

# **Loganhead Forest**

Archaeological Assessment

23 February 2021



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# Loganhead Forest

## Archaeological Assessment

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# Executive summary

Mott MacDonald were commissioned to complete a targeted archaeological assessment of the Loganhead Forest, west of Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway in advance of felling of a larch plantation.

The National Record of the Historic Environment and the Dumfries and Galloway Historic Environment Record catalogue the presence of a farmstead within the vicinity of the felling works. Recorded during a survey by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland in 1981, the exact location of this heritage asset was unclear, and features may have existed on both sides of the Logan Water.

Through consultation with the Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer, the archaeological assessment targeted the site recorded in 1981, aiming to fully locate and record the extent of the remains, providing recommendations to preserve these during the felling works.

The archaeological assessment failed to reveal any surviving elements of the farmstead recorded in 1981, indicating that these would have been destroyed during the phases of planting and felling either side of the Logan Water. The remnants of a drystone structure were recorded within the Arresgill Plantation south of the Logan Water, but this does not match the 1981 description and appears to be later in date.

No specific recommendations are provided for the felling works within the Loganhead Forest north of the Logan Water. A toolbox talk should be provided to contractors outlining the potential presence of disrupted buried archaeological remains and how these should be recorded.

A record of the archaeological assessment has been deposited with the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) website hosted by the Archaeological Data Service (OASIS ID mottmacd2-415452).



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Mott MacDonald were commissioned to undertake a targeted archaeological assessment within the Loganhead Forest, west of Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway.

the client is looking to fell a plantation of larch and sitka spruce within Loganhead Forest following the issue of a Plant Health Notice by the Scottish Forestry (SF) Conservancy for the South of Scotland. These trees are located along the north and eastern bank of the Logan Water, as well as along the edges of three of tributaries which feed the Logan Water from the north, notably the White Cleuch. The assessment is required in advance of proposed felling works within the existing forest north of the Logan Water, and to confirm the presence or otherwise of a pre-recorded heritage asset in this location before these works proceed.

## 1.2 Scope

The scope of the Archaeological Assessment is tightly focussed and was established through formal consultation with the Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer<sup>1</sup> following submission of proposals by the client to SF.

Within the affected plantation, the area around the confluence of the White Cleuch and the Logan Water contains the record for a heritage asset, initially recorded by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) in 1981 (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The exact location of the site is unknown and it may be located within the area proposed for felling.

Should this heritage asset survive, extensive works proposed have the potential to physically impact upon any buried archaeological remains through the movement of machinery and the tree felling process. Access roads and other infrastructure will also be created, all of which have the potential to impact upon heritage assets.

The archaeological assessment involved a targeted site visit to the area in order to ascertain the survival or otherwise of the site; to map and record the full extent; and provide recommendations to preserve any archaeological features related to this asset which survive within the woodland.

## 1.3 Site

### 1.3.1 Location

Loganhead Forest is located within Dumfries and Galloway, west of Langholm. It is accessed by one of two minor roads running north from the B7068.

The site is located at the confluence of the White Cleuch where it runs into the Logan Water. The NRHE places this at NY30800 86200, but the description indicates the remains may have been located on the north bank of the Logan Water, to the south-east of the White Cleuch (c. NY 30875 86231).

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Nicholson *Pers comm.* 19/01/2021

### 1.3.2 Setting – the study area

The site is located within a series of extensive, conjoined coniferous forestry plantations.

South of the Logan Water the Arresgill Plantation is mature, densely packed coniferous woodland, with trees along the south edge of the Logan Water. On the north side of the Logan Water, the burn is lined with a band of mature larch of the Loganhead Forest, while the area beyond this contains younger conifers restocked in 2012.

South of the Logan Water a trackway follows the line of the burn, with blocks of trees on either side. North of the Logan Water the ground rises steeply, but is more open beyond the larch due to the younger age of the trees here.



**Photo 1.1: View south-east across the Logan Water to the Arresgill Plantation (right), with the Loganhead Forest to the left**

## 2 Policy and guidance

### 2.1 General

This assessment was prepared with reference to all relevant statutory and planning frameworks for the historic environment as well as the 'United Kingdom Forestry Standard' (UKFS) and other relevant guidance.

