

DATA STRUCTURE REPORT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION ON LAND EAST OF LAG AN TAIRBH, NORTH CONNEL,
ARGYLL

Client: The Executry of Dr E Dryden, c/o Bruce & Neil Chartered Architects

Produced by Clare Ellis and Hilary McLauchlan of Argyll Archaeology, June 2026

Planning Ref. No.: 25/01180/PP, 25/01181/PP & 25/01182/PP



1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This *Data Structure Report (DSR)* has been produced with respect to the archaeological evaluation undertaken on Plots 1-3, North Connel, Argyll (NGR: NM94248 36071) (Fig. 1). A charcoal platform was recorded in Plot 3 and another much disturbed feature which may have been a charcoal platform was recorded in Plot 1. A later stoney field bank ran through Plot 3. All the features have been recorded and it is the recommendation of this report that no further archaeological intervention is required in any of the three plots.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are five scheduled Neolithic or Early Bronze Age burial cairns on the north side of the three plots. A cist which was found over a hundred years ago may have been found next to, or it may have been within the westernmost burial cairn which lies to the northwest of the plots. A stone walled enclosure, some 20.5m in diameter has been recorded just to the north of the plots, this enclosure remains undated. Given the presence of the burial cairns, it is possible that further burials may survive below the topsoil within the confines of the three plots, and/or evidence of contemporary prehistoric settlement may also be concealed.

3. METHOD

- 3.1 Twelve trenches were excavated using an 8 ton tracked excavator equipped with a ditching bucket which was 1.5m wide (Fig. 2 & Appendix 1). The trenches were excavated in a series of spits down to a maximum depth of 0.32m. The mature trees along the edge of the road had recently been felled and the wood had not been cleared so there was no access to this area. The western side of Plot 1 was still in use as garden ground and was covered with mature trees; apparently these trees will remain as a screen between Lag na Tairbh and the new dwelling. All machine stripping was carried out in the presence of an archaeologist.

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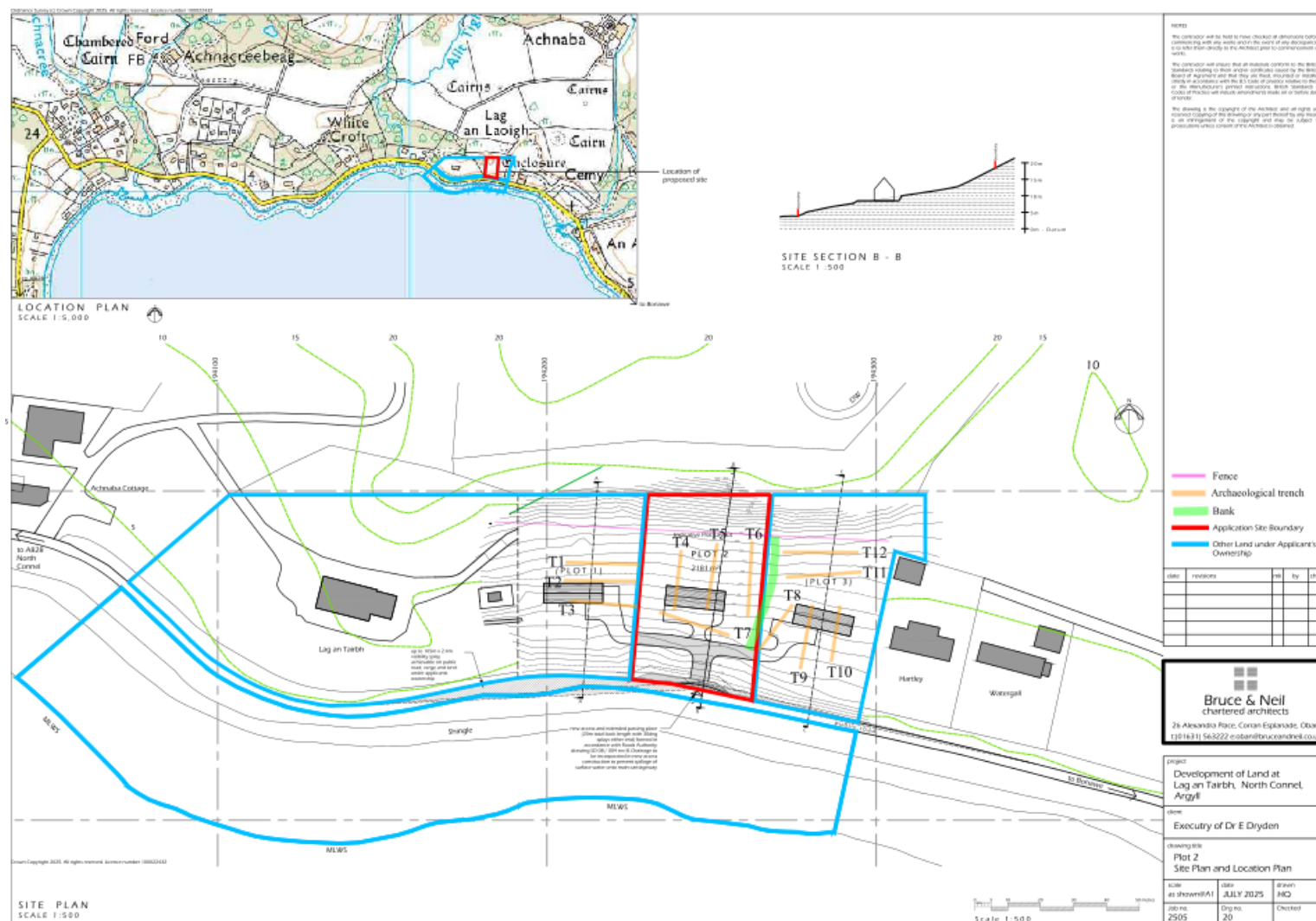


