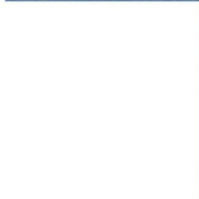
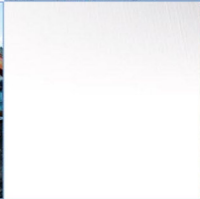
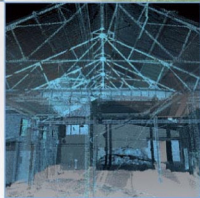
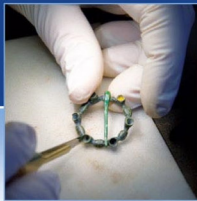


# Fearnan, Aberfeldy, Perthshire: Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

AOC 26049  
29<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
OASIS No: 1-433734



# Fearnan, Aberfeldy, Perthshire: Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

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**National Grid Reference (NGR):** NN72188 44437

**AOC Project No:** 26049

**Planning Application No:** 19/02121/FLL

**OASIS No:** 1-433734

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**Date of Fieldwork:** 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Date of Report:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021

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

**Author:** Nick Johnstone

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Approved by:** Rob Engl

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

**Draft/Final Report Stage:** Draft

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

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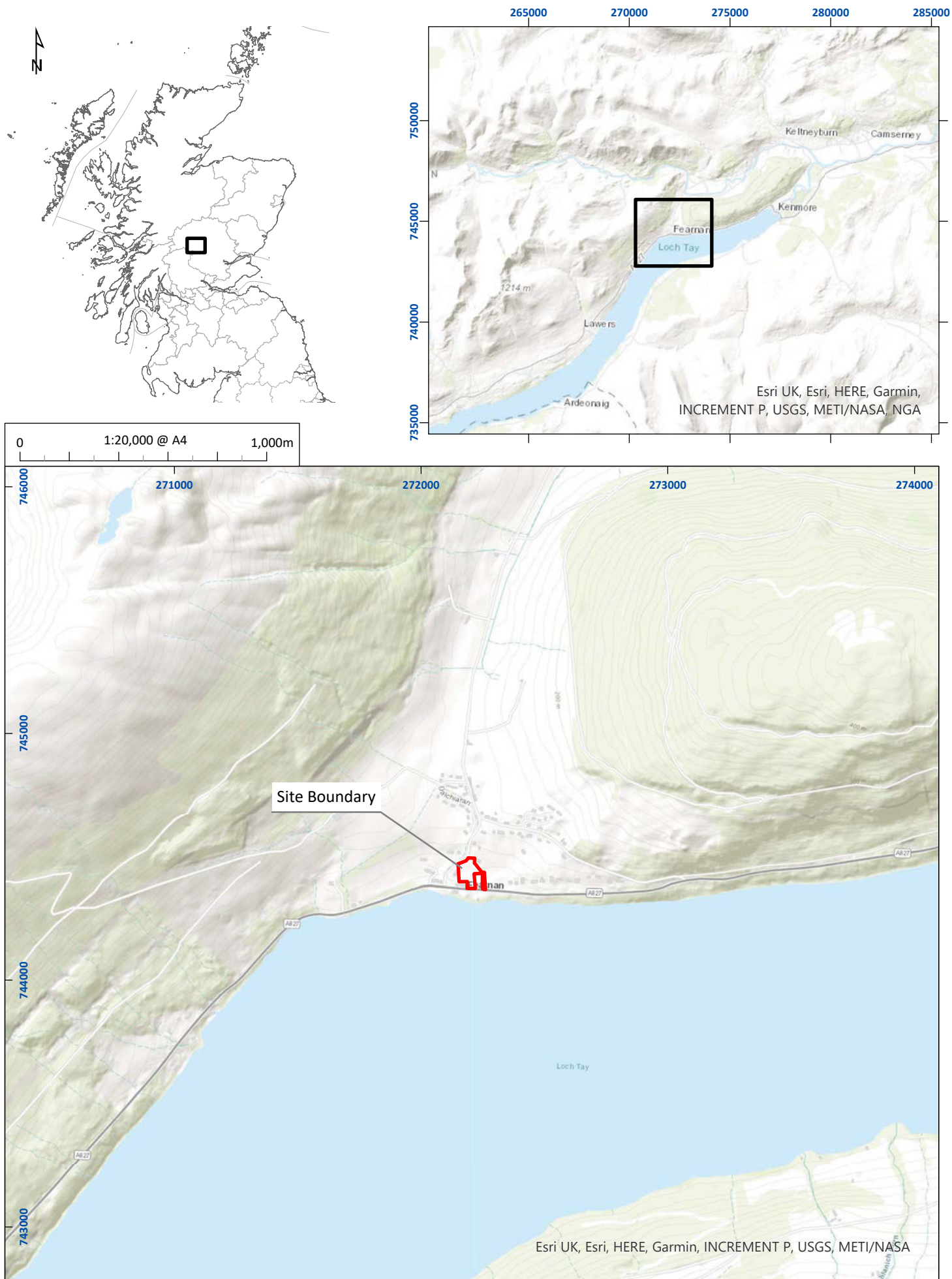


