



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd
Bringing the Past and Future Together

Craig Wood, Dingwall Phase 1



Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation

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Summary

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out at Craig Wood, Dingwall in advance of construction of affordable houses forming the first phase of development at this site.

No archaeological artefacts or features were recorded and no further fieldwork is recommended.

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Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains; and to preserve these where possible and record where necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.
- To ensure that any artefacts or human remains are dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and current policy guidance.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Jon Heyman of Craigwood Homes Ltd. and Bruce Wright of Archial Architects. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217. This report is copyright (c) 2011 Highland Archaeology Services Ltd and the author.

Location

The site is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NH 5559 6029, and rises from about 62m northwards to about 75m above sea level at the highest point by the Old Evanton Road.

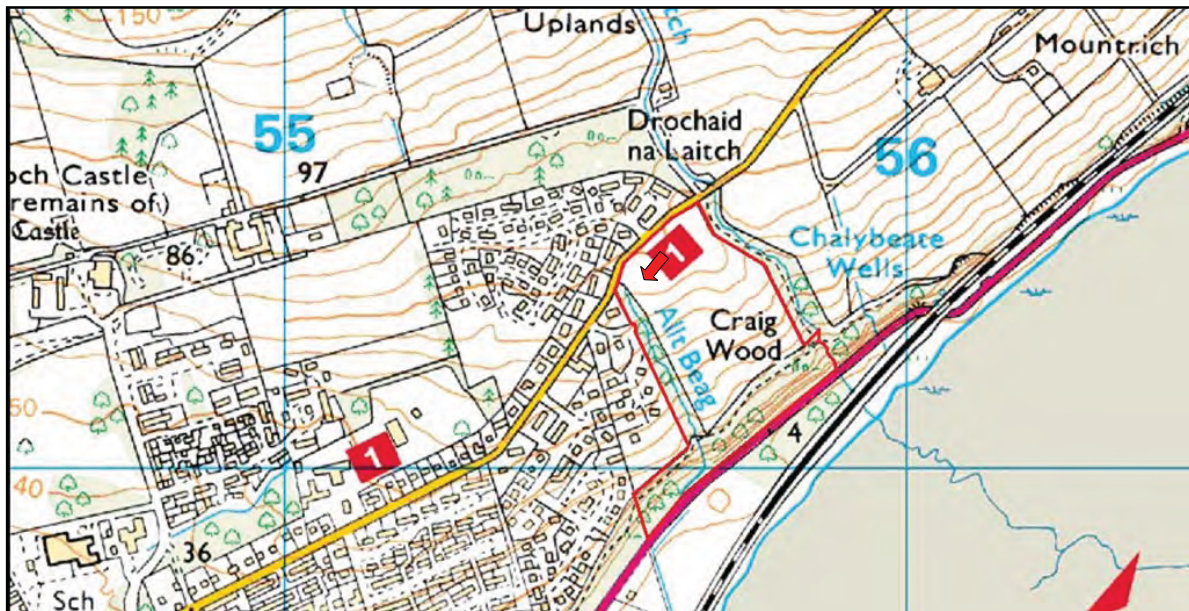
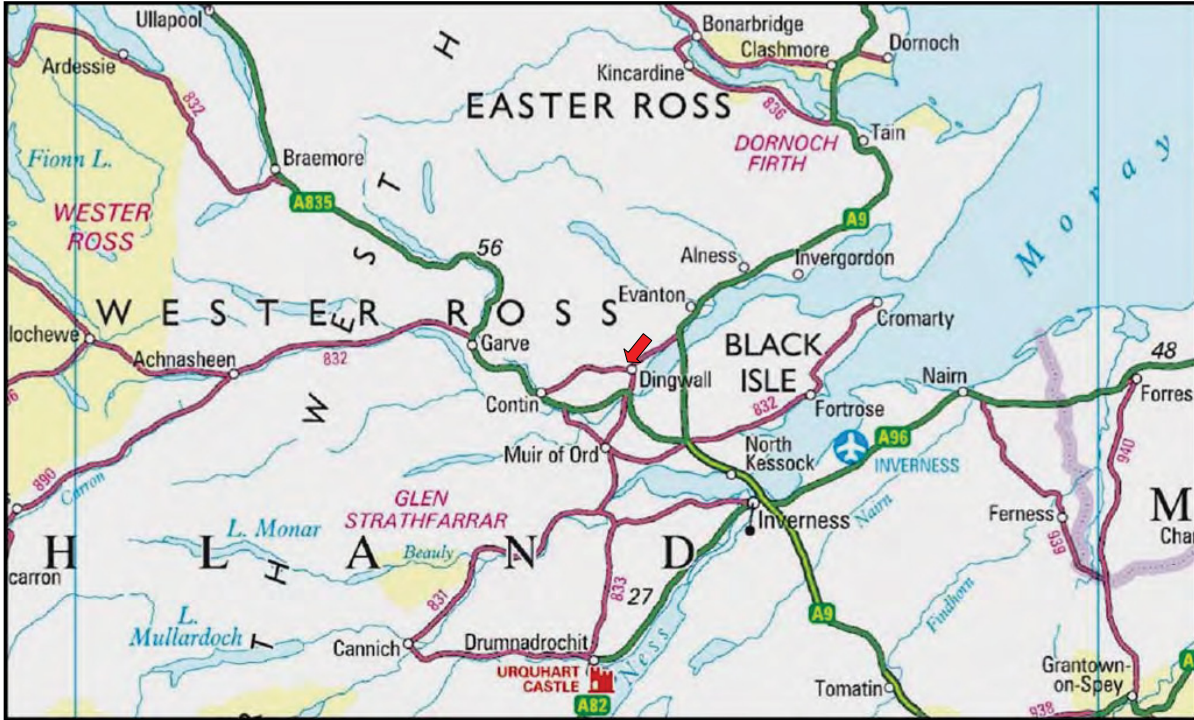


