

**Report of Archaeological Recording Project
June to July 2003
Am Baile by Invershin, Lairg
NH 57878 / 95744**

Client: Mr. G Lonsdale

Planning Application No: 03/0086/REMSU

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Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Mr. G Lonsdale in June 2003 to undertake an archaeological recording project at Invershin (NH 95737/57862) as part of a proposed house development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work revealed that the site was not an archaeological feature but a quarry pit. No features of archaeological interest were revealed during monitoring of groundwork's.

No further recommendations have been proposed.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological recording project conducted on behalf of Mr. G Lonsdale by the author for a house plot at Invershin.

The work was conducted between June 24th and July 5th 2003.

2. Acknowledgements

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

- Mr. G Lonsdale;
- Mr. A Colvin, architect;
- Mr. J Hepburn-Wright of Adrem Cartographic Services Ltd for site survey work;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

Figure 1 – Location

(Site marked by arrow)

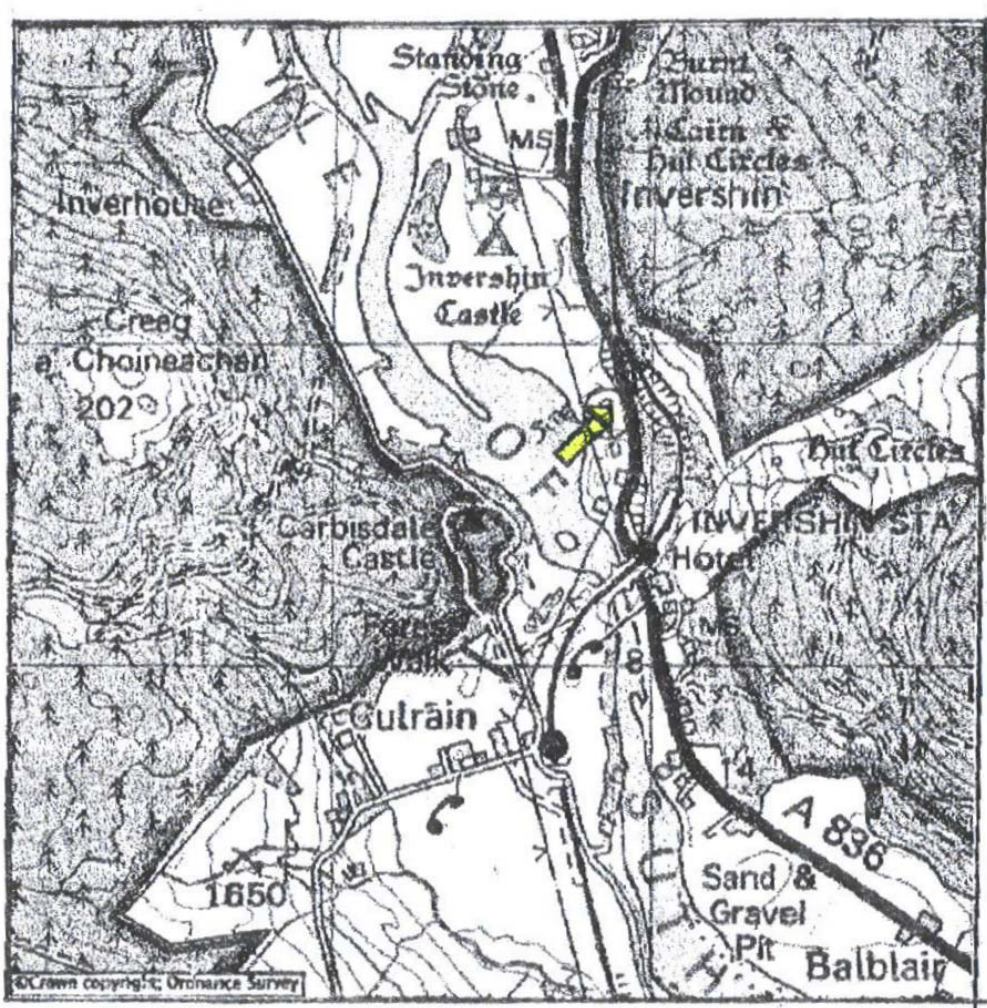


Figure 3 – Area of Watching Brief in Relation to Development Plan

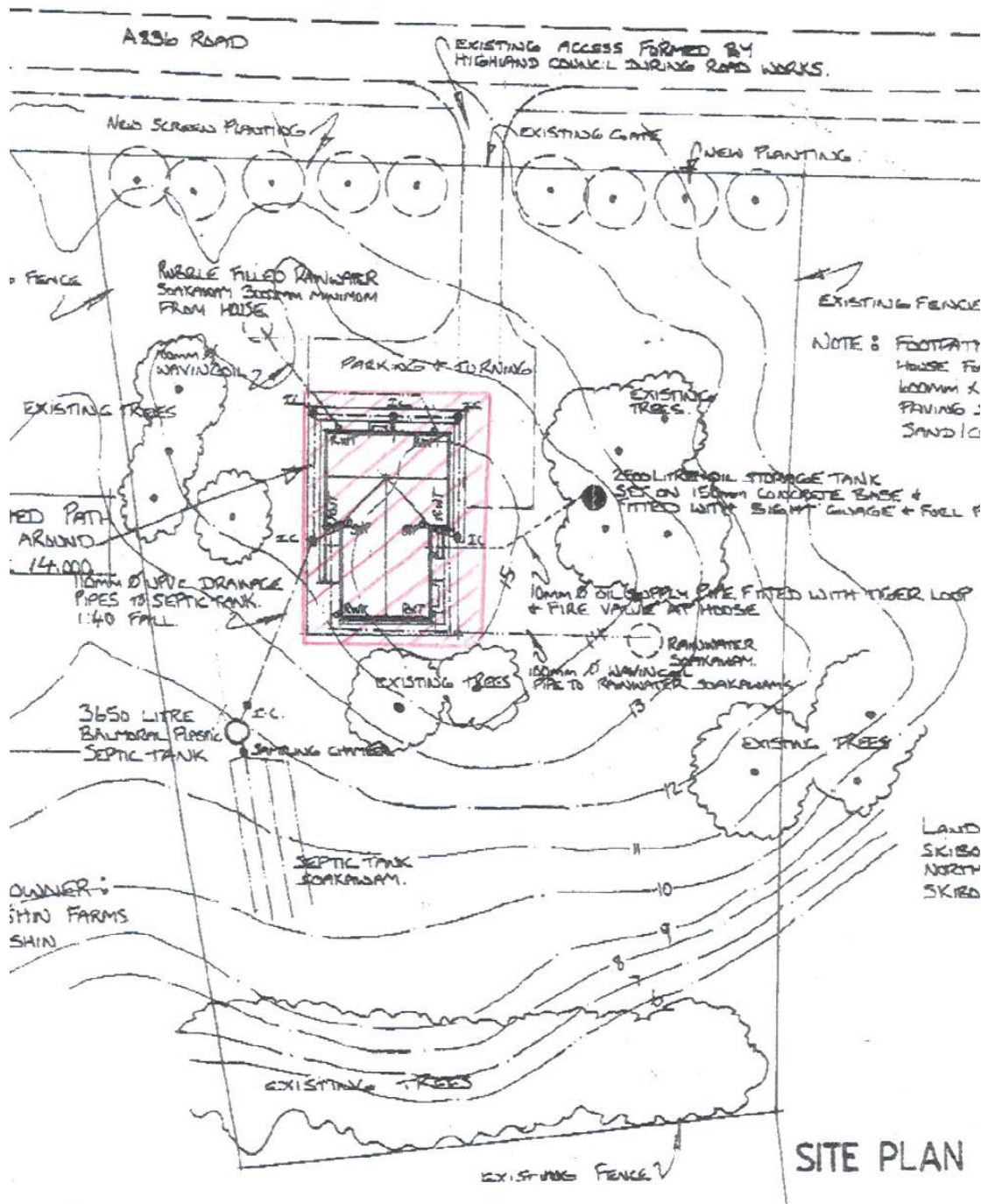


Figure 4 – 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1879 (site marked with red circle)

