

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
May 12th 2005
Plot 2 An Dubh, Ballachulish, Lochaber.
NN 0809/5843 (centred)**

Client: Mr. B Horsnell.

Planning Application No: LO-04-534.

**By
Stuart Farrell
B.A A.I.F.A F.S.A.Scot.
May 2005**

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 Mr. B Horsnell in April 2005 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Plot 2 An Dubh Ballachulish (NH 0809/5843) as part of a house plot. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work revealed one archaeological feature of a stone drain of an unknown date, though probably 19th century in date.

No recommendations for further archaeological work have been made.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Mr. B Horsnell by the author for a house plot and access at Plot 2 An Dubh, Ballachulish. This work is to form part of the conditions for planning application LO-04-534.

The site is located to the north edge of the village of Ballachulish.

The fieldwork was conducted on the 12th of May 2005.

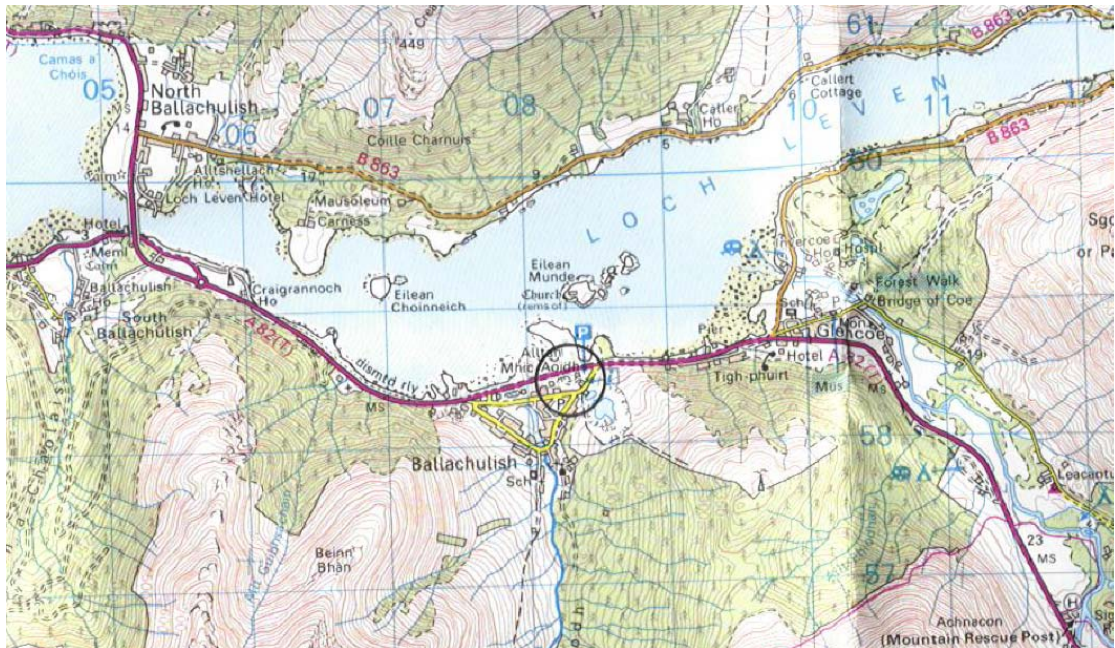
2. Acknowledgements

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

- Mr. B Horsnell;
- Mr. C Fletcher, of TSL Contractors Ltd;
- Staff of TSL Contractors Ltd for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of the RCAHMS;
- Staff of the NMRS;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

Stuart Farrell
39a Park Street
Nairn
Highland
IV12 4PP

Figure 1 - General Location 1:50,000
Copyright Ordnance Survey. Licence 100041016.



