



*Highland Archaeology Services Ltd*

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## Land at Strathcarrick House, Heights of Inchvannie, Strathpeffer



Archaeological Watching Brief

## Data Structure Report & Recommendations

**Craig Road, Dingwall, Highland. IV15 9LE**

**Tel: 01349 888182 Mobile: 07818 035845** Email: [info@hi-arch.co.uk](mailto:info@hi-arch.co.uk) Web: [www.hi-arch.co.uk](http://www.hi-arch.co.uk)

Registered in Scotland no. 262144 Registered Office: Burnfield, 7 Kinbechie, Culbokie, IV7 8LS

VAT No. GB 838 7358 80



# Land at Strathcarrick House, Heights of Inchvannie, Strathpeffer

## Archaeological Watching Brief

<b>HAS Report No.</b>	STC20-005
<b>Site Code</b>	STC20
<b>Client</b>	Karen Armour
<b>Planning Reference</b>	20/02426/FUL
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<b>Author(s)</b>	Andrew Young MCIfA
<b>Approved by</b>	Lachlan McKeggie

### Summary

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of planning consent during preliminary groundworks for the construction of four new Glamping Pods and associated access and services on land at Strathcarrick House, Heights of Inchvannie near Strathpeffer.*

*No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were revealed during the course of the development ground works and no further archaeological mitigation is recommended.*

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## Legislation and Policy

The common principles underlying international conventions, national legislation and local authority planning policies are that cultural heritage assets should be identified in advance of development and safeguarded where practicable; if disturbance is unavoidable appropriate recording of features and recovery of portable artefacts should take place. These have been set out in international and European Union agreements, and UK and Scottish legislation, as well as national and local planning policies<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of relevant international, EU, UK and Scottish legislation and policies is available from the HAS office on request.

Professional standards maintained throughout the present project adhered to the Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists<sup>2</sup>.

## Acknowledgements

This document was written by Andrew Young and approved by Lachlan McKeggie. The project was commissioned and funded by Karen Armour. Fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Young. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217. Historic mapping is courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

## Site Location

The study site is centred at Ordnance Survey grid reference NH 4963 6056 at The Heights of Inchvannie, a rural settlement in the Highlands located approximately 2.5 km to the NE of the village of Strathpeffer and 4.5 km to the NW of the town of Dingwall (Figures 1 to 4 below).



Figure 1 - General Site Location

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<sup>2</sup> Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA) Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation.



