

CVNU12:002

Planning Application Reference 12/00330

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation

Airigh Mhic Ruairidh, Griminish, North Uist

Client: Fraser Architecture LLP

DRAFT v.2

28 January 2013

**Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
North East**

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An application for development (12/00330), by Fraser Architecture LLP, for construction of a proposed Wheelhouse Eco Hut Campsite and Self Catering development at Airigh Mhic Ruairidh, Griminish, North Uist was submitted to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Council and planning permission has since been granted. As part of planning permission, a condition has been attached to consent for a programme of archaeological works.
- 1.2 The client has commissioned Headland Archaeology to agree a programme of archaeological work with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Archaeologist, and to encapsulate that programme within a written scheme of investigation (WSI - this document) to be submitted for agreement in writing a minimum 14 days before any works commence.
- 1.3 A walkover survey and Desk Based Assessment relating to the development has been undertaken in connection with the planning application (Wilson 2012).
- 1.4 The evaluation will provide further information about the archaeological resource, to enable appropriate decisions to be reached regarding further mitigation works including reporting and publication if appropriate.
- 1.5 This WSI takes into account relevant IfA Standards and Guidance.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is located at Airigh Mhic Ruairidh, Griminish, North Uist (NGR NF 76827 74637; see attached figure). The land comprises undulating ground rising to a maximum height of 9 m OD. The landscape is covered in short scrub grassland with frequent heather cover and rocky outcrops.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As noted above a walkover survey and brief Desk Based Assessment relating to the site has been supplied and consulted (Wilson 2012). The full results will not be repeated here. Five possible archaeological sites were located during the walkover survey; most lie in the NW corner of the development, away from the proposed buildings and infrastructure, and none are impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 3.2 In summary, the archaeological potential is assessed as low to moderate. The site has particular potential to contain remains relating to the prehistoric period but also has the potential to include remains related to all periods up to the early modern period.

4 OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 In general, the purpose of the evaluation is to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the archaeological significance and potential of the proposed development site.
- 4.2 More specific aims of the evaluation include:
 - Establishing the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the accessible areas targeted for trenching.

- Establishing the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the accessible areas.
- 4.3 The results of the evaluation will be used to inform a strategy for further archaeological mitigation if appropriate.
- 4.4 The resulting archive (finds and records) will be organised and deposited in the National Monuments Record of Scotland to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

5 SCHEDULE

- 5.1 Subject to receipt of the necessary approval from the curator, the programme of trial trenching will be completed within 2 days (on-site), with work timetabled the week commencing 26/27th February 2013. A draft report will then be delivered to the client and, on approval, to the curator within 4 weeks of the completion of fieldwork.

6 PROJECT TEAM

- 6.1 The project will be managed for Headland Archaeology by Russel Coleman (Project Manager); the field team will consist of Donald Wilson (Project Officer) with one additional site assistant. *Curricula vitae* of key personnel can be supplied on request. The project team will familiarise themselves with the background to the site and will be aware of the project's aims and methodologies.
- 6.2 Specialist artefact analyses will be managed by Julie Franklin who is Headland's Finds Manager. Julie will undertake finds assessment within her areas of competence (medieval and post-medieval ceramics, metalwork, glassware, clay pipes, ceramic building material and other small finds) and assisted by Julie Lochrie (lithics, prehistoric pottery). Further consultation will be sub-contracted to recognised period specialists if appropriate.
- 6.3 Environmental analysis will be managed by Tim Holden. Headland has in-house specialists who can undertake analysis of pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and thin sections. Faunal remains will be assessed by Catherine Smith (Alder Archaeology) and human remains by David Henderson (although it is not anticipated that the latter will be removed during an evaluation project).
- 6.4 Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd is a Registered Organisation and abides by the Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards of the Institute for Archaeologists. The company has all the necessary technical and personnel resources for the satisfactory completion of the evaluation.

7 INSURANCE & COPYRIGHT

- 7.1 Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd is fully indemnified and all necessary insurances can be presented on request.
- 7.2 Copyright will be retained by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd. Headland will licence the client, curator and other bodies as necessary for use in matters relating to the project and for use of the project archive by NMRS. This licence will also extend to non-commercial use.

