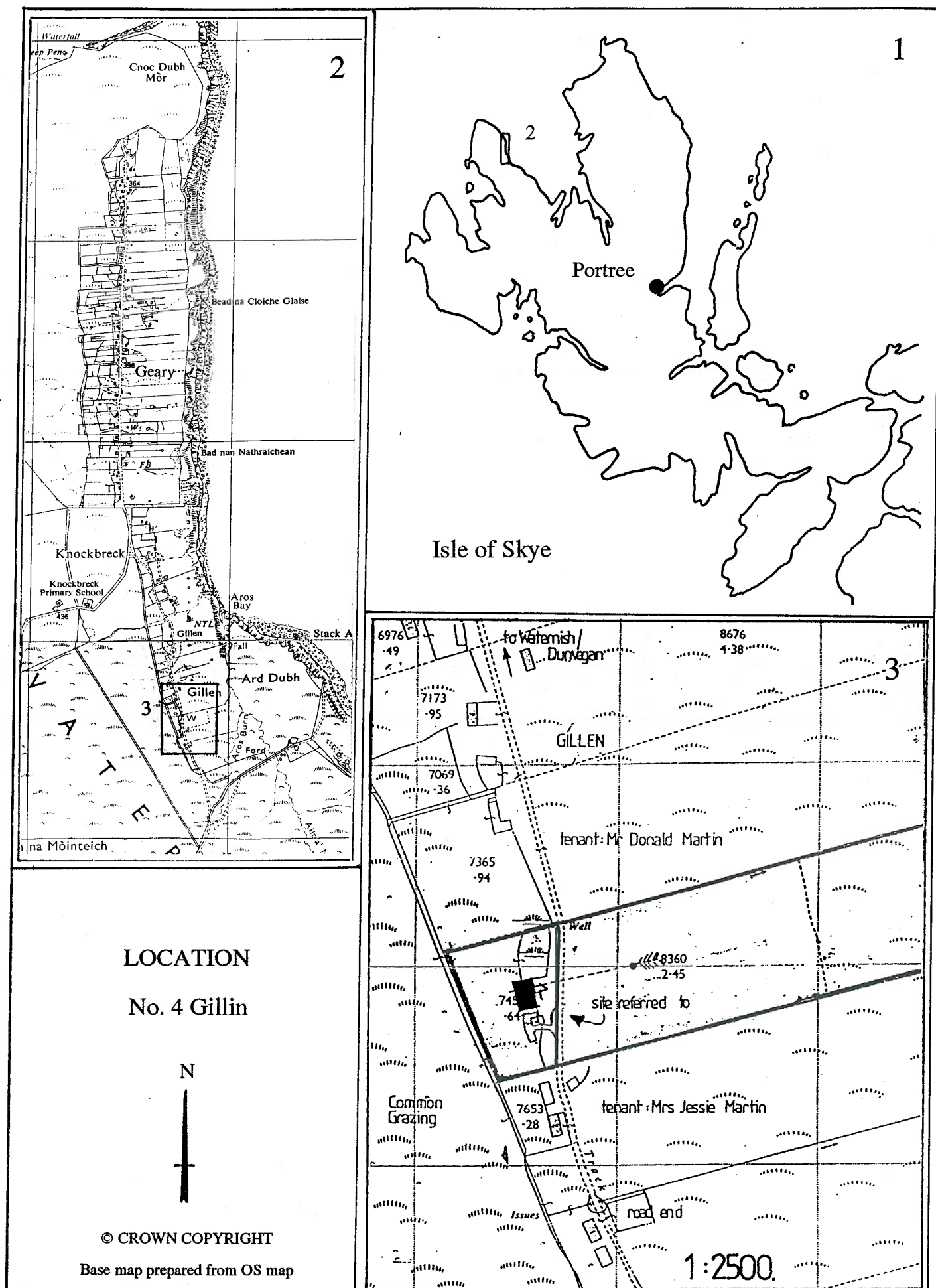


Fig 1 : Location - Croft 4, Gillin, Waternish, Isle of Skye

A survey of the standing buildings and associated yards and enclosures prior to demolition and redevelopment.

