Report of Archaeological Desktop & Walkover Survey
Inverness Flood Relief Scheme
NH 6545/4144 - NH 6819/4191

Client: Young Associates (Environmental Consultants) Ltd

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June 2004
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Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Young Associates (Environmental Consultants) Ltd in May 2004 to undertake an archaeological desktop and walkover survey for the Inverness Flood Relief Scheme (NH 6545/4144 to NH 6819/4191). This work is to form part of an environmental impact assessment for a proposed planning application.

Work revealed a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed flood relief corridor but no sites in the direct line of the proposed channel.

It has been recommended that an archaeological watching brief be conducted during construction work for part of the proposed flood channel.
1. Introduction
This report is for an archaeological desktop and walkover survey conducted for Young Associates (Environmental Consultants) Ltd by the author for the Inverness Flood Relief Scheme, Highland. This work is to form part of an environmental impact assessment for a proposed planning application.

2. Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:
- MS. R McEvan, of Young Associates (Environmental Consultants) Ltd;
- Staff of Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland;
- Staff of the National Monuments Record of Scotland;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives;
- Staff of the National Library of Scotland, Map room.

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Figure 1: General Survey Location 1:25,000
Copyright Ordnance Survey. Licence 100041016.
Figure 2 – 1st edition OS – A3
Figure 3 – 2nd edition OS – A3
Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of site 6 ©RCAHMS. C 37 of 1992.
Figure 5 - Aerial Photograph of site 9 ©RCAHMS.
C 72916 of 1996.
Figure 6 – Map of area of Leys Castle Designed Landscape.
3. Objectives
To conduct a desktop and walkover survey to record those features that would be affected by the new proposed water renewals scheme. This survey to follow those guidelines as proposed by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 1999) and to follow the enclosed specification as provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

4. Archaeological Survey

Desktop & Walkover Results
A desktop survey was conducted using the following sources:
- Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record;
- National Monuments Record of Scotland, Edinburgh;
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland – aerial photograph collection;
- National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Maps);
- Highland Council Archives;
- Inverness Library.

Both the aerial photography and the map coverage were limited to the area of interest. Aerial photographs were limited by scale and coverage to the period 1947 to 1959 with only partial coverage for 1953 and no coverage for the 1960’s/1970’s and the latest coverage of 1988 was very limited due to scale.

Map coverage was also limited as the 1st edition of 1874 (see figure 2) was almost the same as the 2nd of 1906 (See figure 3) and little survey work has been carried out in detail in the 20th century, with the next edition being the early 1970’s. Early historical maps of the area from 1654 to 1830 did not provide enough detail for the area of interest.

The following 17 archaeological sites were to be found close to the proposed flood channel (route is highlighted in red on the accompanying map with sites numbered). Sites are as follows:

HSMR – Highland Sites and Monuments Record
NMRS - National Monuments Record of Scotland
N/a – not available
Recommendations are given after each site.

The walkover survey was conducted on 23rd of June 2004, with the weather being cloudy with light showers.

1 – Milton of Holm
HSMR – NH64SW 72
NMRS – NH64SW 50
Grid Ref: NH 6455/4212
Type – Farmstead
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘a farmstead comprising 2 roofed buildings, 1 unroofed building, 1 horse-gang and 1 enclosure is depicted on 1st edition OS (Inverness-shire sheet 12). 1 roofed building is depicted on current OS 1:10,000 (1973)’.


Walkover reveals private house in area of private garden.

*No recommendations are currently to be made, as no work to be conducted here.*

2 – Holm House  
HSMR – NH64SE 29  
NMRS – NH64SE 29  
Grid Ref: NH 6535/4200  
Type – Motte  
Status – Scheduled Ancient Monument  
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘Situated on the edge of an escarpment, 150m SE of Holm Mains, are the mutilated remains of a motte. A deep ditch 8.0m wide can be traced round the east and south sides of it. On the north, mound and ditch have been erased by cultivation. The west side of the mound has been considerably destroyed by erosion, but there seems to have been a short terrace before the drop to the burn on the NW side. The motte is 5.0m high above the ditch on the south and east - reducing to 1.2m on the west above the terrace. There is a rampart on the counterscarp of the ditch. The mutilated top of the motte measures 14.0m N-S and there is a slight earth-covered wall, or rampart, 0.2m high on edge of the east side of the summit.’

