

# Land South East of Ceol Mara Caolis, Isle of Tiree, Argyll & Bute

## Method Statement

## Archaeological Watching Brief

planning ref: 24/02056/PP

v2

11<sup>th</sup> November 2025

prepared on behalf of Paula Henderson



Clyde Archaeology

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## 1. Introduction

This Method Statement has been prepared by Clyde Archaeology on behalf of Paula Henderson and sets out the aims and methodologies that will be employed during archaeological monitoring being carried out as part of the erection of a dwellinghouse and garage, instillation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access on land south east of Ceol Mara, Caolis, Isle of Tiree, Argyll & Bute. The monitoring is required to satisfy condition 7 of planning permission granted on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (planning ref: 24/02056/PP).

This document establishes actions and products required to achieve Stage 1 of a potentially three-stage process, Stage 2 being any further work, including fieldwork arising from Stage 1, such as the development and implementation of mitigation strategies to deal with any significant archaeology identified or recovered during Stage 1, and Stage 3 being the further analysis of any materials recovered during the fieldwork in either or both Stages 1 and 2 and/or the preparation of a final report on all works constituting preservation by record for publication, as appropriate.

## 2. Project Area

The development area is centred on NGR: NM 08463, 49251 a short distance to the south east of Ceol Mara, Caolis, which is located on the eastern coast of the Isle of Tiree (Illus. 1). The development will consist of the construction of a dwellinghouse and garage, instillation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access on land currently used for grazing.

The proposed access road which leads from the unnamed road to the west into the proposed development area does not belong to Paula Henderson, and is owned by the local crofter. The landowner proposes to lay float the access track, with only turf stripped below, and shall be made of locally sourced beach cobbles/pebbles. As such it is proposed that this will not be included within the watching brief area.

## 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

The immediate area surrounding the proposed development area has a number of recorded archaeological sites ranging from the prehistoric period through to the modern period.

Examples of prehistoric sites within the surrounding landscape include a possible dun (WoSAS pin: 89) a short distance to the north-west, the Druim Nan Caorach enclosure and stone circle (WoSAS pin: 21152) to the north-west and the find spots of two possible stone axe hammers (WoSAS pin: 85 & 94) a short distance to the south-west.

Medieval archaeological sites include the probable chapel, burial ground and cross (WoSAS pin: 91) by

Croch House whilst the more recent archaeological sites include a number of blackhouses (WoSAS pin: 96281, 60035 & 60030) to the north, the Druim Na Caorach farmstead (WoSAS pin: 43641 to the south-west as well as a number of dykes, banks and enclosures.

During July 2025, a watching brief was maintained on the on shore element of a subsea cable between Coll and Tiree. Approximately 60m south of the proposed development area, the cable trench cut through an archaeological deposit containing likely midden material including shell, pre-historic pottery and a flint flake (Dempsey, 2025).

As well as the surrounding area being rich in archaeological sites, the presence of machair deposits (commonly masking archaeological deposits) and the topographic location of the proposed development site, on a minor headland, both raise general potential that exists for buried remains in this landscape.

## 4. Project Aims

The aims of the archaeological works are:

- to establish the presence or absence of any sub-surface archaeological remains which may be present within the development area;
- to determine the character, extent and significance of any archaeology that may be present; and
- where preservation in situ of significant archaeology is not feasible, to develop a stage 2 strategy to offset any negative impacts that may occur.

## 5. Policy & Guidance

All work will be carried out within the context of relevant legislation, policy, standards and guidance related to the historic environment, for example:

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979;
- The Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011;
- Historic Environment Scotland Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (2019);
- National Planning Framework 4/2023: particularly Policy 7 Historic assets & places;
- Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology (July 2011);
- Standards & Guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA);

- Guidance on the Transfer of Archaeological Assemblages to Museums in Scotland from Commercial/Developer-funded Projects (ALGAO, NMS & HES 2025); and
- Minimum Standards for the Preparation of Archaeological Assemblages in Scotland (ALGAO, NMS & HES 2025).

## 6. Methodology

Clyde archaeology adheres to the regulations, standards & guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). All work will be carried out within the context of relevant planning guidance and policy e.g. National Planning Framework 4: Valuing the Historic Environment and Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology (July 2011).

### Archaeological Monitoring

Given the high potential that buried archaeology could be present within the development area, in light of the recent archaeological deposits discovered during the recent Coll to Tiree cable trench (Dempsey, 2025), excavation of all significant groundworks relating to the project shall be carried out in advance of construction. All areas of the development which shall require groundworks shall be surveyed in prior to work proceeding and required depths for each of the elements ascertained. It is expected this monitoring will focus on the groundworks for the dwellinghouse and garage, retaining wall, air source heat pump, soakaway and cattle grid; however indicative plans are that the sewage treatment plant shall be positioned within a natural hollow and therefore shall be built up as opposed to requiring excavation.

The access track, if created, is to be floated with geotextile being placed atop the current ground surface and built up with Type 1. Given no excavation is taking place, this shall not form part of the watching brief.