Figure 1: Site location plan

01/26049/DSR/01/01

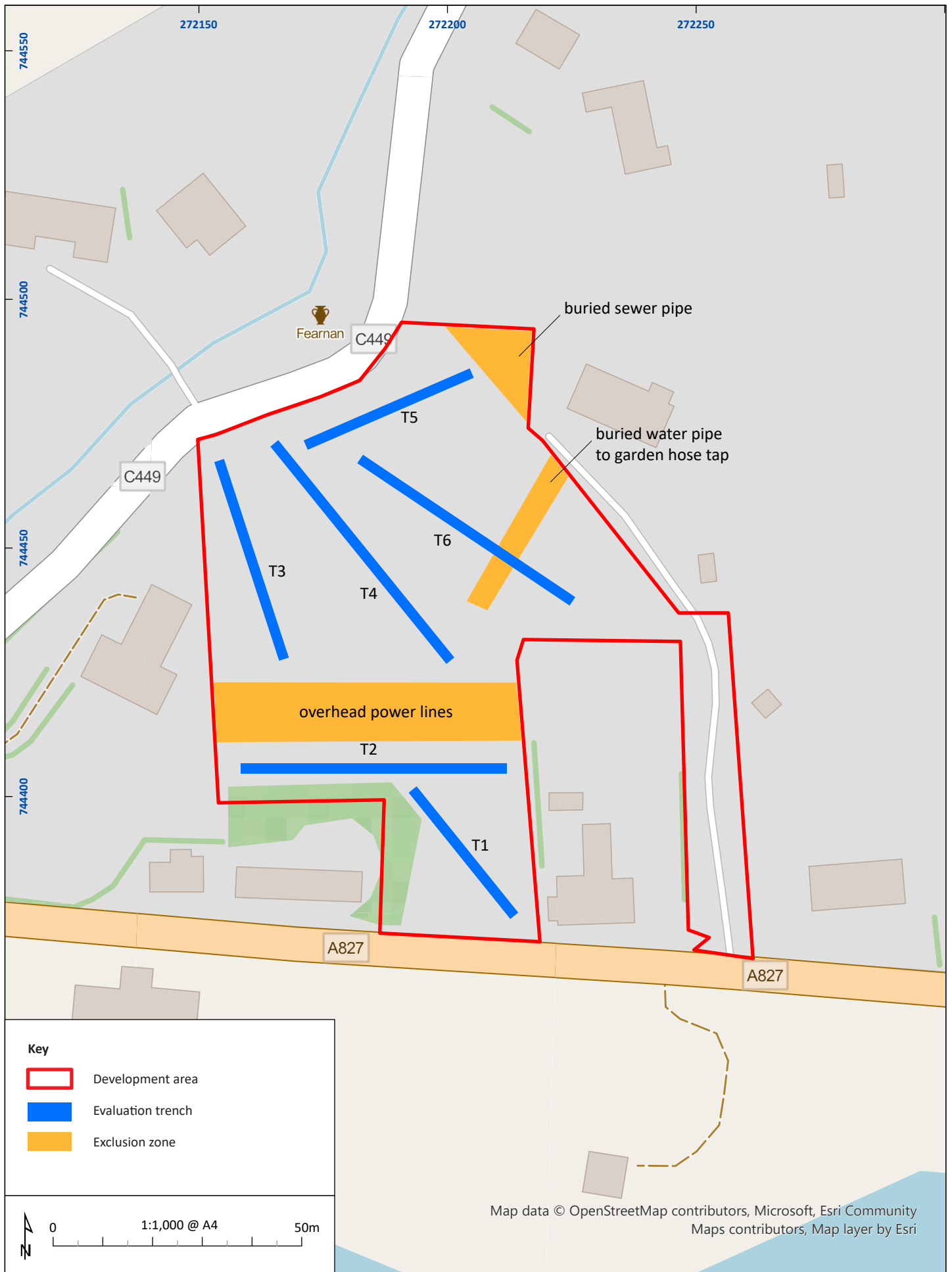


Figure 2: Trench location plan

01/26049/DSR/02/01

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## ABSTRACT

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A programme of archaeological works consisting of an archaeological evaluation was required as a condition of planning consent prior to development of land at Fearnan, Aberfeldy on behalf of McKenzie Strickland Associates (on behalf of their client AKG Homes).

The archaeological evaluation totalled 233 linear metres and revealed a largely sterile, unimproved topsoil and underlying colluvial subsoil. Depths varied between 0.1m on the high ground to 1.5m in low lying hollows. The natural horizon was composed of sandy-clays and gravel with frequent rocks. This contained many large rounded and angular boulders.

No archaeologically significant features or finds were observed.

No further archaeological works are recommended.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 A programme of archaeological works was required by McKenzie Strickland Associates on behalf of their client AKG Homes ahead of the proposed construction of four residential houses and associated infrastructure at land at Fearnan, Aberfeldy (Planning Ref. 19/02121/FLL). The site lies within the administrative area of Perth & Kinross Council, which is advised on Archaeological matters by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT). The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principles as set out in Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011) and consisted of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching.

### 1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The site is currently utilized as open pasture looking out on Loch Tay and covers a total of c.7,985 m<sup>2</sup> located at NGR NN 72188 44437. The site is bounded to the south by the A827 and to the north by a local road. Existing dwellings are present to the west, south-west, south-east and north-east.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (taken from AOC WSI 2021)

2.1 No known archaeological sites are present within the development boundary. However, the proposed development sits within a rich archaeological landscape and there is the potential for encountering unknown features and material.

