

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
19th November 2002
Duntelchaig, Midtown, Highland
NH 62590/33078**

**By
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November 2002**

Introduction

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Mr C Foote by the author for a house plot at Duntelchaig, Midtown per planning application 02/00087/OUTIN.

Acknowledgements

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

- Mr. C Foote;
- Mr. W MacQueen, machine operator for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

Location

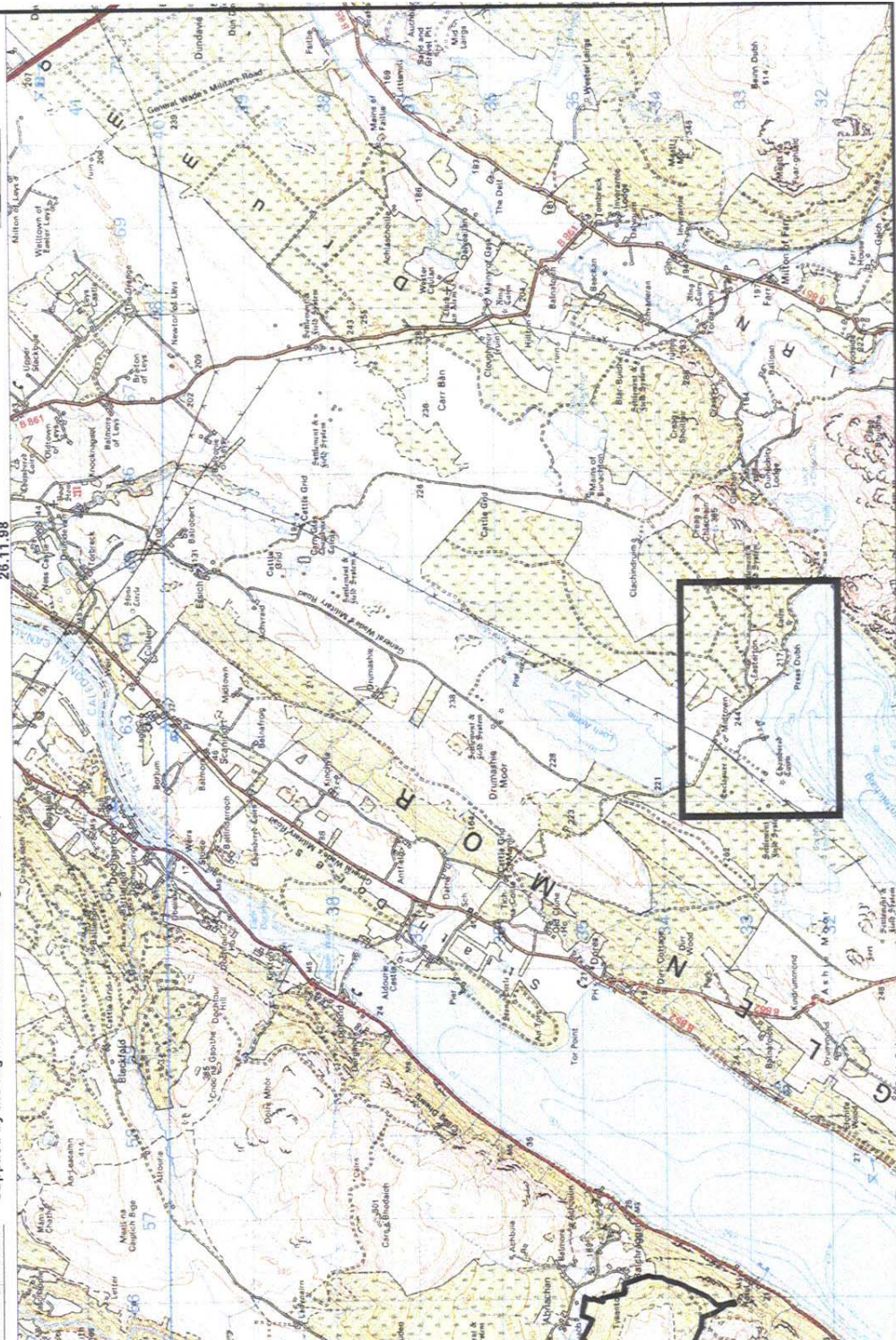
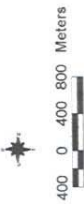
See over

