

Tomatin Water Treatment Works Strathdearn, Inverness-shire

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Walkover Survey



View over Hut Circle Site 3 to River Findhorn

National Grid Reference	NH 79844 27350 (centred)
Site Code	Tomatin 14
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CONTENTS

List of Figures	3
List of Plates	3
Summary	3
1 Introduction	3
2 Acknowledgements	5
3 Site Location	5
4 Archaeological and Historical Background	5
5 Methodology	7
5.1 Desk-Based Assessment	7
5.2 Walkover Survey	7
6 Results	8
6.1 Desk-Based Assessment	8
6.1.1 Cartographic Sources	9
6.1.2 Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER)	9
6.2 Walkover Survey Results	10
6.2.1 Prehistoric Period	10
6.2.2 Historic Period	10
7 Discussion	13
8 Recommendations	13
9 References	14
10 Web Based Sources	14
Appendix 1 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites	15
Appendix 2 Index of Photographs	16

LIST OF FIGURES

1 - Site Location Maps	4
2 - Plan showing the proposed developments focused on Craig Morile	
3 - Distribution of archaeological sites	

LIST OF PLATES

Cover – View over hut circle site 3 to River Findhorn	
1 - The hut circle Site 3 looking E	8
2 - Site 1 looking E showing the central depression in the mound	11
3 - The central depression in the mound looking E	11

TOMATIN WATER TREATMENT WORKS AND ASSOCIATED UPGRADES Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Walkover Survey Strathdearn, Inverness-shire

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out on the 21 February 2014 on behalf of Scottish Water Solutions in advance of new water treatment work upgrades at Tomatin, Strathdearn Inverness-shire. The work was undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any archaeology likely to be affected within the areas outlined for the proposed development works and in order to inform recommendations for the protection and management of any sites recovered. The survey recorded the site of a known hut circle and associated field system and identified one new archaeological site, which may comprise the degraded remains of a prehistoric cairn. Mitigation measures are proposed to safeguard the site during the establishment of the proposed works.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out in advance of ground works and the construction of a new water treatment works, access track and associated infrastructure (NGR NH 79844 27350 centred), in the Parish of Moy and Dalarossie, Inverness-shire (see Figure 1). The proposed developments lie within a wider area where archaeological sites have been recorded in the past.
- 1.2 The desk based assessment and walkover survey undertaken in advance of the proposed developments identified and recorded one new archaeological site and revisited and recorded a hut circle and associated field system (MHG2900) which lies in close proximity to the area of development. Full details of the sites can be found in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 and in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1 in this report.
- 1.3 The new archaeological site is located in close proximity to the route of the proposed access track to the new water tank and recommendations and mitigation measures are

Tomatin 14 – Archaeological Walkover Survey: Tomatin Water Treatment Work and Associated Upgrades, Strathdearn, Inverness-shire

set out in this report to safeguard the archaeological site during the development works (see Section 8).

