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**Braes Water Main
Portree
Isle of Skye
Highland Region**


Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1453

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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Commissioned by Jacobs UK on behalf of Scottish Water Solutions

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA standard operating procedures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in January and February 2008 during the installation of a section of the Braes water main, Portree, Isle of Skye (NGR: NG 4800 4060 to NG 5008 3905) (Fig. 1.1 – 1.3). The work was commissioned by Jacobs UK on behalf of Scottish Water Solutions.
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief was produced by CFA on behalf of Jacobs UK. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of the Highland Council Archaeology Unit (HCAU).

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Scottish Water Solutions are inserting a water mains pipe that runs from the south of Portree (NGR: NG 477 423) to Conarden (NGR: NG 507 380), with an additional branch line extending from NGR: NG 480 407 to Penifiler (NGR: NG 489 415).
- 1.2.2 A desk-based assessment carried out by Jacobs UK in 2007 (Shaw 2007) identified twenty-six cultural heritage sites (Sites **1 – 26**) within a 100m wide corridor along the proposed route of the water mains pipe. The majority of the sites are of post medieval and modern date, but a prehistoric settlement (Site **13**) (NMRS No. NG44SE 7) consisting of four hut circles (**A – D**) was identified at Lon A' Ghleannain (NGR: 484 405) and a souterrain (Site **22**) (NMRS No. NG53NW 8) was identified near Camastianavaig (NGR: 50 39).
- 1.2.3 In response to the close proximity of these prehistoric sites to the line of the water main, mitigation measures were implemented by HCAU requiring an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken on the section that runs between the road junction at Peinmore (NGR: NG 4800 4060) and the road junction at Camastianavaig (NGR: NG 5008 3905) (Fig. 1.1 – 1.3). Further cultural heritage features within close proximity to this section of water main include three gravel pits (Sites **14**, **15** and **20**), a farmstead and field system (Site **16**) (NMRS No. NG43NE 7), possible cairns (Site **17**) (NMRS No. NG43NE 14), two further field systems (Sites **18** and **21**) (NMRS No. NG43NE 9 and NG53NW 47) and an enclosure and possible shieling huts (Site **19**) (NMRS No. NG43NE 8).
- 1.2.4 Hut circles **A** and **B** (Site **13**) were fenced off prior to the commencement of the programme of works in order to protect them during all ground-breaking operations.
- 1.2.5 The route of the water main ran through an area of heathland, which contained small parcels of improved land. The improved land largely consisted of rig and furrow agriculture, bordered by a network of earth banks. Much of the area of heathland had been exploited for the extraction of peat. A number of the peat banks are still in current use.

- 1.2.6 A previous watching brief (Conolly and Wilkinson 2001) carried out along the route of the water main during the excavation of trial pits did not identify any significant deposits.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to determine the location, character, extent and quality of any features or objects of archaeological importance that may survive within the application area, and which may be damaged or destroyed by this development.

2. WORKING METHODS

- 2.1.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.
- 2.1.2 Ground-breaking work for the pipeline involved excavating a 1m deep by 0.5m wide track using a 360° excavator equipped with a 0.5m wide toothed bucket. The use of a smooth bucket was not practical due to the level of bedrock encountered. All ground-breaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision.
- 2.1.3 All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Three digit numbers in bold refer to contexts listed in Appendix 2.
- 3.1.2 The nature of the topsoil (**001**) along the route of the water main showed a considerable degree of variation both in terms of depth and type. Within areas of unimproved heathland, it generally consisted of peat overlying grey and reddish brown clay. In places, the peat had a depth of greater than 1m, but it reduced to no more than c. 0.1m on some of the higher knolls where bedrock was encountered immediately below it. Where the ground was better draining and had been improved for agricultural purposes, principally within the area of Site **16**, the topsoil consisted of c. 0.2m of mid brown silt overlying reddish brown sandy gravel. A further variation was identified within enclosures **014** and **016**, where a thin layer of fibrous turf overlay reddish brown sandy gravel subsoil. The presence of rig and furrow cultivation within these enclosures suggests that the reddish brown sandy gravel may have been reasonably fertile.
- 3.1.3 The features identified form part of a much wider pre-improvement agricultural landscape consisting of settlements, rig and furrow cultivation and

field banks. A detailed breakdown of the features affected by the water main is given below.

3.2 Archaeological Features (Fig. 1.1 – Fig 1.3)

Bank 003

- 3.2.3 Bank **003** appears to have been a substantial field boundary, which continued for a considerable distance both to the north and the south of the water main trench. Where it was cut by the water main, it measured 3.2m in width by 0.5m in height and consisted of a peaty material (**003**), which was slightly more fibrous than the underlying peat topsoil (**001**). In other locations, the bank had been constructed from earth and stone and the preservation was often considerably better with it having a maximum height of c.1m and a width of c.1.5m. This would perhaps indicate that there had been a considerable degree of slumping in the location where it was crossed by the water main trench. The full extent of this feature was not identified.

