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Client: **HIGHLAND DEEPHAVEN**

Project: **HIGHLAND DEEPHAVEN
CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAY
ACCESS**

Title: **ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

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5.10. Cultural Heritage

5.10.1 Methodology

An initial desk study was undertaken of the data held in Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record including vertical aerial photographs at 1:10,000 taken by the RAF in 1949. Additional cartographic material was examined in Highland Council Archives and secondary reference material was examined in Inverness Reference Library. A field survey was carried out on 26 October in dry conditions. At the time of this survey the field was under stubble with straw bales uncollected. Consultations were made with Highland Council archaeology unit to determine the presence of any archaeological features within the surrounding area.

5.10.2 Existing conditions

There are no archaeological sites noted in the Sites and Monuments Record within the survey area. During the 1993 topsoil strip of a gas pipeline from Dingwall to Invergordon, running just north of the A9, three features were observed below the topsoil but were not recorded in detail.

NH 261630 866500 – An area of c3m diameter by 50mm thick was covered in black charcoal rich silt and fire reddened stones. It lay at the base of a hill on a low terrace and could possibly have been the remains of a burnt mound, but was too disturbed by matching to interpret properly.

NH261669 866542 – A group of 3 large stones up to 0.3m long by 150mm thick were exposed in sand. They may have been randomly placed but appeared to form part of a structure. 1 sherd of glazed late medieval pottery was found 1m to the east of the stones.

NH261700 866650 – The pipeline cut exposed a natural deposit of peat and wood in this hollow. This is almost certainly of natural origin but could be of value for the environmental history of this area.

No crop mark sites were observed on the 1:10,000 aerial photographs taken by the RAF c1949. However there may be other photographs of the area eg. those taken by the Cambridge University Air Photographic Unit that may be informative. Since there is no record of sites being recorded in the SMR from these surveys, this probability is low.

The first map evidence, that of General Roy's Military Survey dating to C.1750, shows in a schematic form extensive arable covering the whole survey area. To the east Newton House was already established within what appears to be a Designed Lands with avenues of trees running south west/north east as well as more strongly on a north west/south east axis. Though at a fairly small scale (C.1:36,000) the depiction of large house and enclosure is considered one of the more accurate elements of the Roy Survey (cf. Whittington & Gibson AJS 1986 *The Military Survey of Scotland 1747-55: A Critique Hist. Geog Research Series 18*) Elements of the designed landscape appear to extend into the survey area.

The 1st OS survey map shows a series of fields presumably forming part of Novar Estate. No buildings were shown within the survey area.

The air field at Evanton was first opened in 1922 and only used seasonally when the home fleet was operating out of Invergordon during its summer cruises. Known as Novar there are unlikely to have been many permanent building connected with it. In 1937 it also became the base for a RAF Armament Training Group being re-named RAF Evanton. The runways were not built until 1942 and photograph showing the airfield before these were built is shown Captain Hughes A Steep Turn to the Stars (Peterborough 1999 – photograph in the possession of a B Hansley). The photograph shows a couple of features within the modern survey areas, including a possible track from Newton heading towards Evanton. The staff increased until by April 1944 there were 1340 RAF and 39 WAAF stationed. Due to there being sufficient trained staff the RAF involvement here declined, though the

navy involvement increased so that the station became renamed HMS Fieldfare. This was associated with an investment of over £2million producing accommodation for 150 officers, 2369 other ranks, 17 WRNS officers and 458 WRNS accommodation for ratings. It was closed in 1948, though a detachment from the USAAF 8th Weather Squadron used the base for 11 years to study high altitude weather from balloons.

5.10.3 Survey Results

The survey area consists predominantly of a fluvo-glacial terrace cut by the Allt Graad on the south west. The lower ground to be found here and to the south east of the site will have lain under the post glacial sea and is likely to have remained as salt marsh or mud flats until modern drainage allowed these areas to be exploited.

Settlement remains are therefore likely to be concentrated on the surface of the terrace, such as the possible structural remains previously recorded at NH261669 866542. On the basis of 1 sherd of pottery this might be medieval in date. No additional evidence was found on the ground or from documentary records of any prehistoric or later settlement in the survey area. On predictive grounds, it is probable that there was such settlement at some point in the past, the evidence for it being hidden under modern ploughsoil. Depending on the degree of damage from ploughing, these remains may be sufficiently well preserved to justify archaeological excavation. There is possible evidence from Roys map for elements of a Designed Landscape extending from Newton into the survey area. Elements of these might survive in the form of ditches or tree holes.

The majority of the airfield seems to have been sited outside the survey area. However the remains of a partially destroyed brick building at HN26165 86660 almost certainly a gun emplacement or listening post, show that additional airfield features, not recorded on the OS map or the airfield map drawn by Hughes may be recovered in this area. There is likely to have been some form of communication between this position and the main command post. There is also a possibility that waster material may be buried in this area, particularly adjacent to the recorded buildings at the north east of the area.

No major archaeological sites were recorded in this area and this application should not be refused on archaeological grounds. There is sufficient archaeological assessment to be carried out here if the application is approved. Such archaeological assessment work may lead to further excavation work being required.

The only feature of interest in the vicinity of the railway siding area is a residential house which is situated to the far eastern corner of the field and should in no way be affected by the development. Other identified features are present surrounding the railway siding area, however these will not be affected by the proposed development as they are too distant. There are no Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest or scheduled monuments within the vicinity off the jetty extension site.