8 HEALTH & SAFETY

- 8.1 All of Headland's work is undertaken in accordance with current H&S legislation. A risk assessment and method statement will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork. All staff will wear appropriate PPE and this will

include high-visibility clothing, hard hats and safety footwear. Suitable site welfare facilities will be provided.

9 ACCESS & SERVICES

- 9.1 This WSI is submitted on the understanding that there will be machine-access to all relevant areas of the site. A plan of any services within the proposed development area will also be provided by the client or their agents where appropriate. Any obstructions/spoil heaps/livestock etc. will be removed by the client prior to trenching.

10 STRATEGY

- 10.1 Ten (1 – 10) evaluation trenches will be excavated within the proposed development area to meet the required 10% sample size (see attached plan). The trenches (totalling 170m in length) will target the main areas that will be impacted upon by the proposed development (access road, the round houses, areas, the soak-away pits) and achieve good coverage across the site.
- 10.2 The development has been designed to minimise below ground impact and this has been taken into account in the assessment of impacts and the sample size. For example, sections of the access road are to be 'floated' rather than cut and car parking areas and paths within the site are similarly sited on terram. The majority of the water pipe will also lie within mounded material rather than cut.
- 10.3 In addition to the above, it is proposed to archaeologically monitor the cutting of the track for the water pipe where it is not mounded – see attached plan. The connection of the water pipe to the existing mains is subject to a separate planning application (Ref: 12/00708/PPO).

11 METHOD

FIELDWORK

- 11.1 Trenches will be opened with a mechanical excavator, suitably equipped with a toothless ditching bucket of adequate width (usually 1.6 m). All trenches will be excavated by machine under direct archaeological supervision to remove topsoil and deposits of modern make-up and will be excavated in controlled spits. Machine excavation will terminate at the top of the natural geology or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever is encountered first. Spoil will be stored beside the trench.
- 11.2 Excavation of archaeological deposits and features required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation will continue by hand (except where agreed otherwise with the curator). On completion of machine excavation, all faces of the trench that require examination or recording will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools where required. The stratigraphic sequence will be recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 11.3 A sufficient quantity (to adequately evaluate the site) of identified features will be investigated and recorded. This will typically involve excavation of 50% of discrete features, and a 1m slot of linear features. Where features form a definite arrangement a sample of features within the arrangement will be sample excavated. Features not suited to excavation in evaluation trenches will be investigated in plan only. This would typically apply to areas of complex, intercutting features such as structures with *in-situ* floor surfaces, kilns and other 'special' features, all of which benefit from open area investigation and suffer when excavated during trial trench evaluations. No features will be wholly excavated; similarly, structures and features worthy of preservation will not be unduly excavated.

- 11.4 Due to Health and Safety considerations, excavations below approximately 1m below existing ground level will not be entered by site staff without suitable battering or stepping of trench edges. Localised stepping of trench edges may be undertaken to allow safe inspection and investigation of deep deposits sufficient to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation.
- 11.5 Trenches may be machine-excavated to depths greater than approximately 1 m and inspected from the surface. Test pits may be excavated to investigate deep depositional sequences; any such test pits will be located within blank areas of existing trenches, will not be entered by site staff, and will be backfilled immediately after excavation.

RECORDING

- 11.6 All recording will follow IfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological evaluations. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples will be given unique numbers. All recording will be undertaken on *pro forma* record cards. In the event that stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled. 35mm colour transparencies and prints will be taken; a graduated metric scale will be clearly visible. Digital images may be taken for illustrative purposes.
- 11.7 A site plan including all identified features, areas of excavation and other pertinent information will be recorded digitally. The site plan will be accurately linked to the National Grid and heights to OD. Where appropriate, sections and stratigraphic sequences will be recorded digitally. Digital recording will be undertaken using a differential GPS or an EDM linked to a hand-held computer in order to allow data checking while in the field. If additional detailed recording of features and sections is required (ie. where their complexity means that archaeological information could be lost if recorded digitally) then plans and sections will be hand-drawn on permatrace at an appropriate scale (normally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections).
- 11.8 Headland maintains a digitally-based library of guidance documents that includes information on field evaluation and recording. Relevant parts can be forwarded on request.

