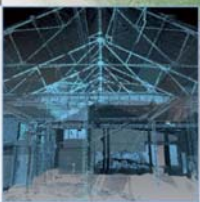


Creag Dhubh, Strachur, Argyll Archaeological Walkover Survey Report

AOC 70241
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Creag Dhubh, Strachur, Argyll

Archaeological Walkover Survey Report

On Behalf of:	Muirden Energy LLP
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NN 12581 03011
AOC Project No:	70241
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Abstract

This report details the results of an archaeological walkover survey undertaken over the area of a proposed wind farm at Creag Dhubh, Strachur, Argyll. The survey was required due to the location of the development site within an area considered to have the potential for unrecorded historic environment features to be present.

The walkover survey was undertaken on 6th-7th November 2017. Nine sites were identified: two possible structures, including a shieling and shooting butt, and areas of drainage works. There are expected to be no direct impacts to mitigate against for the proposed development.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological walkover survey was required on behalf of Muirden Energy LLP ahead of the construction of a proposed new wind farm at Creag Dhubh, Strachur, Argyll. The aim of the survey was to identify and assess the nature and extent of any upstanding archaeology likely to be directly affected by the proposed development and to inform decisions on any further fieldwork or mitigation.
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of Argyll and Bute Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS). The walkover survey was specified in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.
- 1.3 The survey was carried out on 6th-7th November 2017 and identified nine sites, including one stone-built shieling and two possible small structures thought to be a shieling and a shooting butt. The remaining sites consisted of low banks that appear to represent relatively recent drainage works.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The survey area is located on a southeast facing slope on the southeast side of Loch Fyne, just northeast of the village of Strachur. Centred on grid reference NN 12581 03011, it runs in a NE-SW direction between Hell's Glen to the northeast and Strachur to the southwest, centred (**Figure 1**). The terrain consists mainly of conifer woodland on a very steep slope with a large number of small watercourses. The upper slopes are open moorland and in most parts very boggy (**Plates 1 and 2**).
- 2.2 The proposed development is located in a wider area that is rich in archaeological remains from prehistory through to more recent times. To the northeast of the survey area, on the south side of the Allt Dline Bhig, there is a ruined farmstead and three cupmarked rocks at Gleann Beag (WoSAS Pins 1697, 1700 and 1701). Beyond the periphery of the survey area are several structures and shieling huts at Coire No (WoSAS Pin 43810), Laglinarten/Allt Cuil a'Chaorainn/Tom Breac (WoSAS Pin 22271) and Allt Na Criche/Allt Na Dunaiche (WoSAS Pin 50743). A bloomer mound is recorded at Eas Dubh (WoSAS Pin 1723).

