

# **Extension to Fort Augustus Substation Auchterawe, Fort Augustus**

## **Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Walkover Survey**



# Fort Augustus Substation

## Extension to the existing substation at Auchterawe, Fort Augustus

### Archaeological Walkover Survey Report

Client	<b>Global Infrastructure</b>
National Grid Reference	<b>NH 35663 08207 (centred)</b>
Site Code	<b>FAS14</b>
Report Number	<b>2014-26/FAS14</b>
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**Cover image** –aerial image of the site

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#### Acknowledgements

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## Summary

*An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out on 25 August on behalf of Global Infrastructure in advance of extending the existing substation at Auchterawe, For Augustus. The work was undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any archaeology likely to be directly affected by the proposed works in order to inform recommendations for the protection and management of any sites identified. There were two archaeological sites identified: a stone dyke and a large spread of possible clearance material. No further work is recommended.*

### 1.0 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out in advance of an extension to the existing substation at Auchterawe, Fort Augustus (centred on National Grid Reference NH 35663 08207) on behalf of Global Infrastructure. The archaeological work was requested to inform site management.

There were two archaeological sites recorded during the survey: a stone dyke running adjacent to the southwest boundary of the site and a large spread of stone, interpreted as clearance material, situated in the south-western quadrant of the site.

### 2.0 Site Location

The proposed development area, measuring approximately 120m NE-SW x 100m NW-SE, is situated contiguous to the south-eastern boundary of the existing substation at Auchterawe about 2 miles to the southwest of Fort Augustus (Figure 1).

The landscape situation of the site comprises a flat area of slightly wet ground under deer grass, heather and some broom at approximately 40m OD. Approximately two-thirds of the area is covered on mounds of earth and stone from the construction of the existing substation.

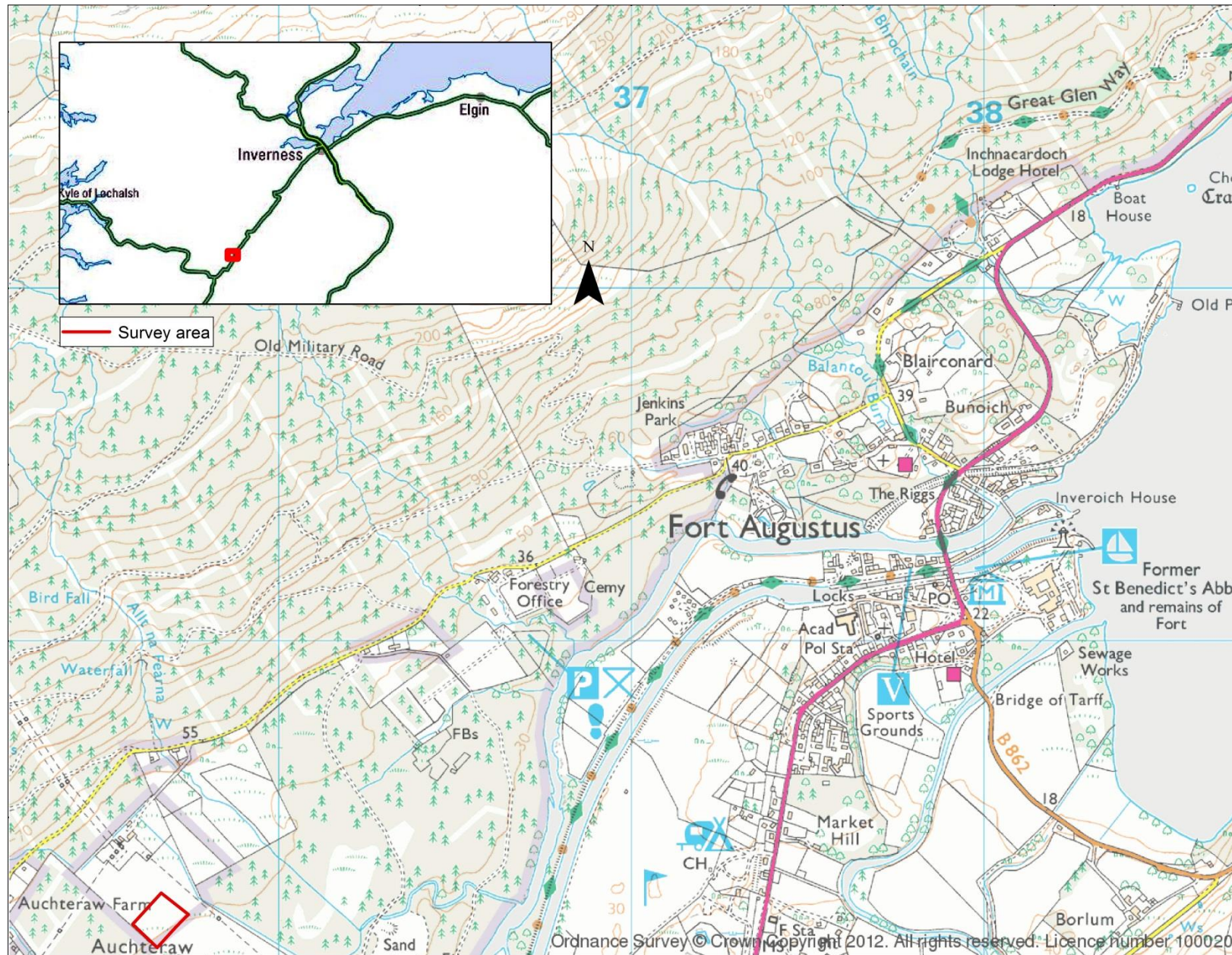
The underlying geology is a West Highland granite gneiss intrusion overlain by Devensian glaciofluvial sheet deposits of sand, gravel and boulders<sup>1</sup>.