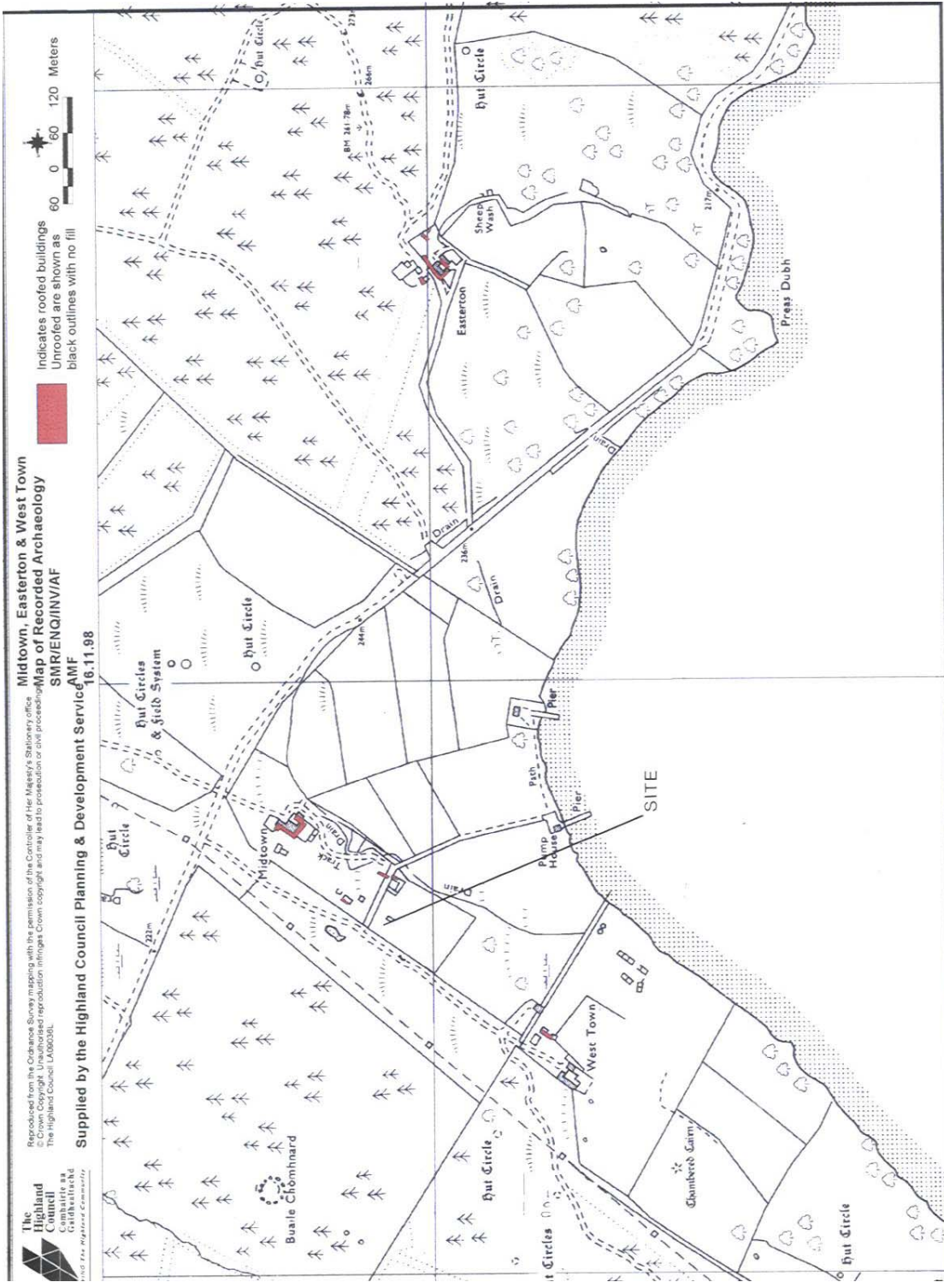


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The Highland Council LA00302.

