

A proposed timber haulage route from Keil to Lochaline West Pier

An Archaeological Survey

H.C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE		
22 FEB 2001		
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11th February 2001

1 Introduction

The writer was asked to carry out a rapid archaeological survey of a proposed timber extraction route from Lochaline West Pier to Keil. The purpose of this proposed road was to remove timber from Morvern by sea to avoid pressure on the local road network. The survey was carried out to a brief produced by Highland Council Archaeology Service and a copy of this is appended with this report as Appendix A. The route of this road had already been surveyed by a local archaeologist Dr Jenny Robertson and her findings were incorporated into the Environment/Archaeology & Landscape Notes submitted for Planning Consent for this project. This is reproduced as Appendix B. However there was some concern locally that the route might impact on significant archaeology in this area and to allay these concerns the writer was asked by Ardtornish Estate to carry out an additional survey.

2 Survey Method

- 2.1 Because the timetable for this survey was extremely restricted the initial deskbound survey was limited to an examination of cartographic and aerial photographic evidence compiled by Dr Robertson and Ardtornish Estate. Subsequently copies of estate plans of area surveyed in 1788 [RHP 2971] and 1815 [RHP 2993] by George and Alexander Langlands, respectively were examined courtesy of Iain Thorber.
- 2.2 The route of the proposed road, including two variants at its south end, was walked by the writer on January 25th 2001 in cold, blustery and mostly dry conditions. Notes and photographs were taken of all archaeologically significant features. To save confusion the same numbering as used in the planning submission is reproduced here, additional sites being numbered cumulatively after the 12 previously used.
- 2.3 On the 26th January the photographs were developed and a verbal report was given to Dorothy Low, Assistant Archaeological Officer. From this was compiled an e-mail report to Lochaber Area Planning Officer Kenneth Johnston recommending that consent be given to the proposed route subject to standard archaeological conditions.

3 Survey Results

- 3.1 Two additional structures were recorded, Features 13 and 14, as described in the Gazetteer. Neither of these will be directly affected by the proposed road if suitable mitigation measures are taken.
- 3.2 Four main areas of archaeological concern were noted. Additional concerns about the natural heritage interests in the surviving woodland at the south were noted but are not addressed in this report.

- 3.2.1 The extent to which the previous settlement of Keil extended into the survey area.
- 3.2.2 The location of the proposed road in relation to the possible drove route.
- 3.2.3 The extent of damage to the existing stone dykes and other historic landscape features in this area.
- 3.2.4 The potential damage to Features 13 & 14 as this lies close to the preferred route (Route 3) for the road.

4 Survey Conclusions

- 4.1 The Langlands Surveys of 1788 and 1815 [Register House Plans 2971 and 2993] do suggest that this township, with its clear medieval origins, may have extended to this area. This settlement of 29 houses, as recorded in 1815, or 10 households as recorded on the 1841 census was cleared by John Sinclair by 1851. The majority of this township lay above the road where some 13 buildings were recorded north of the road and west of the burn. Feature 14 and at least three other buildings were shown south of the road on the 1815 plan. However Feature 14 is the only building close to the proposed road line.
- 4.2 The possible drove road runs in a direct line from Keil to the shore. The alignment and the style of dyking used to construct the stone dykes, as they here survive, suggest this route and these walls were constructed after Keil was cleared after 1841. This is confirmed by comparing A. Langlands map of 1815 with the 1st Ordnance Survey Map of 1871. While there may well have been a casual ferry route from Mull to Keil, the Rev. Norman Macleod's evidence at the time of the 1st Statistical Account of 1791 suggests the main ferry route from Mull was to Fernish. Indeed he specifically mentions the want of a ferry to Knock at this time.
This writer concurs with Angus Robertson that in cultural landscape terms it is better that the proposed new road follows this route, however late it was introduced, rather than bisecting the existing field pattern.
- 4.3 The surviving dykes are in mostly ruinous condition and indeed the west side of the dyke Feature 5 alongside the drove road has been robbed out to its footings. The A Langlands plan of 1815 shows a dyke in this position and this may always have been of turf construction on stone footings. The turf dyke Feature 12 was also extant by 1815 but not in 1788. Dyke Feature 9 may possibly have been extant in 1788, as the boundary between Knock and Keil Farms was shown on this alignment. It however remains possible that the surviving dyke is in fact a rebuild as it was still in use in 1880. Dyke Feature 7 which contains iron spacers set in upright stones 4m apart to support a wire fence, a feature which cannot date before 1830, and is clearly the latest boundary constructed, cutting as it does across the existing field systems.
- 4.4 Feature 13 was probably used as a store and is not of major archaeological significance. It should be sufficiently robust to survive the road construction providing measures are taken to identify it to contractors and to isolate it from the road line.

