

**Siting of 4 x holiday cabins and installation of private
foul drainage system
Cnoc Nam Bradhan, Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute**

**Archaeological Monitoring
Methods Statement**

July 2026

Document control sheet

Client: Jamie Dods
Project: Machair Croft Monitoring
Document Title: Archaeological Watching Brief WSI/MS

Job No: 422

	Originator	Illustration by	Reviewed by	Approved by
ORIGINAL	NAME Alastair Rees	NAME Alastair Rees	NAME Alastair Rees	NAME Alastair Rees
DATE 20/07/2026				
Document Status: DRAFT				

ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd

This report contains historic maps, reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland (NLS). To view these maps online, see <http://www.nls.uk>.

This document has been prepared by ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd in its professional capacity as consultants in accordance with the terms and conditions of ARCHAS Ltd contract with the commissioning party (the "Client"). Regard should be had to those terms and conditions when considering and/or placing any reliance on this document. No part of this document may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from ARCHAS Ltd. If you have received this document in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify ARCHAS Ltd.

Any advice, opinions, or recommendations within this document (a) should be read and relied upon only in the context of the document as a whole; (b) do not, in any way, purport to include any manner of legal advice or opinion; (c) are based upon the information made available to ARCHAS Ltd at the date of this document and on current UK standards, codes, technology and construction practices as at the date of this document. It should be noted, and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to ARCHAS Ltd has been made. No liability is accepted by ARCHAS Ltd for any use of this document, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. Following final delivery of this document to the Client, ARCHAS Ltd will have no further obligations or duty to advise the Client on any matters, including development affecting the information or advice provided in this document.

This document has been prepared for the exclusive use of the Client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by ARCHAS Ltd, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of this document. Should the Client wish to release this document to a third party, ARCHAS Ltd may, at its discretion, agree to such release provided that (a) ARCHAS Ltd' written agreement is obtained prior to such release; and (b) by release of the document to the third party, that third party does not acquire any rights, contractual or otherwise, whatsoever against ARCHAS Ltd and ARCHAS Ltd, accordingly, assume no duties, liabilities or obligations to that third party; and (c) ARCHAS Ltd accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage incurred by the Client or for any conflict of ARCHAS Ltd interests arising out of the Client's release of this document to the third party.

Contents

- 1 Introduction**
 - 1.1 General**
 - 1.2 Site Location and Setting**
 - Fig. 1: Site Location*
 - General*
 - Study Area*
 - Geology*
- 2 Historical and Archaeological Background**
 - 2.1 General**
 - 2.2 Cartographic Study**
 - Ordnance Survey Maps*
 - 2.3 Archaeological Potential**
- 3 Methodology and Reporting**
 - 3.1 Watching Brief**
 - Scope*
 - 3.2 Standards**
 - 3.3 Timetable**
 - 3.4 Staffing**
 - 3.5 Monitoring Report and Archiving**
 - 3.6 Archiving**
 - 3.7 Post Excavation Analysis and Publication**

Cartographic

1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd were commissioned by Jamier Dods to undertake archaeological monitoring (watching brief), during works for the proposed construction of four pods, formation of access and associated works at Machair Croft, Isle of Iona, Argyll and Bute NGR: NM 27370 23800 (centred). The pod construction requires invasive excavation. A new track will require to be formed.

1.1.2 Following submission of a planning application for the development the site was identified as archaeologically sensitive by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (hereafter WoSAS) in their role as archaeological advisers to Argyll and Bute Council. There are two separate aspects to this potential. The most obvious is as follows:

"Most obviously, the red-line boundary shown on the supplied plans encompasses elements of a group of buildings annotated as Cnoc-nam-Bradhan that appeared on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881. On the 1st edition, this settlement was shown as comprising a reasonably dispersed group of six roofed buildings, with a number of enclosures also shown. Only two of these structures, now unroofed, are shown on current OS maps of the area; however, a survey of the settlement carried out by the National Trust for Scotland in 2016 identified four structures, two of which are extensions of the upstanding buildings. A third is substantially upstanding with walls up to 2.5m in height and 0.8m thick. This building measures 5.0m by 10m in plan and has rounded external corners. The fourth structure is an ephemeral circular structure, 5.0m in diameter with walls 0.4m high, with a possible entrance to the east. This circular structure lies 23.0m to the south-west of the west upstanding building. Two enclosures were also recorded both of which are illustrated on the modern Ordnance Survey map. Comparison with the supplied plans indicates that while none of the holiday units would directly overlie any of the structures shown on the 1st edition, the proposed new access track would run across the site of one of the buildings and an enclosure, while the treatment plant and soakaway would be located in another of the enclosures, and could affect the site of a second building. There would therefore be some potential for the development as a whole to encounter and remove physical material associated with the occupation of this site."

1.1.3 In addition, the following has been identified by WoSAS:

"In addition, the development would also be located in an area with a reasonably high potential to produce buried archaeological material associated with occupation in both the prehistoric and early medieval periods. Iona is rich in early medieval ('Dark Age') religious activity focussed on the Abbey; however, large numbers of features of prehistoric and later medieval date are also present in the surrounding landscape. The proposed development would be located on the corridor of flatter ground that connects the two sides of the island, running from Leck na Baan to Cnoc Ciarain. This section of the island is better-suited to past occupation than the rockier land to both the north and south, and could have the potential to produce buried archaeological material associated with almost any period."

1.1.4 Clarifying the mitigation works required through planning condition **25/00440/PP**, WoSAS requested:

"The developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological watching brief, to be carried out by an archaeological organisation acceptable to the Planning Authority, during all ground disturbance. The retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all reasonable times and allowed to record, recover and report items of interest and finds. A method statement for the watching brief will be submitted by the applicant, agreed

by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved by the Planning Authority prior to commencement of the watching brief. The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the Planning Authority and to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service in writing not less than 14 days before development commences." The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the Planning Authority and to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service in writing not less than 14 days before development commences." The retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all reasonable times and allowed to record, recover and report items of interest and finds. Reason: In order to protect archaeological resources.

- 1.1.3 This Methods Statement (hereafter MS) outlines proposals from ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd (hereafter ARCHAS) to undertake the programme of archaeological mitigation as recommended by WoSAS on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council. The MS also contains a small degree of research undertaken to put the site and the project in its historical context and establishes the methodology to be followed during the Archaeological Monitoring. This research is not exhaustive.
- 1.1.4 The objective of the monitoring is to record the presence or absence, quality, character, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits on site during all groundworks (Monitoring and Recording). Should significant remains be encountered, the planning authority as advised by WoSAS will determine whether further analysis and reporting is required (See sections 3.6.1-3.6.3 *ibid*).
- 1.1.5 ARCHAS Cultural Heritage Ltd. (hereafter ARCHAS) conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (hereafter CIfA) Code of conduct, and relevant Standards and Guidance documents.