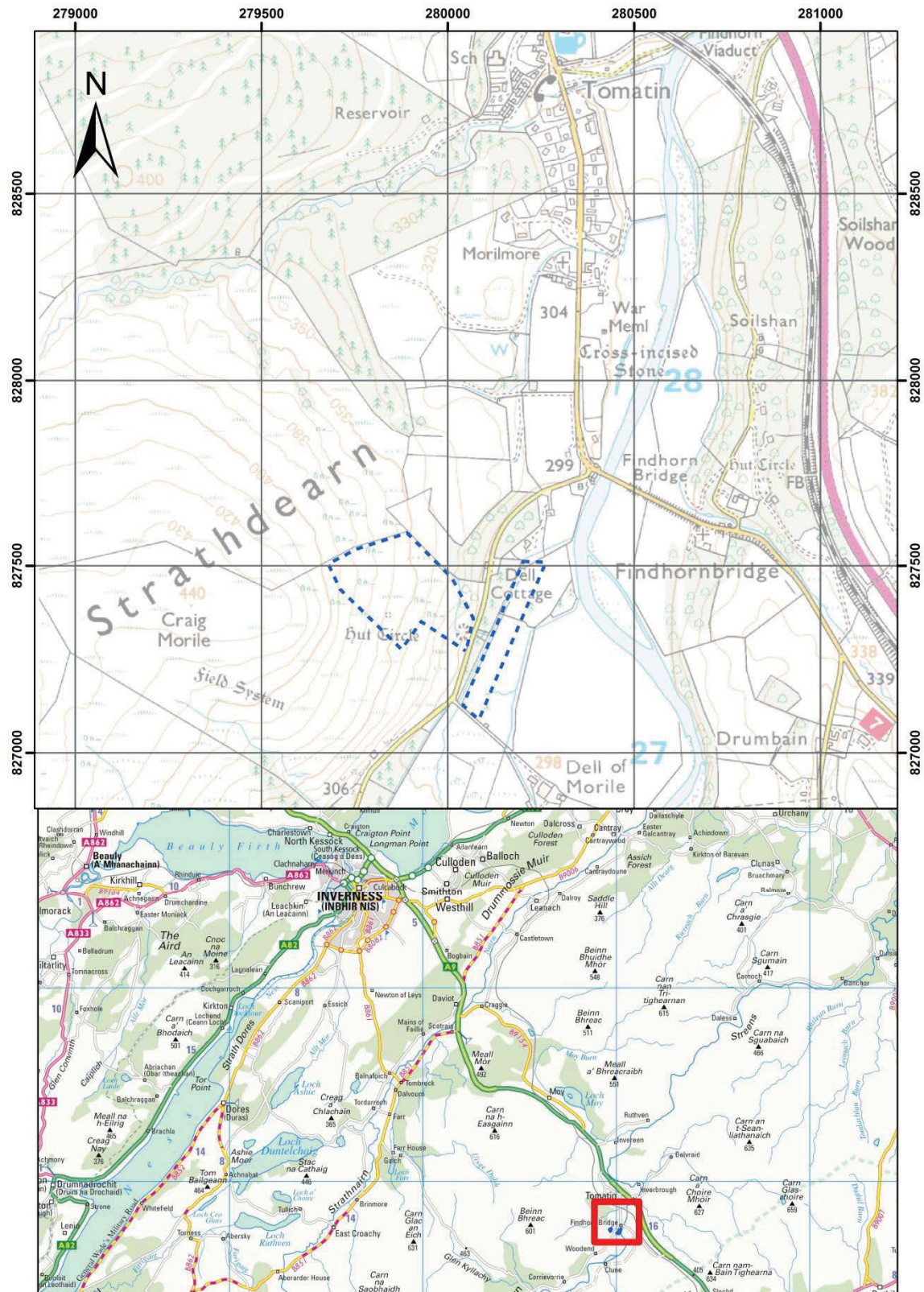


Figure 1 – Site Location Maps

2 Acknowledgements

- 2.1 We wish to thank Andrew Sunde of Scottish Water Solutions for commissioning the work and supplying base maps and associated information in advance of the survey. I would also like to thank Lord James Macpherson of Dell Farm House, Tomatin for allowing access to the survey area. Fieldwork was carried out by Steven Birch, while mapping is reproduced by permission of Pro-Map license #LIG1044. Base maps contain Ordnance Survey Data Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2013.

3 Site Location

- 3.1 The proposed developments for this archaeological desk based assessment and walkover survey are centred on Craig Morile (440m OD), which is located to the south of Tomatin in Strathdearn. The main development works including the water treatment works, boreholes and access tracks are located to the southeast of the road and northwest of Dell Farm, on the flood plain of the River Findhorn. The proposed access track to the main water tank (the existing water tank will be upgraded and enlarged here) climbs the east flank of Craig Morile, the track route using and upgrading an existing estate track where possible.
- 3.2 The geology in the area around the development site includes undifferentiated schists and gneiss of the Moine Series, while the area displays good examples of glacial outwash and river terraces relating to the melting of the Late Devensian ice-sheet. Surface vegetation includes areas of rough grazing and heather moorland, and within the survey area also includes extensive stands of juniper scrub – especially on the flanks of Craig Morile where drier areas of ground exist. Some of the ground is well-drained and improved areas appear to have relatively good quality, although thin, soils. Springs issue from the ground on the upper slopes of Craig Morile, which give rise to locally wet and boggy areas covered with rushes.
- 3.3 There are extensive views from the upper slopes of Craig Morile over the Findhorn flood plain, especially in an arc from the north, through east, to the southeast. Indeed, it is the higher, well-drained terraces along Strathdearn that appear to have encouraged settlement, especially throughout the prehistoric period.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The proposed developments at Craig Morile are located within an area where a significant number of archaeological sites have been recorded in the past. Previous archaeological evaluations conducted in the area include a walkover survey in advance of a woodland planting scheme (Dagg, 2009 - see EHG3192). This survey recovered sites that had previously been identified and recorded by the Ordnance Survey in 1972. In particular, the Ordnance Survey had focused on the upland prehistoric settlement in Strathdearn that includes numerous prehistoric hut circle settlements and their associated field systems and cairns, some of which were most likely funerary in function.