SUMMARY

The survey and recording of the standing remains of the croft house and its associated structures, yards and enclosures was carried out on the 1st and 2nd of July 1999. The structures were recorded at a scale of 1:100. An overall plan of the site was also made, at a scale of 1:200, showing the spatial relationship of all the remains on the building plot. The work was carried out during a spell of wet and windy weather.

The owners, Mr and Mrs Alasdair MacLeod, intend to sell on the stone generated by the demolition of the standing buildings.

INTRODUCTION

Croft 4, Gillen is a family croft which has been in Mr MacLeods family since at least 1891. The House was abandoned in 1930 when the family moved to No. 6 Gillen.* Mr and Mrs Alasdair MacLeod of 41 Scotsblair Avenue, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow applied for planning permission, to erect a new dwelling on the site, in the spring of 1999. The development plans involved the demolition of the existing house and byre and its associated yards and enclosures. This being the submitted intent the Highland Archaeologist required that the existing buildings, and all related features, be recorded prior to the start of site works. The following report details the results of the archaeological recording.

A copy of the specification for the Archaeological Recording Brief is included as Appendix A at the back of the report.

* Appendix B : Abstract from the Waternish Tenantry.

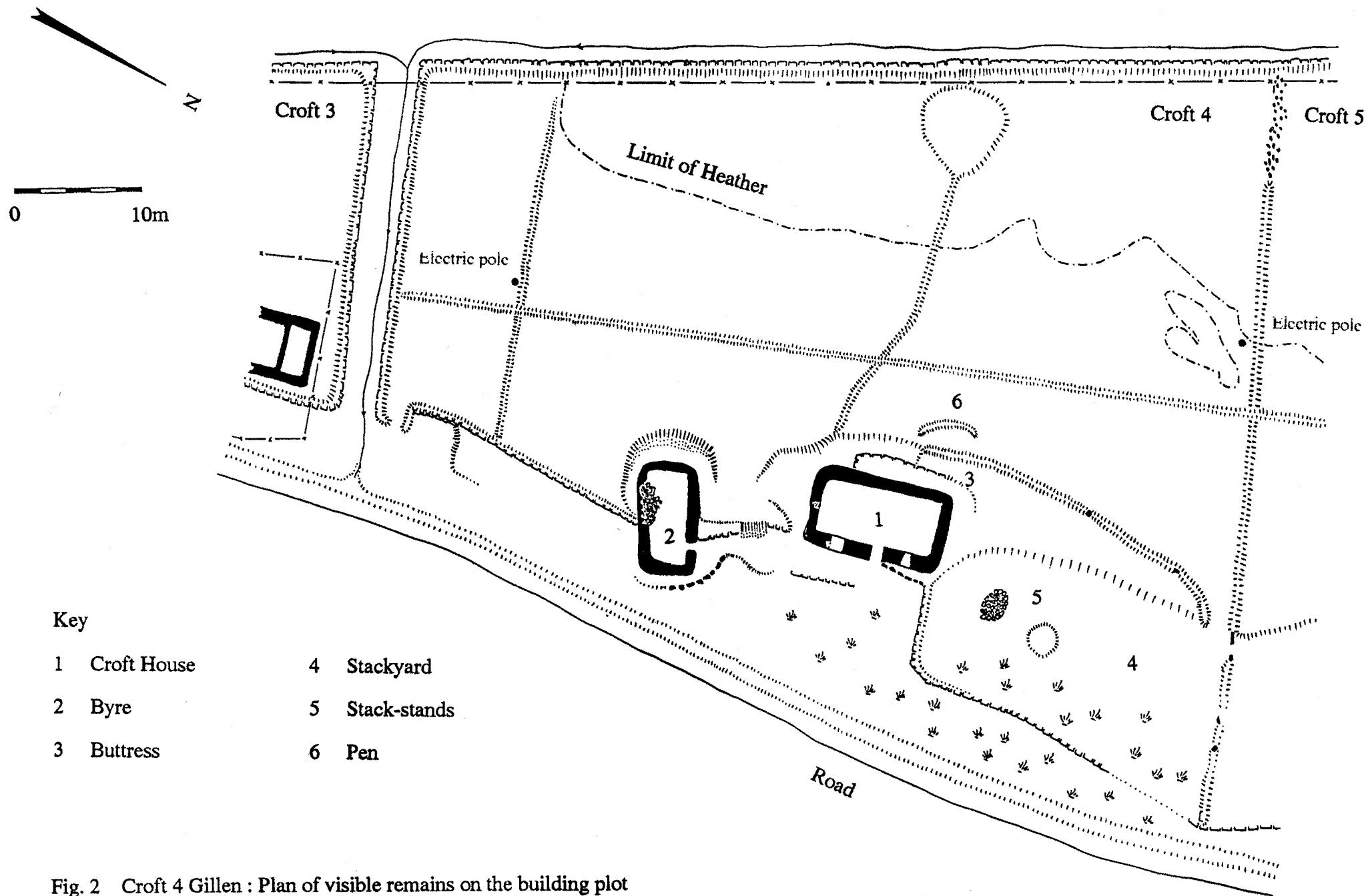


Fig. 2 Croft 4 Gillen : Plan of visible remains on the building plot

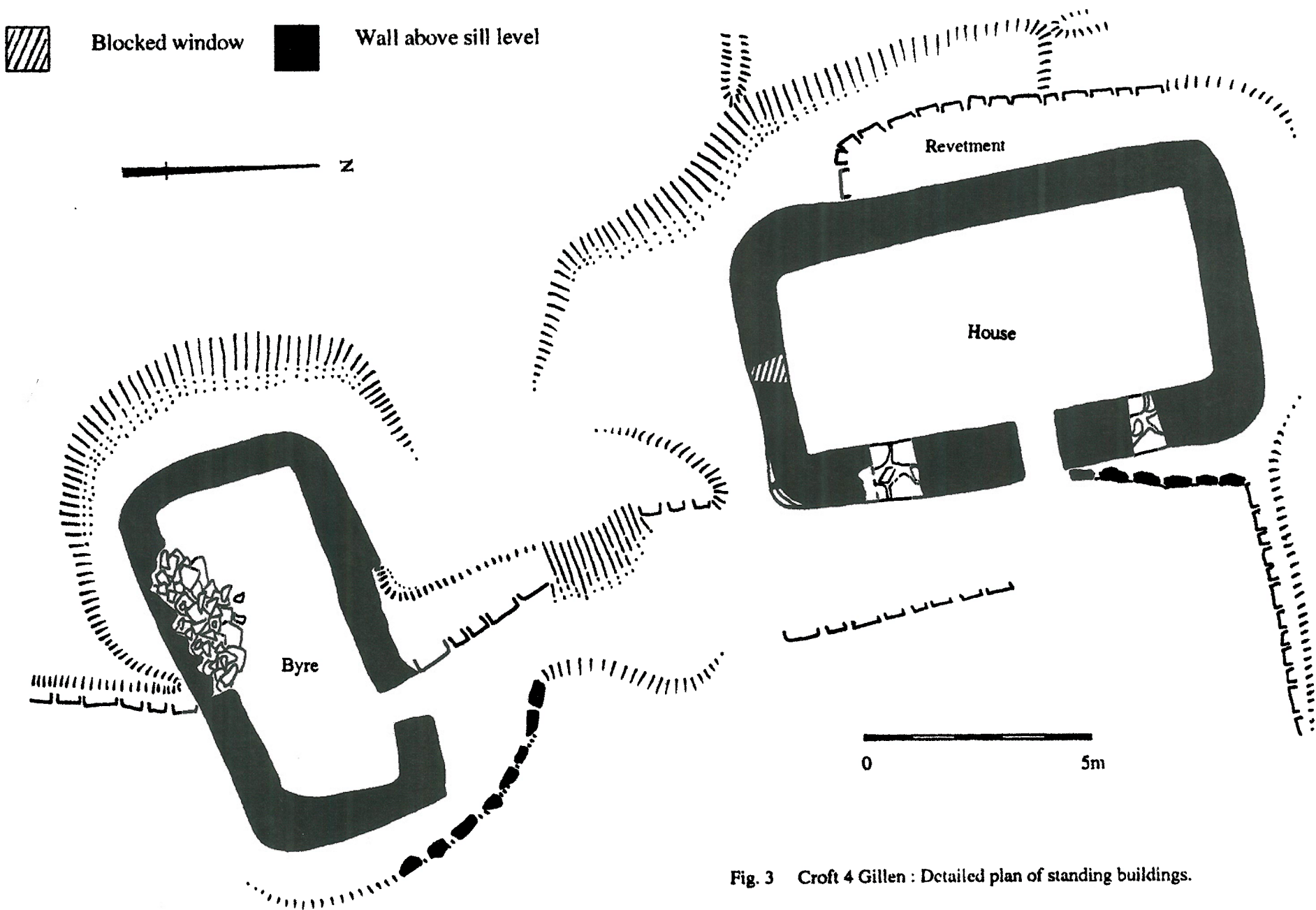


Fig. 3 Croft 4 Gillen : Detailed plan of standing buildings.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The building plot in question lies on a gentle east facing slope at the upper east end of Croft 4, Gillen on the Isle of Skye. It measures some 70.00 metres long by 60.00 metres wide at the north end and 35.00 metres wide at the south end. The plot is currently unenclosed. The plot lies on the west side of the present township road some 70 metres north of the turning circle at the end of the road.