### 2.2 Prehistoric and Roman (8000 BC-AD 410)

2.2.1 Several Crannogs are situated close to the site on the northern shore of Loch Tay. The Crannog **Canmore ID 25035** is situated 50m from the N shore and 'just off' the pier at Tigh-an-Loan Hotel, Fearnan. It measures between 28m and 33m in diameter, and the highest point (which has probably been built up to hold a marker-post) is about 0.9m below the normal level of the loch; at its base it measures about 2m in depth towards the shore and about 4.5m on the opposite side. In 1979 examination revealed structural timberwork (including a 'beam with a mortice slot') on and around the crannog; one of the piles was dated by radiocarbon assay to 525 +/- 55 BC (GU-1322).

2.2.2 The Oakbank Crannog (**Canmore ID 25024**) is situated further to the east. An initial examination in 1979 revealed that the main mound of the crannog measured up to about 25m in diameter; the highest point was about 1m below the normal level of the loch and the bottom was at a depth of 2m on the landward (NW) side and about 3.6m on the SE.

2.2.2.1 On the SW there was noted a 'smaller circular feature', possibly the remains of a landing-stage, measuring about 7m in diameter and linked to the main mound by a scatter of boulders. In the angle to the S were noted oak and soft-wood piles and probable softwood planks; at least one oak pile projected from the top. Radiocarbon assay of two piles (one from the top of the crannog and the other from the loch-bed to the S) yielded dates of 595 +/- 55 BC (GU-1323) and 460 +/- 60 BC (GU-1325) respectively. Two rows of piles on the N and a ridge of bottom material were all that remained of a causeway to the shore.

2.2.2.2 In 1980 trial excavation uncovered an array of soft and hardwood piles embedded in a matrix of bracken, moss, twigs and other organic matter between 1.5m and 2m deep; two of the piles (possibly from the last phase of use) were radiocarbon-dated to 410 +/- 60 BC (GU-1463) and 455 +/- 60 BC (GU-1464). Fragments of iron slag were found with basket-and hurdle-work, numerous small wooden artifacts (including a peg, a whistle and a spindle-whorl), whetstones and other worked stones and vegetable debris which included cereal remains and cultivation weeds.



