

Site Code: NBN 08
 Client: Mr and Mrs D Cox

New Barn, Wester Lochloy Farm, Nairn

Desk-based Assessment and Archaeological Watching Brief

Nick Garry MA PIFA

18th December 2008

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Site Location: NH 9250 5740
Planning Application: 06/00202 OUTNA
Type of Work: Desk-based Assessment and Watching Brief
Parish: Nairn
Council: Highland

Managed by Fred Geddes
Fieldwork, DBA and report by Nick Garry
Consultation by George Geddes
Fieldwork: 9th July 2008
Draft Report: July 2008
Final Report: December 2008

1. Background

In July 2008, Alba Archaeology (Highland) Ltd was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Cox to carry out an archaeological Watching Brief in compliance with a planning conditions for the construction of a house and access road on this site, see Figure 1, 2 and 3. Because there are a number of archaeological sites in the area, it seemed likely that there may be archaeological evidence within the site boundaries. A brief was issued by Highland Council Archaeology Unit on 28th June 2007. The work was carried out with on the 9th of July 2008 using a straight edged ditching bucket in good clear and dry weather. There had been some light rain in the early morning.

2. Summary

The site location is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The site was over grown with tall grass and roughly bounded by fences on the north, east and south. The western edge of the site was loosely defined by a change in the height of the grass. A number of areas had already been stripped in previous work related to the installation of a septic tank and electric cable. This cable was visible above ground at the point where the proposed house and access road met. There was a large mound, on the east side of the site, which related to the installation of the septic tank. The area between this and the proposed house site had already been dug and had been back-filled using small pebbles. An area between the gate and the house site had also been excavated, when the mobile home had been erected, to accommodate the requirements of the delivery lorry.

The opportunity to identify cut features and residual markers left by human activity were high due to the nature of the natural soil, a sandy beach type material, below a mid-brown top-soil. As a result of this and the good weather, we can be sure that the negative results were reliable. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required in connection with the development.

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. Methodology

The methodology follows standard Highland Council Planning and Development Service guidelines. Work was carried out according to the brief produced by HCAU and IFA standards.

For the Desk Based Assessment, this included a check of all the National Monuments Record of Scotland, The National map Library, Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record and the aerial photographs of the RCAHMS.

A straight edged ditching bucket was used for all topsoil stripping.

5. Operational Factors

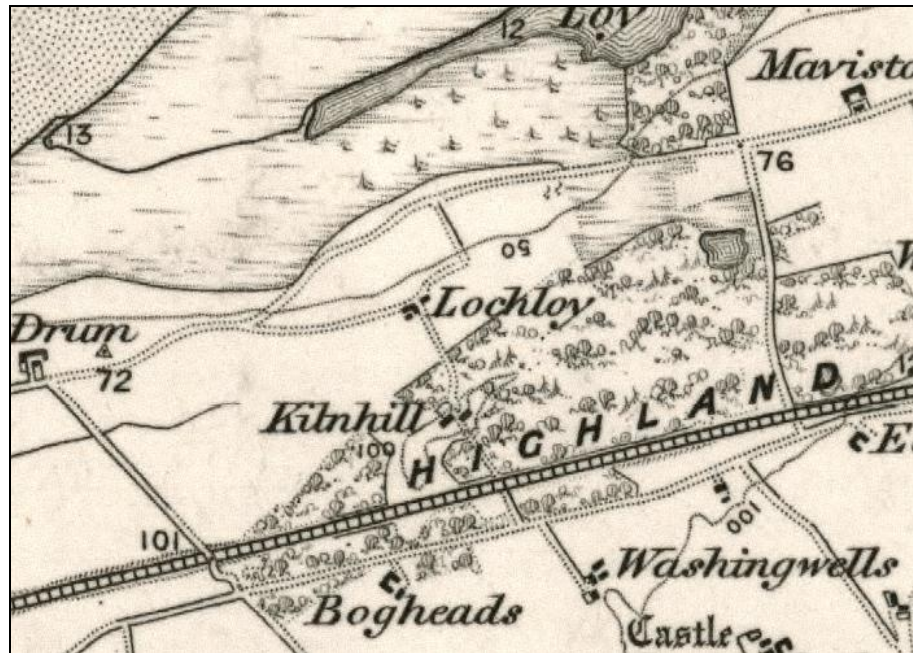
The site had a live electric cable running across the site to the mobile home. This was easily identified and a safe working strategy was agreed with the driver of the JCB. The geology of the site allowed for quick run off and with the lack of heavy rains the site was dry. The JCB used was of the wheeled type with a standard straight edged ditching bucket.

