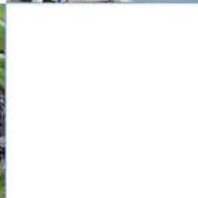
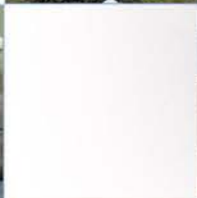
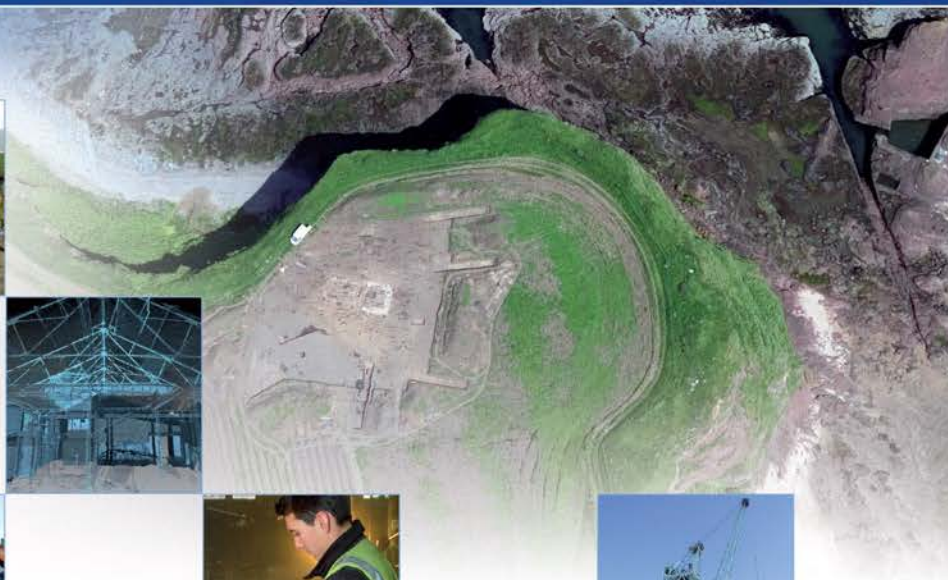


Castle Dounie, Knapdale Survey Report

AOC 21912
15th July 2011



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Castle Dounie, Knapdale

Survey Report

On Behalf of: **Forestry Commission Scotland**
1 Highlander Way
Inverness Business Park
Inverness
IV2 7GB

National Grid Reference (NGR): **NR 7674 9323**

AOC Project No: **21912**

Prepared by: **G.Cavers**

Illustration by: **G.Cavers**

Date of Survey: **20th-21st June 2011**

Date of Report: **15th July 2011**

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Castle Dounie, Knapdale

Survey Report

1. Castle Dounie

- 1.1 Castle Dounie is situated on a high rocky knoll near the west coast of Knapdale, around 3 miles SW of Crinan. The site is now in open ground within a clearing in the modern forestry, although at the time of the RCAHMS inventory surveys (visited in 1979) the surrounding area was afforested, with at least part of the site planted with conifers. Despite this disturbance parts of the site are very well preserved, including the entrance passage and the remains of two corbelled cells.
- 1.2 The site was listed by Campbell and Sandeman in their 1964 survey of Argyll as a galleried dun containing a 'possible souterrain' and noted a 'vertical joint' in the southern rampart walling, west of which the wall had collapsed (Campbell and Sandeman 1964:294). RCAHMS surveyors later clarified that the souterrain was in fact part of the intra-mural galleries of the dun, and that the rampart comprised at least two constructional phases. During the 1979 survey, further detail was added to the RCAHMS interpretation, with several constructional phases described. The 'vertical joint' in the S walling was considered during this survey to represent a 'straight joint' deriving from the meeting of separate work gangs during the construction of the wall (RCAHMS 1988:177).

2. 2011 Survey

- 2.1 The site was surveyed again by AOC Archaeology Group in 2011 on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland in order to inform conservation management planning. A laser scan survey was carried out using a Trimble GS101 laser scanner, while topographic and architectural detail was surveyed using a Trimble M3 total station and a Trimble R6 differential GPS. A photographic record was compiled and cross referenced to a written description of the monument.

General Notes

- 2.2 The dun comprises a sub rectangular enclosure, located at 235m OD on the crest of a small, steep sided knoll at the N end of the Creag Mhor outcrop; the site is overlooked to the S by higher ground. The site falls at the smaller end of the size spectrum for Argyll duns, measuring 24.8m in its long axis and 14.5m in the short axis. The dun is oriented NE/SW, with the main surviving entrance to the site on the NE face. An informal footpath has developed up to the site from the SE, with most visitors accessing the site over the denuded remains of the rampart. The wall of the dun survives most completely on the SW side, where it stands to over 2m in height.

