

**Report of Archaeological Desktop
& Walkover Survey
20th & 21st March 2003
Stronlairig Hydro- Electric Scheme Proposal
NH 536 / 070 (centred)**

Client : BMT Cordah Ltd

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Acknowledgements
3. Objectives
4. Survey Results
5. Conclusions
6. Archive
7. Discovery and Excavation
8. References

Appendix 1 – Photographic Register

Non Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by BMT Cordah Ltd in March 2003 to undertake an archaeological desktop and walkover survey at Stronlairig (NH 536/070 centred) as part of an environmental impact assessment for a proposed hydro-electric scheme.

Work revealed the remains of buildings associated with the former shooting lodge of Sronlairig, a farmstead, shielings and other small structures. A find was also made of a flint scrapper during the walkover.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological desktop and walkover survey conducted on behalf of BMT Cordah Ltd by the author as part of an environmental assessment for a proposed hydro-electric scheme at Stronlairig.

The walkover survey was conducted between March 20th and March 21st 2003.

2. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work :

- Mr. T Baker, of BMT Cordah Ltd;
- Mr. J Massey, of BMT Cordah Ltd;
- Mr. N Stoddart, Estate Manager for access;
- Mr. K Cooper, for onsite help;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland;
- Staff of the National Monuments Record of Scotland;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives;
- Staff of the National Library of Scotland, Map room.

