

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief
October 30th 2003
Flowerdale Glen, Gairloch
NG 81356/75293 to NG 81512/75208**

Client: Gairloch Estate

Planning Application No: 03/00764/FULRC

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Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Gairloch Estate in September 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Flowerdale Glen, Gairloch as part of a project for a new path. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work revealed the partial remains of a stone building of a 19th century date but no earlier archaeological features or deposits.

No recommendations for further fieldwork have currently been proposed.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological watching brief conducted on behalf of Gairloch Estate by the author for a path at Flowerdale Glen, Gairloch.

The fieldwork was conducted on October 30th 2003.

2. Acknowledgements

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

- Mr. R McDonald, of Gairloch Estate;
- Staff of GG Mackenzie Civil Engineer Contractors for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

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Figure 2 – Archaeological Sites 1: 2500

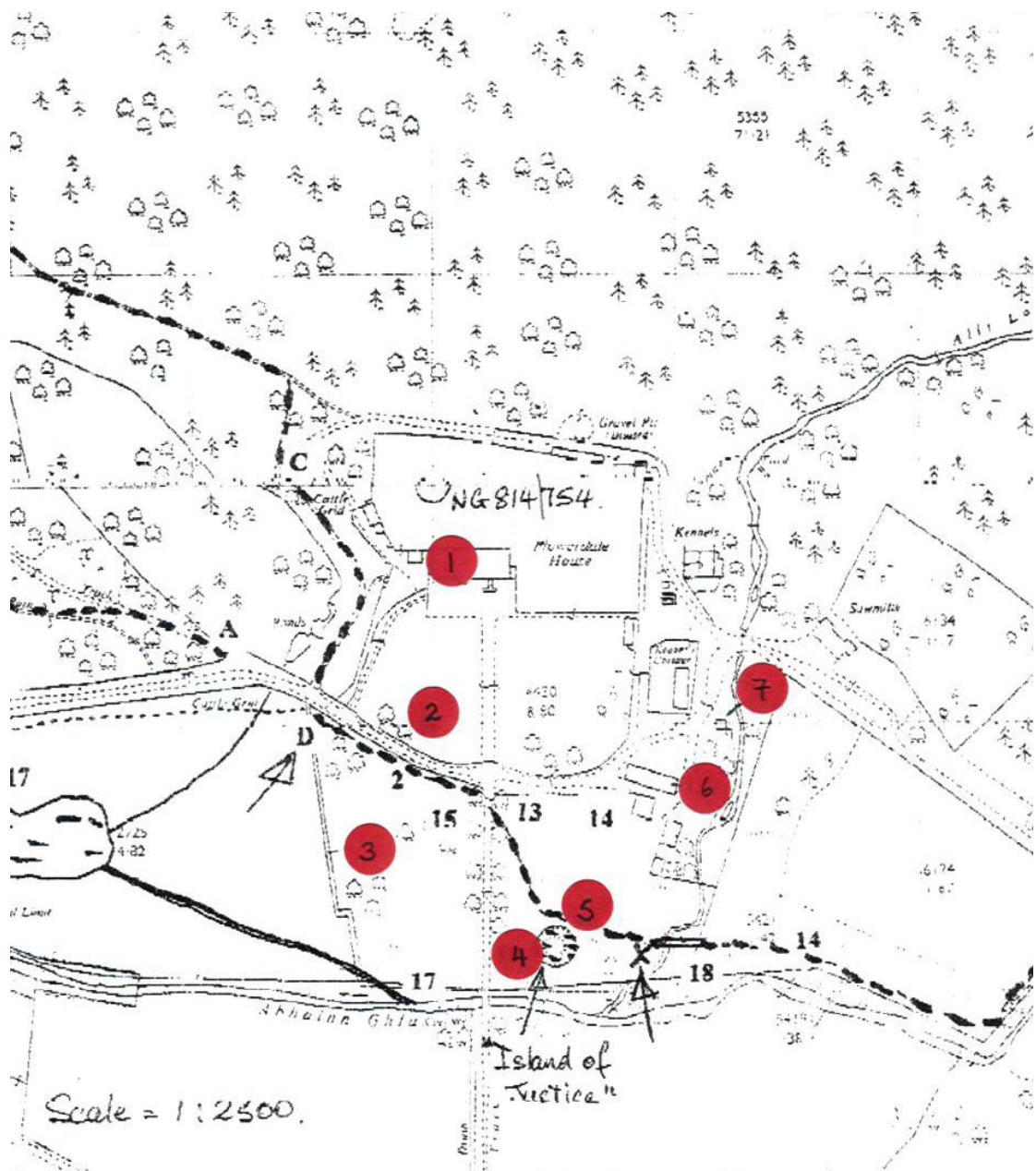


Figure 3 – Ordnance Survey 1st edition of 1881 1: 2500

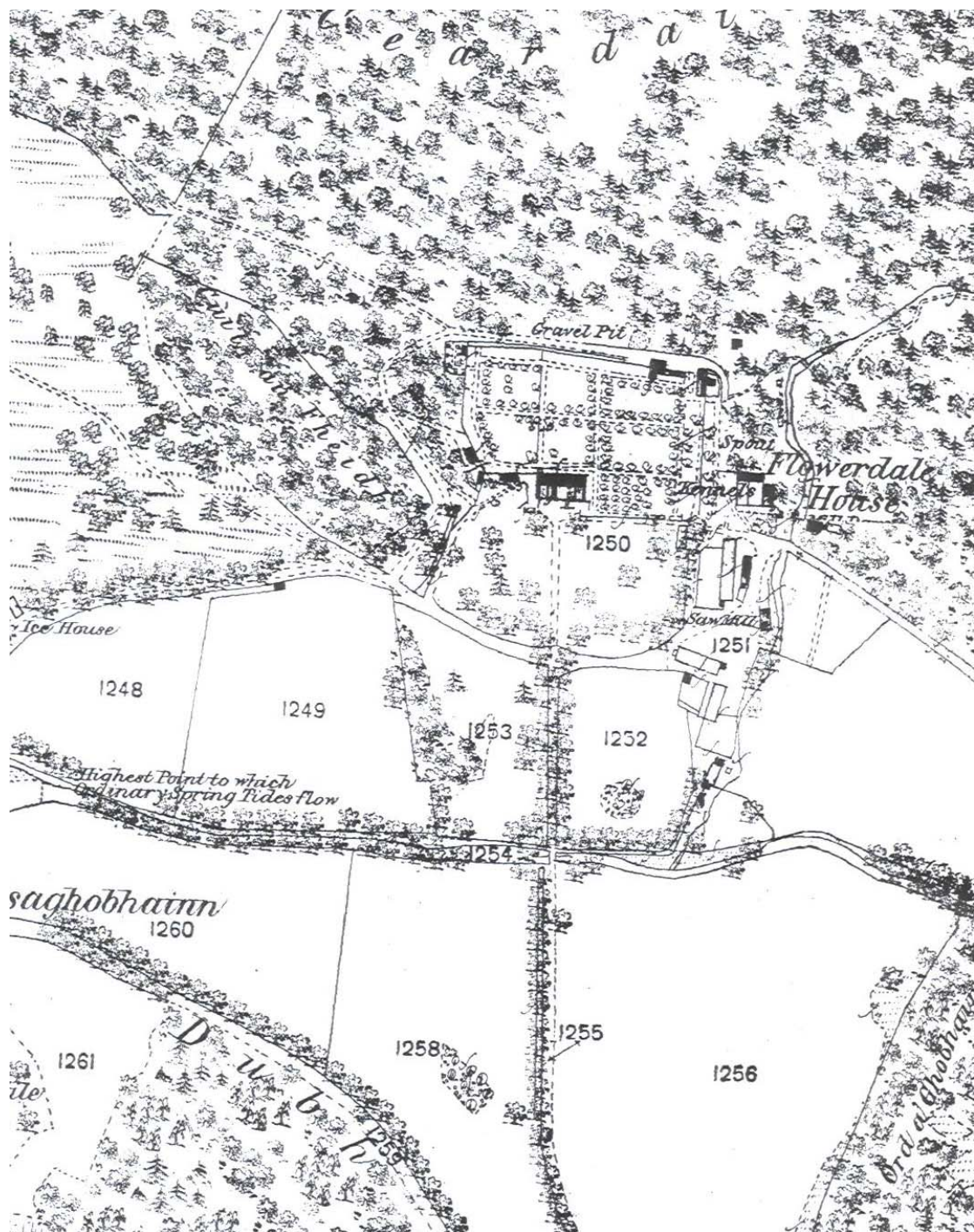
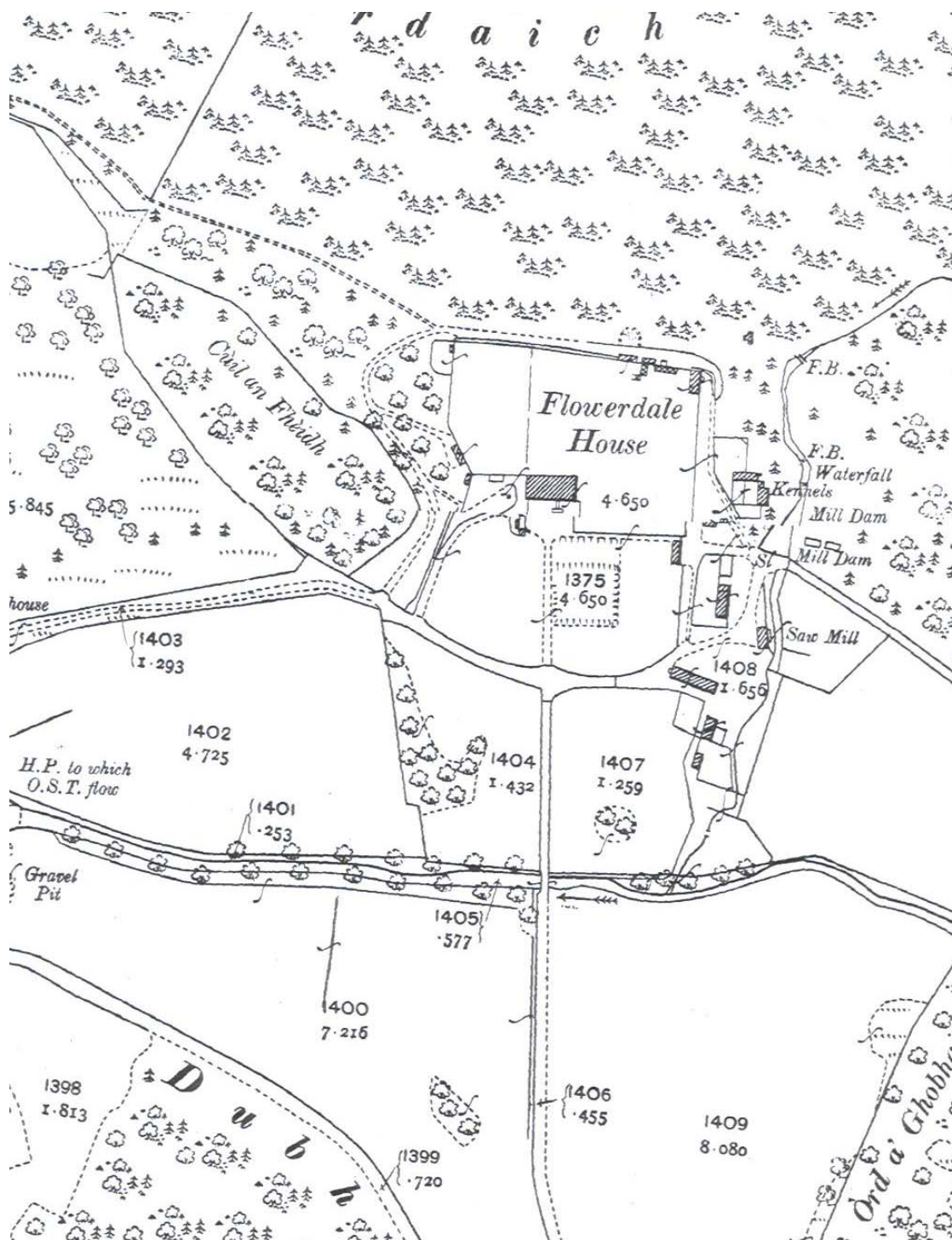