SAMPLES AND ARTEFACTS

- 11.9 Finds will be routinely recorded by context and recorded 3-dimensionally where appropriate (ie. where their position within a context can provide further significant information or the find is of particular significance). Any artefacts retrieved during the evaluation will be cleaned using appropriate techniques and packaged and stored in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 1998). All artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be cleaned, marked and catalogued. Headland's in-house finds specialists will be available to provide advice remotely or on site if necessary. Conservation will be undertaken by Scottish Conservation Studio (for metalwork) and AOC Ltd (for organics).
- 11.10 Deposits identified as archaeologically significant will be sampled for environmental material and other finds (e.g. bone, pottery etc.). Bulk samples will be taken from selected deposits for wet sieving and floatation in order to recover any environmental material. A bulk sample will typically be 40 litres. However, where large deposits are encountered more than one bulk sample may be taken. Similarly, small deposits such as the fill of postholes may contain less than 10 litres of sediment and will be fully sampled. A representative proportion of samples taken on site will be processed and assessed with the results and recommendations for any further work included in the evaluation report.
- 11.11 Where waterlogged deposits are encountered (such as peat) appropriate sampling techniques will be employed so as to maximise the environmental information

gained from such deposits. This may include the taking of monolith or core samples for pollen and non-pollen palynomorphs (e.g. testates and fungal spores) and large specialist samples for plant macrofossil, wood (including waterlogged wood) and insect analyses.

- 11.12 Headland's Environmental Specialist, Dr Scott Timpany, will liaise with site staff to ensure an appropriate strategy for the recovery and sampling of environmental remains develops in tandem with fieldwork results.

12 MONITORING

- 12.1 Access to the site will be afforded to the curator for monitoring purposes. A site meeting when all the trenches are open would provide a useful opportunity to discuss any further works should archaeological remains be uncovered. Should no archaeological remains be uncovered, the meeting could be used to sign off the works in lieu of the report.

13 REPORTING AND ARCHIVE

- 13.1 On completion of the evaluation Headland will produce a site archive and an archive report that includes all relevant specialist assessments of excavated material. An online OASIS report will be completed and will be accompanied by a pdf report and boundary file. A summary report will be submitted for inclusion in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland*.
- 13.2 Final report contents and format will be in line with IfA standards & guidance and curator requirements. Copies of the report will be sent to the client for onward transmission to the local planning authority; copies (paper & electronic) will also be submitted to the curator, to be deposited in the HER. Draft reports will be submitted within 4 weeks of the completion of fieldwork.
- 13.3 The project archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines published by the Institute for Archaeologists on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (July 2007). The documentary and digital archive will be submitted to RCAHMS within six months of completion of all work on this project. All finds will be reported to the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel, which will determine the ultimate destination of the material archive. Once this is determined, and within three months, arrangements will be made with the specified museum for transfer of material and title.
- 13.4 Further mitigation works may be required after the initial site evaluation. In such an event, a supplementary WSI will be submitted for approval setting out the scope of any further works required, especially full excavation of areas, and further analysis and reporting of the results including publication.

14 HUMAN REMAINS

- 14.1 All finds of human remains will be reported to the client, curator and local police. None will be excavated during the course of the present program of work. If human remains are to be excavated during subsequent work all excavation and treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains will be undertaken in cognisance of IfA Technical Paper Number 13 (Brickley & McKinley & 2004) and relevant Historic Scotland policy on the treatment of human remains.

15 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeological Archives Forum Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (published by the IfA 2007).

Brickley M & McKinley J 2004 Guidelines to the standards for recording human remains (IfA Paper No 7).

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Watkinson D & Neal V First aid for finds, (Third Edition 1998).

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