Supplied by the Highland Council Planning & Development Service

Map to Show Area of Interest
SMR/ENQ/INV/AF
AMF
26.11.88





The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd
The Highland Council

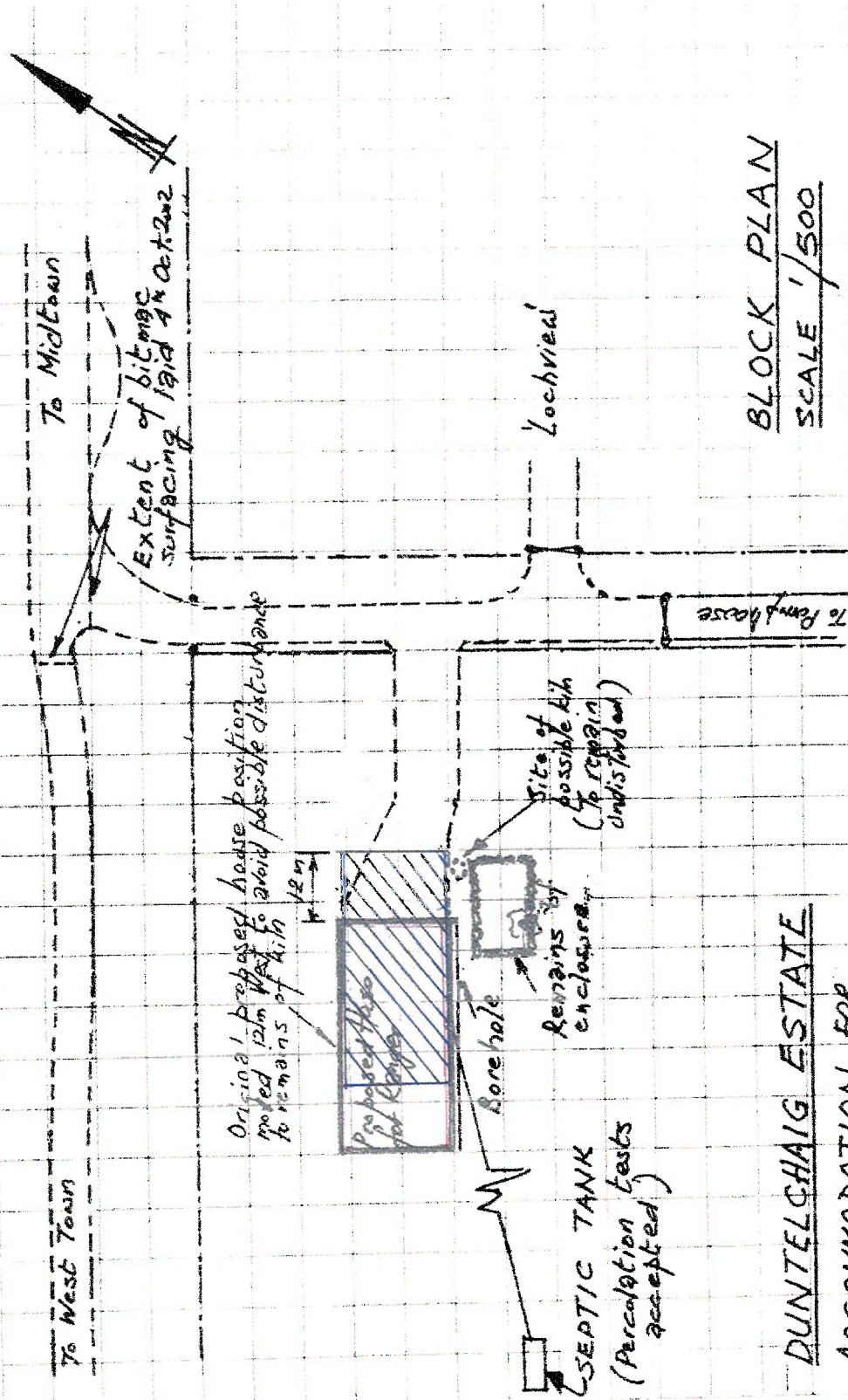
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Midtown, Easterton & West Town
Map of Recorded Archaeology
SMR/ENQ/INV/AF
16.11.98
Supplied by the Highland Council Planning & Development Service

