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**Archaeological Watching Brief on Landscaping and
Construction of Pathways and Laybys at East Street,
Balintore, Easter Ross
(Planning Application 03/00218/FULRC)**



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For

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1. Background

The present phase of landscaping work at East Street, Balintore, involves the construction of two lay-bys and a network of footpaths over two areas of waste ground between the road and the sea front. An archaeological watching brief has been required as a condition of planning consent because of the potential for archaeological finds or features of interest to be discovered during site work. A desk-based assessment was carried out before the watching brief to acquire background information on the archaeological and historical record of the Balintore area.

2. Desk-Based Assessment

The following easily-accessible sources were consulted during the desk-based assessment;

- RCAHMS database CANMORE, available online at www.rcahms.gov.uk
- 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, available online at www.old-maps.co.uk
- J. MacDonald and A. Gordon: Down to the Sea. An account of life in the fishing villages of Hilton, Balintore and Shandwick
- C. Dagg 2001: Archaeological Watching Brief on excavation work at a house site at Plot 4, Sand Dune Walk, Balintore, Easter Ross

3. Archaeological Background

A number of cist burials have been revealed in the Balintore area, together with a Bronze Age cemetery of several burials. The majority of these sites are located immediately inland from the harbour, in the area of Balintore old village and the mid-20th century expansion known as the Scandinavian houses, and have come to light during building work or the digging of wells or trenches for services. The following recorded sites are within 800m of the present area of development:

- Sloc Geal, possible Bronze Age cemetery at NH 861 754, NMRS no. NH87NE 5
- Cist burial at NH 8617 7578, NMRS no. NH87NE 13. Two inhumations found in 1976
- Cist Burial at NH 8626 7563, NMRS no. NH87NE 10, uncovered during insertion of sewer in 1950.
- Human remains, possible cist at NH 8630 7568, NMRS no. NH87NE 11, uncovered during building extension in 1919
- Cist burial at NH 8639 7570, NMRS no. NH87NE 8. Found while digging a well in 1932
- Burials at NH 866 758, NMRS no. NH87NE 14. Two extended inhumations below flat slabs possibly the remains of cists, found while excavating a trench for a sewer pipe in 1982.

This last site is located only 100m from the edge of the present area of development. The possibility of further burials being located within the area of development was therefore considered to be high.

4. Recent background

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows no development along the track between Balintore village and Hilton of Cadboll. The modern road follows the line of this track, running above the shoreline and below the bank of the raised beach, which at this point runs parallel and close to the shore. In the 20th century a quarry was opened behind the top of the bank and was certainly being worked in 1930. Spoil from the quarry was apparently tipped over the bank. When, around the 1970s, it was decided to build houses along the inland side of the road, the site was levelled by removing this quarry waste to the sea side of the road. To this was added rubble from the demolition of buildings at the Fearn Airfield. Part of the landfill area thus created has been used as a builder's yard; the concrete foundations of a building are still visible. Apart from this, the only use of this ground was the location of posts providing sight lines for fishing boats. For this purpose, occasional attempts were made to clear the ground of whin.

5. Site description

The present development covers two areas of roughly similar size (Areas A and B) separated by a bungalow, between the road and the shoreline. The building up of the shoreline with quarry spoil and rubble (see above) has resulted in the ground level on the seaward side being considerably higher than the natural **(Photo no. 1)**



1. Area A. View NE from shore showing height of bank of landfill material.

The site has recently been cleared of vegetation, leaving substantial gorse roots. The only visible features are, in Area B, the concrete foundations of a modern building associated with the builder's yard, and indications of sewage pipes and other underground services running parallel to the road.



