



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd
Bringing the Past and Future Together

Wester Moy Ross and Cromarty



Archaeological Watching Brief



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Wester Moy Ross and Cromarty

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No.	HAS100603
Site Code	HAS-WMY10
Grid Ref	NH 480 553
Client	SSE
Planning Ref	N/A
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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on 25th and 26th May 2010 during works in advance of cable undergrounding at Wester Moy, near Marybank, Ross-shire. There were no significant features or finds uncovered.

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Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by Lynn Fraser. This report was authored by Lynn Fraser and edited by John Wood. We wish to thank Donald Alexander of SSE for his help on and off site. Fieldwork mapping is reproduced by permission of Landmark Information Group, *RoCAS* license #LIG1044. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under *HAS* license 100043217. Historic maps are courtesy of the National Library of Scotland. Site plans have been kindly supplied by SSE.

Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains; and to preserve these where possible and record where necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.
- To ensure that any artefacts or human remains are dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and current Historic Scotland policy guidance.

Location

Wester Moy Farm, near Marybank, Ross-shire, is centred approximately at OS grid ref NH 480 553 at about 63m above sea level.



Figure 1 Site location



Figure 2 Locations of observed trench areas

Blue: Trench 1; Red: Trench 2. Trench one was not observed across the farmyard.
 Maps reproduced from Ordnance Survey under licence. Not to scale.

More detailed plans provided by SSE are included as Figures 3 and 4 below.

