

Manse Road, Kingussie Erection of four new houses



Trial Trenching Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation

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This report is a proposal for an archaeological trial trenching evaluation at the proposed location of four new house sites near Highview on Manse Road in Kingussie. The trial trenching is a requirement of the Highland Council Planning Department prior to development of the site.

¹ Imagery reproduced under ESRI licensing and provided by Microsoft Bing Maps

1.0 Project Background

An archaeological trial trenching evaluation is proposed in January 2012 for the development of a site for four new houses on Manse Road in Kingussie.

The trial trenching requirement has arisen due to the situation of the site adjacent to St. Columba's Church, which was rebuilt in 1824 on the site of a late 18th century church and there is potential for unrecorded buried archaeology on the site. The purpose of the trial trenching is to identify the presence or absence of any archaeologically significant remains on the site prior to its development².

Approximately 9.1% percent (135 m²) of the site area (1,351 m²) is proposed to be investigated during the trial trenching evaluation.

2.0 Site Location

The development site is centred at approximately Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NH 76135 00720 in Kingussie, Badenoch and Strathspey, in Cairngorm National Park. It is located in the centre of Kingussie adjacent to the east side of St Columba's Church and parish churchyard, and to the north of the Highland Folk Museum. Kingussie is situated in the upper Spey Valley on the north side of the River Spey, 42mi south of Inverness.

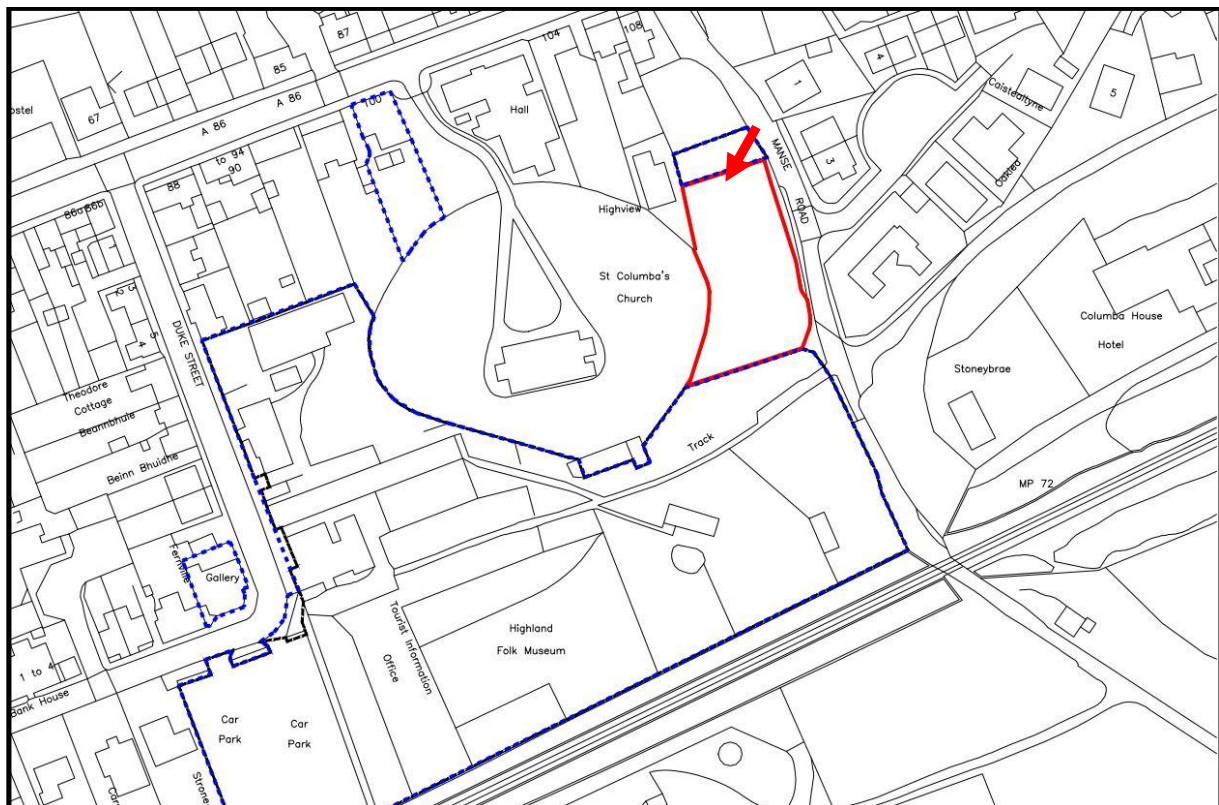


Figure 1 Site plan³

² Highland Council HET, 2011 (b)