1.2 Site Location and Setting

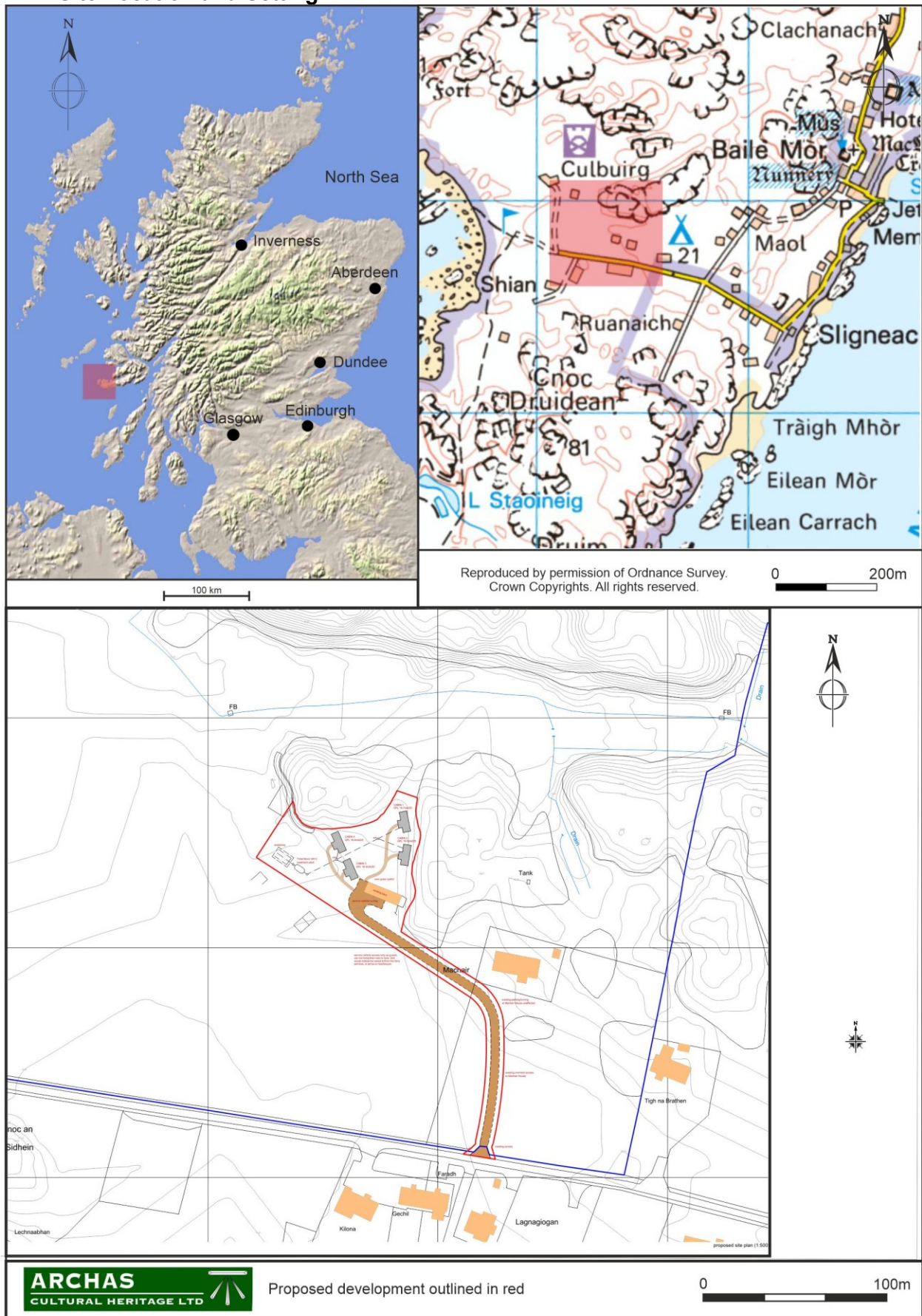


Figure 1 Development site Location

Development area

- 1.2.1 The development site is located at Machair Croft, Isle of Iona. On Bartholomys map of 1874 showing the island subdivided into several discreet areas, the site is in the area known as “Machair”, west of “Sliginach”.

The Gaelic name for the site is Cnoc Nam Bradhan which translates to **Hill of the Querns** (or **Knoll of the Querns**), or hill of the stone discs used for grinding crops. It is located in an area dominated by deposits of windblown sand and machair. The proposed development will be sited on an area of fairly level ground that has views to the south, west, and east. It is suggested that the ground has deep soil and vegetation grows well. This is in an area dominated by a mix of rough pasture, machair and outcropping bedrock. The denuded remains of a former Post Medieval farmstead and enclosure survive on the site, however, the proposed development does not obviously impact upon these surviving remains. However, there remains the potential for the presence of other buried remains associated with the farmstead to be affected.

Wider Landscape

- 1.2.2 The proposed development at Machair Croft is sited within an area on an island with considerable historical importance with numerous Historic Environment sites, the most important and well known being Iona Abbey. There are numerous other sites, many of which are buried beneath windblown sand. This prompted Argyll & Bute Council, on the advice of its archaeological advisers the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (hereafter WoSAS), to attach the archaeological planning condition.

Geology

- 1.2.3 The bedrock below the development site comprises Scourian Gneisses-Orthogneiss. These rocks were igneous in origin, but have subsequently undergone metamorphism. Amongst some of the oldest rock on earth, they date to 2,500,000,000 years ago. The drift geology will be windblown sand i.e machair.

