

An Archaeological Watching Brief
At a House Site above Kinlochaline Cottages,
Ardtornish, Morvern,
Highland Region.

September 2003.

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1. Abstract.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a house site above Kinlochaline Cottages, Ardtornish, Morvern, Argyll (NGR NM 6927 4773) (See Fig. 1: Location Map)

The watching brief was required under the terms of a specification ((LO-02-456) issued by the Archaeology Unit of Highland Council Planning and Development Service, as part of the planning application, Ref. No. 02/00456/FULLO. (See Appendix A)

The specification was issued on account of the number of archaeological features already recorded in the vicinity.

All groundworks at the site were observed by the writer on 20th – 22nd August 2003 and **no archaeological features or small finds were recorded.** The following report details the progress of the watching brief in the context of the archaeology of Kinlochaline.

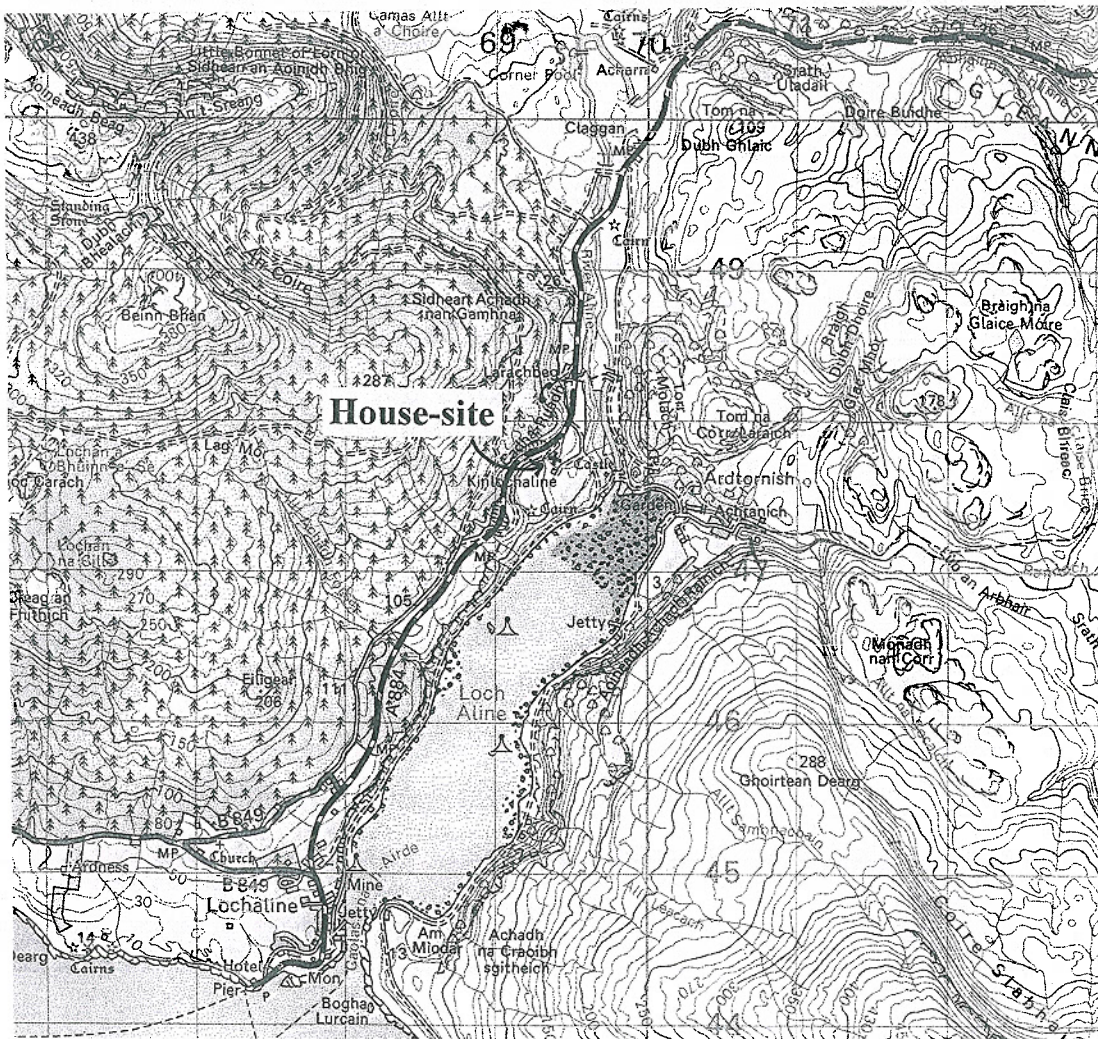


Fig. 1: Location Map (extract from OS Landranger 49, 1:50,000)

2. Acknowledgements.

I am most grateful to Kirsty Cameron, Highland Council Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Inverness and Kevin McLaren, Air Photo Unit, RCAHMS, Edinburgh for kindly supplying information.