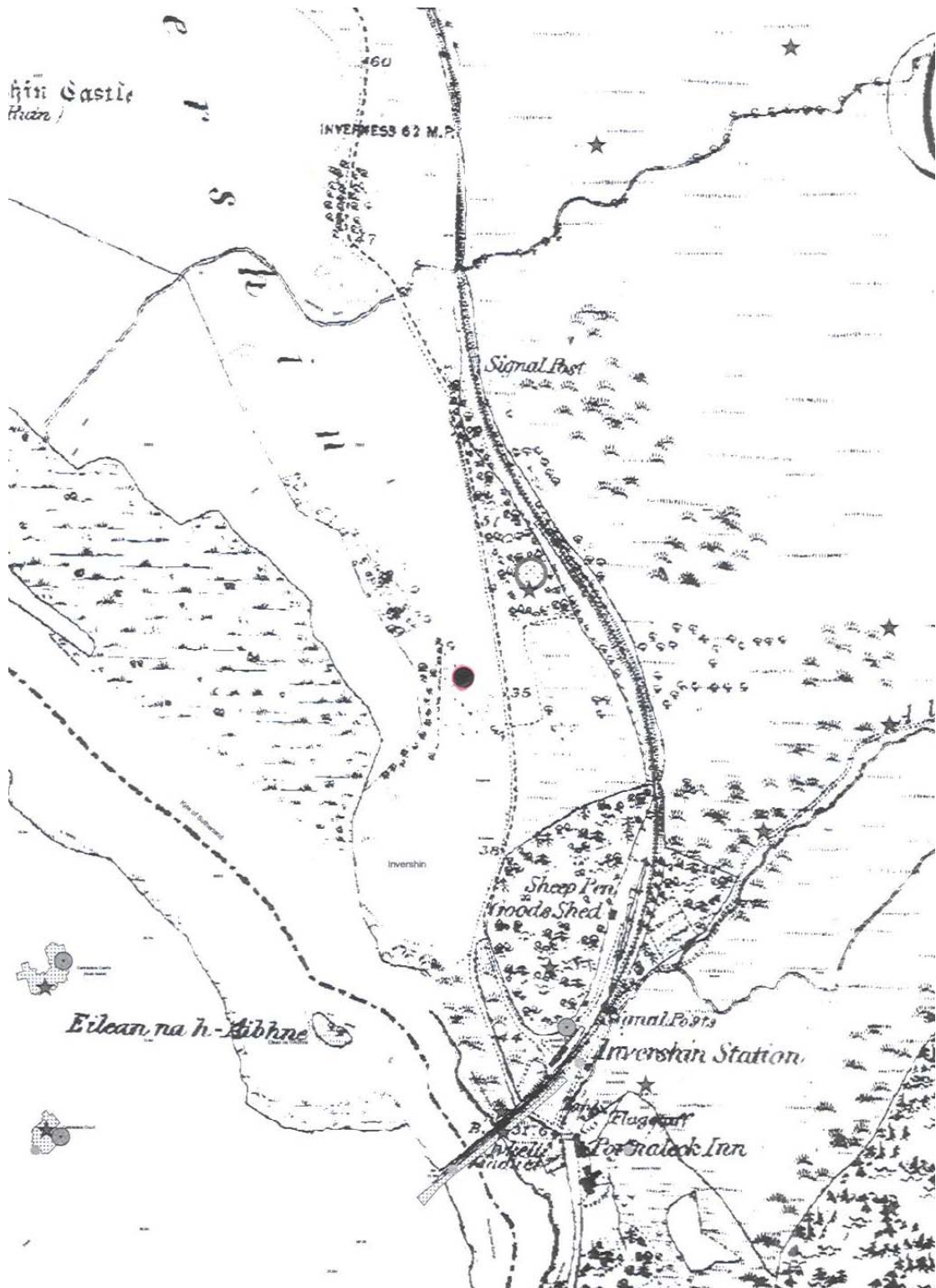
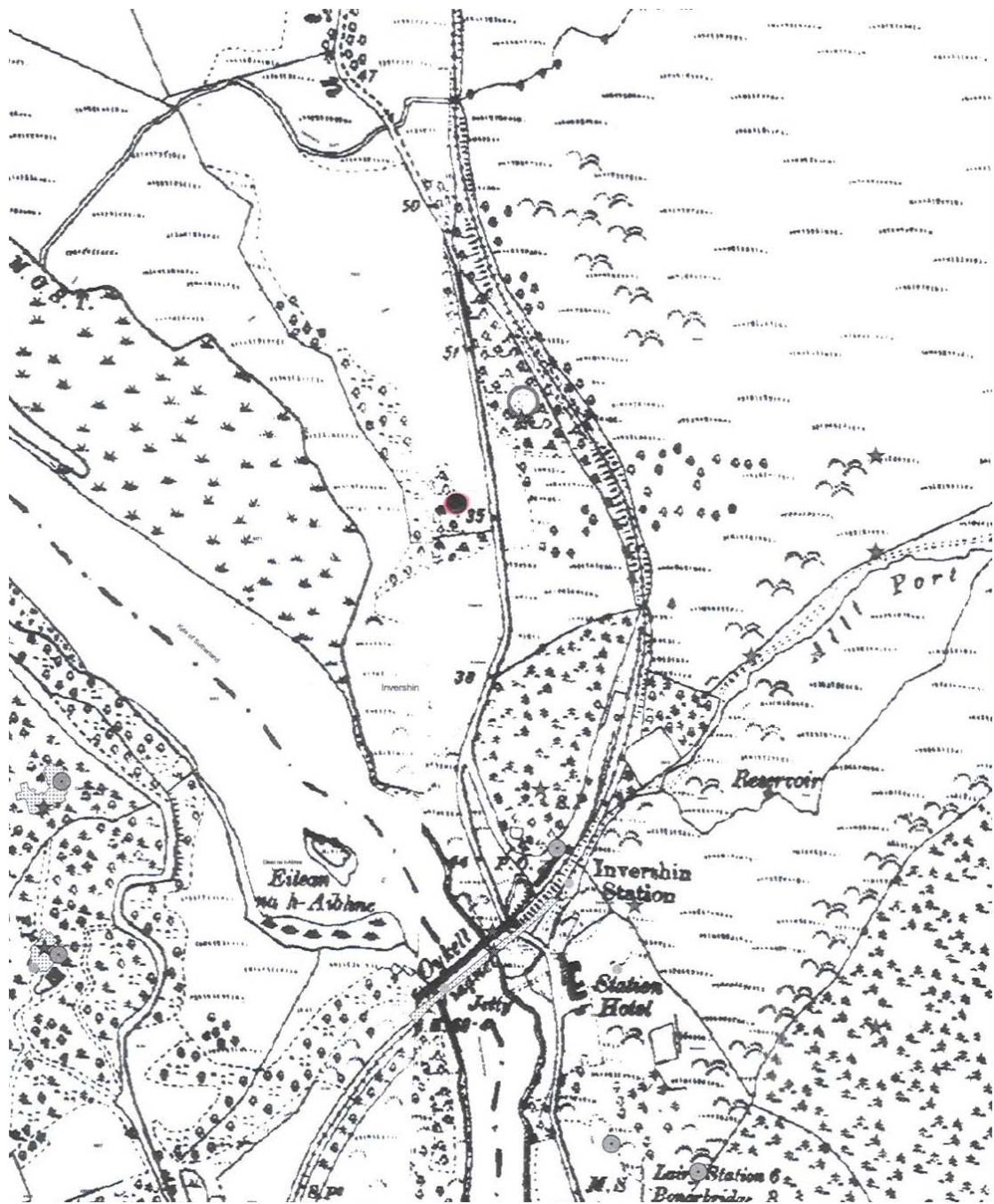