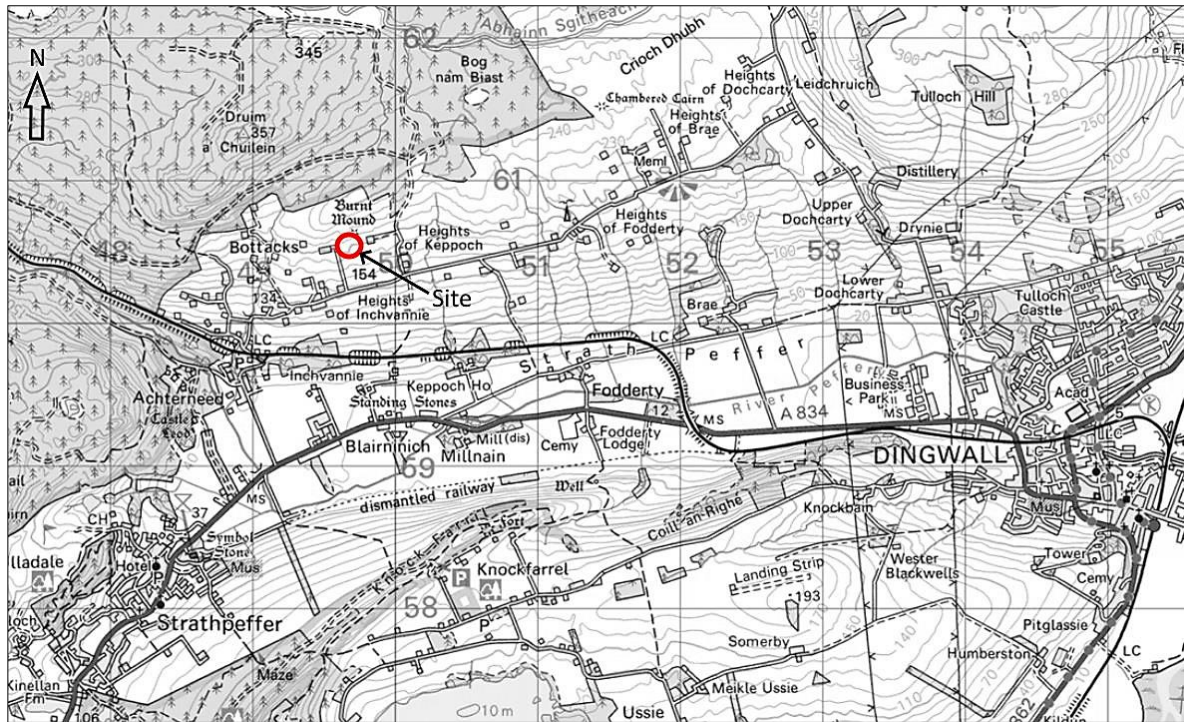


Figure 2 – The Study Area showing Site Location. Grid scale in km

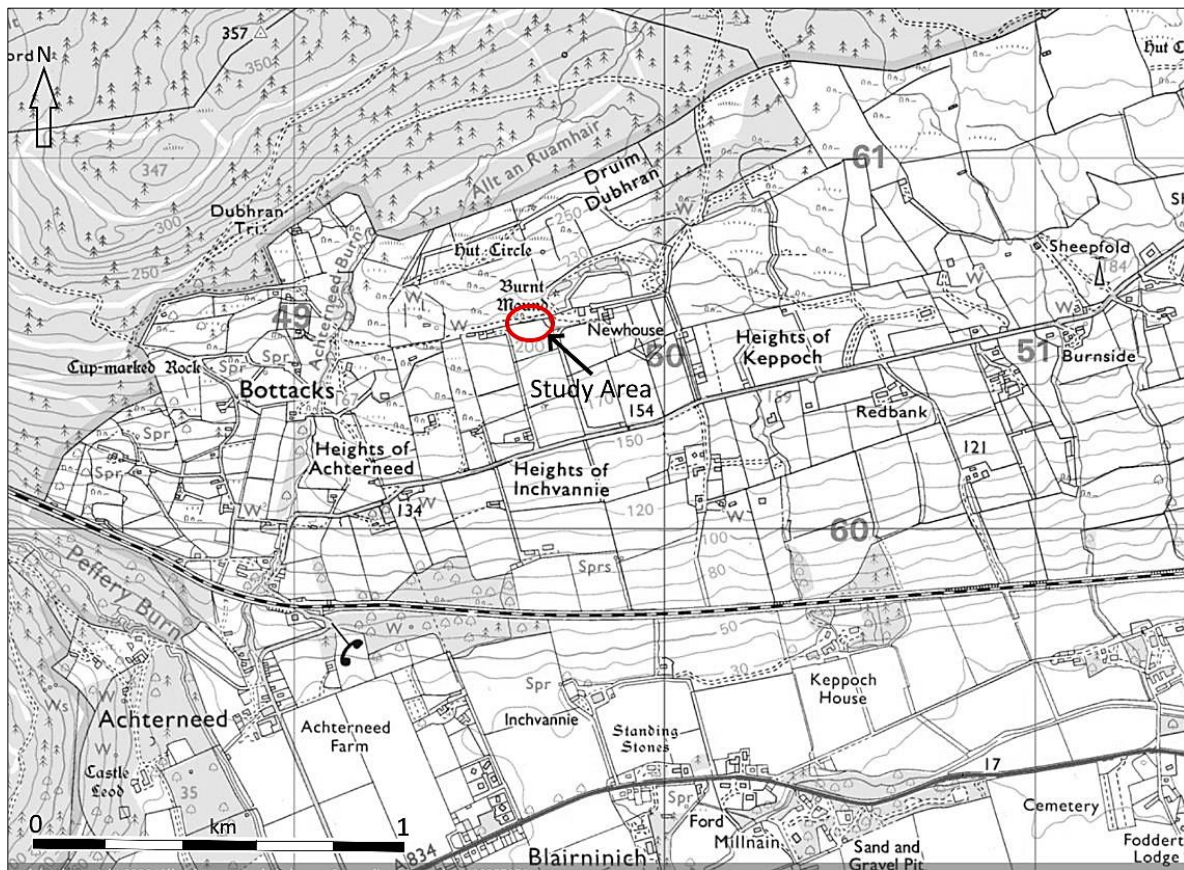


Figure 3 – Site Location. Scale shown.