### 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is situated approximately 2 miles southwest of Fort Augustus in the parish of Boleskine and Abertarff in what can be considered a marginal landscape. There is scant evidence in the immediate vicinity of settlement through time, although there are some patches of improved land, in an area that is largely covered by forestry plantation. An old military road is located on the hillside to the north of the site.

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<sup>1</sup> British Geological Society 2014



**Figure 1:**  
Site location

## 4.0 Methodology

The overall aim of the desk-based assessment and archaeological walkover survey was to identify and record any unknown archaeological sites or features that might be directly affected by the extension to the existing sub-station. This would enable informed mitigation measures and recommendations to be proposed to ensure that the value of any cultural heritage sites would not be compromised by the development.

### 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.

A full check of all available historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps was conducted using the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), Historic Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland databases and other available records or online resources about the site.

### 4.2 Walkover Survey

The survey area was walked over and surveyed on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The weather for the survey was dry and sunny.

Survey and recording methods recommended by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)<sup>2</sup> were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct*<sup>3</sup>.

## 5.0 Results

### 5.1 Desk-based Assessment

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 on sites in close proximity to the proposed development area.

#### 5.1.1 Cartographic Sources

Historical maps were consulted at the National Library of Scotland online<sup>4</sup>.

**First Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map  
*Inverness-shire (Mainland)*, Sheet LXVIII  
Survey date: 1871 Publication date: 1874**

The first edition map shows the survey area as an area of unimproved heathland with an enclosed field to its southwest.

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<sup>2</sup> RCAHMS 2004

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Archaeologists 2012

<sup>4</sup> NLS 2014

## **Second Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map *Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet LXVIII***

**Publication date: 1904 Date revised: 1899**

The second edition map shows the survey area as forming part of an irregularly shaped area that has been reclaimed as agricultural land, but has not been enclosed.

### **5.1.2 Aerial Photographs**

The RCAHMS online collection of historical aerial images<sup>5</sup> and modern aerial images supplied by Microsoft Bing Maps<sup>6</sup> were checked. There were no potential archaeological features identified within the site.