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Figure 1: General Location

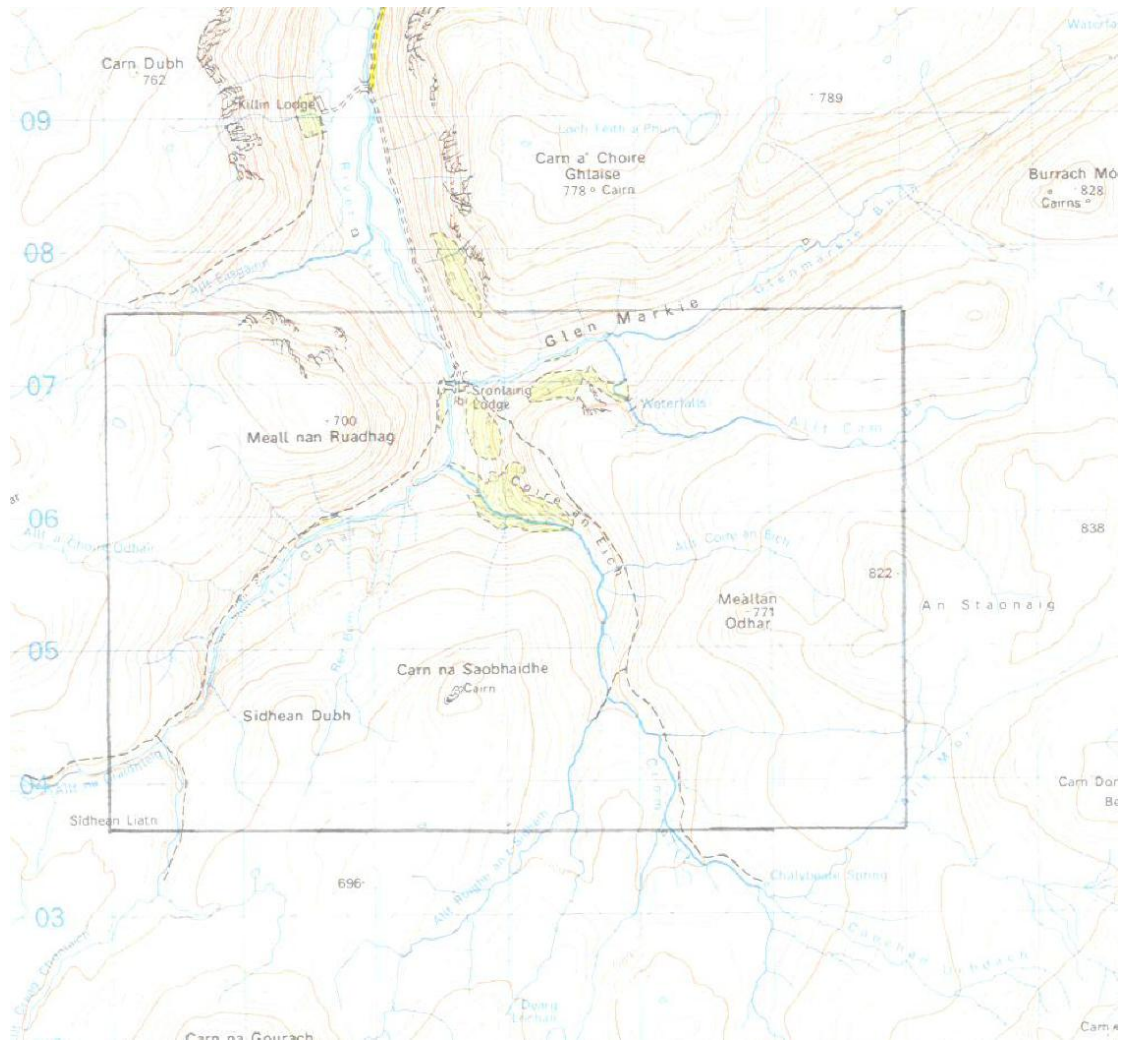


Figure 2: Route of Pipes and intakes

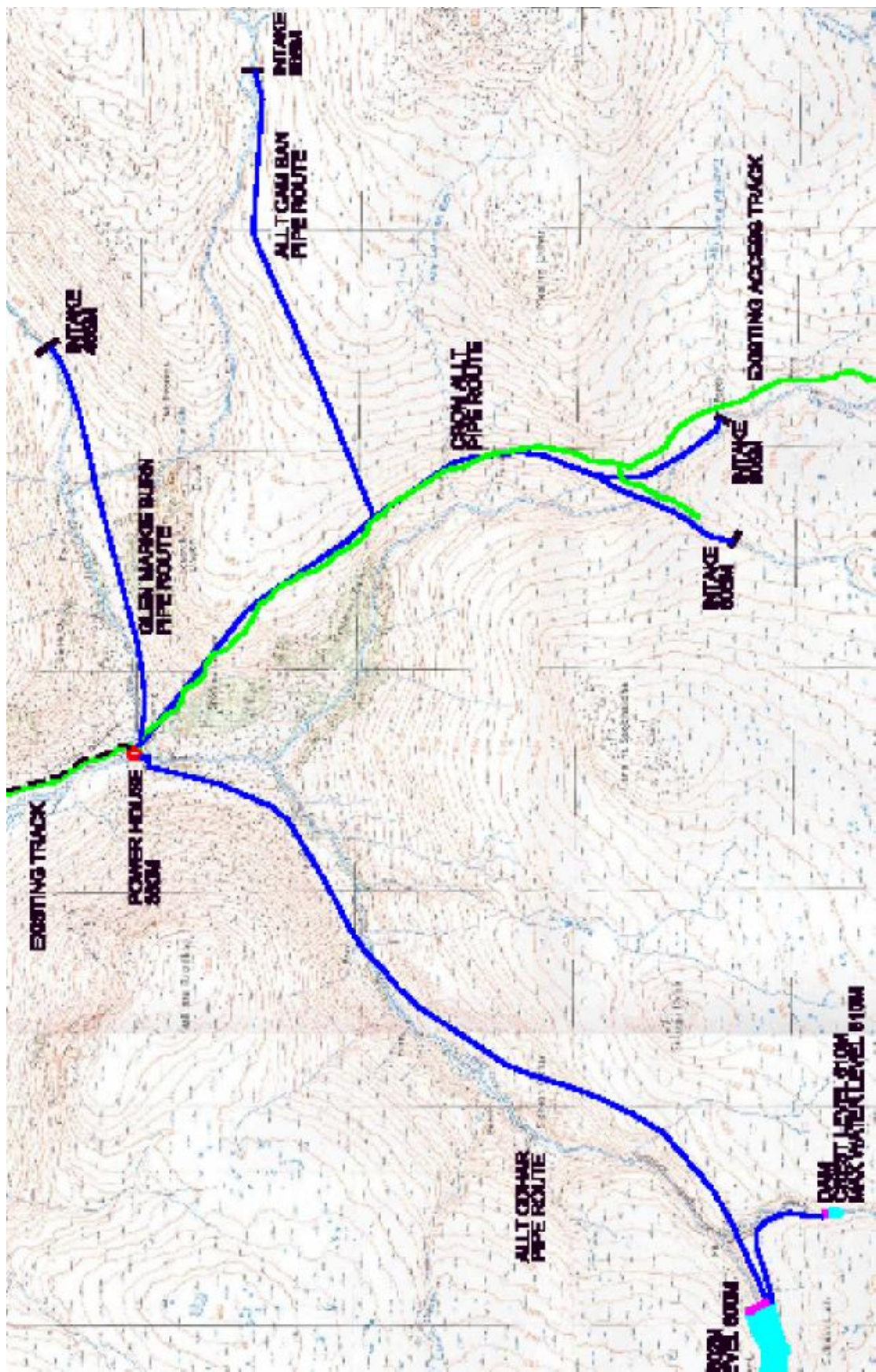


Figure 3: Ordnance Survey Map of 1872 (surveyed 1869)