2. Area B: level, built up, area behind the grassy foreground, view from NE.

7. Methodology

Two main areas of work were covered by the watching brief:

- A.** laybys: two laybys, one in each area, where topsoil stripping will cover an area approximately 20m in length by 4.5m in width, to a depth of 0.3m. Work on these is to be carried out at a later date, but both areas were stripped in the presence of the archaeologist and subsequently backfilled (**Photos 3 and 4**)
- B.** Footpaths: Two main sections of footpath crossing both areas from ENE to WSW, crossed by shorter lengths connecting these to the laybys. The topsoil stripping was to a width of 1.2m and a depth of 10-15cm, to allow edging with kerbstones and the laying of hardcore. The entire length of the main footpath in Area A and approximately 50% of the footpath in Area B were stripped in the presence of the archaeologist. (**Photo no. 5**)

Archaeological Observations:

Removal of the top 10-30cm of material revealed a homogenous mix of sand and soil, slightly sandier in area B, together with stone, beach pebbles, brick and concrete fragments, coal, glass, china, plastics and bone. Any object located within this disturbed ground was considered to be completely out of context and was not recorded. Some bone fragments of uncertain identification were retained, while others were clearly butchered. The bone material was generally found lying weathered on the surface.

The removal of 30cm of material from the area of the layby in Area A possibly revealed the top of a layer of natural sand shelving down from the road edge (Photos no. 3 and 4) visible as a line of clean, pale sand approximately 1.6-1.9m from the kerb. This was not observed at the layby in Area B and the footpath work did not go deep enough to touch a lower layer.



3. Layby, Area A. Stripping of topsoil to a depth of 0.3m, view from SW



4. Layby, Area A. Lighter sand indicating the possible natural surface at a depth of 0.3m



5. Area A. Footpath, topsoil stripping to a depth of 10-15cm, view from east.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

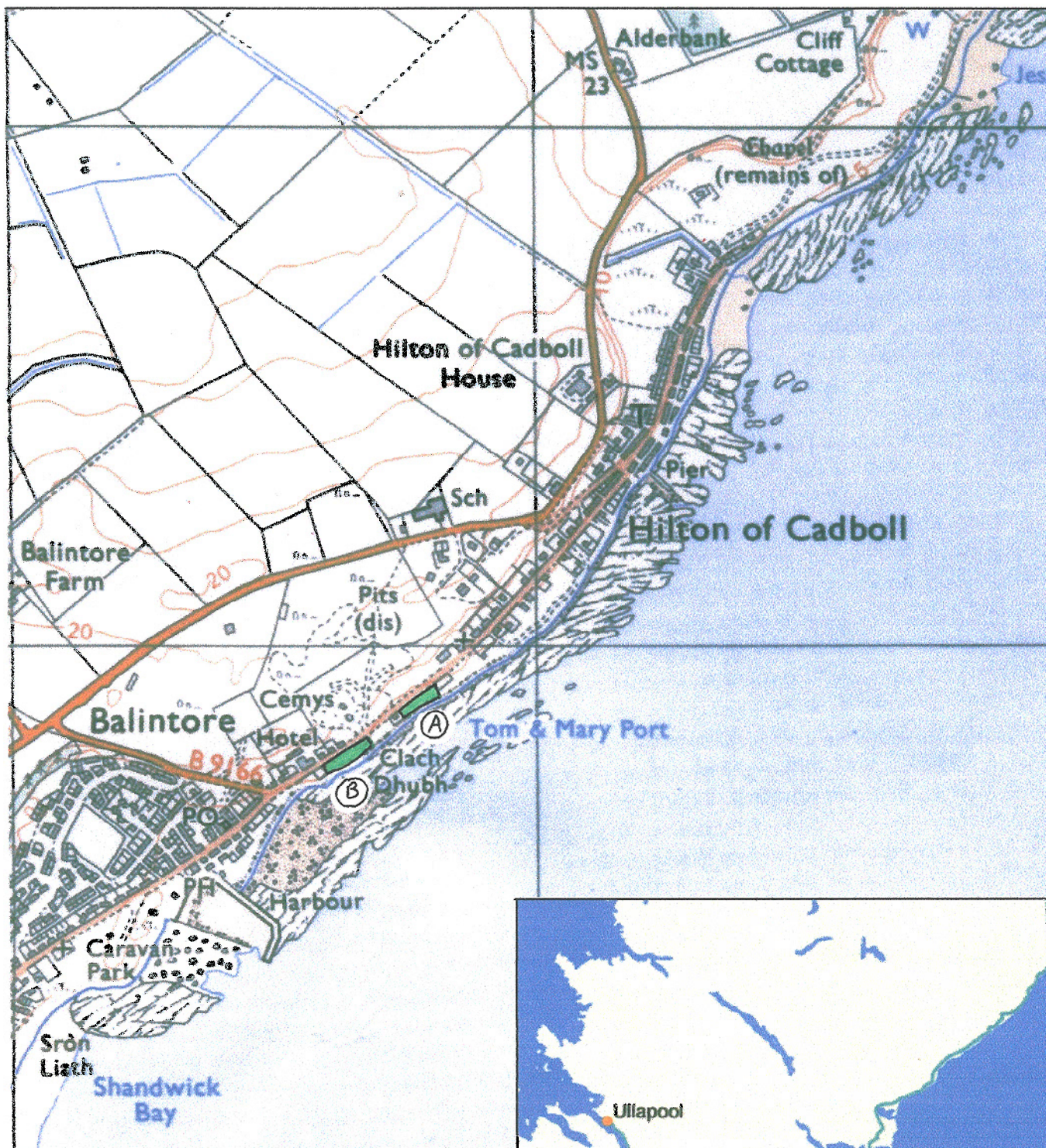
Although the possibility remains of further prehistoric burials or other archaeological features being located in the undisturbed natural layers under the landfill, this top layer of obviously imported material is effectively archaeologically sterile. At no point during this watching brief did excavation work extend into the natural soils or sands of the original foreshore.

