

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief  
August 5<sup>th</sup> – September 1<sup>st</sup> 2003  
7 Braehead, Cromarty  
NH 78848 / 67569**

Client: Reynolds Architecture on behalf of Mr. A Bird

Planning Application No: 03/00161/FULRC & 03/00162/LBCRC

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Reynolds Architecture on behalf of Mr. A Bird in July 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 7 Braehead, Cromarty (NH 78847/67568) as part of a redevelopment of an existing house. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.*

*Work revealed the partial remains of an 18<sup>th</sup> century house that was replaced by the current house in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with later additions. No other features of archaeological interest were revealed.*

*No recommendations for further work have been proposed.*

## **1. Introduction**

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted for Reynolds Architecture on behalf of Mr. A Bird by the author for a redevelopment at 7 Braehead, Cromarty per planning applications 03/00161/FULRC and 03/00162/LBRRRC.

The fieldwork was conducted between August 5<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> 2003.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

- Mr. W Reynolds, of Reynolds Architecture;
- Mr. A Hardie, of Alan Hardie Joinery Contractors;
- Mr. D Alston, of Cromarty Museum with help with house records;
- Staff of Alan Hardie Joinery Contractors for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

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Figure 1 – General Location 1: 50,000



Figure 2 – Location Plan 1: 500

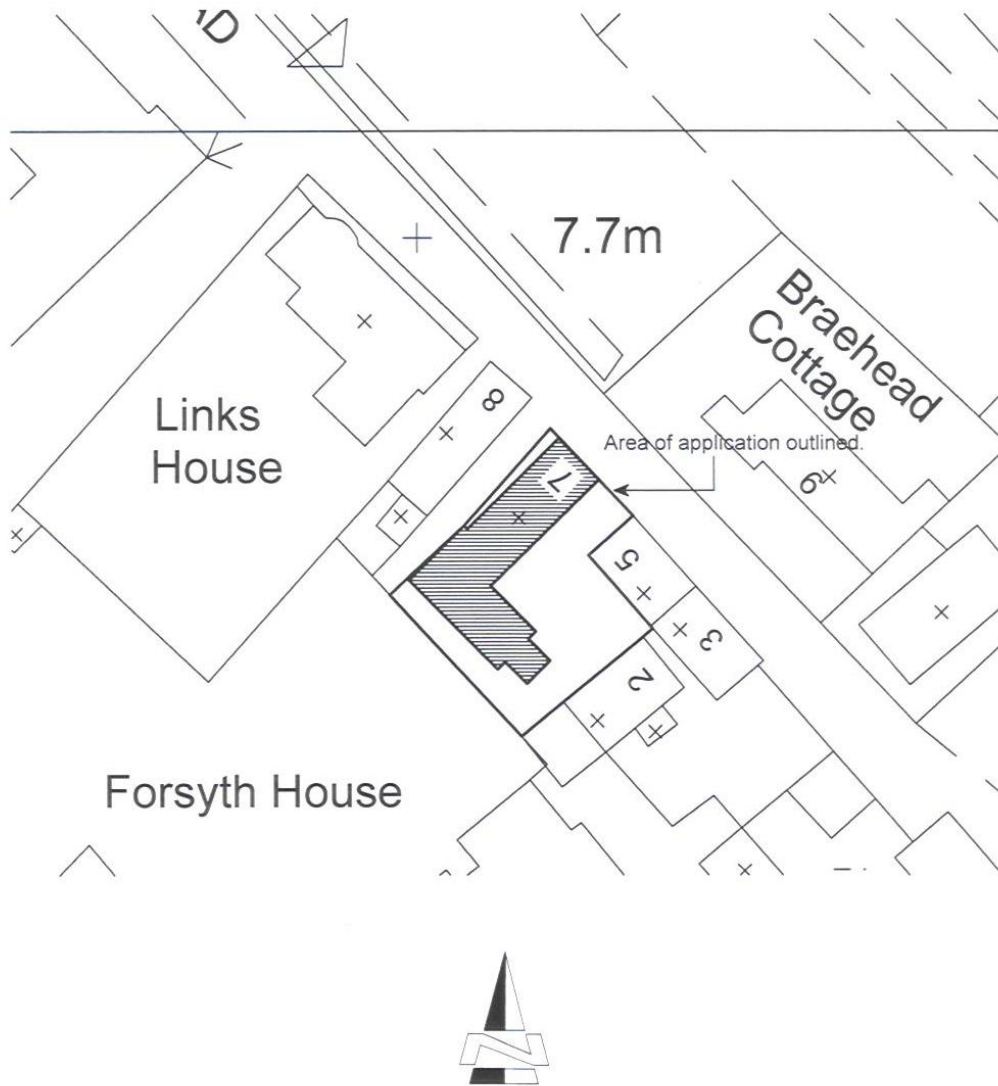


Figure 3 – Development Plan

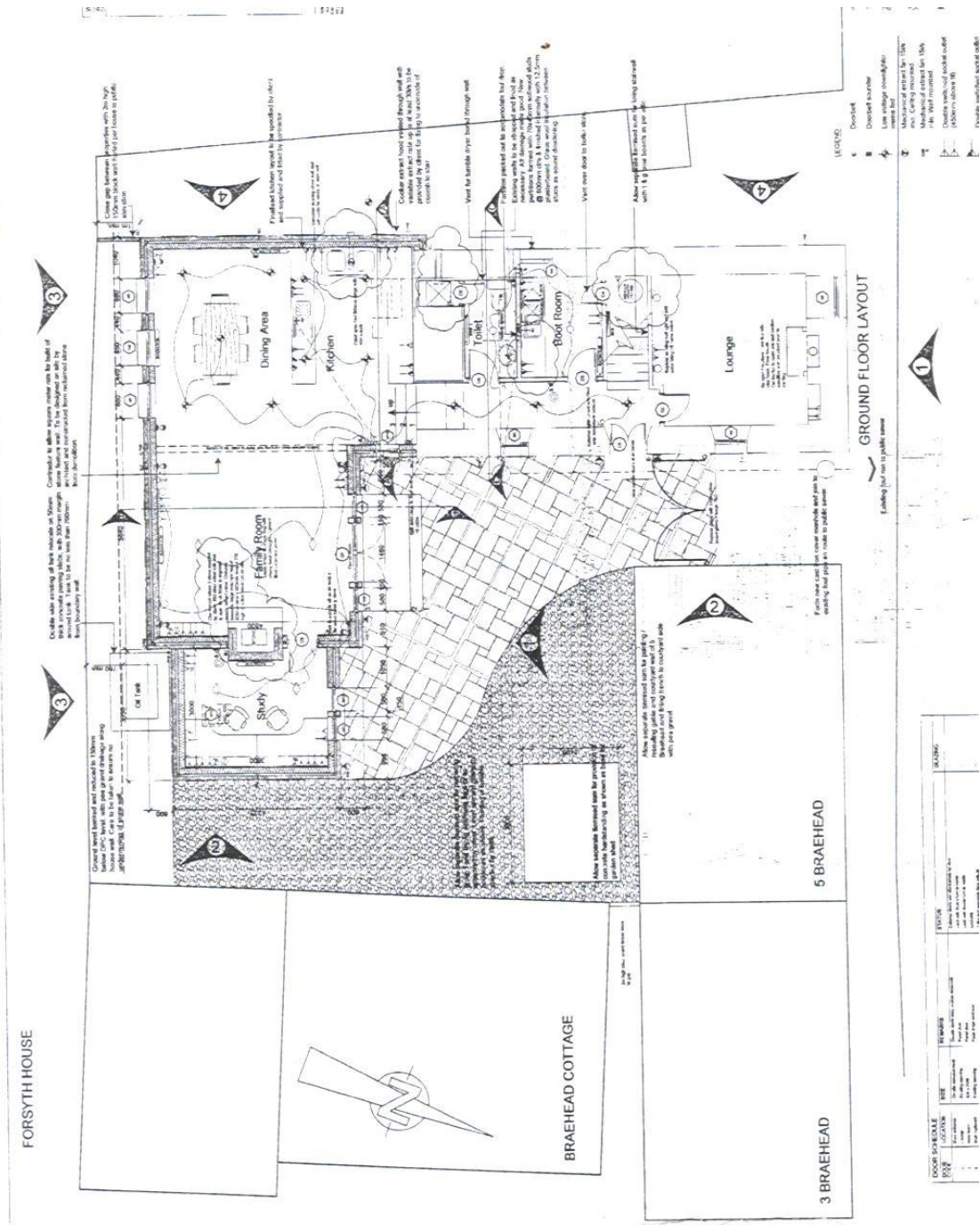




Figure 5 – Ordnance Survey Map of 1874 1: 2500

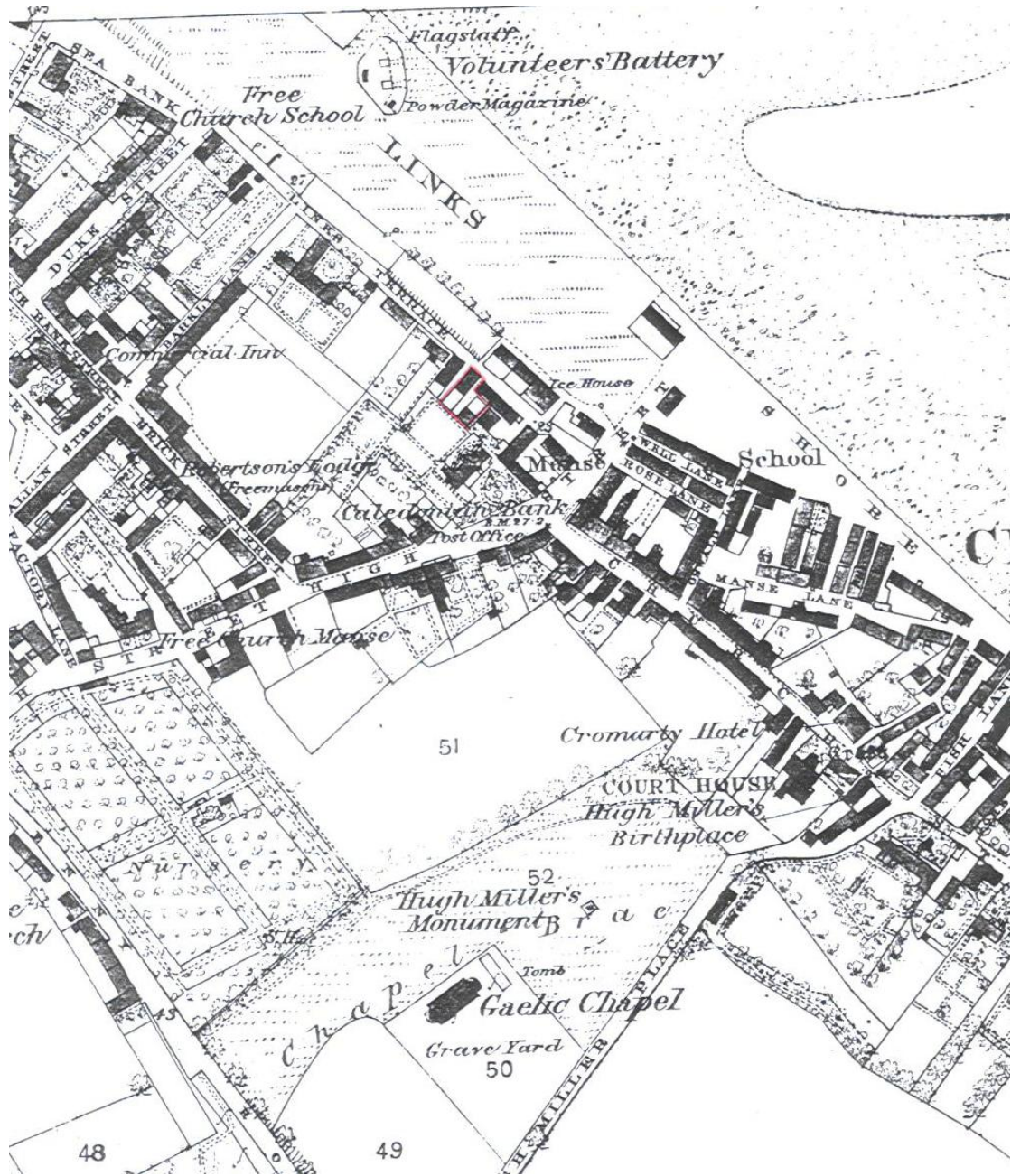


Figure 6 – Ordnance Survey Map of 1906 1: 2500

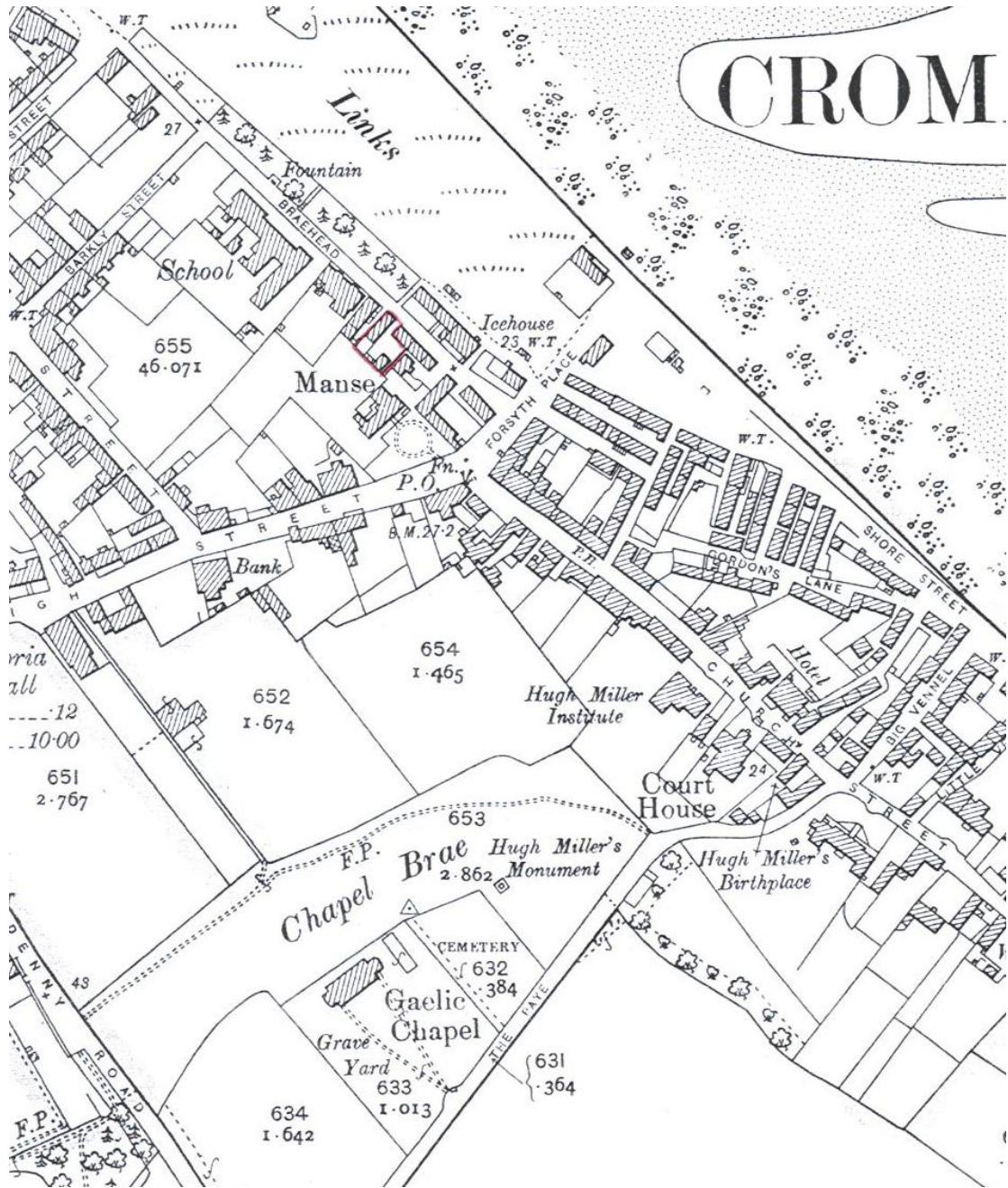
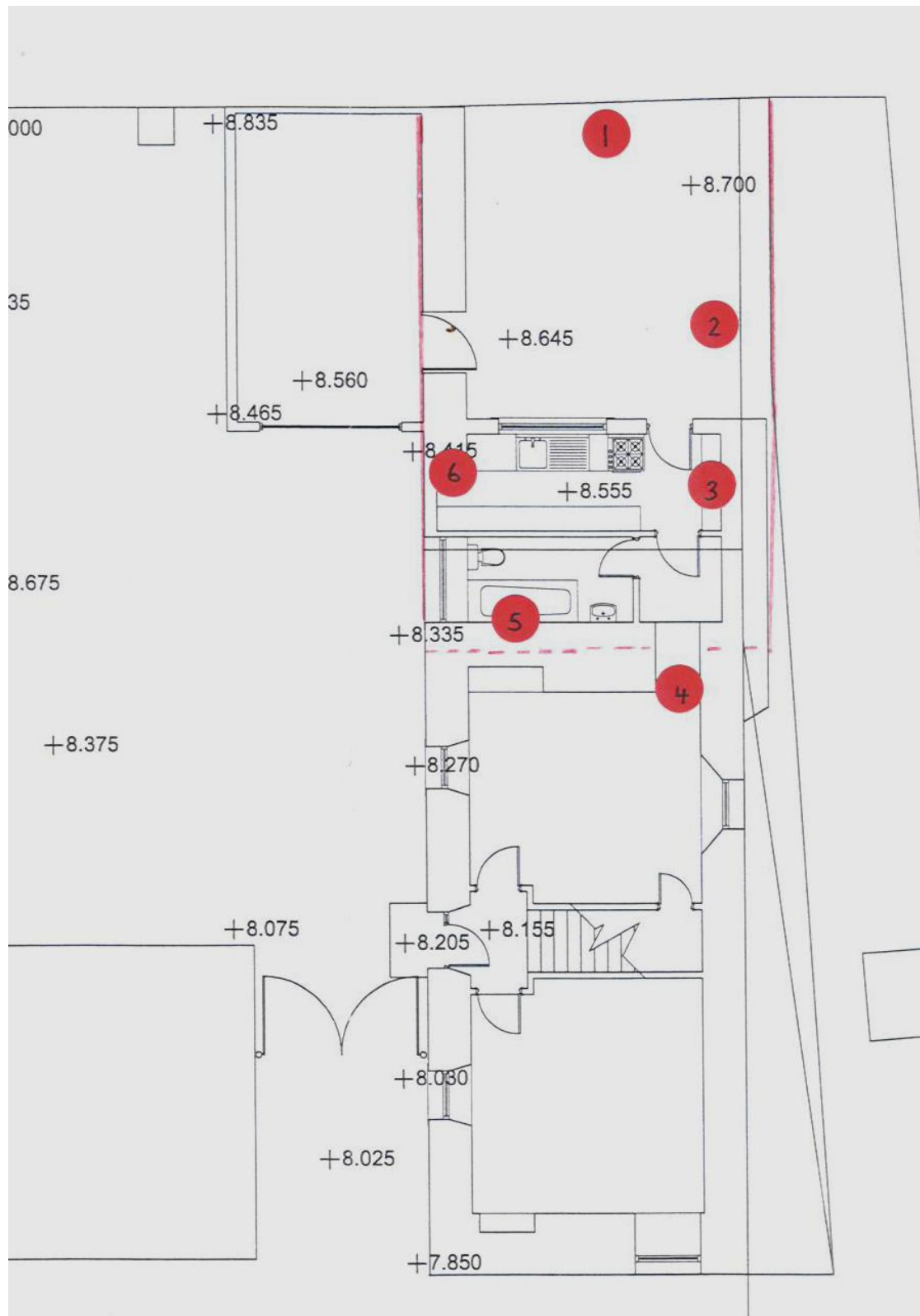