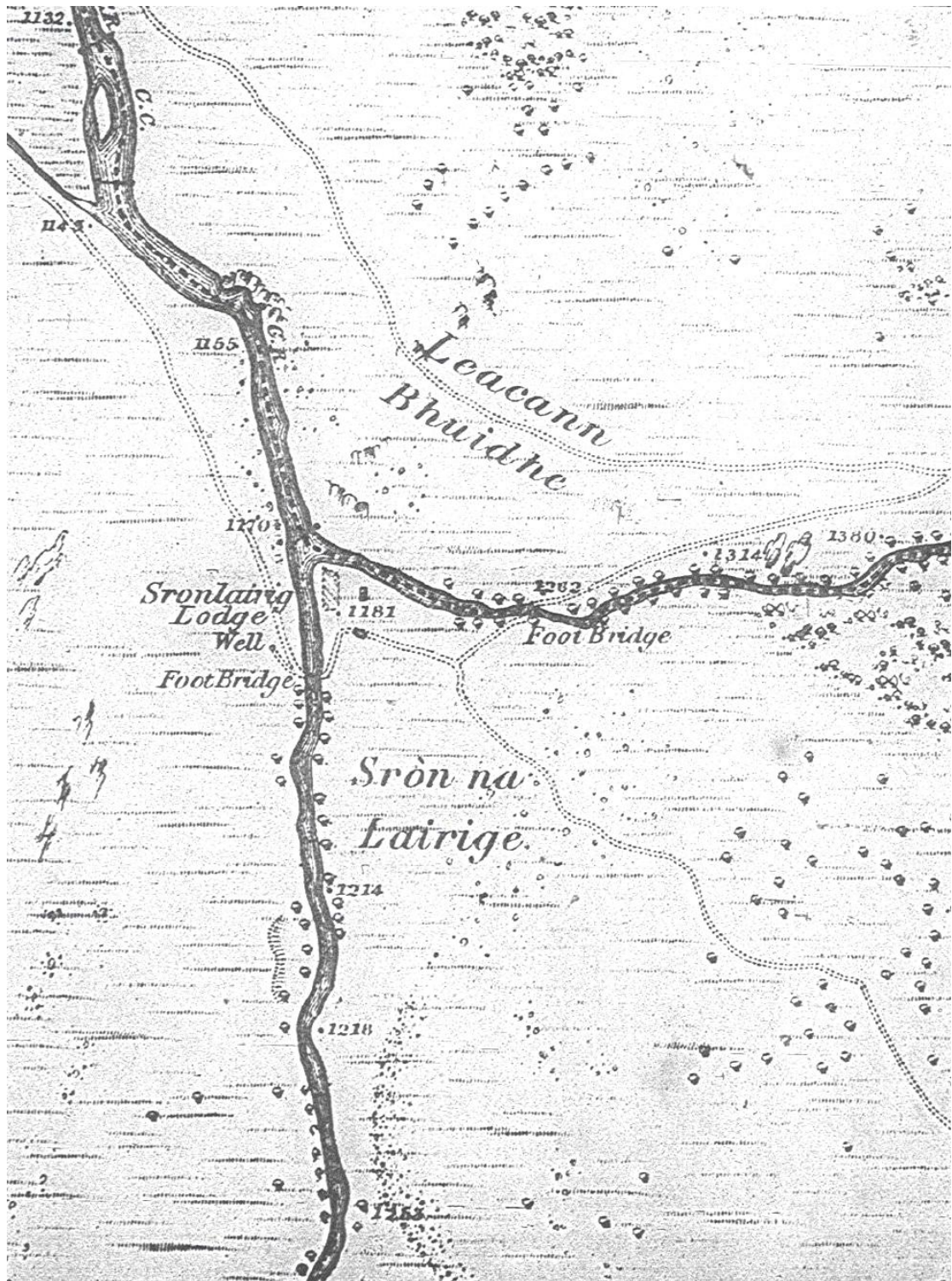


Figure 4: Ordnance Survey Map of 1872 (surveyed 1869)