Fig. 1. Location of Plots 1-3, North Connel and location of evaluation trenches

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The land sloped southwards and relatively steeply towards the road and the edge of the loch. The vegetation cover comprised rough grazing, stumps of recently felled trees and cleared scrub and bluebells. The topsoil comprised a gritty brown sand loam and was around 0.30m deep.

4.2 Charcoal platform, Trench 8

- 4.2.1 A charcoal platform [004] was recorded on the eastern side of the area and falls mainly within Plot 3 (Fig. 2, Fig. 3 & Fig. 4). The platform was just over 15m wide (E/W) and 6m wide (N/S). The northern side of the platform had been cut [004] into the hillside to a depth of 0.40m. The platform was relatively level, having been built up on the south side with redeposited sand and gravel (006). The build up on the south side was at least 0.12m higher than the natural slope below. The platform was partially covered by a later stone and earthen field bank [005]. This field bank is now much denuded, and the stone has spread out on both sides making it c. 2.25m wide over the platform. There was evidently access through the bank just below and to the south of the platform; the bank appeared then to continue down towards the road although it was covered with recently felled timber. Scrub and small trees had been growing on the platform and the stumps were visible at the time of the evaluation. Trench 8 was machine excavated across the platform. It revealed a thin 0.20m layer of charcoal (003) which covered the width of the platform and covered its southern slope. Fragments of roundwood charcoal and larger pieces were visible. Machine excavation of (003) revealed that it sealed the underlying natural gravel deposit (002) and the redeposited gravel (006).