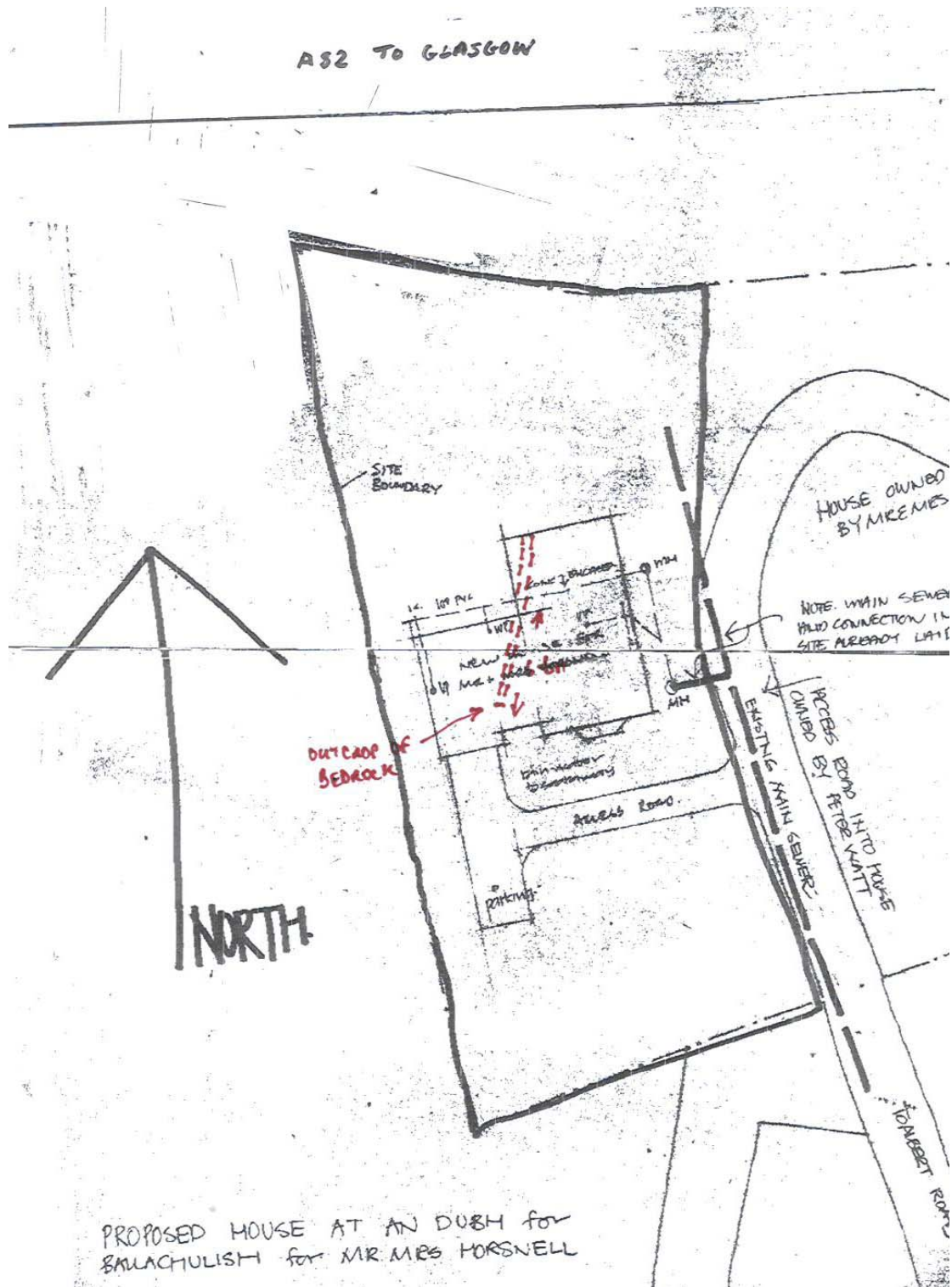
[illegible]

PROPOSED HOUSE AT AN DUBH for
BALACHULISH for MR. MRS HORSNELL

Dr 04 scale 1.250.

[illegible]

Figure 4 – Location of Drain 1:400.



3. Historical Background

The origins of Ballachulish village principally relate to the slate industry known to have been in operation in the 17th century, though settlement has occurred in the vicinity since the Bronze Age.

The development site lies to the SE of Cnocan Dubh a fort located at NN 0799/5851, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site also is situated to the E of another flat hilltop shown on the 1st edition OS to be part of the same monument. The fort (NMRS & HSMR NN05NE 6) is a fort of an unknown date, though surveyed by the RCAHMS in 1971 almost no traces survive of any of its defences (RCAHMS, 1975, 65-66). No excavations have taken place on the fort or in its vicinity. The site is described in the NMRS and HSMR as follows:

‘NN 0799 5851. On the summit of the more northerly of the two rocky prominences known as Cnocan Dubh, are the slight remains of a stone-walled fort. The NE and SE sides are protected by sheer rock faces whilst on the south some protection is afforded by a low crescent-shaped scarp. Elsewhere, however, the approach is over a grassy slope of only moderate steepness. The fort measures internally about 36 metres E-W by 27 metres transversely.