³ Plan courtesy of Highland Council

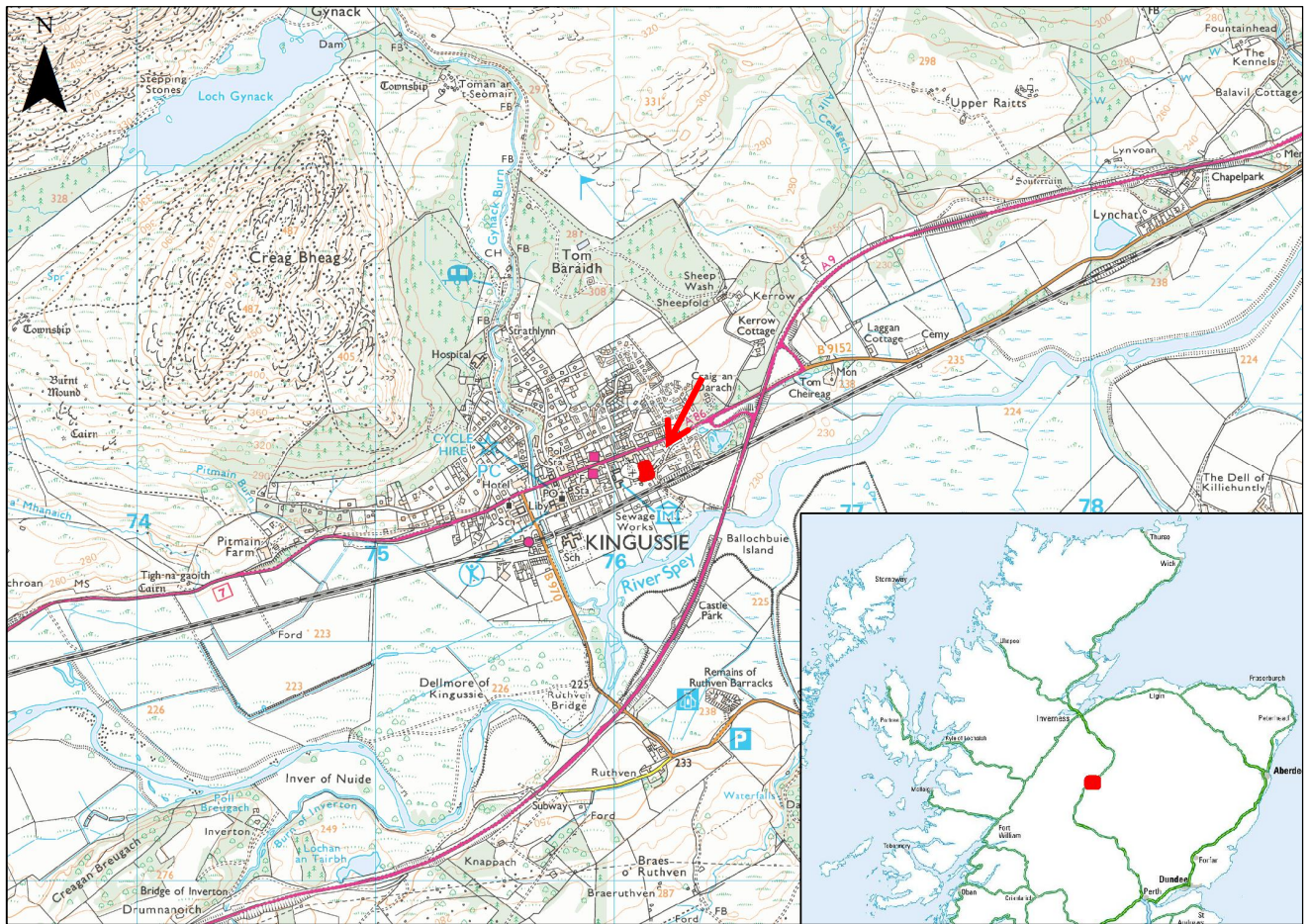


Figure 2 Site location⁴

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Kingussie is situated on north side of the banks of the River Spey in the river valley at approximately 230m OD. It was founded in the late 18th century by the Duke of Gordon, at the time of which it was a small town set within a pinewood.

Located on the opposite side of the River Spey from the site is Ruthven Barracks, constructed after the 1715 Jacobite uprising on the site of earlier castle sites between the 13th and 17th centuries, in particular one seat belonging to Alexander Stewart, the infamous Wolf of Badenoch who destroyed Elgin Cathedral in 1390.

The proposed development site is shown on the First edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6 inch-to-the-mile map⁵. It is clearly visible as an enclosed plot, not in use and probably belonging to the parish church.

⁴ Mapping reproduced under ProMap license #LIG1044

⁵ Sheet LXXXVII, surveyed 1870.



Figure 3 First Edition OS 6-in map (*Inverness-shire*) showing Kingussie⁶

4.0 References and General Information

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) is written in accordance with the *Development Guidance* from the Highland Council Historic Environment Team (HET)⁷.

All fieldwork will be conducted as per the *IfA Code of Conduct*⁸, guidance from Historic Scotland and the Highland Council Historic Environment Team⁹.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the trial trenching evaluation is to identify and record any features or finds of archaeological interest in order to assess the nature and extent of the archaeological potential of a site prior to development, while minimizing any delays or disruptions to the project. The aim is to evaluate the likely impact of the development on any identified archaeological remains to aid the planning authority's decision making process. The *Scottish Planning Policy 2010* describes how archaeology should be managed when considering planning decisions and determining conditions for developments that have an impact on the historic environment¹⁰.