The dun

- 2.3 The surviving entrance is located on the NE side of the site, at Point 1 (see plan), and is largely choked with rubble (Plates 1 to 4). The entrance was approached up a steep slope from the NW, between bedrock outcrops. The entrance is ruinous, but survives best on the W side where the original walling stands to c.2.0m in 10 visible courses. As noted by previous surveyors, the entrance is unusually wide, at 2.27m; the wall itself at this point is 3.2m thick. There are no visible signs of complex mural architecture.
- 2.4 Within the rubble of the entrance collapse on the W side, there is evidence that the passage has been narrowed by the construction of a small block of walling, surviving to only two or three courses. The

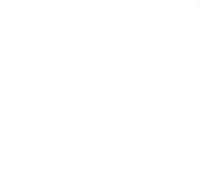
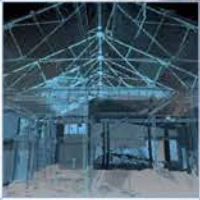
poor build quality of this construction in comparison to the walling of the dun itself would support the RCAHMS suggestion that this relates to later reuse of the enclosure.

- 2.5 A modern walkers' cairn has been built on the rampart wall to the W of the entrance, at Point 2 (Plate 5). It stands to 1.0m in height and is 2.0m in diameter.
- 2.6 At Point 3, the original inner wall face of the rampart is visible behind the rubble collapse (Plates 6 and 7). The build quality of the wall at this point is not good, and the walling is fairly ruinous. However, the rampart still stands to a height of 0.5m in around four visible courses and is composed of blocks averaging 0.3m by 0.2m. Larger blocks, probably facing stones, are visible in the rubble in the interior of the site.
- 2.7 At Point 4, a small sub-oval cell has been constructed, measuring 1.6m N/S by 1.2m E/W (Plates 8 and 9). The cell stands to around 1.2m in height, with walling that is slightly battered inwards strongly suggesting that the cell was brought to a full corbel. The W side of the cell is ruinous, however, and the interior is choked with rubble. Although the back of the cell is curvilinear, it aligns closely with the inner face of the original rampart at Point 3, indicating that the cell has been added secondarily to the enclosure wall, and is not a true intra-mural gallery. A small aumbry measuring 0.25m by 0.2m has been constructed in the cell wall, in the SE quadrant.
- 2.8 A re-skin wall has been constructed on the inside of the rampart that incorporates the cell at Point 4. The inner wall face of this construction is visible for a short length to the N of the cell, standing to c.0.5m in height in around three courses. This re-skin wall is ruinous, however, and is reduced to rubble to the N.
- 2.9 A second cell has been constructed inside the rampart wall, at Point 5 (Plates 11 and 12). The cell is also sub-oval in plan, following the inside corner of the enclosure wall. Although fairly ruinous, the inner wall face does batter slightly inwards within the curve in the NE, indicating that the cell was corbelled. The structure stands to a maximum height of 1.1m above the rubble level, in ten visible courses of blocks averaging 0.4m by 0.2m across. A possible aumbry measuring 0.4m by 0.3m may have been constructed in the SE corner of the cell (Plate 15), although this is somewhat ruinous and may rather derive from collapse. At the W end of the cell, a single lintel survives of the original corbelling (Plates 13 and 14). The lintel is 1.2m long and 0.15m thick, similar in size to some of the larger blocks on the floor of the cell, suggesting that much of this material derives from the collapse of the cell corbelling. Inside the lintelled part of the cell the interior space measures 1.0m N/S by 0.8m E/W. The N inside face of the cell in the corbelled part contains an orthostat 0.5m high, which has been coursed over.
- 2.10 The corbelling at the W end of the cell appears to be integral to the rampart wall face, so that it is possible that this cell was part of the original design; otherwise significant modification of the rampart wall has been undertaken. The rampart wall itself at this point is 1.5m thick at the highest course, with outer facing blocks to the S up to 1.0m long and 0.5m thick. The inner face is built of much smaller blocks.
- 2.11 At Point 6, the inner wall face stands to 0.7m high in c.5 courses (Plate 16). Surrounding this area and protruding from the rubble are several large lintel-like blocks, which could have fallen from the cell at Point 5, although it is possible that another cell or other feature was located between Points 4 and 5.
- 2.12 The rampart wall is best preserved at Point 7 (Plates 17-19), where it stands to over 2m in height in around 11 courses above the steeply sloping bedrock. The wall at this point is composed of blocks averaging c.0.6m but up to 1.0m across, with some up to 0.3m thick.

