



Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

**Barcosh Quarry, Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway
Archaeological Works**



**by Rebecca Shaw
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1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an archaeological investigative survey undertaken in regard to continuation of granite extraction for a further five year period at Barclosh Quarry, located near Dalbeattie in Dumfries & Galloway (NGR: NX 8466 6214) (Figure 1).

The proposed development work (extension of the existing quarry) (Figure 2) lies within an area of archaeological interest relating to extensive late and post-medieval agricultural activity associated with Barclosh Castle and the later farmstead (HER ref. MDG4541).

As the proposal would involve down-cutting works, which would remove any archaeological finds or features within the development area, Andrew Nicholson, Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist, required archaeological works to be undertaken within the proposed extraction and working area prior to any further removal of material.

The archaeological works comprised: recording of any upstanding earthworks and structures within the proposed quarry extension area (Figure 3a) specifically features relating to late and post-medieval agricultural activity – in particular to establish if any remains survived of a corn kiln(s), depicted on 1st edition OS mapping (1854) and mentioned in historical documentary sources (Maxwell W J, 1890).

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to carry out the works by Ecoplan Architectural Limited, on behalf of their client.



Figure 1 – location map
(contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2017])

2 Background

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1854) (Figure 2), which is the earliest detailed mapping, depicts three structures: a roofed rectangular structure with an unroofed rectangular structure to the SW (annotated as Raith Mill (Ruin)) and a further unroofed rectangular structure to the NE. The structure to the NE, which has a very narrow compartment at the SW end is also depicted as a ruin (Figures 4a-b). By 2nd edition mapping (1896) two unroofed (& unnamed) rectangular structures are depicted (the NE ruin is no longer mapped).

A paper titled 'The Old Cornkilns of Barclosh, Kirkcudbrightshire' (Maxwell W J, 1890) records the investigation of a corn kiln sited 90yards to SE of Barclosh farm-steading. The corn kiln was situated on the slope of a hill and comprised a rough stone (without lime) built circular structure which measured 6ft 6in in depth and 13ft in diameter at the top contracting to 4ft 6in at the base. It had a smooth clay floor and an aperture resembling a pen of drain at the bottom. The foundations of an attached rectangular building (barn) were apparent on the higher ground at the top of the slope.

