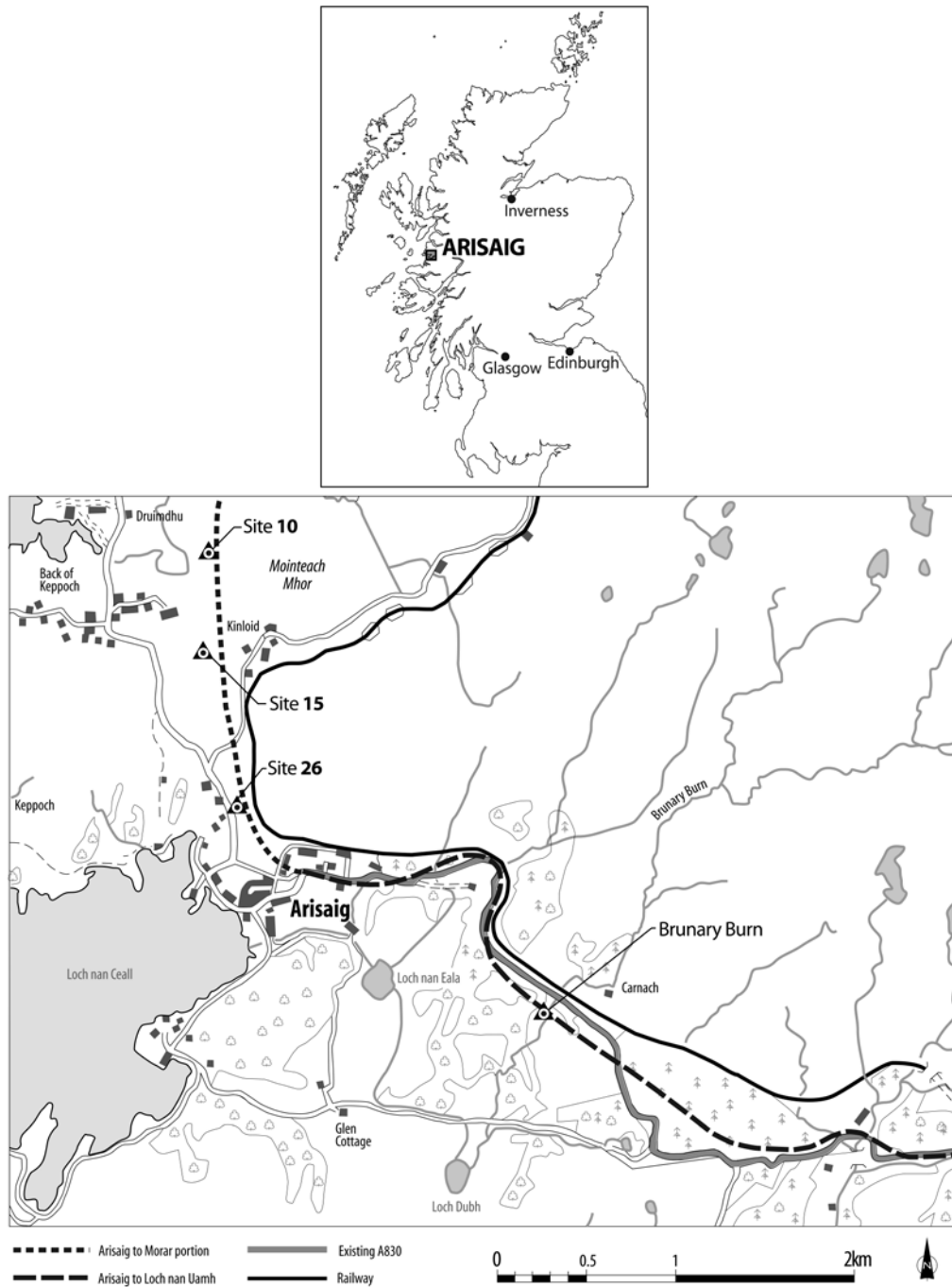


3 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the excavation of a burnt mound (NGR: NM 6667 8650) and associated palaeochannels undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between September and October 2005 prior to the upgrading of the A830 from Loch Nan Uamh to Arisaig. The excavations revealed two phases of

burnt mound accumulation interspersed with three phases of erosion.

The burnt mound was discovered as a result of a programme of archaeological works along the route of the Loch Nan Uamh to Arisaig upgrade that included reconnaissance survey (Suddaby 2005 (a)),



