



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Dingwall North: Drynie Farm



Desk-Based Assessment



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Dingwall North: Drynie Farm

Desk-Based Assessment

Report No.	HAS100101
Site Code	DND10
Client	GH Johgnston on behalf of Watson family
Planning Ref	N/A
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Author	John Wood

Summary

A desk based assessment was undertaken for a proposed housing site at Drynie Farm, Tulloch, Dingwall. The site is currently agricultural land and there are no recorded archaeological features present.

There is also limited potential for buried archaeological evidence of earlier pits and similar features. However this is likely to be fragmentary and difficult to evaluate in the field. Attendance by an archaeologist during topsoil stripping is recommended to ensure that any such evidence found can be dealt with promptly and effectively without delay to the construction work.

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Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating requirements as far as possible
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any recorded archaeology that could be affected by this development and recommend mitigation as necessary

Location

The site is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NH 540603, and rises from about 36m above sea level by Lower Docharty to about 87m above sea level at the highest point in the NE corner.

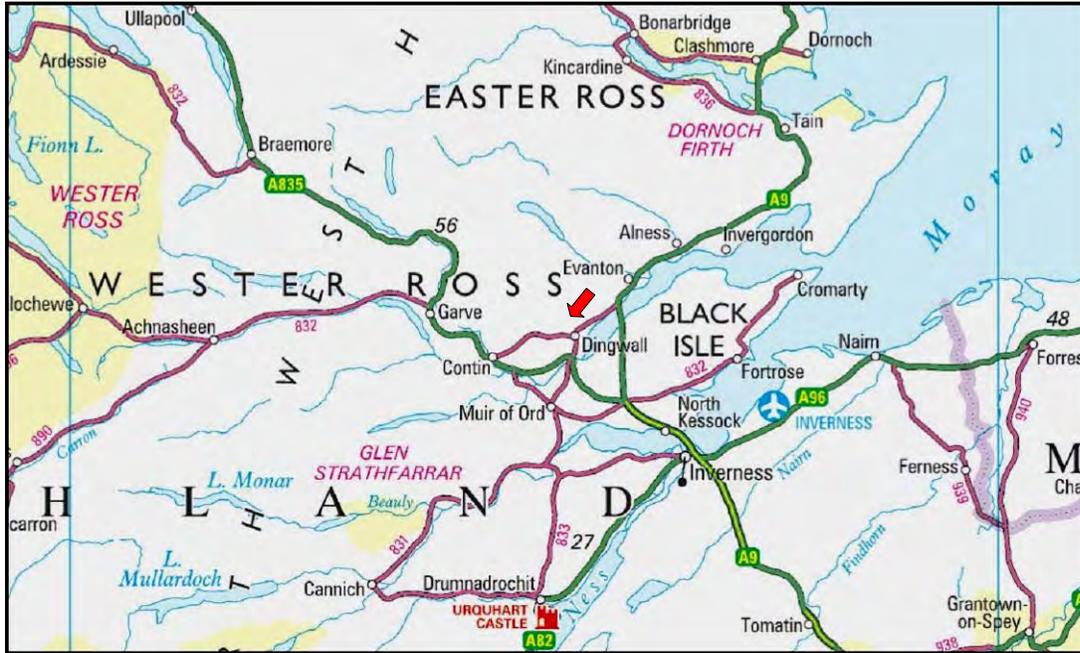


Figure 1 Site location

Introduction

A desk-based assessment was carried out of a site at Drynie Farm, Tulloch, Dingwall, in advance of a housing development. The purpose was to determine as far as possible from archaeological and historical records, the known and potential cultural heritage baseline within the proposal area.