Within the confines of the plot are the remains of two buildings :-

1. The croft house
2. A byre

Both these structures are drystone built and are of locally won stone which has been rough dressed on one face. Almost all the pins have dropped out of the wall faces leaving voids between the facing stones. The wall cores, where visible are filled with a light brown to orange, friable, soil mixed with small stones. The wall cores are riddled with rabbit burrows. To the north of the house and running down to the road is an enclosed stackyard containing two stack stands. Immediately to the west of the house are the remains of a small turf walled pen. On the slope above, and to the west of, the house are the remains of field boundaries. All these elements are described in detail below.

1. The House

Building 1, the former croft house, lies on a NNW to SSE alignment and faces the road, being some 15.00 metres distant from the road edge. It lies on a negative platform cut into the gently sloping hillside. The building measures 11.40 metres long by 6.60 metres wide over walls which vary in width from 1.30 metres on the front (east) side to 0.80 metre at the south-east corner. The walls survive to a height of 1.75 metres for almost the entire circuit. This was probably the height of the original wall head. All the external corners are rounded with the south-east corner having a strengthened footing to prevent slippage down the slope. The internal corners are squared and well knitted together indicating a building of single period construction. The interior of the building is level and grass covered. The east facing wall has a door opening 0.90 metre wide which lies 3.60 metres from the north-east internal corner. The door is flanked, on both sides, by well made widow embrasures. The northern window embrasure measures 0.60 metre wide on the inside and 0.90 metre on the outside. The lintel is missing and the sill is 0.65 metre above current ground surface both inside and out. The southern window embrasure measures 0.95 metre on the inside, the outer part however has partially collapsed and it is not possible to measure the width. The surviving portions however suggest that this window was the same width in and out, unlike the