- 2.2.2.3 In 1981 further excavation took place in the centre of the crannog. Removal of the overlying large boulders revealed a layer of small stones and occasional timbers which probably formed a log floor and a timber wall; the upper floor timbers were removed to expose a second floor beneath. Excavation towards the N edge of the mound revealed a band of large stones overlying a sloping deposit of organic materials, piles and timbers which had been formed by the partial collapse of the structure; three of the timbers were mortised. Finds included a jet ring, a stone bead, several probable stone net-rings, part of a possible rotary quern; a plate, a dish and a paddle of wood were also found.
- 2.2.2.4 Oakbank is a multiphase site and there is some evidence for the existence of two distinct structural phases. One perhaps antedates the other or served as an extension possibly with a different function. Much of the outline of supporting piles for the dwellings has been defined, but substantial areas are still obscured by overlying boulders. The principal aim in 1990 was to remove as many of the overlying boulders as possible in order to establish the complete outline plan of the structures.
- 2.2.2.5 Soon after the 1990 project began, it became apparent that all of the boulders could not be removed in the allocated time, even with the help of our custom-made underwater 'dump-truck'. It was decided to determine the diameter of the main dwelling, which entailed one team working in the shallows (1-2 metres) and another team in the deeper water (about 4 metres). Between them the two teams removed more than 20 tons of boulders, revealing worked stone objects, structural timbers and wooden artefacts. In the deeper water, supporting piles were discovered approximately one metre under the loch bed silts and some of them were about two metres out from what has normally been seen as the outer perimeter of the main crannog mound. This indicates that the site is larger than previously estimated, and that a considerable period of abandonment took place before part of the site was covered by natural silt.
- 2.2.2.6 In 1991 excavations at Oakbank Crannog were carried out with a team of ten to twelve students and volunteers. The plan was to extend the 1990 excavation and open another new area adjacent to it. As usual the first task was to remove the boulders that covered the areas to be worked on. The Oakbank "underwater dumper truck" was put into action and altogether 25-30 tons of boulders were removed. Underneath the large boulders were exposed a layer of smaller stones and grit which also contained burnt bone and large amounts of charcoal, suggesting that the hearth was in this part of the house.
- 2.2.2.7 The most important discovery was the remains of a substantial floor. Part of the floor was exposed in 1980 but nothing since then, so it was believed that the rest had been destroyed. An even larger area was uncovered this year. Lying across the floor are larger timbers, at right angles to the floor timbers, which may be the uprights of a fallen partition wall that separated two rooms, or functional spaces, within the house.
- 2.2.2.8 The floor is situated near the middle of the site and east of it, nearer the edge, was uncovered a substantial number of upright piles with a jumble of branches, stakes and pieces of cut wood surrounding them. These pieces of wood were all produced deliberately by the crannog-dwellers, but we can only speculate as to their use.
- 2.2.2.9 Two fragments of possibly worked and burnt flint were also recovered from hill wash on the shore opposite the Crannog.
- 2.2.3 To the north of the site lie a number of cup-marked stones the two most obvious of which are The Clach na Tuirc (the Boar Stone) (**Canmore ID 25036**) which is a large boulder 6' high bearing one very distinct cup-mark and a boulder known locally as Clach-na-Cruich, or the Stone of the Measles (**Canmore ID 25037**), which is

situated in the middle of a field immediately below Borland farmhouse. It has seven faint cup marks on its upper surface. Rainwater contained in a cavity was supposed to be a cure for measles.

### 2.3 Medieval (AD 410-1600) & Post-medieval (AD 1600-1900)

2.2.1 To the north of the development lies the site of Caibéal Chiarain (St Ciaran's Chapel) (Canmore ID 25038) which once stood on Boreland Farm, and a meadow there is named Dail Chiarain. The font has been placed, with a suitable inscription, near the site of the chapel. The dedication is to Ciaran of Cluain mac Nois who died in 549.