- 2.13 At Point 8, a possible second entrance to the site has been blocked with rebuild of inferior quality (Plate 20). The return in the wall face at Point 8 in the original wall is very clear, and appears to be carried through the thickness of the rampart. A possible corresponding return in the more ruinous walling to the W may support the view that this was an entrance, although the poor quality of the rebuild, which has coursed over the W return, makes this difficult to assert with confidence.
- 2.14 There is no evidence for internal features within the dun itself; the ground in the interior is grassy, with several outcrops of natural bedrock protruding from the grass.

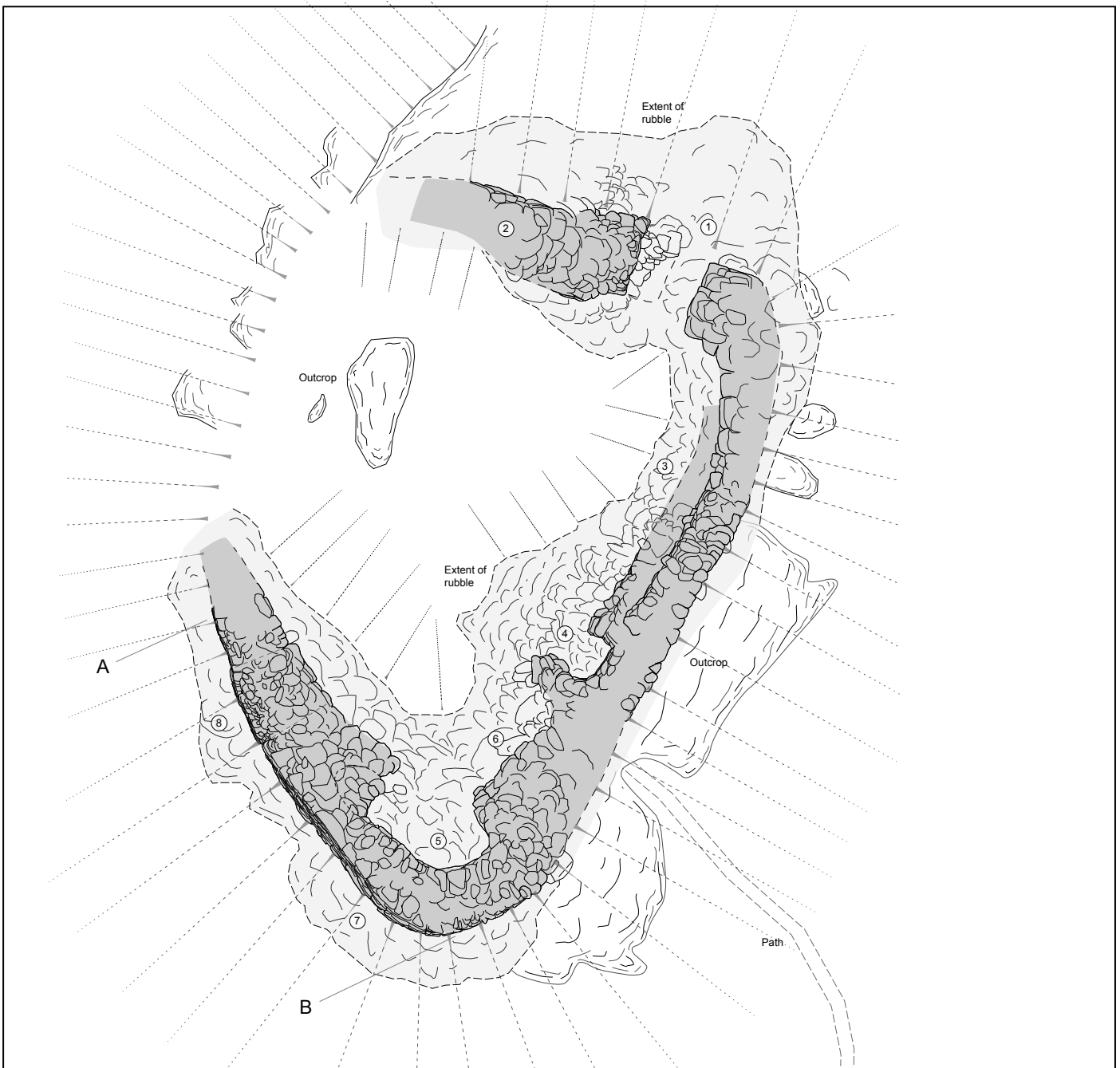
3. Condition

- 3.1 In general, although ruinous, Castle Dounie is in a stable condition, and with the removal of commercial forestry from the site there are now no immediate and pressing threats to the integrity of the structure. The stonework on the upstanding portions of the site appears to be relatively stable, although the laser scan data and photographs collected as part of this survey could perhaps be used to monitor the rate of erosion over the coming years.
- 3.2 The current informal footpath used by visitors to the site, entering over the rampart from the SE is a source of erosion of the stonework in this area. It is recommended that the access route into the site be redirected to a less sensitive area, perhaps through the original entrance.



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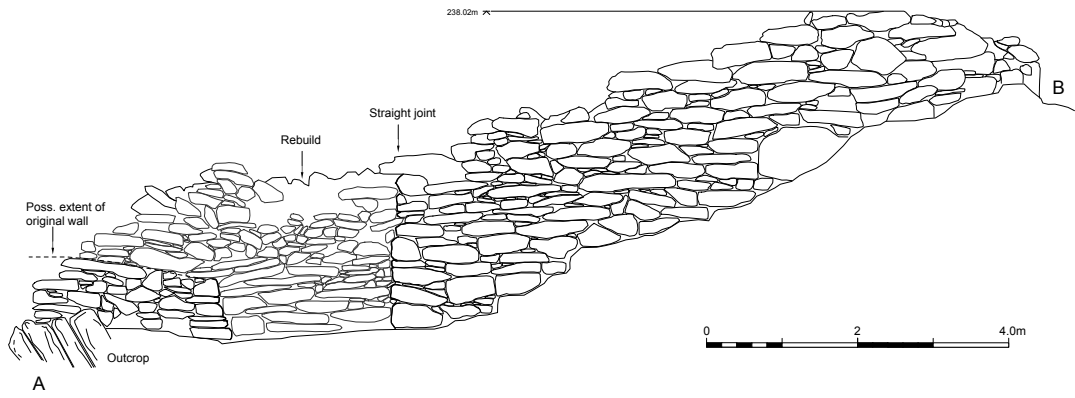


