

Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
15th April – 5th July 2002
Cantray, by Croy, Highland
NH 7994 / 4834

By
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Introduction

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Mrs G Sinclair by the author for a development of a house plot, an agricultural barn and associated access at Cantray, by Croy.

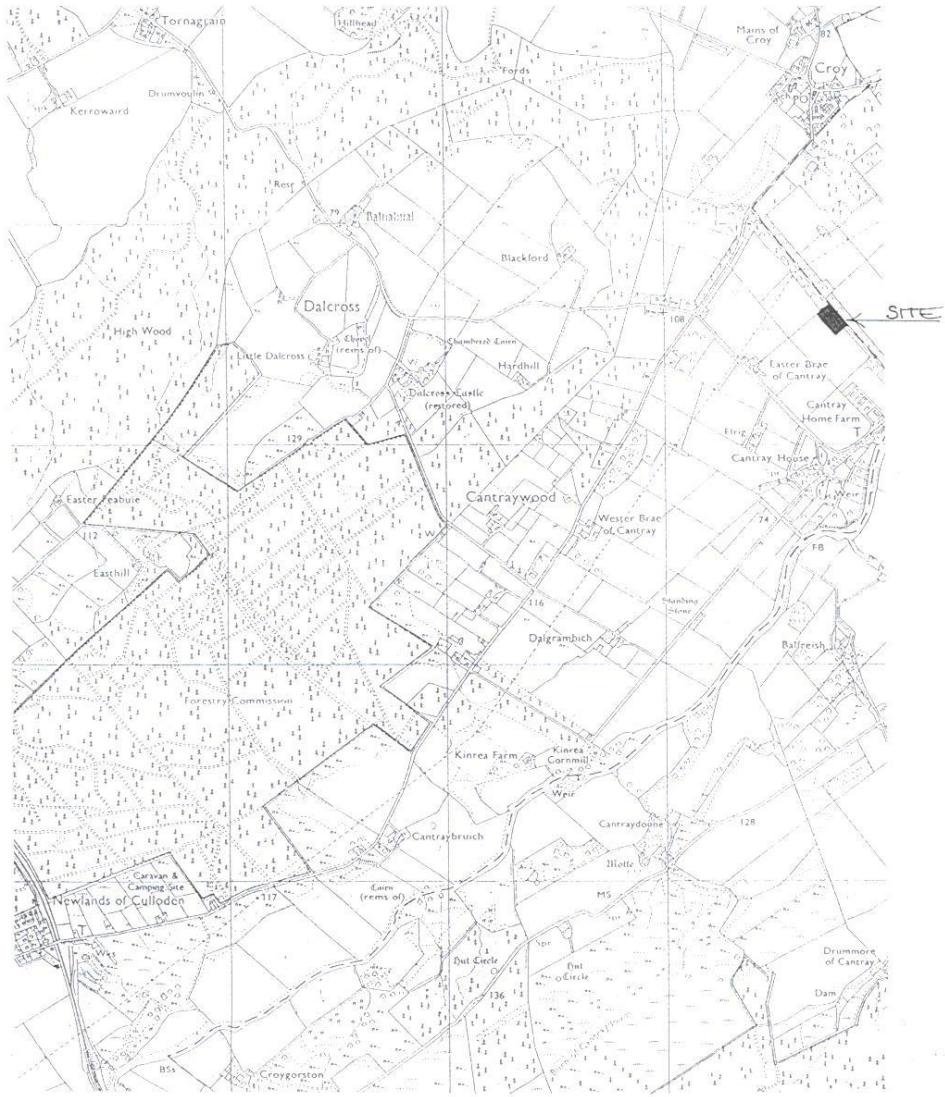
Acknowledgements

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

- Mrs. G Sinclair;
- Staff of F & G Construction Ltd for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

