

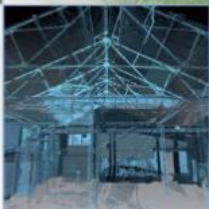
Strathnaver Museum, Bettyhill

Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

AOC Project Number: 70535

January 2021



Strathnaver Museum, Bettyhill:

Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Strathnaver Museum
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NC 71449 62246
Planning Reference	19/01504/FUL
AOC Project No:	70535
Prepared by:	Jessica McGreevy and Mary Peteranna
Illustrations by:	Sam O'Leary
Date of Fieldwork:	14 th January 2021
Date of Report:	20 th January 2021
OASIS No:	aocarcha1-413785

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

Authors: Jessica McGreevy and Mary Peteranna Date: 20th January 2021

Approved by: Mary Peteranna Date: 27th January 2021

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
The Old Estate Office
Rosehaugh Estate
Avoch
IV9 8RF

Mob. 07972 259255
Tel. 01463 819841
E-mail inverness@aocarchaeology.com



Contents

Page

List of illustrations	3
List of Evaluation Plates.....	3
List of Photographic Survey Plates.....	4
List of Appendices	4
Abstract.....	5
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	6
2.0 BACKGROUND.....	6
3.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT	9
3.1 Methodology.....	9
3.2 Cartographic Sources	9
3.3 Historic Environment Sources	13
4.0 OBJECTIVES	14
5.0 METHODOLOGY.....	15
5.1 Archaeological Evaluation.....	15
5.2 Photographic Survey.....	15
6.0 RESULTS	16
6.1 Archaeological Evaluation.....	16
6.2 Photographic Survey.....	17
7.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17
8.0 REFERENCES.....	22

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Site location map

Figure 2: Location of trenches

Figure 3: Extract from Pont's *Map of Scotland*, 1583

Figure 4: Extract from Blaeu's *Atlas of Sutherland*, 1654

Figure 5: Extract from *A Map of Sutherland* 1817-1824

Figure 6: Extract from Burnett and Scott's *Map of the County of Sutherland* 1847 (Surveyed in 1833)

Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey six in to the mile map, *Sutherland*, surveyed 1873

Figure 8: Extract from Ordnance Survey six inch to the mile map, *Sutherland*, surveyed 1903

Figure 9: S-facing section of Trench 1, showing sequence of archaeological layers; location of [008] in centre at base of drawhoe

Figure 10: E-facing section of Trench 2 showing sequence of layers

Figure 11: E-facing section of Trench 3, showing the sequence of layers

Figure 12: N-facing Trench 4 section showing layers overlying (020) at base of the sequence with the natural subsoil exposed in base of slot

List of Evaluation Plates

Plate 1: View SE over the development area, showing the location of trenches, with T4 to left

Plate 2: Post-ex of T1, showing sequence of layers with E- and S-facing sections of T1

Plate 3: W-facing section of the W end of T1 showing [009] in section at the base of the section

Plate 4: E-facing section of T2, with the drawhoe for scale

Plate 5: Looking N over T2, showing the location of [016], with another possible feature in back

Plate 6: W-facing section of [016] at the base of the trench section

Plate 7: E-facing section of T3, showing the sequence of layers

Plate 8: E end of T4, showing slot excavated through lowest archaeological horizon (020)

- Plate 9:** SF02, iron slag fragments from (003)
Plate 10: SF04, possible iron knife blade from (007)
Plate 11: SF07, shaped stone (?) from (014)
Plate 12: SF01, possible iron pin fragment from [016]

List of Photographic Survey Plates

- Plate 13:** Location of Strathnaver Museum
Plate 14: Panorama of location of Strathnaver Museum and graveyard, taken from the north
Plate 15: E gable end of Strathnaver Museum
Plate 16: Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building
Plate 17: S wall of the Strathnaver Museum
Plate 18: W gable wall of Strathnaver Museum
Plate 19: "Farr stone" and grave markers near the west side of the museum
Plate 20: N wall of the Strathnaver Museum
Plate 21: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)
Plate 22: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)
Plate 23: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)
Plate 24: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)
Plate 25: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)
Plate 26: First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams
Plate 27: First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams
Plate 28: First floor of the W end of the museum
Plate 29: First floor of the W end of the museum
Plate 30: First floor of the E end of the museum, roof beams and wall face

List of Appendices

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Evaluation Plates |
| Appendix 2 | Photographic Survey Plates |
| Appendix 3 | Photo Register |
| Appendix 4 | Trench Register |
| Appendix 5 | Context Register |
| Appendix 6 | Sample Register |
| Appendix 7 | Finds Register |

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation and photographic survey was undertaken in January 2021 by AOC Archaeology ahead of the re-development of Strathnaver Museum in Bettyhill, Sutherland.

During development, the existing museum will undergo mostly interior renovations and a new building will be erected to the northeast of the site. The archaeological fieldwork consisted of a trench evaluation of the new building site and a basic photographic survey of the existing museum and surrounding landscape.

The trench evaluation, although sited within a small development footprint, revealed a well-stratified sequence of at least two deep midden layers separated by wind-blown sand layers and a basal soil horizon found more than 1m below the turf. Initial excavation of the layers found evidence for artefactual material (slag, iron objects and coarse ceramic sherds) and ecofactual material (charcoal, shell and animal bone) from both midden layers and from the basal soil layer. Evidence for archaeological features was identified at the base of the archaeological sequence and within the second overlying midden layer. The sequence indicates there is considerable time depth to the site, which contains the likelihood for considerable archaeological material.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was required as a condition of planning consent on the development of Strathnaver Museum (Planning Ref:19/01504/FUL) on behalf of Strathnaver Museum.
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of the Highland Council (HC), which is advised on archaeological matters by the Historic Environment Team (HET). The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principles set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) and *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011* (2011), the ClfA *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014) and the Highland Council *Standards for Archaeological Work* (2012).