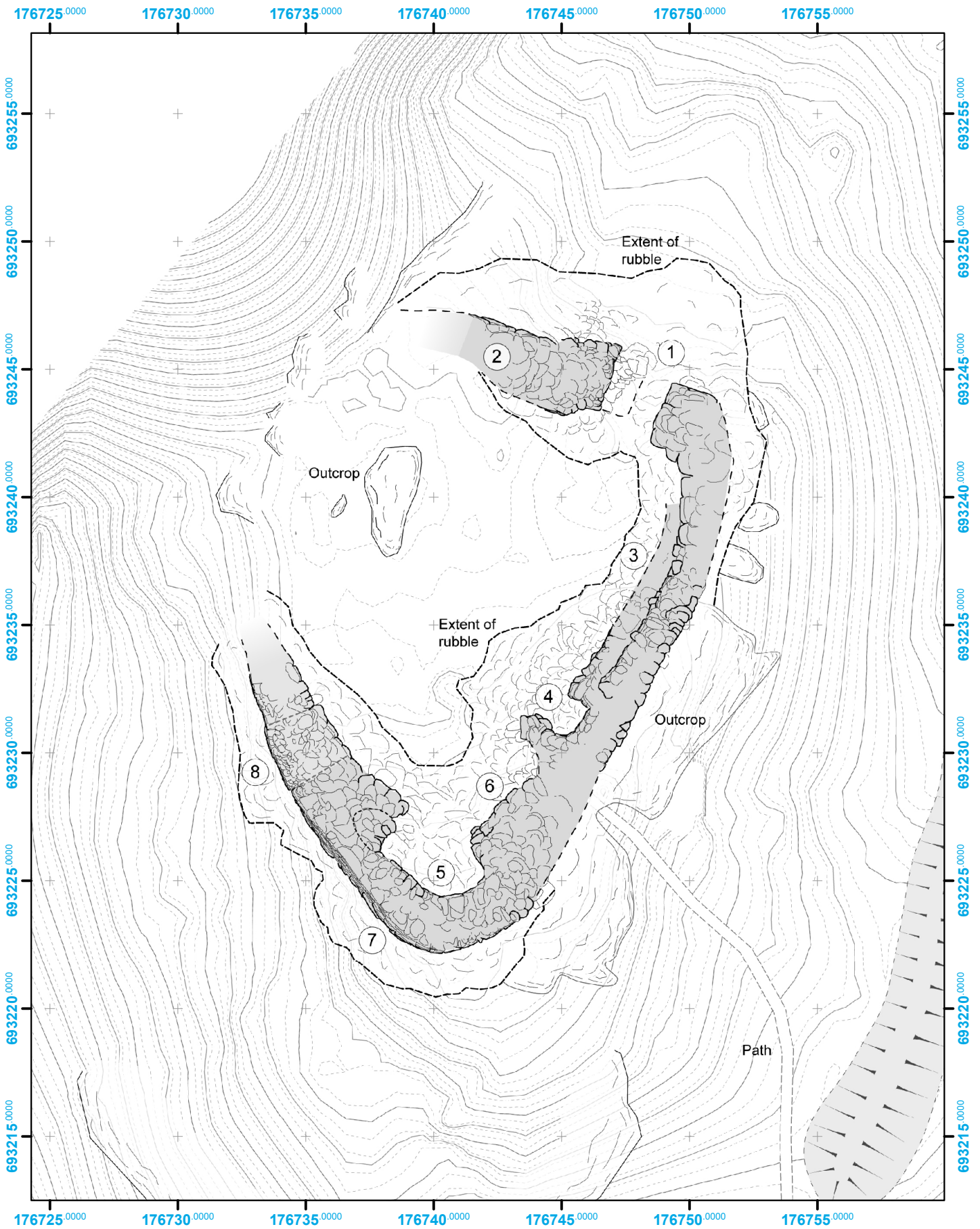
Castle Dounie, Knapdale


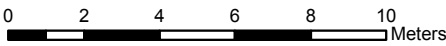