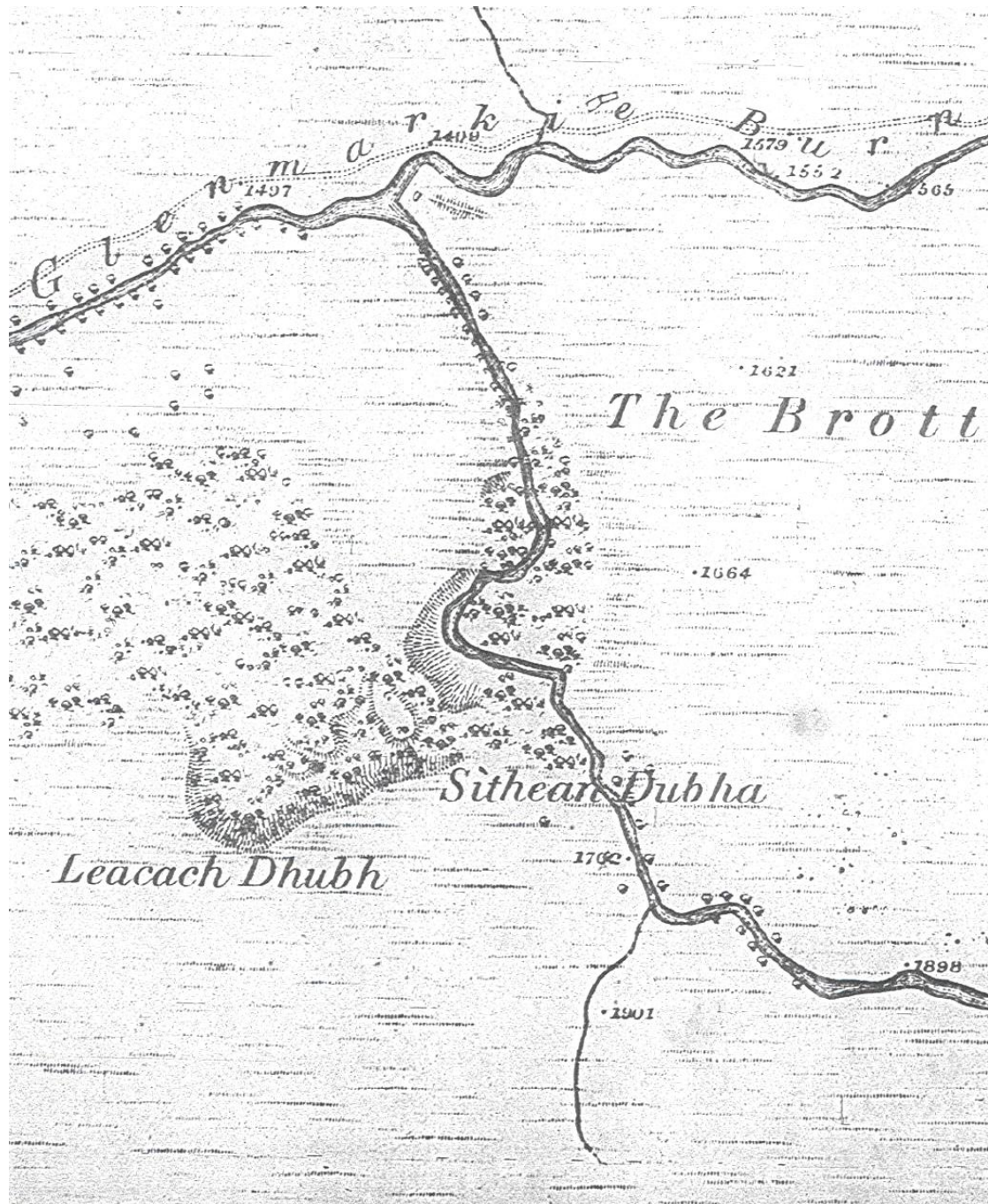


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey Map of 1902 (revised 1899)

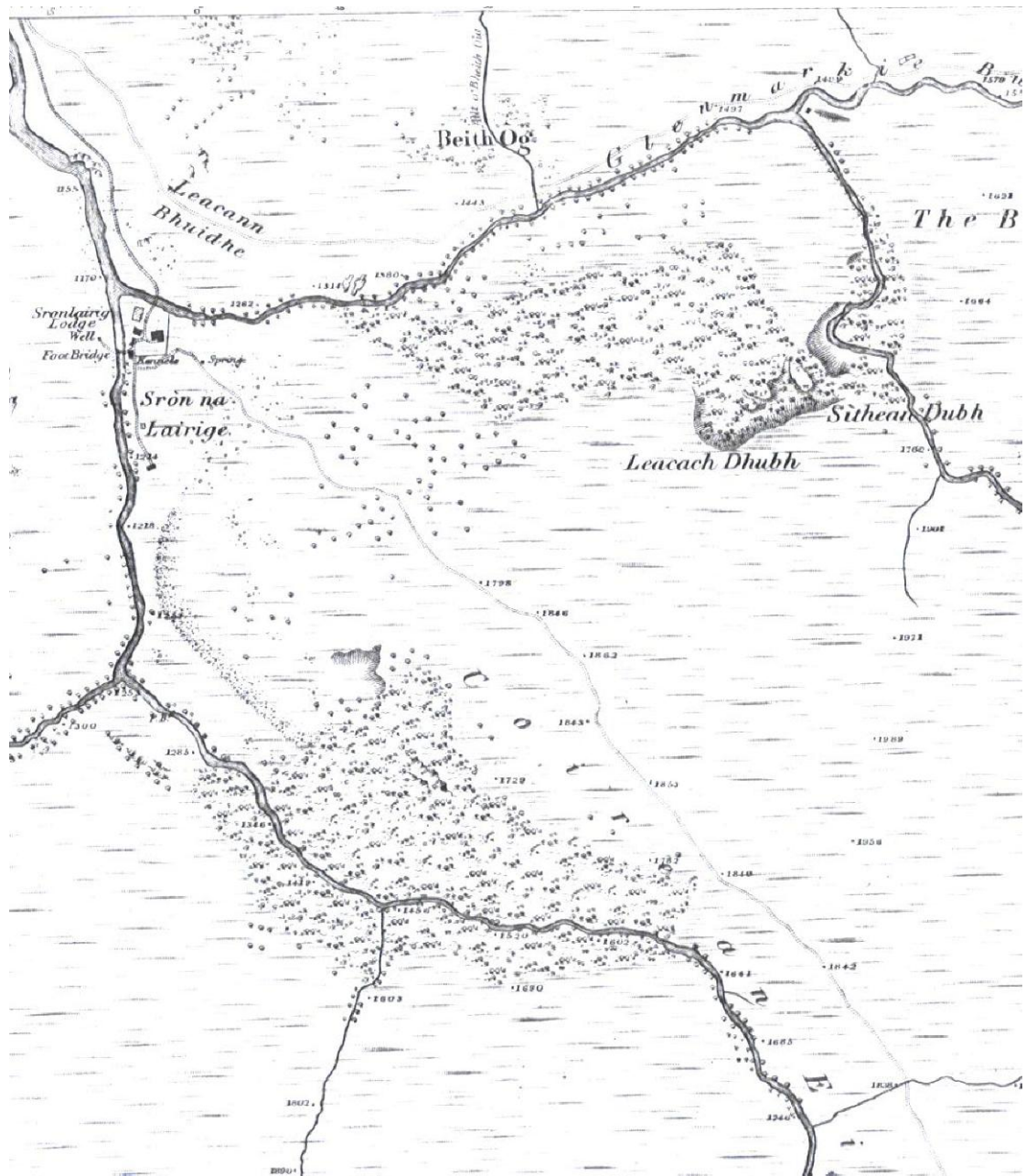


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map of 1992 (enlargement of Lodge area with individual sites marked)