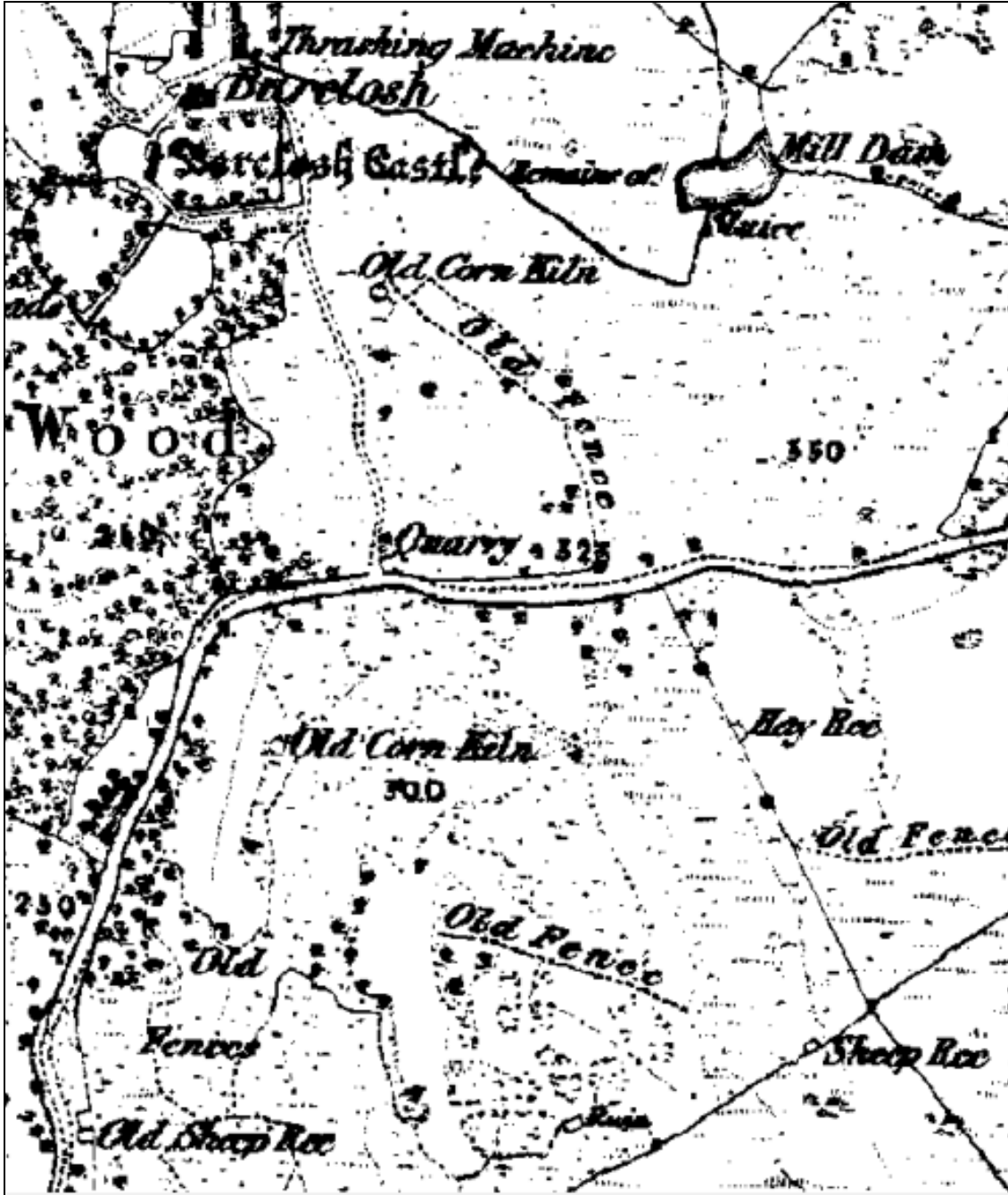


Figure 2 – 1st Edition OS Map, Kirkcudbrightshire (1854) 1:10 560 © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission – 718402735

The remains of a further three corn kilns were noted (but not investigated) within the immediate area:

- (I) sited 286yards further south and 55yards on the on the other side of the parish road from the one that was investigated – this one appeared to have the same form as the one previously investigated (with an attached barn-like structure)
- (II) sited 190yards to SW of the last mentioned and close to the parish road –

comprised a smaller circular structure with no attached building

(III) sited in the copse or young plantation adjoining – a smaller circular structure with no attached building

Canmore records: Field System(period unassigned), Township (period unassigned) (centred on NX 8563 6229; NX86SE 10; Canmore ID 64968; HER: MDG4541)

Centred on NX 856 621 the depopulation around Barclosh extends over an undulating area of approximately 12 hectares and possibly represents a near-continuous sequence of occupation from the 16th century (Barclosh Castle – See NX86SE 1) to the present. Several domestic structures, rectangular and oval in shape, survive as turf-covered rubble footings. They are irregularly interspersed amongst tumbled boundary walls, plots of rig and furrow and associated clearance heaps. Of the four corn-drying kilns, two are in reasonable condition with annexe building footings. The apparent successions of occupation in this area leave no coherent pattern of settlement (Visited by OS (JRL) 27 January 1978).

A township, comprising one unroofed building, six unroofed structures annotated 'Hay Ree', 'Old Sheep Ree' or 'Sheep Ree', two circular structures annotated 'Old Corn Kiln' and a field-system annotated 'Old Fences' is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Kirkcudbrightshire 1854, sheet 40). One unroofed structure is shown on the OS 1:10000 map (1981) (Information from RCAHMS (AKK) 28 June 2000).

3 Findings

Three areas which had potential to be the remains / locations of corn kilns were evaluated (using a large excavator with a smooth ditching bucket) (Figures 8a-b and Figures 4a-c).