3. Working Methods.

3.1 A preliminary phase of desk-based research assessed the potential for archaeology in the vicinity of the house site. The sources consulted included:

3.1.1 Sites and Monuments Registers.

The Sites and Monuments Register (SMR), held by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Glenurquhart road, Inverness IV3 5NX.

The National Monuments Record of Scotland, (NMRS), held by RCAHMS, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX.

The following sites have been recorded in the vicinity of the house site:

SMR NM 64 NE 0005 Two cairns (NM 6922 4740) (scheduled monument)

SMR NM 64 NE 0009 Cairn (NM 695 476) (scheduled monument)

SMR NM 64 NE 0010 Four Cists (NM c. 695 477)

SMR NM 64 NE 0011 Bloodstone artefact; flint implements; quartz. (NM c. 696 476) (scheduled monument)

SMR NM 64 NE 0014 Township (NM 693 475)

SMR NM 64 NE 0032 Kinlochaline Castle (NM 6975 4763) (listed B)

3.1.2 Maps.

Roy's Map of Scotland, 1747-55.

OS 1st Ed. 6" Map Sheet Argyllshire LIV, surveyed 1872, published 1875.

OS 1:10,000 NM 64 NE, 1975.

Plan of the farms of Kinlochalin and Achaforse, surveyed by James Thomson, 1834, in Ardtornish Estate Archive.

3.1.3 Aerial Photographs.

106G/SCOT/UK 35 Frame 7146; date 27.4.1946; Scale 1:10,000.

OS/68/105: 044; date 8.5.1968; scale 1:10,000

3.1.4 Documentary sources.

Gaskell, Philip: 1968 *Morvern Transformed*, Cambridge.

Innes, C: 1854 *Origines parochiales Scotiae*, vol ii, pt. 1.

RCAHMS: 1980 *Argyll: An Inventory of the Monuments. Vol. 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll and Northern Argyll*, Edinburgh.

JNG Ritchie and Iain Thornber 1974-5: "Cairns in the Aline Valley, Morvern Argyll" in Ritchie et al: "Small cairns in Argyll: some recent work" in *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* cvi, pp15 – 30.

3.2 The site was visited by the writer in July 2003 and no archaeological remains were identified in the immediate vicinity of the proposed groundworks. A brief report and programme of work was lodged with the Planning Dept., Fort William. (See Appendix B)

3.3 A watching brief was conducted by the writer during the groundworks on the site from 20th to 22nd August 2003.

4. Background to the Watching Brief.

The house site is situated on rough ground in the corner of a formerly cultivated field above, and to the NW of, Kinlochaline Cottages. The site is on the NE side of a small stream, Allt na Croite, and opens onto an old road, which is the immediate predecessor of the present A884 road from Lochaline to Strontian. The site lies on a band of schist and gneiss, which is part of the Moine complex, occupying the central part of Morvern. Some rock outcrops protrude through the surface soils.

The watching brief was deemed necessary because of the proximity of the site to several archaeological monuments previously recorded around Kinlochaline. (See Fig. 2) These indicate a long, though not necessarily continuous, history of occupation in the area. A Mesolithic presence is suggested by the assemblage of flint implements, quartz artefacts and a bloodstone artefact, which were collected from an area to the West of Kinlochaline Castle at c. NM 696 476. (SMR NM 64 NE 0011) Later prehistoric occupation is attested by the adjacent group of cairns and cists. Thus, two severely robbed kerbed cairns, described in the 19th century as a “stone circle” or “druidical circle”, are situated in a field adjacent to the house site at NM 6922 4740. (SMR NM 64 NE 0005; OS 1st Ed. 6” Map, 1875; Plan of ... Kinlochalin and Achaforse, 1834) An arc of stones in the SW perimeter of the larger cairn is all that remains on the surface, though excavation of the smaller cairn, in the 1970’s, revealed fragments of cremated bone and sherds of pottery. (Ritchie and Thorner, 1974-5, 22-4; RCAHMS, 1980, 57-8)