Figure 5 – 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1907 (site marked with red circle)



3. Historical Background

The development site lies on the following site recorded in the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record:

Am Baile

SMR: NH59NE 74

Parish: Creich

Type: Cairn; Dun?; Mound

Grid Ref: NH 57862/95737

Recorded in HSMR as 'This mound is not the most obvious defensive site, although it has a view of the river, the field immediately to the N (improved) is slightly higher and the hill rises steeply on the E side of the road. Earthwork survives as sub circular spiral, cut into the natural hill on the west (river) side. Earthwork survives best to the north and where there has been tree collapse appears to have a core of large irregular stones. Less defined bank on E (down slope) side, but would not link to make full circle. Central sub-circular area has dumping in the centre.

There is modern material on the site which would indicate that the site has been disturbed previously and it is not clear whether this could be for borrow pit for the adjacent road, or perhaps WW2 defences as mound overlooks road bend.

Proposals for new house on site would lie across part of the mound. Trenches for utilities have already been cut & infilled. No obvious finds on site visit. Appears to have cut areas of natural stones overlying extremely fine sand layers'.

Placename evidence of the site named 'Dungarvia' appears on 18th century maps of Sutherland but no details were available in the Highland Sites and Monuments Record.

The site also lies to the SW of the following site:

Invershin

SMR: NH59NE 4

NMRS: NH59NE 4

Parish: Creich

Type: Chambered cairn

Grid Ref: NH 57930/95840

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of Scheduled Ancient Monument of '6 upright stones forming foundations of oval chamber (Orkney-Cromarty type). The cairn has been entirely removed. The chamber measures 13'NS x 7'. It has been entered from the S between two traverse portal stones. A slab forms the back of the chamber, and there have been 2 slabs on each side, that on the SW is now missing. No change noted by Ordnance Survey in 1963 and 1976 or by the RCAHMS in 1989'.

4. Objectives

To conduct a project of archaeological recording prior to and during 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.