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Site is located on the north coast of Scotland to the south side of the sand dunes of Farr Bay, between the village of Bettyhill and the Farr Bay in Sutherland (**Figure 1; Figure 2**). The land slopes downhill from the dunes to the Clachan Burn and A836 which is the main arterial road through the county. The land is situated on ground owned by the Church of Scotland and leased to the Highland Council. The Site centres on National Grid Reference NC 71449 62246.
- 2.2 The development will see the construction of an external annex for additional exhibitions situated to the northeast of the main museum along with the alteration to the interior of the current museum space to improve accessibility and use of space. The proposed annex will be constructed within the church grounds to the east of the graveyard enclosure wall.
- 2.3 Strathnaver Museum, which opened in 1976, is situated in the former parish church of St Columba, built in 1774 and refurbished in 1882. It is a Category B Listed Building (Designation: LB7156). The church is known historically for being the venue where evidence relating to the Highland Clearances for the people north of Sutherland was taken in 1883 by the Napier Commission.
- 2.4 The British Geological Survey GeoIndex (BGS 2021) records the bedrock on the Site as belonging to the Bettyhill Formation – Migmatitic Psammite with Migmatitic Semipelite. This is described as metamorphic bedrock formed approximately 541 to 1000 million years ago in shallow seas and later altered by high grade regional metamorphism. This is overlain by sand deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in an environment dominated by wind-blown deposits.
- 2.5 The Site is situated within a rich archaeological landscape, with burials of likely prehistoric date previously discovered in the sand dunes around 1.7km east of the site. A possible broch is located over 1km to the northeast at Clerkhill, while 0.5km to the southeast a Bronze Age hoard was located at Creag A'Bhodaich near a standing stone. A bit further to the east and northeast, there is extensive prehistoric settlement as recorded by hut circles and field systems at Fiscary and An Rath Chruineach. Significant prehistoric funerary monuments of chambered cairns are found alongside this at Fiscary.