Visible on aerial photographs of 1947 (4021) and 1953 (18) as covered in trees, visible as mound on aerial photograph of 1959 (87). Not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps or earlier maps.

Walkover not conducted as well away from any proposed works.

*No recommendations are currently to be made, as no work to be conducted here.  
Recommend that watching brief be conducted if any work be conducted close to this site.  
Any work close to this site will require Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic Scotland.*

3 – Holm Mains  
HSMR – N/a  
NMRS – NH64SE 247  
Grid Ref: NH 655/144  
Type – Excavation  
Noted in NMRS of excavation conducted by Headland Archaeology Ltd for a new housing development which noted only 2 ditches relating to possible field boundaries, and 2 stone filled pits relating to agricultural improvements.  
This work followed on a desktop survey conducted by SUAT Ltd (SUAT 2000).

Walkover reveals site to be currently under development for housing.

*No recommendations to be made, as site now developed by new housing.*

4 – Knocknagael Boar Stone  
HSMR – NH64SE 25  
NMRS – NH64SE 25  
Grid Ref: NH 6767/4134  
Type – Pictish Symbol Stone
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘A roughly shaped slab. At the top is incised the mirror-case symbol and below the figure of a wild boar. The round part of the mirror case is ornamented with a circle and a central dot and the boar has spiral curves on the body. Excavation was undertaken around stone prior to its removal to its new protected location (supra). Work was limited to small Guardianship area, and was further reduced by immense disturbance caused by fence foundations. Guardianship gravel overlay a layer of blackened cobbles, which dipped below stone itself. Both were rich in glass and pottery fragments of recent date and probably derived from local pastime of hurling bottles at stone from passing cars. Beneath this was natural gravel subsoil, and it was clear that stone was not on original site. 2 finds of interest, both unstratified were noted. These consisted of a small, un-retouched and un-diagnostic flint flake and a broken glass bead of recent date. Neither relate to stone.’

Stone was removed in 1994 and is now on display in Highland Council’s Headquarters in Inverness. Marked as ‘Boar’s Stone’ on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on earlier maps.

Walkover reveals area to be currently under crop of barley.

Recommends that watching brief be conducted in any work close to this site.

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5 – Culduthel
HSMR – NH64SE 33
NMRS – NH64SE 33
Grid Ref: NH 6593/4168

Type – Cist
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘A cist was found at NH 6593 4168 at the edge of a gravel pit by Mr R Milne on 20 October 1970. (R Milne, curator, Inverness Museum) It was c. 0.5m below the ground surface and consisted of four side slabs and a covering slab, measuring 1.1m NNE-SSW by 0.8m transversely, and was 0.6m deep. It contained a crouched inhumation, the skeleton being laid on its left side with the head to the NNE. There were no artefacts. Mr Milne took photographs which were sent to the NMAS with a report on the cist, which is still in situ.’

Walkover not conducted as site well away from any proposed works.

No recommendations to be made, as site now in area developed by new housing.

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6 – Culduthel
HSMR – NH64SE 290
NMRS – NH64SE 71
Grid Ref: NH 661/415

Type – Barrow (Possible)
No information available in HSMR or NMRS. Photographs held in the NMRS [C36-38] of 1992 (see figure 4) show only a possible circular structure.

Nothing visible on aerial photographs of 1947 (4024) or 1959 (87 & 88).

Walkover reveals site under grass.