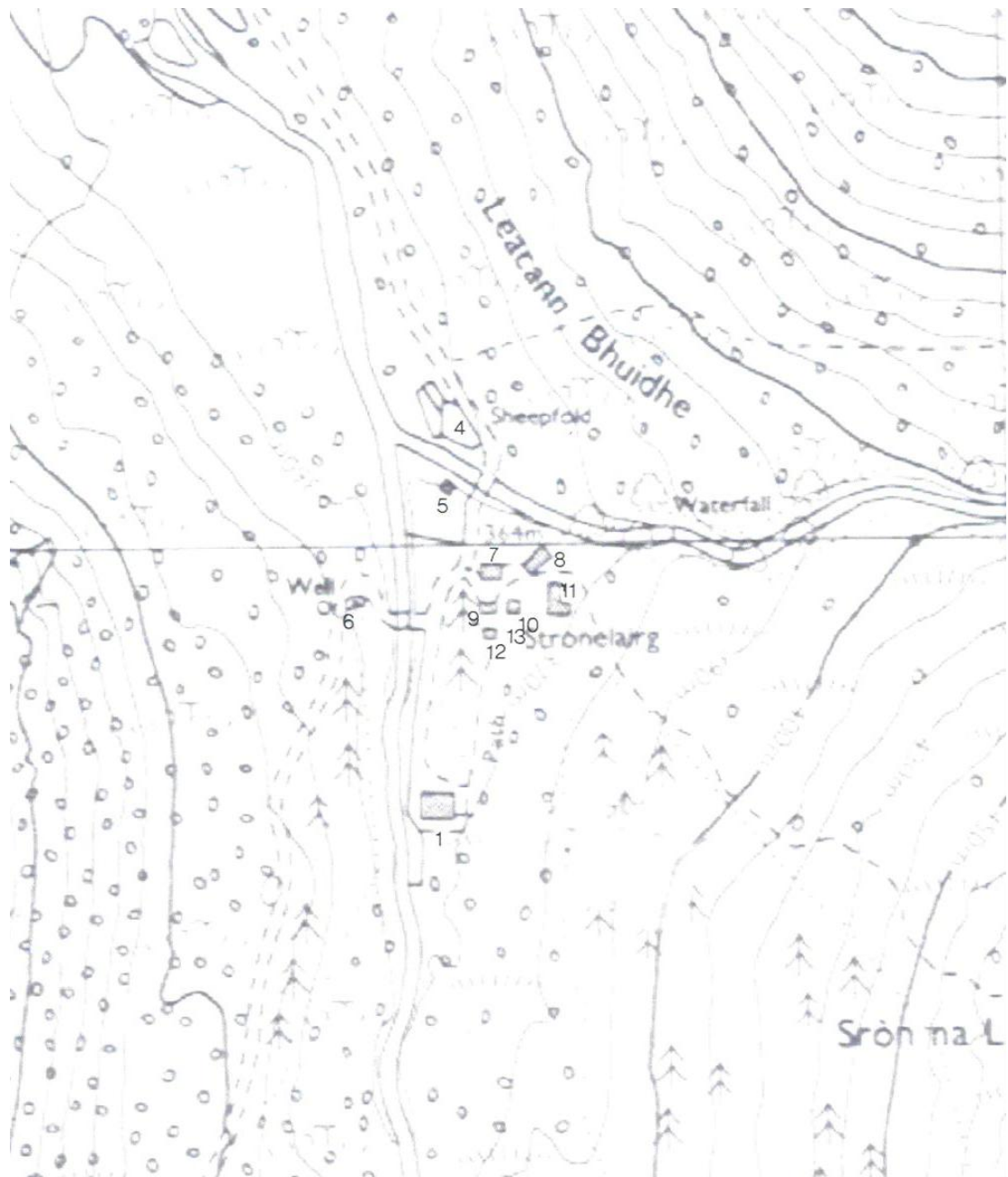
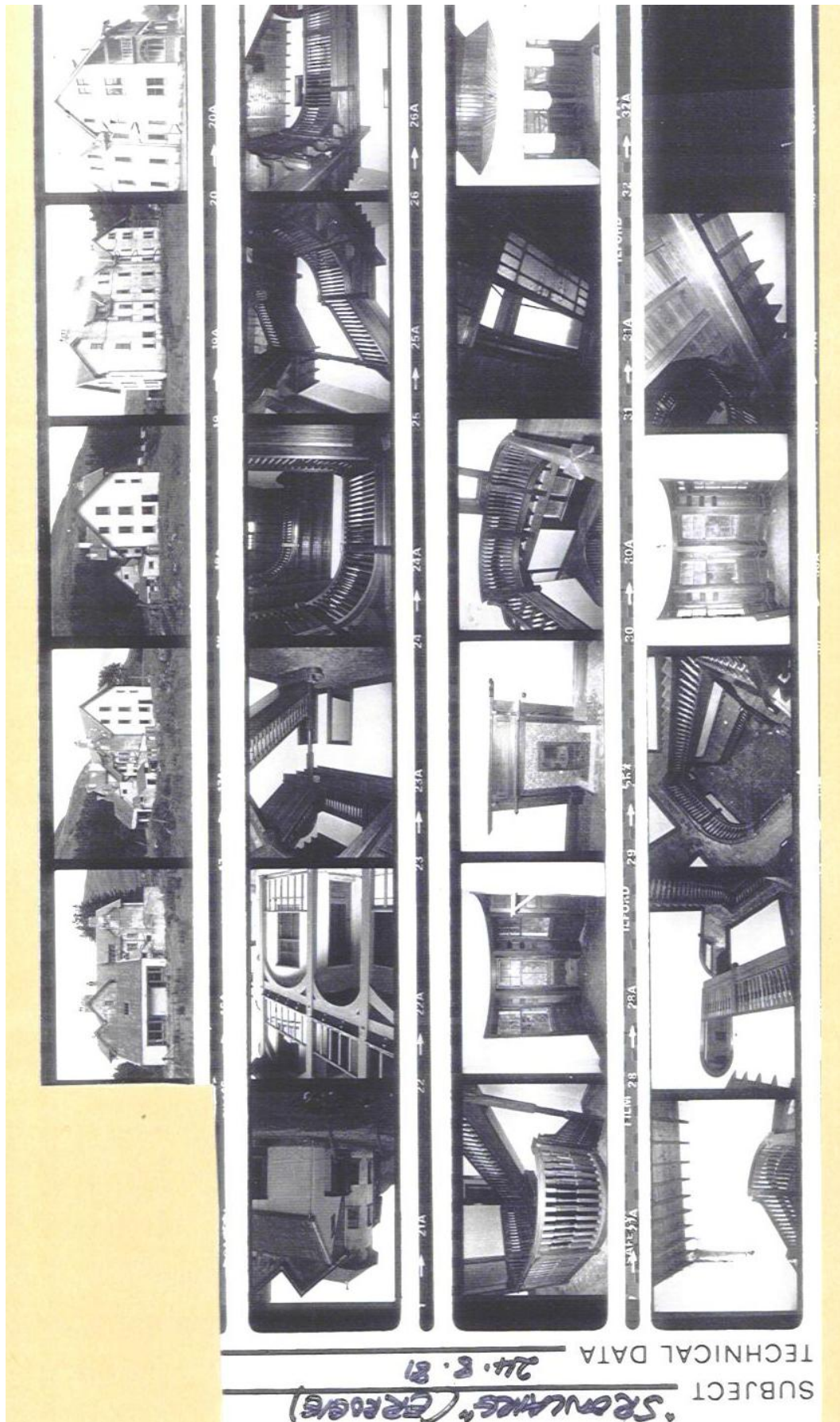