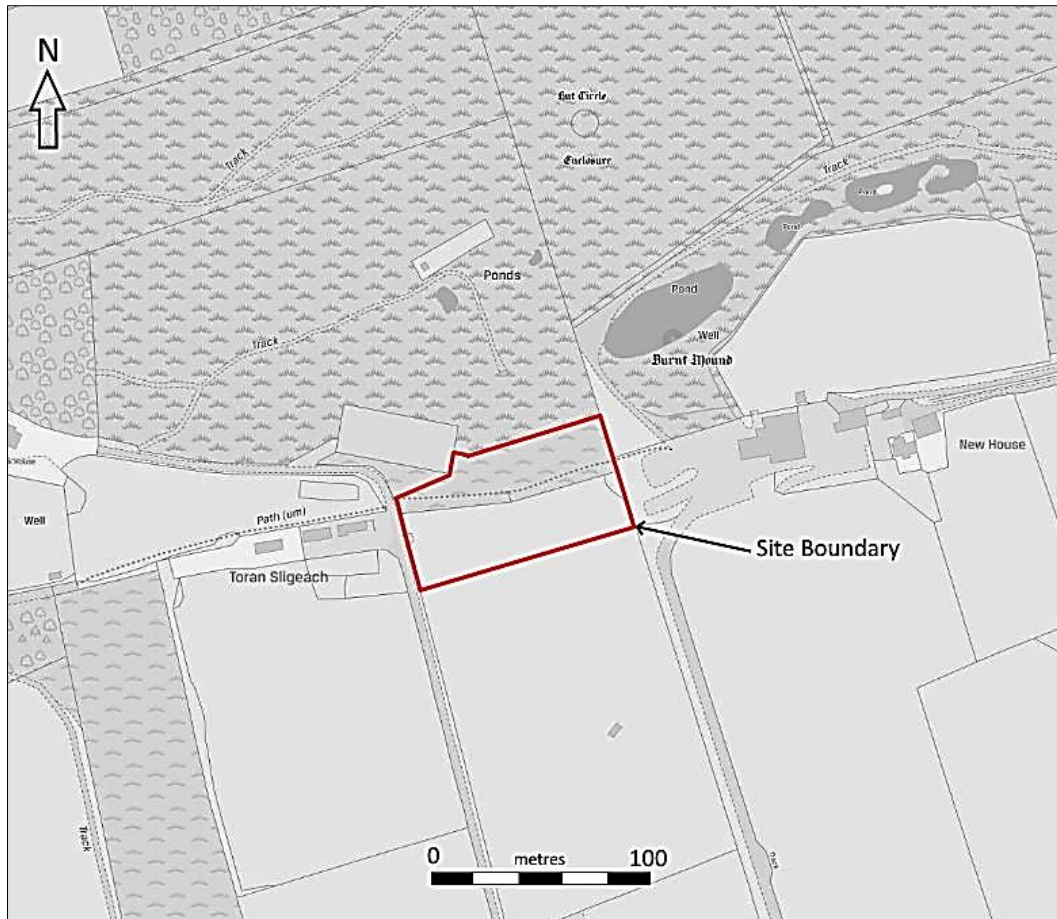


Figure 4 – The boundary of the Study Area. Scale shown

## Introduction

The proposed development at Strathcarrick House, Heights of Inchvannie, has received planning consent (20/02426/FUL) for the development of four new Glamping Pods plus associated structures, access and services, the latter including septic tank and SUDS. The consent included a Condition that requires all preliminary ground works to be monitored by means of an archaeological watching brief in order to identify and record all heritage assets revealed during the course of ground works.

The following report reviews the documentary evidence for the site and sets out the results of the watching brief fieldwork.

## Archaeological & Historical background (from the preliminary Desk-based Assessment)

### Scheduled Monuments

There are no recorded Scheduled Monuments either on or within 1km of the study site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is The Heights of Brae Chambered Cairn (SM2312), a prehistoric funerary monument located approximately 2km to the NE of the study area.

### Listed Buildings

There are no recorded Listed Buildings either on or within 1km of the study site.

## Historic Mapping

Readily available historic mapping showing the site was reviewed for the present WSI document. The earliest available map showing the site in any detail is the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1880 (**Error! Reference source not found.**), which depicts the study area straddling an area of open agricultural land and an area of rough ground to the north. An unnamed building and an adjacent well are located immediately to the west and a second building with a small yard, again unnamed, is depicted immediately alongside to the NE. Both these earlier buildings have gone by the publication of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1904 (**Error! Reference source not found.**) when the study area is again shown to straddle open agricultural land and rough ground.