6. Desk Based Assessment

6.1 Maps



Ordnance Survey 1871 Nairnshire Sheet ii



1876 Nairn



1896 Nairn



Nairn 1908-09

6.2 Aerial photographs

Sortie	Frames	Date	Scale	Lib.
106G/Scot/UK169	2287 – 2288	26.8.46	1:10000B69	
58/RAF/1116	F22:0358 – 0360	8.5.53	1:10000B356	
05/67/095	215 – 217	14. 5.67	1:17500-	
05/89/365	082 – 081	5.7.89	1:7700	-

6.3 Known sites nearby

SMR NUMBER: NH95NW0010

DISTRICT: Nairn;

PARISH: NAIRN:Auldearn

SITE TYPE: Chapel; Graveyard;

PERIOD: Post Medieval (AD 1500-2000); Later Medieval (AD 1200-1500);

EASTING: (2)92350

NORTHING: (8)57980
EVIDENCE: OS/RCAHMS Report;

NH95NW 10 92 57 to 92 58.

The village of Lochloy, extant in the early 17th century, lay between the loch and the modern house of Lochloy, close to the present road. Hearth-stones, querns and remains of buildings were dug up about 1859. The chapel, which lay a little to the west of the village, was known to Bain who recorded that its dry stone foundation walls suggested that it was very old. The mound on which it was built had on it a number of undressed and unmarked headstones. A well close by was still known as Chapel Well. Bain adds that fragments of human bones were dug up when a road was being made down to the loch but that the work was stopped by the proprietor.

G Bain 1893; J Blaeu 1654

SMR NUMBER: NH95NW0007
DISTRICT: Nairn;
PARISH: NAIRN: Auldearn
SITE TYPE: House;
EASTING: (2)92500
NORTHING: (8)57700

NH95NW 7 925 577

No traces of any earlier house are visible in the area of Lochloy House, a 19th-century mansion (at NH 9258 5774). A residence of the Hay family is reported to have existed here before the building of Inshoch Castle (NH95NW 3). RCAHMS 1978, visited March 1978; G Bain 1893

Type of Site: House
NMRS Number: NH95NW 7
Map reference: NH 925 577
Parish: Auldearn
Council: Highland
Former District: Nairn
Former Region: Highland
NH95NW 7 c. 925 577

No traces of any earlier house are visible in the area of Lochloy House, a 19th-century mansion (at NH 9258 5774). A residence of the Hay family is reported to have existed here before the building of Inshoch Castle (NH95NW 3). RCAHMS 1978, visited March 1978; G Bain 1893

Type of Site: Enclosure
NMRS Number: NH95NW 39
Map reference: NH 9290 5748
Parish: Auldearn
Council: Highland
Former District: Nairn
Former Region: Highland

NH95NW 39 9290 5748

An enclosure is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS (Nairnshire 1871, sheet i), but it is not shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1977).
Information from RCAHMS (AKK) 1 August 1996.