Figure 7: Photographs of Lodge in 1981 held in NMRS.



3. Objectives

To conduct a desktop and walkover survey to the development area to record those features that would be affected by the new proposed hydro-electric scheme.

4. Archaeological Survey

Desktop Results

A desktop survey was conducted using the following sources:

- Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record;
- National Monuments Record of Scotland, Edinburgh;
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland – aerial photograph collection;
- National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Maps);
- National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Manuscripts);
- Highland Council Archives;
- Inverness Library.

Both the aerial photography and the map coverage were very limited to the area of interest.

Aerial photographs, in particular were very limited with partial cover for 1946 and 1948 and the latest coverage of 1989 was limited due to scale.

Map coverage was also limited as the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the 1872 (surveyed 1869) was almost the same as the 2nd of 1902 (revised 1899) and little survey work has been carried out in detail in the 20th century, with the next edition being in 1992.

Currently only 3 archaeological sites are recorded to the development area either in the Highland Sites and Monuments Record or in the National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database. Summaries of these are as follows:

1 Sronlairig Lodge
HSMR – NH50NW 1
NMRS – NH50NW 6
Type: Building, House
Grid Ref: NH 5362/0683

No information available in HSMR or the NMRS. A photograph held in the HSMR taken in 1992 shows the building roofed but derelict. Photographs held in the NMRS taken in 1981 (see figure 7) show the building empty and partly derelict.

The building is not marked on either the 1st or 2nd edition OS Maps (see figures 3 & 5) and the building must therefore date to after 1905. Site is recorded in the Ordnance Survey Name Book as 'a small gamekeeper's lodge, built of wood, at the foot of Sron-a-Lairig. The property of Captain Fraser of Polbalnain House'.