Recommends that watching brief be conducted in any work close to this site. Area of site has been proposed for new housing.
7 – Culduthel Mains
HSMR – NH64SE 49
NMRS – NH64SE 49
Grid Ref: NH662/417
Type – Flints
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘Two re-touched pieces of flint and a blue glass bead, found in a ploughed field; In Inverness Museum (INVMG 985.45) The published grid ref is just a centre point for a fieldwalking exercise. Virtually nothing was found north of cairn NH64SE0026. But field was previously divided, which may explain this. The finds included a leaf shaped arrowhead in grey flint, (since lost), and debitage inc cores and flakes. The glass bead is annular and of Iron Age date, currently on display in Inverness Museum.’

Walkover not conducted as site well away from any proposed works. Recent work at this location conducted by Headland Archaeology in 2004 is yet unavailable.

No recommendations to be made, as site now developed by new housing.

8 – Culduthel
HSMR – NH64SE 26
NMRS – NH64SE 26
Grid Ref: NH 6619/4176
Type – Cairn
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘Clava-type cairn, Culduthel: ‘The cairn has been placed on a small natural rise. It is now at the edge of a patch of thin woodland. It has been so completely robbed that only a few stones of the peristalith remain in situ and a few more stones lie where they have fallen outwards form their original positions. The stones are considerable rounded boulders set on end, four of them contiguous. They vary in height from 1 foot 9 inches to 4 feet, the tallest being in the middle of the existing setting. There can be little doubt that they represent part of the south arc of a cairn kerb though they are not arranged on a true circle. On the OS 6”map of 1871 the site is marked as an almost complete circle lacking only part of the west side’.

Marked as ‘Stone circle (Remains of)’ on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps.

Walkover not conducted as well away from any proposed works.

No recommendations to be made, as area around site now developed by new housing.

9 – Oldtown of Leys
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – NH64SE 241
Grid Ref: NH 664/414
Type – Enclosure, palisaded.
Noted in NMRS of ‘an oval shaped palisaded enclosure with possible ring-ditch within interior. Possible entrance to the W or NE. Possible cremations/pits within.’ (See figure 5) Nothing visible on aerial photographs of 1947 (4024) or 1959 (87, 88).

Walkover reveals no trace of site, area currently under long grass and slight vegetation.

Recommend that watching brief be conducted in any work close to this site. Area of site has been proposed for new housing.
10 – Castle Heather
HSMR – NH64SE 282
NMRS – NH64SE 186
Grid Ref: NH 679/149
Type – Copper Mount
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘Copper alloy mount decorated with ropework motif, found with metal detector near Castle Heather’. Find made in 1996.

Walkover reveals site to lie in area of golf course.

*Recommend that watching brief be conducted in any work close to this site. Part of nearby area to the site has been proposed for new housing.*

11 – Drumdevan
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – NH64SE 257
Grid Ref: NH 6551/4136
Type – Watching Brief
Noted in NMRS of ‘A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of a house plot and access in the vicinity of a number of recorded archaeological sites. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed’.

Walkover reveals private house in area of private garden.

*No recommendations are currently to be made, as no work to be conducted here.*

12 – Holm Mains
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NH 6551/4136
Type – Cists
Two cists excavated by Headland Archaeology Ltd in May 2003. One was of a male adult with two arrowheads, lithics and a beaker pot. The second was of a male adult with only a beaker pot. (Brown 2003, Coleman 2003) Also located near the burial were a number of pits and ditches, though no dating material was located in these features to relate them to the cists.

Walkover reveals no trace of site, area currently under development for housing.

*Recommend that watching brief be conducted in this area.*

13 – Castle Heather
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NH 6805/2000
Type – Quarry

Walkover reveals site to lie in area of golf course with planting of a new woodland in area of quarry.

*No recommendations to be made. Part of nearby area to site has been proposed for new housing.*
14 – Upper Slackbuie
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NH 6764/4187
Type – Clearance cairn (possible)
Site revealed as part of walkover survey.

Walkover reveals pile of rubble, 3m x 3m x 0.5m high with modern rubble including brick and mortar partly covered in grass.

