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Client: Tulloch Homes Ltd

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Report of an Archaeological Evaluation at Fairways, Castleheather, Inverness.

Mhairi Hastie

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET (CDF04)

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Summary

This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken on the site of a proposed housing development at Fairways, Castleheather, Inverness. The site is located on the southern outskirts of Inverness within the Inverness and Bona parish, surrounded by part of the 'Fairways' golf course, to the south of the recently constructed Southern Distributor Road.

Four archaeological features were recorded across the site. Two possible pit/postholes, one charcoal rich pit and a shallow linear feature. No datable finds were recovered from the features and all were apparently isolated. The evaluation was monitored by Highland Council Archaeology Service and no further work is recommended.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Headland Archaeology at Fairways, Castleheather, Inverness. The work was carried out on behalf of Tulloch Homes in advance of a proposed housing development.

The evaluation was carried out between 19th May and 21st May 2004.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this evaluation are:

1. To establish the limits of archaeological features within the proposed development area
2. To determine the nature, date, condition and significance of any archaeological sites and features within this area.
3. To determine the likely impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource
4. To propose appropriate mitigation measures to address the impact of the development

3. METHODOLOGY

A preliminary desk-based assessment was undertaken in advance of fieldwork. This involved a search of the National Monuments Record of Scotland on-line database CANMORE, Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record and the Digital Map Library of the National Library of Scotland.

The investigated area measured approximately 6.5 ha (65,000 sq m). The evaluation entailed trial trenching by mechanical excavator to investigate a 5% sample of the total site, which equated to 1600 m linear (using a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a 2 m wide ditching bucket).

A total of 23 trenches were excavated and located in such a way as to maximise the archaeological potential presented by topographical features. Turf and topsoil were removed by mechanical

excavator and exposed natural subsoil was examined for archaeological features and deposits. Identified linear features were sample excavated whereas discrete features were fully excavated in order to recover any potential artefactual dating evidence. The stratigraphy of the trenches was recorded using Headland Archaeology pro-forma sheets. Colour transparencies and black & white photographs were taken. The layout of the trenches and any features within them were recorded using a field computer running Penmap software controlling a Leica TCRA 405 total station.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Desk-based assessment

The following records pertaining to archaeological sites or investigated areas (excluding listed or standing buildings) are held at the NMRS for the immediate area.

NMRS ref no.	Site type	Description
NH64SE 25	Knocknagael Boar Stone	Pitish Symbol Stone
NH64SE 26	Culduthel	Cairn; ring-cairn Clava-type
NH64SE 29	Holm House	Motte
NH64SE 30	Holm House	Cist; jet necklace; bronze awl; stone flake; charcoal
NH64SE 33	Culduthel Mains, Knocknagael	Cist
NH64SE 36	Culduthel	Cist; beaker; flint arrowheads
NH64SE 37	Lower Slackbuie	Pit-circle; ring-ditch
NH64SE 42	Balloan	Enclosure: palisaded; pottery; bracelet: shale
NH64SE 48	Inverness, Royal Academy	Flints; bronze
NH64SE 49	Culduthel	Flints; glass; bead
NH64SE 57	Fort William - Fort Augustus	Military road
NH64SE 61	Welltown of Easter Leys	Hut-circles; field clearance cairns
NH64SE 63	Castle heather	Ring-ditch (possible)
NH64SE 70	Knocknagael	Ring ditch; barrows and pits
NH64SE 71	Culduthel	Barrow (possible)
NH64SE 72	Castle Heather	Postholes, Charcoal
NH64SE 163.0	Leys Castle	County house
NH64SE 163.1	Leys Castle, Gardens	Gardens
NH64SE 163.2	Leys Castle, Lodge	Lodge
NH64SE 171	Milton of Leys	Building; enclosure
NH64SE 172	Welltown of Easter Leys	Farmstead
NH64SE 186	Castle heather	Copper mount
NH64SE 228	Balloan	Trial excavation; farmstead
NH64SE 241	Old Town of Leys	Enclosure; palisaded
NH64SE 247	Drumdevan	Geophysics and excavation
NH64SE 255	Culduthel	Trial excavations
NH64SE 257	Drumdevan	Watching brief
NH64SE 261	Culduthel Mains	Cist; beaker; flint arrowheads; amber bead; stone bracer; bone toggle
NH64SE 329	Torbeck	Watching brief; cremation, pits

Table 1. Gazetteer of Cultural Heritage Sites near to the proposed development area

The evaluation site lies within a rich archaeological landscape and substantial quantities of prehistoric features have been uncovered in the vicinity. A number of prehistoric enclosure sites located to the

north of the evaluation area are visible on air photographs including the double ring-ditch at Castle Heather Farm and a circular enclosure at Balloan.

