

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief  
June 18<sup>th</sup> 2003  
Balbeg No.6, Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire  
NH 44993 / 31351**

Client: Mrs C Miller

Planning Application No: 02/924/FULIN

**By  
Stuart Farrell  
B.A A.I.F.A F.S.A.Scot.  
June 2003**

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Acknowledgements
3. Background
4. Objectives
5. Method
6. Watching Brief
7. Conclusions
8. Recommendations
9. Archive
10. Discovery and Excavation
11. References

Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Mrs C Miller in May 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at no.6 Balbeg by Drumnadrochit (NH 44993/31351) as part of a housing development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.*

*Work revealed that the site of the new house lay adjacent to a former croft house, which was depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map. A watching brief on the excavations for the new house and access road revealed no archaeological deposits or features.*

*No further recommendations for further work have been proposed.*

## **1. Introduction**

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Mrs C Miller by the author for a house plot and associated access at Balbeg by Drumnadrochit.

The fieldwork was conducted on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2003.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

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

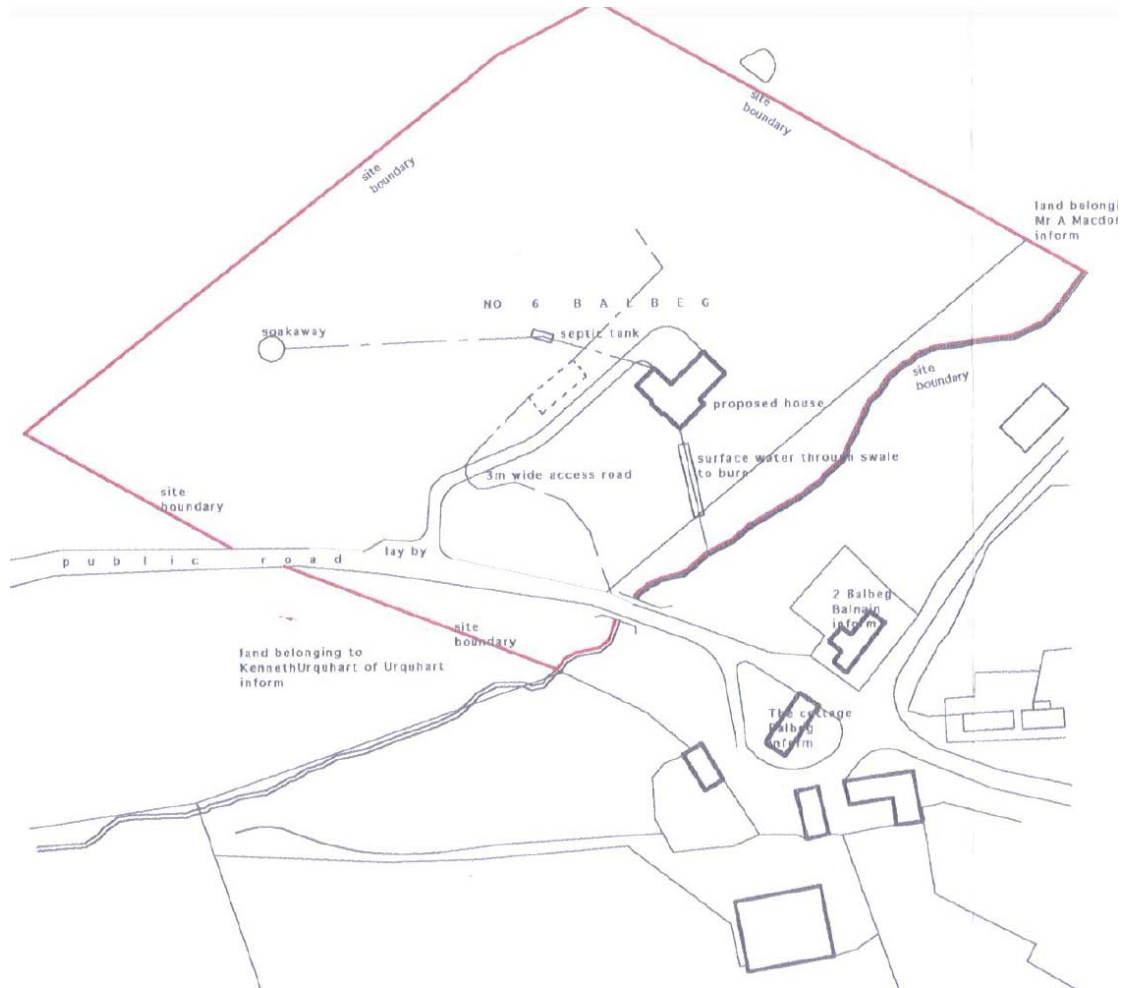
- Mrs. C Miller;
- Mr. J Fraser, Builder;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