*It is recommended that further investigation of this site may be necessary to determine what this site is. This work should be conducted prior to construction work being undertaken as this site lies close to area of proposed channel.*

15 – Upper Slackbuie
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NH 6723/4162
Type – House
Visible on aerial photographs of 1947 (4026) and 1959 (89) as group of roofed buildings. Depicted on 1st and 2nd edition OS maps (see figures 2 & 3) and U-shaped building.

Walkover reveals derelict boarded-up house in area of private garden. Building dates to early 19th century of 1½ storey with slate roof, 2 chimneys at each gable with 3 modern extensions.

*No recommendations to be made, as no work to be conducted close to here. Site lies in area of proposed new housing.*

Below: View of house facing S.

16 – Drumdevan House
HSMR – NH64SE 132
NMRS – NH64SE 176
Grid Ref: NH 6553/4127
Type – House
Status – Listed C(S)
Noted in HSMR and NMRS of ‘Early 19th century, 2-storey, 3-bay house with outer bowed bays fronting late 18th century house of similar size forming double pile dwelling’.

Walkover reveals private house in area of private garden.
No recommendations to be made, as no work to be conducted here.

17 – Leys Castle
HSMR – N/a
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NH 676/415 (centred)
Type – Designed landscape
A detailed appraisal of the landscape of Leys Castle appears in Historic Scotland’s Inventory of Gardens and Designed landscapes (2003) to comprise of house, drive and approaches, parkland, woodlands, gardens (both formal and walled) and agricultural land. Though the house dates to the 18th century it is noted that ‘no evidence survives for the involvement of any landscape designer, planting and enclosure records chart the establishment of the designed landscape in the 1820-30s.’ (ibid, 82)

Walkover reveals series of agricultural fields of a mixture of grass and arable grazing, no indication of any features relating to the ‘designed landscape’ of Leys Castle situated to the south (Located at NH 4100/4099). (See figure 6)

No recommendations to be made, as only agricultural fields.

5. Conclusions
Overall most of the sites revealed close to the proposed flood channel are mostly of a prehistoric date that lie to an area to the north of the proposed channel. The reason for this may be that parts of the ground to the south of the proposed flood channel rise from 50m to 110m above sea level and would probably have been too exposed for any kind of settlement. Most of the archaeological sites are located below 50m. Although a number of sites have now been removed by recent housing developments there is good chance that other sites may lie in the vicinity. That most sites lie in this area below 50m above sea level can be seen in the results of the archaeological watching brief conducted for the nearby Southern Distributor Road (Suddaby, 2001) where it was noted that the majority of features were located at 50m above sea level to include finds of fire or cooking pits.

Though part of the route crosses part of the designed landscape associated with Leys Castle, there is no indication either cartographically or physically that the channel would effect any features of the landscape.

It is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be conducted as part of the programme of construction work because the route is mostly to be at 50m above sea level and because of the numerous sites in the vicinity. This work should include the channel and any associated works ie compounds and access roads to the following areas:

1- Area from site 14 east to Castle Heather Burn.
2- Area from Culduthel Smithy west to Holm Burn.

A number of sites (4, 9, 12, and 13 lie within 50 metres of the channel) and these should be fenced off prior to work commencing and contractors made aware of the archaeological sites in the area.
6. Archive
A copy of this report is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh and the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record.

7. 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.

8. References


Highland Sites and Monuments Record database entries for NH64SW & SE.


National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE entries for NH64SW & SE.

Ordnance Survey Name Book Inverness & Bona Book 31 page 68.


Maps Consulted
Ainslie’s map of Scotland dated 1789.

Blaue’s atlas of 1654.

Board of Ordnance c1730’s ‘A general survey for Inverness and the County adjacent to the foot of Loch Ness’.

Dorret’s map of Inverness-shire dated 1750.

Thomson’s map of Ross & Cromarty shires dated 1826.

Thomson’s map of Inverness and Ross & Cromarty dated 1830.


Ordnance Survey map NH66SW for 1973 1:10,000.

Ordnance Survey map NH66SE for 1973 1:10,000.

Aerial Photographs Consulted

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