Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
16th July 2005
Tohorrie, by Dunbeath, Highland.
ND 15417 / 30861 (centred).

Client: Mrs E MacDonald.
Planning Application No: 02/00400/FULCA.

By
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August 2005
Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Mrs E MacDonald in July 2005 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Tohorrie, by Dunbeath (ND 15417/30861) as part of a new house development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits in the excavation of the house plot and associated services, though the development site lies close to a number of upstanding archaeological sites.

No recommendations for further archaeological work have been made.
1. Introduction
Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Mrs E MacDonald in July 2005 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Tohorrie, by Dunbeath (ND 15417/30861) as part of a house development. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work. This work is to form part of the conditions for planning application 02/00400/FULCA.

The site is located to the NW of the village of Dunbeath.

The fieldwork was conducted on the 16th of July 2005.

2. Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:
- Mrs. E MacDonald;
- Mr. J. Mason for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of the RCAHMS;
- Staff of the NMRS;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

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Figure 1 - General Location 1:50,000
Copyright Ordnance Survey. Licence 100041016.
Figure 2 – Location 1:2500.
Copyright Norscot Joinery Ltd.
Figure 3 – Archaeological Sites in Vicinity.
House site marked with an X.
Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of Site dated 2004.
Copyright RCAHMS.
Figure 5 – Development Plan 1:500.
Figure 6 – Area of Watching Brief 1:500
3. Historical Background
The house site lies in an area rich in archaeological sites. The following were noted both during the desktop survey and when work was undertaken onsite:

1 - Ballentink
HSMR – ND13SE 11
NMRS – ND13SE 11
Grid Ref: ND 1532/3098
Type – Broch, Building
Status - Scheduled Ancient Monument
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘At Ballentink, about 200 yards SSW of road bridge of Rhemullen, on a grassy hillock, the foundations of several circular enclosures built with large stones are visible beneath the turf. Towards SE, an entrance passage has been partly exposed, passing beneath a large lintel and suggesting entrance to a broch. Dimensions and outline of such a structure are not, however, evident. Possible that circular enclosures are secondary constructions superimposed on the ruin. (RCAHMS 1911).
Remains of broch with associated settlement generally as described by RCAHMS. The door-check and bar-hole are exposed at entrance at SE edge of broch mound, together with a short stretch of curved, battered walling. (OS 1968). 20m in diameter, enclosed by an early modern field-wall. The indications are that the latter mound conceals secondary occupation. Over the whole site there are superimposed footings of much later date (OS 1982).’

2 - Ballentink
HSMR – ND13SE 164
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 15322/30934
Type – Longhouse
Noted in HSMR of ‘Swanson in her thesis identifies longhouses as turf covered foundations of a number of longhouses to the S & W of the broch, which may be related chronologically to the later structures on the broch mound’.

3 - Dun Beath
HSMR – ND13SE 17
NMRS – ND13SE 17
Grid Ref: ND 1553/3044
Type – Broch
Status - Scheduled Ancient Monument
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of being excavated in late 19th century (1866) and consolidated in 1990.

4 - Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1534/3079
Type – Farmstead
Two roofed buildings on 1st and 2nd edition OS. Marked as unroofed on 1:2500 map of 1969. To the N is visible a turf covered rectangular building on aerial photograph of 2004. Also visible onsite.

5 - Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1541/3067
Type – Farmstead
Two roofed buildings on 1st edition OS, marked as unroofed on 2nd edition of 1907. Not marked on OS map of 1969 or later editions. One unroofed building to NW side of road visible on aerial photograph of 2004.
6 – Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1529/3090
Type – Corn Mill

7 – Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1496/3095
Type – Enclosure
Marked on 1st and 2nd edition OS and later maps. Visible on aerial photograph of 2004 as being overgrown with gorse.

8 – Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1545/3067
Type – Enclosure
Marked on 1st and 2nd edition OS and later 1969 map. Not marked on modern OS map.

9 – Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1540/3079
Type – Cropmarks
Noted on aerial photograph of 2004. Not marked on maps. Visible as dark outline of possible building

10 – Dunbrae
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: ND 1532/3087
Type – Structure

Nothing is marked on the 1st edition map of 1877 for the development area only open ground. Again nothing is depicted on the 2nd edition of 1907 except a single field boundary to the north of house plot location. Again by the later edition of 1969 and subsequent editions nothing is depicted. Early maps of the county do not provide enough detail for the development site.

A study of aerial photographs held in the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh revealed recent colour coverage from 2004 (see figure 4) but only showing the development area to be a grass field, though a slight cropmark of a possible field boundary is visible running parallel with the nearby road.

No archaeological work has been conducted to the area of development; the two broch sites have seen limited study by the RCAHMS (1911) and by C Swanson (1985).