Figure 5 - Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey of 1880 with approximate boundary of the study area indicated. Not to original Scale. Courtesy National Library of Scotland



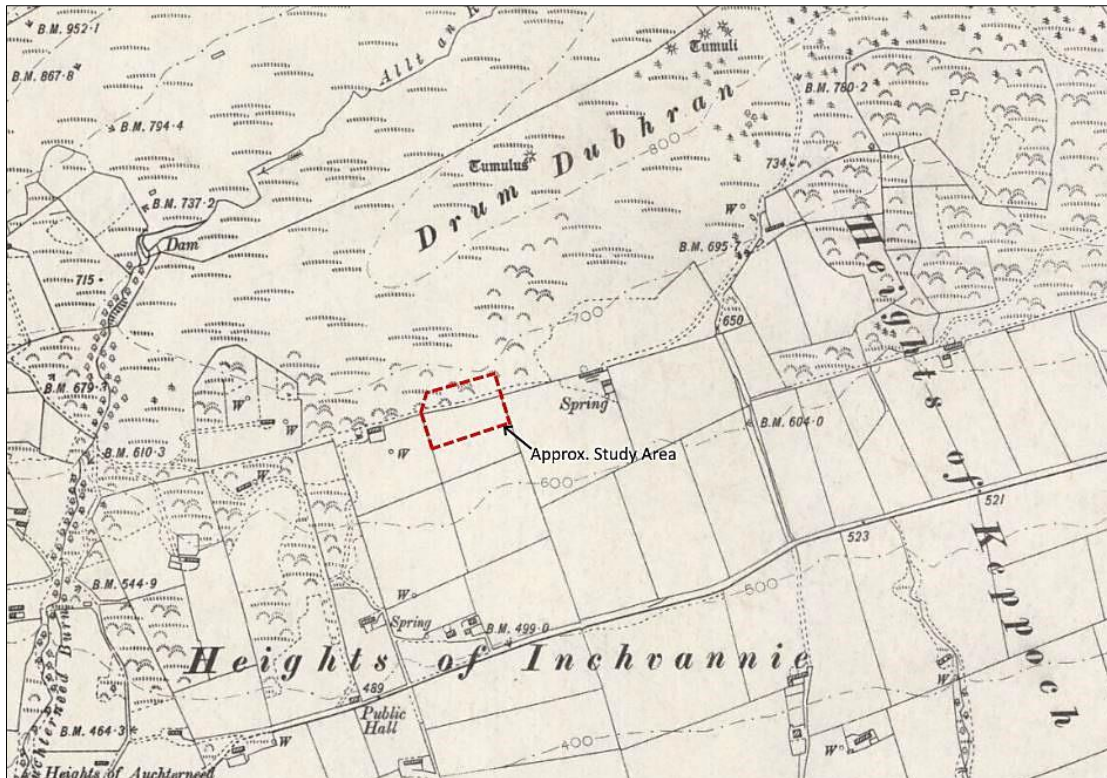


Figure 6 - Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey of 1904 with approximate location of the study area indicated. Not to original Scale. Courtesy National Library of Scotland

## Heritage Assets & Events

There is no record of any modern archaeological work having been undertaken either within or directly adjacent to the study area (see table below). A single HER entry (MHG54957) extends into the northern part of the study area.

Heritage assets and events recorded adjacent to or within 1km of the study area are shown on Figure 6 and listed below. The principal HER and Canmore entries relevant to the archaeological setting of the study area include the following:

- **MHG54957** – An area of extant ridge and furrow earthworks of suggested 16<sup>th</sup> century or later date that extend into the northern part of the study area.
- **MHG7774** – A prehistoric ‘Burnt Mound’, *Druim Dubhrain*, of probable prehistoric date located adjacent and to the E of the study area. Consisting of a U-shaped mound open towards the N.
- **MHG45437** – An extensive Cairnfield located just to the north of the study area that contains many stone cairns, some of which may reflect undated clearance cairns whilst others may represent burial cairns. None appear to have been investigated or dated.
- **MHG7776** – An extensive area just to the north of the study area containing the remains of at least eleven prehistoric round houses, which appear to be associated with the Cairnfield (above). None of the probable roundhouses appear to have been investigated or dated.



- **MHG52913** – ‘The Fairy Stone’ at Bottacks. A large cup-marked boulder of probable Bronze Age date located approximately 800 m to the W of the study area.
- **MHG24534** – Bottacks post medieval township. A post medieval settlement site located approximately 800 m to the W of the study area.
- **MHG49769** – Heights of Achterneed Chambered Cairn. A suggested prehistoric funerary cairn located approximately 500 m to the SW of the study area.
- **MHG24414** – Heights of Inchvannie farmstead. A post medieval settlement site located approximately 120 m to the W of the study area.
- **Canmore 313176** – Heights of Keppoch - Kenny Grants Croft. A post medieval farmstead site located approximately 450 m to the E of the study area.