The footprint of the proposed house shall be topsoil stripped and taken down to the depth required for the instillation of the concrete slab. Foundations for the concrete slab shall also be excavated to the required depth of the development. Should the sand deposits be very loose and not allow for the narrow foundation trenches to be easily excavated, the trenches may be stepped out, with a 1.6m flat bladed ditching bucket excavating the initial step and the narrow foundation trench being excavated within this reduced area.

The other areas within the project i.e. access ramp and terrace shall also be topsoil stripped where necessary, as a large area to the east of the proposed development as shall be made up as opposed to any ground reduction taking place due to the topography of the development area.

Where possible, periodic test pits into the sand deposits shall be made in order to record stratigraphy. Should no archaeological deposits or features be noted during the advance watching brief, the base of each trench shall be covered with terram (or similar) to act as a marker and shall then be backfilled until such a time as the construction work begins when they shall be re-opened to the previously excavated locations and depths as indicated by the presence of terram. Should any further excavation be required during the construction phase which was not monitored during the advance watching brief, consultation shall take place with WoSAS in order to ascertain whether further archaeological mitigation is required. Digital photographs shall be taken during the re-excavation of the various elements of the project.

Deposits will be removed by a mechanical excavator fitted, where practical, with a flat bladed ditching bucket and monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Overburden shall be removed to the natural subsoil, the level required for construction or the first archaeological horizon, whichever is encountered first.

Sufficient time will be allowed for the archaeologist conducting the watching brief to obtain an appropriate record of any identified archaeology prior to construction work proceeding in that area. Any archaeological features encountered will be cleaned by hand to help determine the date of the deposits, their character and extent. Should discrete negative cut features be encountered they will be 50% excavated in order to determine their significance, date and function. In the event that they are deemed to be important discoveries they will be fully excavated. An appropriate proportion of substantial linear features will be excavated to determine their character, date and function.

All archaeological features, deposits and finds will be recorded to modern professional standards. Scaled hand-drawn plans will be made at 1:20 and sections at 1:10. High resolution digital images will be taken. The extent of the area excavated and any archaeological features encountered will be recorded in such a way as to tie them to the OS grid and OS datum.

All archaeological finds will be dealt with by the on-site archaeologists. The general practice will be to bulk recover artefacts by context which date from the nineteenth or twentieth century. Should any find be of particular significance or if the location of a find within a context provides important information it will be three-dimensionally recorded prior to up-lifting. Artefacts recovered during the excavation will be appropriately cleaned, packaged and stored in line with guidance contained in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 1998). Finds which are of particular sensitivity or importance may require specialist conservation assessment.

All archaeologically significant excavated feature fills and deposits will be sampled for artefactual and palaeoenvironmental evidence. Where appropriate this will also include micromorphological sampling in order to address key issues relating to soil development at the site. Typical bulk samples of significant deposits will be 20 litres or the complete fill of a feature if smaller than this.

Where particularly extensive, numerous or complex archaeology is proven to be present the developer and West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) will be informed and discussions, including a site meeting if deemed necessary, will be held between all relevant parties to agree the most appropriate strategy. Where preservation in situ is not feasible this will generally comprise a need to develop a stage 2 mitigation strategy to excavate and record any significant archaeological features or sites to ensure preservation through record. This strategy would be detailed in a project design that would form an addendum to this Method Statement.

WoSAS, acting on behalf of the planning authority, will be the final judge of significance in any case and may require full excavation of features to be destroyed by the proposals.

### *Human Remains*

Although unlikely, should human remains be encountered the local police, the developer and WoSAS will be notified immediately and, thereafter, prescribed procedure for their treatment will be followed, in accordance with legal requirements. Any human remains uncovered will not be disturbed until the police have had the opportunity to inspect the remains, although excavation in other areas can continue.

### *Project Monitoring*

The developer and WoSAS will be notified immediately of any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and/or the development. In that event, all finds and features will be left in situ until arrangements have been agreed for safeguarding or recording them.

The project archaeologists (see below) will be the first point of contact for any project-related liaison including all formal logistical, administrative and financial aspects of the project.

It will be important to ensure that all formal communications, instructions and/or requests (including any proposed amendments to on-site strategies) are ultimately made in writing.

### *Public Benefit*

In line with NPF4, where avoidance and retention of archaeological remains is not possible, mitigation to offset any negative impacts on archaeology from the development will include activities that provide public benefit. These would be proportionate to the significance of the archaeological discoveries and would be agreed through discussion with the developer and WoSAS as appropriate.

The means of delivering public benefit would follow current guidelines (Mann 2023) but may, for example, include site open days and ensuring the results are accessible to a wide range of audiences.

## 7. Reporting, Archive & Finds Arrangements

### Reporting

Following completion of all on site work, a report will be prepared by the archaeological contractor who carried out the fieldwork, outlining the main results and incorporating lists of all features, finds, samples, photographs and drawings. This report will be produced as an electronic report (and a desk-top published document where required). If appropriate the report will also include recommendations for further post-excavation work. This report will be prepared and submitted for comment within 1 month of the on site works finishing.