- 4.5 Feature 14 should be sufficiently distant from the road route to be unaffected during construction work, as long as mitigation works are carried out to protect it from damage.

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 *There are no strong archaeological grounds for altering the proposed route of the road. Any possible archaeological features are buried beneath the surface and cannot be identified.*
- 5.2 *The proposed route while it will impact on the cultural landscape has probably been sited to cause the least impact to the cultural heritage, given the constraints that it should run from Keil to Lochaline West Pier. Careful landscaping should minimise its impact.*
- 5.3 *Given the local sensitivities to this road construction, it may be appropriate to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the topsoil strip for the road. Of particular concern should be the section at the north where slight remnants of Keil township may survive beneath the topsoil and the section through the wood at the south. Slight terracing here may indicate some form of human interaction. They were not distinct enough to be defined as archaeological features but may contain buried archaeological features beneath the scrub woodland and turf.*

Jonathan Wordsworth, MA, MIFA, FSA Scot

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jenny and Angus Robertson for supplying earlier OS maps and aerial photographs of this area. Iain Tornber also kindly allowed access to his copies of the 1788 & 1815 Langlands Estate maps. The bibliographic background relies almost entirely on the sources compiled by Philip Gaskell in Morvern Transformed (Cambridge, 1980).

Gazetteer of Features recorded

As described above the first 12 features were previously identified in the submission by Ardtornish Estate. Items 13-14 are additional to this. Grid references refer to sections of features affected by new road line and not full extent of features

Feature Number 1
NGR NM 6684 4518
Site Description A stone dyke in intact condition stands on the S side of the B849.
Discussion *This was probably built in the mid 19th century after the main clearances of Keil after 1841. The road line was shifted to its present position after 1815. Its intact form shows that it has been subject to regular maintenance either by the estate or by the Roads Authority. While the new road will demolish a section of this, the remainder should continue to survive in good condition as a modern field boundary.*

Feature Number 2
NGR NM 6699 4501
Site Description Stone or more probably turf dyke. Faintly visible N of the new road line. To the S it has been robbed to footing level. At cNM 6696 4488 circular holes in the footing stones may be natural features but are more probably caused by holes bored to blast the rock either from within the fields or from a quarry. The line of this dyke continues S of the sheepfold as Feature 5. It is possible that it was originally a turf dyke on stone footings and thus perhaps it was built before the dyke to the east of the track, though the footings are very similar to those of the stone dyke on the E.
Discussion *See below for interpretation. It has been very severely robbed and though it has some landscape value, it has slight intrinsic value. However the current proposals suggest it can be retained during the new road construction and this should be encouraged.*

Feature Number 3
NGR NM 6699 4500 – NM 6694 4477
Site Description Old road considered locally to have been a possible drove route for cattle from Mull to a small mart at Keil. The straight alignment of the dyke and the drystone construction of the dyke to the E of the road (not shown by 1815) suggests this road is a fairly late feature, probably after the clearances post 1841. The dyke and road are recorded on the OS 1st edition map of 1880. The road line cannot be traced S of the sheepfold and as surviving, may have been more connected for moving stock without entering the fields to the W & E.
Discussion *As discussed above the road and the dyke to the E are thought not to have been built until after 1841. It is possible that they were following an earlier route and indeed there must have been some access to Keil from the sea to deliver the medieval tombstones erected in the graveyard. It is unlikely that any early road metalling survives in this area, though this could be confirmed if an archaeological watching brief is carried out. Given the slope of the road considerable erosion is likely to have occurred when the ground was open. While there are legitimate arguments that the new road line should be diverted to avoid this feature, on balance the writer agrees that in landscape terms it is better that the road continues over the existing route rather than cutting further into the field pattern.*