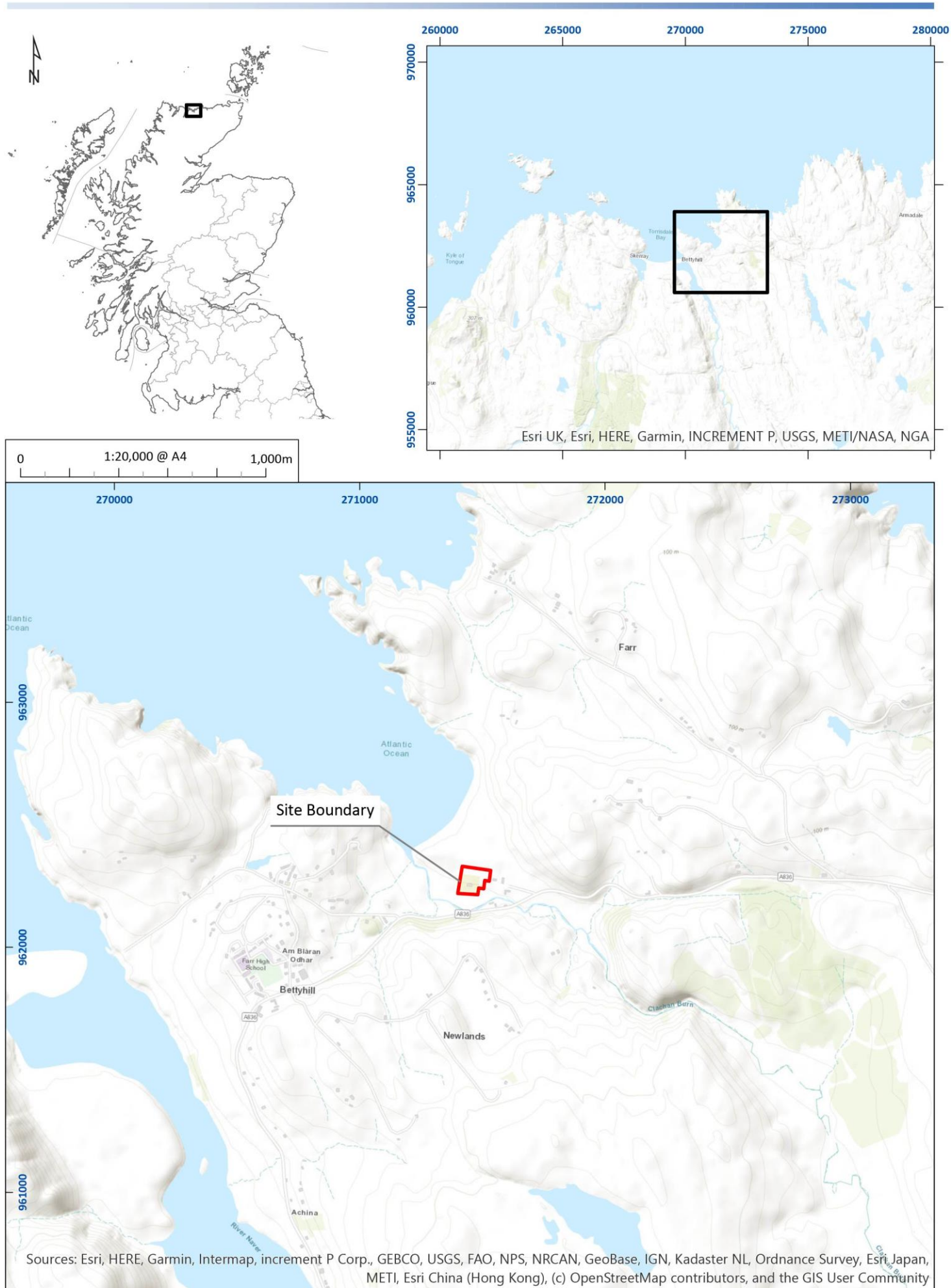


Figure 1: Site location plan

01/70535/DSR/01/01

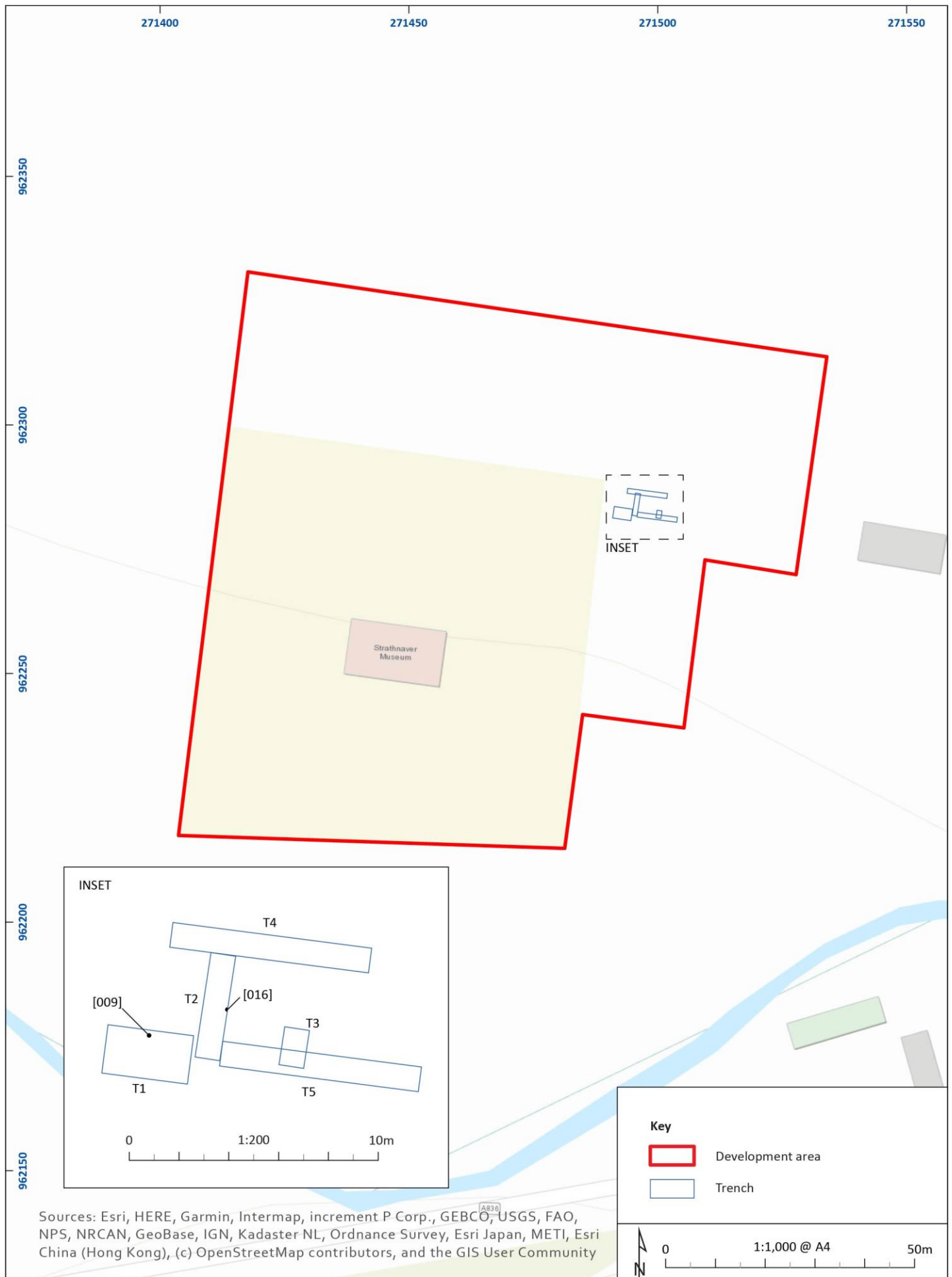


Figure 2: Location of trenches

01/70535/DSR/02/01

3.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the fieldwork in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation. A rapid check of historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps was conducted using the Highland Historic Environment Record, the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), Historic Environment Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland and online resources about the site.

3.2 Cartographic Sources

3.2.1 Historic maps were consulted online at the National Library of Scotland (NLS 2021). The current buildings within the site boundary consist of a rectangular church building orientated East to West, known to date from the late 18th century, set within a graveyard enclosure. Numerous maps depict the location of the kirk and a selection of these maps are noted below.

a) Pont's Map of Scotland, Strathnaver; Kyle of Tongue - Pont 2, 1583

This map depicts a church during this time period with it marked *Kirk of Farr* (**Figure 3**).

b) Blaeu's *Atlas of Scotland*, 1654

A church is depicted on this map to the west of Farr (**Figure 4**).

c) Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland*, 1747-52

Roy's survey depicts the *Kirk of Farr* within an enclosure and a small, enclosed settlement to the east, with areas of rig and furrow on both sides of the *Burn of Farr*.

d) *Large folded coloured map of Sutherland*, ca. 1817-24

In this map, a church is marked in more detail. It is shown at its approximate location north of the road which would become the A838 (**Figure 5**).

e) Burnett and Scott's Map of Scotland, *Map of the county of Sutherland*, 1833

This map depicts church and manse buildings with the wider context of the surrounding landscape, showing *Farr* to the north-east and *Bettyhill Inn* shown to the south (**Figure 6**).

f) *Sutherland Sheet XVIII, Series: Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile*

Surveyed: 1873 Published: 1878

This map shows the Site, which can be seen in roughly its current state clearly showing the church buildings enclosed within its graveyard (**Figure 7**). There is path leading from the east end of the church and through the graveyard at the east end of the wall towards the manse to the east. The manse, which dates from 1819, is now The Farr Bay Inn, a Category C listed building (Designation: LB7157). To the south of the church on the south side of the stream is a L-shaped range of buildings.

g) *Sutherland Sheet XVIII, Series: Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile*

Surveyed: 1904 Published: 1908

The map shows little change to the Site; however it is shown in clearer detail with the range of buildings to the south of the site labelled as a *police station* (**Figure 8**). The current layout of

the Site is largely unchanged from this, with only the addition of a pathway leading from tourist information building north to the former church and museum.



Figure 3: Extract from Pont's *Map of Scotland*, 1583



Figure 4: Extract from Blaeu's *Atlas of Scotland*, 1654



Figure 5: Extract from *A map of Sutherland 1817-1824*



Figure 6: Extract from *Burnett and Scott Map of the County of Sutherland 1847 (Surveyed in 1833)*



Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey six inch to the mile map, *Sutherland*, surveyed 1873