northern example. Again the lintel is missing and the sill is 0.55 metre above the current ground surface. A third window can be seen - blocked - in the south end wall of the house. This blocked window lies centrally in the length of the wall and measure 0.80 metre on the inside and 0.30 metre on the outside. There are no window openings in any of the other walls. There is no fire-place or chimney stack. To the rear (west side) of the house, and butting against the outer face of the wall, is a large, stone built , buttress. This buttress stands to half the height of the wall.

2. The byre

The byre lies on a platform cut into the east facing hill slope, at right angles to, and 9.00 metres to the south of ,the house on a WSW to ESE alignment. It measures 9.10 metres long by 5.00 metres wide over walls which vary in width from 1.30 metre at the south-east corner to 0.65 metre at the north-west corner. The walls, which are dry stone built, stand to a maximum height of 1.75 metres - probably the original wall head. A section of the internal face at the south-western end of the south wall has collapsed inwards revealing the earth core of the wall. All the external corners, except the north-east, are rounded. The north-east corner is squared and more strongly built - perhaps to give strength to the nearby door opening. The internal corners are all squared, the two east internal corners however are not true right angles the south-east corner being about 105 degrees and the north-east corner 85 degrees. This difference in angle results in the gable wall decreasing in thickness from south to north. The door opening lies in the north wall 2.00 metres from the east end and is 0.70 metre wide on the inside and 1.00 metre wide on the outside. There are no window openings. The interior is level and grass covered except for that part covered by fallen walling.

