



ROSS & CROMARTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Woodland Creation Scheme Balvraid, Tomatin



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WOODLAND CREATION PROPOSAL – BALVRAID, TOMATIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WALKOVER SURVEY

Summary

An archaeological walkover survey was carried out on 24 October 2013 on behalf of SAC Consulting in advance of the proposed woodland creation at Balvraid near Tomatin. The work was undertaken to record the location of two known archaeological sites and any other unknown archaeological sites within the woodland location prior to development of the planting and regeneration scheme. The exact location and extent of the two archaeological sites, recorded during the survey, are detailed in the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological walkover survey was carried out in advance of development of a proposed woodland creation and regeneration scheme at Balvraid near Tomatin (centred on NGR NH 8392 3113) on behalf of SAC Consulting by *Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services* on 24 October 2013 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The purpose of the archaeological walkover survey was to identify and record the location two known archaeological sites, one shown on Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping and a second identified during a 1986 aerial survey, and any other archaeological remains visible on the ground. The results of the survey will be used to provide an exact location of any archaeological sites on the ground, to ensure they are safeguarded during the proposed planting and regeneration works.

2.0 Site Location

- 2.1 The woodland creation area (Figure 1) is centred on NGR NH 8392 3113 in the former parish of Moy and Dalarossie in Inverness-shire. It lies 4.1km to the northeast of Tomatin and east of Balvraid Lodge.
- 2.2 The woodland creation area lies to either side of the Allt Bruachaig, a tributary of the River Findhorn. The site, totalling 1.86ha, is situated adjacent to the southeast side of an abandoned settlement known as *Croft* on the north side of the burn.

3.0 Methodology

The overall aim of this archaeological walkover survey was to identify and record any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by the proposed development. This would enable informed mitigation measures and recommendations to be proposed to ensure that archaeological sites would not be damaged or destroyed during works.

3.1 Desk-based assessment

A rapid desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the survey in order to review the historical mapping and information about the previously recorded sites in the survey area. A search was made of the online maps from the National Library of Scotland (NLS) and of all relevant records from the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER).