Rig and Furrow 004 and Bank 005

- 3.2.4 Bank **005** bordered the northern and eastern edges of two areas of rig and furrow (**004**), consisting of a main irregular area with an adjoining triangular area to the north. The line of the water main was diverted slightly to avoid the main area of rig and furrow, but it cut through the small triangular area where the rig and furrow was less well preserved. Where the rig and furrow (**004**) was cut by the water main trench, it measured c.8m from crest to crest and was upstanding to a height of c.0.4m. The material forming the rigs (**004**) consisted of silty peat, which overlay peat topsoil (**001**). Bank **005** also consisted of silty peat. It had a width of c.1.8m and a height of c.0.5m and was bordered to the east by a ditch with a width of c.1.5m and a depth of c.0.25m. Elsewhere, bank **005** showed evidence of stone being used in its construction and was upstanding to a maximum height of c.0.8m.

Bank 006

- 3.2.5 Bank **006** (Fig. 2) was elliptical in plan, looping out from the line of the modern road. In the location where the bank was cut by the water main trench, it measured c.1.4m in width by c.0.45m in height and the material (**006**) used in its construction consisted of mid-brown silt. Following the line of the inside of the bank, there was an area of flat ground where the natural slope of the hill had been quarried into to obtain the material for the construction of the bank. The flat area measured c.1.8m in width and had been cut into the subsoil to a depth of c.0.15m. A layer of peat (**008**) with a depth of c.0.2m had built up in the flattened area between the bank and the natural slope of the hillside.

Line of Stones 009

- 3.2.6 Line of stones **009** ran in a south west to north east direction for a distance of c.30m from the edge of the modern road to the edge of a large enclosure. It

consisted of a single line of stones, which measured up to 0.5m in length and were set at intervals up to c.0.3m apart. It may originally have been a length of wall, with the majority of the material having been robbed out and used elsewhere. The line of the water main passed through a gap in the feature and therefore disturbance was minimal.

Bank 010

- 3.2.7 Bank **010** ran parallel with stones **009**, tying in with the same large enclosure to the north east. Where the bank was cut by the water main, it measured c.1.8m in width by 0.5m in height and was constructed from mid brown silt (**010**), which was the same colour and consistency as the underlying topsoil (**001**).

Quarry Scoop 011

- 3.2.8 Quarry scoop **011** had been cut into the side of a low knoll to the west of Site **16**. It measured c.10m in diameter by a maximum of 2m deep.

Enclosure 012

- 3.2.9 Enclosure **012** (Fig. 3 and 4) is believed to be associated with the farmstead of Acres/Muclach (Site **16**). The enclosure measured 25m north west to south east by 19m north east to south west. It had an entranceway in the south eastern bank and much of the south western bank had been removed by the construction of the modern road. The banks (**012**) forming the enclosure measured c.1.8m wide by 0.4m high and had been constructed using mid brown silt.

Line of Stones 013

- 3.2.10 Line of stones **013** was roughly north to south orientated and consisted of a single line of stones with a length of c.25m. The stones measured up to 0.6m in length and were up to c.0.4m apart. It was very similar in nature to feature **009**.

Enclosures 014/016 and Rig and Furrow 015/017

- 3.2.11 Enclosures **014** (Fig 5) and **016** (Fig. 7) and rig and furrow **015** (Fig. 6) and **017** all constitute elements of the field system recorded by the NMRS at Allt Osglan (Site **21**) (NMRS No. NG53NW 47). Both enclosures were irregular in shape and were conjoined at one end to form a rough figure of 8 shape. The banks (**014** and **016**) forming the enclosures typically measured c.1.5m in width by 0.7m in height and had been constructed from reddish brown sandy silt. Stone had also been used in places during the construction of the banks, but it was not present where they were cut by the water main. Bank **014** enclosed rig and furrow **015** and bank **016** enclosed rig and furrow **017**.

- 3.2.10 Rig and furrow **015** measured c. 7m from crest to crest and stood to a height of 0.3m above the subsoil and rig and furrow **017** measured c.9m crest to crest

and stood to a height of 0.3m above the subsoil. Both areas of rig and furrow consisted of reddish brown silty and overlying reddish brown sandy gravel natural.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A watching brief was carried out during ground breaking works for the section of the Braes water main pipe that runs between the road junction at Peinmore and the road junction at Camustianavaig. This area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive because it contained a prehistoric settlement and a series of post-medieval field systems.
- 4.2 The line of water main pipe cut across a series of field banks and areas of rig and furrow. All these features were visible on the surface and are considered to be part of a wider pre-improvement agricultural landscape. They are believed to be post-medieval in date.
- 4.3 A summary statement of the results of this watching brief, submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4), will be sufficient to disseminate the results of this work.