Figure 4 - Ordnance Survey 2nd edition of 1906 1: 2500



Scale = 1:2500.

3. Historical Background

The following sites around Flowerdale Glen are recorded in the vicinity of the path:

1 – Flowerdale House

HSMR – NG87NW 27

NMRS – NG87NW 34

Grid Ref – NG 81420/75364

Type – House

Listed A Building.

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'Dated 1738 with restoration and additions by A Maitland & Sons 1904. Now forming two dwellings with wing of 1904 named 'Westerdale'.

Flowerdale the seat of the Mackenzies of Gairloch'. Noted of a small 19th century salmon ice house in hillside close to entrance drive.

Noted by Beaton (1992) and Gifford (1992) of house to date from 1738 and built for Alexander Mackenzie of Gairloch and his wife (and his cousin) Janet Mackenzie of Scatwell, with house still belonging to Mackenzie family. Outer bay windows of 19th century with additional wing of 1904. House suggested by Beaton of plan possibly inspired by the gabled barracks of Bernera or Ruthven with result of house being deeper than usual.

2 – Temple House

HSMR – NG87NW 4

NMRS – NG87NW 4

Grid Ref – NG 814/753

Type – House

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'The old Temple House at Flowerdale (NG 814 753) where Alastair Breac (alive in the early 17th century) seems to have sometimes lived, is a modernised dwelling. 'No doubt a great part of the wall is ancient.' The present occupier, a head-gardener and forester, says that the style of the windows and entrance when he first remembers the house, gave probability to the tradition that it was originally a church or temple of worship. It may have been the residence of the priest or priests of Gairloch church before the Reformation.'

3 –Tigh Dige

HSMR – NG87NW 8

NMRS – NG87NW 8

Grid Ref – NG 8137/7526

Type – Walled Garden

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'The original house known as Tigh Dige was built on a field below where present Flowerdale House stands. It was a 'black house', built of turf, roofed with large thin turfs, and surrounded by a moat or ditch. It was in existence about 1480.

The old Tigh Dige and its gardens and outbuildings stood in the field on seaward side of paddock (in which is the 'Place of Justice' - NG81NW 7) below Flowerdale House. The Tigh Dige itself was a house in a ditch or moat. Its remains still existed up to time of late Sir France MacKenzie in the centre of this field but agricultural operations have entirely obliterated them. The lines of garden walls can still be traced in the part of the field lying to east. This was Gairloch home of Hector Roy MacKenzie, founder of family in latter part of fifteenth century. The Tigh Dige is said to have been originally a turf hut, with a roof made of sticks and divots. Kenneth MacKenzie erected on same site, within the same moat, about middle of seventeenth century, a more substantial building, which was called the Stank House or Moat House, and continued to be home of the family until 1738, when Sir Alexander Mackenzie erected present residence called Flowerdale House. The garden walls of Tigh Dige were still visible about 1931.

The site of moated house indicated by Dixon (J H Dixon 1886) is a very marshy area unsuitable for building, save for a natural grassy hillock planted with trees centred at NG 8137 7526, 80.0m NW of the place of justice (See NG87NW 7). It is steepest on S. side and less well defined/ defined on other three. On flat top of it, several large earthfast

stones suitable for building purposes can be seen, but they form no pattern of a structure. No moat is visible, but 0.3m high vague grass-covered banks of stones, probably garden walls mentioned by Dixon (1886), are in evidence immediately to the E. of the hillock. Visited by Ordnance Survey April 1965.'

4 – Flowerdale House or Palace of Justice

HSMR – NG87NW 7

NMRS – NG87NW 7

Grid Ref – NG 8145/7520

Type – Mound

Noted in HSMR and NMRS of 'The circular island in paddock below Flowerdale House, which as until recent times the place where justice was administered in Gairloch, is probably Druidical. It is scarcely an island, the moat or ditch which formerly insulated it being now filled up, or nearly so. It formed no part of the Tigh Dige. Situated in marshy ground in a paddock 20m N. of a burn and 150m S of Flowerdale House, is an artificial flat-topped island, planted with trees, and still known locally as a place of justice. It measures 9m in diameter by 0.4m in height, and is surrounded by a 4m wide ditch with a very slight bank on S side to contain water. No causeway across the ditch is visible. Visited by Ordnance Survey April 1965.'

5 – Flowerdale House

HSMR – NG87NW 59

NMRS – N/a

Grid Ref – NG 81463/75220

Type – Buildings

Noted in HSMR of 'buildings immediately on the W side of the stream stretch as far S as this GR on the 1st edition OS. 3 small ones depicted are now gone'.

6 – Flowerdale Barn

HSMR – NG87NW 29

NMRS – N/a

Grid Ref – NG 81488/75278

Type – Barn

Listed B Building.

Building is dated 1730. Single storey of rubble with corrugated iron-roof, formerly thatched. Remains of horsewalk to rear. Lintel in west gable with initials AMK and IMK for Alexander Mackenzie and Janet Mackenzie. Suggested by Beaton (1992, 97) as 'possibly the earliest dated barn in Scotland'. With coat of arms of Mackenzie Family. Noted by Gifford (1992) of being altered in 19th century.