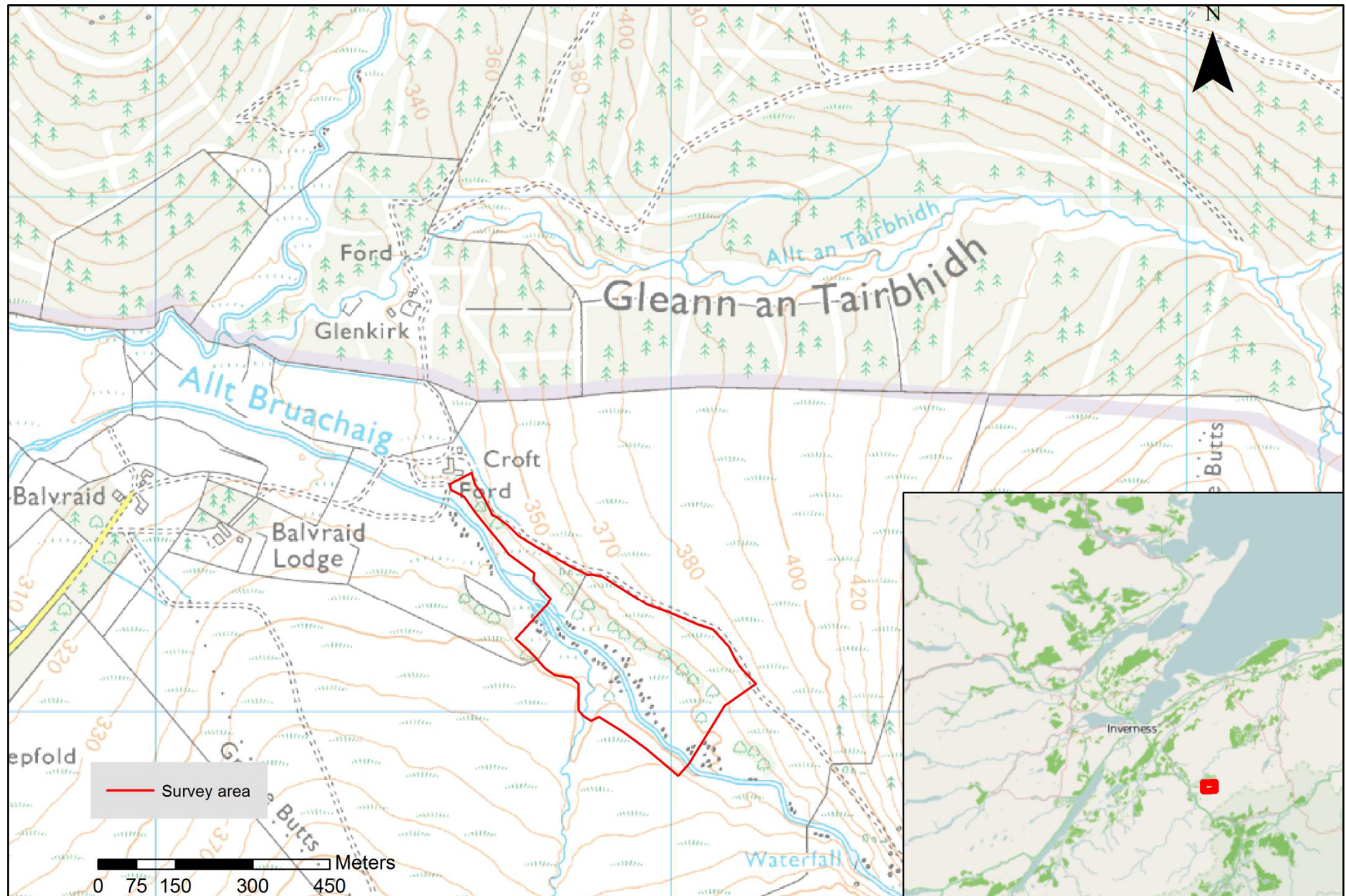


Figure 1: Location of the woodland creation scheme east of Balvraid (Crown copyright and Ordnance Survey database rights 2013)

3.2 Walkover survey

- 3.2.1 The survey area was walked over and surveyed on 24 October 2013. Conditions were excellent: the day was dry and sunny. In general visibility was very good although dense vegetation, particularly on the northeast side of the burn, made survey of some areas difficult.
- 3.2.2 Archaeological sites were recorded individually including using high-resolution digital photography and individual site locations were plotted as polylines with a Trimble Geo-XR rover capable of centimetre accuracy. Details relating to the sites can be found in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1.
- 3.2.3 Survey and recording methods recommended by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)¹ were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Code of Conduct*² and the Highland Council's *Standards for Archaeological Work*³.

4.0 Results

4.1 Desk-based assessment

A rapid desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the walkover survey in order to assess the location of the previously recorded archaeological sites and to assess the potential for further archaeological remains in the area.

4.1.1 Historical mapping

Historical maps were consulted using the National Library of Scotland's online collection⁴.

4.1.1.1 Ordnance Survey 6-inch to the mile map 1st edition *Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XXXIII* Survey date: 1870-71, publication date: 1874

A small enclosure or structure is shown at the southeastern end of the survey area on the first edition mapping. A section of walling runs from the enclosure towards the southwest to the burn.

The *Croft* farmstead, with eight roofed structures, is shown bordering the northwest edge of the survey area. It is linked by a track to the settlement to *Glenkirk* to the north. To the south of *Croft* on the opposite side of the burn, a second farmstead, *Milton*, is depicted with an enclosure and three roofed buildings beyond the proposed woodland survey area.

4.1.1.2 Ordnance Survey 6-inch to the mile map 2nd edition *Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XXXIII* Revision date: 1900, publication date: 1904

The southeastern site remains unchanged on the second edition survey map. However, the settlement at *Croft* has changed considerably, from eight individual buildings to one large T-

¹ RCAHMS 2004

² IfA 2009

³ Highland Council 2012

⁴ NLS 2012

shaped farmstead with the second farmstead to NE and an enclosure and pen to the E side of the T-shaped building.