5. REFERENCES

Conolly R and Wilkinson E, 2001, 'Portree to Camastianavaig, Sky (Portree Parish): Desk-based assessment: survey: watching brief' *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, 2001, 62

Shaw C, 2007, *Braes Water Mains, Portree, Skye, Highland Region: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Walkover Survey*: Unpublished Jacobs UK data structure report

APPENDIX 1

Photographic Register

Colour Slide: Film 1

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-10	General working shots	Various	Various
11-12	Field bank 003 partially excavated	South	Overcast
13-14	Field bank 003 general shot	South	Overcast
15-16	Field bank 003 , south facing section	South	Overcast
17-18	Rig and furrow 004 , pre-excavation	East	Overcast
19-20	General shot of enclosure containing rig and furrow 004	SE	Overcast
21-22	Field bank 005 pre-excavation	East	Overcast
23-24	Rig and furrow 004 south facing section	South	Sun
25-26	Enclosure bank 006 , pre-excavation	South	Overcast
27-28	Line of stones 009	SE	Rain
29-30	Field bank 010 pre-excavation	SE	Rain
31-32	Enclosure bank 012 SW facing section	SW	Overcast
33-34	Enclosure 012 general	SE	Overcast
35-36	Enclosure 012 general	NE	Overcast

Colour Slide: Film 2

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-2	Quarry scoop 011	NW	Rain
3-4	Field bank 010 SW facing section	SW	Overcast
5-6	Field bank 006 general	SE	Overcast
7-8	Line of stones 013	South	Overcast
9-10	Enclosure bank 014 NW side pre-excavation	SW	Overcast
11-12	Enclosure bank 014 SE side pre-excavation	SW	Overcast
13-14	Rig and furrow 015 general	SW	Sun
15-16	Enclosure bank 016 NW side pre-excavation	SW	Sun
17-18	Enclosure bank 016 SE side pre-excavation	SW	Sun
19-20	Rig and furrow 017 general	South	Sun
21-22	Rig and furrow 017 general	SW	Sun
23-24	Bank 014 SE side, NE facing section	NE	Sun
25-26	Enclosure 014 general shot showing line of water main	SE	Sun
27-30	Enclosure 016 SE side, SW facing section	SW	Sun
31-36	General working shots of area near Camastianavaig crossroads.	Various	Sun

APPENDIX 2

Context Register

Context	Description
001	Topsoil
002	Subsoil
003	Material forming field bank
004	Soil forming rig and furrow
005	Material forming field bank
006	Material forming enclosure bank
007	Cut for levelled area bordering enclosure bank 006
008	Fill of ditch 007
009	Line of stones
010	Material forming field bank
011	Cut of quarry scoop
012	Material forming enclosure bank
013	Line of stones
014	Material forming enclosure bank
015	Material forming rig and furrow
016	Material forming enclosure bank
017	Material forming rig and furrow
018	Turf

APPENDIX 3

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet	Description	Scale	Section/Plan
1	1	Bank 003 south facing section	1:20	Section
2	1	Rig and furrow 004 and bank 005 SE facing section	1:100	Section
3	2	Bank 006 S facing section	1:20	Section
4	3	Bank 010 SW facing section	1:20	Section
5	3	Enclosure 012 SW facing section through SE bank	1:20	Section
6	4	Enclosure 012 plan	1:100	Plan
7	4	Enclosure 012 SW facing section across feature	1:100	Section
8	5	Rig and furrow 015 SW facing section	1:50	Section
9	5	Enclosure 014 SW facing section through SE bank	1:20	Section
10	5	Enclosure 016 SW facing section through NE bank	1:20	Section
11	6	Enclosure 016 SW facing section through SE bank	1:20	Section
12	6	Rig and furrow 017 SW facing section	1:50	Section

APPENDIX 4

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Highland Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Braes Water main, Portree, Isle of Skye, Highland Region
PROJECT CODE:	POJA
PARISH:	Portree
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Magnus Kirby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NG44SE 7, NG43NE 7, NG53NW 47
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Hut circles/Prehistoric settlement, Farmstead/Field system, Field system
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 Figures)	NG 4800 4060 to NG 5008 3905
START DATE (this season)	January 2007
END DATE (this season)	February 2007
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Conolly R and Wilkinson E, 2001, 'Portree to Camastianavaig, Sky (Portree Parish): Desk-based assessment: survey: watching brief' <i>Discovery and Excavation in Scotland, 2001, 62</i>
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out to the south of Portree, Isle of Skye during ground breaking works for the section of the Braes water main pipe that runs between the road junction at Peinmore and the road junction at Camastianavaig. This area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive because it contained a prehistoric settlement and a series of post-medieval field systems. The line of water main pipe cut across a series of field banks and areas of rig and furrow. All these features were visible on the surface and are considered to be part of a wider pre-improvement agricultural landscape. They are all believed to be post-medieval in date.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Scottish Water Solutions
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS) Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