Figure 7 – Extract of Estate Map of Cromarty dated 1823 (original in Cromarty Museum) Outline of house marked in red.



**Figure 8 – Plan of 18<sup>th</sup> century house revealed – marked in red. 1: 100**

- 1 - Fireplace    2 - Window    3 - Window  
4 - Doorway    5 - Window    6 - Doorway?



### **3. Historical Background**

The village of Cromarty was created as a Royal Burgh by 1266 but was dependent of the Earl of Ross from 1315 until forfeiture in 1475. Granted a new charter in 1593 but removed from the roll of Royal burgh's before 1685 when made a burgh of barony under the Viscount of Tarbat (later 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Cromartie). Town noted to be in part decline by 1730 but had traded in salted fish, especially salmon, between 1690 and 1720. The late 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a rise in prosperity with the building of ropeworks, brewery, harbour, new Townhouse, a 2<sup>nd</sup> church and new housing. The town went into decline after the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the ropeworks and brewery closed, also the failure of the herring industry and the rise of Invergordon as the main port of the Cromarty Firth led to Cromarty continuing to be 'an appearance of picturesque decay and desolation' (Gifford, 1992, 397)(Alston 1999; Ash 1991; Gifford, 1992).

#### Archaeological Background

Currently only limited archaeological work has been conducted in the burgh previously. Although the burgh was recommended for the Scottish Burgh Survey Project it was not included. Only three archaeological watching briefs have been conducted in the burgh:

- Work by SUAT Ltd in 1994 at 65 Gordon's Lane, revealed a wall of an 18<sup>th</sup> century date. (Mackenzie, 1994)
- Work by Graham Robins in 1995 at 98 Shore Street, revealed no features of interest though a dark garden soil underlying the modern soil containing bone and shell was noted but with no dateable material. (Robins, 1995)
- Work by the author in 2002 for a new waste water supply revealed medieval deposits to the Causeway end of the village, work was mostly on the shoreline. (Farrell, 2002)

#### Cartographic History

The house is marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874 (see figure 5) with a second building to the south, by the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906 (see figure 6) these buildings are still present and there is an addition of a small building against the southwest wall. Braehead was formerly named Links Terrace. The house appears on an estate map of 1823 (see figure 7) though the small building to the S is not. The building to the south corner is recorded in the HSMR with the following information:

HSMR – NH76NE 278

NMRS – NH76NE 112

'According to local people, the house was taken down at the insistence of the Local Authority Buildings Control Dept, many years ago on the grounds that it was unsafe. Part of the gable survived built into the adjoining garden wall for some years but this too eventually became unsafe and partially collapsed. Footings are likely to survive however.'