5.10.4 Effects of the Railway Access

The railway siding area should not have any negative impacts upon surrounding features of archaeological interest.

Section 5.10 of the environmental statement contains a full report of the archaeological survey undertaken by a contractor in October 2000, by means of desk exercise and walkover. The contractor recommended geophysical survey and trial trenching followed by detailed archaeological survey as condition of any planning permissions. The Council's archaeologist has requested that this survey be carried out prior to determining the planning applications. There is no evidence from the SMR or desk study of any remains in the field where development is proposed, and only on predictive grounds does the contractor suggest that there may be settlement remains hidden under

modern plough-soil. Therefore it is unreasonable to suggest expensive archaeological trials on the field at this early stage in the planning process. It is intended to undertake these investigations when the planning permission has been determined and prior to any construction work.

5.10.6 Mitigation Measures

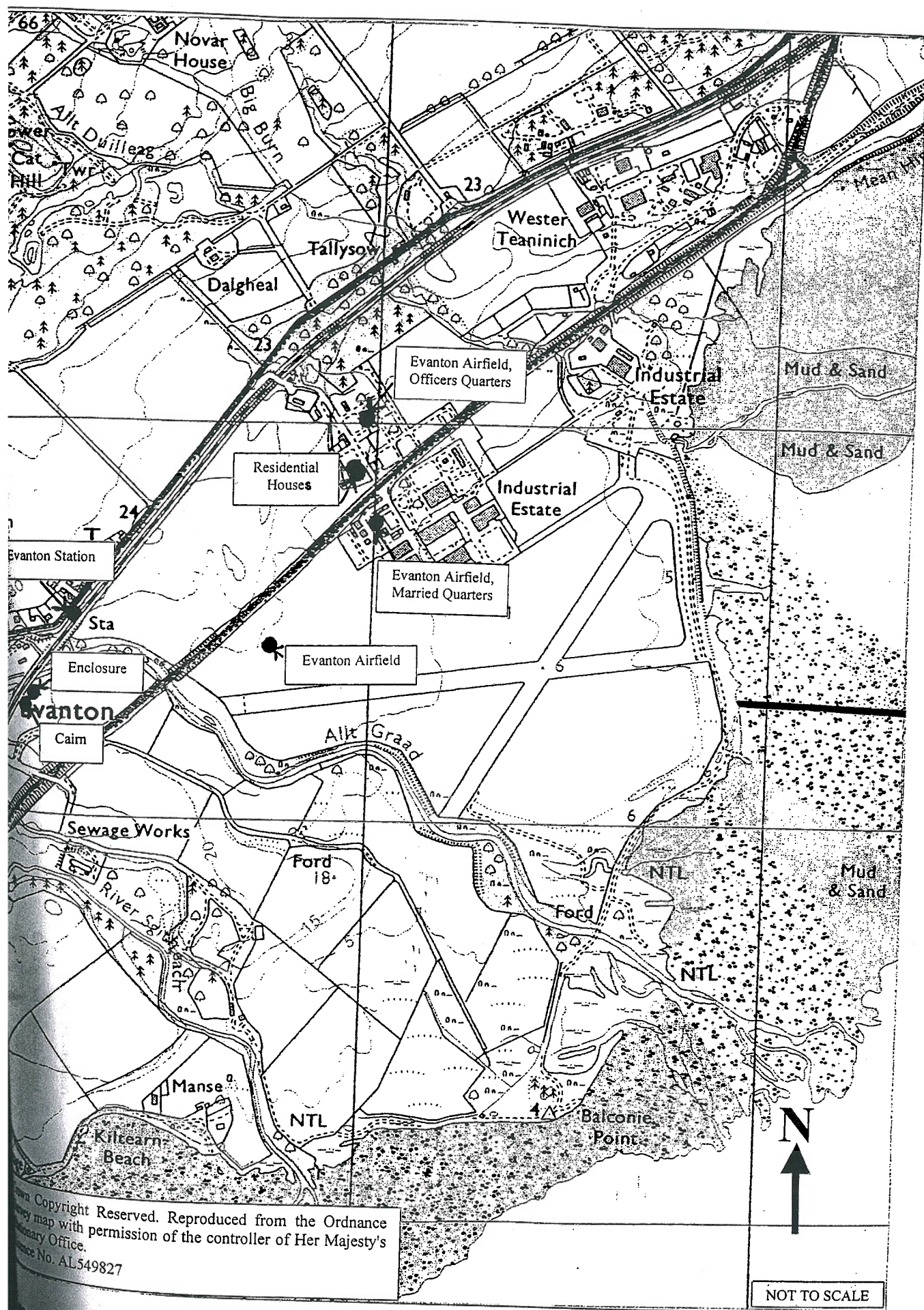
Archaeological mitigation would include the following:

Further examination of all aerial photographs of this area including copies of those held by the Cambridge University Air Photographic Unit and the wartime print held by B Hansley.

A geophysical survey to examine the extent of possible buried archaeological features and to identify possible hazards associated with the airfield.

A sampling exercise of trial trenches to examine a minimum percentage of the areas, as agreed with Highland Council Archaeology Service. The precise location of these trenches should depend on the results of the geophysical survey, but may also include sections of the access track as well as the main areas of the sidings.

If significant results are recovered from this assessment then a more detailed examination will be required. This would require an open area excavation of the areas of significance, following mechanical removal of the topsoil under archaeological supervision.



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