(I) located on a slight knoll this exploratory pit comprised a dark brown silt 200mm-300mm in depth above an orangey brown slightly gritty clayey silt (Figure 4a)

(II) & (III) both located on a slope and comprised small and medium stones on surface - below surface there were further stones, mostly angular with bedrock at an approx depth of 250mm (Figures 4b-c).

A number of other features were also recorded within the general area owned by the applicant (Figure 3a) detailed below (Figures 8a-b):

- (a) small slightly 'D' shaped feature (possible enclosure) comprising a low turf bank with intermittent stones (front cover – taken from N). Measured 9.5m by 6.4m (approx) with walls averaging 1.8m in width and 0.20m in height (at most).
- (b) small rectangular enclosure, aligned NE / SW. Measured 11m by 6m (approx) (internally) with walls averaging 2m in width and 0.20m in height (Figure 5a).
- (c) enclosure with walls averaging 2m in width and 0.20m in height (Figure 5b).
- (d) rectangular enclosure, aligned roughly NNE / SSW with an entrance in ESE. Wall average 1.8m in width (spread) and 0.25m in height (Figure 6a).
- (e) sub-rectangular enclosure (Figure 7b) aligned roughly N / S – a small clearance cairn was noted towards the N end of this feature.
- (f) small slightly oval shaped structure, aligned E / W with an entrance in the S wall. Measured 8.7m by 2.6m (internally) with walls averaging 1m in width and 0.45m in height (Figure 6b).
- (g) remains of a mostly upstanding stone structure (sheepfold), aligned NE / SW with an entrance in NW wall. Measured 9.50m by 4.60m (internally) with walls 1.50m in height (at most) and 0.50m in width (Figure 7c)

There was a further small isolated section of walling located to immediate W of exploratory pits (II) & (III) (Figures 8a-b). The walling was aligned NW / SE and measured 16m in length,

2m in width and 0.20m in height (approx) (Figure 5c). A further section of walling between enclosures (d) and (e) was also recorded (Figure 7a).

NB - due to inclement weather conditions not all features were recorded.

4 Conclusions

The exploratory works revealed no remains of any corn kilns in the three areas that were evaluated. It is possible that the larger corn kiln (see paragraph 2 feature (l) - with the attached barn) has been removed (possibly even partially) or become obscured by the bank that surrounds the quarry. An example of a kiln barn is included within Appendix 1.

The other remains that were recorded are typical of features related to a late eighteenth / early nineteenth century township comprising: enclosures, associated walling and structures. Structure (f) appeared to have slightly rounded ends, which indicates it may be earlier rather than later in date and was probably a dwelling with the enclosures being used to either house stock or grow crops.

