

Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
April 12th 2003
Achilty, By Contin
NH 4433 / 5702

Client : Mr. M Butcher

Planning Application No: 02/00973/FULRC

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Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Mr. M Butcher in April 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Achilty by Contin (NH 4433/5702) as part of a house development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits. No further work has been recommended.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Mr. M Butcher by the author for a house plot and associated access at Achilty by Contin.

The work was conducted on April 12th 2003.

2. Acknowledgements

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

- Mr. M Butcher;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

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Figure 1 – General Location (circled)

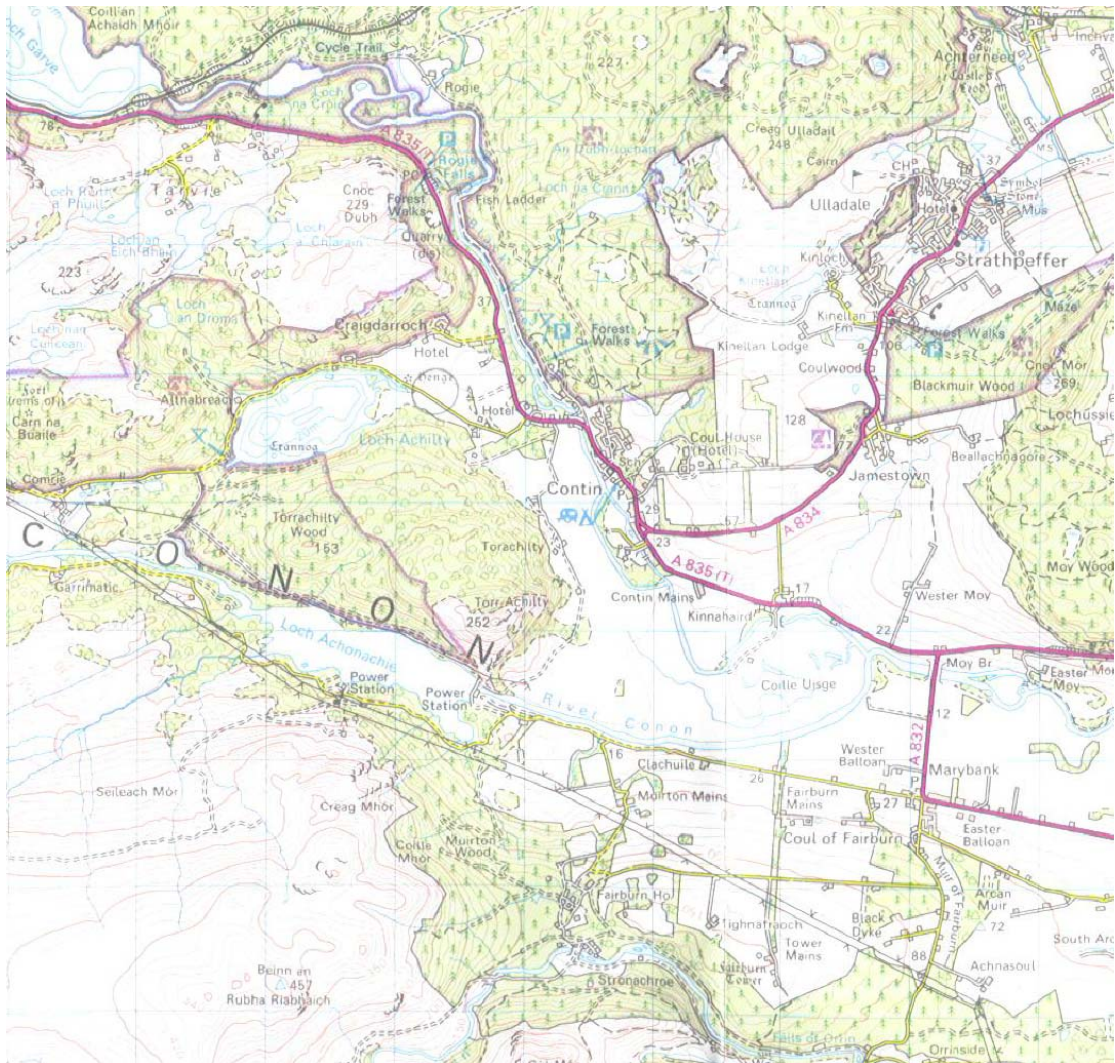


Figure 2 – Site Plan

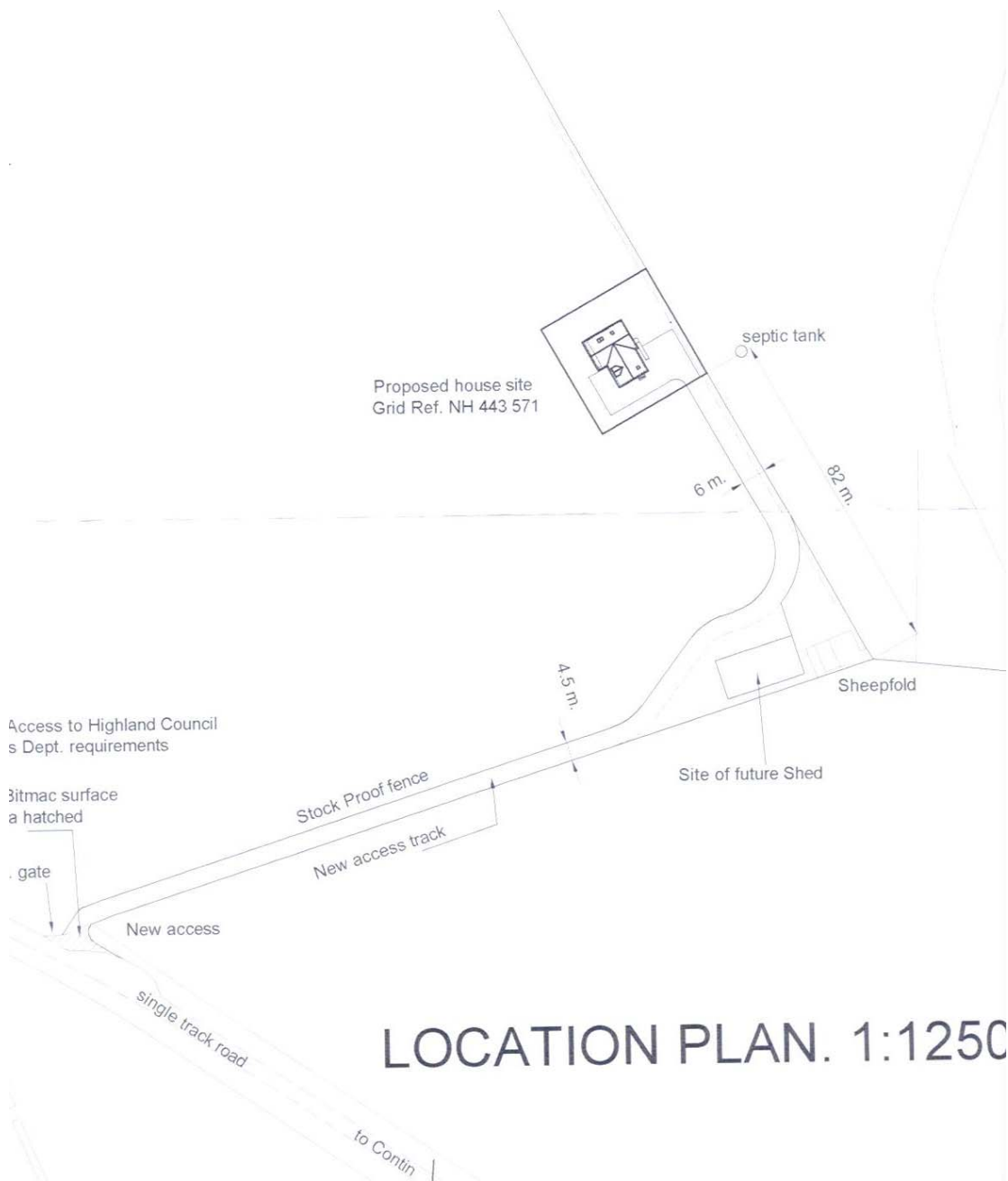


Figure 3 – Development Plan of House

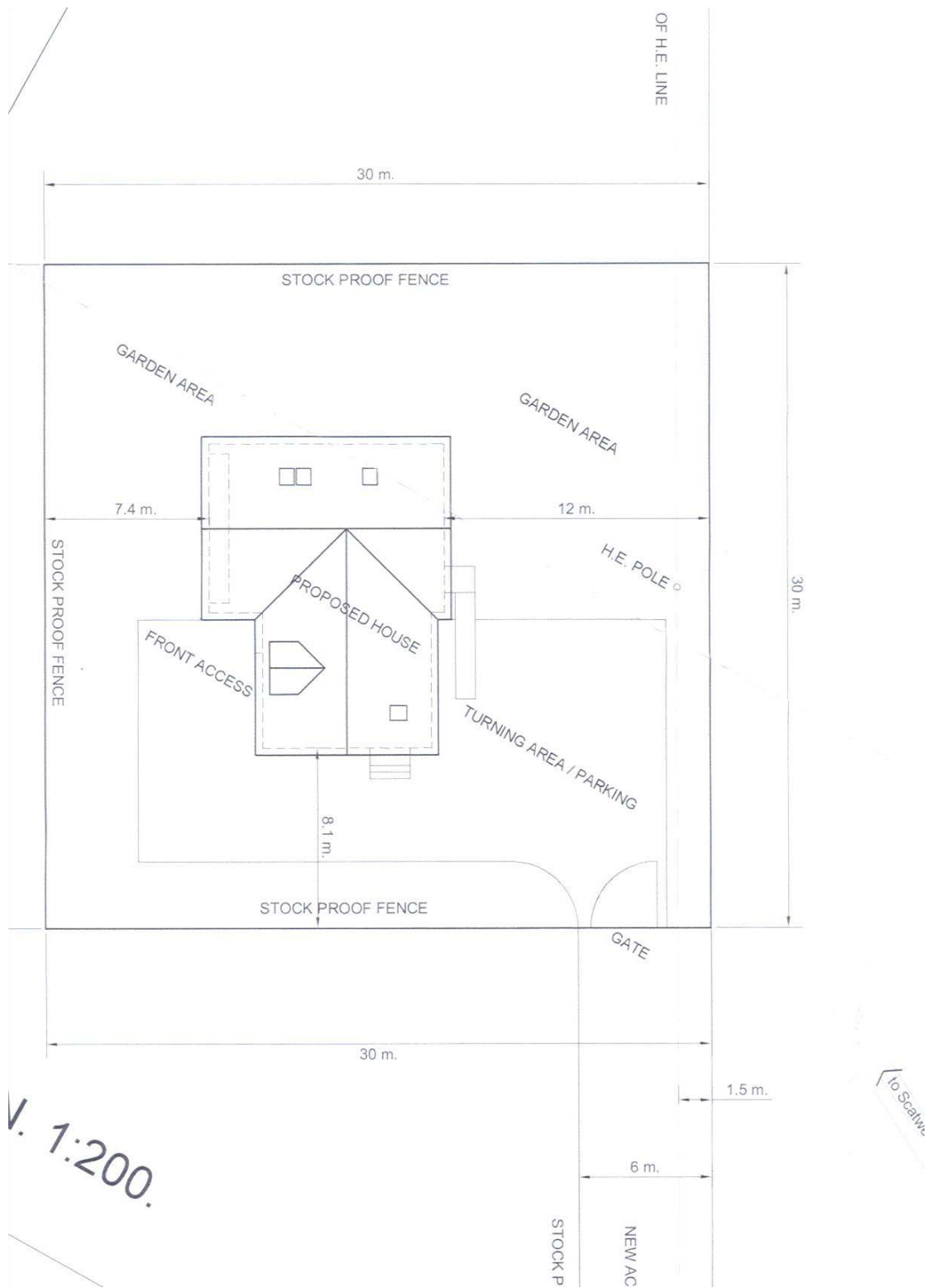


Figure 4 – Area of Watching brief in relation to Development Plan



3. Historical Background

The house development lies close to a couple of archaeological sites recorded in the Highland Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record of Scotland. A summary of these is as follows:

Achilty

HSMR – NH45NW 1