Work to include the following:

- Desk based survey
- Survey of the monument
- Monitoring of excavations
- Monitoring of protection to surviving earthwork's

A desk-based survey showed that nothing is indicated to this location on either the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879 (surveyed 1874) or on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1907 (revised 1903-4). (See figures 4 & 5)

Aerial photographs held in HSMR did not provide any evidence for any archaeology at this location, though coverage was very limited.

A contour and walkover survey (see figure 6) conducted 24th June revealed the site to resemble not an archaeological site but a former quarry pit with later material being dumped within. As the description in the HSMR notes the site is not in a commanding or defensive position, the earthworks are very arbitrary as an archaeological structure due to the contours. The site overall is roughly oval in plan measuring 21m NS x 10m EW (at widest point) with the inside bank measuring up to 1m in height with an uneven slope and edge with an opening to the NE varying in width from 4m to 8m. An excavation made previously for a water pipe shows only natural orange-brown sands and gravels to be exposed. A small possible retaining wall to the NNW running for 6m up to 0.5m high and 0.3m wide is very uneven and possibly only to retain bank during quarrying operations and not structural. Within have been dumped modern material including iron and concrete.

The only structural feature located during the site survey was a small clearance cairn to the SW corner of the site against a tree 2m in diameter and up to 0.5m high with a small stretch of wall running in an arc towards the SW boundary of intermittent boulders 0.5m wide possibly the remains of the base of a turf and stone wall.

5. Methodology

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to a maximum depth of 320mm for the house plot to an area of 273m². A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the site with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand. Service's and access were already existing.

Weather on the day of work (July 5th 2003) was slightly overcast and dry.

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 on area of rough ground of grass with bracken.

Results

A monitoring of the excavation revealed no archaeological features or deposits only a natural of orange-brown sandy gravel with patches of yellow sand. A part machining of the possible archaeological feature at its southwest quadrant revealed only a natural bank with no indication of it being an earthwork. (See over). Excavation work on the mound to the centre of the proposed feature revealed it not to be an archaeological feature but dumped material. (See over)

Top – Edge of bank at SW corner – scale 1m

Below – Section through mound in middle of feature – scale 1m



7. Conclusions

This site as recorded has been wrongly identified and should be reclassified as a quarry with possible retaining wall. There is no evidence for the site to be an archaeological feature.

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
- Black and white photographs & negatives
- Copy of this report

A set of black & white photographs of the site and colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record as well as JPEG's used in this copy of this report and copy 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

Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entry for NH59NE0074.

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

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 108 Sutherland of 1879 surveyed 1874.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 108 Sutherland of 1907 revised 1903-4.

Aerial Photographs Consulted

RAF CPE/Scot/UK184 9 Oct 1946 5011 1:10,000

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Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

Black & White Photographs

- 1 – View of site of feature facing N.
- 2 – View of mound in centre of feature facing E – scales 1m.
- 3 – View of feature facing S.
- 4 – View of feature facing SW.
- 5 – View of entrance to feature facing W.
- 6 – View of feature facing N.
- 7 – View of area of house plot facing NE.
- 8 – View of area of house plot facing E.
- 9 – View of area of house plot facing N.
- 10 – Detail of modern dumped material to centre of feature – scale 1m.
- 11 – Detail of possible retaining wall at NW edge of feature facing W – scales 1m.
- 12 – Detail of cut through bank for water pipe facing W – scales 1m.

Colour Slides

- 1 – View of site of feature facing N.
- 2 – View of mound in centre of feature facing E – scales 1m.
- 3 – View of feature facing S.
- 4 – View of feature facing SW.
- 5 – View of entrance to feature facing W.
- 6 – View of feature facing N.
- 7 – View of area of house plot facing NE.
- 8 – View of area of house plot facing E.
- 9 – View of area of house plot facing N.
- 10 – Detail of modern dumped material to centre of feature – scale 1m.
- 11 – Detail of possible retaining wall at NW edge of feature facing W – scales 1m.
- 12 – Detail of cut through bank for water pipe facing W – scales 1m.
- 13 – Detail of water pipe running to W – scales 1m.
- 14 – View of area of house plot facing SW.
- 15 – View of machining in progress facing E.
- 16 – View of partial clearance of house site facing E.
- 17 – Detail of cut through edge of feature showing natural bank – scale 1m.
- 18 – View of cleared plot at edge of feature facing N.
- 19 – View of cleared SW quadrant of feature facing NE.
- 20 – View of cleared house plot facing W.
- 21 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NE.
- 22 – Ibid but facing W.
- 23 – Detail of section through mound in centre of feature facing NNW – scale 1m.
- 24 – Ibid.