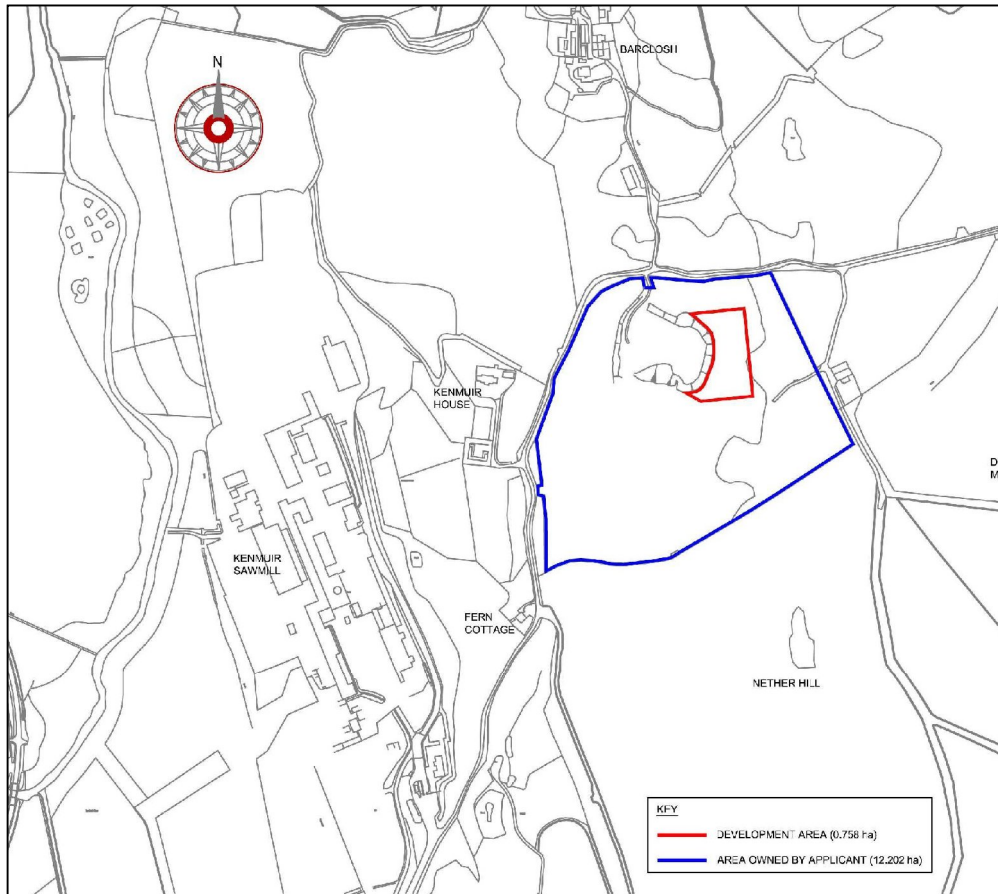


Figure 3a – map showing location of proposed extension at Barclosh Quarry (kindly provided by Ecoplan Architectural Limited)

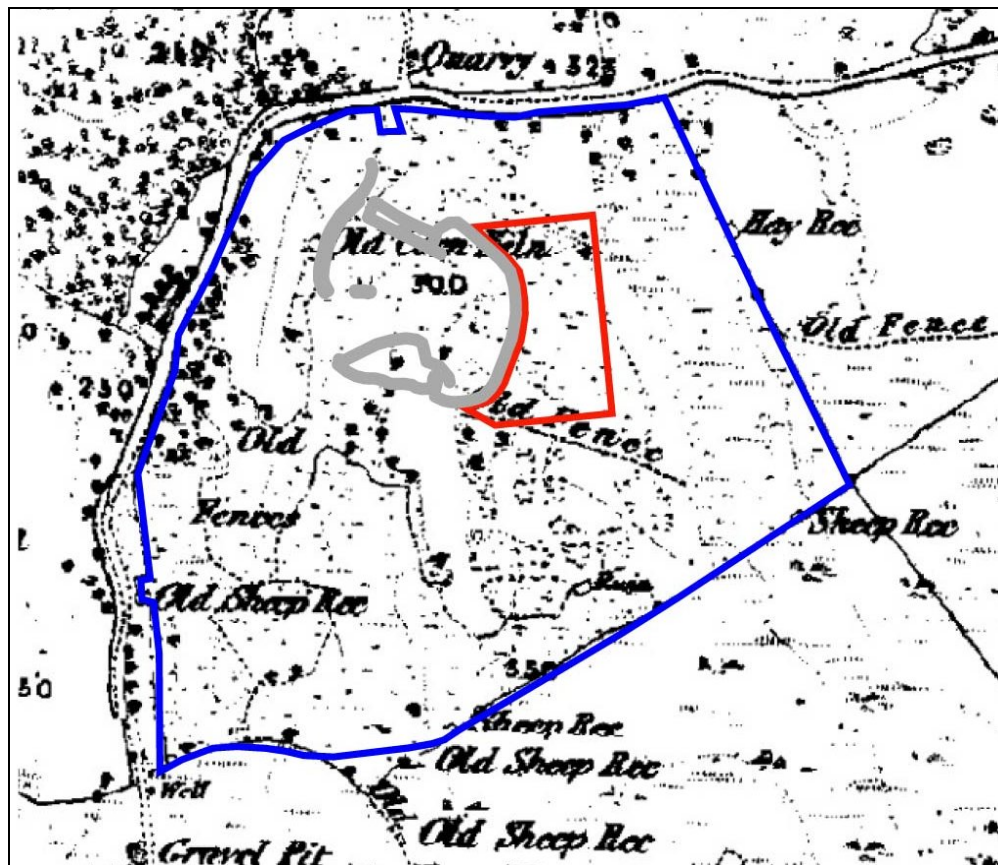


Figure 3b – 1st edition OS showing extent of existing quarry with proposed extension