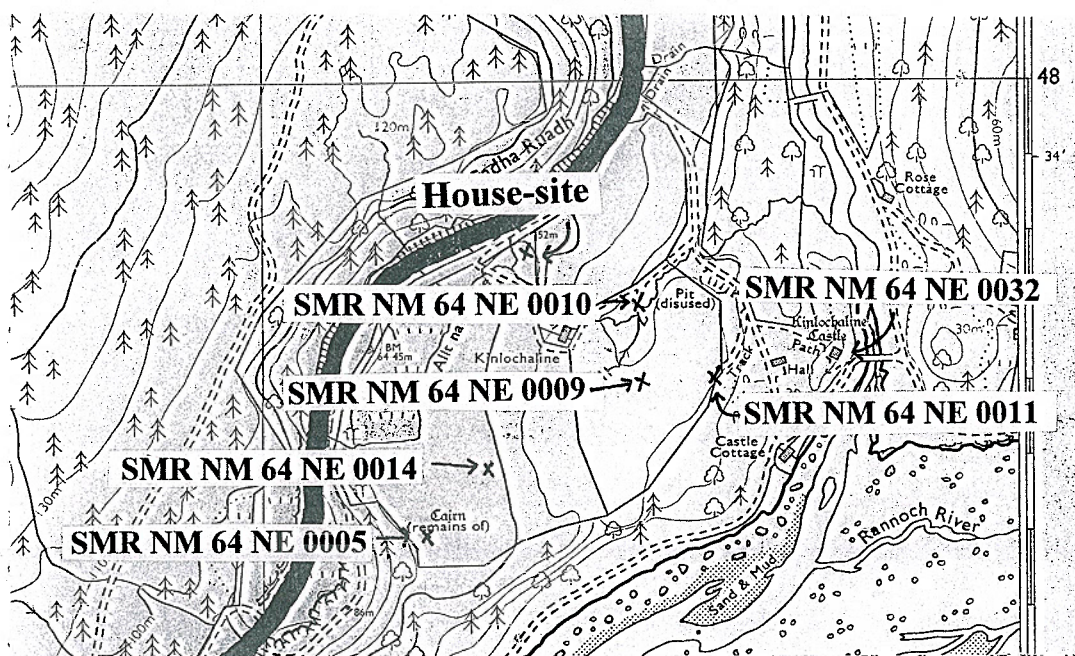


Fig. 2: The site in its archaeological context (extract from OS 1:10,000)

Another cairn, to the SE of Kinlochaline Cottages at NM 695 476, is represented by a “slight swelling in the ground”, while, further North at NM 695 477, four cists were said to have been discovered during the excavation of a sand pit in 1904. (SMR NM 64 NE 0009 and 0010; RCAHMS, 1980,58, 63) All these sites are part of a series of cists and cairns, situated along the Aline Valley, from Kinlochaline to Claggan and Acharn. (Ritchie et al 1974-5; RCAHMS, 1980,48-51; 54-5; 57-8; 63)

Kinlochaline enters the written record in 1390, when lands at “Achagalain” were granted to Lachlan Maclean. (Innes, 1854, 190)¹ A settlement may well have evolved, associated with these lands, though there is no evidence of contemporary remains on the surface. The construction of Kinlochaline Castle in the 15th century and its occupation until the 1690’s may also have had an effect on the surrounding lands, though again there is no surviving evidence of contemporary associated features. (SMR NM 64 NE 0032; RCAHMS, 1980, 205-8)



Fig. 3: Extract from Plan of ... Kinlochalin and Achaforse, 1834.

¹ “Achagalain” may mean “field of the sudden blast”, “field of the sudden glimpse”, or “field of chivalry”. (Dwelly’s Gaelic/English Dictionary)

By the mid-18th century a township, consisting of two groups of buildings accompanied by arable, had evolved at "Kenlochaillyn". (SMR NM 64 NE 0014; Roy's Map, 1747-55) By the early 19th century the settlement is concentrated around the southern group, where ten buildings are recorded accompanied by enclosures and a series of fields. (Plan of ... Kinlochalin and Achaforse, 1834) (See Fig. 3) The house site is situated on an area of pasture, which almost bisects an arable field, named "*Daille – Ghearr*" (? Field of summer grazing). (See Fig. 3)

By 1872, the focus of the settlement had moved again, nearer the site of the present Kinlochaline Cottages (built 1899) and approached by a road, which followed the West side of the Allt na Croite. (OS 1st Ed. 6" Map, 1875; Gaskell, 1968, 136)

5. The Watching Brief.

5.1 Objectives.

The objectives were to conduct a watching brief at the following:

5.1.1 The excavation of the house site and car park.

5.1.2 The excavation of the access road.

5.1.3 The excavation of the service trenches for water and electricity supplies.

5.2 Conditions.

The watching brief took place in a persistent drizzle on the 20th – 21st August 2003 and in mostly dry, cloudy conditions on the 22nd August.