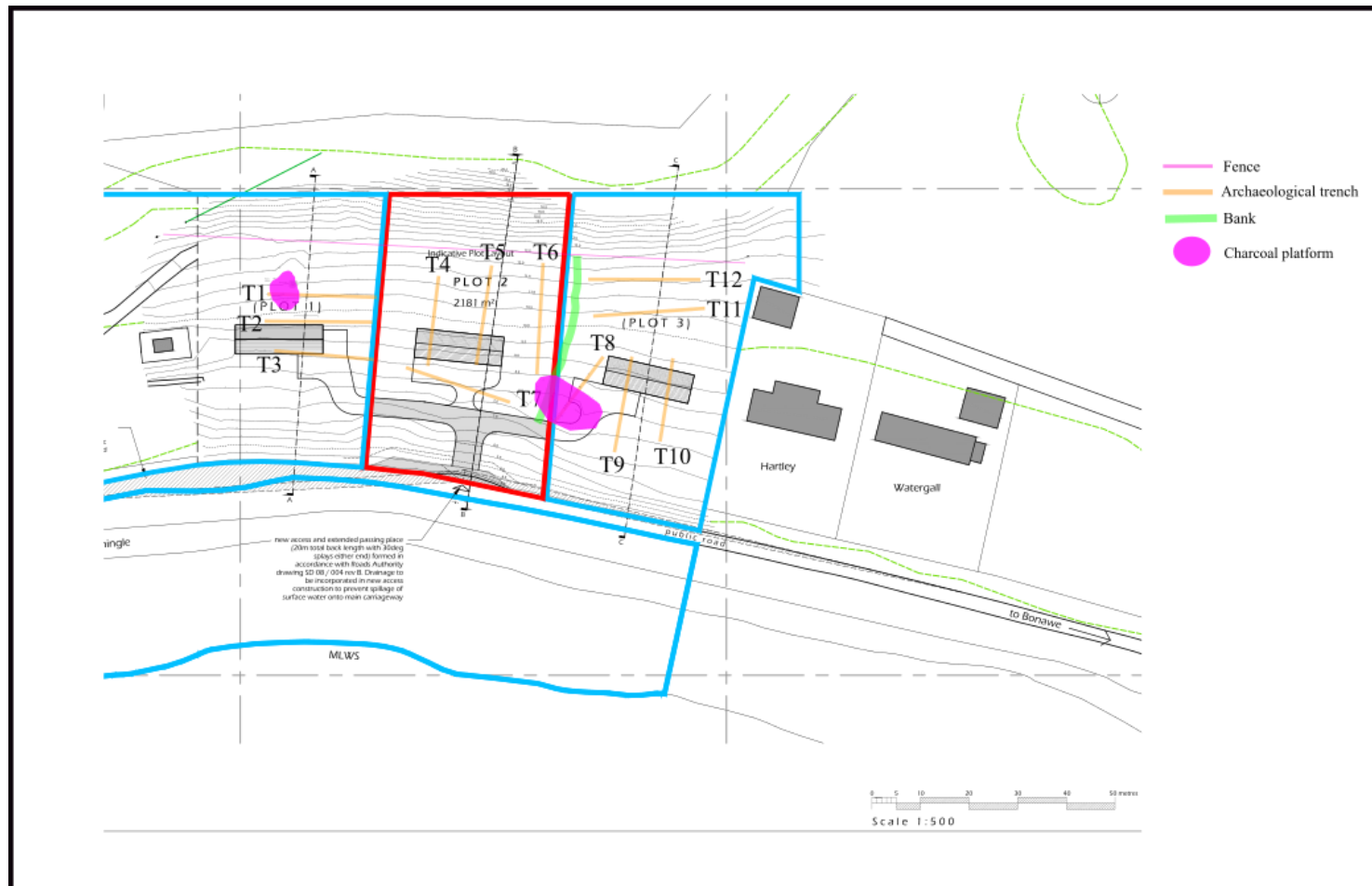


Fig. 2. Location of the possible charcoal platform (?) in Trench 1 and the definite charcoal platform in Trench 8