Conclusions
The house site lies in an area rich in archaeological sites, though to date little or no work has been undertaken in this or the surrounding area to fully understand them. A majority of them seem to have seen reuse or seem to form part of a larger complex site.

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. This work is to include the following:
- Desk based survey
- Watching brief
- Report on results

5. Methodology
A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil’s to a maximum depth of 400mm for the house plot to an area of 150m². A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the house site with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand.

Weather on the day of work (July 16th 2005) 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 the author 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 grazing on a south-facing slope. Information from owner (Mrs E MacDonald) that field has been not ploughed in the last 5 years.

Results
A monitoring of the excavation revealed no archaeological features or deposits. The house plot measured 10m x 15m with natural at east end of house to a depth of 400mm rising to the NW to a depth of 300mm. No finds were made in the topsoil or subsoil removed.

A monitoring of the road was limited as only turf and some topsoil was removed to a depth of 100mm, and geo-textile material placed on top to bring road level up. No monitoring was conducted of soakaway pit as this had already been excavated prior to planning application being submitted to enable percolation test to be conducted. No trace was made of the slight parch mark noted on the aerial photograph of 2004.

A monitoring of the service trench (both water and electricity) 0.6m wide and 1m deep started at ND 15360/30837 (by electricity pole, close to burn) revealed depth of topsoil here at 1m, hitting bedrock at ND 15385/30837 at depth of
300mm until ND 15394/30847 then deepening to 500mm at ND 15406/30847 ending at ND 15418/30856 at front of the house.

7. Conclusions
Overall the excavations were limited due to no features or deposits being revealed, though excavation of the service trench and the exposure of bedrock show that the house lies on almost a flat terrace, though no indication of former use was revealed.

8. Recommendations
No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this current project is to be proposed due to no features or deposits being revealed.

It is recommended that if any further development is conducted in the vicinity of this development further archaeological work should be conducted.

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
Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record database entries for ND13SE.


National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE entries for ND13SE.

RCAHMS (1911) The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland: Third Report and Inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Caithness. HMSO. London.

Swanson, C 91985) Brochs in Caithness: A Plan for their Interpretation. Unpublished report for Caithness District Council – copy held by Highland SMR.
Maps Consulted


Ordnance Survey map ND1530 1: 2500 of 1996.

Ordnance Survey map ND13SE for 1979 1:10,000.

Blaue, J [1654] Cathenessia.


Aerial Photographs Consulted

RCAHMS E40828-40833- CN 28-4-2004 1:7,500
Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

1 – View of development site prior to excavation facing W.
2 – View of development site prior to excavation facing E.
3 – View of Broch to N of development site facing NE.
4 – View of excavation work in progress facing SW.
5 – View of site 4 from house plot.
6 – View of excavation work in progress facing SW.
7 – View of excavated house plot facing NW.
8 – View of excavated house plot facing N.
9 – View of excavated house plot facing E.
10 – View of excavated house plot facing NW.
11 – View of excavation for service trench facing W.
12 – View of excavation for service trench facing E.
13 – View of excavation for service trench facing E.
Brief for archaeological work
(Revised 15/07/2005):

New Dwelling etc, Tohorrie, Dunbeath,
(Planning App 02/00400/FULCA)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING DURING DEVELOPMENT

HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

Archaeology Unit
1) Background

Planning permission has been granted for the building of a new house at Tohorrie, together with ancillary services and access road. The application area lies to the south of Balentink Broch – ND13SE0011 - a defensive tower of the Iron Age. This site has been added to the Schedule of Ancient Monuments, recognising that is nationally important.

Archaeological records indicate however, that there was also settlement outside the broch tower itself, with a number of buildings identified (at least one of which it has been suggested is of Norse date). Some of these building sites lie between the Broch and the application area. There are also reports of human remains being discovered in the general area, indicating a cemetery probably lay outwith the broch.

As a result, archaeological recording is needed at this site because there is a potential for finds or features of significance to be discovered during site works. A watching brief enables any such discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently as they appear with minimum delay or disruption to the development.

The area to be covered for recording purposes is the full application area for the new house, it includes any ancillary works such as access road, landscaping, drains, telecommunication, power and water supplies.

2) Terms of Reference

This brief has been produced for the applicants (in response to planning application 02/00400/FULCA) who will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements.

It may be used to obtain estimates from archaeologists, and specifies what we consider to be the minimum acceptable standard of work; proposals that present a higher standard may be offered and accepted. We will assume that this will form the basis of an agreed approach unless changes are agreed with us in writing before the start of any site works.

It sets out who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Council requires all archaeological work in Highland to be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (MIFA or AIFA). This is to ensure that it is carried out to professional standards. Where archaeological work fails to meet the standards set out here, the applicant will be in breach of any archaeological planning condition until matters are rectified. The Archaeology Unit may also refuse to accept work from, or otherwise take action against, archaeologists who fail to carry out work to these standards.