The 2nd edition OS of 1902 (revised 1899 – figure 5) shows an unroofed building at this location as well as a kennels and another building situated to the north. Building is visible on aerial photograph of 1948 (4076) as is other buildings in surrounding area. Only 3 buildings around lodge visible on aerial photograph of 1989. (081)

Walkover reveals lodge to be in a ruinous state with notices of dangerous building posted.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

Top – General view of Lodge from west
Below – View of west end of Lodge



2 Glen Markie

HSMR – NH50NW 5

NMRS – NH50NW 4

Type: Shieling Hut

Grid Ref: NH 5481/0733

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'What may be an unroofed shieling hut is depicted on the 1st edition OS map of Inverness-shire 1872 sheet 85 and on the current Os 1:10,000 of 1992'. Possibly marked as roofed on 2nd edition OS (see figure 5). Visible partly on aerial photograph of 1948 (4077) not visible on aerial photograph of 1989.

Walkover reveals site not to be a shieling but small farmstead at NH 54803/07317 at 1499ft above sea level of a rubble rectangular building aligned NE-SW 7.7m by 4.5m with walls up to 1.4m high and 0.5m wide. Frontage to NW has doorway and 2 windows visible. Possible enclosing wall to the NE end with possible clearance cairn. Remnants of corrugated iron roof visible, building collapsed at SE end. (Photo facing East – scale 2m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



3 Glen Markie

HSMR – NH50NW 6

NMRS – NH50NW 5

Type: Farmstead

Grid Ref: NH 5498/0742

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'What may be a farmstead of an unroofed building is depicted on the 1st edition OS map of Inverness-shire 1872 sheet 85 (see figure 4) and on the current Os 1:10,000 of 1992'. Marked on 1st edition to comprise of 2 compartments. Visible on aerial photograph of 1948 (4077) of 2 compartments, not visible on aerial photograph of 1989.

Walkover revealed site to be centred at NH 54989/07389 at 1571ft above sea level of 2 buildings with circular enclosure to west end. Buildings are aligned E-W with 1st at E 9.1m x 4.6m with walls 0.8m wide and up to 0.8m high with entrance to S. 2nd building is 9m x 4.6m with walls 0.8m wide and up to 1.2m high with entrances to S and N. No sign of connecting doorway between both buildings. Enclosure is 8.9m EW by 9.7m NS with walls spread to 2.6m and up to 0.6m high. Possible associated pen with small stretch of walling at NH 54955/07377 of 10m with bank to rear 3.5m of rough boulders. (Photo facing Southeast)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



The following additional 19 archaeological sites were to be found on or close to the area of the proposed routes, sites are numbered on the accompanying 1:5000 maps).

The walkover survey was conducted on the 20th & 21st of March 2003, with weather conditions being sunny with occasional heavy showers on the 20th. Weather on the 21st was bright and sunny. Grid references were obtained using a Garmin GPS Plus II using OS data.

Recommendations, where applicable are given after each site.

HSMR – Highland Sites and Monuments Record
NMRS - National Monuments Record of Scotland
n/a – not available

4 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Sheepfold

Grid Ref: NH 5363/0708

Marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not visible on aerial photograph of 1948 (4076).

Walkover reveals remains of sheepfold with walls thrown down and currently area of hard standing used by vehicles for turning. Wall along riverside 14m in length to 7.9m at its widest point. Wall spread to 2m. (Photo facing Northeast – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project. Area to be avoided by construction traffic.



5 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 5363/0705

Marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals L-shaped building of corrugated iron walls and roof with concrete floor with cast-iron guttering. Overall size of building is 4.25m NS by 4.9m EW. Building is former electric generator house using water from nearby river, with remains of belt generator and switchgear still in situ. Remains of concrete bases for intake pipe to be seen in the riverbed. (Photo facing East and NE – scale 2m)

Currently this building lies in area of new proposed powerhouse by proposed project. And is likely to be removed. No further work is recommended.



6 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Well

Grid Ref: NH 53566/06959

Marked on OS map of 1992, and marked on 1st and 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals well 0.6m deep 1m in diameter with possible spring hollow 4m to west. Remnants of surrounding fence still to be seen.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

7 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 5365/0698

Marked on OS map to be aligned E-W of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals no trace of building as marked on map.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

8 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 5368/0699

Marked on OS map of 1992 to be aligned NE-SW, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals no trace of building as marked on map. Area has wooden sheep pens at this location, which are still in use.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

9 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 53658/06951

Marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals remains of concrete floor with brick edge with possible sump in floor, making site possibly former garage. Overall size is 16.9m EW by 5m NS. (Photo facing West – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



10 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 5366/0696

Marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map. Visible on aerial photograph of 1948 (4076) not visible on aerial photograph of 1989.

Walkover reveals rectangular rubble building aligned N-S 8.7m x 4.65m with walls 0.3m thick and up to 0.3m high. Lately used for scrap. Possibly kennels? (Photo facing South)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



11 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 53694/06964

L-shaped building marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st edition OS map possibly partly marked on 2nd edition OS of 1902.

Walkover reveals standing building with rubble base and corrugated iron roof and walls with additions of brick. Building in dangerous condition. Possibly former bunkhouse for beaters, ghillies, etc. (Photo facing East)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



12 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building (remains of)

Grid Ref: NH 53656/06935

Marked on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map. Visible on aerial photograph of 1948 (4076) not visible on aerial photograph of 1989.

