



ROSS & CROMARTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND WALKOVER SURVEY

Laggan / Strathmashie Forest



Ryefield Tore Ross-shire IV6 7SB
Tel: 01463 811310 Mobile: 07891 578998/07776 027306
rossandcromarch@gmail.com
www.rossandcromarch.co.uk

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND WALKOVER SURVEY

Laggan / Strathmashie Forest

Client	Forestry Commission Scotland
National Grid Reference	NN 58200 93246 (Centred)
Site Code	LAG14
Report Number	2014-12/LAG14
Authors	Lynn Fraser and Mary Peteranna
Date	05-04-2014
Revised by	Mary Peteranna
Date	07-04-2014
OASIS No.	rosscrom1-176567

Contents

List of Figures	3
List of Plates	3
Acknowledgements	3
Summary	4
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Site Location	4
3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background	4
4.0 Methodology	6
4.1 Desk-Based Assessment	
4.2 Walkover Survey	
5.0 Results	7
5.1 Desk-Based Assessment	7
5.1.1 Cartographic Sources	
5.1.2 Highland Council Historic Environment Record	
5.2 Walkover Survey Results	10
6.0 Discussion	12
7.0 Recommendations	13
8.0 References	14
Appendix 1 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites	15
Appendix 2 Index of Photographs	16

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location of the survey area	5
Figure 2: Excerpt from the OS 1 st edition map	7
Figure 3: Location of the archaeological sites	11

List of Plates

Cover: Structure 1 on the N side of a forest track, looking WNW

Plate 1: Site 1, an enclosure, looking WNW	12
Plate 2: Site 2, a building, looking NNW	12
Plate 3: Site 3, a building, looking SW	12
Plate 4: Site 4, a water tank, looking NW	12

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Giles Brockman of Forestry Commission Scotland for commissioning the work. Fieldwork was carried out by Lynn Fraser and Mary Peteranna. All mapping, unless otherwise stated, is reproduced by permission of Landmark Information Group license LIG1044. This is an unpublished report.

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out on 31 March 2014 on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland at Laggan/Strathmashie Forest, Inverness-shire in advance of the proposed construction of an access track by a neighbouring landowner. The work was undertaken to establish the baseline extent and condition of any archaeological sites on the property by recording and identifying any features that may need conservation management. The survey identified four archaeological sites, including Post Medieval structures and a water tank. No recommendation is made for further investigative work.

1.0 Introduction

A desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the visible archaeological monuments surviving within a discrete block within the Laggan/Strathmashie Forest (centred at grid reference NN 58200 93246) was carried out by *Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services* on 31 March 2014 (Figure 1). The survey was requested by Forestry Commission Scotland due to the request of a neighbouring proprietor to construct an access track, which will run through the area.

The purpose of the desk-based assessment and archaeological walkover survey was to identify the cultural heritage baseline in the survey area within the Laggan/Strathmashie Forest by recording and identifying any features that may need conservation management in order to inform the location of the access track.

2.0 Site Location

The survey area extended to approximately 25ha within the Laggan/Strathmashie Forest and was located at the northern end of the Black Wood, which is situated in Strath Mashie on the north-western side of the A86 approximately 7km southwest of Laggan, Inverness-shire. The area encompassed the slopes below Dun-da-Lamh Fort running from east to west (Figure 1).

The survey area sloped uphill towards the fort with varying degrees of steepness, and comprised a mixture of tree stands at different stages in their rotation. The underlying bedrock comprises gneissose psammite and gneissose semipelite overlain by diamicton till¹.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Laggan sits on the former main route from east to west over the Corrieyairack Pass to Fort Augustus, one of General Wade's military roads built in 1731², which runs along the northern edge of the survey area. The present route to Fort William was not built until about 1828. Along the military road were small settlements occupied by farmers and crofters who made their living from subsistence farming and providing food and lodging for the hundreds of drovers using the road throughout the year³.