Feature Number 4
NGR NM 6696 4478
Site Description A timber sheepfold with concrete foundations has largely been removed. The cast iron dye pot still survives. This is a relatively modern feature
Discussion *No protection needs to be given to this feature due to its poor condition and modern date.*

Feature Number 5
NGR NM 6695 4475
Site Description This dyke of probable turf & stone construction may show that robbed wall W of the track was indeed of an earlier construction type than the wall to the E. The line of this dyke can be clearly followed on aerial photographs, but was not shown on the earlier OS maps. It was recorded by 1815.

Discussion *The suggested course of the proposed road should leave this feature undisturbed.*

Feature Number **6**
NGR NM 6698 4460
Site Description Natural stone knoll.
Discussion *Not of archaeological interest*

Feature Number **7**
NGR NM 6703 4453
Site Description Low drystone dyke in relatively poor condition with occasional repairs that have altered its original form. Enough evidence survives to show it was only built 1m high and capped by a wire fence of 3 strands. The iron stays to hold the wires were set c4m apart and leaded into upright stone blocks. This style of construction makes this a later form than the other dykes and this is confirmed by looking at its position in the landscape. It cuts through the centre of the enclosure to the N, probably supplanting dyke feature 8. It appears designed as a major boundary separating Lochaline (originally Knock Farm) from Keil.
Discussion *Given the poor condition of the existing dyke the 6m intrusion of the new road will cause little impact on this feature, even in landscape terms.*

Feature Number **8**
Site Description Landscaping comment
Discussion *Not relevant archaeologically*

Feature Number **9**
NGR NM 6712 4444
Site Description Ruinous low stone dyke which appears to have been superseded by dyke feature 7. However both dykes are shown on the early OS maps suggesting at least part of this dyke remained in use. This formed the boundary between Knock and Keil Farms in both 1788 and 1815, though it may well not be the original boundary recorded in 1788. Though E of Cuibheag it appears to follow a field alignment followed by Knock rather than Keil Farm.
Discussion *The 6m portion of this dyke affected by the new road line is in such poor condition that no special recording should be required.*

Feature Number **10**
Site Description Mixed scrub woodland. The underlying features are obscured here by the woodland and other scrub vegetation. Nothing could be convincingly interpreted as an archaeological site here other than Feature 13. There could, for example, be traces of a track and a level platform 5m in diameter. But equally these could be the result of natural geomorphology and cannot therefore be defined as archaeological sites.
Discussion *If an archaeological watching brief is carried out, particular attention should be paid in this area. It has the potential to hold a small-scale occupation, such a mesolithic camping site or a charcoal burning stance.*

Feature Number **11**
Site Description Landscaping comment
Discussion *Not of archaeological interest*

Feature Number **12**
NGR NM 6734 4429
Site Description This turf dyke is faintly visible on the ground but shows up clearly on the earlier OS and 1815 maps (but not on the 1788 map) and on aerial photographs. The S section appears to have been entirely built of turf, now surviving up to 0.3m high, reflecting the moss ground which it covers. A small fragment of stone footings are visible at the S end where the dyke is cut by a modern quarry. To the N outwith the survey area, the dyke is largely of drystone construction. As Cuibheag at NG 669448 formed part of Keil Farm this would appear to mark an earlier boundary between Keil and Knock Farms before being replaced by dyke feature 7. This is partly confirmed by the different alignment of the two dykes.

Discussion *Part of this dyke will be destroyed by the new road construction. However the S end has already been lost and the 6m portion to be cut away will have little impact on the integrity of the rest of this feature.*

Feature Number **13**

NGR NM 6719 4439

Site Description A small rectangular structure was previously identified by Angus Robertson, after the original environment/archaeology & landscape notes were compiled. It is aligned WNW/ESE measuring 3m by 1.5m internally with an entrance at the SE 1m long by 0.5m wide. The wall width is irregular, possibly averaging 0.5m and mostly surviving up to 0.6m high, except where it incorporates large boulders. It lies c2m from the edge of the preferred road line.