### 2.2 United Kingdom Forestry Standard

The UKFS<sup>2</sup> defines a series of established standards and guidelines to ensure that forests and woodlands in the United Kingdom are properly and sustainably planned and managed. Written and developed by the Forestry Commission (from 2019 Scottish Forestry), the UKFS addresses potential historic environment impacts by providing a series of requirements which must be adhered to when planning or maintaining woodland. These are complemented by a set of guidelines which set out how the requirements can be met and provide sources of practical guidance.

The UKFS identifies the following requirements and legislation which must legally be covered and adhered to by any forestry or woodland scheme:

**Table 2.1: UKFS Requirements as covered by existing legislation**

UKFS Reference	Level of Requirement	Relevant Legislation	Standard
1	Legal Requirement	The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Scheduled Monuments must not be damaged and consent must be obtained from the relevant historic environment authority for any works that have the potential to damage the monument.
2	Legal Requirement	Treasure Trove system. All treasure trove - which comprises any portable antiquity and not just those incorporating precious metals - are the property of the Crown at Scots common law.	The historic environment authority must be informed if objects are found that come within the scope of the law covering archaeological finds. Metal detectors must not be used where legally restricted or on a Scheduled Monument site.
3	Legal requirement	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997	Listed building consent must be obtained from the local authority or relevant historic environment authority to demolish a listed building or structure or any part of it, or to alter it in any way which would affect its character, inside or out.

In addition to those legal requirements covered by legislation outlined in Table 2.1, the UKFS also provides a list of required standards as justified by 'good forestry practice'. Some of these are outlined as follows:

<sup>2</sup> The Forestry Commission 2017, The UK Forestry Standard: The government's approach to sustainable forestry - [www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs)

**Table 2.2: Relevant UKFS requirements as defined by good forestry practice**

UKFS Reference	Level of Requirement	Standard
1	Good forestry practice requirement	Forests should be designed and managed to take account of the historical character and cultural values of the landscape.
2	Good forestry practice requirement	Forests should be designed and managed to take account of policies associated with historic landscapes, battlefield sites, historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes of historic interest.
3	Good forestry practice requirement	Steps should be taken to ensure that historic features, which may be adversely affected by forestry, are known and evaluated on an individual site basis, taking advice from the local historic environment services.

Source: United Kingdom Forestry Standard

The UKFS also provides a series of guidelines for the historic environment on how best to comply with the UKFS Requirements.

The client has adhered to the UKFS in preparing the felling work associated with the Loganhead Forest. Advice has been sought from the Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer and a survey was commissioned to assess the survival of heritage assets.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of the Archaeological Assessment is to ensure the site is not damaged by the proposed felling works within Loganhead Forest.

The Archaeological Assessment has two main objectives:

- Compile a record of the site in its present condition including its actual extent, allowing this to be updated in the HER; and
- Provide recommendations as to future management of the heritage asset.

The results of the Archaeological Assessment will feed into the plans for the felling of the larch plantation, allowing any heritage assets to be adequately protected during proposed work.

### 3.2 Consultation

The Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer responded to a formal consultation request from SF following the proposals to fell the larch:

*'get an archaeological contractor to walk over the area where the site was identified in 1981, to determine which features have survived the last round of forestry planting and the construction of forest roads, and to devise an appropriate buffer for any viable remaining archaeological features.'*

Mott MacDonald confirmed the proposed methodology with the Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer through a series of emails and phone calls.

### 3.3 Archaeological Assessment

The Archaeological Assessment is designed to be proportionate to the aims and objectives of the project.

Historical context to the site was provided through an assessment of the records held in the Dumfries and Galloway HER and through the NRHE as held by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Further evidence was provided by historic Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and aerial images.

The site was visited by an experienced archaeologist and the wider area assessed for physical evidence of archaeological survival. The site visit to Loganhead Forest was completed by Ross Cameron on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The weather conditions throughout the visit were overcast.

### 3.4 Assumptions and Limitations

This assessment accesses limited readily available sources to assess the survival of the site within Loganhead Forest. This report is not a comprehensive Desk-Based Assessment and as such, the level of research is not exhaustive, but is at an appropriate level to fulfil the scope of the project.

No detailed assessment designed to identify previously unrecorded heritage assets was completed. However, given the nature of the site and extent of forest cover, the potential for such assets surviving is considered unlikely.