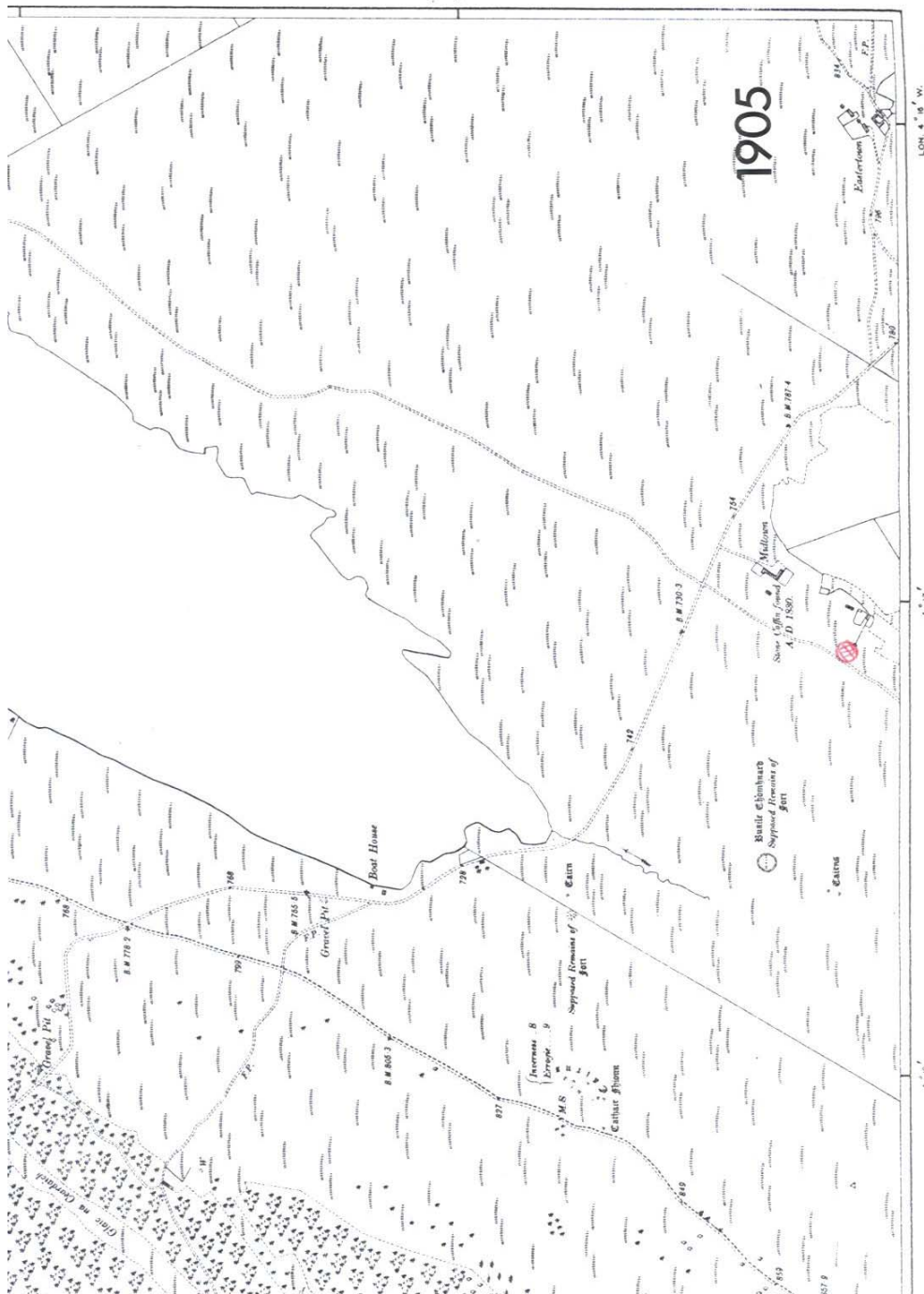


Accommodation for
Conservation Rangers
Area of plot edged red
11,885 sq. mtrs or thereabouts

DUNELCHAIG ESTATE
SITE PLAN
SCALE 1/2500



LONG. 4° 16' W.



Scale ... Six Inches to One Statute Mile or 880 Feet to One Inch ...



Historical Background

The proposed development site lies in the vicinity of the following sites recorded in the HSMR and the NMRS:

1 – Midtown

HSMR – NH63SW 79

NMRS – NH63SW 77

Grid Ref – NH 62570/33090

Type – Burnt Mound

Site lies to front of proposed plot. Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'this burnt mound, which is visible as an exposure of shattered stones and black soil on a NW-facing slope immediately beside the track to West Town, measures 4.5m across and up to 0.3m in height; there is a second spread of burnt-mound material a short distance to the NE. Visited by RCAHMS 1992'.

2 – Midtown

HSMR – NH63SW 80

NMRS – NH63SW 76

Grid Ref – NH 6264/3312

Type – Township

One structure from this township lies directly to the front of the proposed house, and is marked on the 2nd edition OS of 1905 (see over). Details in the HSMR and NMRS are:

NH63SW0080 Midtown

This township comprises eight buildings and a kiln, and extends from the modern farm at NH 6275 3324 to NH 6264 3304 about 200m to the SW. All the buildings lie within the fields of Midtown farm and have suffered varying degrees of robbing and disturbance. One building still stands to gable height and measures 11m from NE to SW by 5.2m transversely over walls of roughly-dressed masonry, 0.65m thick and standing 1.75m