During trial trenching a further palisaded enclosure and associated occupation features were uncovered at Balloan Park in 1991 (Wordsworth, 1991). These deposits were not excavated but were seen to include areas of paving, probable post-pits, stone-lined slots and a small rectangular structure. The remains of a shale bracelet and a rim sherd of possible Bronze Age date were also recovered.

A number of prehistoric sites are recorded to the south of the site including two hut circles and associated field clearances recorded by Driscoll in 1989 at Milton of Leys, and a stone/circle or chambered cairn recorded from 1884 on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

Further west of the site a number of cist burials have been uncovered at Holm Mains and Culduthel. In addition, the remains of a cairn identified as a probably Clava-type cairn is present at Culduthel Mains Farm.

The evaluation site itself lies immediately southeast of the location of Castle Heather identified as a probably medieval monument dating from the 16th century AD. The site was recorded in 1962 as consisting of a sub-rectangular platform measuring 1-2 m high with no traces of buildings. However in 1994 an archaeological evaluation carried out at the castle site found that the monument had been badly degraded and was considered destroyed (Wordsworth, 1994). A copper alloy openwork mount decorated with rope-work motif was also found in the vicinity of Castle Heather by a metal detector.

The cartographic evidence indicates that the evaluation area formed part of a large field until c. 1906 when the area was divided into smaller fields, with the field boundaries changing frequently throughout the mid to late 1900's. The area surrounding the evaluation site was then developed into 'Fairways' golf course in 1994.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of the golf course (Wordsworth, 1994), which revealed a group of charcoal rich-postholes, one of which was sampled and produced pre-medieval pottery.

4.2 Field Evaluation

A walkover survey was carried out prior to any trial trenching being undertaken. The site consisted of two roughly triangular sections of ground bounded to the north, east and south by the golf course and to the west by a small burn. The west section of the site sloped sharply up from the burn becoming flatter at the southeastern corner. The east section of the site consisted of slightly sloping ground rising to the south of the site with a number of rough access tracks, for the golf course, crossing the area. Both areas consisted of rough grassland.

There was no visible evidence of any field monuments within the study area. The remains of a dry-stone dyke were observed, aligned NS-EW (Figure 2), dividing the evaluation area into two. This field boundary is not marked on any of the pre-1984 Ordnance Survey Maps and is thought to be a recent boundary that has been partially destroyed to allow access to the golf course.

A total of 23 trenches of (Figure 2) varying length and width were excavated (Appendix 1). Topsoil varied from 0.35 - 0.66 deep, although it was evenly spread across most of the site at a depth of 0.4 m. Topsoil directly overlay sands and gravel subsoil.

Four archaeological features were found cutting the subsoil. An isolated pit/posthole [001] was uncovered at the eastern end of Trench 1 (Figure 3). The feature consisted of a sub-circular cut with

sloping edges down to a rounded base (0.15 m deep) and filled with mid-brown sandy silt and small pebbles [002]. No datable finds were recovered from the fill. Two 5 m by 5 m extensions to Trench 1 were stripped of topsoil to the north and south of pit/posthole [001] in order to investigate whether the feature formed part of a cluster of features in this area. No other features or finds were uncovered in the extension.

A second pit/posthole [006] (Figure 3) was uncovered at the eastern end of Trench 5. The feature was sub-circular in plan with irregular sloping edges down to a slightly rounded base (0.18 m deep) and filled with mid-brown compact sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions [005]. No datable finds were recovered from the fill. Two 3 m by 3 m extensions to Trench 5 were stripped of topsoil to the north and south of [006] to investigate whether the feature formed part of a cluster of features in this area. No other features or finds were uncovered in the extended area.

A small, shallow linear [003] (Figure 3) was uncovered to the south end of Trench 8. The feature was 0.54 m wide and 0.18 m deep. It was filled with mid to dark brown compact sandy silt and occasional gravel inclusions. Two 5 m by 5 m extensions to Trench 8 were stripped of topsoil to the east and west of the linear to investigate the extent of the feature. The linear was found to be 3.1 m long and had a rounded west end and tapered at the east end. No other finds or features were uncovered in the extended area.