5.3 The Groundworks.

The groundworks were carried out carefully and competently by a local contractor, using a straight edged bucket.

5.3.1 The House site and Car Park

The topsoil was stripped from an area measuring 17.30m N-S by 11m E-W for the house site, with a westward extension, 12.40m N-S by 8.40m for the car park. The topsoil was stripped first to a depth of 0.15m and then to a hard surface of orangey-brown soil at a maximum depth of 0.45m. Three parallel ridges of natural rock outcrops, oriented N-S, were exposed within the house site. **No archaeological features or small finds were recorded.**

5.3.2 The Access Road.

The access road runs from the house site to the old disused road on the SE side of the present A884. (See Fig. 4) The topsoil was stripped first to a depth of 0.15m and then to a hard surface of orangey-brown soil at a maximum depth of 0.45m. There were some signs of disturbance at the bell-mouth along the edge of the old road. **No archaeological features or small finds were recorded.**

5.3.3 The Service Trenches.

Trenches, 0.60m wide and 0.70m deep, were excavated, running southwards from the house for the electricity cables and WSW from the car park for the water supplies. **No archaeological features or small finds were recorded.**

6. Archives.

A set of colour slides showing the work in progress has been deposited with the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Register.



Plate 1. The house site before excavation, from N.

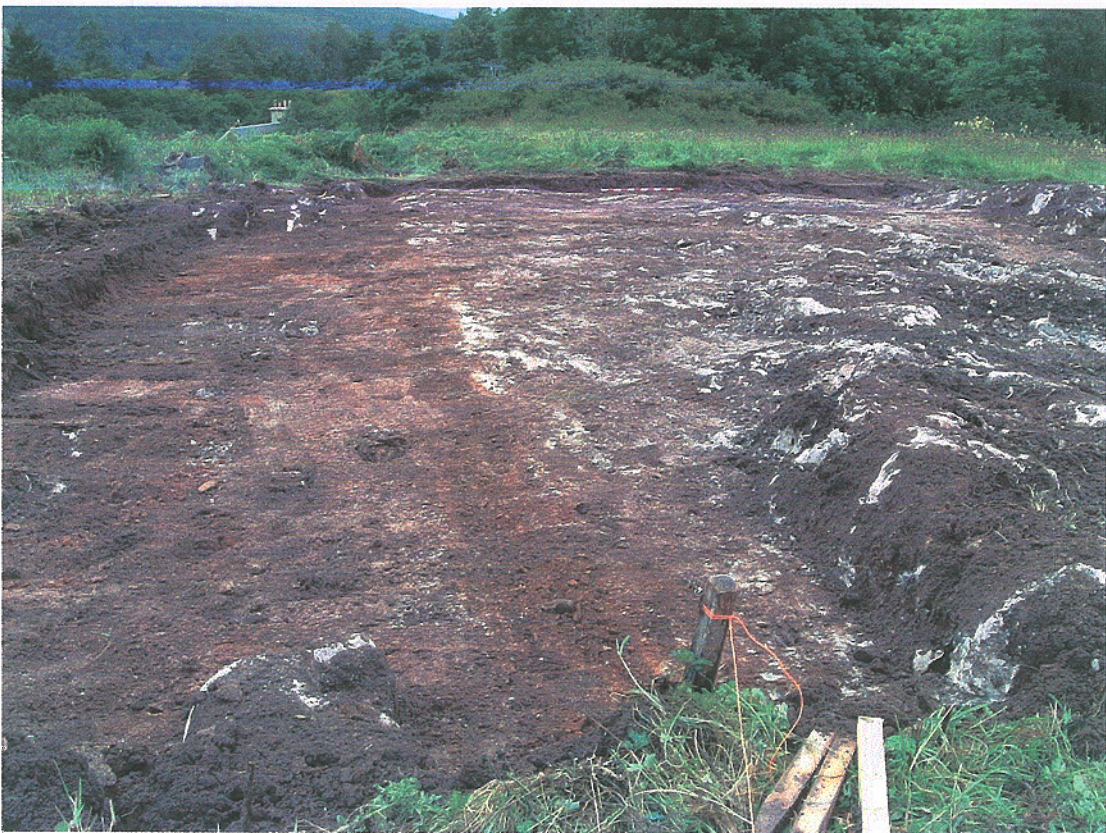


Plate 2. Topsoil stripped from house site, from N.