No trace of any defences are discernible on the eastern perimeter, but it is probable that the fort was originally defended by a wall drawn round the whole of the irregular summit area with an outwork to restrict progress on the more vulnerable west flank.

The surviving portion of the main wall is on the west side and appears as a low grass-grown spread of core material ranging in width from 0.6 to 2.4 metres. No inner or outer facing stones are now visible. A similar band of debris, 1.5 metres in its greatest width, indicates the course of the outer wall. The entrance was on the west side and is indicated by gaps in the inner and outer walls measuring 1.8 metres and 5.1 metres respectively. The interior is mainly bare rock.

RCAHMS 1975, visited May 1971. Visited by April 1972’.

A previous archaeological watching brief by the author (Farrell 2002) to the E of plot 2 for house plot 1 revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1875 notes the development area to be comprised of rough ground. Again nothing is depicted on the 2nd edition of 1900, only open ground. Again by the later edition of 1990 nothing is depicted.

A study of aerial photographs held in the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh revealed coverage from 1946 to 1968 but only showing the development area to be only rough ground, with no visible archaeological remains.

The site is not mentioned in either the Old or New Statistical Accounts of Scotland. Cnocan Dubh literally means ‘small black hill’ (Maceachen, 1960).

Conclusions

Currently there is no indication of the southerly prominence known as Cnocan Dubh having any archaeological remains, only that it may only be natural ground.

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 200mm for the house plot and access area (water and sewage services were already onsite, telephone and electricity cables to lie in area of road) to an area of c300m². 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 (12th May 2005) was bright and clear.

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 in area currently (May 2005) of rough ground, with existing services in place for water and sewage.