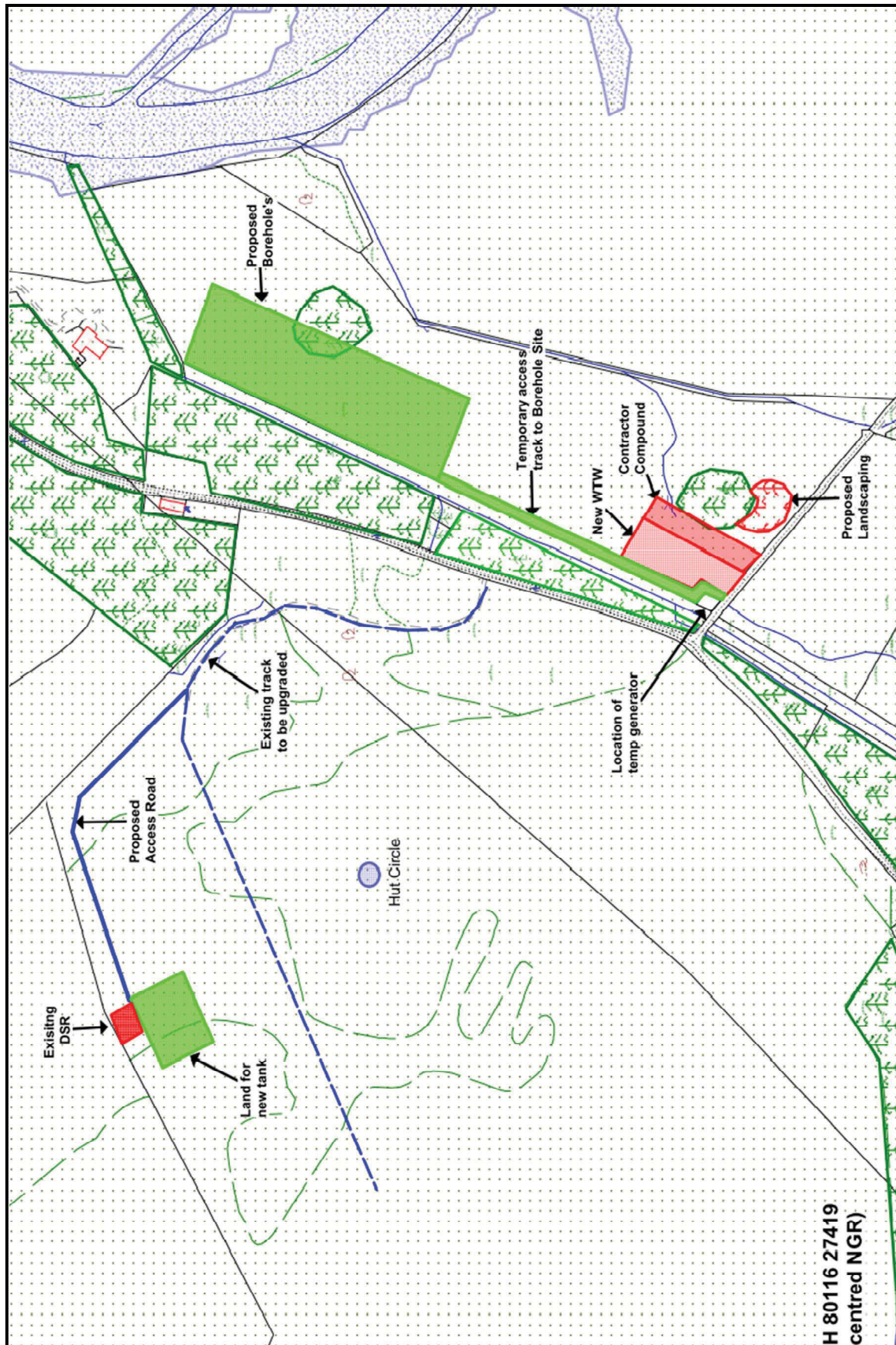


Figure 2 – Plan showing the proposed developments focused on Craig Morile

- 4.2 In close proximity to the area of the development, at least two prehistoric hut circles have been previously recorded (MHG2900), along with their associated clearance cairns relating to field systems. Potentially contemporary cairns and field systems have been recorded in the surrounding landscape on Craig Morile (MHG53421) and (MHG2901), while another hut circle and clearance cairns have been identified on the northeast flanks of the hill (MHG2897). To the southwest of Craig Morile, on the southeast flanks of Tom na Moine (478m OD), is a group of three well-preserved hut circles, their associated field systems and clearance cairns, and a kerb cairn (MHG2899, MHG43665, MHG43666 and MHG51052).
- 4.5 Features recorded in the area relating to historic settlement include a cruck-framed cottage at Morilemor Farm (MHG16115), a farmstead (MHG53425), a possible horizontal mill (MHG53423), a former track (MHG53422) and drystone dykes (MHG53424 and MHG53426).

5 Methodology

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

5.1 Desk Based Assessment

- 5.1.1 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 (see Section 6.1.2).
- 5.1.1 A search was made of all relevant records from the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS – *Canmore*) and the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER). Online aerial photographs were also checked for any relevant site information where possible, while cartographic and other written records were also assessed for information relating to the area proposed for survey.

5.2 Walkover Survey

- 5.2.1 The areas proposed for development with relation to the water treatment works, upgrading of the main water tank and access road, were walked over and surveyed on the 21 February 2014. The weather conditions for the survey were varied, but generally included dry and sunny weather with light rain showers, and strong winds. Visibility was excellent and the conditions on the ground for the walkover survey were generally very good, especially within well-drained areas of ground. The stands of juniper scrub were generally impenetrable.