2.2.2 At NN 7221 4470 is the stone font of St Ciaran's Chapel. It measures 50 cm by 45 cm and 30 cm high, with a shallow oval depression on its upper surface. A plate attached reads "The baptismal font of the church dedicated to St Ciaran, which stood near this spot". The site of the chapel and burial ground is believed to be in the field immediately to the West of the font, but the precise position cannot be ascertained.

### 2.3 Post-medieval (AD 1600-1900)

2.3.1 Early pre-ordnance survey maps tend to be schematic and lack detail, although can give some idea of the nature of settlement in the surrounding area. Maps pre-dating Ordnance Survey name Fearnan as Stron (Roy 1747-1752 and show a clustered settlement surrounded by open rig cultivation (figure 3).



Figure 3: Extract of Roy Map, 1747-1752

2.3.2 By the 1<sup>st</sup> ed OS maps (1867) the name has changed to Stron Fearnan with settlement now in a linear pattern north of the Loch shore (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Extract of Ordnance Survey Map of 1867

- 2.3.2 The old village of Stron Fearnan, was said to have encircled the present burial ground of Cladh-na-Sroine (**Canmore ID 25026**) which is situated to the north-east of the proposed development. The earliest gravestone is dated 1778. There is now no trace of the village of Stron Fearnan in the vicinity of the graveyard (NN 7247 4460)
- 2.3.3 Courts were said to have been held at Tom a' Mhoid (Gillies 1938) at the northern edge of the proposed development. Tom a' Mhoid (**Canmore ID 25030**) is a natural wooded knoll. The tradition of a gallows still survives.

### 3 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:
- i) to determine and assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed development area through evaluation trenching;
  - ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation compliant with Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011), such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.
  - iii) To report on the results of the archaeological evaluation.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological evaluation consisted of 6 trenches set on varying lengths and orientation. This equated to 233 m of linear trenching (Figure 2).
- 4.2 The trenches were excavated utilising a 13-tonne tracked excavator equipped with a smooth bladed ditching bucket and operating under the constant supervision of an experienced field archaeologist. Each trench was recorded using AOC *pro forma* trench record sheets, photographed, and any potential features investigated further to assess their character and date.
- 4.3 Several changes were made to the pre-excitation trench plan (AOC 2021) due to the presence of an overhead service and buried water and sewer pipes. The presence of these services and their necessary exclusion zones reduced the overall area available for evaluation. As such 233 linear meters were excavated rather than the 280m specified in the WSI (AOC 2021)

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The archaeological evaluation was conducted on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. Weather conditions were damp and overcast but archaeological visibility was good. The various data gathered from the evaluation are presented as a series of appendices:

Appendix 1: Evaluation trench descriptions

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Appendix 3: '*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*' entry

- 5.2 The site consisted of a rolling hillside of closely cropped grass on a predominantly north to south slope. This had a topsoil of loose dark brown sandy-clay and silt (loam) (Plate 3) measuring between 0.1 m and 0.4 m in depth, with 0.3 m being most common. This included frequent rocks and very rare inclusions of modern (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century) ceramics.
- 5.3 Below the topsoil the deposits varied depending on the topography of the landscape. At the top of the higher ground natural subsoil was encountered below a very thin skim of topsoil. This was composed of varying bands of sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders, both rounded and angular, of differing types of stone (Plate 4). The colour of this varied from orange/red to yellow/brown and to grey/green/brown and occasionally was composed of larger component of a softer sandy clay. In some areas this deposit was particularly hard packed, and stone filled making machine excavation difficult.
- 5.4 Within the folds of the hillside, between the areas of higher ground, a colluvial deposit of soft orange/brown sandy-clay with frequent small stones was uncovered (Plate 7). This varied considerably in depth from a few centimetres to 1.1m deep. This was deepest across the middle of the site, on the mid slope of the predominant north-south hill slope (Plate 6). This reflected an infilled natural dip which had become invisible in the present ground surface.
- 5.5 A disused iron pipe was encountered at the northwest end of trench 1. This was left undisturbed and led to the houses located just to the southwest of the site.
- 5.6 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.