The report will be prepared, in structural and textual content terms, to the standard of a Data Structure Report (DSR). The DSR will be illustrated with drawings and photographs including levels and grid references where appropriate. As a minimum the DSR will include:

- A location map
- Abstract/Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- A description of the site and its location
- Archaeological and Historical background
- Aims
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Recommendations
- Appendices (tables of contexts, finds, samples, photographs and drawings as appropriate)

Copies of the DSR will be provided to the developer, WoSAS and to the National Record of the Historic Environment. Further copies can be distributed to other recipients if requested and specified.

### Archiving

A project archive adhering to ClfA's standards & guidance (2014, updated 2020) will be prepared and made ready for submission within six months of the completion of all fieldwork or post-excavation work (as appropriate). The resultant site archive will be deposited with the National Record of the Historic Environment.

A short report detailing the results will also be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and to OASIS.

## Finds

The laws relating to Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia* in Scotland apply to all finds where the original owner cannot be identified. This includes all material recovered during archaeological fieldwork. Accordingly, all assemblages recovered from archaeological fieldwork are claimed automatically by the Crown and must be reported to the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel through its secretariat, the Treasure Trove Unit. In the event of the discovery of small finds during the evaluation or any subsequent stages of work, a filled-out copy of the form "Declaration of an Archaeological Assemblage from Fieldwork" and two copies of the pertinent Data Structure Report will be submitted to the Panel at the conclusion of the fieldwork. The Panel will then be responsible for recommending to the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR) which museum should be allocated the finds.

All artefacts will be stored temporarily by Clyde Archaeology until a decision has been made by the Panel regarding the museum which will be allocated the finds for permanent curation. All finds will be transferred to the appropriate museum within six months of completion of the fieldwork, if no post-excavation work is required, or at the end of the latest finishing post-excavation programme.

In the event that unallocated finds recovered from the excavation or any later stages of work require to be removed from Scotland, for the purposes of post-excavation analysis, there is a legal requirement to obtain the consent of the KLTR, in the form of a loan agreement. Initially, an indication of intent would be registered with the Treasure Trove Secretariat at the National Museums of Scotland, after which formal consent would be applied for using the form "Application for authority to borrow unallocated Treasure Trove for research purposes". A consent form, signed by the KLTR and specifying conditions (such as the period during which finds may be held outside Scotland) would then be issued. Receipt of this signed consent form will be required before items may be removed from the country.

Preparation of archaeological assemblages prior to museum deposition will follow industry standard guidelines (ALGAO et al 2025a & 2025b). A fee will be charged for deposition of assemblages with the allocated museum. This fee will be relative to the size of the assemblage and could vary between a minimum of £75 and a maximum of £1,325 (ALGAO et al 2025b) to be paid at the point of deposition.

## 8. Post-excavation Analysis & Publication

The results of all on site work will inform the need for further analysis of archaeological materials and/or generation of a report for publication. Where appropriate, and on request, any DSR produced as part of the on site work will be followed by the production of a costed Post-excavation Research Design (PERD) specifying any work deemed necessary in order to complete the project. Publication, where required, would normally be sought in a suitable academic journal. The post-excavation process is essential to bring a piece of archaeological work to completion.

## 9. Timetable

The start date for the archaeological watching brief is Late November 2025.

Any Stage 1 or 2 DSR will be submitted within 4 weeks of completion of field work. If required any PERD will be submitted within 3 months of WoSAS agreement to any DSR. Any final publication will be submitted within a year of agreement to the PERD.

## 10. Staffing

Project Archaeologist: John Dempsey

CV can be provided on request.

## 11. Health, Safety & Environment

Prior to fieldwork commencing a risk assessment of the project will be undertaken. Clyde Archaeology adheres to all standard Health and Safety regulations governing fieldwork projects. Clyde Archaeology adhere to their Health & Safety and Environmental Policy, copies of which can be provided on request.

## 12. Insurance

Clyde Archaeology also possesses appropriate Public Liability insurance (£5 million), Employers Liability insurance (£10 million) and Professional Indemnity insurance (£1 million), proof of which can be supplied upon request.

## 13. Sources

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Regulations, Standards and Guidance.

<https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

National Planning Framework 4, February 2023.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/>

Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning & Archaeology, July 2011.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/>

Watkinson & Neal, D & V 1998 First Aid for Finds (London: Rescue/UKICAS 2001)

Mann, B 2023 Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value Guidance for Archaeology in the Planning Process. ALGAO, Feb 2023  
[https://www.algao.org.uk/sites/algao.org.uk/files/2023-2/ALGAO\\_Delivery\\_of\\_Public\\_Benefit\\_Social\\_Value\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.algao.org.uk/sites/algao.org.uk/files/2023-2/ALGAO_Delivery_of_Public_Benefit_Social_Value_Guidance.pdf)

ALGAO, NMS & HES, 2025a, Minimum Standards for the Preparation of Archaeological Assemblages in Scotland, April 2025.

ALGAO, NMS & HES, 2025b, Guidance on the Transfer of Archaeological Assemblages to Museums in Scotland from Commercial/Developer-funded Projects, April 2025.

Dempsey, J, 2025. '*Coll to Tiree Subsea Cable, Archaeological Watching Brief*', Unpublished Data Structure Report: Clyde Archaeology.



*Location of proposed development*