Figure 4a – exploratory pit (I) (from N)



Figure 4b – exploratory pit (II) (from NNW)



Figure 4c – exploratory pit (III) (from N)



Figure 5a – enclosure (possible) (b) (from NE)



Figure 5b – enclosure (c) (from ENE)



Figure 5c - section of walling close to exploratory pits (II) & (III) (from SE)



Figure 6a – remains of enclosure (d) (from E)



Figure 6b – remains of structure (f) (from S)



Figure 7a – walling between enclosures (d) to (e) (from E)



Figure 7b – enclosure (e) (from N)



Figure 7c - sheepfold (g) (from N)

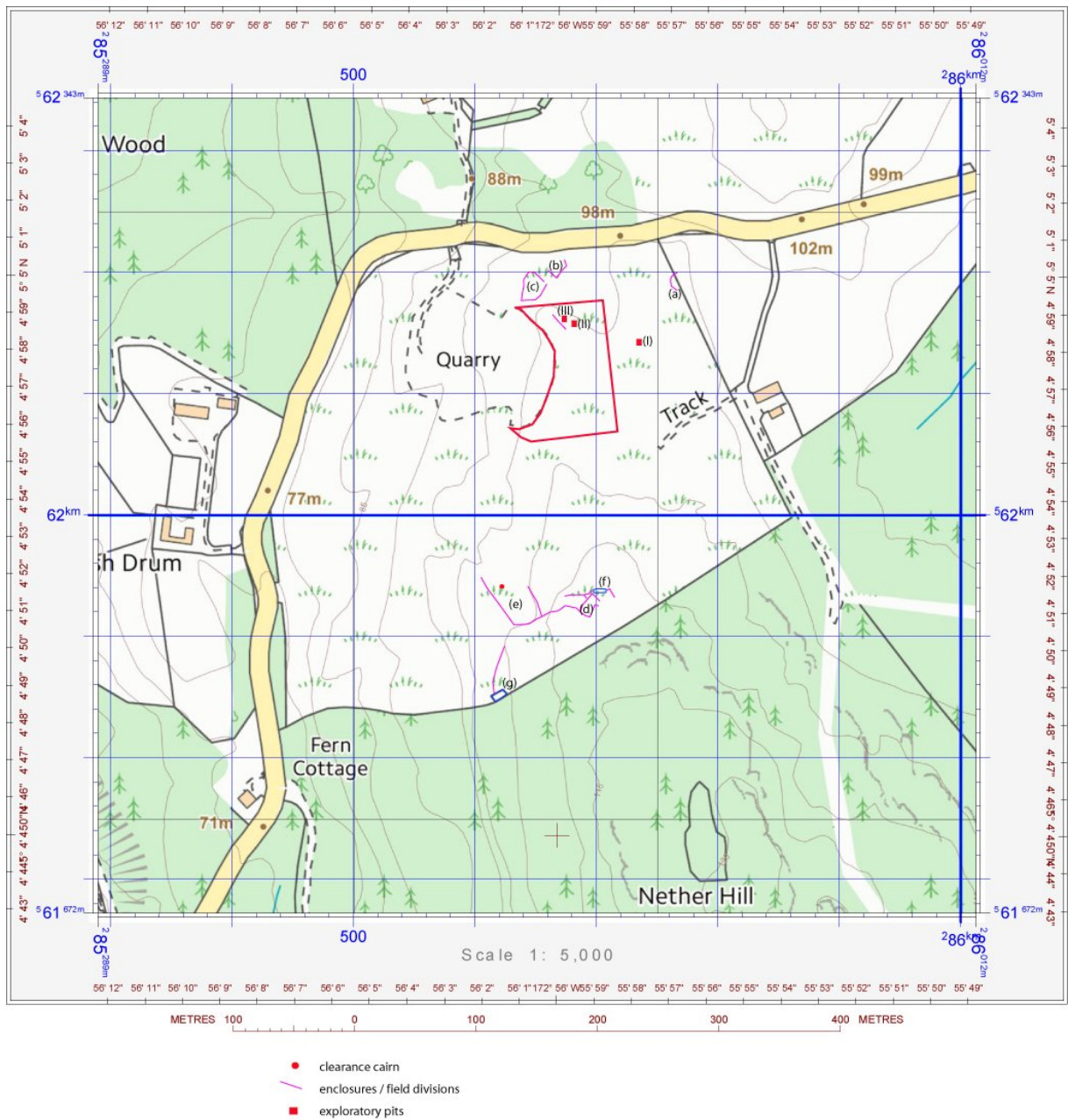


Figure 8a – map indicating features recorded during on-site survey