6.4 Results of Desk-based Assessment

In August 1946, the nearby Loch Loy farm had a garden while the wooded area to the south of the site was unplanned and had a ragged edge which did not reach the present position of the planted wood. The site itself was isolated having no access road to it. By 1953, the area to the east of the site, next to the Loch Loy Farm, had a number of small buildings and farm related items, the access to this area coming from the farm itself. This development, which by 1967 had been reduced to a single round roofed building, may explain the modern dump material on site which appeared as blackened irregular deposits. By 1989 the wood to the south had been cleared and Wester Lochy had been built. At this point there was neither access road nor the barn which now exists next to the site.

The aerial photographs studied at the RCAHMS showed no archaeological features either within the site or within the immediate area in which the site is situated. While there has been a number of changes in the landscape and the building of new structures nearby these did not have a direct impact on the site.

While the name of the nearby farm called Kilnhill no doubt relates to a burning process, be it charcoal burning or some other industrial activity, there was no evidence of any industrial processes having been carried out on the site or having been left there.

7. Watching Brief

The Watching Brief covered the footprint of the house and the access road with an additional strip around these to accommodate construction needs. It was decided to strip back the site from the north west edge of the house up to the area which had been previously stripped for services and the erection of the mobile home. Figure 4 shows the area subject to the watching brief.

The top soil was between 0.30m and 0.4m thick and was made up of dark loose fine silty sand, approximately 0.10m thick over mid-grey silty sand approximately 0.20m thick, over a uniform light-orange brown stoney sandy deposit. Where this had been disrupted by the installation of drains the soil was darker and contained either rough stones or in the case of the recent work clean and well sorted grey pebbles. The Natural was of a beach type material, sandy, with round and sub-round stones with occasional boulders of approximately 0.30 x 0.20 x 0.15m in which a number of broken stones offered the possibility of being worked but these were not identified as such when looked at more closely. Although there were interesting areas of compacted mid-red brown pebbles these were understood to be natural deposits.

In addition to the identified drainage, clearly seen as black patches running across the site through the area of the access road and containing modern ceramic drains and red tile pieces, a number of shallow pits had been dug in the area of the house foot print. These contained recent vegetation and animal bone and as such were identified as modern middens, possibly related to activities carried out in the near-by barn.

In summary no significant archaeology deposits or individual finds were identified on this site.

8. Acknowledgements

Mr and Mrs Cox

H.W. Kinnaird Ltd.

RCAHMS



New Barn, Lochloy.