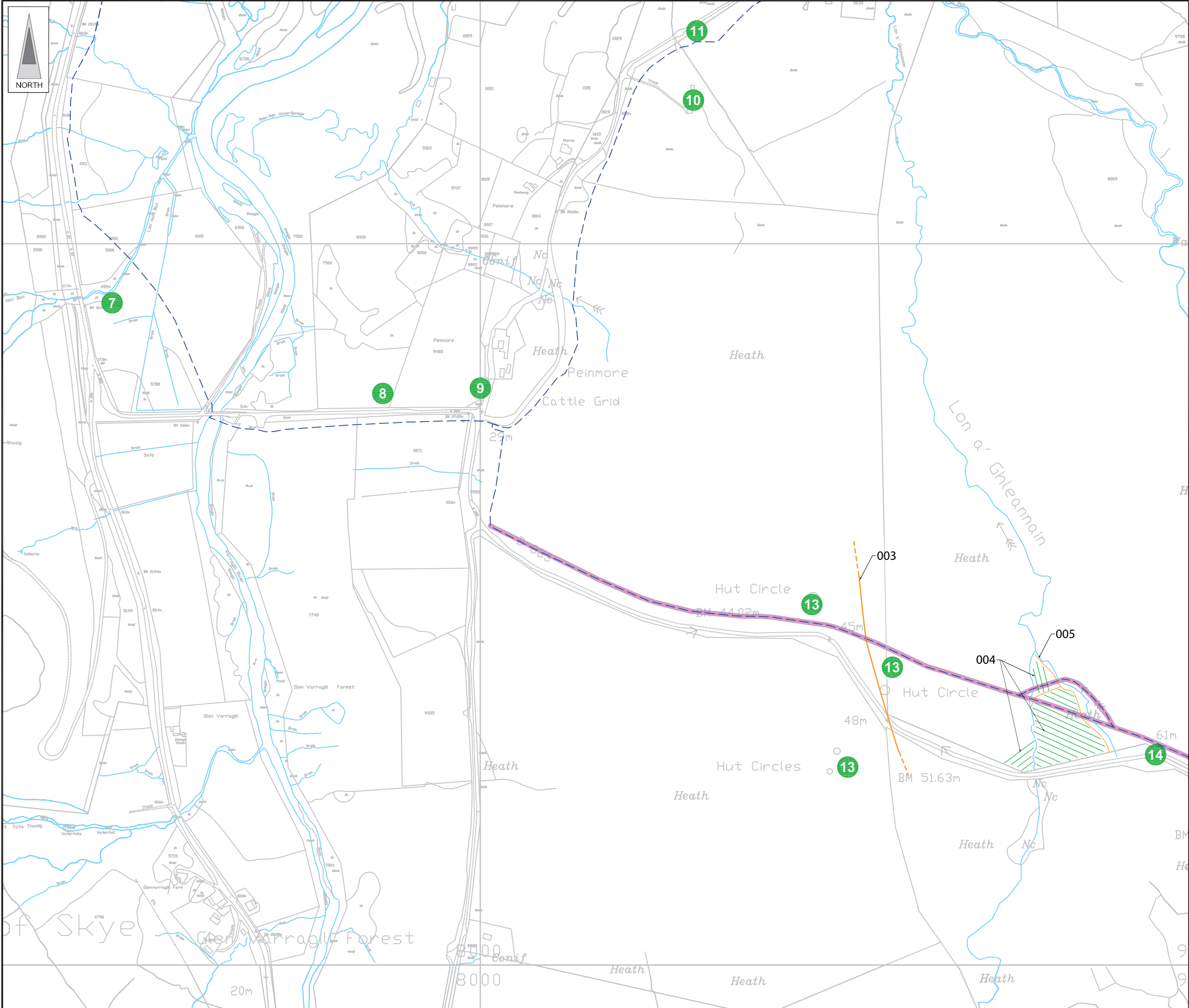
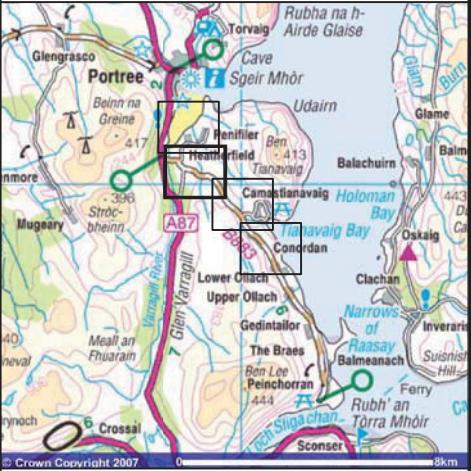


FIGURE 1.1



LEGEND

- Archaeological Sites
- Existing Pipeline
- Proposed Pipeline

Sites added by CFA Archaeology Ltd

- Archaeological Sites
- Rig and Furrow

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Client	SCOTTISH WATER		
Project	Skye Braes Water Treatment Works		
Title	Location map and archaeological features Sheet 1 of 3		
Drawing Status	DRAFT		
JB No.	B0570000		
Figure No.	FIGURE 1.1		Revisions
Scale	1:5,000 @ A3		Date Nov 2007
Drawn	SC	Checked	Approved