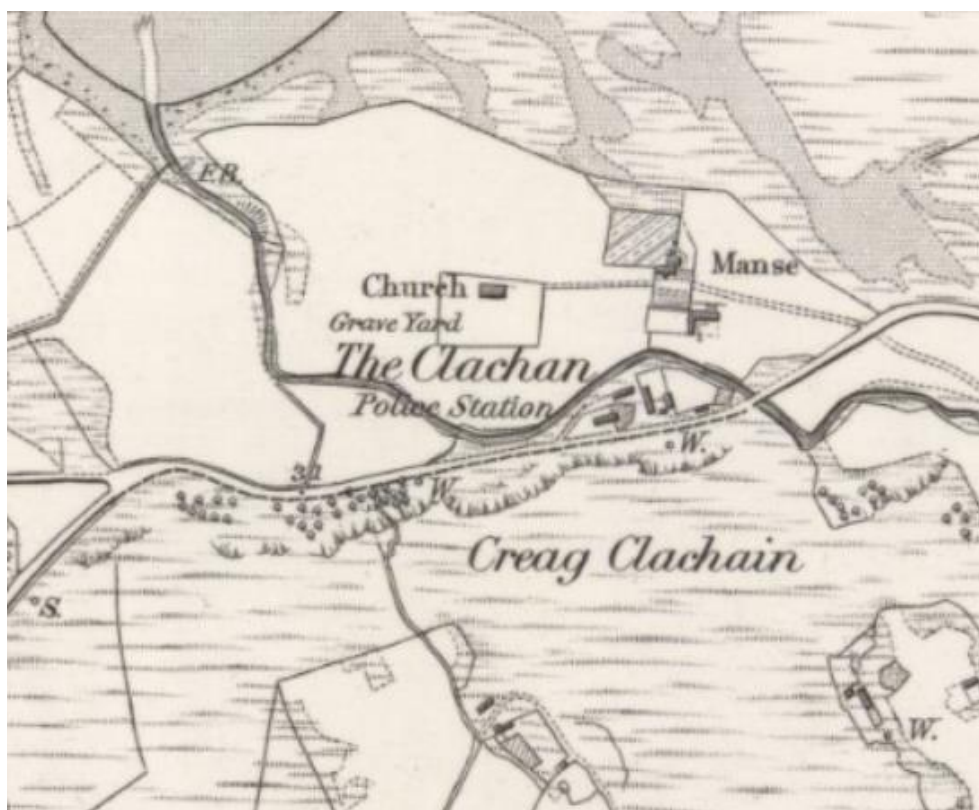


Figure 8: Extract from Ordnance Survey six inch to the mile map, *Sutherland*, surveyed 1904

3.3 Historic Environment Sources

3.3.1 A full search of the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER) and the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), via Canmore, was carried out.

3.3.2 Significant records located within proximity to the Site are as follows:

Canmore ID: 6442 NC 71450 62248 Clachan, Strathnaver Museum

Built in 1774 and the interior altered 1882. A tall rectangular church, harled with painted ashlar reveals (some rendered). Symmetrical south elevation with 2 long centre windows with multi-pane glazing. Flanking ground floor and gallery windows. Single long window, detailed as in south elevation, in centre north elevation with flanking ground floor windows; 12-pane glazing; 1st floor gallery entrances in east and west gables, reached by forestairs over-sailing similar ground floor entrances. Listed building number LB7156, Category B. MHG17085

MHG31434 NC 7145 6223 Farr Burial Ground, Bettyhill

Cemetery around the church building (now used as museum), dating from the C19 onwards, some unusual built stone monuments. Modern extension uphill on the coastward side still in use.

MHG33843 NC 7124 6231 Occupation site, Bettyhill

A report of bones eroding from dunes north-west of the Site were checked by AOC Archaeology and deemed to be animal. Possible remains of a slabbed surface or feature, along with burnt stone and slag were also noted.

LB7157 NC 71580 62274 Bettyhill Farr Old Manse (Former Church of Scotland Parish Manse)
Canmore ID: 110992

The old Manse, located to the east of the Site, is dated to 1819 and described as: 2-storey and attic house, 3 bays. Harled with painted rendered margins. Projecting gabled porch masks centre door; 2 gabled dormers. 2-and 12-pane glazing; corniced end stacks; slate roof. Rear wing at right angles to main building with additional 2-storey and attic extension parallel to front range. The interior has been altered; upstairs rear room has hand painted flowers decorating the window shutters.

MHG33797 NC 7139 6230 Clachan

An area of flat thin flagstones appear to be eroding out of a sand dune at this location.

MHG10761 NC 7142 6225 Farr Stone
SM1889

This Pictish cross-slab is located in the Strathnaver Museum graveyard. It is described as: a blue schistose slate, 7ft 6ins high, 2ft wide and 9ins thick, sculptured in relief on one face only. The main element is a ringed cross with 'arm-pits' and a central boss, springing from a semi-circular base within which are two intertwined birds. There are also panels of key-pattern and interlacing infill. Possibly Pictish in date (300 AD to 900 AD).

The record also states that the "graveyard of the former parish church stands on the site of its predecessor, mentioned 1223-1245."

MHG54228**NC 7179 6234****Human Remains, Farr, Bettyhill**

Human remains were discovered in 2010 eroding from a sand dune approximately 1.75km to the east of the Site. The record description is:

“In 2010 local children discovered a single articulated inhumation eroding from sand dunes overlooking Farr Bay. Police were called to the scene and removed the exposed sections of bone, roughly equating to the left-hand side of the body and including the skull, for further testing and analysis. It was established that the bones were not recent and the police expressed no further interest. It is possible that the remains date to the last two or three hundred years and that they may be the remains of a victim of drowning, or possibly a suicide, but there is no substantive evidence for either of these interpretations. It is thought unlikely that the bones are of considerable antiquity. A site visit was conducted by HCAU to assess the condition of the remaining human remains, and to ensure that this was a single, rather than multiple, inhumation. Long bones were noted projecting from the dune edge and, following earlier disturbances, a number of now largely disarticulated remains including ribs, vertebrae, possible skull fragments and several teeth were visible on the dune surface from where the left-hand side of the body was removed; no artefactual evidence was identified and a survey of surrounding dunes revealed no evidence for further burials. In consultation with Historic Scotland it was concluded that there is no evidence that the burial site retains any archaeological information that might add to our understanding of the circumstances of burial, of the burying society or of the individual who was buried and the exposed in situ remains were re-covered with dune material. The site will be monitored.”

“The human remains were taken from Inverness Museum by GUARD for analysis. The post-excavation report indicated that the human remains from this site, and those retrieved the following year from closeby (MHG55585), were from the same individual, probably a male individual who had reached at least adolescence/early adulthood at death. If they are from the same individual it is difficult to account for the slightly different locations.”

MHG55585**NC 7180 6234****Human Remains, Farr, Bettyhill**

Human remains were discovered in 2011 eroding from a sand dune approximately 1.75km to the east of the Site. The record description is:

“GUARD Archaeology recovered the partial inhumation...the disarticulated remains had been buried in a sand dune that had collapsed due to burrowing and wind erosion. The incomplete skeletal remains recovered appear to represent a single inhumation, although no archaeological contexts associated with the burial could be discerned. No artefacts were recovered and it is not possible to date either of the burials.”

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any sub-surface archaeological remains within the development area and, should significant archaeological deposits be discovered, to prepare a mitigation strategy compliant with Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011).
- 4.2 The objective of the photographic survey was to create a ‘preservation by record’ of the buildings and structures on site prior to any changes through photographs to include within the

National Record for the Historic Environment (NHRE) and the Historic Environment Record (HER).