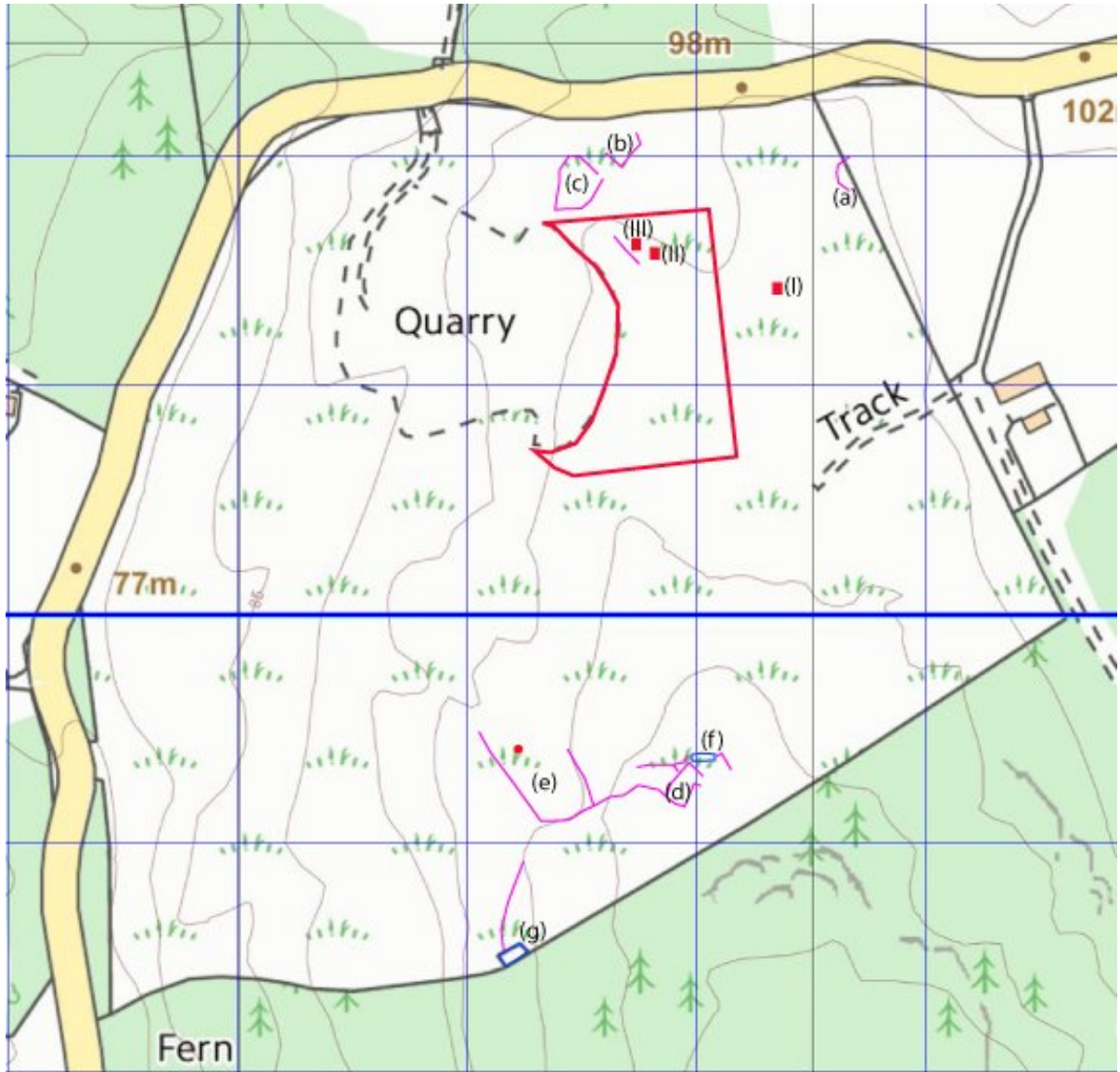


Figure 8b – detail of features / remains recorded during on-site survey works

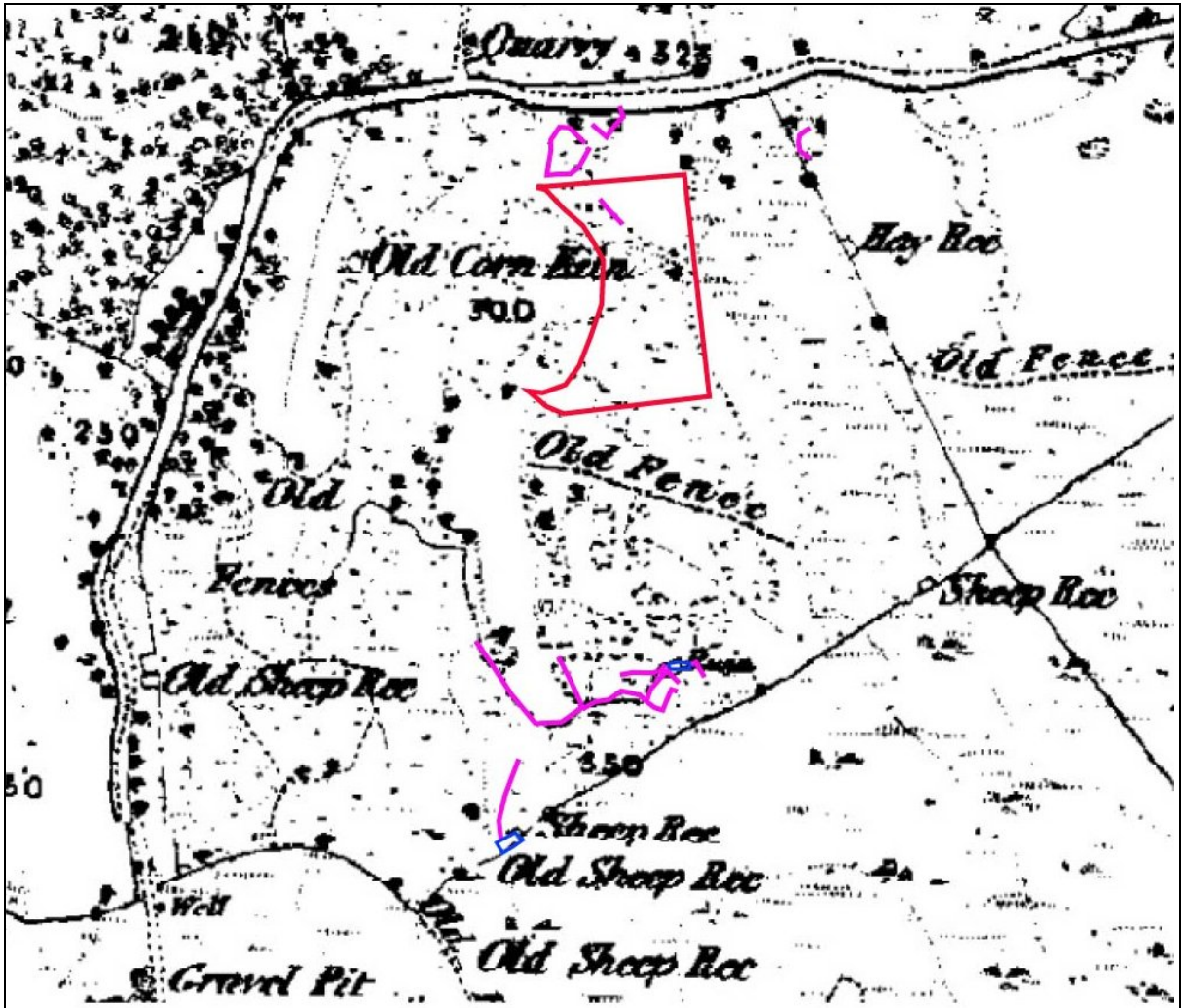


Figure 8c – results of on-site survey works overlaid on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map