¹ British Geological Survey 2014

² Old Roads of Scotland 2014

³ Richardson 1990, 9

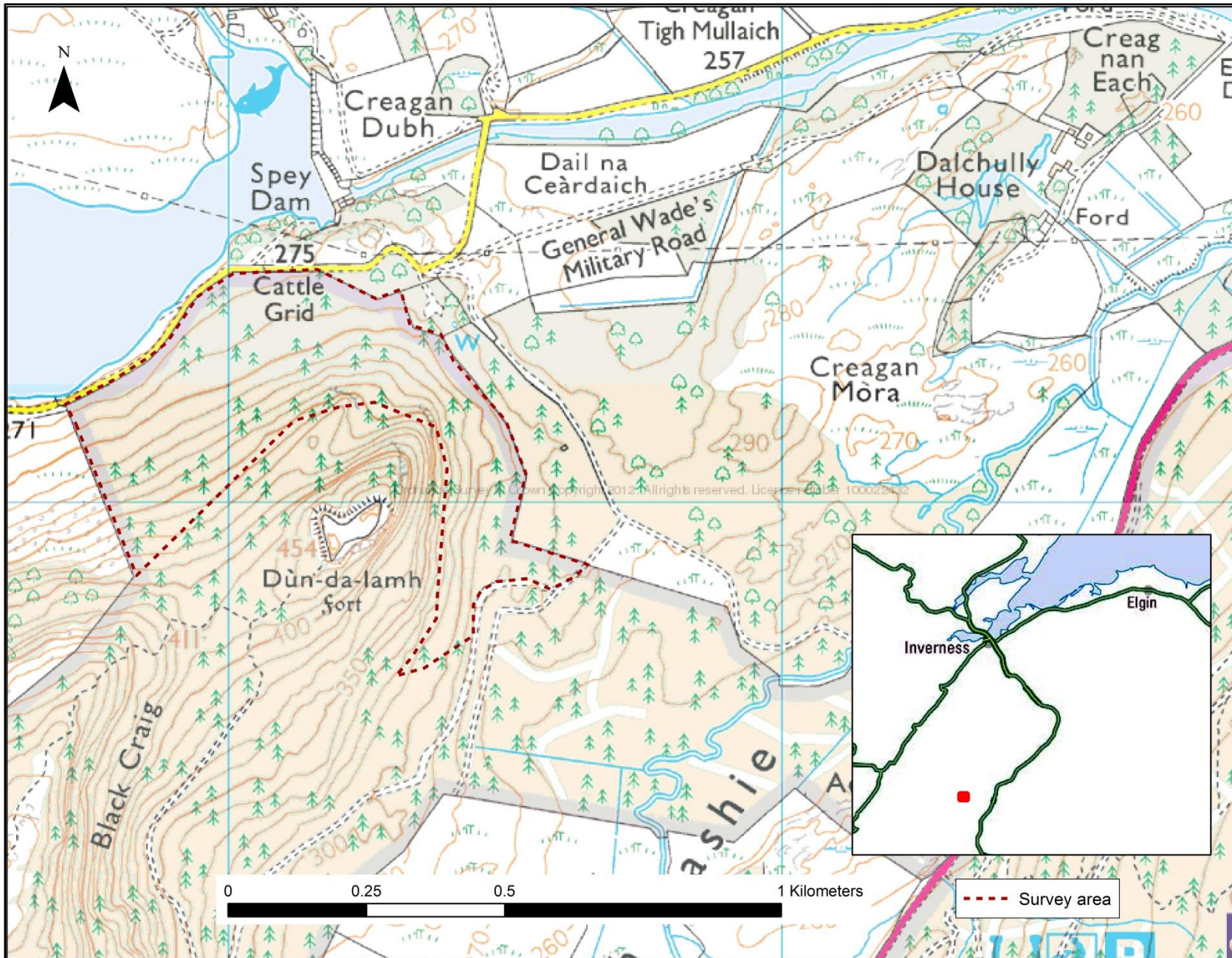


Figure 1: Location of survey area. Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 1000224

Towering above the survey area is Dun-da-Lamh, the fort of the two hands⁴, with an enclosing stone wall surviving to a maximum internal height of 2.5m. Around the base of the rocky knoll upon which the fort is located is a plethora of Post-Medieval settlement and associated sites.