in height. It has a central door between two windows on the SE, a central window in the rear and chimneys in each gable. The other buildings range from 12.9m to 17.8m in length by between 4.5m and 5.9m over faced-rubble walls 0.8m to 0.9m thick and up to 0.9m high, where best preserved. Two of the buildings are very much reduced and stand barely 0.3m in height over walls spread to grass-covered stony banks between 1.5m and 1.8m in thickness. Two of the longer buildings are sub-divided into three compartments and a third into two. A kiln is set into the W-facing slope at NH 6260 3307 and measures 3.2m in diameter within faced-rubble walls 0.8m in thickness and 0.6m in depth with a flue opening on the E. Three of the buildings are depicted as roofed and two unroofed on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map, as well as the adjacent farmsteading (Inverness-shire, 1875, sheet xix). Only one of these is still roofed on the 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire, 1905, sheet xix) but an additional roofed building is depicted a short distance to the W of the farmsteading.

Visited by RCAHMS (PJD) 8 October 1992.

Four roofed buildings, of which three are arranged around a courtyard, two partially roofed and two unroofed buildings, five enclosures and a length of wall are depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1875, sheet xix). Two roofed, seven unroofed buildings, what may be another two conjoined unroofed buildings, three enclosures and a length of wall are shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1992).