References

Documentary

Maxwell W J 1890 ‘The Old Cornkilns of Barlcosh, Kirkgunzeon’ In
*Trans. of the Dumfriesshire & Galloway Natural
History and Antiquarian Society, 2nd, vol 6 1887-90*

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey 1854 1st Edition OS Map, Kirkcudbrightshire (1:10,560)

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to David Reilly for the provision of site plans & maps and for arranging the use of an excavator. Much appreciation also to Andrew Nicholson for taking the time to visit during site works.

Report - Barclosh Quarry, Dalbeattie
Appendix 1 – Clauchrie Kiln Barn



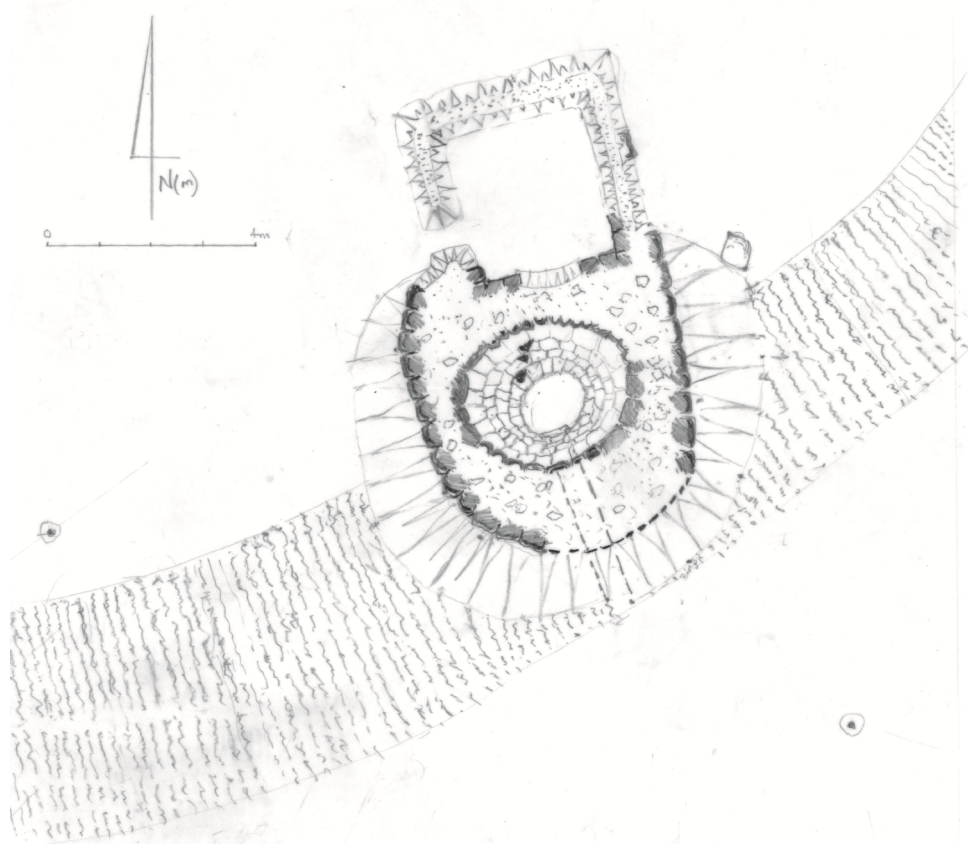
Corn kiln (kiln barn) built into slope, showing flue leading into bowl with attached barn to rear



Bowl of corn kiln from above showing flue



Corn kiln (kiln barn) showing barn area upslope with drying bowl built into slope



Drawing of corn kiln (kiln barn) showing bowl built into slope and barn upslope

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