On the basis of its archaeological setting alone (see Figure 7), the Desk-based assessment concluded that the study area had some low to moderate potential for the survival of significant buried archaeological deposits, features and finds.

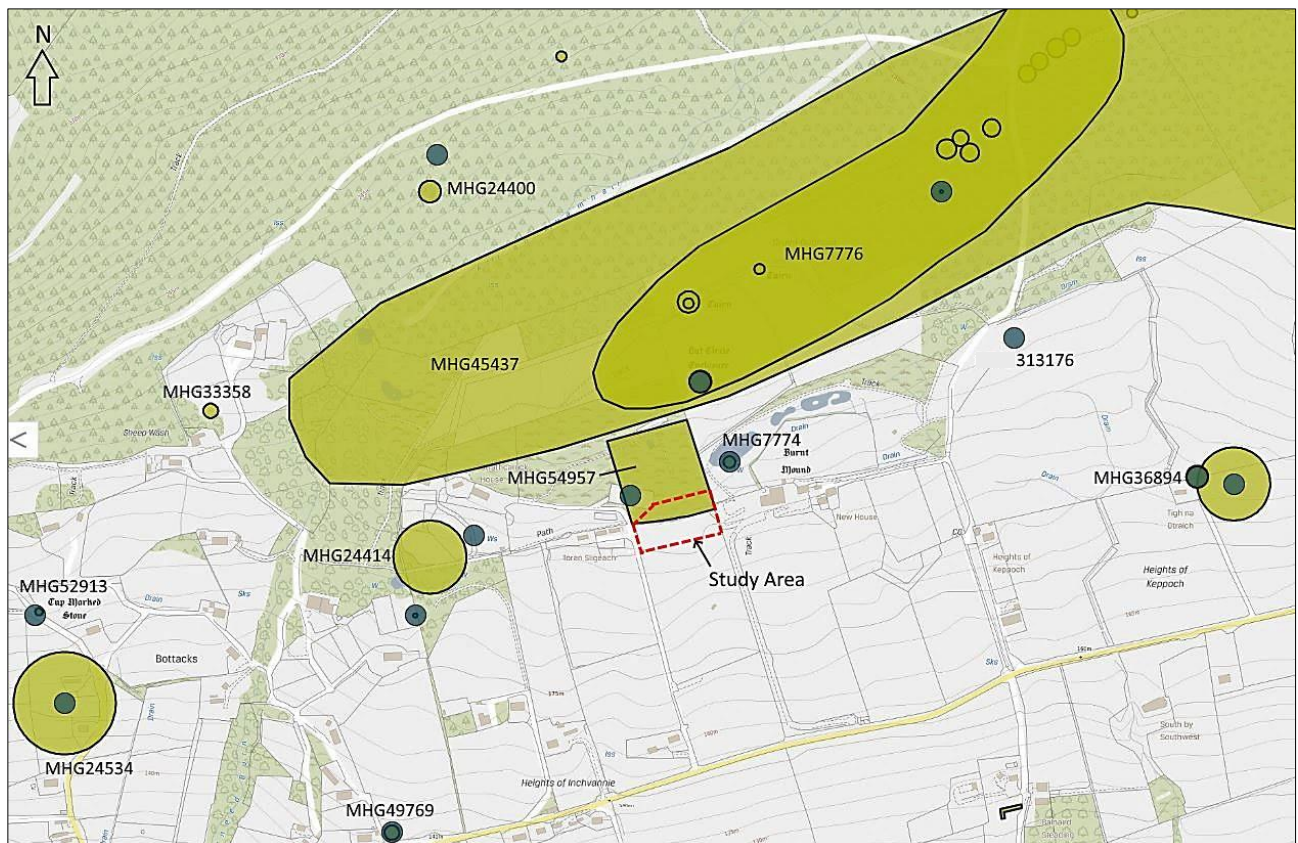


Figure 7 - Recorded Heritage Assets and Events within approximately 800m of the study site. Reproduced courtesy of Pastmap with HAS annotation.

## Statistical Accounts

Both the Old<sup>3</sup> (OSA) and New<sup>4</sup> (NSA) Statistical Accounts for the parish of Fodderty were reviewed for the present study.