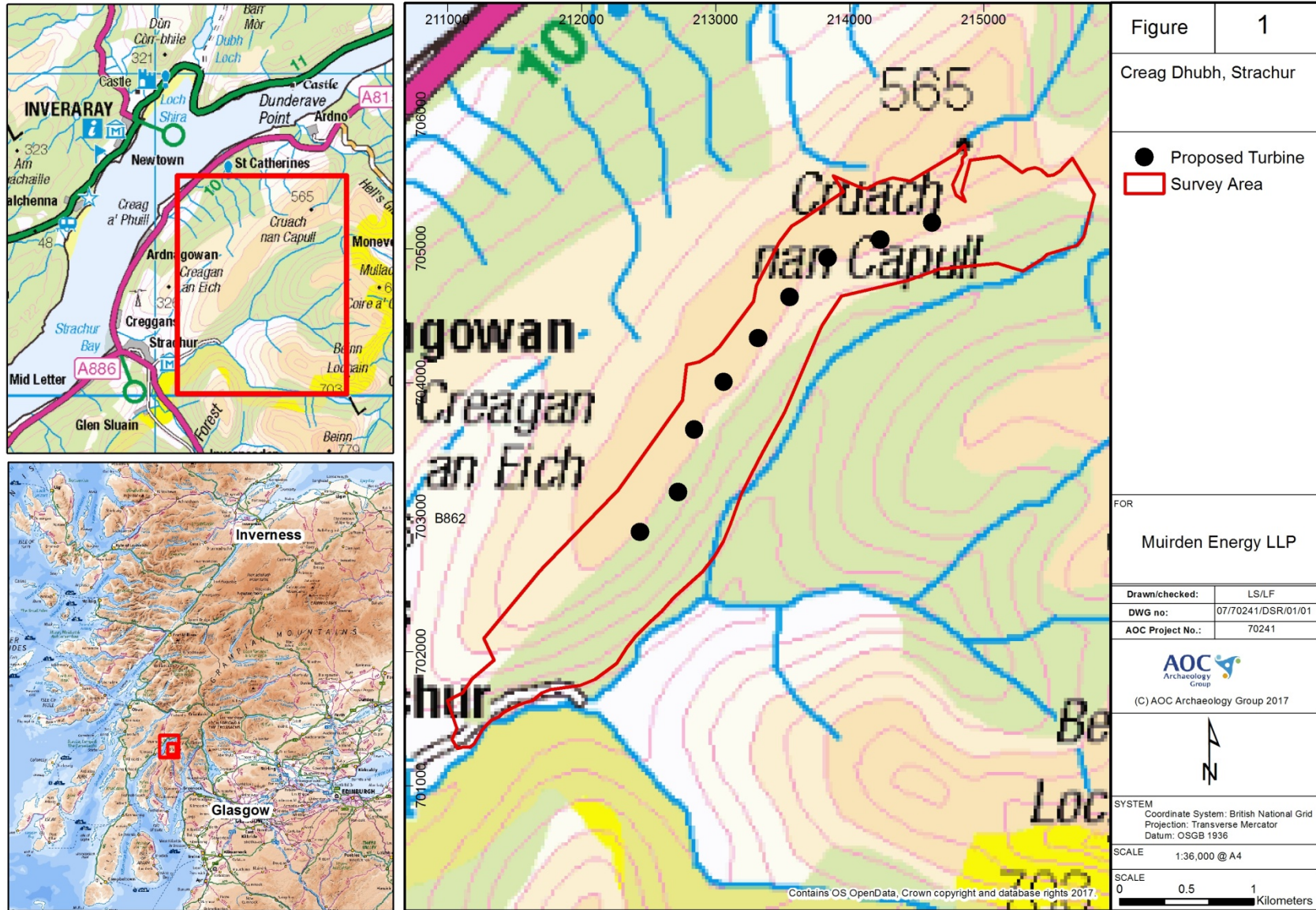


Figure 1: Site location map



Plate 1: Looking northeast over the survey area



Plate 2: The steep forested terrain that covered most of the survey area

3.0 Desk-based Assessment

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 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. A full check of all available historical and archaeological records, aerial photographs and historical maps was conducted using the WoSAS Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), Ordnance Survey Name Books, Historic Environment Scotland's databases, the National Library of Scotland, statistical accounts and other available records, literary sources or online resources about the site.

3.2 Cartographic Sources

3.2.1 Historical maps were consulted at the National Library of Scotland (NLS 2017) online.

**a) William Roy Military Survey of Scotland
Highlands, 1747-52**

Roy's map shows settlement and cultivation at *Cuneg* and *Socherachmor*, which corresponds to those shown at Upper and Lower Caoinaig and Upper Succoth.

**b) Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map
Argyllshire, Sheet CXLI (includes: Strachur)
Survey Date: 1866 Publication Date: 1870**

Starting at the northeast end of the survey area, marked as *Bealach an Tom Fhionn* on this map and *Bealach an Tuim Fhinn* on the modern OS map, the terrain is shown as heathland with several watercourses running into the River Cur that flows south-westwards towards Strachur. This continues through the survey area. In the vicinity of a series of waterfalls, two square unroofed structures are marked as *Sheepfold* to the north-northwest on the northern bank of a stream. This appears to be within the survey area. Where Upper Succoth is shown on the modern OS map, this map shows a sheepfold and rectangular enclosure. Ruins are depicted at *Upper Caoinaig*, which are beyond the present survey area. A sheepfold and unroofed buildings are also depicted at *Lower Caoinaig*, which are again outwith the survey area.

**c) Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map
Argyll and Bute Sheet CXLI.NE (includes: Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich; Strachur)
Publication Date: 1900 Date revised: 1897**

The second edition map is relatively unchanged. The two square unroofed structures by the stream side are still shown, but no longer labelled *Sheepfold*. A small number of dykes or fences have been added.

**d) Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile map
Argyll and Bute Sheet CXLI.NE (includes: Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich; Strachur)
Publication Date: 1925 Date revised: 1914**

There are no changes to this map other than some of the fences being extended.