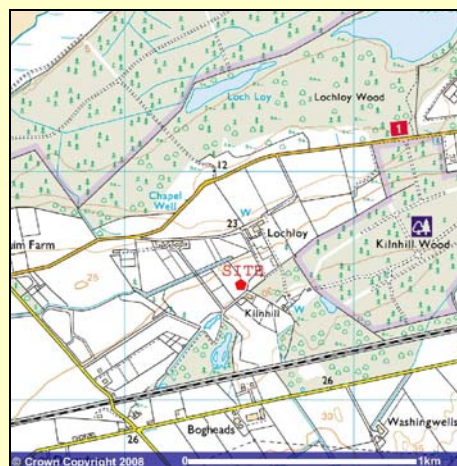


Figure One: Site Location

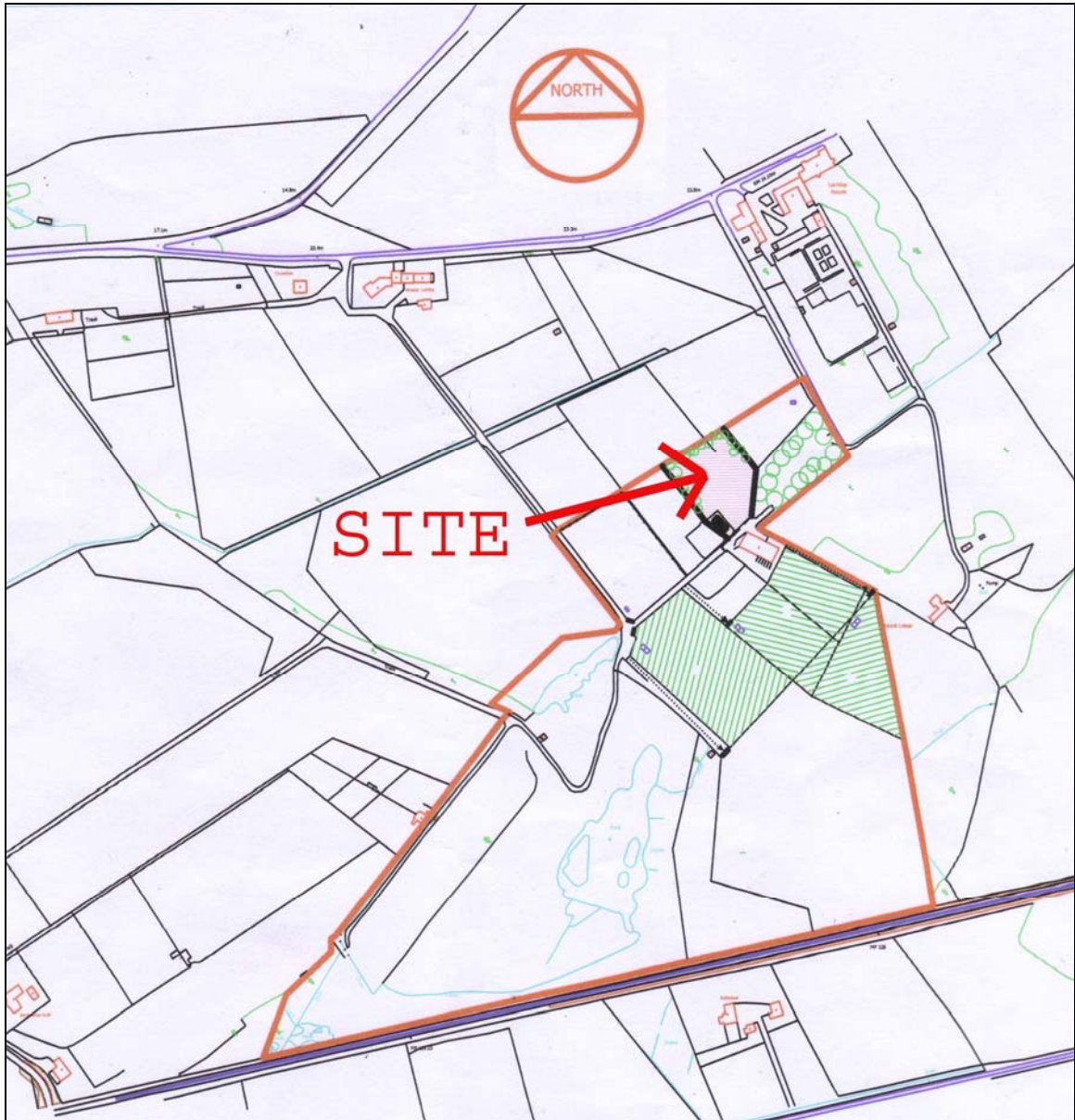


Figure 2: Detail plan showing location of site.