2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Readily accessible historical and archaeological records were consulted in order to gain an understanding of the relevant history of the development area. These resources included the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), the National Map Library of Scotland (NLS) and the Statistical Accounts of Scotland. Consultation of these resources for the wider area allows the archaeological team to better understand the immediate archaeological landscape.
- 2.1.2 The Prehistory of Iona stretches back to the Mesolithic Period and there are several known Prehistoric sites on the island.

2.2 Cartographic Study

Early Mapping

- 2.2.1 The development site is not shown in any detail on any early maps. An area of exposed bedrock to the north of the site is noted on all OS maps and is present today

Ordnance Survey

- 2.2.2 The 1st edition 6” to the mile map Argyllshire Sheet CIV Surveyed: 1878, Published: 1881 covers the development area and notes the homestead of Cnoc Nam Bradhan which

comprises six separate small roofed buildings two of which have attached small enclosures (Figure 2).

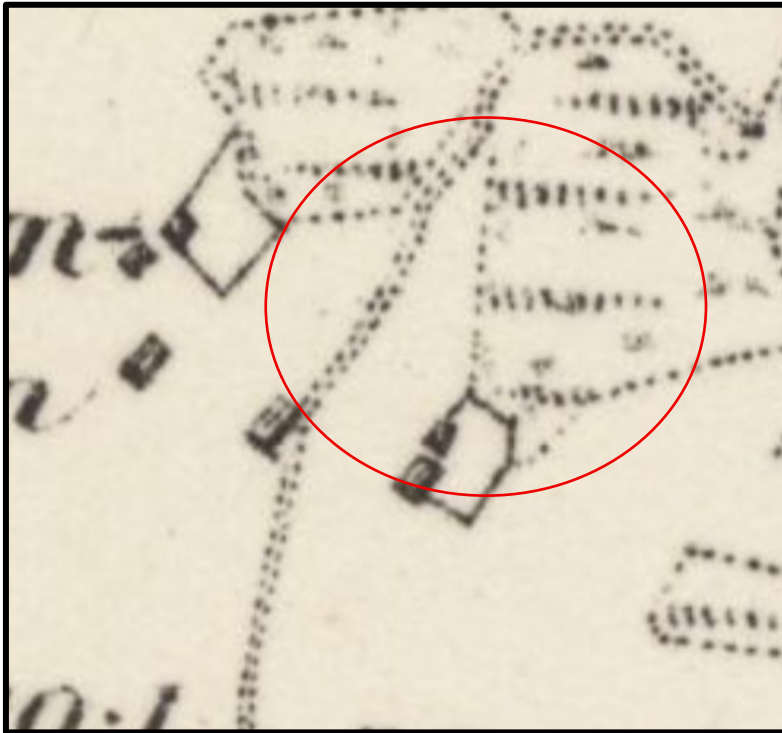


Figure 2: OS 1st edition 6" to the mile map Argyllshire Sheet CIV with approx development area outlined in red

- 2.2.3 By the publication of the 2nd edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map, *Argyllshire Sheet CIV* (surveyed 1897; published 1900), the settlement had changed little. The principal additions or alterations were the depiction of a well (W.) north of the trackway, and the apparent adaptation of two smaller buildings at the eastern and western edges of the area into single structures (**Figure 3**).

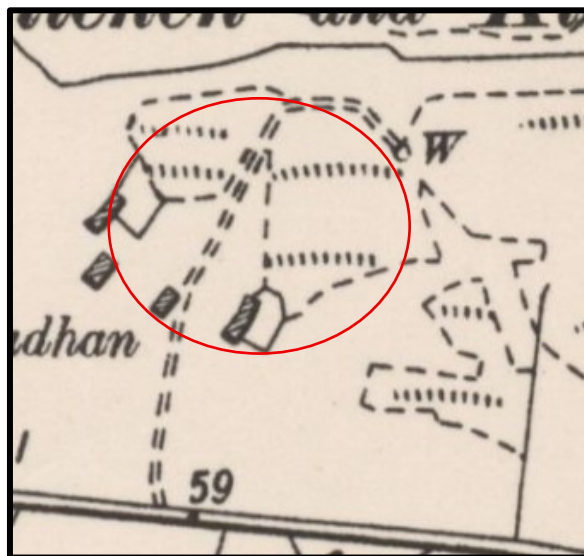


Figure 3: OS 2nd edition 6" to the mile Argyllshire Sheet CIV with development area outlined in red