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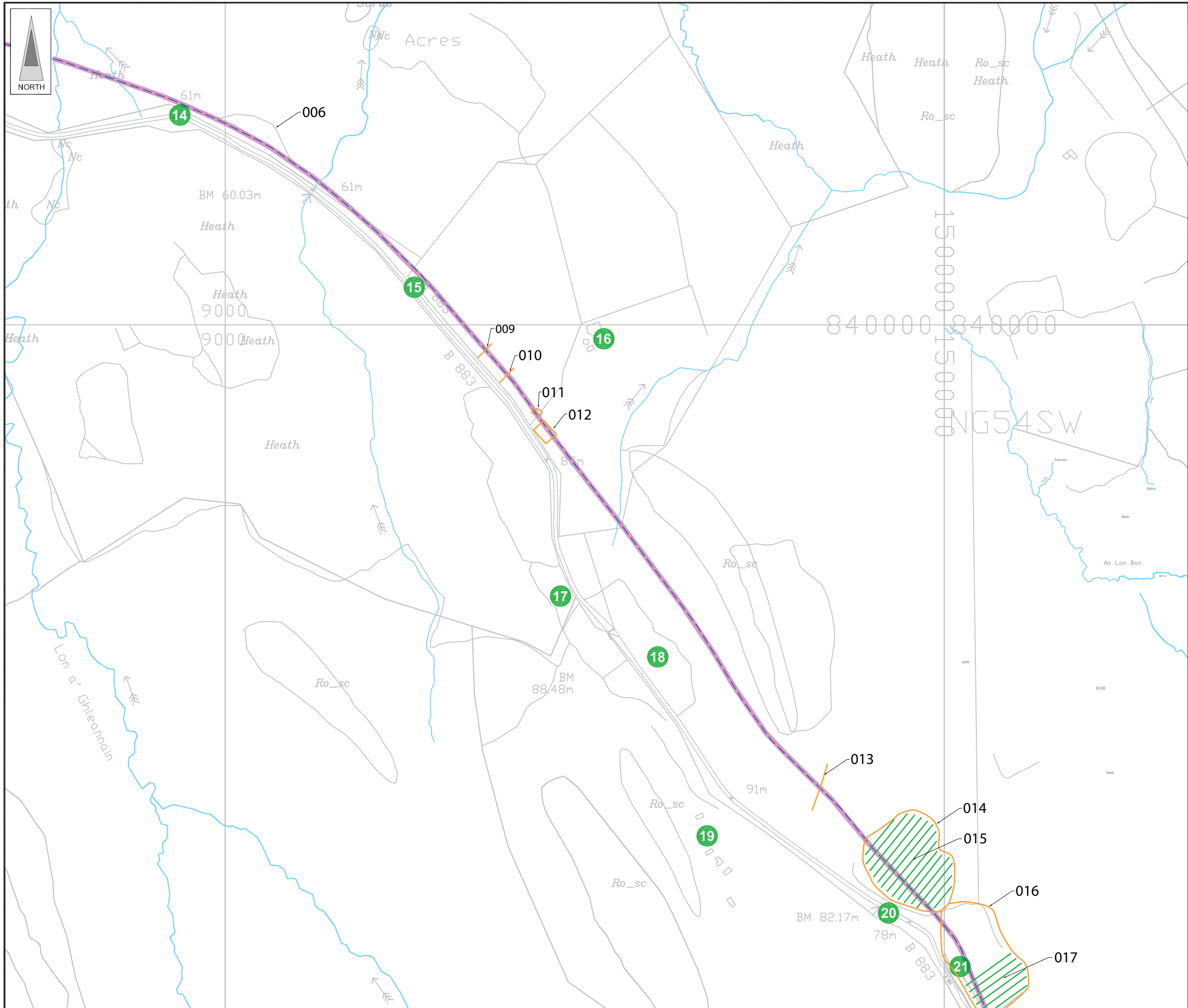
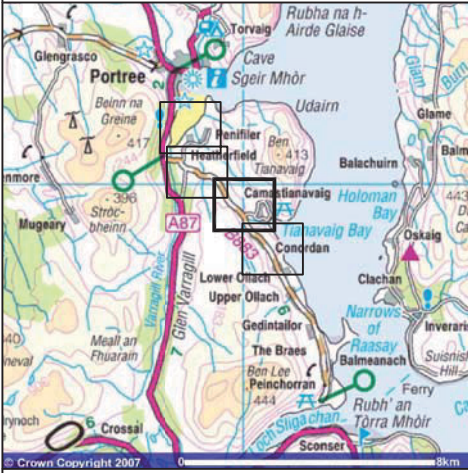


FIGURE 1.2



LEGEND

1

Archaeological Sites

Existing Pipeline

Proposed Pipeline

Sites added by CFA Archaeology Ltd

Archaeological Sites

Rig and Furrow

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Rev	Date	Purpose of Revision	Drwn	Chkd	Appd
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Client	<div><div>SCOTTISH</div><div>WATER</div></div>				
Project	Skye Braes Water Treatment Works				
Title	Location map and archaeological features Sheet 2 of 3				
Drawing Status	DRAFT				
JB No.	B05700000				
Figure No.	FIGURE 1.2		Revisions		
Scale	1:5,000 @ A3		Date	Nov 2007	
Drawn	SC	Checked	-	Approved	-