4.3 The aims of the archaeological works were:

- i. To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- ii. To remove by hand any overburden in order to expose the archaeological deposits.
- iii. To excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
- iv. To sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating
- v. To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development.
- vi. To make recommendations for post-excavation work

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Archaeological Evaluation

5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out as per the methodology specified in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Usher 2020). All groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist who directed excavation of trenches over the Site. The archaeologist directed digging by a mechanical excavator fitted with a straight-edged bucket in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains with the development area. All work was carried out in accordance with the ClfA *Code of Conduct* (2019).

5.1.2 Features and deposits of archaeological significance were cleaned and evaluated by hand to establish the nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. All significant archaeological features were sampled, in the event post-excavation analysis is deemed necessary. The location of trenches was recorded by offset measurement from known points. The archaeological monitoring was recorded using high resolution digital photography to record the process as well as any archaeological features or finds of interest.

5.2 Photographic Survey

5.2.1 A basic photographic survey was carried out of both the exterior and interior of the buildings. A running register of photographs was made on site and has been included as an appendix to the report.

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 Archaeological Evaluation

6.1.1 Five trenches (T1 – T5) were excavated on the Site (**Plate 1**). Evaluation commenced with excavation of a linear trench (T5) around 10m long E-W, to assess the footprint of the new building site. Stripping of the turf and topsoil initially revealed what appeared to be a clean sand horizon. This was further investigated to a depth of 1.1m at the west end (T1), to reveal a deep sequence of archaeological layers interspersed with wind-blown sand layers. T2 and T3 were extended from T1 to expose the sequence of deposits running N-S across the Site and T4 investigated the depth of deposits along the northern end of the Site. Full details of the evaluation data registers are shown in **Appendices 3 – 7**.

6.1.2 T1 revealed a deep sequence of archaeological ‘midden’ layers (001) – (007) interspersed with probable wind-blown layers, which were identified in section up to 1.1m deep (**Figure 9; Plate 2**). The trench was extended and stepped to evaluate the individual layers at different depths. Below the turf/topsoil (001), a thin, mostly sterile sand layer (002) overlay a deep, homogenous silty sand layer (003), 0.27m deep, which contained small shell fragments and pieces of animal bone with small charcoal flecks throughout. Animal bone and large slag fragments (SF02) (**Plate 9**) were recovered from (003). Below this, another sterile sand layer (004) covered (005), a homogenous silty sand up to 0.2m deep with charcoal, shell and animal bone fragments. Below this a final sterile sand layer (006) overlay (007) in the base of the trench. Context (007), although not fully excavated, comprised a dark sandy loam with charcoal, shell and animal bone fragments throughout. A large boulder was also uncovered within (007). During excavation, a possible iron knife blade (SF04) (**Plate 10**) was found at this depth near a partially exposed feature [008] within deposit (007). Pit [008] was revealed in the trench section in the base of T1 (**Plate 3**) and contained a dark sandy soil (009) with frequent charcoal fragments, fire-cracked stone and animal bone fragments. A few small fragments of thin-walled, coarse ceramic (SF05) were also recovered from (009). The pit was interpreted as a possible hearth or fire-pit, but was not fully exposed.

6.1.3 T2 revealed a similar sequence of archaeological ‘midden’ layers (010) – (014) (**Figure 10**), although only exposed to a second deep midden layer (**Plate 4**). As in T1 and T3, the turf/topsoil layer (010) overlay a thin wind blown sand (011). Below this (012) consisted of a homogenous silty sand up to 0.3m deep with charcoal flecks and small shell fragments throughout it – probably the same as (003) in T1 and (019) in T3. Another sterile thin sand layer (013) below this overlay (014), a deep, reddish-brown silty sand layer with charcoal flecks throughout it and containing some small cobbles, shell fragments and animal bone. Although it was not fully excavated, at least two features were identified within this horizon (**Plate 5**) and a possible worked stone artefact (SF07) (**Plate 11**) and slag fragments (SF06) were recovered from it. One of the features, pit [016], was evaluated – as shown in the W-facing trench section (**Plate 6**). It contained a mottled orange clay and blackened silt (015) with fire-cracked stone and frequent charcoal fragments. A small possible iron object (SF01) (**Plate 12**) was found within the fill (015) and the pit was interpreted as a possible fire-pit or hearth, although not fully exposed. Another deposit similar in appearance to (015) was uncovered to the north of [016] and may represent the location of another feature, which was not excavated.

6.1.4 T3 revealed essentially the same sequence of archaeological ‘midden’ layers (**Figure 11**) as T2, although the intermediate wind-blown sand horizon was not as clear (**Plate 7**). Below the

turf/topsoil (017) was a thin wind-blown sand (018). Below this (019) consisted of a silty sand up to 0.3m deep with charcoal flecks and small shell fragments throughout it. Although it is likely the same layer as (003) in T1 and (012) in T2, the layer was less homogenous and there may have been a thin wind-blown horizon within it. Another sterile thin sand layer (021) below this overlay (022), another deep midden layer comprising a brown silty sand layer with charcoal flecks throughout it and containing some animal bone and slag fragments (SF03). It was not fully excavated to the base of the trench, but is probably the same layer as (014) in T2.

6.1.5 T4 was stepped in several places in order to excavate a slot to identify the base of the sequence of deposits along the uphill/deeper side of the Site. At the base of the full sequence (same as the layers revealed in T1-T3), more than 1.1m deep below the turf, there was a dark sandy loam (020) measuring up to 0.26m deep (**Plate 8**). Probably the same horizon as (007) in T1, (020) contained some animal bone, and charcoal/shell fragments. It overlay a sterile sand over a dark grey-red compact sandy gravel (023) with small stones – the natural subsoil (**Figure 12**).

6.1.6 Only the turf/topsoil was stripped over the full extent of T5, which was not further excavated to the base of the archaeological sequence.

6.2 Photographic Survey

6.2.1 A rapid photographic survey of the museum building exterior, interior and surrounding landscape was undertaken in advance of the works, which will consist mostly of internal refurbishment to the museum and minor external finishing. All of the images from the survey are shown and described in Appendix 2.