4.1.2 Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER)

The Highland Historic Environment Record was consulted online⁵ and the following sites were recorded in the survey area:

MHG14524 **NH8390 3100** **Enclosure, Balvraid Lodge**
Aerial photographs in 1986 identified the remains of an enclosure, visible due to light snow cover.

MHG26421 **NH 8405 3095** **Enclosure, Allt Bruachaig**
An enclosure or structure with an attached short length of wall is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map but they are not shown on the current map.

4.2 Walkover Survey

The walkover survey identified the two previously known sites (MHG14524 and MHG26421, as listed in Section 4.1.2), the exact location of which had not been recorded on the ground. These sites, Sites 1-3, were recorded during the survey (Figure 2) along with a small section of drystone walling (Site 4).

The remains of the settlement at *Croft* (Site 5) were also recorded rapidly in order to have a complete record of the settlement. The Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites (Appendix 1) provides details of the sites recorded during the survey.

4.2.1 Site 1

A standalone tree marks the north corner of a built platform on a lower river terrace on the northeast side of the burn (Figure 2, Plate 1). There is visible stone walling on the southwest side (Plate 2) with a turf/stone bank visible on the northwest side of the platform. The south edge of the site is formed by the steep natural terrace and there is a slight edge visible forming the northeast side of the platform.

There was no visible sign of a smaller enclosure or structure on the site, as indicated by the historical mapping (**HER No. MHG26421**). The site is reportedly the location of a weaver's cottage, all trace of which has been removed⁶.

⁵ Highland HER 2013

⁶ J. Beattie, pers. comm.