Plate 3. Stripping the car park to a hard surface, from NE.



Plate 4. Topsoil stripped from the access road, from SW.

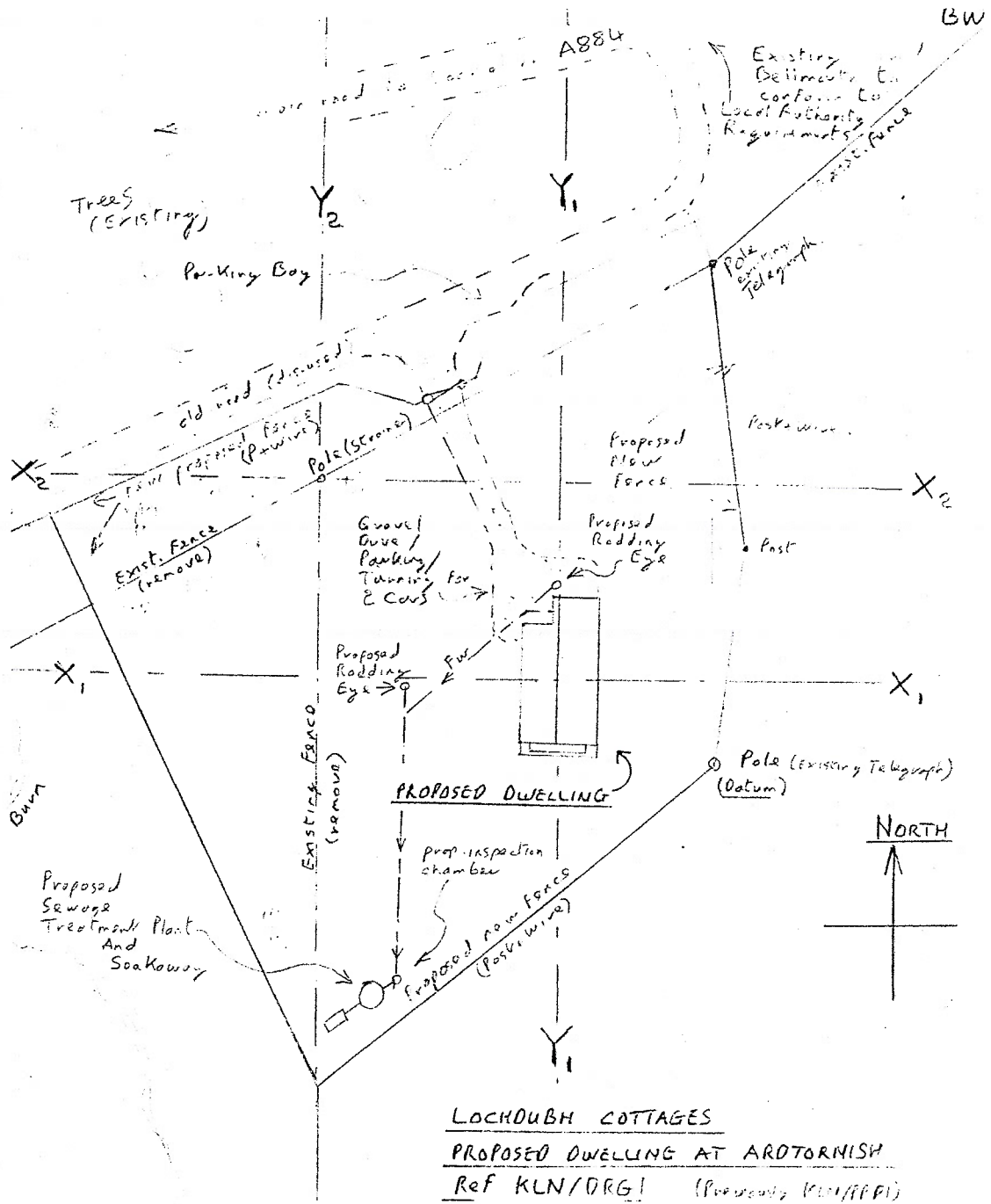


Fig. 4. Site Plan.