This was probably used as a store, though for what purpose is uncertain.

Discussion *Mr Robertson is confident that the new road can be constructed without affecting this structure. It will require to be fenced off before construction to prevent accidental damage.*

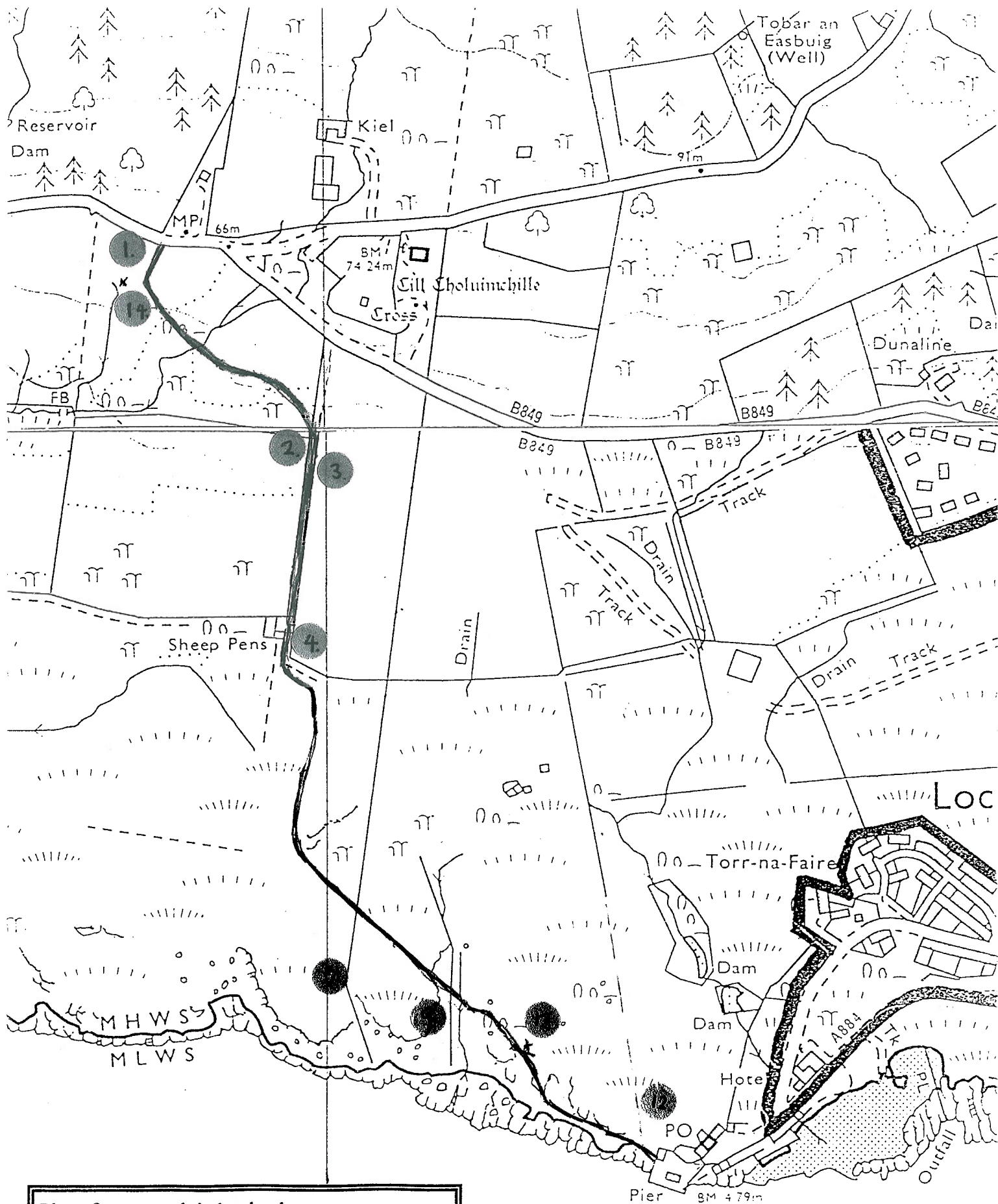
Feature Number **14**

NGR NM 6680 4514

Site Description 50m from the road and 15m W from the cane that marks the centre of the road where it bends to the SE, are the footings of a rectangular building. It measures 16m by 5m externally and is aligned E/W. There was a probable internal division. It is very poor condition with evidence of previous rabbit infestation, though no active burrows can now be seen.