Walkover reveals remains of concrete floored building aligned E-W 4.5m x 3.7m.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

13 Sronlairig Lodge

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 53662/06935

Site not marked on OS maps.

Walkover reveals remains of concrete floored building (similar to site 12) aligned N-S 6.5m x 3.5m.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

14 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 51797/05115

Marked as unroofed on OS map of 1992, not marked on 1st or 2nd edition OS maps. Not marked on latest OS map.

Walkover reveals rectangular structure at 1691ft above sea level. Building of rubble is aligned N-S 6.5m x 3.5m with walls up to 1.4m high and 0.4m wide. Secondary structure of possible lambing pen built into SE corner with remnants of corrugated iron roof. (Photo view facing SE – scale 2m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



15 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Structure

Grid Ref: NH 51804/05149

Site revealed during walkover survey of possible rectangular structure aligned N-S 4.3m x 2.9m of rough boulders up to 0.4m high. (Photo facing North – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



16 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Shieling

Grid Ref: NH 51835/05162

Site revealed during walkover survey of round shieling of 3.1m by 3.7m overall with walls to rear up to 0.4m high and 0.4m wide. Possible entrance to south. (Photo facing North – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



17 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Shieling

Grid Ref: NH 51843/05185

Site revealed during walkover survey of rectangular shieling aligned E-W 4.3m by 3.1m with turf walls 0.3m wide and 0.2m high. Stone visible in southern bank and entrance to North. (Photo facing East – scales 1m x 1m)

Currently site lies on edge of existing path – area to be avoided by construction traffic.



18 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Flint scrapper

Grid Ref: NH 51462/04455

Find revealed during walkover survey of small thumbnail scrapper possible Bronze Age in date. Located at 1927ft above sea level on track.

No recommendations to be made, as find is likely to be stray find and possibly not part of a site.



19 Allt Odhar

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Building

Grid Ref: NH 52717/05965

Site revealed during walkover survey of rectangular building at 1549 ft above sea level.

Building is aligned NE-SW 6.5m by 3.4m with walls 0.6m thick and up to 0.3m high.

Entrance visible to NE corner. Possible adjoining structure to W with possible 2nd doorway to SW. (Photo facing South – scale 2m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project. If sites lies close to route area around for 20m to be avoided.



20 Glen Markie

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Shieling (possible)

Grid Ref: NH 54638/07349

Site revealed during walkover survey of possible shieling or pen on slope of a u-shaped structure 5m in diameter with walls up to 0.3m high and wide. (Photo facing West – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



21 Glen Markie

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Shieling

Grid Ref: NH 54498/07300

Site revealed during walkover survey of rectangular shieling aligned E-W 4.6m x 3.5m with turf walls 0.2m high and wide with possible entrance to E. (Photo facing West – scales 1m x 1m)

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.



22 Glen Markie

HSMR – n/a

NMRS – n/a

Type: Structure (possible)

Grid Ref: NH 54516/07288

Site revealed during walkover survey of possible rectangular structure as a platform as part remains of a house or shieling. Aligned E-W 8.3m x 4.5m with turf bank 0.7m wide and up to 0.2m high. No trace of entrance. Sits with site 21 (to NW) in area of improved ground.

No recommendations to be made as site should be unaffected by proposed project.

5. Conclusions

Overall the archaeological sites revealed relate mostly to the former shooting lodge and those farmsteads that would have been cleared or abandoned before the creation of the lodge. The find of the flint scrapper is a rare find especially at this altitude.

6. Archive

Notebook of results and copy of images is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh.

7. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

8. References

Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entries for NH50NW.

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE entries for NH50NW.

Ordnance Survey Name Book Inverness-shire Book 16, page 28.

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 85 Inverness-shire of 1872 surveyed 1869.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 85 Inverness-shire of 1902 revised 1899.

Ordnance Survey map NH50NW, NH50NE & NH50SW for 1992 1:10,000.

Aerial Photographs Consulted

RAF 106G/Scot/UK82	4137-4129, 3129-3119	10.5.1946	1:10,000
RAF 541/A/399	4137-4129	21.5.1948	1:10,000
OS 62289	82-80, 150-148	16.6.1989	1:24,000

Appendix 1 – Details of Photographs

- 1 – View of rectangular structure – site 14 facing SE
- 2 – View of shieling – site 15 facing N
- 3 – View of shieling – site 16 facing N
- 4 – View of shieling – site 17 facing SE
- 5 – View of building – site 19 facing SE
- 6 – Ibid.
- 7 – General view of lodge – site 1 E
- 8 – View of west end of lodge – site 1 facing E
- 9 – View of farmstead – site 2 facing SE
- 10 – View of Farm – site 3 facing SE
- 11 – View of possible shieling – site 20 facing W
- 12 – View of shieling – site 21 facing W
- 13 – View of sheepfold – site 4 facing E
- 14 – View of building – site 5 facing S
- 15 – ibid facing E
- 16 – View of building, possible garage – site 9 facing W
- 17 – View of building – site 10 facing SE
- 18 – View of bunkhouse – site 11 facing E
- 19 – Detail of flint scrapper – site 19