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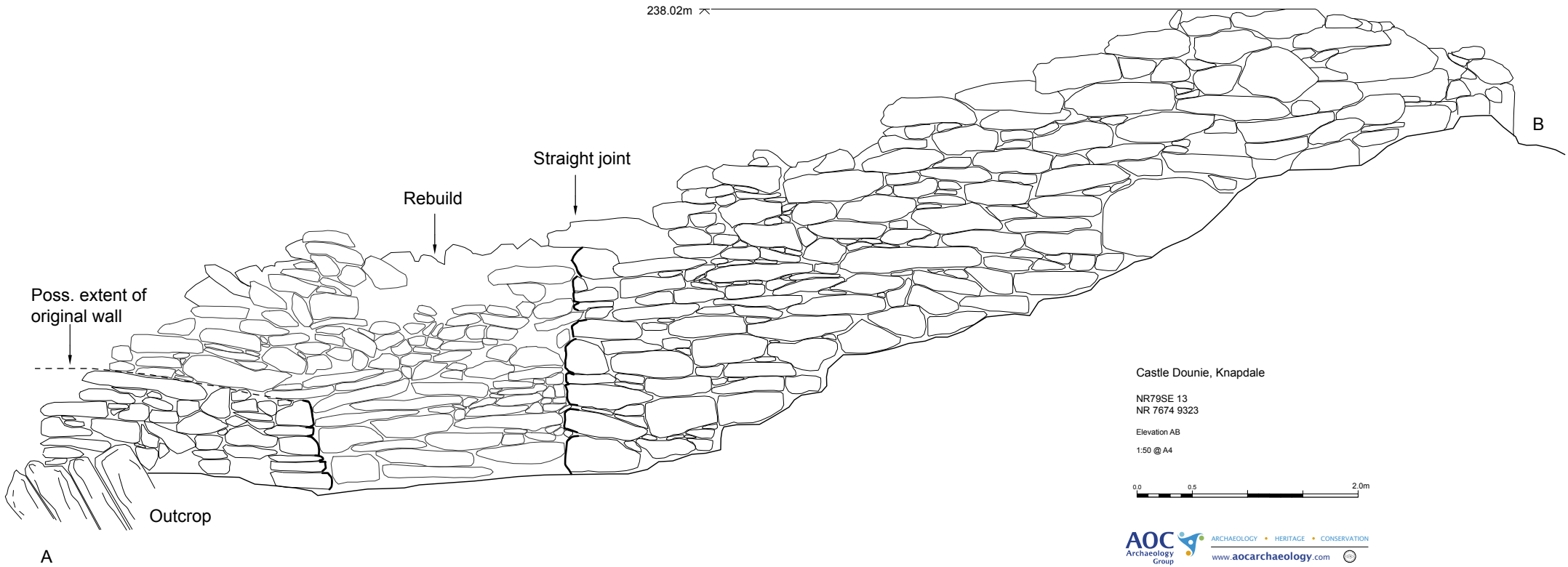
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