NMRS – NH45NW 1

Grid Ref: NH 4411/5692

Type – Henge

Henge enclosed by ditch and bank. Noted in 1837 (NSA) that a “few empty earthen jars found”. Noted in 1963 of ‘a monument of which there is certain room for doubt’. Noted by Ordnance Survey of 1965 as a ‘probable henge’.

Craigdarroch

HSMR – NH45NW 9

NMRS – NH45NW 9

Grid Ref: NH 4451/5270

Type – Small cairns

Seven small cairns measuring 4-5m in diameter on edge of river terrace.

Craigdarroch

HSMR – NH45NW 2

NMRS – NH45NW 2

Grid Ref: NH 4422/5730

Type – Cairn, Bronze ornaments

2 pieces of decorated copper presented to NMAS in 1828 of possible plate armour found in cairn. Noted by Ordnance Survey in 1965 that no trace of cairn.

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.

5. Methodology

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to a maximum depth of 250mm for the house plot to an area of 360m². A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the site with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand.

Weather on the day of work (April 12th 2003) was slightly overcast with showers.

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 site lies in an area of grass pasture with the underlying geology being mixed sands and gravels.

Results

A monitoring of the excavation revealed no archaeological features or deposits in the area of the house plot. A watching brief and inspection of the access road (part of which was excavated without any archaeological supervision) revealed no archaeological features to be evident. An amount of modern clearance material lies in the area of the proposed cattle shed (see figure 2).

7. Conclusions

With no archaeological features or deposits being revealed it is likely that the recorded archaeology stands alone and any prehistoric settlement lies closer to the nearby River Contin or nearer Loch Achilty.

8. Recommendations

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to no archaeological features being revealed, and it is likely that no other features would be revealed with further work.

9. Archive

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

- Notebook of results
- 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 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

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

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database entries for NH45NW.

Appendix 1 – Details of Slides

- 1 – View of site prior to excavation facing north.
- 2 – View of henge from house plot facing west.
- 3 – View of site of house plot facing northeast.
- 4 – View of henge facing west.
- 5 – View of access road facing east.
- 6 – View of modern clearance material facing east.
- 7 – View of access road facing south.
- 8 – View of machining in progress.
- 9 – View of house plot upon excavation facing north.
- 10 – View of house plot upon excavation facing southwest.