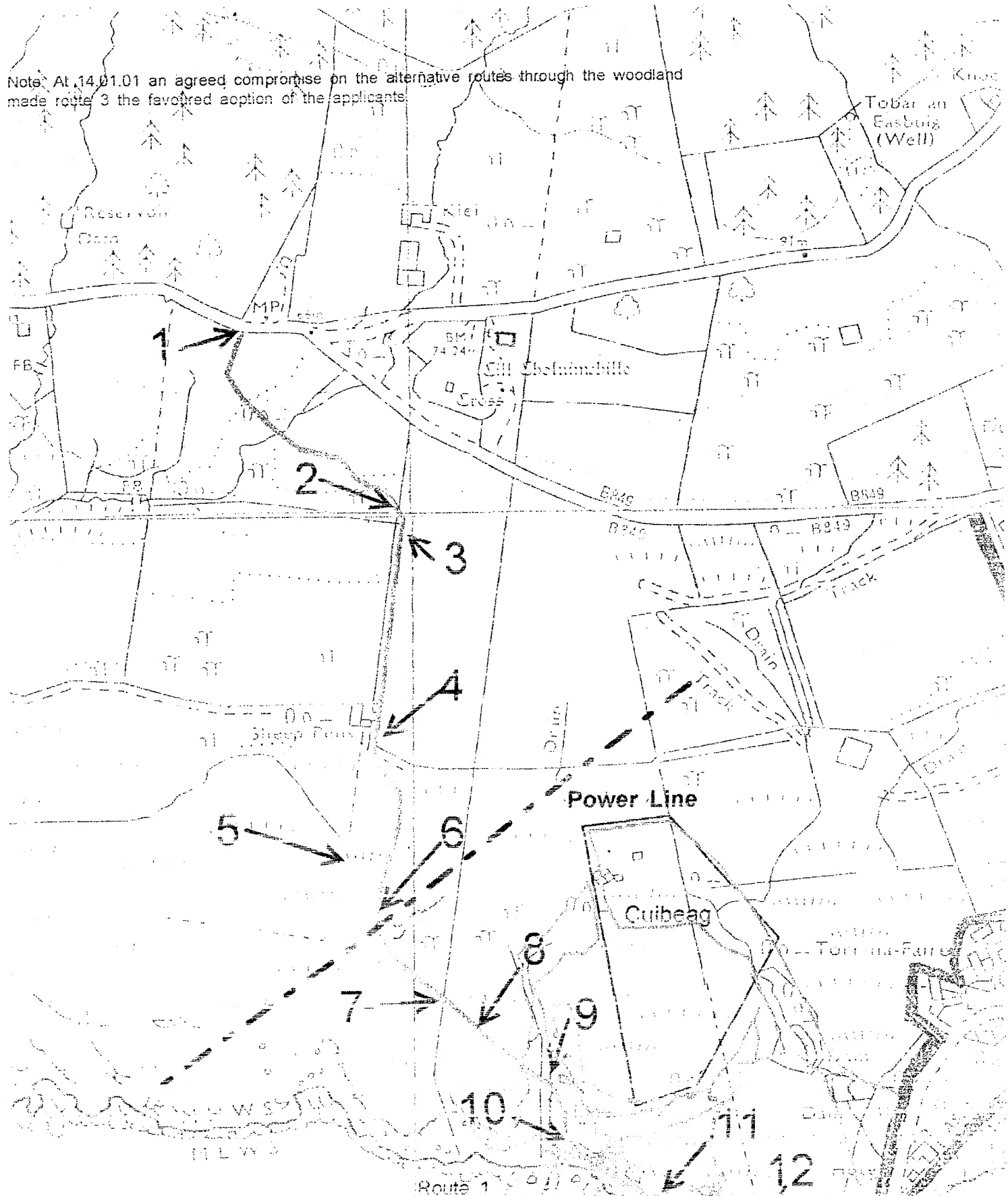
This building was built after 1788, first being recorded in 1815. It was not shown on the earlier OS maps and would appear to have belonged to one of the tenants cleared after 1841.