### *Old Statistical Account (OSA) 1793*

The compiler of the OSA, the Rev. Donald Mackenzie, notes the presence of an old ‘fort’ at the summit of nearby Knockfarrel but does not refer either to the study area in particular or antiquities in the area generally.

### *New Statistical Account (NSA) 1845*

The compiler of the NSA, the Rev. John Noble, also notes the remains at Knockfarrel as well as the discovery of a series of prehistoric cist burials in the areas of Keppoch Lodge and Fodderty (Temple Croft). The entry notes that some of the stone cists contained ‘bones and ashes’ whilst others contained a pottery urn.

This account does not refer to the study site in particular.

## Fieldwork

### *Aims & Objectives*

The objectives of the Watching Brief are to:

- Identify and characterise all heritage assets revealed during the course of development ground works.
- Examine and establish the nature and extent of all features of potential archaeological significance affected by the proposed work, and to record these to professional standards, in line with current legislation and policy.
- Minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.

No archaeological excavation will be undertaken as part of this work beyond that necessary to achieve these objectives.

## Methodology

The methods adopted for the watching brief fieldwork were as follows:

1. All site excavations were carried out under controlled conditions and archaeological supervision. The archaeologist on site will observe excavations and check for possible archaeological evidence. Topsoil and other overburden will be carefully removed to reveal the interface with the subsoil, using a back acting digger fitted with a straight edged bucket to provide a clean surface for inspection.

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<sup>3</sup> Fodderty, County of Ross and Cromarty, OSA, Vol III. 1793. Rev. Donald Mackenzie

<sup>4</sup> Fodderty, County of Ross and Cromarty NSA. 1845. Rev. John Noble



2. Any features or artefacts found during the above work will be excavated archaeologically according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' published standards. Any evidence revealed will be examined and sample excavated. Discrete pits and other features will be half-sectioned; linear ditches will be sectioned at intervals to provide a 10% sample.
3. Where archaeology is confirmed a drawn and photographic record will be made. The camera locations and direction of all photographs taken will be plotted on a site plan. Where necessary, plans and scaled drawings of archaeological features will be made at 1:10 or 1:20 scale. Depths of excavations will be taken from the adjoining ground surface.
4. Palaeo-environmental sampling will be undertaken if initial results demonstrate a need for this.
5. Portable artefacts will be retained, conserved and recorded and declared as necessary for Scottish Treasure Trove. Where material is disclaimed, the client's consent will be sought to offer it to a suitable local museum for safe keeping.
6. Any human remains found will be immediately reported to the local Procurator Fiscal and will not be excavated as part of this work. They will then be dealt with in accordance with Historic Scotland's published guidance. Where the results demonstrate the presence of significant archaeology which cannot be adequately recorded or adequately conserved or reported within the scope of the work as set out here, further fieldwork or post-fieldwork analysis may be required, which will be the subject of separate negotiation. The Highland Council will be the final judge of significance and level of excavation and may insist that all identified features to be destroyed by the development are fully excavated. In the event of exceptional discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and /or the development, the client and the Planning Authority will be notified immediately and any finds or features will be left *in situ* until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them. Any arrangements for further works will be detailed in an addendum to this project design and method statement to be agreed between all parties.
7. If potential archaeology is identified it will be recorded to professional standards. The archaeologist will also search for historic artefacts in the excavated topsoil. Photographs of the site, all excavations, and any features found will be taken using a professional quality digital camera. The locations of any trial pits, features or finds will be recorded using a survey grade GPS unit.
8. All work will meet or exceed CIfA Standards and Guidance<sup>5</sup>. The company is a CIfA Registered Organisation.

### ***Description of Recorded Archaeology***

The preliminary ground works for the development were undertaken using both a 20 ton and a 5 ton slew-tracked machine equipped with both toothless and toothed buckets.

Excavations (see Figure 8) involved topsoil stripping of the corridor of a new access and services track and the excavation of the four Pod sites (Pods 1 to 4 below), all to the level of the undisturbed natural substrate. The following descriptions are set out in the order of excavation.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