6.2.2 It is worth noting, as shown in **Plate 16**, a recumbent grave slab, located directly next to the museum entrance in the east gable end of the building. This slab had been re-sited in this location next to a different burial. This is evidenced by the fact that the slab sits above the turf in front of an upright grave slab representing a different burial. As a result, the recumbent slab will require reinstatement in another location in the graveyard during the development works.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The discovery of a well-stratified archaeological sequence of at least two deep midden layers overlying an earlier soil horizon found over 1m below the turf has indicated the presence of significant archaeological remains on the site. Rapid investigations of the layers have found evidence for artefactual and ecofactual material from both midden layers and the early soil layer, along with features present in two of these horizons. The sequence indicates there is considerable time depth to the site – though the mobile nature of the sand layers within this wind-blown environment would have facilitated easy natural movement of material.

7.2 Although the site formation processes are not understood, the homogenous nature of the 'midden' layers may indicate that material was spread across the area – although this does not appear to have been result of modern farm techniques. In fact, the stratigraphic sequence seems similar to some of the characteristics of the Orkney 'farm mounds', man-made mounds of stratified and homogenous midden layers with charcoal flecks, shell and animal bone, occasionally containing structural remains and often dating to the Iron Age, Norse and

medieval periods (but also with evidence as early as the Neolithic period). Situated on the northern coast of Scotland, the Site is not so distant from Orkney and one possibility could be that this site represents the truncated remains of a similarly mounded site. However, there are many other possibilities, not the least of which is that the Site has been shown to have ecclesiastical origins documented on mapping at least into the 16th century, with early medieval ecclesiastical evidence also indicated by the presence of the Farr Stone. Furthermore, the surrounding landscape contains a plethora of archaeological evidence, to include prehistoric burials and a Bronze Age hoard findspot in close proximity to the Site. The situation of the Site, at the back of a dune environment by Farr Beach, a sandy bay, and the Clachan Burn, a freshwater source, places it in an ideal location for early and continued settlement.

- 7.3 Further archaeological work is recommended on the Site in advance of development. In order to propose a methodology for this, an initial assessment of the samples and finds retrieved during the evaluation is recommended. This will assist characterisation of the ecofacts and artefacts and would be assisted by initial radiocarbon dating to elucidate the time periods represented.
- 7.4 It is recommended that proposals for a further methodology are made after discussions with the client and design team in order to understand the overall impact on the site. It is possible that further archaeological methodology could include hand excavation through gridded sampling of the overlying midden layers, followed by controlled machine stripping to reveal archaeological features in plan and to allow for hand excavation of such areas. Based on the results, it is expected that extensive archaeological features may be present in the basal horizon (007)/(020) as well as potential features above this within the horizons of (005)/(014)/(019).
- 7.5 Recommendations for assessment of the samples/finds and any future archaeological investigation will be made after discussions with the Highland Council HET and the client and only undertaken after approval of a methodology for both.



Figure 9: E-facing section of Trench 1, showing sequence of archaeological layers



Figure 10: W-facing section of Trench 2 showing sequence of layers



Figure 11: E-facing section of Trench 3, showing the sequence of layers



Figure 12: N-facing Trench 4 section showing layers overlying (020) at base of the sequence with the natural subsoil exposed in base of slot

8.0 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2021. *Geology of Britain*. Accessed on 27th January 2021 at <https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Canmore 2021. National Record of the Historic Environment. Accessed on 20th January 2021 at: <http://canmore.org.uk>

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014. *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Evaluation*. Reading: CIfA.

Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER) 2021. Accessed on 27th January 2021 at <https://her.highland.gov.uk/>

Highland Council 2012. *Standards for Archaeological Work*.

National Library of Scotland 2021. Accessed on 20th January 2021 at: <https://maps.nls.uk>

Scottish Government 2011. *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology*.

Scottish Government 2014. *Scottish Planning Policy*.

Usher, R 2020. *Strathnaver Museum, Farr Archaeological Evaluation & Historic Building Recording Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished AOC Archaeology report.

Appendix 1 Evaluation Plates



Plate 1: View SE over the development area, showing the location of trenches, with T4 to left



Plate 2: Post-ex of T1, showing sequence of layers with E- and S-facing sections of T1



Plate 3: W-facing section of the W end of T1 showing [009] in section at the base of the section



Plate 4: E-facing section of T2, with the drawhoe for scale



Plate 5: Looking N over T2, showing the location of [016], with another possible feature in back



Plate 6: W-facing section of [016] at the base of the trench section



Plate 7: E-facing section of T3, showing the sequence of layers



Plate 8: E end of T4, showing slot excavated through lowest archaeological horizon (020)



Plate 9: SF02, iron slag fragments from (003)



Plate 10: SF04, possible iron knife blade from (007)



Plate 11: SF07, shaped stone (?) from (014)



Plate 12: SF01, possible iron pin fragment from [016]

Appendix 2 Photographic Survey Plates



Plate 13: Location of Strathnaver Museum



Plate 14: Panorama of location of Strathnaver Museum and graveyard, taken from the north



Plate 15: E gable end of Strathnaver Museum



Plate 16: Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building



Plate 17: S wall of the Strathnaver Museum



Plate 18: W gable wall of Strathnaver Museum



Plate 19: "Farr stone" and grave markers near the west side of the museum



Plate 20: N wall of the Strathnaver Museum



Plate 21: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)



Plate 22: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)



Plate 23: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)



Plate 24: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)



Plate 25: Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)