Stuart Farrell  
39a Park Street  
Nairn  
Highland  
IV12 4PP

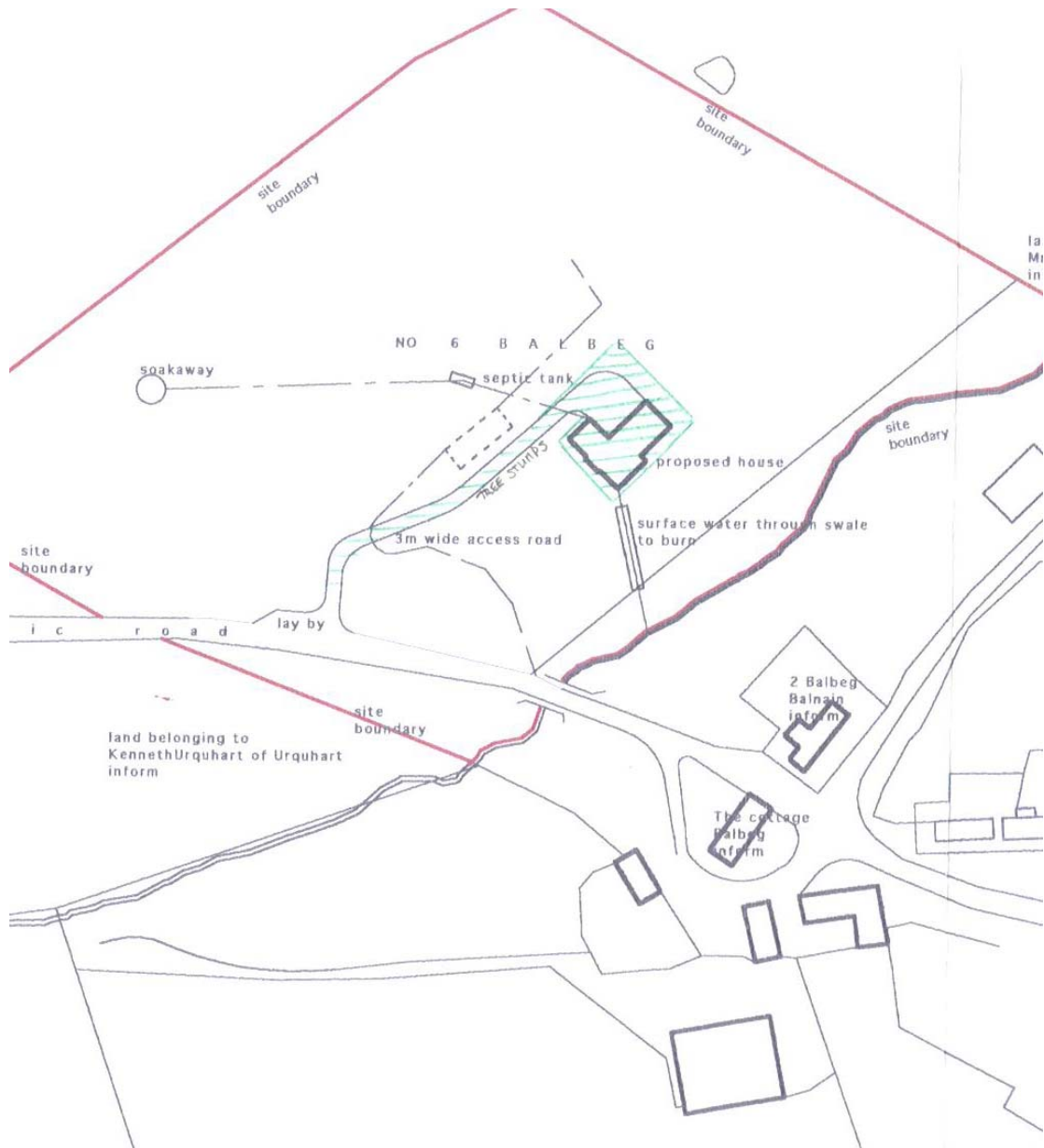
Figure 1 - Location



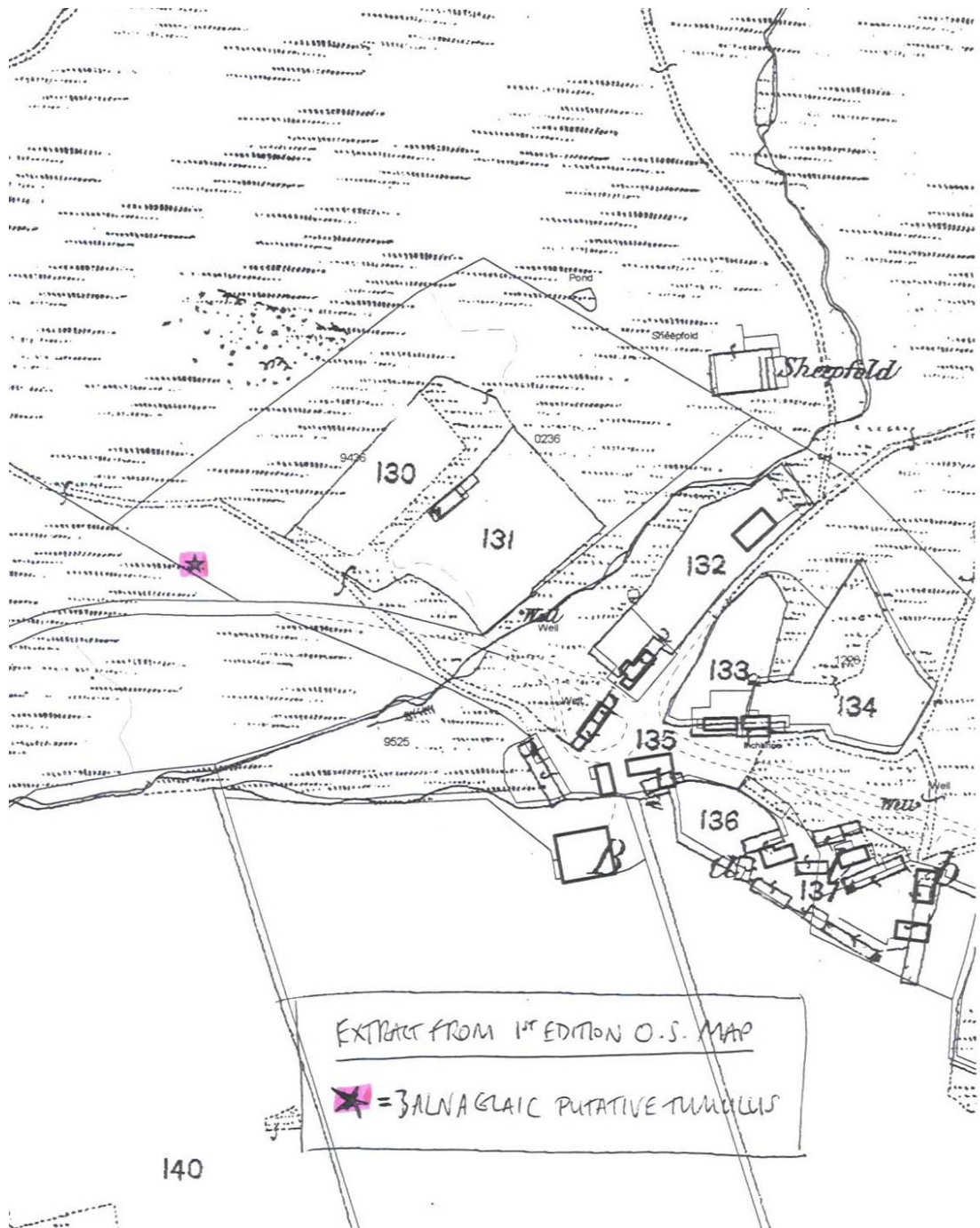
Figure 2 – Development Plan 1:1250



**Figure 3 – Area of Watching brief in relation to Development Plan**  
(Area highlighted in green)



**Figure 4 – Ordnance Survey Map of 1870**  
House to be sited on site numbered 131.



### **3. Historical Background**

The development lies close to the following sites as recorded in the Highland Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database:

1- Balnaglaic  
HSMR – NH43SW 35  
NMRS – n/a  
Grid Ref: NH 4488/3133  
Type – Ditch, platform, wall  
Tumulus known as “heavenly hill”.

2- Balnaglaic  
HSMR – n/a  
NMRS – NH43SE 43  
Grid Ref: NH 4508/3140  
Type – Farmstead  
Marked as sheepfold on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps. No further information available.

The development site lies close to a former croft (see figure 4) centred at NH 44974/31353 which is depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS of a rectangular structure of 2 compartments and 2 enclosures (though not defined if of stone or fence lines) with a well close to the burn. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS of circa 1905 (not illustrated) depicts a partly roofed building.