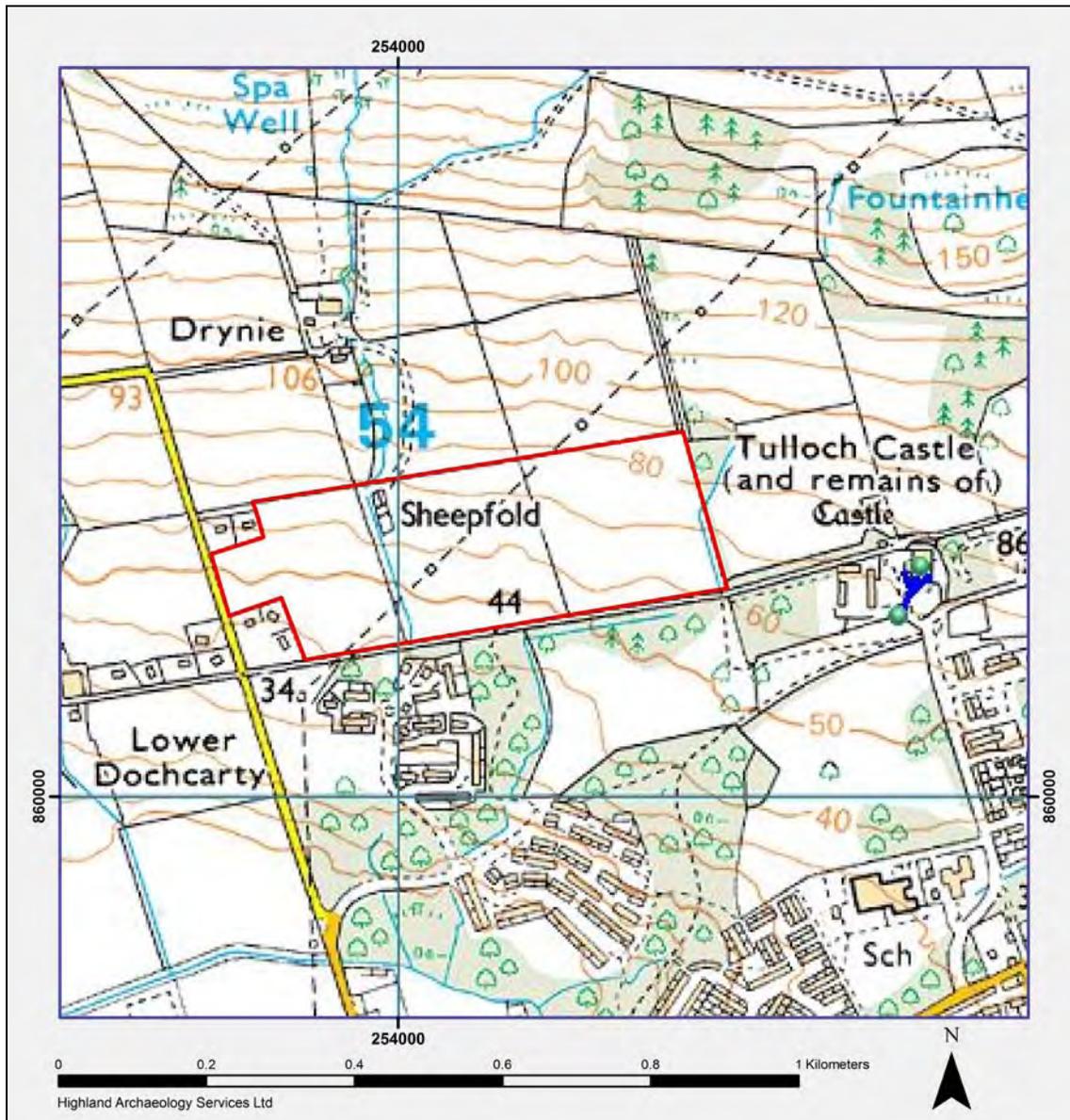


Figure 2 Site extent.