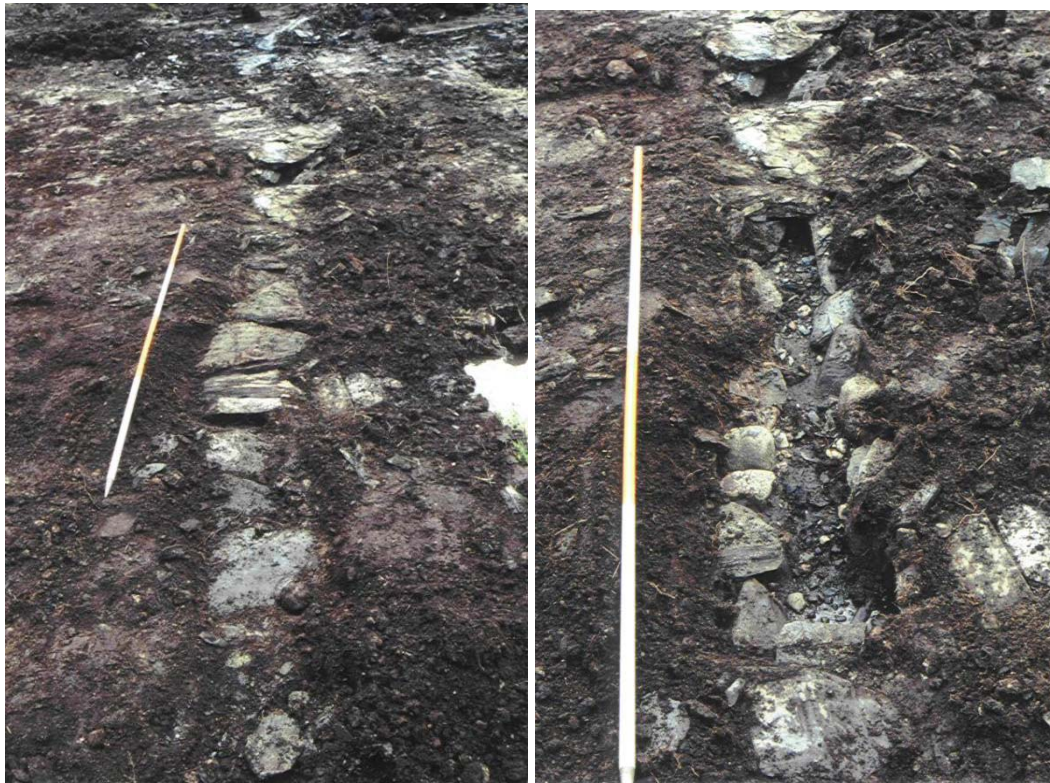
Results

A monitoring of the excavation revealed one archaeological feature of a stone drain running SWW-NNE of an unknown date. In all an 11.6m length of drain was revealed, part excavation revealed it to be 0.4m wide and 12cm deep and constructed of flat slate slabs situated on rounded boulders. At its SSW end the drain possibly utilised part of an outcrop of bedrock to allow water to enter the drain. No finds were made to the drain, which had little or no fill, and may have still drained water to a recent date.

Underlying natural was a mixture of slate bedrock (especially in the area of the road) some mud clays (in the W side of the house to the base of the nearby slope) and some orange-brown gravels. Part of the house site on its E side was heavy with root damage due to former trees, and the existing sewage and water services.

Below left: View of drain facing NNE – scale 2m.

Below right: View of drain upon excavation facing SSW – scale 2m.



7. Conclusions

Currently there is no indication of the southerly prominence known as Cnocan Dubh having any archaeological remains, only that it may only be natural ground. The drain revealed is of an unknown date but possibly may be earlier in date than the 19th century, but why it is at this location is unknown as there was no indication prior to work commencing that the ground here has ever been improved.

8. Recommendations

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to the limited feature that was revealed, and that probably 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 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

Farrell, S (2002) Report of Archaeological Watching Brief July 29th - August 8th 2002 An Dubh, Ballachulish, Highland. Unpublished report – copy held in HSMR.

Highland Council Sites and Monuments database entry for NN05NE 6.

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

Maceachan, E (1960) Gaelic-English Dictionary. Fourth edition. Highland printers Ltd. Inverness.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database entry for NN05NE 6.

NSA (1845) New Statistical Account of Scotland.

OSA (1791-99) Old Statistical Account of Scotland.

RCAHMS (1975) Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: Argyll and Inventory of the Ancient Monuments Volume 2 Lorn. RCAHMS. Edinburgh.

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 30 Argyllshire of 1875 surveyed 1870.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 30 Argyllshire of 1900 revised 1897.

Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 sheet NN05NE of 1990.

Aerial Photographs Consulted

RAF CPE/Scot/UK 287	3244--3243	29-8-1947	1:10,000
RAF 58/RAF/802	4245-4246	12-10-1951	1:10,000
RAF 58/RAF/2559	F21/70-71	4-9-1958	1:10,000
OS OS/68/173	183-182	11-6-1968	1:10,000

Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

- 1 – View of site prior to excavations facing N.
- 2 – View of site prior to excavations facing NNW.
- 3 – View of site prior to excavations facing NNE.
- 4 – View of excavations in progress facing SW.
- 5 – View of excavations in progress facing S.
- 6 – View of drain facing SSW – scale 2m.
- 7 – View of drain facing SSW – scale 2m.
- 8 – View of drain facing NNE – scale 2m.
- 9 – View of drain upon excavation facing SSW – scale 2m.
- 10 – View of drain upon excavation facing SSW – scale 2m.
- 11 – View of drain upon excavation facing W – scale 2m.
- 12 – View of drain upon excavation facing NNE – scale 2m.
- 13 – View of drain upon excavation facing E – scale 2m.
- 14 – View of drain upon excavation facing E – scale 2m.
- 15 – View of drain upon excavation facing E – scale 2m.
- 16 – View of house plot upon excavation facing S.
- 17 – View of road upon excavation facing W.
- 18 – View of house plot upon excavation facing NE.
- 19 – View of road upon excavation facing E.
- 20 – View of house plot upon excavation facing N.



Brief for archaeological work at:

Plot 2, An Dubh, Ballachulish

(LO-04-534)

WATCHING BRIEF

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

1) Background

This application site lies in the vicinity of the scheduled fort at Cnocan Dubh.

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

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

2) Terms of Reference

This brief specifies what is considered to be the **minimum** acceptable standard of work; proposals that present a higher standard may be offered and accepted. It is assumed that this will form the basis of an agreed approach unless changes are agreed with Highland Council Archaeology Unit in writing before the start of any site works.