4.0 Methodology

The overall aim of this assessment was to provide a cultural heritage baseline for the survey area within the Black Wood. The specific objectives were to verify known archaeological sites or features and identify and record any previously unknown archaeological sites or features within the survey area, which would inform conservation management during the planning and construction of the access track.

4.1 Desk-based assessment

A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation. This was done in accordance with the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Standards and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment*⁵.

The drawings of the area, as supplied by the client, were checked in detail against the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Map, Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and Historic Scotland's records of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Online aerial photographs were checked and the map collections of the National Library of Scotland (NLS) were studied. Other literary sources were also consulted.

4.2 Walkover survey

The objectives were to identify and record all archaeological sites within the survey area.

Archaeological sites were recorded individually including using high-resolution digital photography where possible, while sketch survey drawings were produced where necessary. The individual site locations were plotted using and ArcPad GIS software on a handheld Windows Mobile-based computer capable of sub-metre accuracy. Details relating to the individual sites and monuments located during the survey can be found in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1.

Survey and recording methods from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)⁶ were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Code of Conduct*⁷.

5.0 Results

5.1 Desk-based assessment

⁴ Ibid., 35

⁵ IfA 2008

⁶ RCAHMS 2004

⁷ IfA 2009

A desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the walkover survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation.

5.1.1 Cartographic sources

Mapping held at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh was checked on-line and produced the following results:

First Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map

Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet CXV

Survey date: 1869 Publication date: 1872

The Ordnance Survey (OS) of 1869 (Figure 2) depicts the survey area as open moorland with a track running along the northwest edge of the survey area. *St. Michael's Chapel (Roman Catholic)* is shown as one sub-rectangular building and one small rectangular building on the NE side of the survey area within an amorphous enclosure.

A track running along the NE edge of the survey area is shown with one unroofed building on the NE side of it. Close to the SE edge of the survey area, a rectangular unroofed building or pen is shown. *The Dun (remains of)* marks the location of Dun-da-Lamh as a substantial sub-oval structure on the summit of the hill beyond the SW side of the survey area. A possible boundary wall runs along the base of the rock outcrop, close to the western boundary of the survey area.



Figure 2: Excerpt from the 1st Edition OS Map. ©NLS

Second Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map

Inverness-shire – Mainland, Sheet CXV

Date revised: 1903 Publication date: 1903

There are some changes noted in the area at the time of the 1903 revision. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey now depicts the survey area as enclosed woodland with *St. Michael's R.C. Chapel* within a pentagonal enclosure with what appears to be two small enclosed spaces. The base of the outcrop is still demarcated with a boundary and *cairns* are noted on the summit of the hill where *Dun-da-lamb* is located. The River Spey has not yet been dammed by this time.

5.1.2 Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER)

A full search of the Highland Council Historic Environment Record produced the following sites within, and close to, the survey area:

EHG1351 NN 5807 9073 (centred) Strathmashie Forest – DBA and Survey

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) and walkover survey of Strathmashie Forest was conducted in 2005 by GUARD on behalf of the Strathmashie Forest Community Heritage Project. The present survey area falls within this previous area of survey.

MHG34488 NN 5800 9342 Dalwhinnie – Fort Augustus Military Road

A modern track overlies the location of a section of General Wade's military roads, which ran on the north side of the survey area between the forest plantation and Loch Laggan. There are two stretches surviving to the E and to the W of Sherrabeg House.