Figure 3 Proposed development (courtesy of GH Johnston)

Policy and archaeological background

The planning and policy framework includes the Highland Council's *Structure Plan*¹, and the Scottish Government's *Scottish Planning Policy SPP 23: Planning and the Historic Environment* (2008)². The fundamental principles underpinning the above policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland's Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)³ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999).⁴

1

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

2 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/10/28135841/0>

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

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

There has been no recorded archaeological excavation or survey within the proposed housing site itself, which consists of agricultural land lying north-west of Tulloch Castle⁵. The castle itself, with its tunnel entrance, extensive farm steading, houses and garden walls are Listed Category B⁶. North of this site lies *Drynie Farmhouse which is Listed Category C (S)*⁷

Method

All relevant locally or digitally accessible archaeological and historic records, maps and aerial photographs were checked. These included the digitised RAF post-war aerial photograph collection and historic OS map sequence held at the Highland Council headquarters in Inverness, the Highland Council archives service, Dingwall Museum, and Dingwall Library (including the NOSAS collection). Unfortunately it was not possible to locate the relevant aerial photographs for the Tulloch and Dingwall area.⁸

Results

Norman Macrae, in his *Romance of a Royal Burgh: Dingwall's Story of a Thousand Years* (1923) states,

The Tulloch Hill was once the habitation of a pre-historic race. Ages before the first Viking sailed his coracle up the Cromarty Firth, the Tulloch Hill afforded a dwelling-place for a considerable population...

He goes on to describe a Neolithic flint adze found 'at the root of an old Scotch fir tree', a Celtic bead found near the stone circle at Brae, and 'a thriving weaving industry established on the western shoulder of Tulloch Hill'. It seems likely he was referring to the Heights of Brae, where Bronze Age hut circles and field systems are still visible, rather than this area⁹, but this gentle south facing slope at about 60m above sea level might have been a favoured site for early agriculture, and there is some potential for fragmentary, truncated buried evidence to survive.

According to Highland Library Service¹⁰, there may have been a Norse stronghold near Tulloch Castle, although the evidence for this is not clear. An undated steatite lamp now in the National Museum of Scotland is recorded as having been found to the north-east of Tulloch in the 19th c. However this is a stray find of uncertain provenance, and apparently some distance from the proposed housing site.¹¹

The *First Statistical Account* (1791-99) states that the proprietor of the estate of Tulloch was appointed hereditary constable of Dingwall Castle on the forfeiture of the Earl of Ross in 1476. As Dingwall Castle decayed, Tulloch was no doubt becoming the seat of the town's principle landowner. A tower or "keep" was built by Duncan Bain in 1542, with further ranges added in the seventeenth century. John Bane, 4th Laird of Tulloch from 1626, was Provost of Dingwall on three occasions. Kinnairdie was bought from

⁵ Highland HER MHG 8897; NMRS NH56SW 8.0

⁶ Listed Building nos 24518-9

⁷ Highland HER MHG16146; Listed Building no 1822.

⁸ The reference numbers are: 106G/UK/01114/3084-5; 3367-8 (1946); 58/2337/10-11 (1957); and a single photograph with no sortie number, shown on the index as BOS_68_104.

⁹ Thanks to Dingwall Museum for drawing this to my attention

¹⁰ http://www.ambaile.org.uk/en/item/item_photograph.jsp?item_id=35310

¹¹ Highland HER MHG 8952; NMRS NH56SE 16

the Munros of Foulis in 1633, and in 1665 the tower house was enlarged to form a 'castle'. However by 1762 the estate was bankrupt and it was sold to Henry Davidson, a wealthy London sugar merchant, originally from Cromarty.¹²

Davidson appears to have invested heavily in his new property: the farm steading carries a date of 1774. A hundred years later, the Ordnance Survey Name Book (1872) refers to a 'considerable farm steading, with coach houses and cottages in the possession of and the property of Duncan Davidson esq.'¹³ The farm steading was repaired and altered in 1900.

Six successive Davidsons from this family were lairds of Tulloch Castle until 1917, playing a prominent role in the Burgh of Dingwall and County of Ross-shire. Different generations served as Provosts of Dingwall and as MPs for the local constituency, and one was appointed a Lord Lieutenant of Ross & Cromarty in 1879¹⁴.