⁶ NLS, 2011

⁷ Highland Council HET, 2011(a)

⁸ IfA, 2008(a)

⁹ Highland Council HET, 2011(a)

¹⁰ The Scottish Government, 2010.

The specific objectives are:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area
- To remove by hand any overburden in order to expose the archaeological deposits
- To excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
- To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development

6.0 Methodology

6.1 Desk-based assessment

The purpose of the desk-based assessment (DBA) is to gain information about the known archaeology or potential for archaeology within a given area or site (including the presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource), in order to make an assessment of its merit in context and assist in the formulation of a strategy for further work¹¹.

The DBA shall be undertaken prior to the fieldwork commencing, and will involve a full check will be undertaken of all available historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps using the Highland Historic Environment Record (HER), the Highland Council archives, the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), Historic Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland and any other available records or online resources about the site.

In order to inform the preparation of this report and positioning of the trial trenches, a site visit was made on 30 December 2011 and an assessment of the historic maps was conducted online at National Library of Scotland and the Highland Historic Environment Record was checked on 9 January 2012.

6.2 On-site recording

Trench positions and any archaeological features or finds of interest will be plotted using ArcPad GIS software with sub-metre accuracy on a handheld Windows Mobile-based computer. In the event of any archaeological features being uncovered, features will be planned per standard archaeological drawing procedures.

6.3 Photography

The development site will be recorded using high resolution digital photography prior to the start of works and throughout the trial trenching evaluation in order to record the trial trenching process as well as any features or finds of interest.

¹¹ IfA, 2008(b).

6.4 Trial trenching



Plate 1 **Proposed development site on 30-12-11**

The site was visited on 30 December 2011 and no visible archaeological remains were noted. The site was under a layer of light snow and the vegetation was mostly grass and bracken. The terrain rises gently from east to west to the base of the churchyard mound. Manse Road borders the site to the east.

During an initial desk-based assessment, there were three potential features of interest noted on the aerial imagery: a possible ring-shaped feature with a possible square feature on its east central side and a possible rectangular feature in the northeast corner of the site (see cover image). These possible features have been targeted within the proposed trench plan.

This brief proposes to excavate seven trenches to cover 135 square metres, 9.1% of the site area (see Figure 4). The dimensions of the proposed trenches are as follows:

- Trench 1 - 8m by 3m**
- Trench 2 - 15m by 1m**
- Trench 3 - 23m by 1m**
- Trench 4 - 5m by 4m**
- Trench 5 - 25m by 1m**
- Trench 6 - 16m by 1m**
- Trench 7 - 4m by 3m**



¹² Imagery reproduced under ESRI licensing and provided by Microsoft Bing Maps

Each trench will be excavated under archaeological supervision using a straight-edged bucket on a back-acting machine. Following machine excavation, all trenches will be cleaned back using drawhoe to allow for the identification of archaeological features. Each feature will be excavated by hand in order to establish the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. Trenches will be extended, if necessary, to aid the investigation of all significant relationships between features. A second phase of archaeological work may be required in the event that significant archaeological features are uncovered, in order for the work to be done to professional standards. Any such works will be agreed, in advance with Highland Council HET.

In the event of any important or complex discoveries, all finds and features will be left *in situ* and the archaeologist will notify the contractor/developer and HET immediately to make arrangements for their safeguarding and recording. This may result in site clearance works taking longer than normal, and the archaeological contractor will work with both parties to come to an agreement on any further phases of work¹³.

The discovery of any human remains is a sensitive matter. Any such finds will be left *in situ* until the local police and the HET have been contacted. Any excavation required will be conducted as per Historic Scotland's Operational Policy Paper 5¹⁴.

7.0 Strategy for recording/conservation

All artefacts recovered will be sorted and recorded. Finds will then be turned over to *Treasure Trove*. If help is required with emergency conservation, we will contact *Inverness Museum* or *National Museums Scotland*.

8.0 Post-excavation and reporting

Upon completion of work, Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services will compile and analyse all data from the evaluation. A digital report will be produced containing the conclusions of the work and any mitigation proposals agreed with HET and recording arrangements. This report will be disseminated to the contractor/developer, the Highland Council Planning and Buildings Standard Department, HET and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

The report will be submitted with digital copies of the site photographs and georeferenced site plans in ESRI shapefile format. Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services will retain copyright of this report.

A summary of the watching brief will be submitted for publication in Archaeology Scotland's annual journal, *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*. An OASIS entry will also be completed.

9.0 On-site contact

The archaeologist on site will be either Mary Peteranna or Lynn Fraser, who can be contacted on 07776 027306 or 07891 578998 or on rossandcromarch@gmail.com. RoCAS will keep the HET informed of the schedule of works, which is expected to start on 16 January 2012.

¹³ HET, 2011 (a).

¹⁴ Historic Scotland, 2006.

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