The brief is based on details supplied at the time it was issued. It is valid for one year from date of issue.

Before site works start, the proposed arrangements, including a timetable for the work should be agreed with the Highland Council Archaeology Unit in writing.

3) Objectives

To identify and then record any features or objects of archaeological importance that could be damaged or destroyed by this development, while minimising any delays or disruption to the development project.
To meet the archaeological requirements of the planning permission granted for this development.

4) Method

a) Desk-based Assessment
Before the start of fieldwork, the Contract Archaeologist will carry out a check of relevant archaeological records and aerial photographs to provide background information. At least the following sources should be checked:

- The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (Inverness)
- The National Monuments Record for Scotland
- Any relevant aerial photographic coverage
- Any relevant early cartographic coverage
- Relevant bibliographic or other local history sources

b) Watching Brief
A “watching brief” will be conducted by the Contract Archaeologist on all site ground-works. All archaeological finds or features of significance will be recorded to professional standards. The Contract Archaeologist will be present during all below ground works.

The Contract Archaeologist will endeavour wherever possible to work with the contractor to ensure that any recording required is done with minimum delay to the site works. However it is essential for contractors to note that working practices may need to be varied to accommodate the needs of the archaeologist (see (d)).

c) Report
The archaeologist will produce a report setting out the results of the work (see below).

d) Important Note for applicants, architects, builders and site contractors

An archaeologist should be present during all below ground works. Those carrying out site clearance and excavation works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. They may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. For example,

- Where excavating machinery is used, a straight-edged bucket must be used on a back acting machine. Care will need to be taken to avoid over excavation, and the advice of the archaeologist on-site should be adhered to on this.
- Archaeologists may need to get quickly into recently cleared areas and this may mean that drivers of excavators may sometimes need to wait briefly.
- Each excavating machine needs to be watched by at least one archaeologist at all times (1:1 ratio). Work should not begin on site until this cover has been set up.
- Because the archaeologist must be able to record any archaeological remains encountered during the work to professional standards, site clearance works may take slightly longer than normal. This should be allowed for in the development project timetable. Occasionally, more extensive excavation may be needed since there will be limited opportunities to preserve features in situ. If discoveries are made that would cause significant delays, see paragraph 5 below.
5) Monitoring

The archaeologist appointed is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with Archaeology Unit staff. We will monitor projects as necessary to ensure that minimum standards are met. This is usually by unannounced site visit - alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.

Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact name, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit by the Contract Archaeologist in writing.

Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and/or the development must be notified by the Contract Archaeologist immediately to the applicant and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit. The finds or features must be left until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them.

6) Reporting

a) Project report

The Contract Archaeologist is responsible for producing a report on the work, and for making sure copies have been received by the recipients listed below. They should allow for all costs when estimating for the work. Contract archaeologists must submit satisfactory reports within the agreed deadline.

Apart from any copies required by the client, at least four copies of the project report must be produced by the archaeologist. These must be submitted to all of the following within 3 weeks of the completion of the field work.

- One paper copy for the Council's Caithness Area Planning and Building Control Manager, Wick
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Senior Librarian Information Co-ordinator, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UA. This will be available for public consultation through the public library service.
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Assistant Curator (Archaeology), Museum & Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EB
- One copy for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX:
  - One copy of the complete report in Adobe Acrobat format (ie a pdf file), on a computer disc or CDROM. All drawings and photographs must be included.

The report must include, as a minimum,

- Location plan at an appropriate scale showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected. Grid references must be included.
- Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification.
- Scale plans, sections and photographs of all archaeological features.
- A written description of all features, deposits, deposit depths and finds.
- A review of the history of the site derived from the desk based assessment.
- An analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of the results. Note that a negative result may itself be significant.
- A set of photographs illustrating the project progress from start to completion.
A list of finds, set out in the required format for Treasure Trove reporting.
A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location.
A description of finds, sampling and retention policies and their justification.
Dates when all elements of the work were undertaken and names of staff involved.
An index of all sources checked during the desk based assessment.
Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork.

b) Presentation

Where significant archaeology has been found, the archaeologist must arrange a presentation of the project results, to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. Arrangements must be agreed with the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

c) DES

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.

d) Copyright

The Council will assume author’s copyright unless advised otherwise. However, the Archaeology Unit reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. The completed report will be made available for public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record.

7) Finds

All finds should be notified for Treasure Trove before the report is submitted.

8) General

The Contract archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this brief and to:
- Carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- Agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.
- Not comment to the press or other media without prior notification to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.
- Fully allow for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.

This brief has been produced by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit, to whom any enquiries should be addressed. No one else has authority to vary its terms.