### **5.1.3 Historic Environment Sources**

A full search of the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER) did not produce any sites within the survey area, but the following site was noted in the vicinity:

#### **MHG22920 NH 3630 0870 Forestry Nurseries**

A township, comprising two roofed, ten unroofed buildings, six enclosures and some field walls is depicted on the 1st edition of the 6-inch map. Two roofed buildings, one unroofed building and two enclosures are shown on the 1971 edition of the OS 1:10000 map to the northwest of the site

In addition, the following event was noted:

#### **EHG3730 DBA and walkover survey – Beaully-Denny overhead line replacement**

Between June 2004 and June 2005, a desk-based assessment and field survey of the route of the new overhead transmission line and the dismantling of the existing overhead transmission line between Beaully and Denny was carried out by GUARD. It was noted in the report in relation to the Fort Augustus substation that there was a collapsed stone wall enclosure and two large cairns, most likely field clearance, located just outwith the area proposed for the new substation.

## **5.2 Walkover Survey**

Two archaeological sites recorded during walkover survey (Figure 2). Site 1 (Plate 1) was a ruinous drystone dyke that ran parallel and adjacent to the southwest boundary of the survey area. Site 2 (Plate 2) was an extensive spread of stones and boulders in the south-western corner of the site. There was no evidence of a structure and it was interpreted as being field clearance. A full description of the sites is given in the Gazetteer of Sites (Appendix 1).

## **6.0 Discussion and recommendations**

The flat, grassy ground and the historical mapping suggest that the area had been used for some form of agriculture in the past. The drystone dyke recorded accords with the enclosure wall depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of the Ordnance Survey map and is most probably

<sup>5</sup> RCAHMS 2014

<sup>6</sup> Supplied under ESRI licensing and Microsoft Bing Mapping

the wall noted in GUARD's 2005 report (EHG3730). Likewise, the large spread of stone may well be the two cairns noted in that, albeit now flattened. There appeared to be disturbance to the stones in places with quarrying and/or robbing having taken place.

It is recommended that the drystone dyke is fenced off with high visibility tape during any works on site to avoid it being compromised. No further works are recommended.



**Plate 1:** The drystone dyke looking S from the SW corner of the existing substation



**Plate 2:** The large spread of stone looking N from the SW corner of the survey area





**Figure 2:**  
Location of  
the  
archaeological  
sites

## 7.0 References

British Geological Survey (BGS) 2014. *Geology of Britain Viewer* accessed at <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> on 24 August 2014.

Highland Council 2012. *Standards for Archaeological Work* available at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/developmentguidance.htm>

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Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2004. *Corporate Plan 2004-9: Annex - Survey and Recording Policy*.

The Scottish Government 2014. *Scottish Planning Policy*  
<Http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf>

## Appendix 1: Gazetteer of Sites

Site Number	Site Name	Site Type	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Ht OD	Easting	Northing	Photo Number
1	Auchterawe	Dyke	A ruinous stone dyke standing up to 1.5m high and about 1m wide at the base, tapering to 0.5m at the top. Constructed of boulders and large stones.	-	Ruinous	Post Medieval	40m	235629	808155	8
2	Auchterawe	Spread of stone	A large spread of stone measuring 31m x 23m at its longest and widest points. Most likely clearance material.	NE-SW	-	-	40m	235651	808174	9

## Appendix 2: Index of Photographs

Photo No.	Direction Facing	Feature No.	Description	Taken By	Date
1	W	-	View over the site taken from the SE boundary	LF	25/08/2014
2	NW	-	View over the site taken from the SE boundary	LF	25/08/2014
3	NW	-	View over the site taken from the SE boundary	LF	25/08/2014
4	N	-	View over the site taken from the SE boundary	LF	25/08/2014
5	NE	-	View over the site taken from the SE boundary	LF	25/08/2014
6	SE	-	View over the site taken from the palisaded fence around the sub-station	LF	25/08/2014
7	S	-	View over the site taken from the palisaded fence around the sub-station	LF	25/08/2014
8	SE	1	The stone dyke running adjacent to the SW boundary of the site	LF	25/08/2014
9	N	2	Large spread of stone in the SW of the site	LF	25/08/2014
10	SSW	-	View of the site	LF	25/08/2014