Location

See over



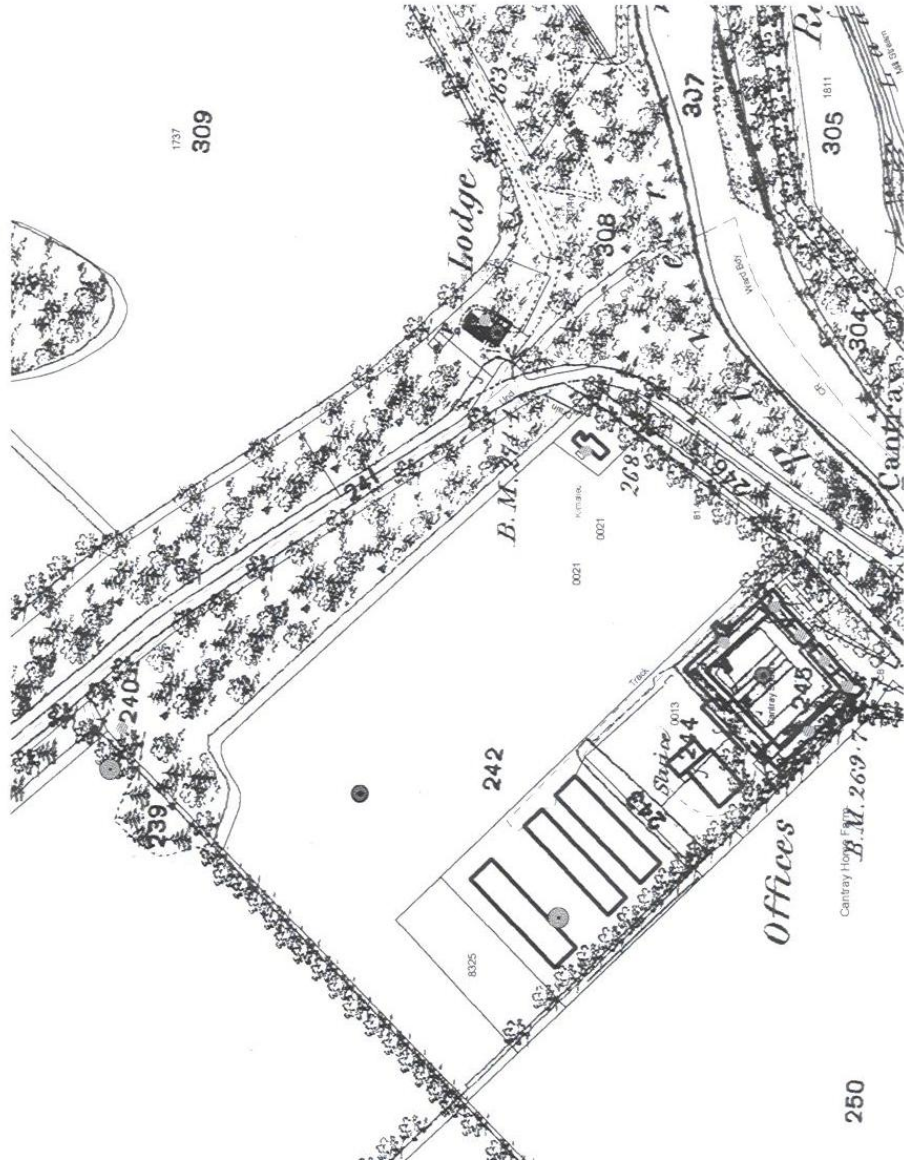
Newtonhill Lentrain Inverness IV3 6RN Telephone 01463 831324 Facsimile 01463 831486

Frederick Geddes and Company Chartered Architects

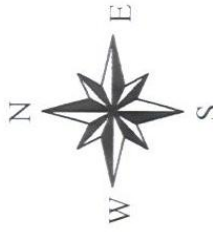
PROPOSED NEW DWELLING HOUSE & DOUBLE GARAGE
 FOR MRS GAYNIE SINCLAIR AT HOLME LANE ROAD, CROY
 LOCATION PLAN SCALE 1/25000 DATE 23/2/02 No 2002/10/1

INVESTOR	PLANNING	LOCAL AUTHORITY
PLAN 1	7	REFERENCE
02/198/REMIN		
7.3.02		

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- ADP
- Smr.shp
- Uni-form Planning
- Hs scheduled monuments.shp
- Badenoch & strathspey lb.shp
- Caithness lb.shp
- Inverness lb.shp
- Lochaber lb.shp
- Nairn lb.shp
- Ross & crom lb.shp
- Skye & lochalsh lb.shp
- Sutherland lb.shp