#### Building History

House is noted by Gifford (1992, 400) to be mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in date 'with a reset stone carved with a tailor's iron and scissors and the date 1727'. Beaton (1992, 34) notes that initials on stone are for Kenneth Kamp and his family. Building is listed C (S) and notes 'Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century incorporating marriage stone of 1727, harled, 2 storeys and attic 2 windows and centre door at ground floor, window at 1<sup>st</sup> floor, slate roof with 2 dormers. Marriage stone with tailor's scissors with initial KK IT and TM and KW and the date 1727.

Valuation Rolls for the burgh prior to 1930 are not available in the Highland Council Archives or Cromarty Museum. Records for the period of 1930 to 1975

notes only 1 owner for 7 Braehead of a Mr. J Reid (see appendix 2) with a rateable value from £6 to £43. Records of Titles and Sasine for the burgh (I am very grateful to David Alston for this information) note that the house forms part of a feu dating to 1717 (see feu register of 1833 Appendix 3). Owners are as follows:

Date Unknown – Sir Kenneth McKenzie to John Manson

5<sup>th</sup> February 1717 – John Manson to his brother David Manson (Sasine)

3<sup>rd</sup> February 1726 – David Manson to Kenneth Kemp (Sasine)

11<sup>th</sup> March 1831 – Sold by Kenneth Kemp, cabinetmaker to William Macrae, ferryman. (Sasine Record)

27<sup>th</sup> July 1840 - Sold by William Macrae, ferryman to George Gordon Smith, surgeon. (Sasine Record)

1910 – Owned by Mrs Margaret Watson (Inland Revenue Service Field Notebook) noted as house and store with corrugated iron roof on store.

2<sup>nd</sup> April 1918 – Sold by Trustees of late Mrs Margaret Skinner or Watson to James Reid. (Title Deed Record)

#### **4. Objectives**

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the development to record those features revealed by excavation work. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed. A photographic record of the building was made by W Reynolds Architects and submitted to the Highland Council as part of this brief.

#### **5. Methodology**

A monitoring was made of the demolition of the existing extension and garage and the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to a maximum depth of 150mm for the new building. A monitoring was also made of the excavation of the foundations for the new buildings. A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the site with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand.

Weather on the days of work (August 5<sup>th</sup> – September 1<sup>st</sup> 2003) was generally bright and clear.

#### **6. Watching Brief Investigation**

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

##### Site Location

The current house lies to the north end of the village and overlooks the Links.

##### Results

The buildings to be demolished consisted of an existing extension of kitchen and bathroom 1½ storey high with a corrugated iron roof with a small courtyard on the west side of the house with a flat roofed garage on its south side (For plan see figure 8). (See also drawings over) Within the courtyard were a small fireplace in

the west gable and a small window in the north wall measuring 45cm x 55cm (see figure 8 – no.1 and 2)

Left: View of Extension and Garage. © W Reynolds.

Right: Fireplace in west gable. © S Farrell.

Below centre: Window in North Wall. © S Farrell.



Removal of the wooden timbers of the extension revealed it to be a later addition to the house with newspapers dated 1908 between floor timbers with wall's of rubble sandstone being later raised and the gable wall on the west side comprised of concrete blocks. Removal of the internal plasterwork and wooden strapping revealed a blocked up doorway on the south side 85cm wide and 1.88m high (For plan - see figure 8 no.6) This area of the building had been heavily altered with the insertion of a window to the left of this doorway with some damage to the 19<sup>th</sup> century house wall being replaced with concrete blocks. The lower part of the wall to the south side was of rounded stones and rubble sandstone.

Left: View of Doorway on south side – scale 2m.

Right: View of Gable end of house upon demolition of extension facing NE – scale 2m.



Removal of the debris from the demolition including plaster and harling revealed that the gable of the existing house sat on the gable of an earlier house of rounded beach stones mortared with mud clay and straw to a 1 storey height with rubble sandstone above forming the later building. A search of these rounded cobbles and straw mortar revealed a rectangular building aligned E-W (see figure 8) with a number of additional features of another window in the north wall (no3 on plan) measuring 55cm x 40cm and an original doorway 1m wide (no.4) later reused between later house and original. Also revealed was a blocked-up window on the east wall 1.1m x 1.1m with an opening measuring 90cm x 40cm (no.5) with pink sandstone lintels – see photograph over). Internally traces of the original plasterwork were also partly visible which was decorated with scallop shells.

Below: View of NE corner of 18<sup>th</sup> century building showing windows in north wall and doorway no.4 – scale 2m.