The stackyard

To the north of the house and abutting its north end is an enclosed stackyard which measures 25.00 metres north to south by 17.00 metres east to west overall. The west side of the stackyard is enclosed by an earth and stone dyke 1.00 metre wide and now only 0.35 of a metre high. The north side is the boundary dyke between crofts 4 and 5 , this also measures 1.00 metre wide and stands 0.35 of a metre high. The eastern side and the eastern half of the south side comprise a stone faced revetment wall - standing 1.00 metre high - the surface of the stackyard being level with its top. The north gable of the house makes up the remainder of the south side of the stackyard. Within the stackyard are the remains of two stack stands. The southern and nearest to the house comprises a laid stone base which measures 2.90 metres long by 2.00 metres wide. The northern stand is a circular, raised turf, platform 0.25 metre high which measures 2.60 metres in diameter.

KEY

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1 Croft House | 4 Stackyard |
| 2 Byre | 5 Stack-stands |
| 3 Buttress | 6 Pen |

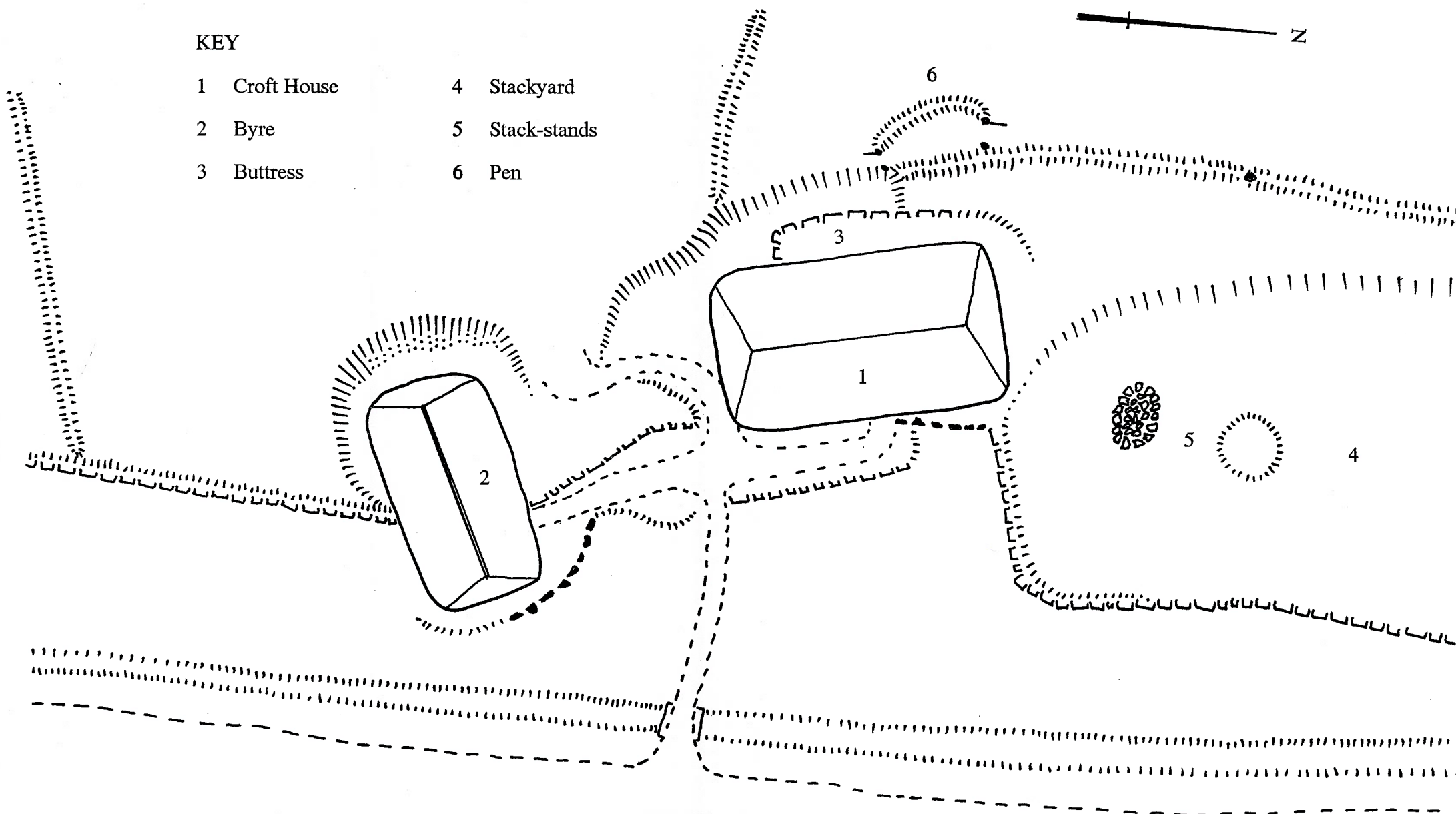


Fig. 4 Croft 4, Gillen : A reconstruction based on the visible remains. (see fig. 2)