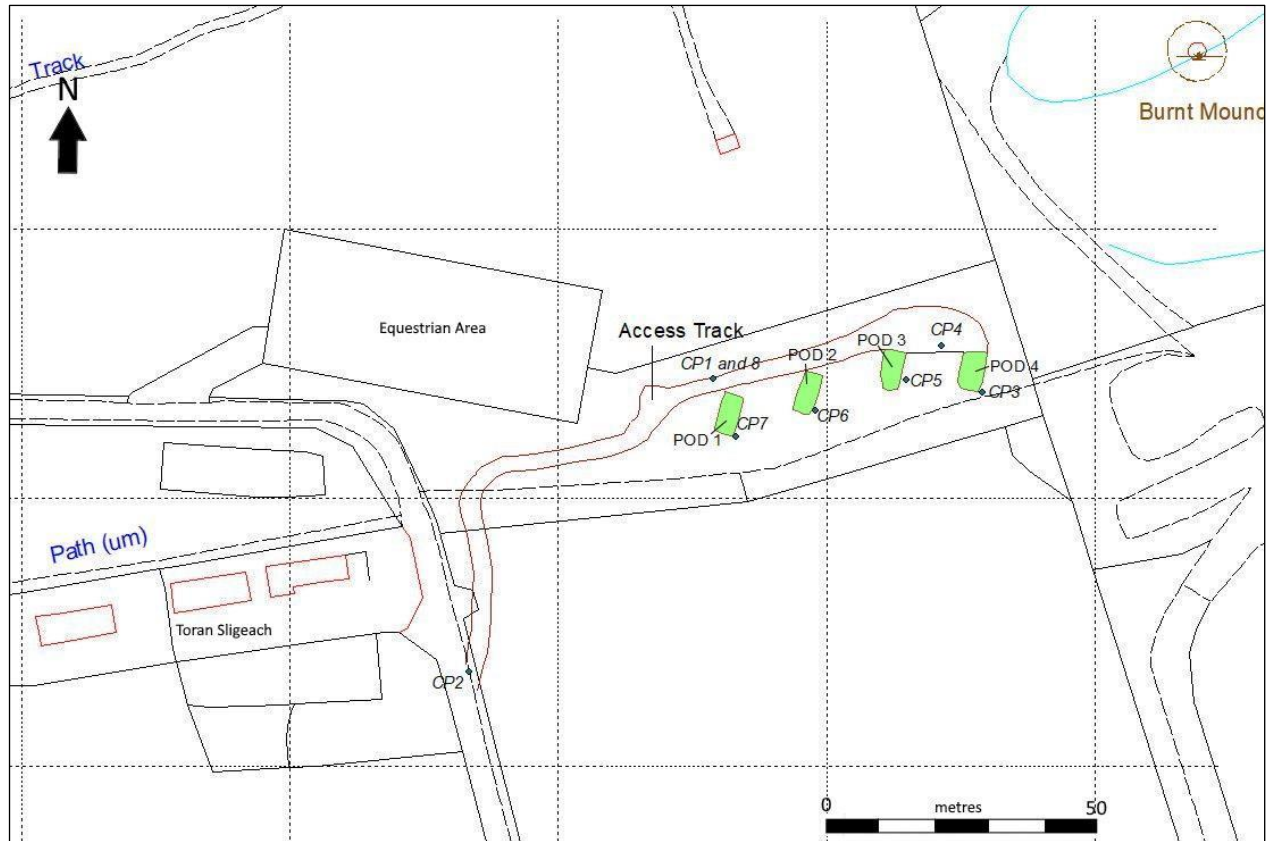


Figure 8 – Location of Watching Brief areas and Camera Points. Scale shown

#### Pod 4 site

The foundation for Pod 4 measured 8m x 4.5m and was excavated across a gentle slope to a maximum depth of 450mm. The cutting (Figures 8 and 9) revealed up to 300mm of dark brown stony silt clay (401) that directly overlay the undisturbed natural substrate of pale grey to pale brown gritty to stony silt clay (402). No significant archaeological deposits or finds were revealed in the cutting.

#### Pod 3 site

The foundation for Pod 3 measured 8m x 4m and was excavated across a gentle slope to a maximum depth of up to 1.2m (Figure 8).

The cutting (Figure 10) revealed up to 600mm of redeposited and waterlogged brown stony silt clay (301) that overlay up to 500mm of very dark brown humic sandy silt (302), which contained common plant roots, small branches and twigs. This in turn overlay the undisturbed natural substrate of pale grey to pale brown gritty to stony silt clay (303). Deposit (302) was interpreted to represent a relatively recent deposit of buried vegetation and topsoil. No significant archaeological deposits or finds were revealed in the cutting.