- 5.2.2 Archaeological sites were recorded individually including using high-resolution digital photography where possible and the individual site locations were plotted using DGPS technology and Trimble Business Centre software on a handheld Windows Mobile-based rover. General accuracy was in the region of 0.05 metres.

- 5.2.3 Details relating to the individual recovered sites and monuments can be found in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1.
- 5.2.4 Survey and recording methods from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct*.



Plate 1 – The hut circle Site 3 looking E with a clearance cairn in the foreground and in the distance to the left in the image

6 Results

The following sections present the results of the desk-based assessment and walkover survey.

6.1 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. This assessment was restricted to the landscape immediately surrounding the areas designated for development.

6.1.1 Cartographic Sources

Mapping held at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh was checked on-line, where a check of military maps and the Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition map sheets failed to produce any evidence for sites or monuments within the survey area.

6.1.2 Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER)

A full search of the Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record produced the following sites and monuments within the landscape in close proximity to the proposed development works and access track:

MHG2900 NH 79844 27350 Craig Morile Hut Circle

Set into an E-facing slope of Craig Morile is an oval stone-walled hut measuring 12.5m E-W by 10.5m transversely between the centres of a wall spread to about 3.0m all round. The ill-defined entrance is in the E. Four outer facing stones are visible in the S and one just to the N of the entrance. The hut is separated from NH 72NE 5 by a boggy rivulet. There are several clearance heaps in the immediate vicinity probably from contemporary cultivation plots.

Forty five metres to the N is a platform about 14.0m diameter bounded in the SE arc by a stony build up, uncertainly a denuded hut or part of a cultivation plot. Visited by OS (I S S) 14 February 1972.