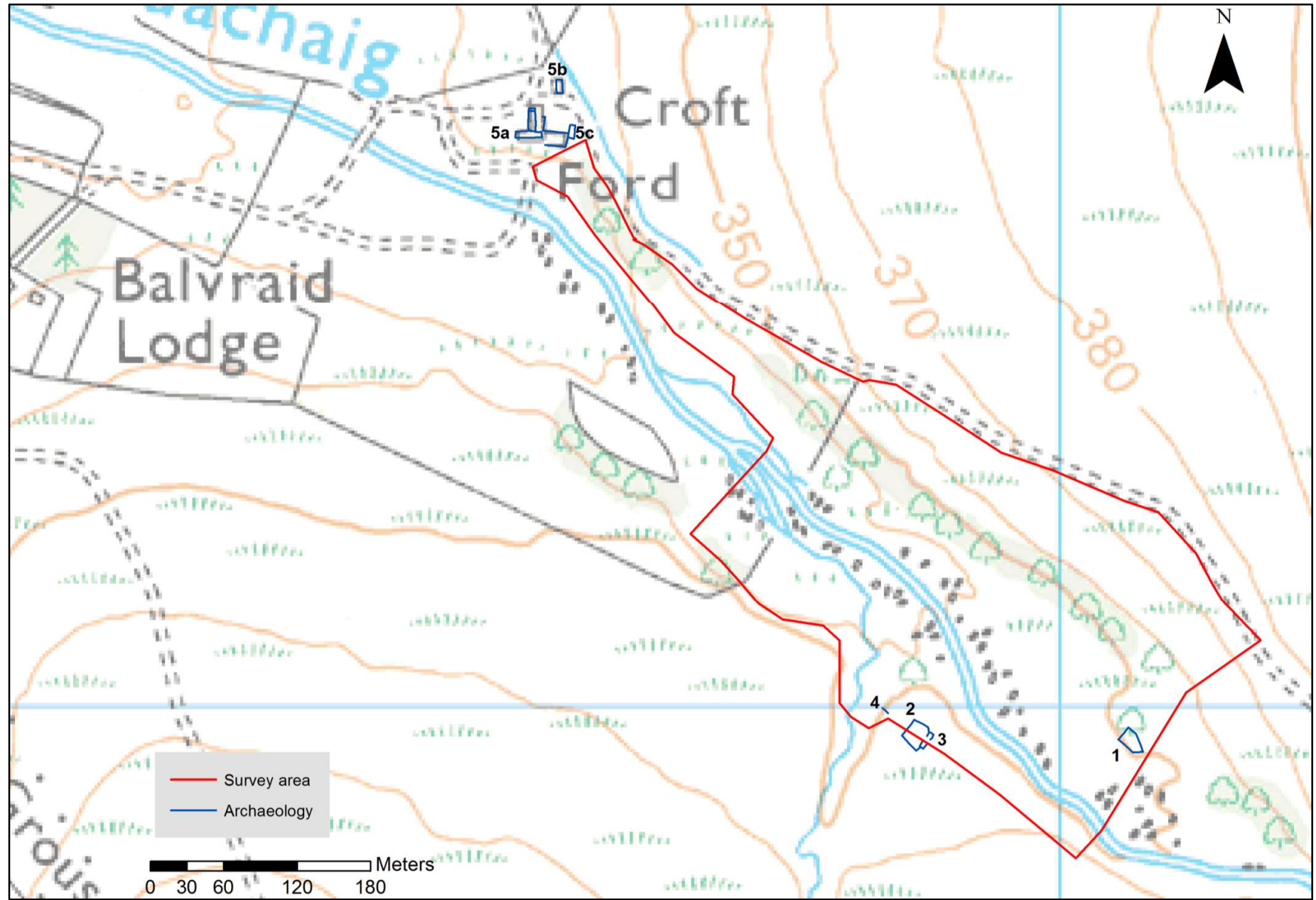


Figure 2: Location of archaeological sites



Plate 1: Site 1 – the standalone tree marking the north corner of the enclosure, looking SE



Plate 2: Site 1 – drystone walling on the southwest side of the enclosure, looking NE

4.2.2 Site 2 and Site 3

Located along the centre of the southwest survey boundary were the faint remains of two structures, bisected by the construction of the new fence line (Figure 2). Site 2 comprises the faint remains of the rectangular enclosure which had previously been identified by aerial photography (HHER No. MHG14524). A second site, Site 3, was also visible and is attached to the southeast side of the enclosure.

Both structures were covered in dense heather and lay below the new fence line, which had caused no disturbance to the sites. The stone/turf-built enclosure measured 19m NE-SW by 16m with the attached subrectangular structure, possibly a house, measuring approximately 14m NE-SW by 4.5m. Both sites were difficult to define and there were no visible entrances. Both sites had not been recorded on the Ordnance Survey historical mapping and, therefore the period of their use remains unclear.

4.2.3 Site 5

The ruins of the abandoned farmstead (Plate 3) on the northwest side of the survey area were rapidly surveyed and are shown in Figure 2. The layout of the site, depicted as still in use on Bartholomew's 1934 map of Inverness-shire, appeared to be much the same as shown on the 1900 2nd Edition OS map.

The woodland creation area lies beyond these sites and they will not be impacted by the works.



Plate 3: Site 5 – ruined farmstead of *Croft*, looking NW

5.0 Discussion

- 5.1 The archaeological walkover survey of the proposed woodland creation scheme at Balvraid recorded the exact locations of the two previously identified sites: an enclosure in the southeastern side of the planting area and an enclosure and attached structure along the centre of the southwest border of the planting area. The ruins of the settlement of *Croft*, located beyond the northwest side of the planting area, were also recorded although these sites will not be impacted by the proposed works.
- 5.2 It appears that Site 1 is known by the estate to have been a weaver's cottage. However, there appears to have been no previous record of Sites 2-3, apart from the location being identified during the 1986 aerial survey. The attached structure on the southeast side of the enclosure could have been a smaller pen or a squatter's house – neither of which were shown on historical mapping.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 As per the site plan provided by SAC Consulting, Sites 2-4 will be located in an area of natural regeneration and will not be impacted by any new planting. However, Site 1 is located near or within an area of new planting and should be safeguarded from destruction.
- 6.2 The following buffer zones should be retained around archaeological sites recorded during the walkover survey:
- A 5-metre buffer zone around Sites 1-4.