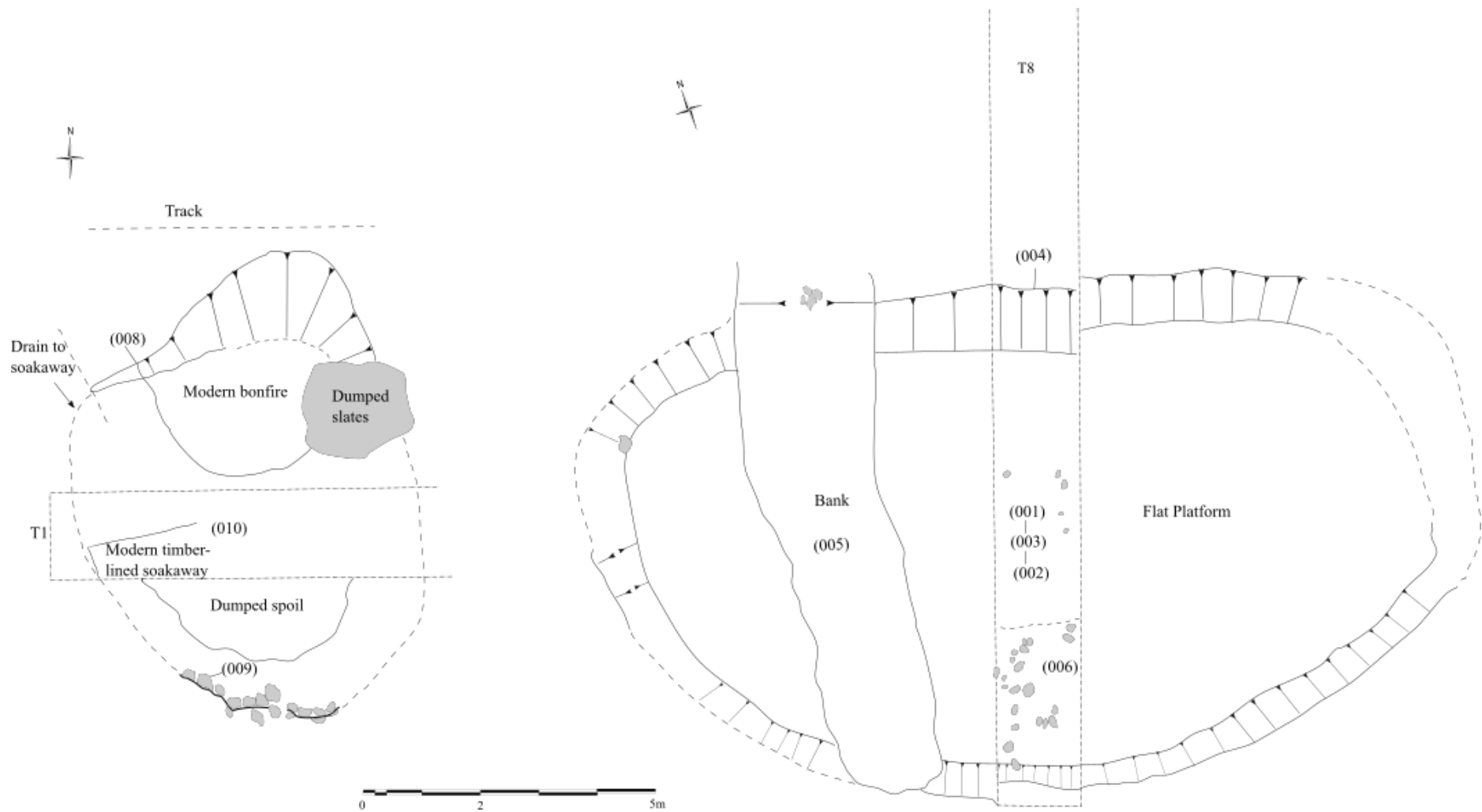


Fig. 3. Charcoal platforms, Trench 1 (left) and Trench 8 (right)



Fig. 4. Charcoal platform [004], Trench 8 looking NNW

4.3 Feature in Trench 1

- 4.3.1 There is less certainty regarding the identification of the feature evaluated in Trench 1 as a charcoal platform [008] because it has been much disturbed by recent gardening activities (bonfire and dumping) and no platform related charcoal was present within the machine excavated trench, rather the base of the trench revealed natural gravel (010) (Fig. 3). However, the form of the feature, with a c. 0.40m deep cut into the natural on the north side and the presence of a disturbed line of stone on the south side which maybe the remains of a low revetment wall could indicate a charcoal platform, or the remains of a wind blown tree bole or a dump of stones and gravel resulting from the construction of a wooden lined soakaway (Fig. 3 & 5). This feature is smaller than that recorded in Trench 8, measuring some 8m N/S and 6m E/W.



Fig. 5. Feature in Trench 1, a possible charcoal platform, or recently disturbed and dumped stone, or a windblown tree bole [008], looking north.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND MITIGATION

5.1 One definite and one possible charcoal platform or another modern feature were identified during the evaluation of the three plots. The platform [004] in Trench 8 was clearly utilised to produce charcoal and conforms to the Type 3 platform as defined by Ellis (Ellis 2016) and is therefore likely to date to the late 18th or early 19th century and would have provided charcoal to the iron works at Bonawe. However, there is less evidence that the feature recorded in Trench 1 was a charcoal platform as no charcoal was present across this feature. Indeed, the slight revetment of stone on the south side could be the result of either dumping of spoil from the creation of the wooden lined soakaway, or the result of disturbance caused when a tree and its root bole fell over. There is no archaeological evidence that either platform was previously utilised as a medieval house platform.