## 4 Baseline

### 4.1 The site

The site was recorded in 1981 by the RCAHMS during a survey of the wider area for the Inventory of Dumfries and Galloway.

#### 4.1.1 NRHE Record

The NRHE records the site as a 'township' (ID 67643), classified as a 'medieval and later settlement'. The site is described as one platform building measuring 6.5m by 2.8m internally, with a scooped yard on the south-east side. To the south of this, two oval enclosures are recorded within stony banks and a potential second building measuring 7.8m by 2.9m.

The location of the site is given as a general NY 30800 86200, which places it on the south side of the Logan Water within the Arresgill Plantation. However, the limitations in plotting such assets in 1981 are acknowledged and the description from the RCAHMS places the platform building on the south-east side of the White Cleuch, which would be on the north side within Loganhead Forest. The enclosures are described as to the south of this, which may indicate they are on the south side of the Logan Water.

The RCAHMS description also says the site is partially planted.

#### 4.1.2 HER Entry

The HER entry provides no additional information, but interprets the location from the RCAHMS description as much wider, encompassing the area south-east of the White Cleuch, but also straddling the Logan Water to the south and west.

### 4.2 Mapping

Historic OS maps do not show any evidence for buildings or enclosures in this area. A road or track is recorded along the Logan Water, predominantly on the south side, but crossing to the north in a number of places through fords. The forestry track within the Arresgill Plantation follows this route for much of its length.

### 4.3 Planting

The RCAHMS description records the site as being partially planted in 1981.

On the north side of the Logan Water, the Loganhead Forest was planted in 1975, including both the larch proposed to be felled as part of the Plant Health Notice, and the area to the north which now contains younger conifers. The trees in this area were felled in 2011 and restocked in 2012.

It is unknown when the Arresgill Plantation south of the Logan Water was planted, but the National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP) holds images from 10<sup>th</sup> June 1988 which show the south bank of the Logan Water as unplanted.<sup>3</sup> There do not appear to be any clear heritage assets or elements associated with the site in these images, although the altitude and resolution of the images precludes detailed assessment.

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<sup>3</sup> www.ncap.org.uk – images 0102 and 0103 of ASS/62288 accessed 11/02/21

## 5 Assessment

### 5.1 The Site

The assessment failed to provide any evidence for the site on either side of the Logan Water.

#### 5.1.1 Loganhead Forest

In the Loganhead Forest on the north side of the Logan Water, specifically within the area south-east of the White Cleuch, the larch trees showed clear evidence of having been planted following deep ploughing. The trees are located in parallel lines on a series of ridges, with deep furrows in between (Photo 5.1).



**Photo 5.1: View south-east within the 1975 larch plantation of Loganhead Forest**

In areas around the White Cleuch, the larch are fairly spread out, while elsewhere the plantation is densely compact, with little opportunity for archaeological deposits to have survived (Photo 5.2).

There is a slight space between the 2012 restocked conifers and the mature larch, but this area shows disruption associated with the planting process including tracks and ruts, as well as the stumps of the felled 1975 trees (Photo 5.3).



**Photo 5.2: View south-east along the Logan Water, with the larch of the Loganhead Forest (left) and the Aresgill Plantation (right)**



**Photo 5.3: View north across the largest cleared area immediately south-east of the White Cleuch. Note the 1975 mature larch (left), 2011 young conifers (right) and the stumps of the felled 1975 trees (centre)**



## 5.2 Arresgill Plantation

The Arresgill Plantation comprises densely packed conifers and there is no evidence of archaeological features within the trees.

However, the area immediately south of where the White Cleuch meets the Logan Water contains a clearing where the modern forestry road deviates from the older track which hugs the Logan Water (Photo 5.4). This latter track has obviously been resurfaced and used for forestry, but it follows the line of a track or road shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of 1862.

The area between the two tracks shows evidence for excavation and drainage work, the former presumably to partially provide a firm base for the modern forestry road.



**Photo 5.4: View north across the clearing within the Arresgill Plantation where the modern road (left) deviates from the older track (right).**

At the north-west end of the clearing, elements of a drystone structure survive, partially within the coniferous plantation and partially overlain or destroyed by the bunding for the modern forest road to the south-east.

Located at NY 30809 86222, the structure is constructed from small to medium angular slabs, topped by a rough soldier course of medium sized rounded field stones to a full height of c.1.10m (Photo 5.5). It comprises a small compartment, aligned north-west to south-east and measuring 7m by c.2.2m and is open at south-east end.