Plate 1 and 2: Trench 1 Post Excavation (from the southeast) and Trench 2 Post Excavation (from west)



Plate 3: Topsoil over natural in Trench 1



Plate 4: Boulder filled natural of Trench 2 hillslope



Plate 5: Trench 3 Post Excavation (from southeast)



Plate 6: Natural dip in Trench 4



Plate 7: Depth of Subsoil in Trench 4



Plate 8: Trench 5 Post Excavation (from northeast)



Plate 9: Trench 6 Post Excavation (from west)



Plate 10: Site from the North – Post Excavation



## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The archaeological evaluation carried out within the proposed development area of Fearnan, Aberfeldy revealed no archaeologically significant features or artefacts. As such, no further mitigation works are recommended.
- 5.2 This recommendation will require the approval of Perth & Kinross Council, which is advised on Archaeological matters by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust.

## 6 REFERENCES

### 6.1 Bibliographical references

AOC Archaeology Group, 2021 *Fearnan, Aberfeldy, Perthshire: Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologist (CIfA) Dec 2014 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field Evaluation.*

Scottish Government 2011 PAN 2/2011 *Planning and Archaeology.*

Scottish Government 2014 *Scottish Planning Policy.*

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**Fearnan, Aberfeldy, Perthshire:  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Data Structure Report**

**Section 2: Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Trench Descriptions

### Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	25 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	NW - SE
<i>Topsoil</i>	0.25 m - 0.4 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.25 m - 0.4 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None

*Other Features* Iron pipe at northwest end of the trench. This was fairly modern and leads to houses west of site (believed to be a dead service)

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

*Subsoil* n/a

*Finds* None.

### Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	35 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	E-W
<i>Topsoil</i>	0.1 m - 0.4 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.1 m - 0.4 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None

*Other Features* Large un-movable boulders in the sides of the trench. There was also a deeper area at base of slope where water pooled.

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

*Subsoil* n/a

*Finds* None

### Trench 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	40 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	NW - SE
<i>Topsoil</i>	0.25 m - 0.4 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.25 m – 0.7m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None

*Other Features* Area of deep subsoil (up to 0.3m thick) at the base of the slope

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

*Subsoil* Orange/brown sandy-clay with frequent small rocks.

*Finds* None

#### **Trench 4**

*Dimensions* 45 m by 2 m  
*Orientation* NW - SE  
*Topsoil* 0.15 m - 0.4 m  
*Depth of Excavation* 0.15 m – 1.5m  
*Significant Features* None

*Other Features* Area of deep subsoil (up to 1.1m thick) filling a natural dip in the landscape mid trench.

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

*Subsoil* Orange/brown sandy-clay with frequent small rocks.

#### **Trench 5**

*Dimensions* 38 m by 2 m  
*Orientation* NE - SW  
*Topsoil* 0.2 m - 0.4 m  
*Depth of Excavation* 0.2 m – 0.7m  
*Significant Features* None

*Other Features* Area of subsoil (up to 0.3m thick) filling a natural dip in the landscape at the northeast end

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

*Subsoil* Orange/brown sandy-clay with frequent small rocks.

#### **Trench 6**

*Dimensions* 50 m by 2 m  
*Orientation* NW - SE  
*Topsoil* 0.3 m - 0.4 m  
*Depth of Excavation* 0.3 m – 0.7 m  
*Significant Features* None

*Other Features* Area of subsoil (up to 0.3m thick) filling a natural dip in the landscape at the northwest end of the trench. Exclusion zone left between 26m and 30m (from NW end) to avoid hitting a known water pipe leading to a garden hose tap.

*Natural* Mixed bands orange/red, yellow/brown, and to grey/green/brown sandy-clay and gravel with a high concentration of rocks and frequent large boulders. These were both rounded and angular and composed of differing types of stone. In some areas this became composed of a larger component of softer sandy clay with less rocks.