Discussion *The road line will not directly impact on this site, but it should be fenced off to prevent damage by contractors during construction work. As it lies obliquely downslope from the road there is a slight risk of stones etc. rolling onto this site, further obscuring it.*



Plan of proposed timber haulage access route
from Keil to the Lochaline West Pier, Morvern.
Ardtornish Estate Co./Iggesund Paperboard Co.
Numbers refer to archaeological features
recorded.
Scale 1:5000

Note: At 14.01.01 an agreed compromise on the alternative routes through the woodland made route 3 the favoured option of the applicants.



Plan of proposed timber haulage route from Keil to Lochaline West Pier, Morvern, Ardtornish Estate/Iggesund.

Scale 1:5000

Environment/Archaeology/Landscape Notes.

- Route 1
- Route 3
- Route 2
- Pier
- Proposed area for new planting
- Existing Woodland
- Alternative Road Lines
- Original Proposed Road Line

Proposed Timber haulage road between Keil and West Pier - Lochaline Morvern.
Environment, Landscape and Archaeological Survey Notes, by reference to the plan
appended.

Plan Ref.	Description
1	Entrance from B849. Existing stone wall is a major feature of this road, and realignment of wall around bell mouth will help to enhance this entrance. Public road safety and visibility at this point is good.
1-2	Road soon dips away and turns to left for screening behind gorse bushes, reducing the visual impact from the B849. Permanent Grassland mostly improved, with some Gorse and wetland.
2	Archaeological Feature. Road crosses old roadside dyke. Full photographic record, before, during, and after work.
3-4	Old road consists of, from west to east. Low built wall, badly damaged, 6 meters of hard road with grass cover, 4 ft. wall in reasonable condition, then stock fence. This is obviously an old road and may have been the drove road for cattle coming from Mull via Ardness Port to the Cattle fair ground at Keil. The road has a firm foundation and provided the new road can be built without damage to the walls then this is a good site. From a landscape point of view the existing road is better than a new one snaking up through the field, and from an agricultural view, the proposal will take out the least amount of valuable improved ground in this area. Provided the road can be built without damage to the old walls on either side then this is a good route. Detailed work programme required. Full photographic record, before, during, and after work.
5	Archaeological feature. Stone and turf dyke forming part of field boundary and possible boundary of old drove road. Not to be disturbed. Road to cut around to the west on the edge of the hard ground, but low enough down edge of hill to provide some screening from views from Lochaline village, and also the sea.
6	Road cuts around corner of small knoll. May be visible from some places at this point, and should be carefully aligned to provided maximum screening. Road cuts under main power line to Mull and must have adequate clearance.
7	Archaeological feature. Stone wall. Full photographic record, before, during, and after work.
8	Road from this point is lost from view from Mull, Torr na Faire and Kirkbrae (Lochaline).
8-9	Road line to be kept on hard ground p the hillside to the south of valley bottom, but not over skyline to protect views from the Sea, and avoiding valuable basin mire to the South.
9	Archaeological feature. Stone wall. Full photographic record, before, during, and after work. Barn to be fully converted here. Design of crossing to fit in with landscape?
9	Woodlands. Proposed new planting area, to screen views etc. from Cuibeng. Planting programme to be agreed.