Figure 1 Site location

Introduction

A trial trenching evaluation was carried out on 17 and 18 January 2011 at Craig Wood, Tulloch Estate, Dingwall, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the client and the Highland Council in November 2010¹. This in turn was based on a site visit and initial desk-based assessment by John Wood in November 2009² to clarify the known and potential cultural heritage baseline within the area proposed for development, which concluded

The proposed housing site lies on a hillside alongside the Allt na Laitch. This land has been agricultural for at least two centuries, and possibly for much longer. It was no doubt previously woodland. Given the location and slope, the existence of buried archaeology seems unlikely in this area. The visual setting of the castle and steading are unlikely to be affected by development in this area.

Given the nearby, albeit fragmentary, evidence there is some potential for middens and lithic working within this site. Trial trenching evaluation would be unlikely to be effective in fully locating such evidence, so a watching brief on site clearance might therefore be advisable.³

Nevertheless, planning permission was granted subject to a condition requiring a 5% trial trenching. The present exercise covered the first stage of the development, including 12 affordable houses and access roads and services (Figure 2 below)

Policy and archaeological background

The current planning and policy framework includes the Highland Council's *Structure Plan*⁴, and the Scottish Government's *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP), issued in February 2010, which consolidates and supersedes the previous SPP and NPPG series⁵. The fundamental principles underpinning UK and Scottish policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland's Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)⁶ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999).⁷

Method

Trial Trenching was conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation and Code of Conduct*⁸ and the *Highland Council's Development Guidance*⁹. The desk-based assessment conducted in 2009 was checked but no updating was found to be needed. A back-acting mechanical excavator was used to remove topsoil from eight trenches under archaeological observation. These were carefully checked for indications of archaeology, photographed and plotted using a Magellan Promark 3 DGPS unit. The area covered is shown in Figure 2 below. The area investigated was approximately 7195 sq m or thereby. 8 Trial trenches were excavated, each a minimum of

¹ Wood, J, 2010 *Craig Wood, Dingwall : Phase 1: Proposed Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation – Written Scheme of Investigation (Revised)* Highland Archaeology Services Report no. HAS101001

² Wood J, 2009, *Dingwall North: DBA (Craig Wood)* Highland Archaeology Services Report no. HAS 091102

³ Wood, 2009, 9

⁴ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/8>

⁶ www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf

⁷ <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

⁸ *Institute for Archaeologists (IfA)*.

⁹ www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology

1.5m wide and 30m long, with an area of 45 sq m. The total area opened was therefore 360 sq m., representing a 5 % sample of the site.