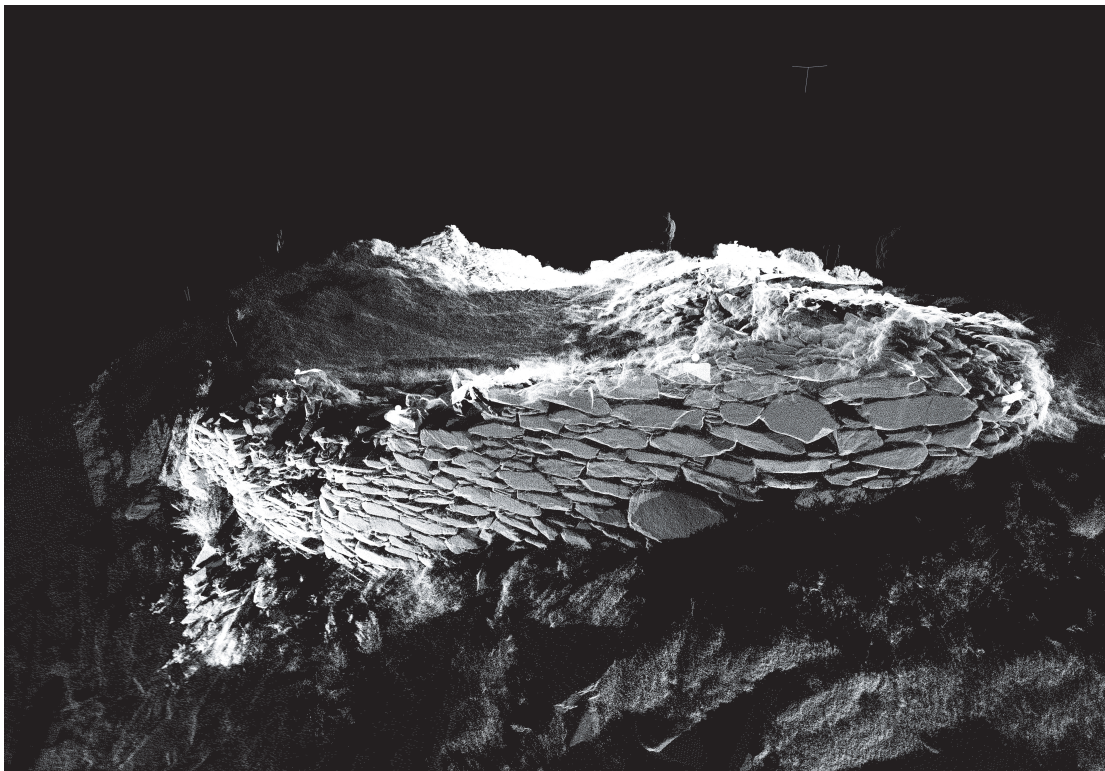
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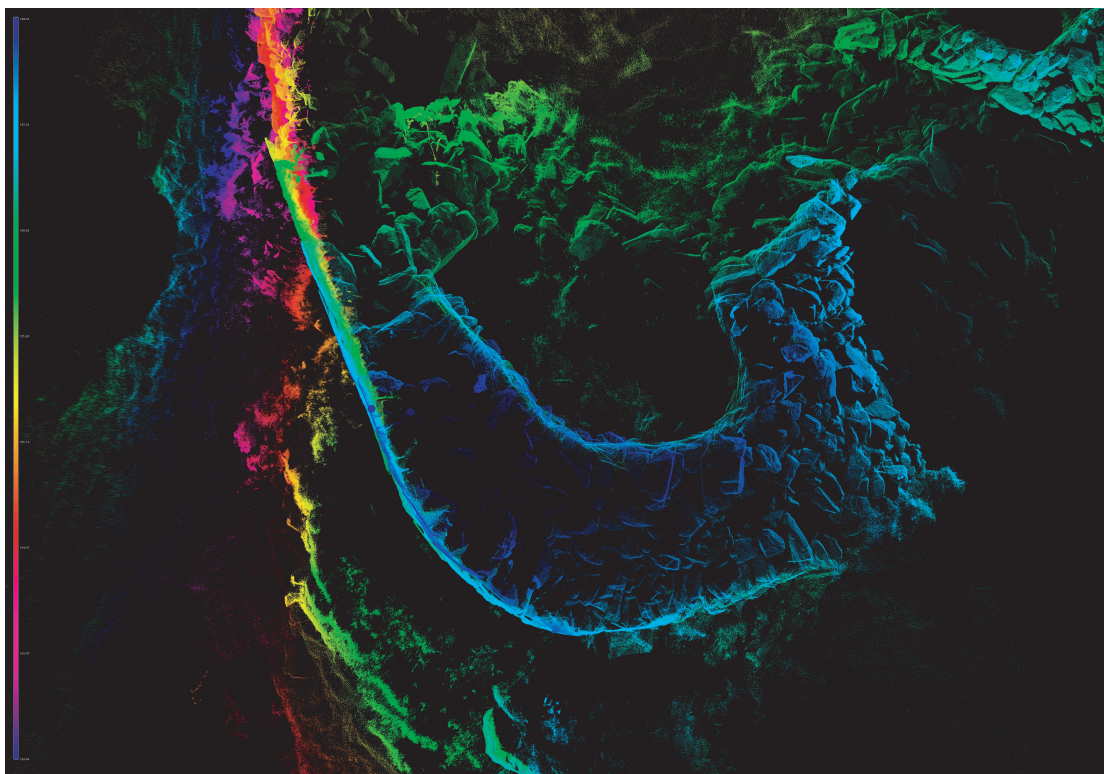