3.3 Aerial Imagery

3.3.1 Satellite imagery was consulted on Bing Maps online (2017). There were no obvious sites visible.

3.4 Historic Environment Sources

3.4.1 A full search of the WoSAS Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), via Canmore, was carried out and the following site was found in the development area.

WoSAS Pin: 43806 NN 13550 04000 Creag Dhubh, River Cur
NMRS No. NN10SW13

What may be a single unroofed shieling hut and one small structure annotated 'sheepfold' are depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1870, sheet cxli), but they are not shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1976).

4.0 Survey Methodology

4.1 The archaeological survey was conducted by two archaeologists. The area of the proposed development was systematically walked and sites were recorded using written descriptions and high resolution digital photography, as well as their locations being recorded using an Archer Field PC unit capable of sub-metre accuracy. The detailed site gazetteer and photograph register are found in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Survey and recording methods recommended by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (2004) were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct* (2014).

5.0 Survey Results

5.1 The walkover survey was carried out on 6th-7th November 2017, with the northeast part of the survey area being walked on the 6th November and the remainder of the area being walked on the 7th. Conditions on the first day of survey were poor with high winds and thick low cloud but visibility improved on the second day. The terrain was on the whole very steep and very boggy, with a large part of the survey area being covered by intensively planted commercial forestry. Due to the densely planted, ploughed ground conditions in the woodland, the surveyors targeted areas of ground with archaeological potential.

5.2 Nine sites (**Figures 2 and 3**) were identified, the majority of which appear to represent relatively recent drainage works. Sites 2 and 4-7 (**Plate 3**) all comprised a turf bank, varying from 1-2m wide and 0.2-0.5m high, each with a dug channel running parallel, approximately 0.5m wide and 0.5m deep. In some cases the stream flowing through the channel had caused it to become wider and deeper. In each case, the channel was very straight, with straight-cut sides, suggesting it may have been machine-dug. The turf banks were interpreted as upcast from the digging of these channels. Most of these channels run downslope into the thick trees suggesting that they were dug before plantation of the forest.

- 5.3 A possible shooting butt (site 1) (**Plate 4**) was recorded near site 2. It consisted of a horseshoe shaped hollow cut into the natural turf slope, measuring 5m by 2m internally and up to 0.8m deep. No other evidence of shooting butts was seen during the survey and it is possible that this feature was a natural turf hollow
- 5.4 An isolated turf bank (site 3) was recorded in the open moorland above the trees. It was an L-shaped bank spread to 1.5m wide and up to 0.2m high, measuring 5m by 4m long. It was very tentatively interpreted as part of a much degraded shieling, but, due to the boggy and hummocky ground conditions in the area, it may just be a natural turf bank.
- 5.5 The location of the previously recorded shieling and sheepfold (WoSAS Pin 43806) was visited during the survey. It is situated below the existing forestry track within an area of intensively planted conifers. The remains of a stone structure were found not far from the grid reference provided on the HER but the thick tree coverage prevented a more accurate reference from being obtained. The structure (site 8) measured 3.5m by 2m internally and had coursed stone walls 0.6-0.7m wide and up to 0.8m high. A few metres to the southeast of this structure was a circular hollow (site 9), 2.5-3m in diameter, with an earthen bank around the exterior spread to 2m wide. A few large stones were visible in the earthen bank. The function of this feature was not clear but it may be associated with the shieling structure. No evidence of a sheepfold or other structures was seen in the immediate vicinity.
- 5.6 The remains of two other settlements are marked on current OS mapping beside the river at Upper and Lower Caoinaig. These were outside the survey area and were not visited, but the ground between them and the forestry track was observed and seen to be an area of previously felled forestry plantation. No sign of any further post-medieval settlement features was seen in this area.



Plate 3: Site 4, a turf bank and dug channel for drainage, looking south



Plate 4: Site 1, a possible shooting butt, looking northwest



Plate 5: Site 8, stone-built shieling, looking northeast



Plate 6: Site 9, circular hollow, looking southeast

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 6.1 The walkover survey at Creag Dhubh identified relatively poor conditions for archaeological remains to be found. Most of the area consists of very steep slopes planted with thick forestry and very boggy ground conditions. The only feature identified within an area of forestry was the remains of a stone-built shieling that had been recorded on historical mapping. This was very degraded and had been planted over by trees. Remnants of a second possible structure were located nearby.
- 6.2 The majority of the other features identified comprised a series of dug channels and turf banks, which probably represent drainage works in the area, possibly carried out prior to plantation of the forest.
- 6.3 Based on the mapping provided by the client, there are no requirements for mitigation. However, if the proposals change, it is recommended that a 10m buffer zone be given to the shieling site during any development works.