It is recommended that, while archaeological monitoring would be advisable where any excavation is likely to extend deeper than 0.3m on the road side and possibly 2m at the sea side, it would not be necessary or useful to monitor shallow work such as further laybys or footpaths, where it is obvious that the ground is similarly made up of landfill material.

It appears that landfilling with quarry spoil or rubble from demolished military buildings has taken place along the greater part of the sea front between Shandwick and Hilton. The two exceptions, where the shoreline appears to be in its natural state, are the area of dunes to the north of Shandwick bay, and below Hilton chapel. This information may be useful to the consideration of the need for future archaeological watching briefs along the seafront.

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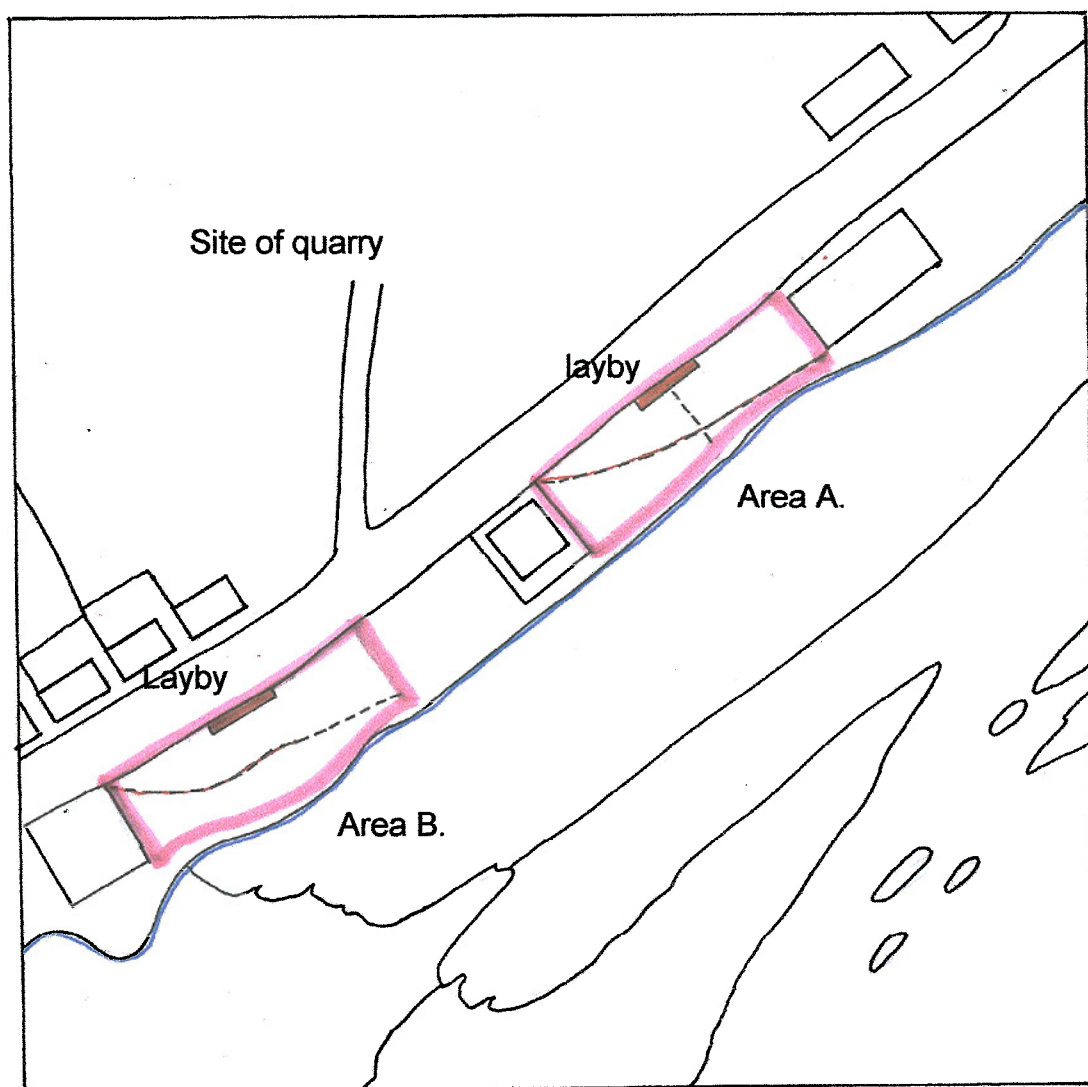
6.6.03