Top: View of East Wall showing doorway no.4 and window no.5 – scale 2m.  
Centre: Detail of original wall of 18<sup>th</sup> century house and plasterwork.  
Bottom: View of cobbles revealed in garage area.



Removal of the existing concrete floor of the garage revealed tar over crushed red sandstone (possibly demolition from building or wall) below that was partly revealed a small cobbled surface (see photograph on previous page). Extent of cobbled surface could not be fully determined due to the previous foundations for garage. This in turn overlay a mixed dark brown subsoil over a natural of orange-brown sand. This subsoil was visible in limited areas of the site, with the depth of cobbled surface and subsoil being to a maximum of 150mm.

Watching brief on the excavation for the foundations revealed the possible hearth for the fireplace in the west gable (point 1 – figure 8) of a course of 4 stones running N-S 700mm to the south, with a small cut feature to the front probably modern. To the area of the small building to the SW corner were revealed a number of machine cut timbers, a couple of timbers that were removed had round ends possibly an indication of being reused, timbers were running N-S overlying a yellow natural sand. Overall natural ground of orange-brown and yellow sand was revealed at a depth of 400mm under mixed soils and crushed red sandstone, there was no indication that the building depicted on the ordnance survey map (see figure 5 and 6) did extent further to the east. No finds or deposits of an earlier date than the 19<sup>th</sup> century were found in the topsoil or subsoil's excavated.

## **7. Conclusions**

The current building dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century sits directly on the edge of the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century building that was aligned E-W. No evidence was found of any earlier structures or deposits and it may be possible from the results made and the documentary evidence that this area of Cromarty was not developed until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century with the expansion of the fishing industry.

## **8. Recommendations**

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to no further work is to be conducted.

## **9. Archive**

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:

- Notebook of results.
- Copy on disc of photographs and plan made by W Reynold Architect.
- Copy of this report.

A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. Digital images used in this report have been deposited with HSMR on disc as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

## **10. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland**

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

## 11. References

- Alston, D (1999) *Ross and Cromarty: A Historical Guide*. Birlinn. Edinburgh.
- Ash, M (1991) *This Noble Harbour: A History of the Cromarty Firth*. Cromarty Firth Port Authority. Invergordon.
- Baldwin, J R (ed) (1986) *Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland*. The Scottish Society for Northern Studies. Edinburgh.
- Beaton, E (1992) *Ross & Cromarty: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. Edinburgh.
- Farrell, S (2002) *Report of Archaeological Watching Brief April – August 2002 Cromarty Wastewater Treatment Works*. Unpublished report – copy held in Highland Sites and Monuments Record.
- Gifford, J (1992) *The Buildings of Scotland: The Highlands and Islands*. Penguin. Edinburgh.
- Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entry for NH76NE.
- IFA (1999) *By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists*. Reading.
- MacKenzie, J (1994) 65 Gordon's Lane, Cromarty. *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 38-39. Council for Scottish Archaeology.
- Robins, G (1995) *Archaeological Watching brief at 98 Shore Street, Cromarty*. Unpublished report – copy held in Highland Sites and Monuments Record (NH76NE 505).

### Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet 67.9 Ross-shire of 1874 surveyed 1871.

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:2500 sheet 67.9 Ross-shire of 1906 revised 1904.

## Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

- 1 – Detail of window in North Wall.
- 2 – View of north wall of garage facing SW.
- 3 – Ibid – scale 2m.
- 4 – Detail of fireplace in W gable – scale 1m.
- 5 – View of window in North wall – scale 2m.
- 6 – View of garage facing NW – scale 2m.
- 7 – View of garage and extension facing N – scale 2m.
- 8 – View of rear garden wall facing W – scale 2m.
- 9 – View of site of building facing SW – scales 1m.
- 10 – Detail of date stone on south side of house.
- 11 – View of garden before removal facing SW.
- 12 – View of extension during demolition facing N.
- 13 – Detail of internal plastering on gable end of 19<sup>th</sup> century house facing E.
- 14 – View of revealed doorway facing S – scale 2m.
- 15 – Ibid but without scale.
- 16 – Ibid but with scale.
- 17 – View of demolition in progress facing NW.
- 18 – View of north internal wall showing building has been raised.
- 19 – View of demolition in progress facing NW.
- 20 – View of demolition in progress facing NE.
- 21 – View of building upon demolition facing NE – scale 2m.
- 22 – Ibid.
- 23 – Detail of revealed cobbles – scales 1m.
- 24 – View of NE corner of 18<sup>th</sup> century building showing windows in north wall and doorway – scale 2m.
- 25 – View of East Wall showing doorway no.4 and window no.5 – scale 2m.
- 26 – Detail of original wall of 18<sup>th</sup> century house and plasterwork.
- 27 – View of north wall of 18<sup>th</sup> century house before demolition facing W – scale 2m.
- 28 – View of house site upon removal of south wall facing NW.
- 29 – View of garden on removal of most of topsoil facing SW.
- 30 – View of north wall upon removal facing N to rear of 8 Braehead.
- 31 – View of site before excavations for foundations facing N.
- 32 – View of machining in progress at west wall facing W.
- 33 – View of hearth revealed at point 1 facing W.
- 34 – View of excavated foundation trench at N facing W.
- 35 – View of excavated foundation trench at W facing S.
- 36 – View of excavated foundation trench at central chimney facing W.
- 37 - View of excavated foundation trenches at SW corner facing SW.
- 38 - View of excavated foundation trenches N facing NW.