Plate 26: First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams



Plate 27: First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams



Plate 28: First floor of the W end of the museum



Plate 29: First floor of the W end of the museum

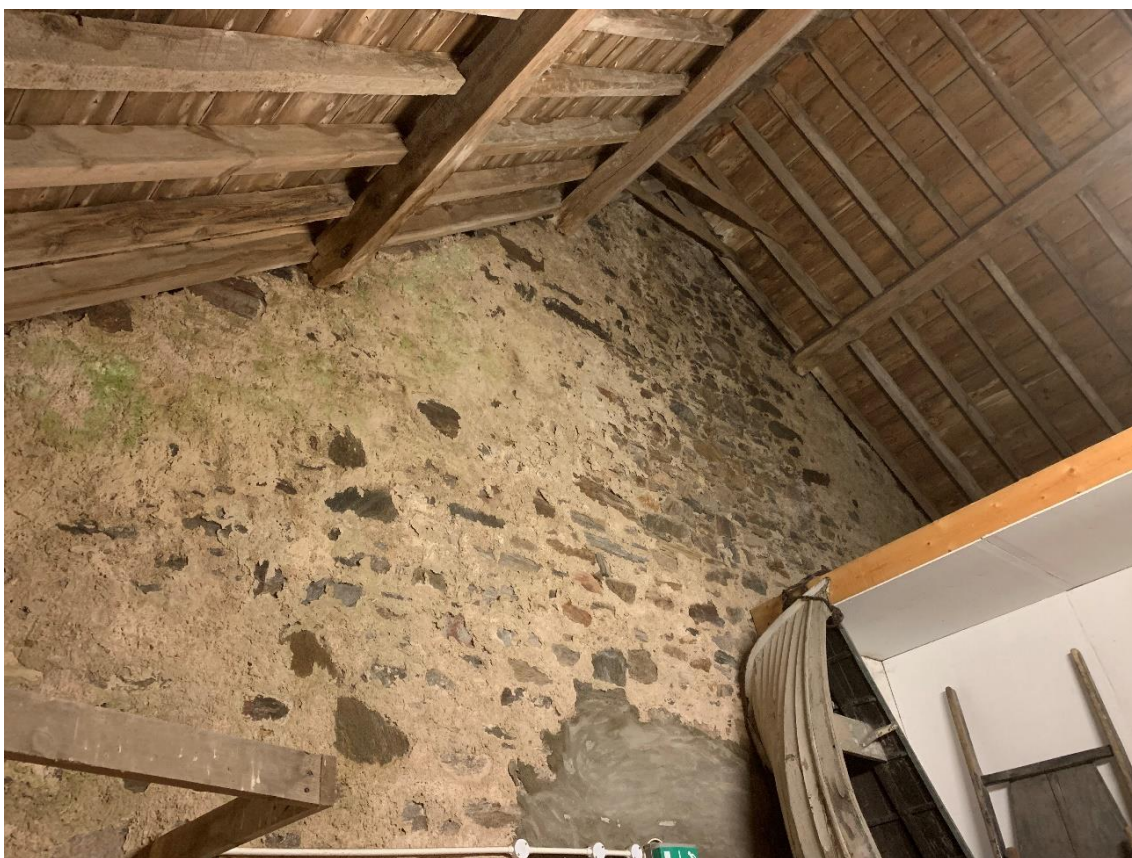


Plate 30: First floor of the E end of the museum, roof beams and wall face

Appendix 3 Photo Register

Photo No.	Trench No.	Context No.	Description	Facing	Date
1	T1, T5	-	View over T5 with T1 in front before extending T1	E	14/01/2021
2	T1, T5	-	View over T5 with T1 in front before extending T1, location	E	14/01/2021
3	T4	020	E end of T4 showing surface of (020) (appears as linear marks) showing through wind blow layer in base of trench	E	14/01/2021
4	T4	020	E end of T4 showing surface of (020) (appears as linear marks) showing through wind blow layer in base of trench	-	14/01/2021
5	T4	020	E end of T4, partial slot excavated through (020) in base of trench	E	14/01/2021
6	T4	020	E end of T4, partial slot excavated through (020) in base of trench	E	14/01/2021
7	T4	020	E end of T4, post-ex of slot through (020) on to clean sand	E	14/01/2021
8	T4	020	E end of T4, post-ex of slot through (020) on to clean sand	E	14/01/2021
9	T4	-	Location of slot at E end of T4	E	14/01/2021
10	T4	-	Location of second slot (through (020) located to W of the slot shown in photos (3-9), to expose top of natural subsoil	E	14/01/2021
11	T4	020	N-facing trench section showing layers overlying (020) at base of the sequence with the natural subsoil exposed in base of slot	S	14/01/2021
12	T4	020	N-facing trench section showing layers overlying (020) at base of the sequence with the natural subsoil exposed in base of slot	S	14/01/2021
13	T4	023	Base of trench showing subsoil exposed at far E end of T4	S	14/01/2021
14	T2	016	Location of [016], before excavation, in T2	N	14/01/2021
15	T2	016	Location of [016], before excavation, in T2	NW	14/01/2021
16	T2	016	Location of [016], before excavation, in T2	NW	14/01/2021
17	T2	-	Sequence of layers in T2, E-facing section of trench	SE	14/01/2021
18	T2	-	Sequence of layers in T2, E-facing section of trench	ESE	14/01/2021
19	T2	-	Sequence of layers in T2 at the S end of the trench, N-facing section of trench	S	14/01/2021
20	T2	016	Post-excavation of [016], showing in trench section (centre right)	N	14/01/2021
21	T2	016	W-facing section of [016] in the W-facing trench section	E	14/01/2021
22	T1	-	E-facing section of T1, showing the sequence of layers	W	14/01/2021
23	T1	-	E-facing section of T1, showing the sequence of layers	W	14/01/2021
24	T1	-	Post-ex of T1, showing sequence of layers and E-facing section of T1 in back	NW	14/01/2021
25	T1	008	S-facing section of T1, showing sequence of archaeological layers; location of [008] in centre at base of drawhoe	N	14/01/2021

Photo No.	Trench No.	Context No.	Description	Facing	Date
26	T1	008	S-facing section of T1, showing sequence of archaeological layers; location of [008] in centre at base of drawhoe	NNE	14/01/2021
27	T1	008	W-facing section of T1, with [008] in base of trench	E	14/01/2021
28	T3	-	E-facing section of T3, showing the sequence of layers	W	14/01/2021
29	T3	-	E-facing section of T3, showing the sequence of layers, location	W	14/01/2021
30	-	-	Location of trenches	ESE	14/01/2021
31	T4	-	Post-ex of T4	E	14/01/2021
32	-	-	Location of trenches	ENE	14/01/2021
33	-	-	Location of Strathnaver Museum	SW	14/01/2021
34	-	-	E side of Strathnaver Museum, location shot	S	14/01/2021
35	-	-	Panorama of location of Strathnaver Museum and graveyard, taken from the north	SSW	14/01/2021
36	-	-	E gable end of Strathnaver Museum	W	14/01/2021
37	-	-	E gable end of Strathnaver Museum	W	14/01/2021
38	-	-	Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building	SW	14/01/2021
39	-	-	Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building	E	14/01/2021
40	-	-	Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building	NW	14/01/2021
41	-	-	Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building	E	14/01/2021
42	-	-	Displaced grave slab against the E gable of the museum building	E	14/01/2021
43	-	-	S wall of the Strathnaver Museum, showing grave slabs close to the wall	W	14/01/2021
44	-	-	S wall of the Strathnaver Museum	N	14/01/2021
45	-	-	S wall of the Strathnaver Museum, showing grave slabs close to the wall	N	14/01/2021
46	-	-	W gable wall of Strathnaver Museum	E	14/01/2021
47	-	-	W gable wall of Strathnaver Museum	E	14/01/2021
48	-	-	"Farr stone" and grave markers near the west side of the museum	ENE	14/01/2021
49	-	-	N wall of the Strathnaver Museum	S	14/01/2021
50	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)	WSW	14/01/2021
51	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)	SW	14/01/2021
52	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)	E	14/01/2021
53	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)	S	14/01/2021
54	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (central space)	SE	14/01/2021