7.0 References

Beattie, J pers comm 24-10-2013

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).

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The Scottish Government 2010. *Scottish Planning Policy* accessed 19 March 2012 at <Http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

Site No.	Site type	Site name	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Photo No.	Ht OD (m)	Easting	Northing	HHER No.
1	Enclosure	Allt Bruachaig	A standalone tree marks the spot of a built platform on a river terrace. There is visible stone walling 0.3-0.6m high and 1m wide on the NW/SW sides and a bank forming the edge of the platform on the NE side.	NW-SE	Very degraded	Post Medieval	2-7	351	284063	830963	MHG26421
2	Enclosure	Allt Bruachaig	The faint remains of a rectangular enclosure under dense heather underlie the new fence line. It measures 19m NE-SW by 16m over stone/turf banks spread 1-1.2m wide and up to 0.4m high.	NE-SW	Very degraded	Unknown	8-9	355	283878	830983	MHG14524
3	Structure	Allt Bruachaig	The faint remains of a heather-covered stone/turf subrectangular structure, possibly a house, is attached to the SE side of an enclosure. It measures 14m NE-SW by 4.5m over walls which are difficult to define, surviving only up to 0.3m high.	NE-SW	Very degraded	Unknown	-	355	283898	830977	-
4	Wall	Allt Bruachaig	A short section of single-coursed stone walling lies below the line of an old fence line. It stands up to 0.6m high.	NW-SE	Degraded	Post Medieval	10	355	283859	830997	-
5a	Farmstead	Croft	A T-shaped farmstead built with mortared stone: E-W aligned wing stands almost to roof height with the W gable end wall dismantled, there are 2 nearly opposing entrances in N/S walls; N-S wing stands up to 0.6m high and is mostly in ruins.	N-S	Ruinous	Post Medieval	11-15	336	283558	831465	-
5b	Farmstead	Croft	A second, probably older, house or byre is located NE of the main farmstead. It is stone-built, with no visible mortar, and there is no visible entrance. It measures 11m N-S by 5m over walls standing 0.5-0.6m high.	N-S	Degraded	Post Medieval	11-15	340	283595	831507	-

BAL13 – Balvraid, Tomatin Woodland Creation: Archaeological Walkover Survey

Site No.	Site type	Site name	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Photo No.	Ht OD (m)	Easting	Northing	HHER No.
5c	Enclosure	Croft	Stone-built walling forming at least one enclosure is attached to the E side of the main farmstead. There is a possible byre or bothy attached to the E side of the enclosure	E-W	Degraded	Post Medieval	11-15	336	283601	831475	-

APPENDIX 2 Index of Photographs

No.	Direction Facing	Site No.	Notes	Taken By	Date
1	SE	-	Looking down the burn valley across the survey area	MKP	24/10/2013
2	SW	1	Looking over the standalone tree marking Site 1	MKP	24/10/2013
3	SW	1	Looking over the standalone tree marking Site 1	MKP	24/10/2013
4	SW	1	Looking over the standalone tree marking Site 1	MKP	24/10/2013
5	NE	1	Section of drystone walling at the NW corner of Site 1	MKP	24/10/2013
6	NE	1	Section of drystone walling at the SE corner of Site 1	MKP	24/10/2013
7	NE	1	Drystone walling visible on the SW side of Site 1 with the standalone tree in back	MKP	24/10/2013
8	NW	2	Heather-covered location of Sites 2 and 3	MKP	24/10/2013
9	W	2	Heather-covered location of Sites 2 and 3, showing the new fence line	MKP	24/10/2013
10	SE	4	Section of drystone walling Site 4	MKP	24/10/2013
11	NW	5	Ruined farmstead of <i>Croft</i>	MKP	24/10/2013
12	NW	5	Ruined farmstead of <i>Croft</i>	MKP	24/10/2013
13	E	5	Small stone cairn marking a dog's burial	MKP	24/10/2013
14	NW	5	Ruined farmstead of <i>Croft</i>	MKP	24/10/2013
15	NW	5	Ruined farmstead of <i>Croft</i>	MKP	24/10/2013