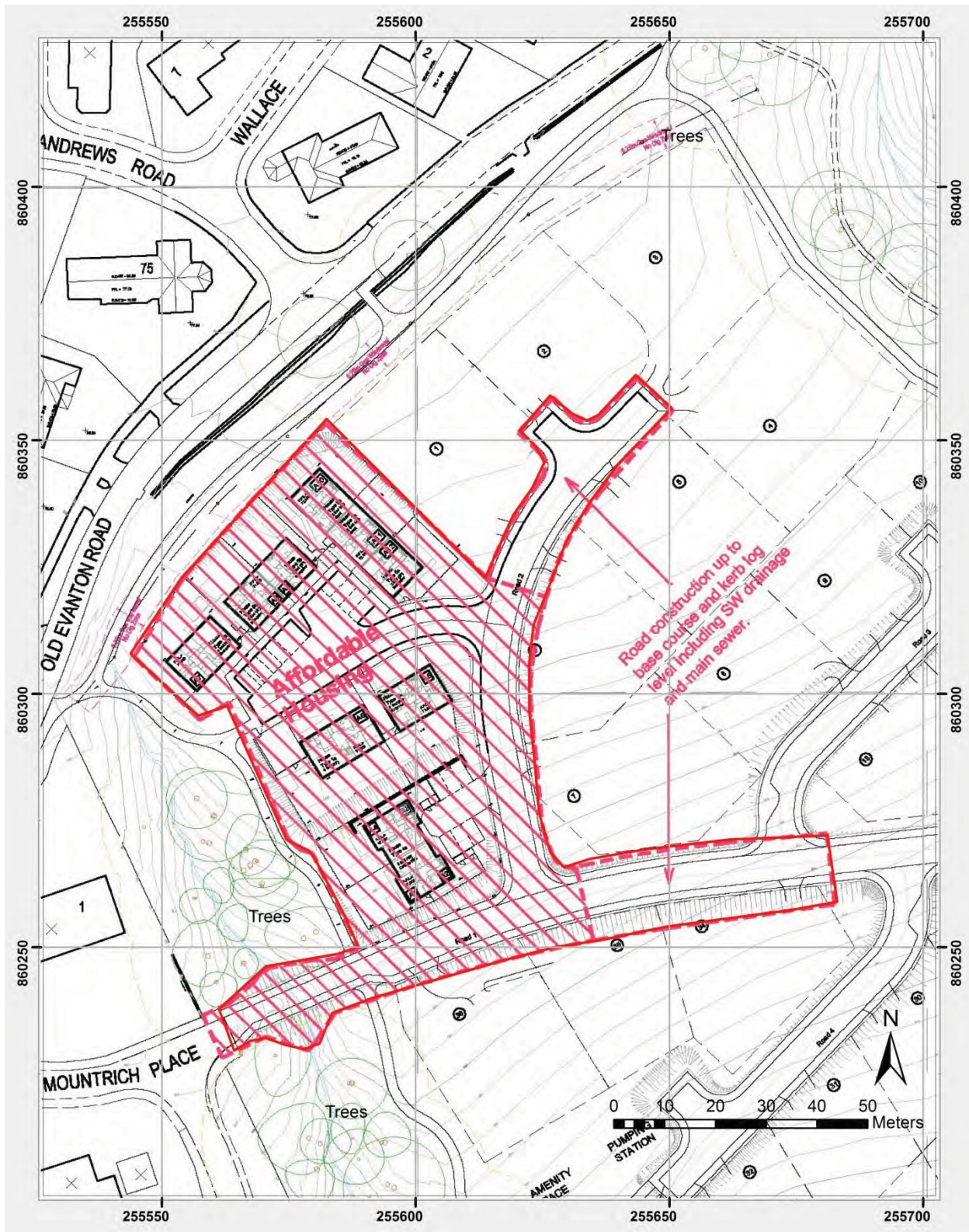


Figure 2 Initial development area: 12 affordable houses, roads and services.