Photo No.	Trench No.	Context No.	Description	Facing	Date
55	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)	W	14/01/2021
56	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)	S	14/01/2021
57	-	-	Interior shot of the ground floor of the museum (W room)	N	14/01/2021
58	-	-	First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams	S	14/01/2021
59	-	-	First floor of the W end of the museum, showing roof beams	E	14/01/2021
60	-	-	First floor of the W end of the museum	SE	14/01/2021
61	-	-	First floor of the W end of the museum	NNE	14/01/2021
62	-	-	Slabs on ground floor of museum	-	14/01/2021
63	-	-	First floor of the E end of the museum	S	14/01/2021
64	-	-	First floor of the E end of the museum, roof beams and wall face	ESE	14/01/2021
65	-	-	Panorama of the location of the Strathnaver Museum taken from dunes above Farr Beach	S	14/01/2021
66	-	-	Panorama of the location of the Strathnaver Museum taken from dunes above Farr Beach	S	14/01/2021
67	-	-	View of Farr Beach from N side of site	NW	14/01/2021

Appendix 4 Trench Register

Trench No.	Description
1	At the west end of T5, stepped to different levels to investigate the midden layers, shows a sequence of 3 midden layers to the base of the trench, where feature [008] a possible hearth or fire-pit was partially exposed; measures 2.2m N-S by 3.5m E-W and excavated to c1.1m deep
2	Linear trench running from the E end of T1 to T4 at its N end; measures 7.9m long N-S; exposed a sequence of 2 midden layers, with feature [016] in the lowest exposed layer (014) at the centre of the trench; evidence for another feature to the north side of [016], which was not excavated
3	Small trench measuring 1.8m N-S, exposed a sequence of 3 midden layers, with possible iron slag in the basal layer (which was not fully exposed to its depth)
4	Linear trench measuring 6.5m E-W and excavated to a depth of 1.1m to expose lowest archaeological deposit (020), a deep midden layer, which overlay the natural subsoil at a depth of c.1.3m; sequence of deposits overlying (020) are similar to T1 sequence
5	Linear trench aligned E-W excavated of turf/topsoil only to reveal first wind blow layer or top of first midden layer

Appendix 5 Context Register

Context No.	Trench No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	T1	Deposit	Turf/topsoil	Turf
002	T1	Deposit	Pale brown sand, 0.1m deep	Wind blow sand
003	T1	Deposit	Homogenous mid-dark grey-brown silty sand with charcoal flecks/small fragments and few small shell fragments and some animal bone fragments, 0.27m deep	Midden layer
004	T1	Deposit	Mixed light-mid brown silty sand, mostly homogenous deposit, 0.04 deep	Wind blow sand
005	T1	Deposit	Mid-dark brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks/ small fragments and occasional small shell fragments and animal bone fragments, 0.18m deep	Midden layer
006	T1	Deposit	Pale brown-yellow sand, mostly sterile with areas of pale white sand	Wind blow sand
007	T1	Deposit	Dark brown-grey sandy loam with frequent charcoal flecks and fragments, animal bone and shell fragments	Midden layer
008	T1	Cut	Cut for pit, probably a hearth/fire-pit, partially exposed in base of Trench 1	Hearth or fire-pit?
009	T1	Fill	Dark brown sandy soil with fire-cracked stone, animal bone, shell, charcoal fragments	Fill of [008]
010	T2	Deposit	Turf/topsoil	Turf
011	T2	Deposit	Light-mid brown sand, mostly sterile, 0.08m deep	Wind blow sand
012	T2	Deposit	Mid grey-brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks and small shell fragments throughout, homogenous deposit, 0.29m deep	Midden layer
013	T2	Deposit	Thin pale brown-grey sand, 0.08m deep	Wind blow sand
014	T2	Deposit	Mid orange-brown silty sand with charcoal flecks and few small cobbles and animal bone and shell fragments, not fully exposed to the base of the deposit	Midden layer
015	T2	Fill	Mottled orange clay, blackened silt with fire-cracked stone and frequent charcoal fragments and small iron object SF01	Fill of [016]
016	T2	Cut	Small pit 0.65m by 0.3m as exposed in trench edge, 0.15m deep, within (014)	Hearth or fire-pit?
017	T3	Deposit	Turf/topsoil	Turf
018	T3	Deposit	Pale white-brown sand, 0.09m deep	Wind blow sand
019	T3	Deposit	Mid-dark brown-grey silty sand with charcoal flecks and animal bone and shell fragments, 0.3m deep, probably has thin wind blow layer within	Midden layer
020	T4	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam with some animal bone fragments and occasional charcoal and shell fragments; at the base of the sequence in Trench 4, starts at a depth of 1.1m below the turf and at least 0.26m deep	Midden layer in base of T4 - same as (007)?

Context No.	Trench No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
021	T3	Deposit	Pale white-cream sand, 0.05m deep	Wind blow sand
022	T3	Deposit	Mid brown silty sand with few charcoal fragments and animal bone, iron slag - in base of trench, not fully exposed	Midden layer, same as (014)
023	T4	Deposit	Dark, grey-reddened compact sandy gravel with 15% small stones	Natural subsoil as exposed in base of T4

Appendix 6 Sample Register

Sample No.	Description	Quantity
005	2 bags, contains charcoal, animal bone and shell fragments	4L
007	1 bag of 8-10 animal bone fragments	-
009	2 bags, contains charcoal, animal bone and shell fragments	4L
015	2 bags, contains charcoal, animal bone and shell fragments	4L
020	1 bag, contains 8-10 animal bone fragments	-
020	2 bags, contains charcoal, animal bone and shell fragments	4L

Appendix 7 Finds Register

Find No.	Context No.	Description
01	015	Small thin iron object - pin fragment?
02	003	2 x large iron (?) slag lumps
03	022	1 x large iron (?) slag lump
04	007	1 x fragment of an Fe object - knife blade?
05	009	3 x small ceramic sherds
06	014	4 x iron (?) slag lumps
07	014	Possible shaped/worked stone (schist) - stone disc?
08	Unstrat	Tin bottle from overburden



AOC Archaeology Group The Old Estate Office Rosehaugh Estate Avoch Ross-shire IV8 9RF
 | **tel:** 01463 819 841 | **mob:** 07972 259 255 | **e-mail:** inverness@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com