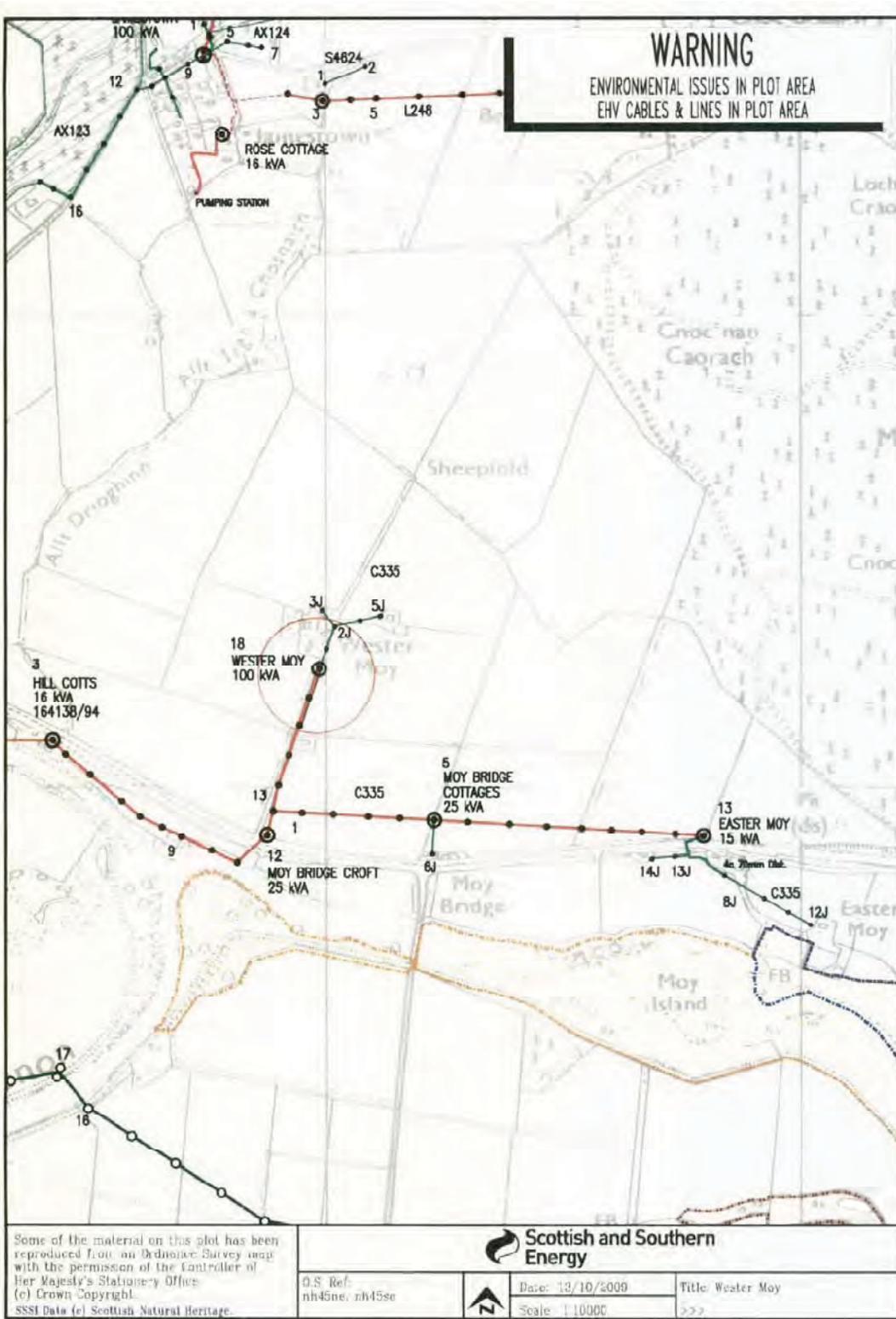


Figure 3 SSE plan showing detailed location

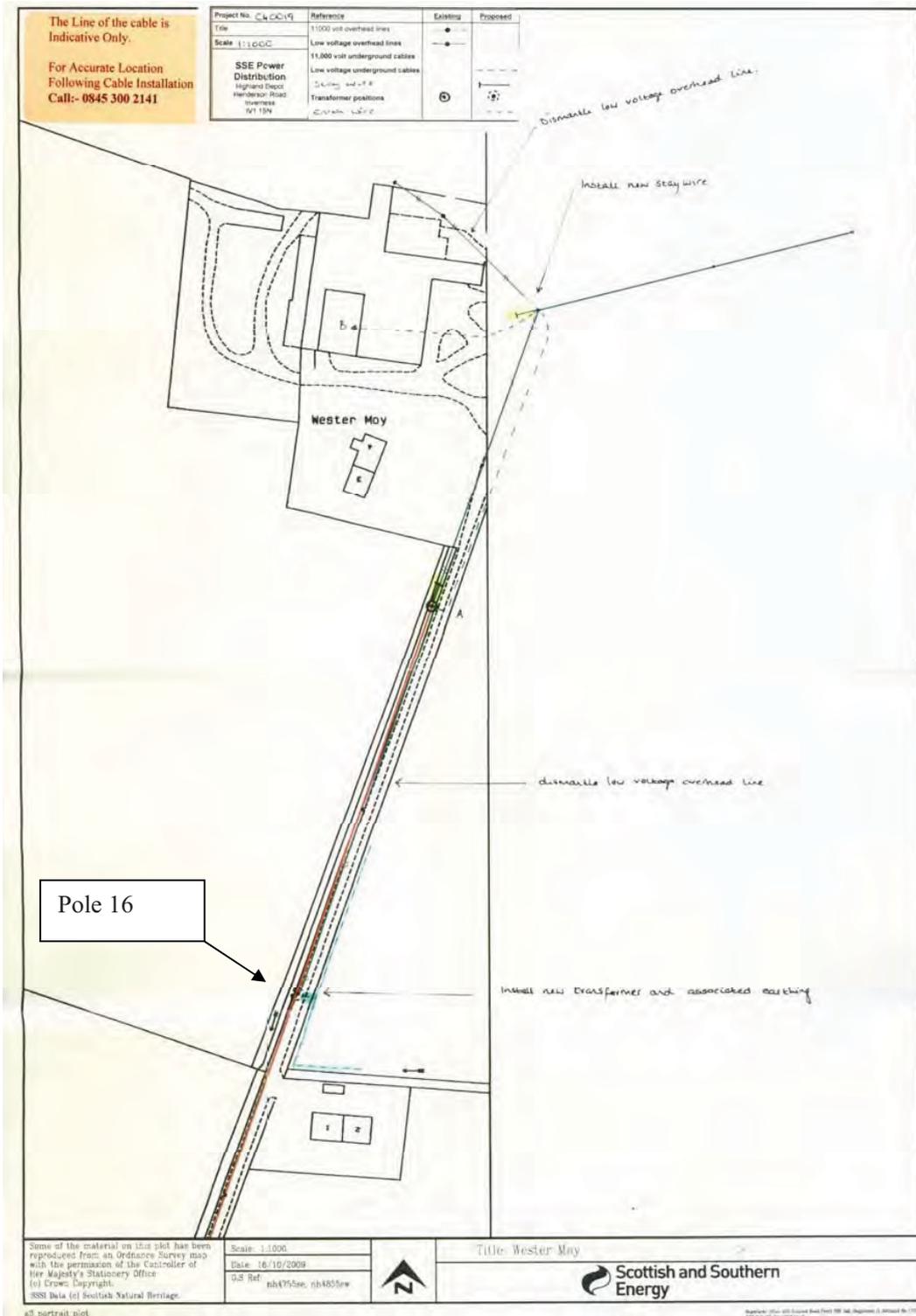


Figure 4 Working plan

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Lynn Fraser on behalf of Highland Archaeology Services for Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) on 25th and 26th May 2010 to identify and record the nature and extent of any archaeological features revealed or affected by the undergrounding of cables.