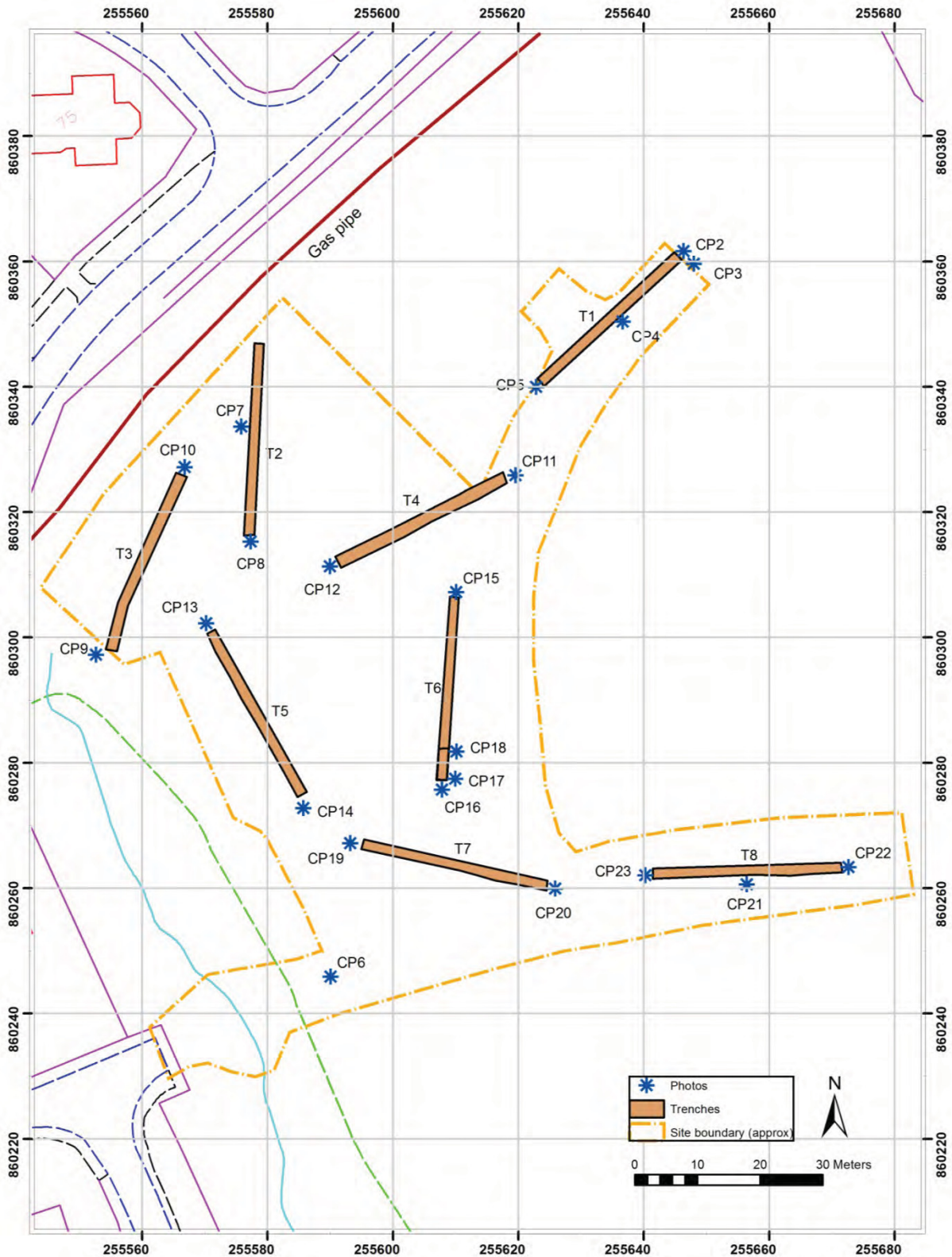


Figure 3 Trenches and Photo locations

Results

All trenches excavated were 1.5m by 30m. Trenches 1 – 7 were opened on 17 January: after initial rain the weather settled to strong, low winter sun with a light breeze from the west; Trench 8 was excavated the following day in intermittent sleet and snow. Ground conditions were extremely soft as a prolonged frost was thawing.

Trench 1

Smooth mid-brown sandy clay topsoil merged into clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional rounded stones c.40-150mm across and larger rounded rocks c.30cm across. Topsoil depth varied from c. 0.5m to 1m. Lower levels of topsoil had occasional unstratified scattered charcoal flecks. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 1).



Photo 1 Trench 1 from SW

Trench 2

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional grey patches in the N half, and angular stones c.100 -200mm across, lying at between 0.6m and 0.85m depth. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 2). It was not possible to photograph this trench from the northern end as this was direct into the low winter sun.



Photo 2 Trench 2 from S

Trench 3

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30-60mm across, lying at between 0.6m and 0.75m depth. There was no clear horizon where the topsoil and subsoil merged. This trench cut into a raised bank at its west end which comprised upcast topsoil – apparently from clearance of the deep gully containing the burn along the western side of the field. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 3).



Photo 3 Trench 3 from N

Trench 4

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30-60mm across, lying at between 0.5m and 0.6m depth. There was no clear horizon where the topsoil and subsoil merged. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 4).



Photo 4 Trench 4 from E end

Trench 5

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular angular stones c.30-60mm across, lying at between 0.4m and 0.5m depth. There was no clear horizon where the topsoil and subsoil merged. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 5).



Photo 5 Trench 5 from S

Trench 6

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.100 -200mm across, lying at 0.6m depth (Photo 6). There has been considerable soil movement down the slope and material was very mixed. The southernmost 5m of this trench were therefore deepened to 1.1m to check (Photo 7 on p.13 below). This revealed a band of organic material at the base of the topsoil – apparently the result of root action. No artefacts or archaeological features were found.



Photo 6 Trench 6 from N

Trench 7

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular angular stones c.30-60mm across, lying at between 0.5m and 0.6m depth. There was no clear horizon where the topsoil and subsoil merged. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 8).