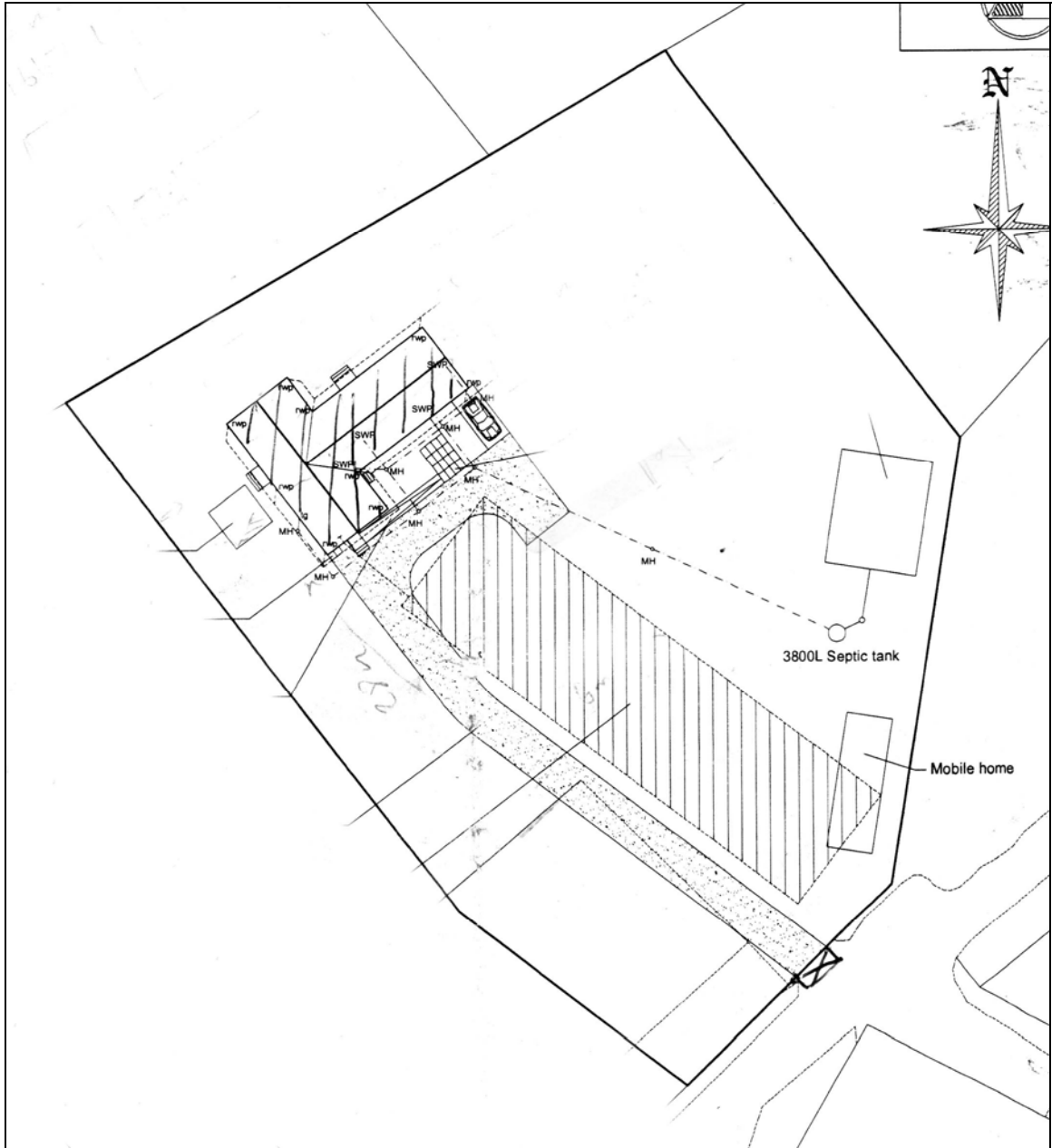


Figure 3: Proposed development.