### **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 and associated access road and turning area to an area of c546m<sup>2</sup>. 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 (June 18<sup>th</sup> 2003) was partly overcast with showers and sunny periods.

### **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 new house site lies on a small flat area of ground of rough grazing of grass and nettles. The site lies to the SW of a former croft.



## Results

The remains of the croft that are visible are of a rectangular structure of large angular rubble aligned NE-SW of 2 compartments 5.5m x 11.5m with walls up to 1m wide and high. No visible entrance, though at time of visit site was partly covered in nettles. (Below – sketch plan of croft – not to scale) A turf and stone bank is visible to the NE of the croft up to 1m wide and 0.5m high though is quite denuded by trees, this matches the enclosure depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS (see figure4).



A monitoring of the excavation for the new house plot and associated access road revealed no archaeological features or deposits. No features were evident prior to work starting. Excavations showed a natural of a mixture of patches of yellow sand and orange-brown sand and gravels with less topsoil to the SW as the ground naturally rises. Area directly to the front of the former croft heavily disturbed by tree stumps.

## **7. Conclusions**

The croft by the size of the trees was probably abandoned about 65 years ago. As no other features were found it is likely that this building stood alone.

## **8. Recommendations**

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to no 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. A copy of this report has been deposited with HSMR on disc 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.

### Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6inch-mile sheet 12 Inverness-shire of 1874 surveyed 1868-70.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 12 Inverness-shire of 1906 revised 1902-3.

## **Appendix 1 – Details of Slides**

- 1 – View of access road prior to excavation facing N.
- 2 – View of site prior to excavation facing NE.
- 3 – View of croft house remains facing NW.
- 4 – View of house plot prior to excavation facing N.
- 5 – View of house plot prior to excavation facing S.
- 6 – View of turf and stone bank at NE facing E.
- 7 – View of machining in progress.
- 8 – ibid but facing SE.
- 9 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NE.
- 10 – View of house plot upon excavation facing N.
- 11 – ibid but facing SE.
- 12 – View of tree stumps to front of croft facing NE.
- 13 – View of house plot and turning area upon excavation facing SE.
- 14 – View of tree stumps in line of access road facing SE.
- 15 – View of access road upon excavation facing N.