- 2.2.4 The 1st edition OS 25-inch map, *Argyllshire and Buteshire CIV.15 (Kilfinichen & Kilviceuen)* (**Figure 4**), provides a more detailed depiction of the development area. The map has been overlaid with the proposed access track and pod locations, highlighting areas where earth-moving works could intersect with, and potentially disturb, deposits associated with the farmstead.

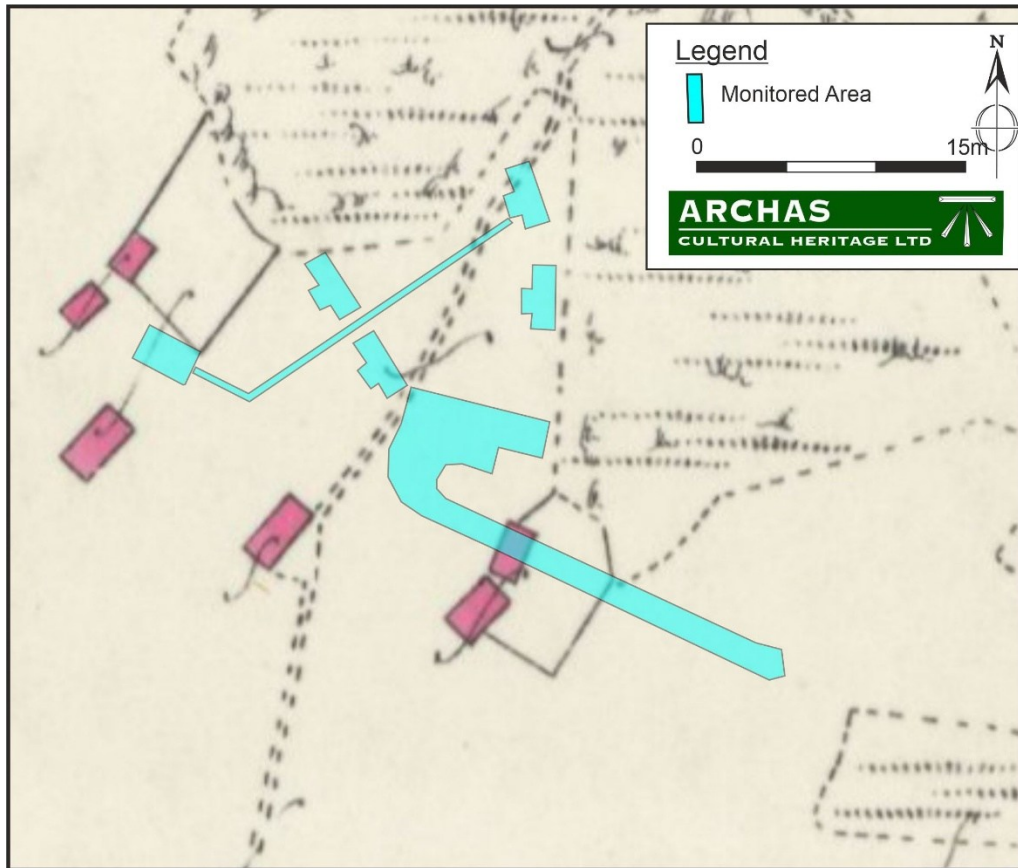


Figure 4: OS 25" to the mile map

2.3 Archaeological Potential

- 2.3.1 Due to the potential presence of elements of the former homestead and the deep sand deposits present across the development area it is suggested that there is considerable potential for the presence of deposits related both to the Post Medieval and earlier Prehistoric periods. Therefore, the archaeological potential of the proposed development site is noted as **High**.