This site was visited during a walkover survey in August 2009 and found to be as described. Four clearance piles were observed to the north of the hut circle, visible as spread, moss-covered stones. The platform described above was noted to the north at NH 79840 27418 and a third was noted to the south at NH 79834 27257, visible as a level platform but with no banking or set stones.

MHG53426 NH 79887 27760 Allt Neacrath Drystone Dyke

A walkover survey in August 2009 identified a low drystone dyke running immediately west of the present boundary fence. The dyke is broad and noticeably battered; a style which suggests an early 19th century date. This type of dyke probably represents early improvements when the present field boundaries were laid out.

MHG2901 NH 79480 27290 Craig Morile Field Systems

Centred at NH 7948 2723 at about 1300ft OD on the S-facing slopes of Craig Morile is a field system marked by stone clearance heaps and occasional lynchets with fields varying between 30.0m x 20.0m and 20.0m x 10.0m. There are no signs of hut circles. Visited by OS (I S S) 14 February 1972.

This site was visited during a walkover survey in August 2009 and found to be as described. The field clearance piles are located between the 420m and 430m contours, at the change in vegetation from grass cover to heather, and generally stand out as low

grassy mounds within the heather. The furthest west clearance pile was noted at NH 79423 27284 and the furthest east at NH 79560 27313. The lynchets marking field boundaries are within the grass-covered lower area.

MHG53421 NH 79219 27369 Craig Morile Clearance Cairns

A group of three definite and two possible field clearance piles were noted during a walkover survey in August 2009. The features lie to the west of the high point of Craig Morile, partly within a strip of muirburn. No field boundaries were noted.

MHG55427 NH 802 269 Dell Farm Shinty Field

There were two shinty pitches in Strathdearn: one at Dell and reputedly one beside Dalarossie Church. Ian MacDonald, whose parents had Dell Farm, remembers going to watch matches there as a boy (information from Betty Watson).

6.2 Walkover Survey

The walkover survey revealed one new archaeological site, the location of a stray flint find spot, and the hut circle site (MHG2900) was revisited and recorded. The Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites (see Appendix 1) provides details of the individual sites recovered during the survey.

6.2.1 Prehistoric Period

6.2.1.1 The desk based assessment of the area surrounding the proposed developments displayed a wide range of prehistoric sites including hut circles and their associated clearance cairns/field systems, and funerary cairns – most likely relating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods.

6.2.1.2 The new archaeological site (Site 1) found within the area of the walkover survey may comprise the denuded remains of a prehistoric cairn. Little stone could be detected in the monument, but its shape and the central depression indicate that it may have been a small kerb cairn with a central cist. The stray flint find (Site 5), located on the surface of the current track to the northeast of hut circle site MHG2900, may relate to the prehistoric activity taking place on Crag Morile during the Bronze Age. No other finds were detected with the flint artefact, although flecks of charcoal were identified in the associated disturbed soil horizon. A survey of the hut circles (Sites 4 and 5) and their associated field system (see Site 2 and MHG2900) identified additional stone clearance cairns.