5.2 Given that the charcoal platform in Trench 8 and the feature in Trench 1 have been recorded it is the recommendation of this report that no further archaeological intervention is required in relation to this development.

6.0 REFERENCES

Ellis, C 2016 *ARO20: Activities in the woods: platforms and a lithic scatter, Loch Doiean, Sunart, Lochaber*. Guard Archaeology Ltd.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Trench record

Trench No.	Orientation	Width of trench	Length of trench	Depth of topsoil	Depth of trench	GPS ref, start trench	GPS ref, end trench	Description
1	E/W	1.5m	25m	0.30m	0.32m	194209 736080	194231 736079	Gritty brown silt loam, gravel subsoil. Possible charcoal burning platform - modern use.
2	E/W	1.5m	24m	0.25m	0.30m	194208 736075	194230 736074	Gritty brown silt and gravel.
3	E/W	1.5m	23m	0.30m	0.30m	194230 736067	194210 736069	Gritty brown silt and gravel.
4	N/S	1.5m	18m	0.30m	0.30m	194243 736083	194241 736065	
5	N/S	1.5m	23m	0.30m	0.30m	194250 736065	194254 736085	Very boulder rich natural at N end.
6	N/S	1.5m	25m	0.30m	0.30m	194264 736085	194262 736063	
7	E/W	1.5m	23m	0.23m	0.25m	194236 736065	194257 736058	
8	NE/SW	1.5m	19m	0.28m	0.30m	194265 736053	194275 736066	Charcoal platform.
9	N/S	1.5m	23m	0.26m	0.28m	194281 736066	194277 736047	
10	N/S	1.5m	21m	0.25m	0.27m	194286 736049	194289 736065	
11	E/W	1.5m	23m	0.25m	0.30m	194295 736073	194274 736074	
12	E/W	1.5m	25m	0.25m	0.30m	194273 736081	194295 736081	

Appendix 2: photographic register

No.	Trench	Description	Taken from
1		Possible charcoal platform	S
2		Possible charcoal platform	S
3		Possible charcoal platform	W
4		Possible charcoal platform	W
5		Possible charcoal platform	W
6	Trench 1	Trench 1 through possible charcoal platform	W
7	Trench 1	Trench 1 through possible charcoal platform	W
8	Trench 1	Trench 1 through possible charcoal platform	W
9	Trench 8	Trench 8 through charcoal platform	S
10	Trench 8	Trench 8 through charcoal platform	S
11	Trench 8	Close up of charcoal layer (003)	E
12	Trench 8	Close up of charcoal layer (003)	E
13	Trench 8	Charcoal platform	N
14	Trench 8	Charcoal platform	N
15	Trench 8	Charcoal platform	N
16	Trench 8	Charcoal platform	N
17		Stone revetment (009) ?	S
18		Stone revetment (009) ?	S
19		Stone revetment (009) ?	S
20	Trench 1	Trench 1 through possible charcoal platform	W
21		Possible charcoal platform	N
22		Possible charcoal platform	N
23		Possible charcoal platform	N

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Appendix 3: DES Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	,North Connel Argyll
PROJECT CODE:	937
PARISH:	Ardchattan and Muckairn
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Clare Ellis and Hilary McLauchlan
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Argyll Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NM 94248 36071
START DATE (this season)	4 th May 2026
END DATE (this season)	4 th May 2026
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken prior to the proposed construction of 3 new dwellings on land east of Lag An Tairbh. A charcoal platform was recorded in Plot 3 and another probable, but much disturbed charcoal platform was recorded in Plot 1. A later stoney field bank ran through Plot 3.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Argyll and Bute Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Davaar Cottage, Campbeltown, Argyll. PA28 6RE
EMAIL ADDRESS:	ellisclare@argyll-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	NRHE