## Appendix 2 – County Valuation Rolls 1930-1975

A periodic search of the County Valuation Rolls held in Highland Council Archives revealed the following:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Rates</u>
1930-31	James Reid, Labourer	£6
1931-32	James Reid	£6
1935-36	James Reid	£6
1939-40	James Reid	£8
1944-45	James Reid	£8
1949-50	James Reid	£8
1954-55	James Reid	£16
1957-58	James Reid	£16
1960-61	James Reid, retired	£16
1963-64	James Reid	£26
1966-67	James Reid	£26
1970-71	James Reid	£30
1972-73	James Reid	£43
1974-75	James Reid	£43

### Appendix 3 – Report on Feu Duties for Cromarty 1833

No 39 (later annotation identifies this as 7 Braehead]

Sinclair, Donald Shoemaker produced Disposition of date 5<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>ry</sup> 1717 by John Manson Indweller in favour of David Manson his brother & Katherine Munro of the one half of his feu subjects being the east half next to John Hossacks feu duty payable to himself six pennies Scots and to the superior 15 Shillings Scots. Instrument of Sasine thereon ? February 1717. Also disposition by David Manson & Spouse to Kenneth Kemp Tailor of date 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1726 conveying said subjects under burden of said feu duty of 15/- Scots and instrument of Sasine thereon 4 Febr 1726. Mutual agreement twixt Kenneth Kemp and D Manson, Marjory Dow, Alex. Manson & Hugh Manson sons to the said John Manson & Marjory Dow 31 May 1743. Also Disposition by Kenneth Kemp, Cabinet Maker, son to the said K Kemp Tailor to the said Daniel Sinclair of the one half of the said subjects 13 May 1831, the other half next the Street were about same time disposed to Wm Macrae Ferryman. D Sinclair had no receipt to show for the payment of the feu duties consequently they are still due. Inde say for one half year 7½.

No 87

McLeod John, Merchant produced Disposition by Isaac Forsyth as Commissioner for John Forsyth eldest son of William Forsyth in favour of George Hossack & Spouse of date 21 November 1812 of subjects on the Braehead which subjects were purchased by Wm Forsyth from John Manson Weaver who obtained the first feu rights thereto and of the tenement adjoining to the east (?) from Sir Kenneth McKenzie the feu duty is not mentioned but it will be seen from the original feu right which is supposed to be in Mr (possibly Mrs?) Forsyth's possession as he sold only a part of the subjects to the Hossacks. Also Disposition by the said George Hossack & Spouse in favour of him the said John McLeod 21 January 1816 Vide no 39 in connection with this feu right.

No 148 includes

Also produced instrument of sasine of date 5 Febry 1717 proceeding on a Disposition (which Mr Forsyth has not) by Sir Kenneth McKenzie in favour of John Manson & Marjory Bain his wife of date [blank] July 1713 of subjects on the Bank or Braehead measuring from East to West 20 Scots ells & from South to North 20 Scots ells bounded by John Hossacks tenement at the East Thos Gairs at the West (now [blank]) John Manson at the South and the road at the North. Retour of service by John Manson as heir to John Manson his grandfather of date 6<sup>th</sup> April 1764 and claim of service therein from which it appears the feu duty payable for said subjects is £1 10/- Scots Disposition by the said last mentioned John Manson to William Forsyth of part of the said subjects being the Wester Half as these ? to Mr Forsyth are bounded on the South by Kemp's subjects which were formerly a part thereof on the West by Mr Forsyth's Garden the Road at the East & by D Urquhart's at the North measure 20 by 20 Scots ells of date 9 Decem 1765 no feu duty mentioned but reference had to prior rights Instrument od Sasine in favour of Wm Forsyth of date 30 July 1767. Inde one half feu duty.