The stub of curving wall abuts the south-west corner of the compartment, gently curving to south-west itself for c.3m (Photo 5.6) before burial under mound of earth for the road.



**Photo 5.5: View north-west over the drystone structure**



**Photo 5.6: Detailed view looking west of the drystone structure**

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

The archaeological assessment has shown that no evidence for the site recorded by the RCAHMS in 1981 survives. The location provided by the RCAHMS was unclear, but given they describe the site as partially planted in 1981, it seems likely that at least some of the remains were located on the north side of the Logan Water, to the south-east of the White Cleuch given that this was planted in 1975, while the Arresgill Plantation south of the Logan Water was planted post 1988.

However, north of the Logan Water no evidence for buildings or enclosures remains and it must be assumed that these features no longer exist had they ever been present.

Given that the RCAHMS say the site was partially planted, it can be assumed the enclosures and second building described as south of the first may have lain south of the Logan Water in what is now the Arresgill Plantation. The historic track in this area crosses and recrosses the Logan Water at a number of fords marked on the 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps, so this would not have proved any barrier to settlement. The Arresgill Plantation comprises densely packed conifers and will have destroyed any evidence for enclosures or buildings.

The drystone structure within the Arresgill Plantation had clearly been used for storage of materials by forestry workers. It has the appearance of remnants of a post improvement 19<sup>th</sup> century sheepfold, but does not appear on historic OS maps and is not readily visible on the NCAP images from 1988.

### 6.2 Recommended

No archaeological features were recorded within the Loganhead Forest and no specific mitigation measures are recommended during the felling of the larch trees.

#### 6.2.1 Toolbox Talk

It is recommended that prior to site works commencing, a toolbox talk be delivered to the appointed contractors. This will discuss specific historical and archaeological features identified by the RCAHMS in 1981 and potential for unrecorded archaeological features to survive during groundworks.

The toolbox talk will cover the need to report any potentially important archaeological features located during the felling works. Any archaeological objects which are noted or recovered by the contractor during site works must be reported to the client's Archaeological Consultant in the first instance and thereafter the Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Officer. This is in line with the UKFS Requirement 2 relating to 'Archaeological Finds'<sup>4</sup> and the Treasure Trove system in Scotland.

The provision of a toolbox talk will ensure that those working on the site are aware of the importance of the historic environment; encouraged to recognise archaeological features; and assist in the recording and preservation of these as recommended by UKFS Guideline 6.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> UKFS 2017 83

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 88

## 7 Bibliography

### 7.1 Aerial images

**Table 7.1: Aerial images consulted**

Frame Numbers	Sortie	Date	Platforms
0102	ASS/62288	10/06/1988	NCAP
0103	ASS/62288	10/06/1988	NCAP
-	-	-	www.google.com/maps
-	-	-	www.bing.com/maps

### 7.2 Bibliographic references

#### 7.2.1 Digital

<https://info.dumgal.gov.uk/mapviewers/Archaeology.aspx>: Dumfries and Galloway Historic Environment Record – accessed 11/02/2021

[www.canmore.org.uk](http://www.canmore.org.uk): National Record of the Historic Environment – accessed 11/02/2021

<http://maps.nls.uk/>: National Library of Scotland - accessed 11/02/2021

[www.ncap.org.uk](http://www.ncap.org.uk): National Collection of Aerial Photography – accessed 11/02/2021

#### 7.2.2 Documentary

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2019 Code of Conduct

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020 Standards and Guidance for Historic Desk-based Assessment

Forestry Commission Scotland 2016a Forests & historic environment: information and advice

Forestry Commission Scotland 2016b The provision of archaeological information and advice in Scotland to meet the UKFS – Guidance Note

The Forestry Commission 2017, The UK Forestry Standard: The government's approach to sustainable forestry

### 7.3 Cartographic references

**Table 7.2: Ordnance Survey maps consulted**

Date	Surveyed	Scale	Title
1862	1857	6 inches to 1 mile	Dumfriesshire Sheet XLV
1900	1898	6 inches to 1 mile	Dumfriesshire Sheet XLV.NW
1951	1949	6 inches to 1 mile	Dumfriesshire Sheet XLV.NW

Source: [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)