MHG4666 NN 5823 9295 Dun da Lamh, Fort

The sole defence is a stone wall, the faces of which have recently been cleared in places. The uneven nature of the ground has meant that the distance between the inner and outer faces varies from place to place, the limits recorded being 13ft and 23ft. The WSW section of the wall runs for a little more than 300ft athwart the line of approach, cutting off the promontory which consists of two elevated areas and the depression between them. A point about the middle of this stretch has been used in modern times as an entrance, an engineered pathway being directed up towards it from the col, but enough of the inner and outer faces of the wall can be seen on the surface to make it reasonably certain that originally there was no entrance at this point. The only unquestionable gap is in the middle of the NW part of the wall, and this leads directly into the central depression. The stones of the wall are small and while the remote situation may have acted as a degree of protection against casual or systematic stone robbers, the condition of some parts of the wall is remarkable. At the W apex, for example, the inner face of the wall stands exposed to a height of over 6ft, while the outer face in the middle of the SE sector reaches as much as 9ft. The interior is occupied by different levels of rocky bosses and courts. It is impossible from surface observation to say to what extent these may have been altered by the fort builders, but it is very probable that such terraces as those NE of the central depression supported dwellings. A dug-out of the kind made by the Home Guard in the 1939-45 war is situated in the S apex, and a cairn stands near it on the line of the inner face of the wall. Three other cairns stand on the debris of the wall near the N apex.

MHG49176 NN 5838 9333 St Michael's Chapel, Strathmashie Forest

Located on the north side of the forest plantation boundary on a flat open area of ground is the site of the former St Michael's Chapel. The site consists of a cluster of yew trees at the southern end of the site and a drystone retaining wall running N-S along the southern edge of the site. The site was demolished c.1955 and there is rubble/mortar remains of this on the site. A small stone-lined spring is located 15m to the SW of the chapel site.

MHG49161 NN 5839 9318 Water tank, St Michael's Chapel

A concrete water tank, which supplied the former St Michael's Chapel and associated house, is located to the south of the chapel site. The site is located in the present survey area.

MHG27147 NN 5853 9309 Building, Dun-da-Lamh

A single unroofed building is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1872, sheet cxv) on the eastern edge of the present survey boundary. It is not shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map.

MHG49175 NN 5854 9302 Building, Tirfadoun, Strathmashie Forest

The remains of a building measuring 10.1m x 3.9m externally is defined by collapsed drystone walls, spread up to 1.5m across and standing up to 0.5m high. The remains of a right-angled drystone wall extend off the SW side of the structure creating a platform built up on the SW side. The site is located on the eastern edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG27148 NN 5847 9285 Enclosure, Dun-da-lamh

An enclosure is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1872, sheet cxv), but it is not shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1971).

MHG49090 NN 5856 9286 Farmstead, Tirfadoun S, Strathmashie Forest

The scant remains of a settlement were recorded on the N side of a modern track during a walkover survey. The northernmost site is a rectangular stone/turf-covered structures measuring around 10m x 4.5m. To the E of it is a well-defined rectangular revetted structure measuring 3m x 4.5m. To the S are two structures: one is rectangular and measures 4m x 2.5m, the second is a curvilinear feature defined by a turf/stone.. The features of this group could be interpreted as a small farmstead, comprising three buildings and an enclosure. They were located within the southern edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG49177 NN 5856 9295 Structures, Tirfadoun, Strathmashie Forest

Two structures were found in an open area of forestry in Strathmashie Forest. One structure consists of a U-shaped pile of cobbles under turf measuring 7m x 10m, with banks 1.5m wide and 0.4m high. 15m to the S is an elongated pile of cobbles and boulders measuring 8m x 3m and 0.7m high. The sites were interpreted as possible building remains, clearance cairns or plough upcast from forestry works. They are located outside of the present survey boundary to SE.