Project and policy background

Archaeological fieldwork was requested in this case because there is considered to be potential for finds or features of interest to be discovered during site works. In particular a watching brief was requested in this case because a cropmark of a sub-rectangular enclosure measuring about 8 x 20m enclosure was noted by aerial photography in 1996, some 40m SW of Wester Moy Farm at NH 480 553 (Bone, 1996)¹. The date of this feature cannot be determined successfully without excavation.

The Electricity Act 1989², as amended by the Utilities Act 2000³, requires Electricity companies to preserve ‘amenity’ including the cultural heritage, and to minimise impacts of new infrastructure works. The wider planning and policy framework includes the Highland Council’s *Structure Plan*⁴, and the Scottish Government’s *Scottish Planning Policy SPP 23: Planning and the Historic Environment* (2008)⁵. The fundamental principles underpinning the above policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland’s Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)⁶ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999)⁷.

Archaeological and historical background

Wester Moy is situated in the parish of Urray, in the former County of Ross and Cromarty now Highland Region. The parish was partly in Ross and Cromarty and partly in Inverness-shire prior to 1891 when it was sometimes known as Urray and Tarradale. Tarradale or Kilchrist was annexed into Urray about 1600; a medieval parish and a parish for civil and religious purposes from the sixteenth century until 1975. The boundaries of the civil parish were altered by the Boundary Commissioners in 1891⁸.

The site at Wester Moy sits within a landscape rich in prehistoric archaeological remains. To the west there is a chambered cairn and cup marked stone within the Preas Mairi cemetery at Contin; to the north-east the Clachan Corrach chambered cairn and beyond to Loch Ussie where there is evidence of prehistoric activity through burnt mounds, hut circles and cup marked stones and to the south-east

¹ HHER MHG22682; NMRS NH45NE140

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1989/ukpga_19890029_en_1

³ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/en/ukpgaen_20000027_en_1

⁴ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/10/28135841/0>

⁶ www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf

⁷ <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

⁸ http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/search/?action=do_search&p_type=PARISH&p_name=urrray&id=1339&p_county=ross_and_cromarty

a chambered cairn or stone circle at Arcan Mains. In addition, there are crannogs situated at Loch Kinellan and Loch Achilty⁹.

Wester Moy also sits within an improved landscape; it is in close proximity to two large, established estates at Fairburn and Brahan.

Methodology

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.

The drawings of the area, as supplied by the client, were checked in detail against the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Map, the Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), the Highland Council Archives 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 were studied. Other literary sources were also consulted.

Watching brief

The archaeological watching brief took place on 25th and 26th May 2010. Both days were dry and sunny. The work was carried out by SSE personnel using a small excavator with a 300mm wide flat-edged bucket and a seven-tonne excavator with a 500mm wide flat-edged bucket.

The first trench, for the underground cable, was started at pole 18 running east and perpendicular to the fence line for approximately 9m to allow sufficient working distance from the overhead cables. This was dug to a depth of approximately 1m by a small excavator with a 300mm flat-edged bucket. The sub-soil was barely reached in this section of the trench. The top-soil was a mid-brown loam descending through sandy loam to a sandy sub-soil.

From the 9m point the trench turned northwards, running parallel with the fence line and was dug using an 8 tonne excavator with a 600mm flat-edged bucket again to a depth of approximately 1m. As the trench rose with the slope the depth of the top-soil reduced to approximately 200mm with a very stony sub-soil and bedrock appearing in the vicinity of pole 19 (Plate 1). From this point, to obtain the correct trench depth, an excavator with a 'pecker' attachment was employed to break through the bedrock. As the ground from this point out of the field and across the farm yard was equally as stony, the decision was taken that this trench would no longer be watched.

The second trench, for the earthing cable, was started at pole 16 and ran northwards towards pole 17 and eastwards along the south-most field boundary. This was dug by the small excavator using a 300mm flat-edged bucket. The trench cut through the top-soil only to a depth of approximately 300mm.

⁹ <http://her.highland.gov.uk/Map.aspx?clear=true>

Results

Desk-based assessment

The Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), historical cartography and aerial photographs were consulted online.