The pen

Immediately to the west of the house and butting up to the outer west face of the stackyard wall is a degraded turf pen? This structure measures 5.00 metres long by 1.20 metres at its south end and 1.50 metres at its north end with a maximum width of 2.10 metres. This structure is now reduced to a low turf bank 1.00 metre wide and standing nowhere above 0.25 of a metre high. The interior is slightly hollowed.

Signs of enclosure

Lying up slope and west of the house / byre complex are the remains of three field boundaries.

12 metres to the south of the byre is a low turf bank which runs east - west up / down the slope. This bank measures 0.90 metre wide and stands 0.30 of a metre high and is contained within the croft boundaries.

Running from the south-west corner of the house , up the slope, in a westerly direction is a similar turf bank which terminates in a low mound just within the upper croft boundary.

Running at right angles to these two boundaries, and overlying both, is a very slight, continuous, turf bank which measures 0.50 metre wide and only 0.15 metre high. This bank starts at the inside face of the southern boundary of croft 4 and continues northwards through crofts 4, 5 and 6. This bank probably represents the line of a now missing post and wire fence.

Conclusions

The buildings on croft 4 appear, from available evidence, to be of one period and to have been conceived and constructed as a single unit*. At some time during the life of the house a buttress was added to the outer face of the rear (western) wall and the small window in the south end was blocked. Local records** state that the Macleod family left Croft 4 in 1930 and moved to Croft 6 just 100 metres to the north. Croft 4 was probably abandoned at this time and has been slipping into dereliction ever since. At some time after the abandonment of Croft 6 a wire fence was erected across the slope behind the house. The fact that this wire fence runs from croft 4 through croft 5 too croft 6 may indicate that the MacLeod family continued to farm the land on croft 4, along with crofts 5 and 6 after they moved.

* See also Croft 4 Upper Halistra. An Archaeological Watching Brief. 1998

** Appendix B - The Waternish Tenantry 1999. The Tuesday Club, Waternish

Recommendations

An archaeologist should be present to record photographically, and if necessary by measured drawing, all features exposed when the buildings are demolished and foundation and service trenches are dug.

END

All records and site drawings are held in the archive of

M Wildgoose
Tigh an Dun
Dunan
Broadford
Isle of Skye
IV49 9AJ

Tel 01471 822562

Retained records include:-

Site drawing on drafting film of all features on the building plot @ 1:200

Site drawing on drafting film of the house and byre @ 1:100

Written site notes relating to the plans

SLIDE INDEX

1. Overall view of the house (back) and byre (front) from the south-east.
2. The interior of the byre from the east end.
3. Looking across the house from the south-east corner.
4. Detail: the east jamb of the entrance to the byre.
5. Interior view of the blocked window in the south end of the house.
6. The southern window opening in the east wall of the house.
7. General view of the site from the north-west, looking over the house and byre.
8. The low bank that runs through Crofts 4, 5 and 6 (line of the old wire fence).

The scale used in the photographs is a 2.00 metre pole divided into 20cm divisions.

APPENDIX A

**Specification for Archaeological work at :
4 Gillen, Hallin, Isle of Skye**

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

**Specification for archaeological work at:
4 Gillen, Hallin, Isle of Skye**

BUILDING RECORDING

1. Background

This specification has been produced in response to the need for an archaeological recording exercise to be carried out prior to site works. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted.

Details supplied appear to indicate that the site works will involve the destruction of somecrofting remains. It is important that these remains are rapidly recorded prior to their destruction.

2. Terms of Reference

This specification is for archaeological recording work occasioned by planning application no. SL/99/168. It is based on these documents. If these details are changed a new specification will be needed. This brief is valid until December 1999 after which if no work has been carried out a revised specification will be needed.

The specification has been produced for Mr and Mrs Alasdair MacLeod 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 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 or historical importance which will be damaged or destroyed by this development.