0.09 0 0.09 0.18 Miles

Historical Background

The area of the watching brief lies adjacent to one recorded site, stock enclosures. The following information is recorded in the National Monuments Record of Scotland (Number in brackets is corresponding number of Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record):

NH69SW 40 (HSMR 47) – Croy – Stock Enclosures at NH 799/483 – Banks in wood on the west side of Croy/Cantray road, found after excavation, not to have been Roman. Believed to have been used in connection with deer herding. Place name evidence supports this belief. (Jones & Keillor, 1984)

There is nothing marked at the development location on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey of 1874 (See previous) the area being marked as woodland.

The name Elrig or Elrick derives from the Old Irish 'erelc' meaning ambush, "and was connected with a drive, either as a wall or glen to assist the drive or as the spot where the hunters awaited the drive". (Gilbert, 1979, 8). It is known in early literature both in Scotland and Ireland and used in Scotland till the 18th century. Watson (1926) also notes it being spelt eileirg (appearing in the Book of Deer) and as Eileag denoting a deer trap.

Objectives

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the house plot, new services and access road to record those features revealed by excavation work. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed.

Methodology

A monitoring was made of the removal of turf and topsoil and subsoil's to an average depth of 300mm for the excavation of the house plot and access area to an average area of 1150m².

Weather on the days of work (April 15th & July 5th 2002) was generally dull and overcast but with some bright periods.

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.

Results

A monitoring of the excavation of the agricultural barn revealed no archaeological features or deposits only natural ground of orange-brown stony silt. The agricultural barn was excavated without archaeological supervision (prior to the 15th) though an inspection of the area showed the area to be heavily disturbed by construction work and with root action and no archaeological features or deposits were evident. The area of the barn was 27m by 27m with topsoil only to a maximum depth of 300mm.

Excavation of the house plot revealed no archaeological features or deposits only natural ground of orange-brown stony silt. The area of the house was within 50m EW by 23m NS with topsoil only to a maximum depth of 300mm.

Evidence for the bank recorded here is slight. A possible bank is evident along the Croy to Cantray road as a line of two boulders as to be the base of a turf and stone dyke. There is no evidence for a ditch that would be required to trap deer or any remains of a wattle fence that would have been on top. It is possible that this is not for deer but a turf and stone dyke of a post-medieval date relating to agricultural use.

Recommendations

No recommendations with regards to this project are to be proposed.

Archive

Notebook of results to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh. A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record.

References

Gilbert, J M (1979) *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland*. John Donald Publishers Ltd. Edinburgh.

Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entry for NH74NE 0047.

IFA (1999) *By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists*. Reading.

Jones, G D B & Keillor, I (1984) Croy parallel banks. *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 1984, 15.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database entry for NH74NE 040.

Watson, W J (1926) *History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland : Being the Rhind Lectures on Archaeology (expanded) delivered in 1916*. William Blackwood & Sons Ltd. Edinburgh.

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Appendix 1 – Details of Slides

1 – View of area for agricultural barn facing east.	April 2002
2 – ibid but facing south.	April 2002
3 – ibid but facing northwest.	April 2002
4 – View of bank by roadside facing north.	April 2002
5 – View of site for house facing northwest.	April 2002
6 – ibid but facing north.	April 2002
7 – ibid but facing south.	April 2002
8 – View of bank facing south.	April 2002
9 – ibid.	April 2002
10 – ibid but facing north.	April 2002
11 – View of house plot prior to excavation facing west	July 2002
12 – View of excavation in progress facing west	July 2002
13 – ibid but facing south west	July 2002
14 – ibid but facing west	July 2002
15 – ibid but facing east	July 2002
16 – View of excavation upon completion facing west	July 2002
17 – ibid but facing southwest	July 2002
18 – ibid but facing northwest	July 2002
19 – ibid	July 2002
20 – ibid but facing southwest	July 2002