East Street, Balintore




Location Plan





0 50m

Scale

-  footpaths
-  Area covered by watching brief
-  Mean High Water Springs

East Street, Balintore, Archaeological Watching Brief

Brief for archaeological work at:

**Landscaping and Creation of Footpaths, East St,
Balintore, Tain, Ross-shire
(Planning App 03/00218/FULRC)**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

1) Background

An archaeological watching brief is needed at this site because there is a potential for finds or features of interest to be discovered during site works. Soil stripping the development area under direct archaeological supervision enables any such discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently as they appear with minimum delay or disruption to the development.

Balnabruach was once the site of an early medieval chapel and associated cemetery. Its full extent has not been fully determined, but burials supposedly of this date have been reported on the north side of Balnabruach Rd. At least one of these overlay a cist burial (possibly of the Bronze Age period c2500-800BC). Other burials in cists have been reported along the road during development and finds of human remains have been reported more widely in the area. In addition midden deposits, posited to perhaps date to the Mesolithic period, were revealed during the laying of utilities along the road.

As the site lies adjacent/over an ancient cemetery it should be noted that there is a strong possibility of recovering human remains. The applicant can take advice from the Archaeological Contractor regarding the legal requirements in such a case. The recovery of human remains to required legal and professional standards may necessitate delays to the development (see para 5). Historic Scotland's Policy Paper on "The Treatment of Human Remains" should be used as an exemplar to good practice.

The area to be covered includes the full extent of landscaping. (Following an assessment of risk once below ground deposits have been examined).

2) Terms of Reference

This brief has been produced for the applicant – Seaboard Initiative – in response to Planning Application 03/00218/FULRC. The applicant will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements.

It may be used to obtain project designs and tenders from archaeological contractors, and specifies what the Archaeology Unit considers to be the minimum acceptable standard of work; proposals that present a higher standard may be offered and accepted. It will be assumed that this will form the basis of an agreed approach unless changes are agreed with the Unit in writing before the start of any site works.

It sets out who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference, objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Council requires all archaeological work in Highland to be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (MIFA or AIFA). This is to ensure that it is carried out to professional standards. Where archaeological work fails to meet the standards set out here, the applicant will be in breach of any archaeological planning condition until matters are rectified.

Before site works start, the proposed project design, including a timetable for the work should be agreed with the Senior Archaeologist in writing.

The project design should include a detailed statement on the proposed treatment of any human remains encountered.

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.

To allow for the appropriate treatment – reporting, recording, sensitive exhumation and re-burial – of any human remains identified.