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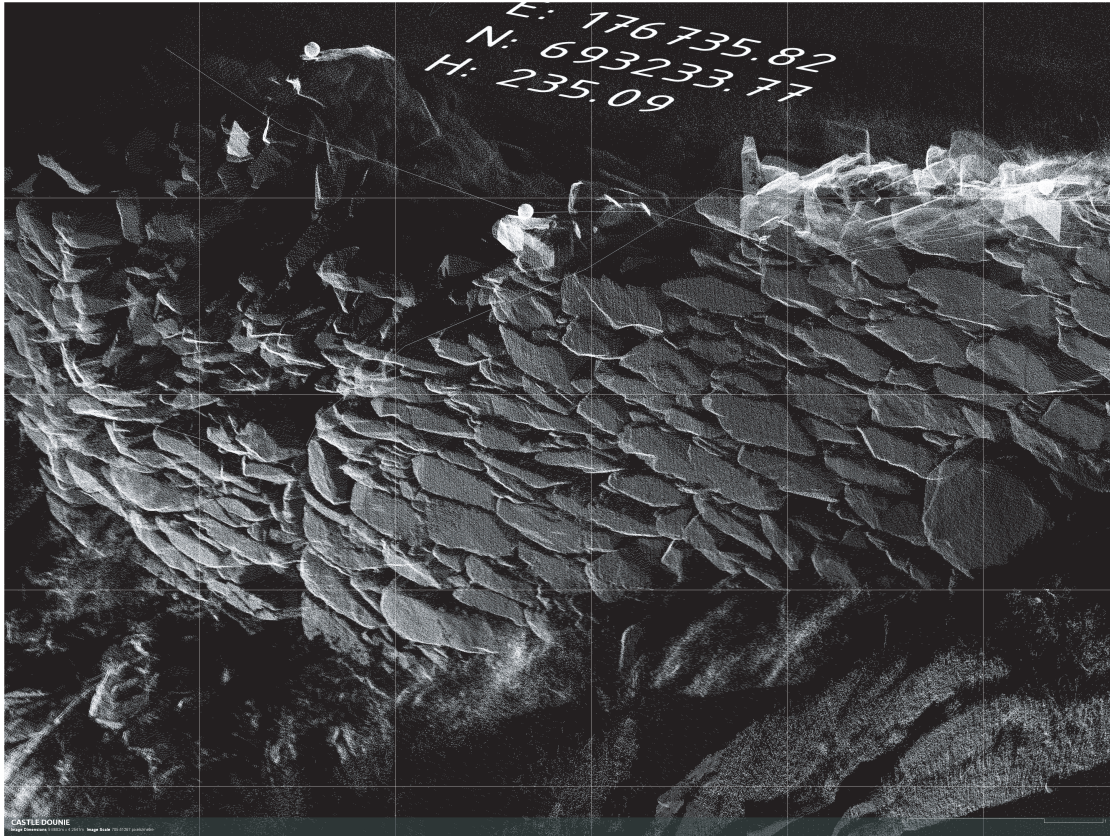