10	Trees. Interesting scrub woodland of hazel, oak, willow, Rowan, Birch etc. Valuable coastal habitat. Original Route 1 proposed would remove approximately 15% of this habitat. Environmental compensation by planting similar trees elsewhere (9 and 11). The wood provides an excellent screen for visual impact of the road from the Sea. Road width and exact trees to be felled to be kept to a minimum and marked and agreed before work commences. At 7.1.01 marked in green with boundaries in orange, and counted at 135 trees of significance. Route 2 was an alternative proposal by the objectors, but the applicant criticised it on mainly landscape grounds. At 14.1.01 a meeting with Dr. Foxley, the applicant and the main objector agreed a compromise route (route 3), which greatly reduces the effect on the woodland while fulfilling the landscape problems. This route is marked with green paint spots and tape. Route 3 is now the favoured option of the applicants.
11	New Planting/ Road exits from tree line and from here to the pier the road is well screened from Lochaline but visible from the Sea. Good site for planting/screening programme. May require some fencing. Planting programme to be agreed.
12	Archaeological feature. Avoid turf wall that extends from stone wall NNW from this point. End of road onto pier requires gate or cattle grid and pedestrian gate.
All	The whole road to be fitted with gates fences and grids to comply with requirements of Ardtornish Farms, and with pedestrian gates etc. to provide a valuable asset to the local community in the form of an attractive circular walking route from Lochaline, open at all times to the public.

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

Brief for:

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT AND WALK-OVER
SURVEY**

1. Background

This brief has been produced in response to the need for an archaeological evaluation to be carried out prior to work beginning on site. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted.

2. Terms of Reference

This brief is for archaeological desk based assessment and walkover survey work prior to works proposed by Forest Enterprise, who are responsible for all tendering and contractual arrangements.

Any reference to 'archaeologist' in this specification is to be taken to mean a qualified and experienced practitioner acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist. This is to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards. The project should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists or an archaeologist of equivalent standing.

If this is for a road or water and sewerage proposal the area to be covered is the entire wayleave except where otherwise indicated.

3. Tendering

Tenders must be accompanied by a project design, statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director, and other staff where possible.

4. Objectives

- 1. To establish the presence of recorded archaeological remains, and the likelihood of further as yet unrecorded archaeological remains.*
- 2. To propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible and recording where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified.*
- 3. To ensure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the development project.*

5. Method

1. A desk based assessment of the site, to include consultation of at least;
 - The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record
 - The Highland Council Archive
 - The National Monuments Record
 - Locally held private archives
 - Aerial Photographic coverage
 - Scottish Record Office
 - National Map Library

- *Any other appropriate resources*
2. The desk- based assessment must make full use of all of the resources held in these repositories.
 3. A walkover survey will be made of the area in question, to enable identification of any upstanding remains, from any period, including modern. All individual features to be recorded on a 1:2500 plan.
 4. No excavation is to take place as part of this work.

6. Monitoring

- I. The Senior Archaeologist will normally monitor fieldwork to ensure that briefs are met.
- II. Monitoring will normally be by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
- III. Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names and local addresses, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Senior Archaeologist.

7. Reporting

7.1. Project report

At least three copies of the project report must be produced.

- I. One paper copy for Forest Enterprise
- II. One paper copy for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX where it will be available for immediate consultation by the public.
- III. One copy for the Highland SMR as above, on a computer disk in a format compatible with Microsoft Office 95 for Windows.

The report must be submitted to the all of the above within 2 weeks of the completion of the field work.

The report must include, as a minimum,

1. Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected. The Grid Reference of the site must be included.
2. Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this brief.
3. Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork

4. Scale plans (at no more than 1:500), and photographs of archaeological features noted
5. A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location
6. 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.
7. The report must propose appropriate arrangements for the safeguarding where possible or recording where necessary of any objects or features identified by this evaluation.
8. A set of colour slides illustrating the project progress from start to completion.

The completed report will be available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, the Archaeology Unit reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. Subject to this, copyright will remain with the author unless specifically transferred in writing, and the Archaeology Unit will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. Copyright will be acknowledged in all cases by the Archaeology Unit.

This specification includes arranging 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 Senior Archaeologist.

7.3. Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The cost of this must be included in any tender document.

8. General

1. The archaeologist appointed must be of a professional standing acceptable to the Senior Archaeologist and must carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
2. The main contractor has responsibility for the Health and Safety of any archaeological staff on site.
3. The archaeologist is responsible for taking all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurances.
4. Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.

5. The archaeologist must agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Senior Archaeologist
6. The archaeologist appointed will not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the Senior Archaeologist
7. Proper provision must be made for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland
8. The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this specification.

Dorothy Low
Archaeologist
Wednesday, 17 January 2001