5. Method

A ground plan of the whole development site must be made at a scale not exceeding 1:500. Individual archaeological features must be planned at a scale of no more than 1:100. A comprehensive set of colour slides must be produced to illustrate all features of the archaeological remains. These slides must be indexed.

6. Monitoring

- I. The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor projects to ensure that specifications are met.
- II. Monitoring will normally be by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
- III. 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.
- IV. 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 so that revised arrangements can be made.
- V. Where archaeological work fails to meet this specification the applicant will be in breach of the planning condition until matters are rectified.

7. Reporting

7.1. Project report

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

- I. One paper copy for the applicant: Mr and Mrs Alasdair MacLeod, 41 Scotsblair Avenue, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 4AG
- II. One paper copy for the Area Planning and Building Control Manager, Kings House, The Green, Portree, IV51 9BS
- 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. One copy for the Highland SMR as above, on a computer disk in a format compatible with Microsoft Office 95 for Windows.
- V. One paper copy to be deposited with Norman Newton, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Longman Industrial Estate, Inverness.

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

The report must include, as a minimum,

1. Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected
2. Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification
3. Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork
4. Plans, as specified and photographs of archaeological features noted
5. A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location
6. Details of any measures proposed to mitigate the impact of the application on the archaeological resource
7. 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.
8. General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project
9. 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 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.

7.2. Treasure Trove

The Project Director 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. 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. Any finds, where appropriate, should also be reported to the Receiver of Wreck

7.3. 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.

8. 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 insurances.
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
Tuesday, 29 June 1999

APPENDIX B

**Abstract from the Waternish Tenantry
curtesy of The Tuesday Club, Waternish**

No. 4 Gillen

1891 Census

MacLeod	Alexander		Age 60	Crofter
	Ann	Wife	Age 60	
	A.	Son	Age 20	Farm servant

1900's

MacLeod Alexander married Kate MacNab with issue:

Maggie married
Marion

Archie married
Peter married Morag Martin
Alexander
Sarah married Alistair Grant

1930

The above family moved to No. 6 Gillen

COPIES OF THIS REPORT SENT TO :-

Mr and Mrs Alisdair MacLeod,
41 Scotsblair Avenue, Kirkintilloch,
Glasgow.
G66 4AG

Area Planning and Building Control Manager,
Kings House,
The Green,
Portree.
IV51 9BS

Archaeology Unit,
Planning and Development Service,
Council Offices,
Glenurquhart Road,
Inverness.
IV3 5NX

Highland SMR
Address as above.
On computer disk.

Norman Newton,
Libraries Support Unit,
31a Harbour Road
Longman Industrial Estate,
Inverness

NMRS
John Sinclair House
16 Bernard Terrace
Edinburgh.

A summary has been sent to the Council For Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.



CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
GENERAL VIEW FROM THE S-E



2

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG26755960
INTERIOR OF THE BYRE



3

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
HOUSE FROM S.E. CORNER



4

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
EAST JAMB : ENTRANCE OF BYRE



CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
BLOCKED WINDOW IN HOUSE END



6

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
WINDOW : FRONT WALL : HOUSE



7

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
GENERAL VIEW FROM N-W



8

CROFT 4, GILLEN, WATERNISH
ISLE OF SKYE. 07. 99. NG 26755960
BANK : LINE OF OLD WIRE FENCE

CROFT 4 GILLEN
FIG 2

2 OF 4

CROFT 4 GILLEN,
(ISLE OF SKYE) TEXT
FIG. 7 (one)

(CREATED IN H.S. WORD 97)
SAVED AS WORD 6.0/95)

ONE OF 4

350 FH
RECORDER NUMBER
IBM®
1.44 FORMATTED
HIGH DENSITY
DOUBLE SIDED
Viking DIRECT

350 FH
RECORDER NUMBER
IBM®
1.44 FORMATTED
HIGH DENSITY
DOUBLE SIDED
Viking DIRECT

CROFT 4 GILLEN
FIG. 4

4 OF 4

CROFT 4 GILLEN
FIG. 3

3 OF 4

350 FH
RECORDER NUMBER
IBM®
1.44 FORMATTED
HIGH DENSITY
DOUBLE SIDED
Viking DIRECT

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Viking DIRECT