Figure 9 – Pod 4 site as excavated. Facing NNW. Scales 2m and 1m



Figure 10 - Pod 3 site as excavated showing buried vegetation layer. Facing NW. Scale 2m

### **Pod 2 site**

The foundation for Pod 2 measured 7m x 3m and was excavated across a gentle slope to a maximum depth of 550mm (Figure 8). The cutting (Figure 11) revealed up to 400mm of dark brown silt clay (201) that directly overlay the undisturbed natural substrate of pale grey to pale brown gritty to stony silt clay (202). No significant archaeological deposits or finds were revealed in the cutting.



Figure 11 - Pod 2 site as excavated. Facing NNW. Scales 2m and 1m

#### **Pod 1 site**

The foundation for Pod 1 measured 7.5m x 3.3m and was excavated across a gentle slope to a maximum depth of 380mm (Figure 8). The cutting (Figure 12) revealed up to 280mm of dark brown silt clay (101) that directly overlay the undisturbed natural substrate of pale grey to pale brown gritty to stony silt clay (102). No significant archaeological deposits or finds of any kind were revealed in the cutting.



Figure 12 - Pod 1 site as excavated. Facing NNW. Scales 2m and 1m



### **The Access Track**

The machine strip for the new access track (see Figure 8) was generally between 3m and 4m wide and excavated to a depth of between 100mm and 800mm. The cutting revealed a variable depth of topsoil, between c 150mm and 400mm deep, which predominantly consisted of dark brown silt clay (501). Throughout the stripped area the topsoil directly overlay an undisturbed natural substrate (502), which varied in type between pale grey to pale brown gritty to stony silt clay and dark reddish-brown brashy clay (Figures 13 and 14). A short (c 6m) stretch of the trackway cut excavated in the vicinity of Pod 3 (see above) revealed a further exposure of the buried humic topsoil and vegetation recorded as (302) in the Pod 3 cutting.

No significant archaeological deposits or finds were revealed anywhere along the cutting.



Figure 13 – The corridor for the new trackway. Facing E. Scale 1m

### **Summary of Finds**

No significant finds of any kind, either stratified or unstratified, were recovered during the course of the site work.

### **Discussion & Conclusions**

The preliminary ground works for the construction of four new Glamping Pods and associated access at Strathcarrick House have been monitored by means of an archaeological watching brief, in accordance with the Condition for archaeology attached to planning consent.

No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were revealed during the course of the watching brief and no further archaeological work is recommended for the site.



Figure 14 – The corridor for the new trackway and site entrance. Facing NE.

## Appendices

### Photographic Register

Photo Number	Camera Point	Description	Facing
7814	CP1	The area of the Pods and access road prior to works	E
7815	CP1	As 7814	SW
7816	CP2	Excavation of the access track adjacent to the existing road	NE
7817	CP2	As 7816	NE
7818	CP3	Pod 4 as excavated. (poor image)	NNW
7819	CP3	Pod 4 as excavated	NNW
7820	CP3	Pod 4 as excavated	NNW
7821	CP3	Pod 4 as excavated	NW
7822	CP4	Excavation of terrace at the E end of the access track	NW
7823	CP4	Pod 3 as excavated showing buried soil	NW
7824	CP5	Pod 3 as excavated showing recent buried soil	NW
7825	CP6	Pod 2 as excavated	NW
7826	CP6	Pod 2 as excavated	NW
7827	CP6	Pod 2 as excavated	NW
7828	-	View from site to the S	S
7829	-	View from site to the S	S
7830	-	View of access track cutting	E
7831	-	As 7830	E
7832	-	As 7830	E
7833	CP7	Pod 1 as excavated	NE
7834	CP7	Pod 1 as excavated	NE
7835	CP7	Pod 1 as excavated	NE
7836	CP8	Access track cutting	E
7837	CP8	Access track cutting	E

Photo Number	Camera Point	Description	Facing
7838	CP8	View from CP8	S
7839	CP8	As 7838	SW
7840	CP8	As 7838	SW

## Context Register

Context	Trench	Description	Comments
101	Pod 1	Brown silt clay layer with rare small stones	Topsoil
102	Pod 1	Silt clay substrate	Natural substrate
201	Pod 2	Brown silt clay layer with sparse small stones	Topsoil
202	Pod 2	Silt clay substrate	Natural substrate
301	Pod 3	Brown silt clay layer with rare small stones	Topsoil
302	Pod 3	Humic soil and vegetation layer	?buried land surface
303	Pod 3	Silt clay substrate	Natural substrate
401	Pod 4	Brown silt clay layer with rare small stones	Topsoil
402	Pod 4	Silt clay substrate	Natural substrate
501	Access track	Brown silt clay layer with rare small stones	Topsoil
502	Access track	Silt clay to brashy clay natural substrate	Natural