6.2.2 Historic Period

6.2.2.1 No new sites were identified during the walkover survey relating to settlement during the Historic Period.



Plate 2 – Site 1 looking E showing the central depression in the mound



Plate 3 – The central depression in the mound looking E

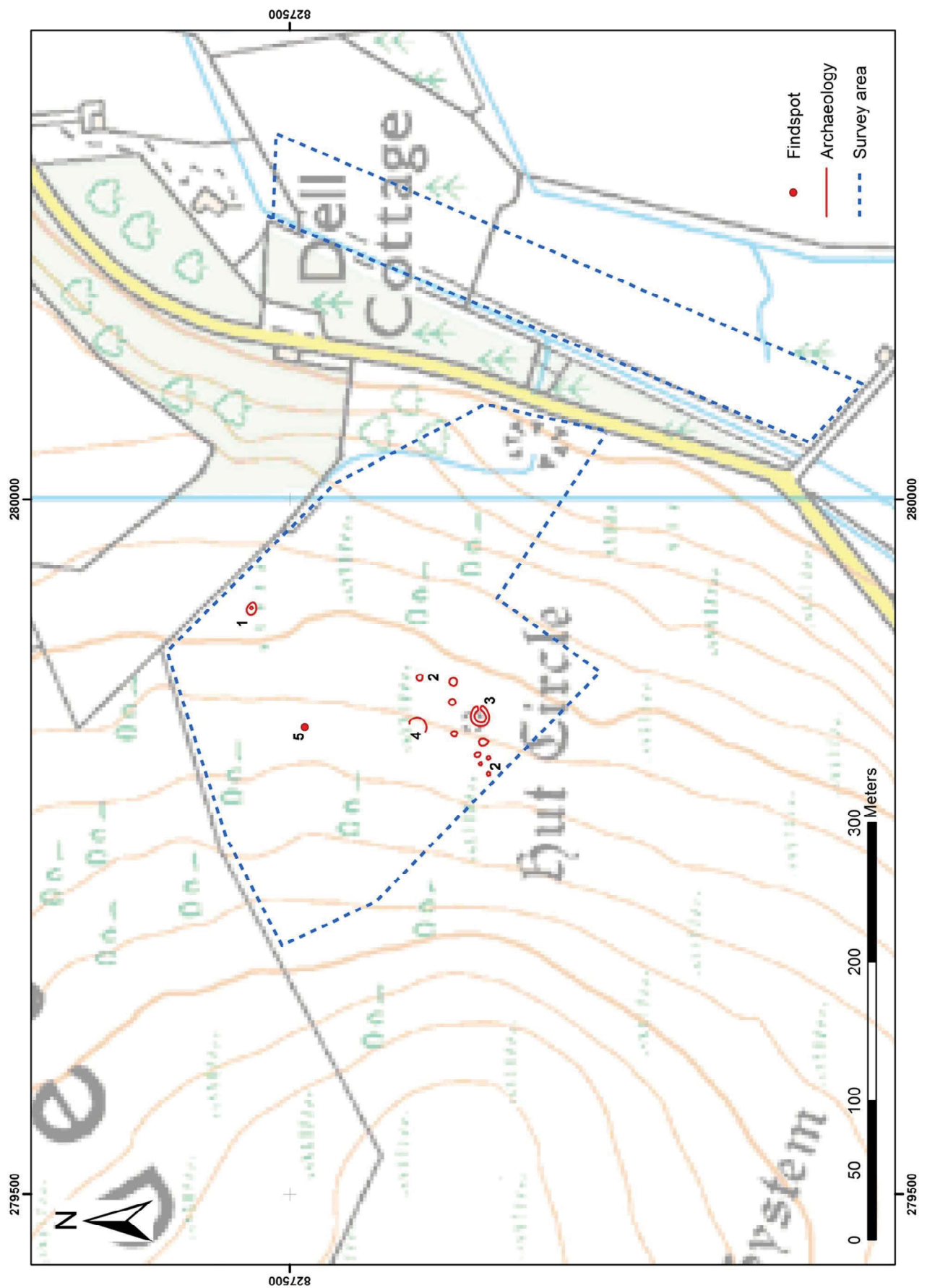


Figure 3 – Distribution of archaeological sites

7 Discussion

- 7.1 The archaeological desk-based assessment in relation to the proposed development works for the water treatment plant, boreholes, main water tank and access track, indicated the potential for upland prehistoric settlement on Craig Morile. This takes the form of hut circles and their associated clearance cairns and field systems.
- 7.2 A rapid walkover survey of the landscape in advance of the proposed development works identified one new archaeological site (Site 1), a possible prehistoric cairn, along with a stray flint find (Site 5). Several new clearance cairns were also added to the archaeological record in relation to the hut circle site MHG2900 (Sites 2, 3 and 4).
- 7.8 Recommendations for mitigation and for preserving the recovered archaeological sites and monuments are included below in Section 8.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 A buffer zone of at least 20 metres should be retained around the remains of the possible prehistoric cairn (Site 1). The new proposed access road will pass to the east and northeast of the site and with this in mind the site should be temporarily marked off with fencing to protect it from the development works. If the access road has to pass within the recommended buffer zone, then a trial evaluation should take place on Site 1 including the excavation of two slot trenches. This should allow the archaeologist to define the site and provide evidence relating to the sites original function. The results of this evaluation would then allow further recommendations to be made with regards to the routing of the new access track. This will ultimately depend on whether the site proves to be the remains of a prehistoric monument, or a site type relating to later activity on the slopes of Craig Morile.
- 8.2 Access tracks for vehicles associated with the proposed developments should respect the archaeological sites mentioned above.
- 8.3 There is a possibility that archaeological remains may still be preserved below the areas covered by peat and below ground-level in general, and this should be taken into consideration when excavation of the access track is taking place. With regards to potential buried archaeological deposits, a detailed survey of the cut sections in the ground surface relating to the current access track on Craig Morile was carried out during the walkover survey. No buried archaeological horizons, deposits or small finds were identified during this exercise (with the exception of the one flint object – see Site 5). Therefore, it is recommended that no formal watching brief is required during the cutting of the new section of the access track to the main water tank, where it deviates away from the current track on the hillside.