4) Method

a) **Desk-based Assessment**

The archaeologist will carry out a check of relevant archaeological records and aerial photographs to provide background information. At least the following sources should be checked:

- *The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (Inverness)*
- *The National Monuments Record for Scotland*
- *Any aerial photographic coverage held in Inverness or Edinburgh*
- *Any relevant early cartographic coverage held in Inverness or Edinburgh*

b) **Watching Brief**

An archaeologist will be present during site ground-works, so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards. All areas of deeper excavation (such as lay-bys) should be watched. Other areas will be watched at the discretion of the Contract Archaeologist, following assessment of the impact of other works on below ground deposits. The extent of the proposed watching brief should be notified to the Archaeology Unit in writing.

The archaeologist will endeavour wherever possible to work with the contractor to ensure that any recording required is done with minimum delay to the site works. *However it is essential for contractors to note that working practices may need to be varied to accommodate the needs of the archaeologist (see (e)).*

c) **Report**

The archaeologist will produce a report setting out the results of the work (see below).

d) **Important Note for architects, builders and site contractors**

Those carrying out site clearance and excavation works will need to work closely with the archaeologist and provide all necessary access and other arrangements. They may need to use differing work practices on site than usual to enable the archaeologist to complete the work. For example,

- Where excavating machinery is used, a straight-edged bucket must be used on a back acting machine. Care will need to be taken to avoid over excavation, and the advice of the archaeologist on-site should be adhered to on this.
- Archaeologists may need to get quickly into recently cleared areas and this may mean that drivers of excavators may sometimes need to wait briefly, or switch to working other areas.
- Because the archaeologist must be able to record any archaeological remains encountered during the work to professional standards, site clearance works may take slightly longer than normal. This should be allowed for in the development project timetable. Occasionally, more extensive excavation may be needed since there will be limited opportunities to preserve features in situ. If discoveries are made that would cause significant delays, see paragraph 5 below.
- If human remains are encountered the archaeological contractor will advise on the legal requirements of the situation. The archaeological contractor may undertake the sensitive exhumation of any such remains, but must act within the law and professional guidelines.

5) Monitoring

The Archaeological Contractor appointed is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with Archaeology Unit staff. Unit staff will monitor projects as necessary to ensure that minimum standards are met. This is usually by unannounced site visit - alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.

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 by the archaeologist contracted to carry out the work.

Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and /or the development, must be notified by the contract archaeologist immediately to the applicant and the Senior Archaeologist. The finds or features must be left until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.

6) Reporting

a) *Project report*

The archaeologist appointed is responsible for producing a report on the work, *and for making sure copies have been received by the recipients listed below.* The archaeologist appointed should allow for all costs when estimating for the work. We require archaeologists to submit satisfactory reports within the agreed deadline.

Apart from any copies required by the client, at least **five** copies of the project report must be produced by the archaeologist. These must be submitted to all of the following **within 6 weeks** of the completion of the field work.

- One paper copy for the Council's Ross and Cromarty Area Planning and Building Control Manager
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Senior Librarian Information Co-ordinator, Libraries Support Unit, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UA. This will be available for public consultation through the public library service.
- One paper copy to be deposited with the Council's Assistant Curator (Archaeology), Museum & Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EB
- Two copies for the Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Council Offices, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX :
 - One paper copy
 - One copy of the complete report in Adobe Acrobat format (ie a pdf file), on a computer disc or CDROM. Please ensure that all drawings and photographs are included.

The report must include, as a minimum,

- Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected. Grid references must be included.
- Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification.
- Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork.
- Scale plans, and photographs of all archaeological features noted.
- A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location.
- An analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate, and a statement of the significance of the results for future research. Note that a negative result may itself be significant.
- General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project.
- A set of colour slides illustrating the project progress from start to completion.

- A list of finds, set out in the required format for Treasure Trove reporting. Copies of the necessary forms are obtainable if required from the Council's Assistant Curator (Archaeology), Museum & Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EB.

b) Presentation

Where significant archaeology has been found, the archaeologist must arrange 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.

c) DES

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.

d) Copyright

The Council will assume author's copyright unless advised otherwise. However, the Archaeology Unit reserves the right to make the report available for reference and research purposes, either on paper, or electronically. The completed report will be made available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record, and through the public library service. The Archaeology Unit will acknowledge copyright in all cases.