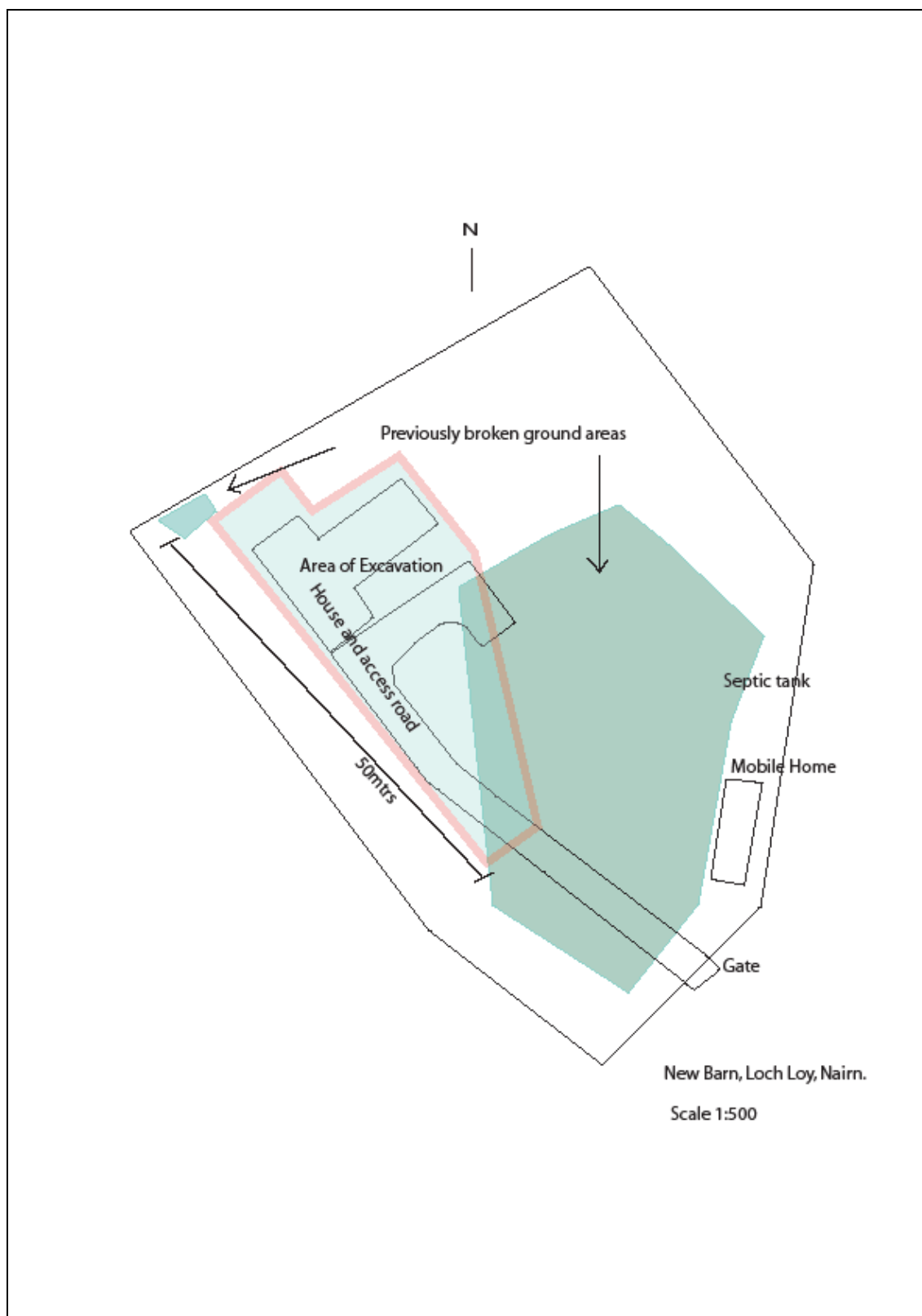


Figure 4: Plan of excavated area and previously broken ground.

Appendix 1: Photo register

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Alba Archaeology Archaeological Consultancy and Fieldwork
Newtonhill Lentrane Inverness IV3 8RN Telephone 01463 831324 Fax 01463 831486 Mobile 07714 233093 e-mail fredged@aol.com
Director Frederick Geddes DA (Edin) ARIBA FRIAS

Appendix 2: Digital Photographs



NBN 08 01



NBN 08 02



NBN 08 03



NBN 08 04



NBN 08 05



NBN 08 06



NBN 08 007



NBN 08 008



NBN 08 009



NBN 08 010



NBN 08 011



NBN 08 012



NBN 08 013



NBN 08 014



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