This brief has been produced for Mr & Mrs W Horsnell, who will be responsible for the work, including any tendering and contractual arrangements. It sets out in detail who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The area to be covered by this assessment will be the entire development area: including any proposed services, access roads, works compounds, borrow pits or other ancillary works.

The work should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The Planning Authority may refuse to accept work from, or otherwise take action against, archaeologists who fail to carry out work to these standards.

The Archaeology Unit can comment on tenders submitted in confidence. Tenders should be accompanied by a project design, statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director.

The brief has been produced specifically for this scheme based on documents supplied at the time it was issued. It is valid for one year from the 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 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.

4) Method

a) Desk-based Assessment

A check of all relevant archaeological / historical records, maps and aerial photographs should be undertaken and presented as an Appendice within the report. At least the following sources should be checked:

- *The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)*. Please note - the online SMR 'Am Baile' is not designed for use in development control, for assembling information for forestry or agri-environment schemes, or for constructing management policy of sites. In order to source the full SMR information required for such studies all consultants should approach the Highland Council Archaeology Unit directly.
- *The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS)*
- *Historic Scotland's databases of listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and monuments proposed for scheduling.*
- *Vertical stereo aerial photographic coverage held by RCAHMS and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.*
- *Ordnance Survey map coverage from 1850 onwards, and any other readily available early cartographic sources held at the National Library of Scotland Map Library.*
- *Bibliographic references and early parish accounts.*

b) Watching Brief

A watching brief will be conducted by the Archaeological Contractor on all site ground-works, so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards. The Archaeological Contractor will endeavour wherever possible to work with the contractor to ensure that any recording required is done with minimum delay to the site works.

Important Note for architects, builders and site contractors:-

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, or switch to working other areas.
- 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.

- Human remains must be immediately reported to the local police and to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit and should not be excavated as part of this work.

Once areas have been cleared, and any archaeology recorded, there should be no need for further archaeological work in these areas.

c) *Report*

The Archaeological Contractor will produce a brief report setting out the results of the work as described below.

5) **Monitoring**

The Archaeological Contractor is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with Archaeology Unit staff. We will monitor projects as necessary to ensure that minimum standards are met. Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates - with contact names, telephone numbers and arrangements for access - must be given to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and /or the development, must be notified immediately to the applicant and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit. The finds or features must be left *in situ* until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.

6) **Reporting**

a) *Project report*

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

Apart from any copies required by the client, at least **five** 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 fieldwork.

- One paper copy for the Council's Area Planning and Building Control Manager, Fulton House, Fort William, PH33 6XY.
- 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
- Two copies for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX : one paper copy and one copy of the

complete report in a *pdf* file. Please ensure that all drawings and photographs are included.

The report must include as a minimum:

- Location plan (bound into the report) showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected at an appropriate scale. Grid references must be included.
- Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification.
- An analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of the results as per the Burra Charter
- Scale plans and sections of the overall area excavated
- Scale plans, sections and photographs of all significant archaeological features noted.
- A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including the archive location.
- Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork.
- A list of finds, as appropriate, set out in the required format for Treasure Trove reporting.
- Details of the sampling and finds retention policy and their justification.
- Proposals for presenting the results of the work to the local community where appropriate.

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. This is the responsibility of the Archaeological Contractor, and will not be funded by the Highland Council.

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 immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record, and through the public library service.

7) *Finds*

Chance finds can be made during any archaeological fieldwork. Archaeologists should note that advice and facilities for emergency conservation and temporary storage can be offered by Inverness Museum. All finds should be notified for Treasure Trove before the report is submitted.

8) *Insurance*

The archaeologist appointed must take all necessary measures to conform to the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurance. Section 24 of the Highland Council's revised Contracts Standing Orders states:

"All specifications issued by and contracts entered into with the Council in connection with the carrying out of work or the provision of services shall provide that the contractor holds a valid insurance policy, approved by the Council, for:-

- (1) Employers liability - minimum limit - £10m (statutory limit)
- (2) Public liability - minimum limit £5m."

9) General

The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this brief. He or she must:

- carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidance 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 approval from the client and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.
- fully allow for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.

Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.

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

*Highland Council Archaeology Unit
Monday, 7 March 2005*