MHG49095 NN 5853 9281 Farmstead, Tirfadoun S, Strathmashie Forest

The remains of 4 rectangular structures were recorded here. The northernmost feature consists of a rectangular slightly sunken area measuring approximately 7m x 3m. Located 8m to the S is the remains of a drystone building measuring 9m x 3m. South of this building is a stone/turf building measuring 5m x 2.5m. To the W of this is a building with two compartments measuring 12m x 4m. A slightly curving dyke extends in a N-S direction for around 20m to the E of the 4 structures. They are located outside of the present survey boundary to S.

MHG49096 NN 5851 9275 Structure, Strathmashie Forest

A faint arc of cobbles forms the curving edge of a large hollow cut into a relatively steep slope. Another faint line of stones extends in a linear fashion from the curved edge of the hollow across very wet ground with sections of iron pipe visible. The remains may relate to activity by the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit. The site is located outside of the south edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG49214 NN 5830 9275**Dyke, Dun-da-lamh**

A short stretch of drystone dyke is covered in turf and moss and stands up to 0.5m in height and runs for around 25m. The site is located outside of the present survey boundary to SW.

MHG49102 NN 5854 9269**Military Camp, Strathmashie Forest**

Two concrete platforms comprise the remains of a camp from the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit active in the 1940s. The first platform measures 11.8m x 4.8m and has drainage channels that lead to underground drainage pipes. The second platform was too overgrown to be measured. A dump of bottles and other rubbish was located nearby. A mug with a date of 1941 was found amongst the rubbish. The site is located outside of the south edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG49099 NN 5859 9268**Corn-drying kiln, Strathmashie Forest**

The structure comprised a rectangular drystone structure with a circular 'bowl' at the western end measuring 2.5m in diameter internally with the drystone walls surviving to 0.7m in width and 0.6m in height, internally. It was interpreted as a corn-drying kiln. The site is located outside of the south edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG32747 NN 5850 9260**Settlement, Tirfadoun**

A long settlement stretching from NN586931 to NN585918 is situated below Dun da Lamh Fort. It was visited and photographed by George Grant (Laggan Heritage). The site is located outside of the south edge of the present survey boundary.

MHG49103 NN 5854 9256**Dyke, Strathmashie Forest**

The remains of a turf-and-moss-covered drystone dyke stands up to 1m high and 1m wide and can be traced for around 130m from an old track to a forest ride to the E. Forest ploughing has damaged the dyke beyond this. The site is located outside of the south edge of the present survey boundary.

5.2 Walkover Survey Results

The walkover survey revealed four archaeological sites (Figure 3) which relate to Post Medieval occupation of the area. The sites were located at the base of the knoll on which the prehistoric fort sits. The Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites (Appendix 1) provides details of the sites identified during the survey.

5.2.1 Conditions

The survey area was walked over and surveyed on 31 March 2014, during dry, sunny weather. Conditions on the ground were good. A large amount of wind-blow in the southeast leg of the survey area (Figure 3) prevented access and, as a result, the presence and condition of HHER site MHG 49090, a farmstead, was not ascertained. Dense tree cover in the northwest corner prevented a thorough survey of that area.

5.2.2 Sites

Four archaeological sites (Figure 3) were recorded during the survey, all of which had previously been identified. Site 1 was a sub-rectangular stone-built enclosure situated 5-10m to the north of the forest track (Plate 1). It was planted over with mature trees and covered in pine needles and brash. This may be the enclosure shown marked on the 1st Edition OS map. Site 2 (Plate 2) was the remains of a stone and turf building, which appeared to have rounded corners suggesting some