An old water channel [008] (Figure 2 & 4) was uncovered in six trenches, 17, 18 20,21, 22 and 23. This consisted of an irregular shallow cut that ran down a step slope at the north end of the site. The channel varied from 2.5 to 15 m wide and was filled with a mid to light brown fine silt sand with occasional patches of stone towards the base of the channel. A modern ceramic drain was found cutting through this water channel in Trench 18.

An isolated pit [009] (Figure 4) was uncovered just immediately east of the water channel. The feature was oval in plan, 0.84 m by 1.06 m, with almost vertical edges down to a flat base. The feature contained two fills an upper charcoal rich fill [010] and a lower fill of clayey silt with occasional charcoal fragments [011]. There was no evidence to suggest that this material was burnt *in situ*. Bulk soil samples were taken from both fills and processed for the recovery of palaeoenvironmental remains and small finds. Both fills contained sufficient charcoal for AMS dating, small fragments of charred hazelnut shell and three abraded carbonised barley grain.

Sample no.	Context no.	Context description	Sample composition
1	010	Secondary fill of pit [009]	Charcoal ++ Hazelnut shell +
2	011	Primary fill of pit [009]	Charcoal ++ Hazelnut shell +

Table 2: Composition of samples

A series of rubble drains, typical of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century field improvements, were uncovered crossing the majority of trenches.

5. DISCUSSION

On average the depth of the trenches was not great, reflecting the relatively uniform depth of plough soil across the area within which there was surprisingly little modern pottery.

Four features of archaeological interest were identified during this evaluation. Two isolated pit/postholes and one small linear were uncovered in the eastern section of the site. All three features were isolated and contained no datable artefacts, which makes it difficult to make any sense of the distribution or function of any of these features.

A pit or hearth was also uncovered in the western section of the site. The recovery of carbonised hazelnut shell and barley grain from both pit fills, albeit in low quantities, suggests a prehistoric date for the feature.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Highland council has recommended that no further evaluation work is required on the site.

REFERENCES

Wordsworth, J 1991 '**Balloan Park, Inverness (Inverness & Bona parishes)**' Discovery and Excavation, Scotland, 1991, 41.

Wordsworth, J 1994 '**Castle Heather Farm (Inverness & Bona parish); prehistoric pits; castle (site of)**', Discovery and Excavation, 1994, Scotland 34.

Driscoll, S (1989) '**Survey. Milton of Leys**' Discovery and Excavation, Scotland, 1989, 31.

Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey 1874 Inverness-shire 1:10560 Sheet XII (Surveyed 1868-70)

Ordnance Survey 1906 Inverness-shire 1:10560 sheet XII (Revised 1902-3)

Ordnance Survey 1927 Inverness Sheet 37 Popular Series 1 inch map (Revised 1926-7)

Ordnance Survey 1959 NH64SE Scale 1:10560 (Revised 1930-45)

Ordnance Survey 1968 NH64SE Scale 1:10560 (Revised 1968)

Ordnance Survey 1978 NH64SE Scale 1:10000 (Revised 1976)

Ordnance Survey 1984 NH64SE Scale 1:10000 (Revised 1984)

APPENDIX 1. SITE REGISTERS

1.1 Trench register

Trench number	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (average/m)	Description
1	51	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. One field drain, aligned N-S, was uncovered running across the western end of trench. This trench contains contexts [001] and [002].
2	50	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. One field drain, aligned SW-NE, was uncovered running across the northern end of trench.
3	99	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. One field drain, aligned N-S, was uncovered running across the western end of trench.
4	101	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. One field drain, aligned N-S, was uncovered running across the southeast end of trench.
5	74	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. This trench contained contexts [005] and [006].
6	75	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. No finds or features were uncovered in this trench.
7	75	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. No finds or features were uncovered in this trench.
8	100	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Four field drains were uncovered aligned N-S, E-W and NW-SE. This trench contained contexts 003 and 004.
9	60	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Two field drains, aligned N-S, were uncovered running across the southern end of the trench.
10	72	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions.

				Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Three field drains, aligned N-S and E-W, were uncovered running across the trench.
11	49	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Two field drains, aligned N-S, were uncovered running across the west end of the trench.
12	67	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. One field drain, aligned N-S, was uncovered running across the east end of the trench.
13	76	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Three field drains, aligned N-S, were uncovered running across the east end of the trench.
14	38	2	0.35	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. No finds or features were uncovered in this trench.
15	36	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel.
16	101	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel.
17	84	2	0.88	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Ceramic drain, aligned NW-SE, uncovered running across south end of trench. Field drain, aligned E-W, uncovered running across northern end of trench.
18	151	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. Two ceramic drains, aligned NW-SE, uncovered running across the northern end of the trench. This trench contained contexts 007 and 008.
19	32	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. No finds or features recovered from this trench.
20	60	2	0.7	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. This trench contained contexts 007 and 008.
21	18	2	0.3	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. This trench contained contexts 007 and 008.

22	20	20	0.3	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. This trench contained contexts 007,008, 009, 010 and 011.
23	25	2	0.4	Topsoil: Mid-brown fine sandy silt with gravel and small stone inclusions. Subsoil: Light brown to orange sand and gravel. This trench contained contexts 007 and 008.

1.2 Context register

Context number	Trench number	Description
001	1	Fill of pit/posthole [002] consisting of mid-brown sandy silt and small rounded pebble inclusions.
002	1	Cut of pit/posthole sub-circular in plan, with sloping edges down to a rounded base. Diameter: 0.35 m, Depth: 0.15 m. Filled by [001].
003	8	Cut of shallow linear aligned E-W consisting of gently sloping edges down to a rounded base. Length: 3.1 m, Width: 0.54 m, Depth: 0.14 m. West end is rounded in profile and east end is tapered.
004	8	Fill of shallow linear [003] consisting of mid to dark brown compact sandy silt and occasional gravel inclusions.
005	5	Fill of pit/posthole [006] consisting of mid brown compact sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions.
006	5	Cut of posthole sub-circular in plan, with irregular sloping edges down to a slightly rounded base. Diameter: 0.52 m, Depth: 0.18 m. Filled by [005]
007	17, 18, 20, 21, 22 & 23	Fill of old water channel [008] consisting of mid - light brown fine silty sand with occasional patches of stone towards base of channel.
008	17, 18, 20, 21, 22 & 23	Cut of old water channel meandering down slope at the north end of the site. Width of channel varies from 2.5 m to 15 m. Shallow cut with sloping edges down to a flat base. Filled by [007].
009	22	Cut of pit, oval in profile with almost vertical side down to a flat base. Diameter: 0.84 m by 1.06 m, Depth: 0.17 m Filled by [010 & 011].
010	22	Upper fill of pit [009] consisting of black loose powdery deposit with small stone inclusions some of which appear to be burnt. Thickness: 0.5 m.
011	22	Lower fill of pit [009] consisting of light brown clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions. Frequent small fragments of charcoal. Thickness: 0.10 - 0.12 m.

1.3 Drawing register

Drawing number	Trench number	Scale	Description
1	1	1:10	East facing section through posthole [002]
2	1	1:20	Post-excavation plan of posthole [002]
3	7	1:10	East facing section through linear [004]
4	7	1:20	Post-excavation plan of linear [004]
5	5	1:10	North east facing section through posthole [006]
6	5	1:20	Post-excavation plan of posthole [006]
7	20	1:20	South facing section through old water channel [008]
8	23	1:10	West facing section through pit [009]
9	23	1:20	Post-excavation plan of pit [009]

1.4 Photographic register

Black & White prints/Colour slides

Shot number	Direction facing	Description
1		Id shot
2	W	East facing section through posthole [002]
3	W	East facing section through linear [004]
4	SW	North east facing section through posthole [006]
5	NW	Section through water channel (right)
6	NW	Section through water channel (left)
7	E	West facing section through pit [009]
8	NW	General site photograph - SE corner of field
9	NW	General site photograph - SE corner of field
10	NW	General site photograph - northern half of site
11	NW	General site photograph - northern half of the site

1.5 Sample register

Sample number	Context number	Description
1	010	Secondary fill of pit [010]
2	011	Primary fill of pit [011]