Duncan Davidson, the fourth laird, was nicknamed "The Stag". Born in 1800, elected Member of Parliament for Cromarty in 1826 and a favourite of Queen Victoria, he had five wives, eighteen children and at least thirty illegitimate children. One of his daughters is said to have run off after seeing her father with another woman. She fell down the stairs and was killed. It is possible that she is the "Green Lady" who is supposed to haunt the castle¹⁵.

Major fires in 1838 and 1845 destroyed most of Tulloch Castle along with many of the estate records, but the castle was rebuilt and extended in 1891. The last of the direct line of Davidsons died in 1917.

The present building mostly dates from 1918-23 but incorporates 16th c. and possibly earlier work. It was used as a hospital in World War II. In 1947 it was taken over by Ross and Cromarty County Council and used as a hostel for Dingwall Academy. It has been a hotel since 1988¹⁶.

A copy of an undated estate map in Dingwall Museum shows a race course occupying part of the Pitcairn Lands, immediately south of this present site. The racecourse is referred to by David Alston in his guide to Ross and Cromarty as being in existence by 1827.¹⁷

The castle was later surrounded by a designed landscape of policies and gardens, which have been much encroached on by housing development in recent years. The Second Statistical Account for Dingwall (1834-45) waxes lyrical about the area:

To the north of the town stands the hill of Tulloch – a continuation of the northern ridge of Strathpeffer, which rises to the height of about 800 feet. Its acclivity presents an aspect of uncommon luxuriance. It is occupied by several farms, which are ornamented by rows of fine old trees; and by the beautiful grounds attached to Tulloch castle, which stands midway, about a mile from the town, 'embosomed deep in tufted trees'¹⁸

¹² David Alston, *Ross and Cromarty: A Historical Guide* (1999)

¹³ ONB R & C Book 9, 9, quoted in NMRS NH56SW 37.0

¹⁴ http://www.clandavidson.org.uk/Part_5.pdf

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ *A Brief History of Tulloch Castle* – notes for an exhibition in Dingwall Museum

¹⁷ David Alston, *Ross and Cromarty: A Historical Guide* (1999), 162

¹⁸ <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/sas/>

The present site lies within the wider policies but did not form part of the park itself. Drynie Farmhouse is a 3 bay early 19th c. two storey building with a central door.



Plate 1 Drynie Farmhouse, photographed in 1984 (from Listed Building record)



Figure 4 Extract from 1st Edition OS 1:10560 Map, surveyed 1875-6
 Ross-shire and Cromartyshire (Mainland) sheet LXXVI. Derived from digital data, courtesy of National Library of Scotland. Not reproduced to scale. Red arrow indicates site.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposed housing site lies on a hillside to the north-west of Tulloch castle. It is agricultural land. As noted above, based on similar topography elsewhere there is some potential for buried evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement and agriculture. However no evidence has yet been found for these here, and later ploughing and drainage are likely to have truncated or removed much of whatever may have existed.

The case for possible Norse settlement here seems weak. Dingwall itself was a centre of Norse administration and justice, no doubt accompanied by trading and other activity, but this is likely to have taken place on or near the site of the present town.

The presence of a medieval service settlement or *castletoun* also seems unlikely here, as the occupiers of the castle from the outset were closely associated with Dingwall. On the other hand a mains farm is likely to have existed, although where this was located is unclear. This area is likely to have formed part of the common fields in the later medieval and early post-medieval periods, continuing in use as agricultural land before being enclosed and then extensively landscaped as a park in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Direct impacts from the development on buried archaeology are possible, but given the probably fragmentary nature of any surviving evidence it would be difficult to evaluate effectively. Regular site visits by an archaeologist might be a sensible precaution during topsoil stripping to ensure that any such evidence is dealt with promptly and effectively without delay to the construction work.

References

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