7) Finds

Finds can be made during any archaeological fieldwork. Advice and facilities for emergency conservation and temporary storage can be offered by Inverness Museum on consultation with the Conservation Officer and Assistant Curator (Archaeology). A list of services and table of costs are available from the museum.

Archaeologists undertaking fieldwork should notify the Council's Assistant Curator (Archaeology) at Inverness Museum, who will in turn notify local museums of the fact that there is archaeological work ongoing in the area. All finds should be notified for Treasure Trove before the report is submitted.

Human remains: all human remains must be treated in a respectful manner. Historic Scotland/IFA guidelines for the treatment of human remains should be followed. Re-burial should proceed in accordance with proposals in the project design.

8) Insurance

The archaeologist appointed must take all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurance. Section 24 of the Highland Council's revised Contracts Standing Orders states:

"All specifications issued by and contracts entered into with the Council in connection with the carrying out of work or the provision of services shall provide that the contractor holds a valid insurance policy, approved by the Council, for:-

- (1) Employers liability - minimum limit - £10m (statutory limit)
- (2) Public liability - minimum limit £5m."

9) General

The archaeologist agrees by undertaking this work to the terms of this brief. He or she must:

- carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Senior Archaeologist.
- not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the client and Senior Archaeologist.
- fully allow for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.

This brief has been produced for the Council's Senior Archaeologist, to whom any enquiries should be addressed. No one else has authority to vary its terms.

Thursday, 5 June 2003

Project Statement for Archaeological Work at Landscaping and creation of Footpaths, East Street, Balintore, Tain, Ross-shire

(Planning Application 03/00218/FULRC)

Prepared for Seabord Initiative, Balintore

1. Objectives

- 1.1 The archaeological watching brief is to cover excavation work prior to the construction of two lay-bys and a network of pathways over an area of approximately 2 hectares on the seafront at Balintore
- 1.2 Monitoring is required at this site because there is deemed a potential for finds or features of interest to be discovered during site works. Soil stripping the development area under direct archaeological supervision enables any such discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently, as they appear, with minimum delay or disruption to the development.
- 1.3 The area to be covered includes the full extent of landscaping, following an assessment of risk once below ground deposits have been discovered.

2. Method

- 2.1 A timetable for work will be agreed between the archaeologist, the client and the senior archaeologist in charge of the project at Highland Council.
- 2.2 The archaeologist will meet the client on site before work commences to discuss methodology, the extent of the area of work and an ongoing programme for monitoring.
- 2.3 Two main areas of work are identified;
 - A. Lay-bys: two lay-bys where topsoil stripping will be to a depth of approximately 0.3m. This work will be done under the supervision of the archaeologist on 26.5.03, although these areas may subsequently be backfilled temporarily to prevent erosion, until a later construction date
 - B. Footpaths: a network of footpaths totalling several hundred metres in length, where topsoil stripping will be to a depth of approximately 0.1m. The extent of monitoring this work will depend on the outcome of the stripping of some representative sections on 26.5.03. If the archaeologist feels that monitoring of the entire area of work is necessary, a further timetable for work will be agreed.
- 2.4 Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries or other unexpected occurrences will be notified by the archaeologist to the client and the Senior Archaeologist immediately. These finds or features will be left until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them

3. Human Remains

- 3.1 The proximity of the area of work to previous discoveries of human remains, and the presence in the locality of an early mediaeval chapel and associated cemetery, means there is the possibility of uncovering human remains.

- 3.2 The archaeologist will advise the client of the legal requirements of dealing with human remains, and initiate these procedures if necessary.
- 3.3 The archaeologist will examine the human remains to evaluate whether they represent an *in situ* burial or are fragments carried from elsewhere during landscaping. If the latter, it may be possible to remove them immediately to prevent delay to the work
- 3.4 If the human remains appear to represent one or more *in situ* burials, arrangements will be made for their proper excavation and processing. This may be carried out by the archaeologist, or may require more extensive archaeological excavation. This may incur extra expense and delay
- 3.5 Any human remains will be treated in accordance with the guidelines set out in Historic Scotland's Operational Policy Paper 5: 'The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology'

4. Reporting

The archaeologist will produce a report on the work as specified by Highland Council's brief for archaeological work prepared for this project.

Catherine Dagg

23.5.03