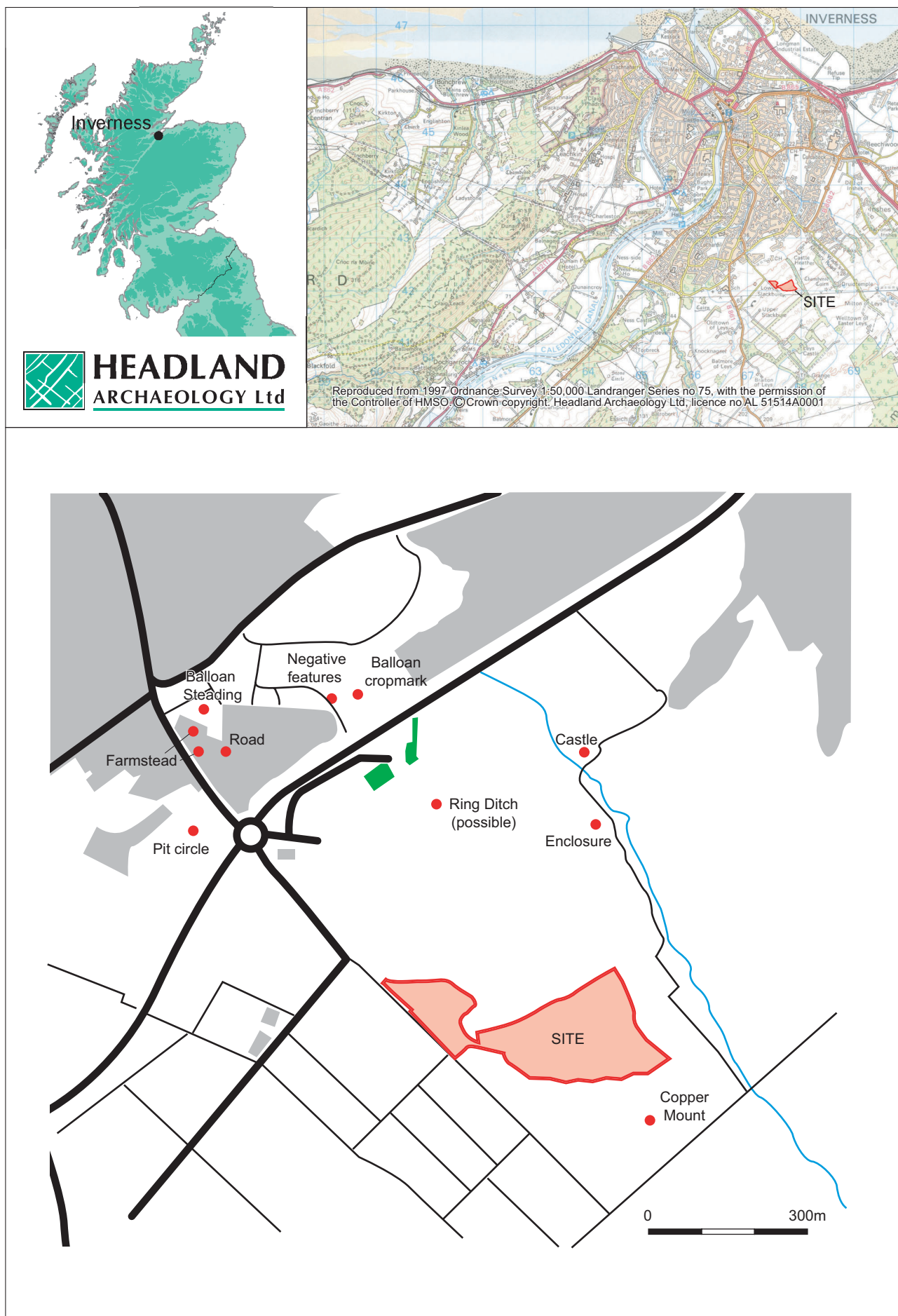


Figure 1: Fairways Castleheather, Inverness.