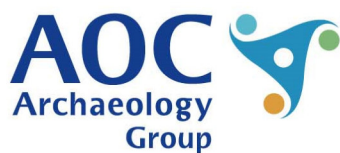
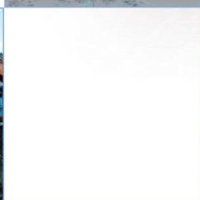
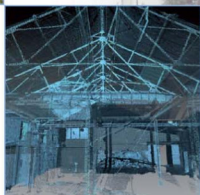
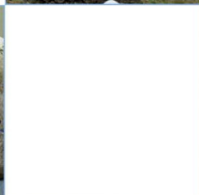
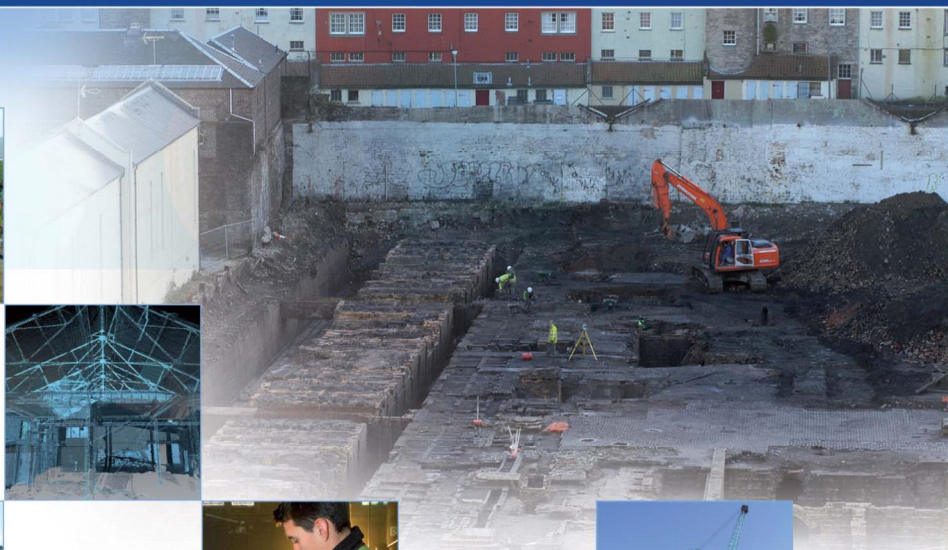
*Subsoil* Orange/brown sandy-clay with frequent small rocks.

## Appendix 2: Photographic Register

No.	Description	From
1	Tr 1 post excavation	SE
2	Natural at SE end of Trench 1	SE
3-4	Natural in middle of trench 1	SW
5-7	Boulders and iron pipe at NW end of Trench 1	SW
8	Trench 2 post excavation	W
9	Natural at east end of Trench 2	W
10	Natural boulders at hill base in Trench 2	W
11-12	Natural boulders on hill slope in Trench 2	W
13	Trench 2 post excavation	SW
14	Trench 3 post excavation	SE
15-16	Topsoil and subsoil at hill base of trench 3	SE
17	Trench 3 post excavation	N
18	Trench 4 post excavation	NW
19-21	Deep subsoil in natural dip in middle of Trench 4	NW
22	Large boulder – example – in Trench 4	SE
23	Natural subsoil at SE end of Trench 4	NW
24	Trench 4 post excavation	NW
25	Subsoil over natural at SE end of Trench 4	SW
26	Trench 5 post excavation	SW
27	Topsoil over natural at SW end of Trench 5	N
28	Trench 5 post excavation	NE
29	Topsoil over colluvium at NE end of Trench 5	S
30	Trench 6 post excavation	NW
31	Topsoil over subsoil at NW end of trench 5	S
32	Trench 6 natural at mid trench	NW
33	Topsoil over natural mid trench 6	S
34	Trench 6 post excavation	SE
35-37	Site Post Excavation	N

**APPENDIX 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Perth & Kinross Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Fearnan, Aberfeldy, Perthshire: Archaeological Evaluation
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	26049
<b>PARISH:</b>	Aberfeldy
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Nick Johnstone
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NN72188 44437
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (inc DES)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological works consisting of an archaeological evaluation was required as a condition of planning consent prior to development of land at Fearnan, Aberfeldy on behalf of McKenzie Strickland Associates (on behalf of their client AKG Homes).</p> <p>The archaeological evaluation totalled 233 linear metres and revealed fairly sterile topsoil and subsoil over undulating natural slopes. Depth varied from 0.1m on the high ground to 1.5m in low lying hollows. The natural horizon was composed of sandy-clay and gravel with frequent rocks. This contained many large rounded and angular boulders.</p> <p>No archaeologically significant features or finds were observed.</p> <p>No further archaeological works are recommended.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	No
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	McKenzie Strickland Associates
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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