Photo 7 Trench 7, from E

Trench 8

Topsoil was removed onto clean, uniform red/brown clay. This was excavated on 18 January in difficult conditions including sleet and snow. Thawing frost made the ground conditions extremely soft and this trench lay across the slope of the hill. Water began to seep into the trench as soon as it was opened. However these conditions made it easier to see the interface between the topsoil and underlying clay, which was encountered at 0.4m across the trench. No artefacts or archaeological features were found (Photo 9).



Photo 8 Trench 8, from E



Photo 9 Trench 6, deepened at S end to clarify ground conditions

Conclusions and Recommendations

The land appears to have been under improved pasture for many years. There were no field drains or other indications of agricultural uses. On the slope where soil movement over many years has mixed material, the subsoil horizon was not clearly defined, as the topsoil merged into a red-brown clay. However there had been accumulation of darker organic matter in a band at the topsoil base (Trench 6). The surface of the clay was more clearly visible at about 0.4m depth in Trench 8, excavated on 18 January in sleet and snow conditions.

The whole area was remarkably clear of any indication of past activity and no further archaeological fieldwork is recommended for this site.

Bibliography

Wood, J. (2009). *Dingwall North: Craig Wood Desk-based Assessment*. Cromarty: Highland Archaeology Services. Report no HAS091102

Wood, J. (2010). *Craig Wood, Dingwall : Phase 1: Proposed Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation – Written Scheme of Investigation (Revised)* Highland Archaeology Services Report no. HAS101001

Tables

Table 1 Trenches

Trench No.	Dimensions	depth	Subsoil	Features	Artefacts	Photos
Trench 1	1.5 x 30m	0.5-1m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional rounded stones c.40 -150mm across	None	None	DSC_0020-0025
Trench 2	1.5 x 30m	0.6-0.8m	Clean, red/brown clay with irregular grey patches to N; occasional angular stones c.100 -200mm across	None	None	DSC_0034-38
Trench 3	1.5 x 30m	0.6-0.75m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30 -60mm across	None	None	DSC_0039-40
Trench 4	1.5 x 30m	0.5-0.6m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30 -60mm across	None	None	DSC_0041-2
Trench 5	1.5 x 30m	0.4-0.5m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30 -60mm across	None	None	DSC_0043-4
Trench 6	1.5 x 30m	0.6m (Southern 5m deepened to 1.1m)	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.100 -200mm across. Band of more organic soil noted in section at base of topsoil.	None	None	DSC_0045-9
Trench 7	1.5 x 30m	0.5-0.6m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay with occasional angular stones c.30 -60mm across	None	None	DSC_0050-2
Trench 8	1.5 x 30m	0.4m	Clean, uniform red/brown clay	None	None	DSC_0053-8

Table 2 Photographs

Photo No	Location	Direction	Subject	Date	Taken by
DSC_0012	CP1	WSW	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0013	CP1	SSW	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood

Photo No	Location	Direction	Subject	Date	Taken by
DSC_0014	CP1	S	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0015	CP1	SSE	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0016	CP1	SE	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0017	CP1	ESE	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0018	CP1	E	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0019	CP1	ENE	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0020	CP2	SW	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0021	CP2	SW	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0022	CP3	W	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0023	CP4	NE	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0024	CP4	SW	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0025	CP5	NE	Trench 1	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0026	CP5	N	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0027	CP5	NW	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0028	CP5	W	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0029	CP5	SW	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0030	CP6	W	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0031	CP6	N	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0032	CP6	E	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0033	CP6	S	General View	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0034	CP7	N	Trench 2	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0035	CP7	E/DOWN	Trench 2	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0036	CP7	S	Trench 2	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0037	CP8	N	Trench 2	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0038	CP8	N/DOWN	Trench 2	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0039	CP9	NNE	Trench 3	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0040	CP10	SSW	Trench 3	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0041	CP11	WSW	Trench 4	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0042	CP12	ENE	Trench 4	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0043	CP13	SSE	Trench 5	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0044	CP14	NNW	Trench 5	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0045	CP15	S	Trench 6	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0046	CP16	N	Trench 6	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0047	CP17	NW	Trench 6	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0048	CP18	SW	Trench 6	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0049	CP18	SW	Trench 6	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0050	CP19	E	Trench 7	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0051	CP19	E	Trench 7	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0052	CP20	W	Trench 7	17/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0053	CP21	W	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0054	CP21	E	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0055	CP22	W	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0056	CP22	W	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0057	CP23	E	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood
DSC_0058	CP23	E	Trench 8	18/01/2011	J Wood