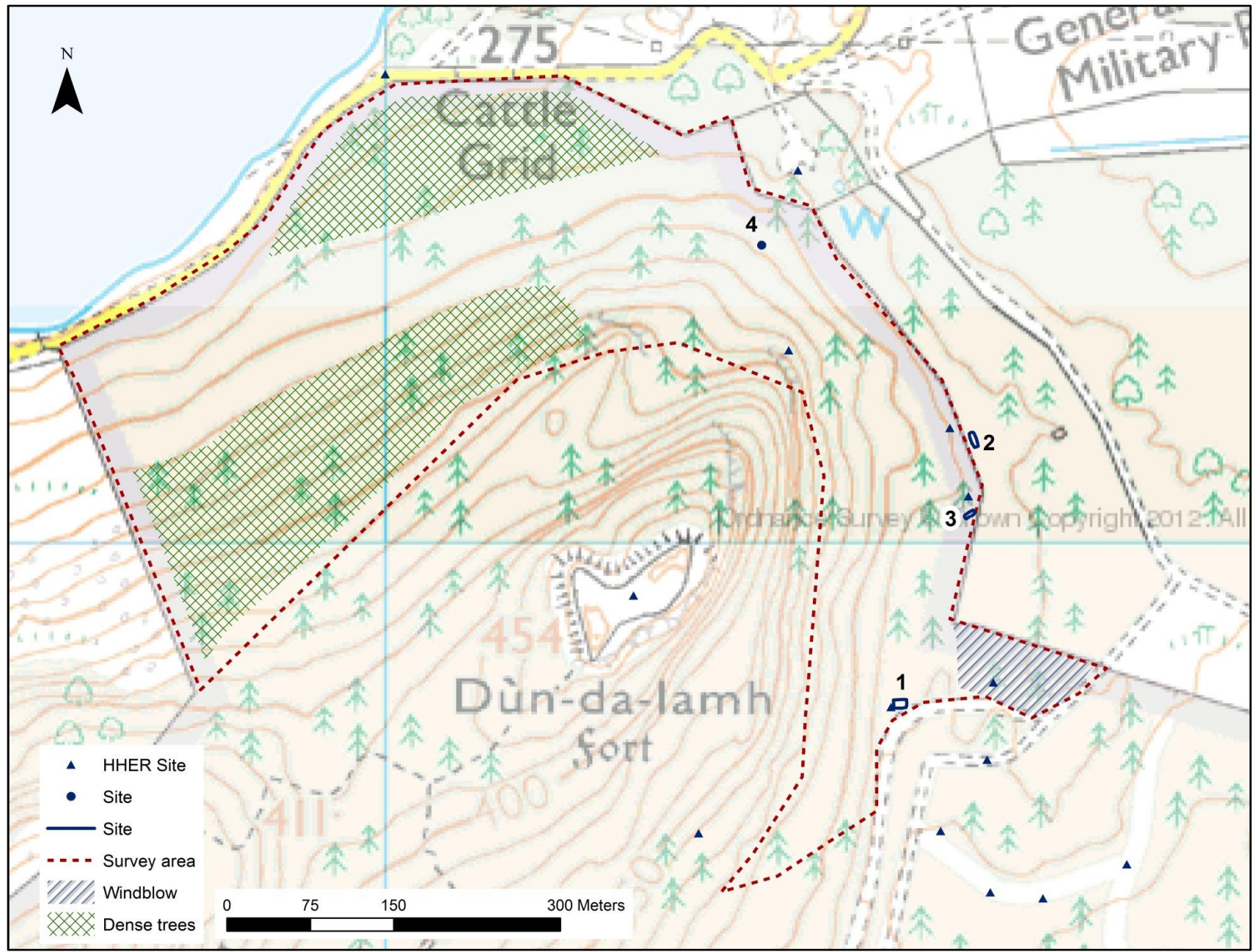


Figure 3: Location of survey area. Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 10002243

antiquity. It was recorded in the vicinity of the unroofed building depicted on the 1st Edition OS map. Site 3 (Plate 3) was another set of stone and turf footings of a sub-rectangular building, which was revetted into the bank on the northwest side. This structure is not depicted on the historical mapping suggesting that it was in a much degraded state by the time of the first OS visit in 1869. The final site recorded (Site 4) was a concrete water tank located on the slope above, and to the south-southwest, of St. Michael's Chapel.