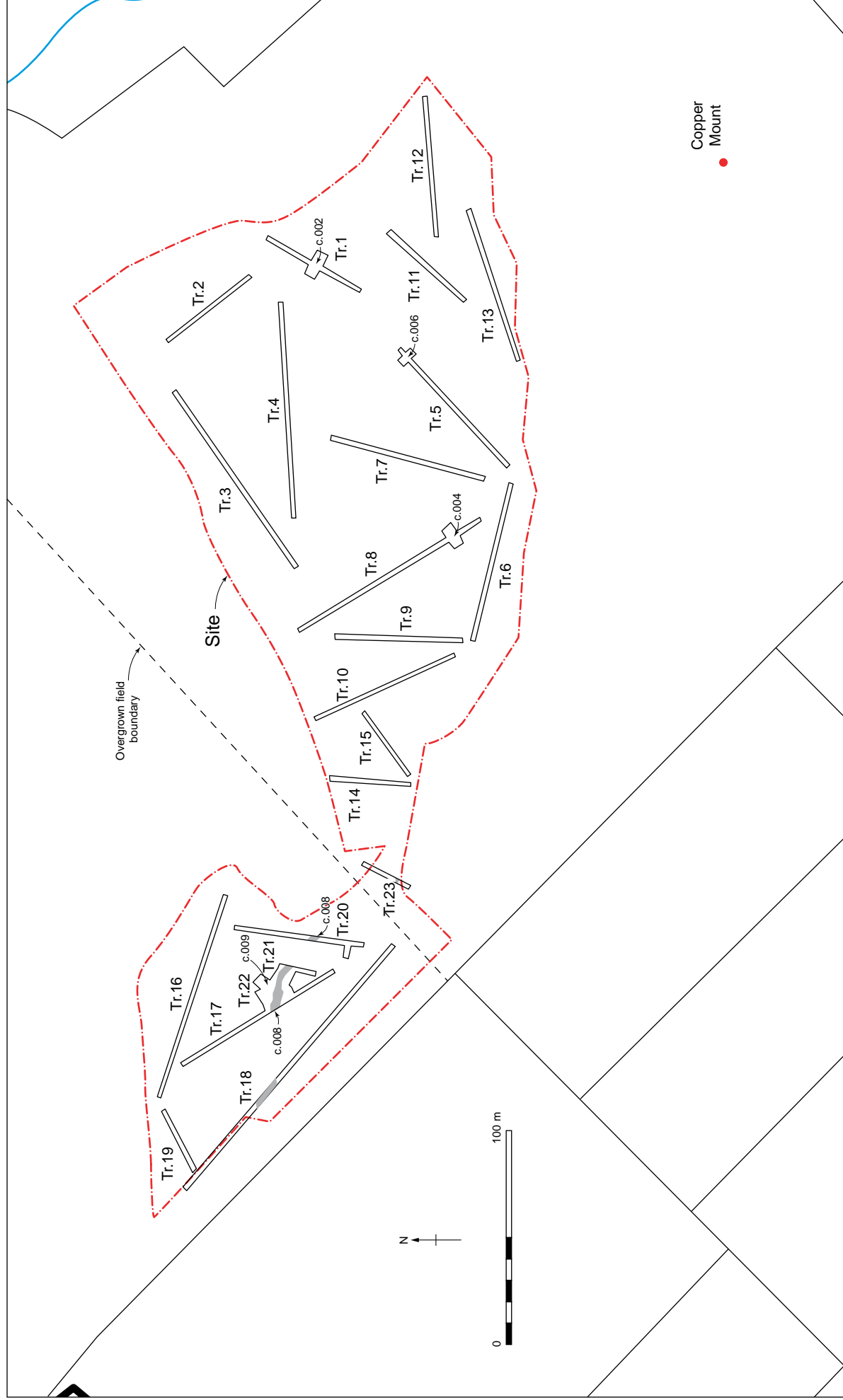
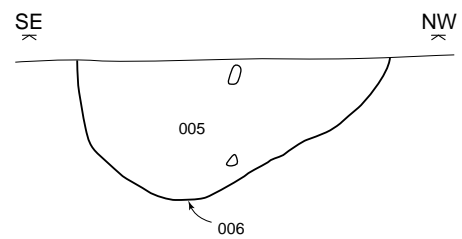
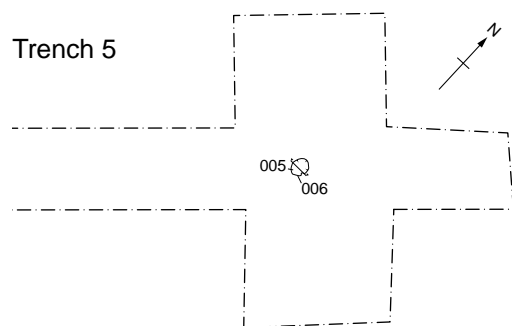
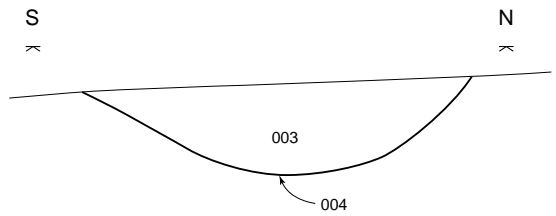