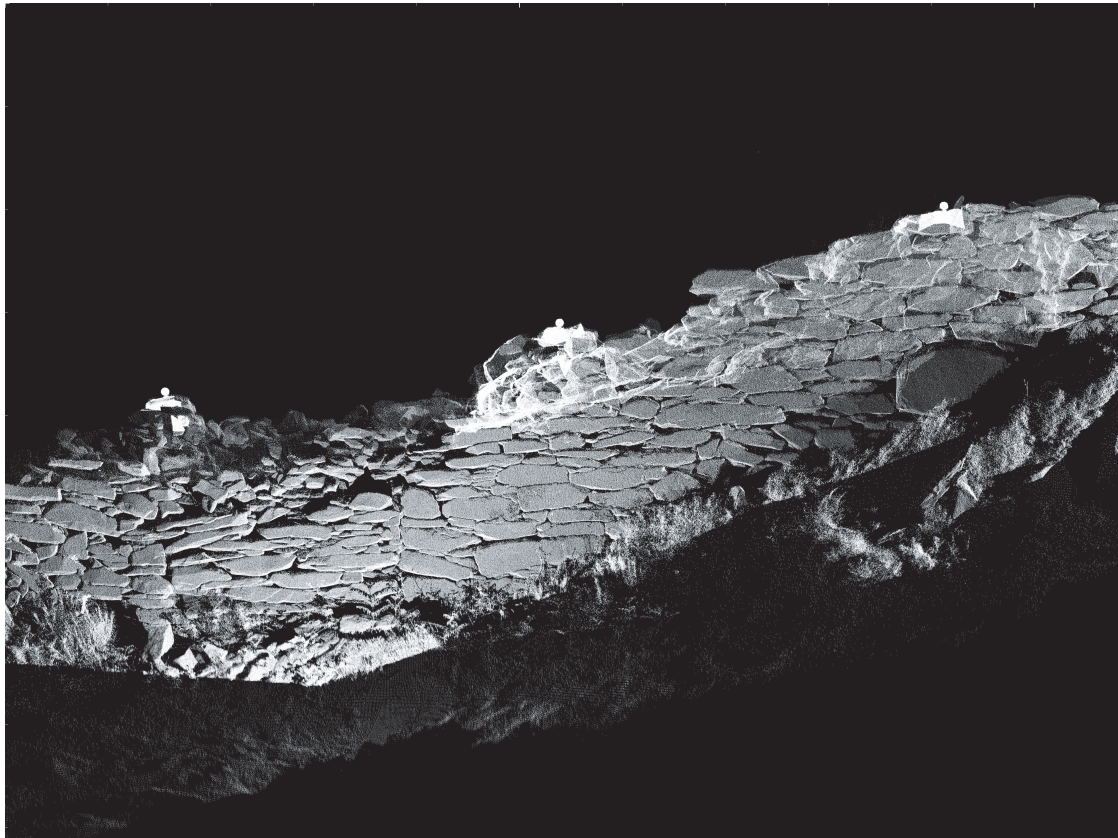
View of laser scan data of the dun, from S



Orthoimage of the laser scan data of cell at point 5, filtered by elevation



Axonometric view of S elevation, showing rebuild from SE



Orthoimage of the S elevation, showing rebuild



Plate 1: View of the entrance at Point 1, from the NE



Plate 2: The E elevation of the entrance, from the NW



Plate 3: The W elevation of the entrance passage, from the E



Plate 4: General view of the entrance and modern cairn (Point 2) from the interior



Plate 5: Modern cairn at Point 2, from the S



Plate 6: Rampart wall face at Point 3, from W



Plate 7: Rampart wall face and rubble at Point 3, from W



Plate 8: Cell at Point 4, showing aumbry, from NW



Plate 9: Cell at Point 4, and surrounding rubble, from N



Plate 10: Rampart and cell at Point 4, from S



Plate 11: Cell at Point 5, showing possible aumbry, from NW



Plate 12: Cell at Point 5, from N



Plate 13: Partially intact corbelling at W end of cell, Point 5, from E



Plate 14: Partially intact corbelling at W end of cell, Point 5, from E



Plate 15: Possible aumbry in cell, Point 5



Plate 16: Wall face at Point 6, from W



Plate 17: Outer wall face at Point 7, from S



Plate 18: Outer wall face at Point 7, from S, showing straight joint



Plate 19: Straight joint (possible entrance) at Point 8, from S



Plate 20: Detail of possible blocked second entrance, from S



Plate 21: General view of the site during survey, from S



Plate 22: General view of the site, from the S