Information from RCAHMS (SAH) 17 June 1996

3 – Midtown

HSMR – NH63SW 24

NMRS – NH63SW 24

Grid Ref – NH 6275/3325

Type – Cist

Site lies to NE of house plot. Recorded in HSMR and NMRS of 'noted on 2nd edition OS of 1905 of stone coffin found in 1830. Noted in OS Name Book of 1871 cist of 3 feet by 2 feet near back of Midtown house. Cist not located by OS in 1963.'

4 – West Town
HSMR – NH63SW 68
NMRS – NH63SW 78
Grid Ref – NH 6250/3293
Type – Hut circle/pen?

Site lies to SW of house plot. Recorded in HSMR and NMRS of 'a hut-circle and a pen are situated about 80m apart on a SE facing slope to the NE of West Town. The hut-circle (NH 6250/3293) has been disturbed by construction of field bank, that runs across it from NE-SW and measures 7.2m in diameter within a rubble faced wall spread to 1.7m and 0.3m in height. To the SW of the hut circle at NH 6244/3287 there is a grass covered oval pen or robbed clearance cairn that measures 5.4m NW-SE by 4.8m with bank 0.8m and 0.2m high. 2nd hut-circle recorded by aerial photography at NH 6314/3298.'

Objectives

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the development to record those features revealed by excavation work. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed.

Methodology

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to a maximum depth of 200mm for the house plot and associated access to an area of c320m². (Water services already exist in the form of a borehole, with electricity supply to lie in access road)

Weather on the day of work (19th November 2002) was partly cloudy with bright low sun.

Watching Brief Investigation

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

Results

An inspection of the proposed house site revealed the rectangular structure as depicted on the site plans to be a rectangular enclosure with a round kiln on its north edge. As the kiln lay in the proposed house plot area the house plot was moved 12m to the west to avoid its disturbance.

The site lies on a SE facing slope with ground cover of rough grass. The enclosure is of rubble built 11.4m EW by 7.3m NS with walls 0.8m wide and up to 0.5m high, whilst the kiln is 4.3m in diameter with walls 1.2m thick and up to 1.5m high. A small amount of clearance material is dumped into the bottom of the kiln and N edge of the enclosure. Kiln is built into a natural bank and has entrance to SE. (See photographs over – top view of enclosure facing SW, kiln facing N – scales 1m). Only other feature was a possible clearance cairn to the north edge of the house plot but upon investigation proved to be a natural mound with some stone on top.



The watching brief on the area for the house revealed no archaeological features only natural ground of orange-brown stony-silt. (See photo above facing W) A peat like deposit was revealed to the NW edge of the kiln – possibly remains of turf bank around kiln to provide more shelter.

The watching brief on the area for the house revealed no archaeological features only natural ground of orange-brown stony-silt on south facing slope. (See photo above facing W) A peat like deposit was revealed to the NW edge of the kiln – possibly remains of turf bank around kiln to provide more shelter.

The remains found represent the remains of West Town Township and are probably pre 20th century in date.

Recommendations

No recommendations with regards to this project are to be proposed. Any further development work in this area would require more archaeological investigation.

Archive

Notebook of results is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh. A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record.

References

Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entries for NH63SW.

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

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database entries for NH63SW.

Ordnance Survey map of Inverness sheet 30 of 1905 (revised 1902-3).

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Appendix 1 – Details of Slides

- 1 – View of house site prior to excavation facing west.
- 2 – View of house site prior to excavation facing east.
- 3 – View of enclosure facing east – scales 1m.
- 4 – View of enclosure facing southwest.
- 5 – View of kiln facing north – scales 1m.
- 6 – ibid.
- 7 – View of enclosure and kin facing south.
- 8 – View of burnt mounds to southwest.
- 9 – View of excavation of access road facing west.
- 10 – View of bank to NW of kiln facing west.
- 11 – View of excavation in progress facing west.
- 12 – View of excavation upon completion facing east.
- 13 – View of excavation upon completion facing southwest.
- 14 – ibid but facing west.