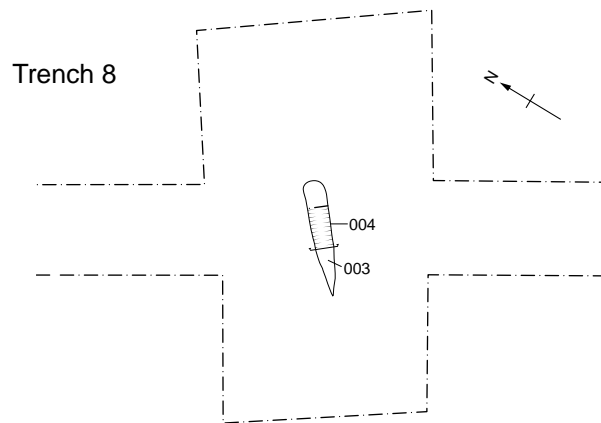
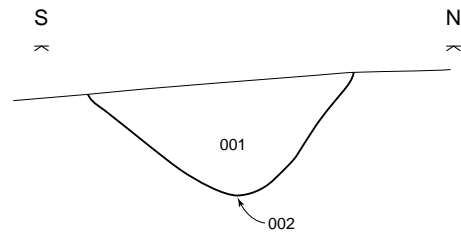
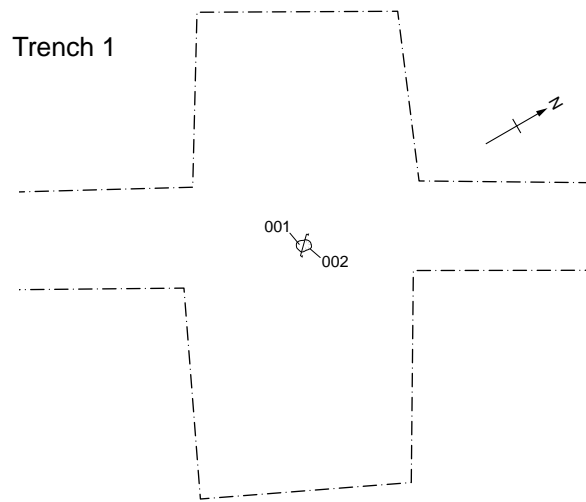