Brief for archaeological work at:

**House Site above Kinlochaline Cottages,
Ardtornish, Morvern**

(LO-02-456)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

Archaeology Unit

Background

The application site is located close to a number of prehistoric monuments, including cist graves, cairns and artefact scatters. It is likely that prehistoric remains are not confined to the specific recorded sites and there is the potential for sub-surface archaeological remains to be uncovered during groundworks on the site.

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. A watching brief enables any such discoveries to be recorded quickly and efficiently as they appear with minimum delay or disruption to the development.

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

1) Terms of Reference

This brief has been produced for the applicant who will be responsible for the work, including all tendering and contractual arrangements.

It may be used to obtain estimates from archaeologists, and specifies what we consider to be the *minimum* acceptable standard of work; proposals that present a higher standard may be offered and accepted. *We will assume that this will form the basis of an agreed approach unless changes are agreed with us 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 Archaeology Unit will be pleased to comment in confidence on tenders submitted if required. Any tenders should be accompanied by a project design, statement and evidence of competence, including the CV of the Project Director, and other staff where possible.

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. The Archaeology Unit may also refuse to accept work from, or otherwise take action against, archaeologists who fail to carry out work to these standards.

The area to be covered includes any proposed ancillary works such as landscaping, drains, telecommunication, power and water supplies unless otherwise indicated.

The brief is based on details supplied at the time it was issued. However briefs have to be updated from time to time, so if any of these details do not apply when site works start, or fieldwork commences more than six months from the date below, please contact us to request the latest version. It may differ from previous briefs supplied by us for other projects.

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

2) 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.

3) 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*
- *Any relevant early documentary sources, including old parish records, etc.*

b) **Watching Brief**

A watching brief will be conducted by the archaeologist on all site ground-works, so that any finds or features of importance can be recorded to professional standards. Photographs should be taken during the watching brief to indicate the progress of the work and any features affected. 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 (d)).*

c) **Report**

The archaeologist will produce a brief 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.
- Each excavating machine needs to be watched by at least one archaeologist at all times (1:1 ratio). Work should not begin on site until this cover has been set up.
- 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 (4) below.

Once areas have been cleared, and any archaeology recorded, there should be no need for further archaeological work in these areas.

4) Monitoring

The archaeologist appointed is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with Archaeology Unit staff. We 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 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.

5) 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 3 weeks** of the completion of the field work.

- One paper copy for the Council's Lochaber Area Planning and Building Control Manager, Fulton House, Fort William.
- 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 or other conditions affecting fieldwork.
- Scale plans, and photographs of all significant archaeological features noted.
- A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location.
- A brief 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.

6) Finds

Chance finds can be made during any archaeological fieldwork. Archaeologists should note that 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.

7) 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."

8) 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 Senior Archaeologist.
- fully allow for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland.

Any Health and Safety incidents on site involving the archaeologist must be immediately notified to the Health and Safety Executive.

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

*John Wood
Senior Archaeologist
Tuesday, 10 December 2002*

Programme of Archaeological Work at Kinlochaline, Ardtornish, Morvern.

Jennifer G. Robertson MA PhD FSA Scot. MIFA

12th July 2003

An archaeological watching brief is to be undertaken at the house site above Kinlochaline Cottages, Ardtornish, Morvern, Argyll, PA34 5UZ, in accordance with the specification, issued by the Archaeology Unit of the Highland Council Planning and Development Service. (LO-02-456)

1. The site has already been visited by the writer and no archaeological remains were identified in the immediate vicinity.

2. A desk-based assessment of the area will be carried out in July 2003 and involve the consultation of the following sources:
 - a) The Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), Inverness
 - b) The National Monuments Record for Scotland.
 - c) Aerial photographs held by the Air Photo Unit, RCAHMS and Ardtornish Estate.
 - d) Early cartographic coverage, held by Ardtornish Estate Archive.
 - e) Early documentary sources.

3. A watching brief will be conducted by the writer on all site groundworks at a date to be arranged, probably late July or August. The writer shall notify the Senior Archaeologist, when the date has been confirmed.

4. A report, in accordance with the Highland Council specification, will be produced within three weeks of the completion of fieldwork.