9 References

Dagg, C. 2009 Kyllachy Woodlands Scheme 1: Craig Morile, Strathdearn, Inverness-shire – Archaeological Evaluation. Unpublished Grey Literature Report.

Highland Council 2001. The Highland Structure Plan: Section 2.15, Built and Cultural Heritage.

Highland Council Historic Environment Team Development Guidance
[Http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/developmentguidance.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/developmentguidance.htm).

Highland Council Historic Environment Team - Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER).
[Http://her.highland.gov.uk](http://her.highland.gov.uk)

ICOMOS: The Burra Charter - [Http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html](http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html).

IfA 2008 By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists: Code of Conduct: Reading, IFA.

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). April 2004. *Survey and Recording Policy*

The Scottish Government 2010. Scottish Planning Policy
[Http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf)

10 Web-Based Sources

British Geological Survey – <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>

Gazetteer for Scotland – <http://www.scottish-places.info>

National Map Library of Scotland – <http://maps.nls.uk>

APPENDIX 1 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

Site No.	Site type	Site name	Description	Alignme nt	Condition	Period	Easting	Northing	Ht OD (m)	Photo No.
1	Green Mound/Possible Cairn	Creag Morile	A grass and heather-covered mound measures 8.5m NW-SE by 7.2m NE-SW and stands up to 0.8m high. There is a central hollow within the top of the mound measuring 1.5m in diameter. Some stone detected within the central hollow and the back of the mound blends into the hill slope to the W.	NW-SE	Very degraded	Prehistoric?	279920	827531	347	1, 2, 3
2	Clearance Cairn	Creag Morile	There are several clearance heaps in the immediate vicinity of the hut circle that are from potential contemporary cultivation plots.	-	Very degraded	Prehistoric	279813	827357	357	4, 5
3	Hut Circle	Creag Morile	Set into E-facing slope of Craig Morile is an oval stone-walled hut measuring 12.5m E-W by 10.5m transversely between the centres of a wall spread to about 3.0m all round. The ill-defined entrance is in the E. Four outer facing stones are visible in the S and one just to the N of the entrance.	E-W	Very degraded	Prehistoric	279846	827367	357	4, 5
4	Hut Circle	Creag Morile	Forty five metres to the N of Site 3 is a platform about 14.0m diameter bounded in the SE arc by a stony build up, uncertainly a denuded hut or part of a cultivation plot.	-	Very degraded	Prehistoric	279842	827406	361	-
5	Flint Find-spot	Creag Morile	Flint flake recovered from the surface of the existing track. Some flecks of charcoal also within the disturbed deposits.	-	-	Prehistoric	279836	827489	365	-

APPENDIX 2 Index of Photographs

Index of Photographs					
No.	Direction Facing	Site No.	Notes	Taken By	Date
1	E	1	View of possible cairn showing central hollow	SB	21.02.14
2	N	1	View of possible cairn looking uphill and showing mound to E	SB	21.02.14
3	E	1	Possible cairn showing central hollow in the monument	SB	21.02.14
4	E	2, 3	View over hut circle with River Findhorn beyond	SB	21.02.14
5	E	2, 3	Hut circle with clearance cairns in foreground and to left	SB	21.02.14