Roy's Map of Scotland 1745-1755

Extensive cultivation is shown between the north bank of the River Contin, the west bank of Allt Drioghinn and to the base of the hill to the east. There is a settlement in the vicinity of Wester Moy marked 'Moye' with further scattered settlement along the River Contin¹⁰. See Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 Roy's Map

Image: National Library of Scotland

The Statistical Accounts for Scotland

1791-99:

“The lands are still open, nor do they shew any desire to have them inclosed.” The account describes a population in transit - large numbers of people were arriving from the north and west, while others were being recruited into the army or leaving to find work in the south or emigrating to America. In common

¹⁰ <http://www.nls.uk/maps/>

with other ministers of nearby parishes (for example Contin) the minister pleads for some inward investment.¹¹

1834-45

Agricultural Improvement had apparently largely been completed by the time of the Second Statistical account¹².

The exact origins of the present farm are unclear but it represents enclosure and consolidation during the early 19th c. Coul House nearby was built in 1821. The present buildings and mill suggest construction during the period of Victorian High farming. The steading was restored in 1906 (see below).



Figure 6 Extract from Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6"/>" data-bbox="112 750 686 765"/>

Ross and Cromarty Shires (Mainland), Sheet LXXXVII (not reproduced to scale). Image: National Library of Scotland

First Edition Six-Inch to the mile Ordnance Survey Map¹³

¹¹ <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ross%20and%20Cromarty/Urray/>

¹² <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834-45/Ross%20and%20Cromarty/Urray/>

¹³ Ross-shire and Cromartyshire (Mainland), Sheet LXXXVII surveyed in 1876.



Plate 1 View S showing the 'pecker' breaking up underlying bedrock in the vicinity of pole 19.

Watching brief

As mentioned above, the northern part of the cable trench was cut through bedrock and the farmyard where shallow, redeposited material overlay bedrock. Neither of the trenches produced any archaeological features; there was very little midden material uncovered during the excavations.

The opportunity was taken to look for evidence of the cropmark on the ground, but there was nothing visible.

The farm steading area was inspected for signs of the mill lade shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. It is possible to see on the most northerly building the position of the waterwheel, which would have been associated with the mill lade (Plate 2). There is no sign of the mill lade in this area.

However, it is possible to pick it up on the north side of the boundary between the farm yard and the farm cottage's garden. The mill lade is still in situ in the farm cottage garden (Plate 3).

Conclusions and recommendations

There were no features or finds of archaeological significance uncovered during the watching brief. There are no recommendations for further work.

References

- Current vertical aerial photography (www.192.com)
 - Highland Archives Centre, Inverness
 - Highland HER (<http://her.highland.gov.uk>)
 - National Library of Scotland Historic Maps (<http://www.nls.uk/maps/>)
 - RCAHMS (www.rcahms.gov.uk)
 - Statistical Accounts for Scotland (<http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/>)
- Wood J, 2010 Proposed Archaeological Watching Brief, Wester Moy: Written Scheme of Investigation (HAS100507), Highland Archaeology Services, Cromarty



Plate 2 Northern farm building showing the possible position of the waterwheel associated with the mill lade shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map.



Plate 3 The mill lade running through the farm cottage garden.

Appendix 1: Index of photographs

Photo no.	Camera point	Direction facing	Date	Taken by	Comments
1	1	NE	25/05/2010	LF	Opening trench at pole 18
2	1	S	"	LF	General panorama
3	2	SW	"	LF	Taken from 9m point looking back towards pole 18
4	3	N	"	LF	Hitting bedrock
5	4	SW	"	LF	Looking towards pole 18
6	4	N	"	LF	Showing stony sub-soil
7	5	N	"	LF	Showing stony sub-soil
8	5	W	"	LF	Farm steading
9	6	NNE	26/05/2010	LF	Opening trench at pole 16
10	6	SE	"	LF	IVO pole 16
11	-	W	"	LF	Probable position of waterwheel
12	-	W	"	LF	As above with scale
13	-	W	"	LF	Close-up of above
14	-	N	"	LF	Interior of mill building
15	-	N	"	LF	As above
16	-	W	"	LF	Farm steading
17	-	W	"	LF	Farm steading
18	-	N	"	LF	Farm steading
19	-	S	"	LF	Position of mill lade leaving farmyard and entering the cottage garden
20	-	E	"	LF	Mill lade in garden
21	-	N	"	LF	As above
22	-	SSE	"	LF	As above
23	-	SSE	"	LF	As above
24	-	W	"	LF	Farm steading
25	-	W	"	LF	Digger and pecker working in tandem
26	-	W	"	LF	As above
27	-	SE	"	LF	Pecker working
28	7	WSW	03/06/2010	LF	Farmyard
29	8	NE	"	LF	End point of trench in farmyard