3 Methodology and Reporting

3.1 Watching Brief

Scope

- 3.1.1 The watching brief as required by the planning condition states that:

"No development or ground breaking works shall commence until a method statement for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out by an archaeological organisation acceptable to the Planning Authority, during all ground disturbance, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service"

- 3.1.2 All ground-breaking works will be undertaken by the contractor using a mechanical excavator fitted, where possible, with a smooth edged ditching bucket.

- 3.1.3 This mechanical excavation work will be monitored at all times by a qualified ARCHAS archaeologist under watching brief conditions until:
- any archaeological horizons are noted;
 - undisturbed natural subsoil is apparent; or
 - the depth of the development impact is reached.
- 3.1.4 Soil shall be removed gradually in spits of 0.10m and the spoil assessed swiftly with a metal detector.
- 3.1.5 If archaeologically significant remains are identified during the watching brief and it is not possible to ensure their long-term preservation *in situ*, the archaeologist will take over formal investigation of these feature(s) in order to preserve any identified remains through record. The client and contractor will be aware of the necessity of archaeological investigation and the potential for down time as a result of this. Should investigation of features prove to be time consuming, or prevent continued excavation, ARCHAS will notify WoSAS and a site meeting will be arranged between WoSAS, ARCHAS and the client at the earliest opportunity in order to agree a mitigation strategy. Further, in the event that extensive, complicated or significant features or deposits are identified that cannot be dealt with within the amount of down-time allowed within the general watching brief methodology, an addendum to this method statement will be prepared outlining proposals for a further phase of on-site work.
- 3.1.6 Any archaeological remains encountered will need to be recorded and investigated/sampled as per recording standards which comply with those outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA Watching Brief Standards and Guidance 2020) and are acceptable to WoSAS in their capacity as advisers to Argyll and Bute Council.
- 3.1.7 The line of communication on-site between the client and ARCHAS must be clearly stated in advance. This is especially important with regards to who must be advised of any necessary stoppage time required.
- 3.1.8 It must be clearly agreed with the client, contractor and site staff before the site works begin that ARCHAS staff have access to all appropriate areas on site and can ask for stoppage time to allow for adequate salvage archaeological recording and artefact retrieval to take place.
- 3.1.9 Any identified features will be investigated in order to ascertain their likely date and possible function. It is, however, appreciated that it will not always be possible to accurately date features during excavation and it may only be possible to achieve this through a programme of post-excavation analysis.
- 3.1.10 While ARCHAS can provide advice and recommendations, WoSAS, on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council, will decide on the significance of any revealed deposits and may request works that ensures proper recording as well as a programme of Post Excavation analysis. Such potential future work cannot be costed or included as part of this proposal but would have to be costed separately and a scope of works agreed through negotiation with WOSAS, on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.
- 3.1.11 All works will comply with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards, Policies and Code of Conduct.

3.2 Standards

- 3.2.1 All archaeological deposits or features encountered will be recorded on ARCHAS Ltd. *pro forma* record sheets to accepted standards established by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). A site diary will be maintained during all site works.

- 3.2.2 Relevant sections and plans will be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 respectively or as appropriate on permatrace and cross-referenced to *pro forma* sheets.
- 3.2.3 A digital photographic record will be maintained. This will illustrate the principal features and finds both in detail and in a general context. The photographic record will also include working shots to represent more generally the nature of the fieldwork. A register of all photographs taken will be kept on standardised ARCHAS *pro forma* sheets.
- 3.2.4 If archaeological finds are recovered during the evaluation, they will have to be formally recorded, removed from site, cleaned/conserved where necessary, and studied appropriately. The present proposals cover the cost of a basic assessment of artefacts. Any further work required will be at the request of WOSAS on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council and will be costed separately.
- 3.2.5 Soil samples shall be collected as required based on archaeological necessity and perceived potential rather than any other consideration. Should soil processing be required as part of a programme of post-excavation analysis this will be at the request of WOSAS and will be costed separately following conclusion of site works.
- 3.2.6 If human remains are encountered appropriate procedures shall be adhered to. All work on site shall halt and WoSAS and Police Scotland notified. No work shall re-commence until the police and WoSAS have concluded all investigations and archaeological works are complete.