Illus 1 Location map showing Arisaig and sites mentioned in the text

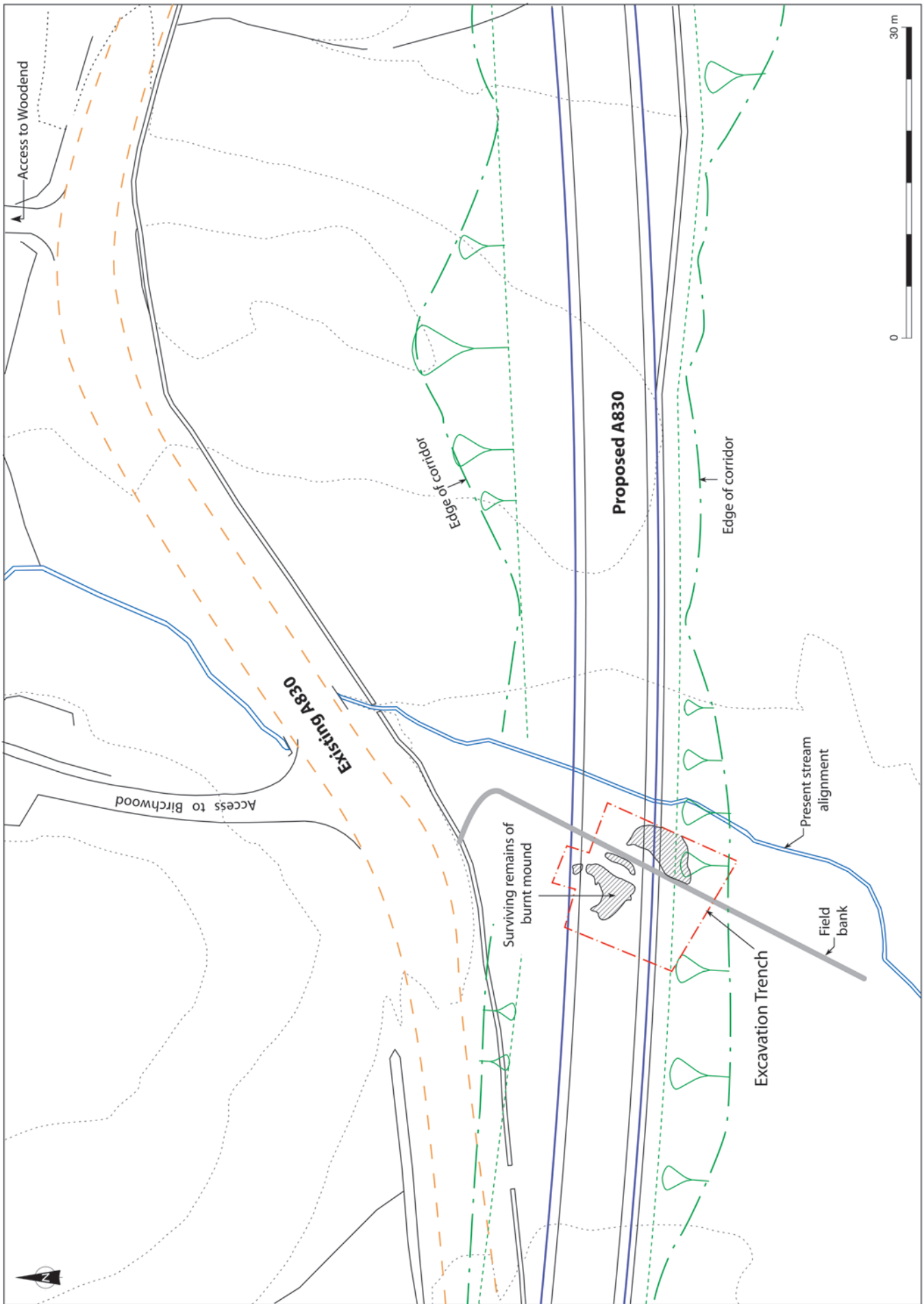
trial-trenching evaluation (Suddaby 2005 (b)) and excavation (Suddaby & White 2006). Archaeological work during earlier phases of the overall upgrading of the A830 include that undertaken by Rees (1996) to the south, between Lochailort and Loch Nan Uamh and by Carter et al (2005) to the north, between Arisaig and Morar. The latter included the excavation of a cairn containing deposits dating to the Bronze Age (NM68NE 35), located 300m to the west of the burnt mound. Additional work on other sites around the Mointeach Mhor, further to the north, also revealed ephemeral Bronze Age activity. Two further cairns (NM68NE 6, 7) and a crannog (NM68NE 2) lie to the south. The location of these nearby sites and the burnt mound itself are shown on *illus 1*.

3.1 *Setting*

The burnt mound lies at *c* 25m OD, less than 1km inland from the head of the sheltered Loch nan Ceall (*illus 1*) where the modern village of Arisaig

is situated. To the east of the village, on generally south-facing gentle slopes, the improved grass fields extend westwards as far as a land boundary which is marked by a substantial grass-covered linear field-bank (*illus 2*). Immediately to the east, a small burn, which has been artificially channelled, drains the south slopes of Sgurr an t-Sasunaidh. To the east of the burn is an area of semi-improved land which contains exposures of knobbly bedrock, large deciduous trees and localised areas of grass and bracken within which lazy-beds are present. To the north, beyond the existing A830, the ground rises steeply up to the railway and the unimproved hill land of Aird nam Fuaran beyond. To the south, the field-bank marking the improved land leads to Mains Farm and the canalised river draining Loch nan Eala.

Despite the straightening of the small burn, which passed within 2m of the burnt mound (*illus 2*), the locality is poorly drained and boggy. The burn level rises appreciably when in spate and, prior to the formation of the field bank, must often have flooded the surrounding area.



Illus 2 The locality of the Arisaig site showing the stream and field bank