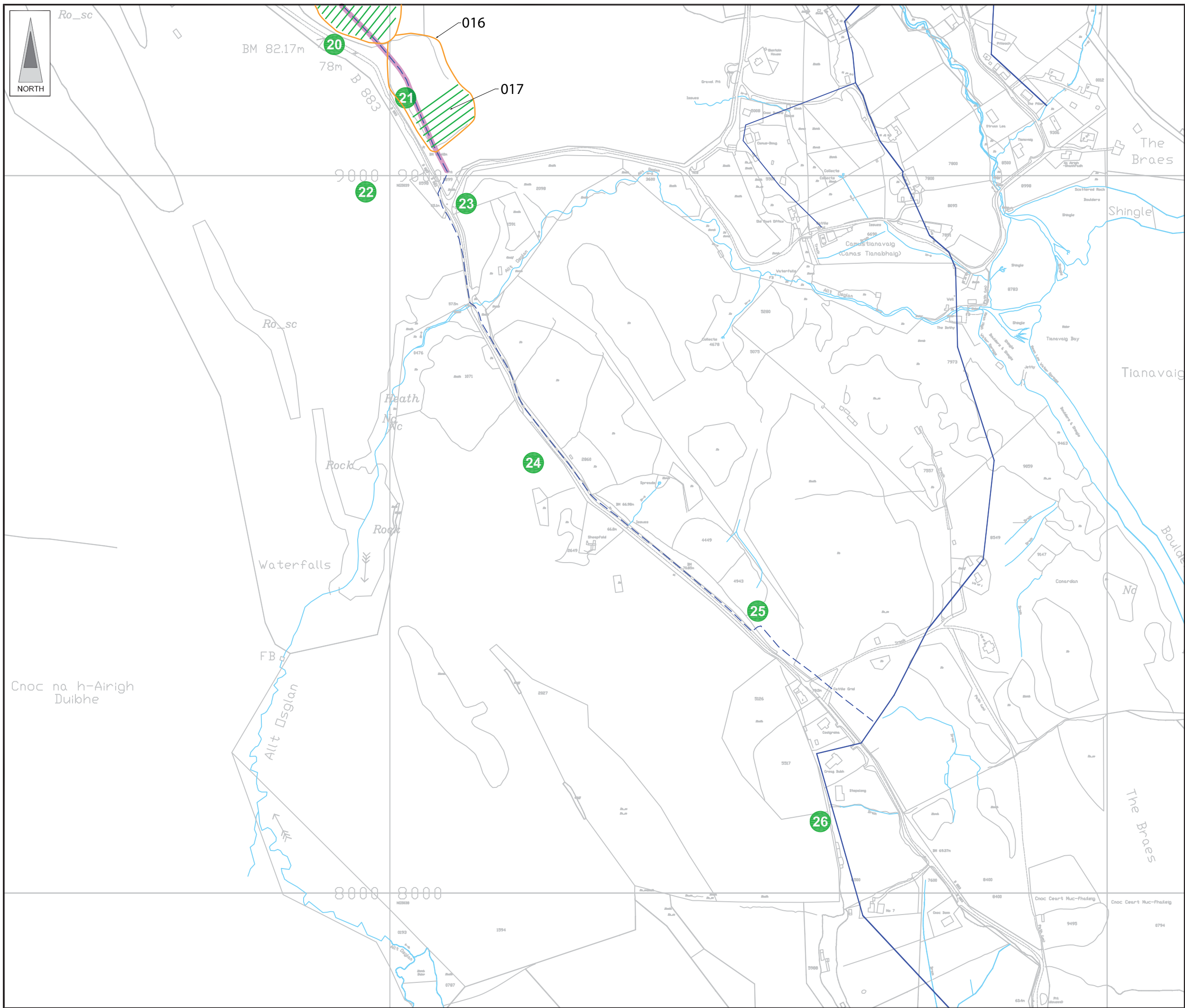
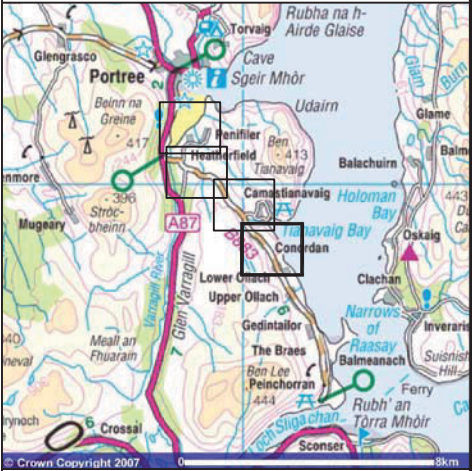


FIGURE 1.3



- LEGEND**
- 1 Archaeological Sites
 - Existing Pipeline
 - Proposed Pipeline

- Sites added by CFA Archaeology Ltd**
- Archaeological Sites
 - Rig and Furrow

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Rev	Date	Purpose of Revision	Drwn	Chkd	Appd
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Client	SCOTTISH WATER				
Project	Skye Braes Water Treatment Works				
Title	Location map and archaeological features Sheet 3 of 3				
Drawing Status	DRAFT				
JB No.	B0570000				
Figure No.	FIGURE 1.3				Revisions
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Drawn	SC	Checked	-	Approved	-