3.3 Timetable

- 3.3.1 Due to the nature of watching briefs, archaeological monitoring must be accommodated within the project timetable. A clear working practice must be agreed in advance.
- 3.3.2 ARCHAS Ltd must be made aware in advance of scheme timetables and when an archaeological presence will be required on site. Adequate notice must be given to ARCHAS by the client. The anticipated extent of the work must be confirmed with the client in advance.
- 3.3.3 It is anticipated that the watching brief will be undertaken during August 2026. WoSAS will be informed in advance of site works commencing.

3.4 Staffing

- 3.4.1 The project will be directed by one of ARCHAS' experienced archaeologists. Most probably Alastair Rees. CVs can be made available on request.

3.5 Monitoring Report & Archiving

- 3.5.1 Within six weeks of completion of fieldwork, the results will be presented in a written Data Structure Report suitable for archiving. The report will include as a minimum:
1. *An Executive Summary*
 2. *A full descriptive text detailing any features identified and an interpretation of their date and purpose;*
 3. *Plans at an appropriate scale showing the location of those areas which were subject to archaeological excavation and any features located;*
 4. *Section drawings of the areas which were subject to archaeological excavation;*
 5. *Appropriate lists and diagrams summarising the contexts and any artefacts recovered and the records made of them.*
 6. *Details of archive and deposition*

7. References

- 3.5.2 The results of the project will also be reported using the *Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations* (OASIS) digital reporting facility and annual publication Discovery and Excavation Scotland (DES).
- 3.5.3 Archiving and post-excavation work shall be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the ClfA Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Watching Briefs and the intended final depository of the archive (NRHE and WoSAS SMR).
- 3.5.4 All works will comply with the ClfA Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.
- 3.6 Post-Excavation Analysis and Publication**
- 3.6.1 Should the excavation works retrieve a significant assemblage of artefactual material; these may raise a requirement for a post excavation analysis phase.
- 3.6.2 If this is required, a Post-excavation Research Design (PERD) will be submitted for the agreement of WOSAS in their capacity as archaeological advisers to Argyll and Bute Council. This will be submitted within three months of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork to which the PERD relates. WOSAS will expect to see a commitment to implementation of a programme of post-excavation by the developer (if this is required) before it will consider the programme of archaeological work to have been fully secured and the planning condition met. Such a contract(s) will include a commitment to publish the results in a suitable professional archaeological journal should this be warranted. WOSAS will be the judge on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council, of the need for post-excavation analyses and publication.
- 3.6.3 Should specialist analysis, conservation, sample processing or PERD be required this is not costed as part of the present project and shall be discussed separately at the earliest opportunity. All requirements for further analysis of recovered artefacts and eco-facts will be at the instigation of WOSAS.
- 3.6.4 Artefacts and eco-facts recovered from excavations sponsored by other funding bodies are reported to the Crown via the Treasure Trove Advisory Panel (TTAP). TTAP then allocates the material to the appropriate museum for long term storage and possible display.
- 3.6.5 All primary site record archiving (drawn, written & photographic record) will be undertaken according to standards and guidelines set out by the National Record of the Historic Environment Scotland (NRHES), held by Historic Environment Scotland. The archive works will be deposited to the NRHES within six months of completion of all fieldwork.

Bibliography

Websites

www.aircrashsites-scotland.co.uk
www.bgs.ac.uk
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
www.nls.uk
www.pastmap.org.uk
www.wosas.net
www.stataccscot.edina.ac.uk

Rees, T& McKeand, S. 1996 Survey and Desk Based Assessment of the lands of the National Trust for Scotland on the Isle of Iona, Argyll and Bute AOC Archaeology Group

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey 6" to the mile 1st edition Argyllshire, Sheet CIV, Surveyed: 1878, Published: 1881

Ordnance Survey 6" to the mile 2nd edition Argyll and Bute, CIV, Surveyed: 1897, Published: 1900

Ordnance Survey 25 inch to the mile Argyllshire and Buteshire (Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen) CIV.15, Surveyed: 1878, Published: 1880