Figure 1: Site 1, an enclosure, looking WNW



Figure 2: Site 2, a building, looking NNW



Figure 3: Site 3, a building, looking SW



Figure 4: Site 4, water tank, looking NW

6.0 Discussion

The walkover survey recorded four archaeological sites within the survey area. Generally the sites recorded can be ascribed to the Post-Medieval era, although it is difficult to ascribe a precise time period to the enclosure (Site 1) without further investigation.

The survey area comprised the lower slopes of the knoll on which Dun-da-Lamh fort sits. The increasing steepness of the slopes on the east-north arc as they rose towards the summit suggested that it would be unlikely that any archaeological sites would be found. This is borne out by the fact that all the sites recorded were located on the gentle lower slopes.

The slope from north to west was less steep with some flattish areas that could have been used by the inhabitants of the area in antiquity. However, due to the very dense tree planting in this area it was not possible to carry out a comprehensive survey.

It should be noted that Site 4, the water tank, appears to be incorrectly located on the Highland Council Historic Environment Record.

7.0 Recommendations

There is no recommendation for further investigative work to be carried out within the survey area.

8.0 References

British Geological Survey (BGS) 2013 *Digmap625*, downloaded from [Http://bgs.ac.uk](http://bgs.ac.uk)

Highland Council 2012 *Standards for Archaeological Work*, v.1.

[Http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/developmentguidance.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/developmentguidance.htm).

Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) 2014. Accessed 28 March 2014 at <http://her.highland.gov.uk>

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standards and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment*. Reading: IfA.

Institute for Archaeologists, 2012. *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists: Code of Conduct*: Reading, IfA.

NLS 2012. National Library of Scotland. Accessed March 2014 at <http://maps.nls.uk/>

Old Roads of Scotland 2014. *The Military Roads of Scotland: The Wade Roads*. Accessed 3 April 2014 at http://www.oldroadsofscotland.com/military_roads.htm#wade

Richardson, I., 1990. *Laggan – Past and Present*. Laggan: Laggan Community Association.

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2004. *Corporate Plan 2004-9: Annex - Survey and Recording Policy* accessed 19 March 2012 at http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/rcahms_media/files/foi/survey_and_recording_policy.pdf

APPENDIX 1: Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

Site Number	Site Name	Site Type	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Height (m) OD	Easting	Northing	Photo Number	HER Number
1	Dun-da-Lamh	Enclosure	Stone-built enclosure with walls spread up to 2m and standing up to 0.4m in places. Some coursing visible. No visible entrance.	E-W	Degraded	Unknown	-	258462	792857	1	MHG27148
2	Dun-da-Lamh	Building	Stone and turf built structure measuring c. 8m x 3m internally with walls spread over 1.5m and standing up to 0.5m high. No visible entrance, but possibly on the E side.	N-S	Very degraded	Post Medieval	295	258531	793095	2	MHG27147
3	Dun-da-Lamh	Building	Stone and turf built structure measuring c. 6m x 2m internally with walls spread up to 1.5m and standing up to 0.5m high. The NW wall is revetted into the bank.	NE-SW	Very degraded	Post Medieval?	290	258525	793026	3	MHG49175
4	St Michael's	Water tank	Rectangular, concrete water tank measuring c. 3m x 1.5m with an open aperture in the cover at the E end. Stands up to 1m on the downhill side.	WSW-ENE	Ruinous	Post Medieval	-	258339	793267	4	MHG49161

APPENDIX 2: Index of Photographs

No.	Direction facing	Site No.	Notes	Taken by	Date
1	WNW	1	Enclosure or animal pen	MKP	31/03/2014
2	NNW	2	Stone footings of a rectangular structure	MKP	31/03/2014
3	SW	3	Stone footings of a rectangular structure	MKP	31/03/2014
4	NW	4	Concrete water tank	MKP	31/03/2014