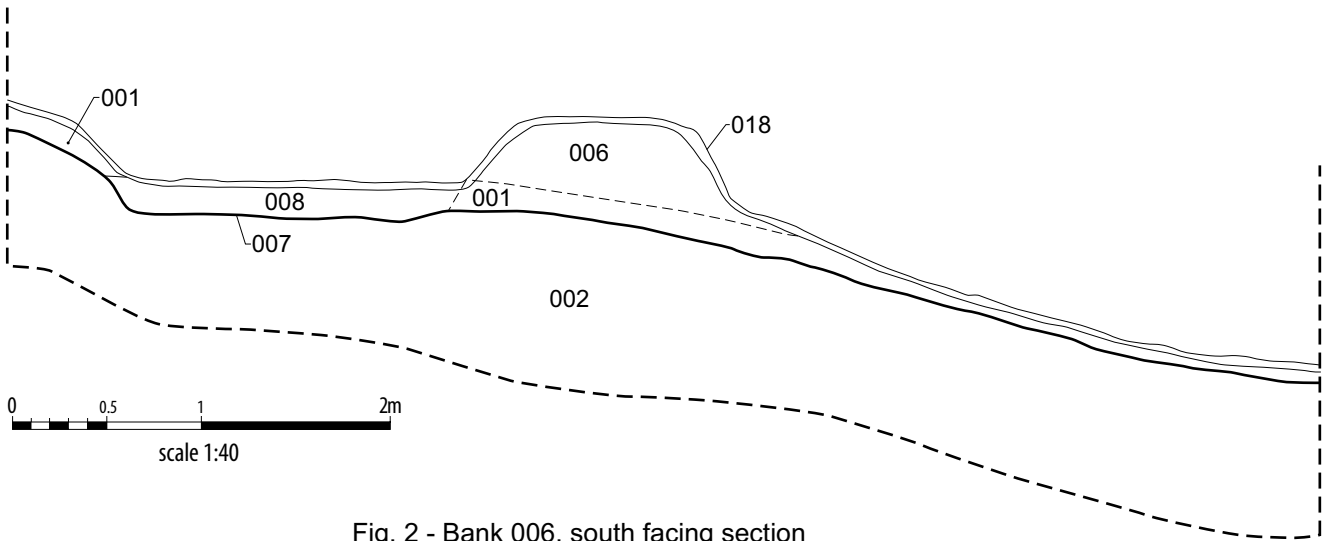


Fig. 2 - Bank 006, south facing section

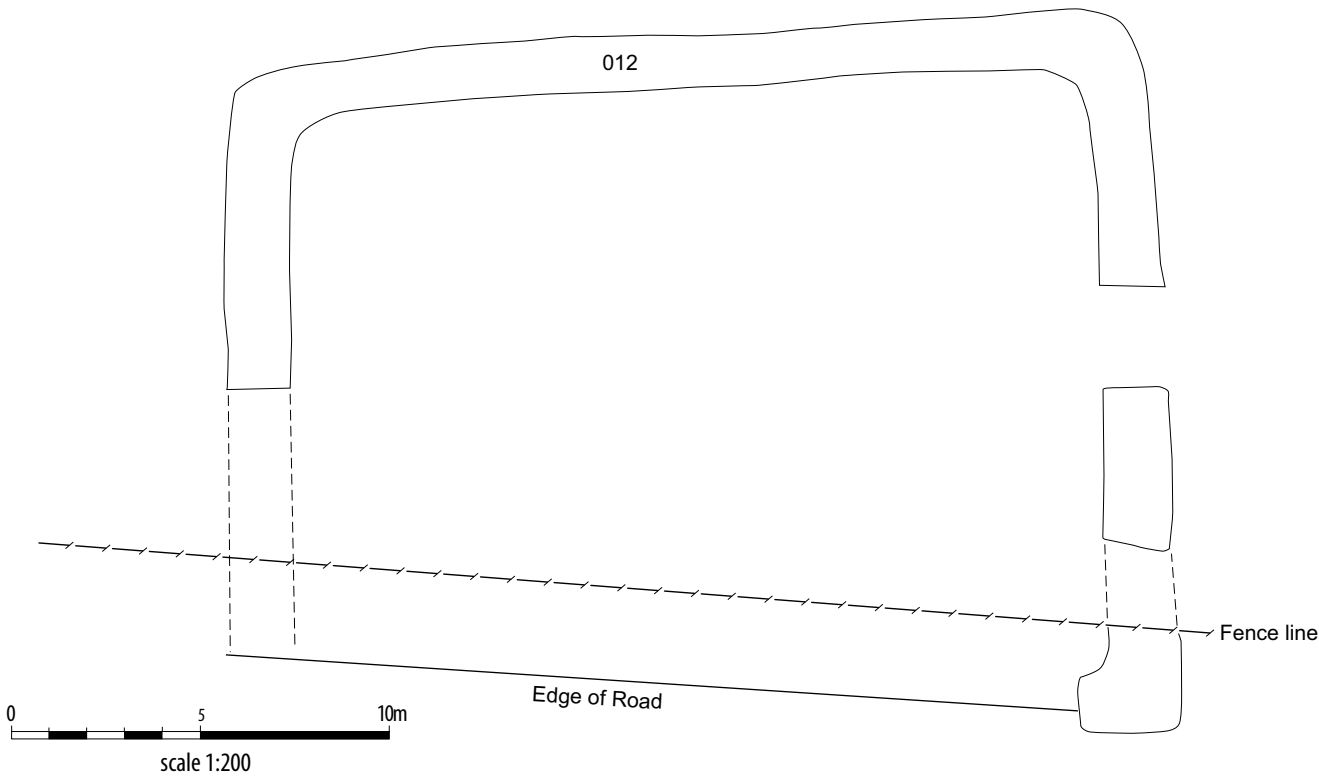


Fig. 3 - Enclosure Bank 012, plan

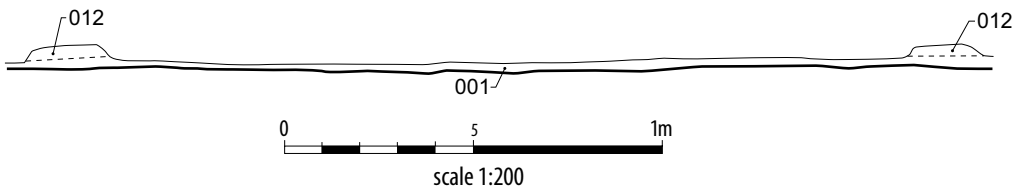


Fig. 4 - Enclosure Bank 012, SW facing section



Key:

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Figs. No:	2-4	Revision:	A	Client:	
Title:					
Project:	Braes Road Water Mains, Portree				