7 – Flowerdale House

HSMR – NG87NW 56

NMRS – N/a

Grid Ref – NG 81534/75310

Type – Saw Mill

Noted in HSMR of 'Sawmills marked at this GR on 1st edition OS with mill dam to north at NG 81532/75353. This marked instead as "spout" on 25".' Named on 2nd edition OS.

Summary

There are only slight changes in the buildings around Flowerdale House between the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps. The garden to the rear of the house by the 2nd edition is marked as an open space, whilst the mound/enclosure to the SE of the house is marked on the 2nd and not on the 1st. Though the current house dates to the early 18th century it is recorded that a house stood here in the late 15th century.

4. Objectives

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the path from the stream across the paddock to record those features revealed. A copy of the specification provided by Highland Council Archaeology Unit is enclosed.

5. Methodology

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to a maximum depth of 100mm and 1.2m wide for the path for a distance of c180m. A back-acting machine with a small toothed bucket cleared the site with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand.

Weather on the day of work (October 30th 2003) was sunny and bright.

6. Watching Brief Investigation

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

Site Location

The site lies to the south of Flowerdale House in an area currently of rough grass and part of a paddock.

Results

A monitoring of the excavation in the area in front of Flowerdale House along the edge of the existing fence line from NG 81356/75293 to NG 81426/75259 revealed no archaeological features or deposits, the excavation being mostly limited to topsoil. The new path then utilised the existing paved avenue south from Flowerdale House until NG 81432/75233 then turned E ending at the burn at NG 81512/75208. Area to N of mound was very wet, again mostly topsoil only. The partial remains of a building were revealed at NG 81501/75208 of a building aligned N-S 4.5m wide though very heavily disturbed by root action, a possible large flat stone of granite possibly a threshold stone was found on its W side. A small section of stone lined path from NG 81488/75234 to NG 81496/75215 of c16m in length to the NE may relate to this building. To the E of these remains at NG 81484/75205 was revealed an area of 3m wide of some 19th century mixed pottery and glass.

7. Conclusions

The remains of the building found are depicted on the 1st edition of 1881 but not on the 2nd of 1906. It may be possible that these buildings were removed because of the nearby burn, which visibly has changed its course a few times and may have caused these buildings to have been flooded.

8. Recommendations

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to the limited number of features that were revealed and no other fieldwork to be conducted.

Any further work around the 'mound of justice' would be worthy of further investigation to try and determine if this feature is man-made or been part of a 'designed' landscape relating to Flowerdale House.

9. Archive

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:

- Notebook of results
- Copy of this report

A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

10. 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*.

11. References

Beaton, E (1992) *Ross & Cromarty: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. Edinburgh.

Gifford, J (1992) *The Buildings of Scotland: Highlands and Islands*. Penguin Books. Edinburgh.

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

Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record entries for NG87NW.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database for NG87NW.

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500 sheets 44.16 & 56.4 Ross-shire of 1881 surveyed 1875.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2500 sheets 44.16 & 56.4 Ross-shire of 1906 revised 1902.

Appendix 1 – Photograph Register - Details of Slides

- 1 – View of Flowerdale House facing N.
- 2 – View of route of path before excavation to N of the Mound of Justice facing E.
- 3 – View of area to front of Flowerdale House facing S.
- 4 – View of buildings to NE of path facing E.
- 5 – View of the Mound of Justice facing SE.
- 6 – Ibid but facing S.
- 7 – View of path? To SW of building facing E.
- 8 – View of route of path before excavation to N of the Mound of Justice facing W.
- 9 – View of Flowerdale Barn facing NW.
- 10 – Detail of armorial panel on Flowerdale Barn.
- 11 – View of machining in progress facing E.
- 12 – View of avenue south of Flowerdale House facing S.
- 13 – View of route of path before excavation to N of the Mound of Justice facing E.
- 14 – View of path upon excavation in front of Flowerdale House facing W.
- 15 – View of route of path during excavation to N of the Mound of Justice facing E.
- 16 – Detail of edge of building facing E – scales 1m.
- 17 – Ibid but facing N.
- 18 – View of building facing E – scales 1m.
- 19 – View of site of building facing W – scales 1m.
- 20 – View of site of building facing N – scales 1m.
- 21 – View of route of path after excavation to N of the Mound of Justice facing E.