Figure 2: Fairways Castleheather, Inverness. Excavated features.

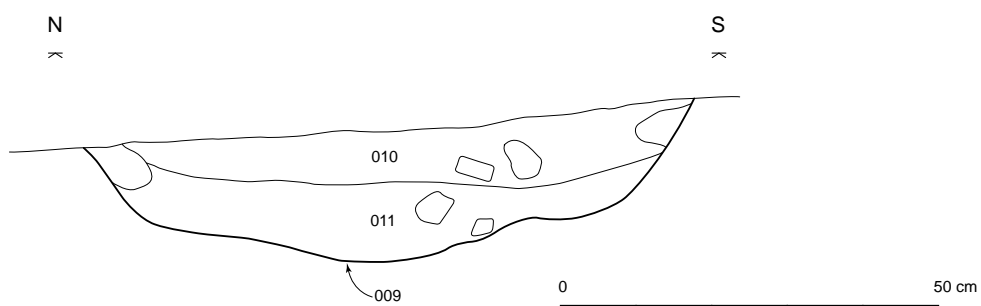
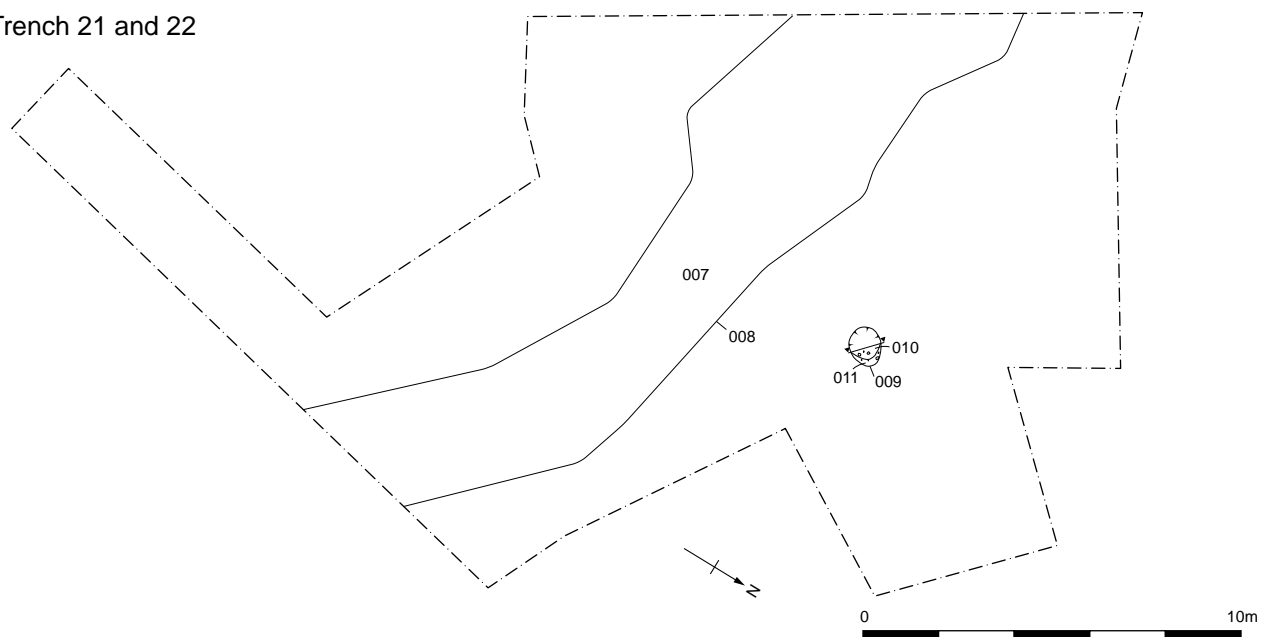


0 10m

0 50 cm

Figure 3: Fairways Castleheather, Inverness. Plans and sections of excavated features.

Trench 21 and 22



Trench 20

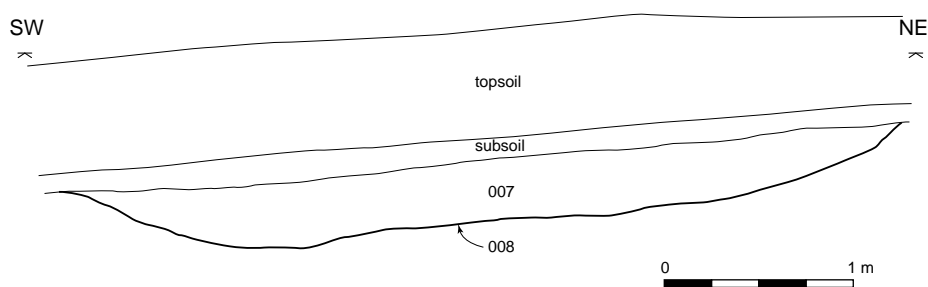
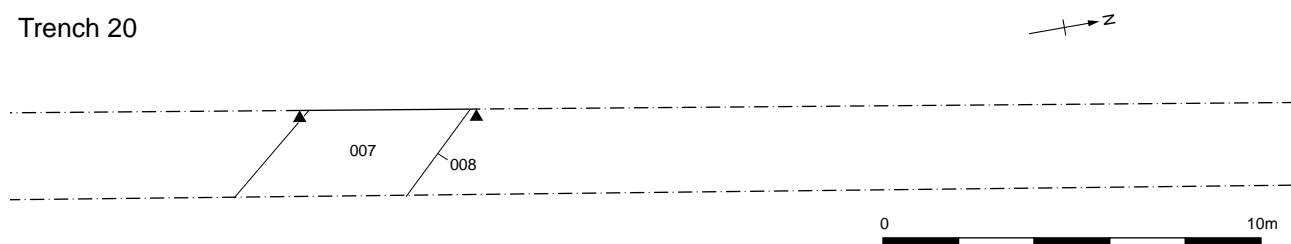


Figure 4: Fairways Castleheather, Inverness. Plans and sections of excavated features.