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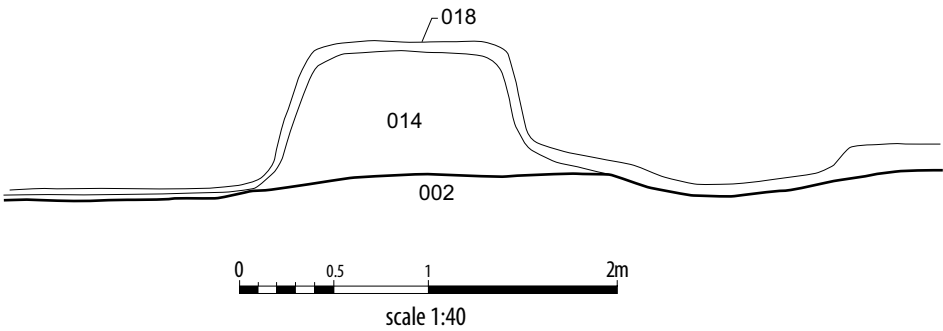


Fig. 5 - Enclosure bank 006, south facing section

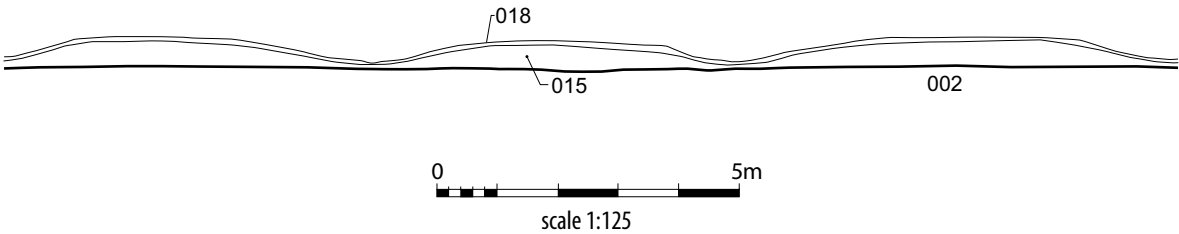


Fig. 6 - Rig and furrow 015, SW facing section

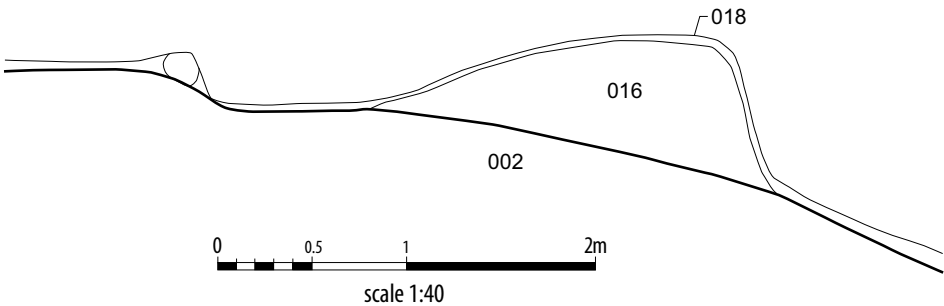


Fig. 7 - Enclosure bank 016, SW facing section



Key:

Scale:

Figs. No:	5-7	Revision:	A	Client:
Title:				
Project:	Braes Road Water Mains, Portree			



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