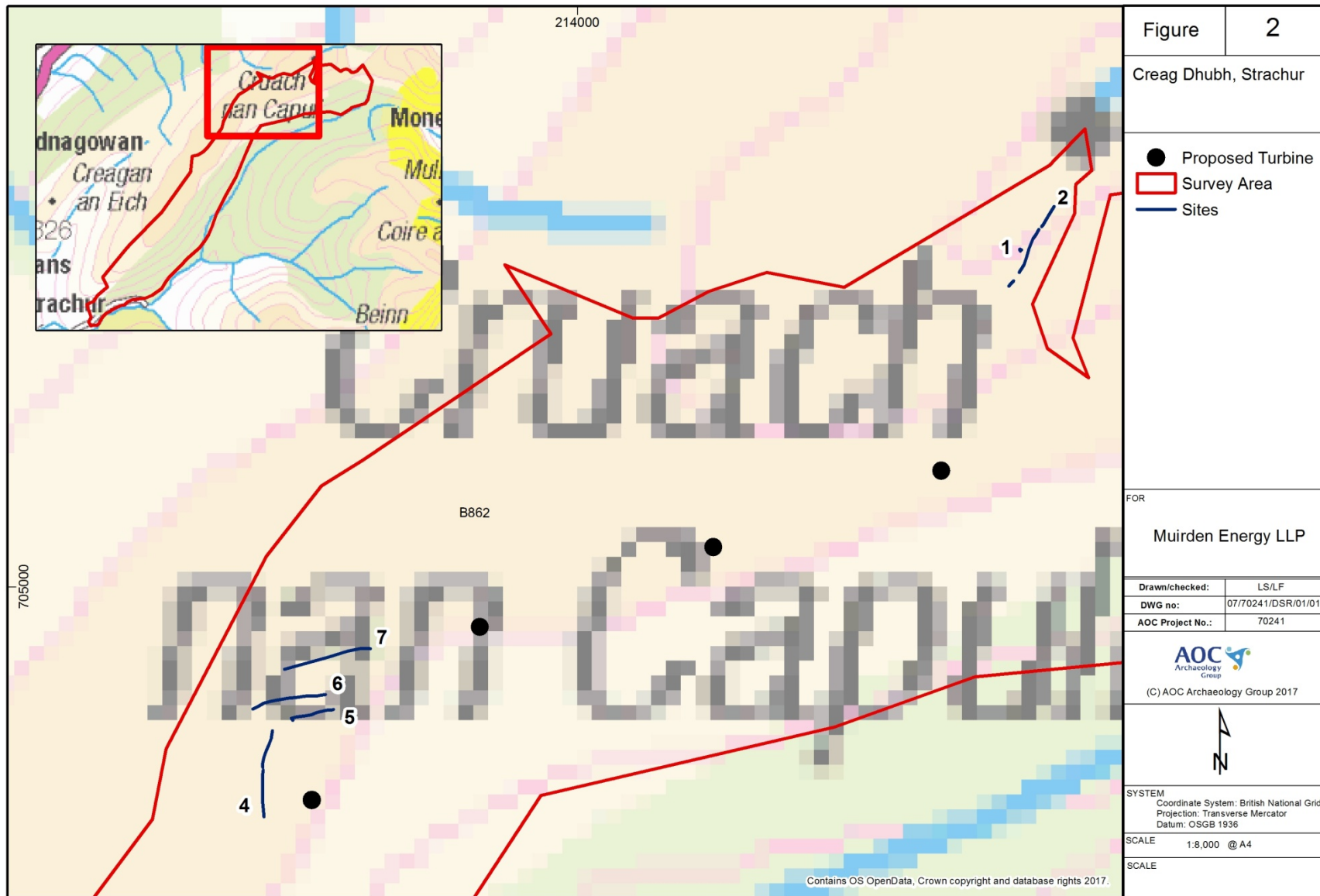


Figure 2: Location of sites 1-2 and 4-7

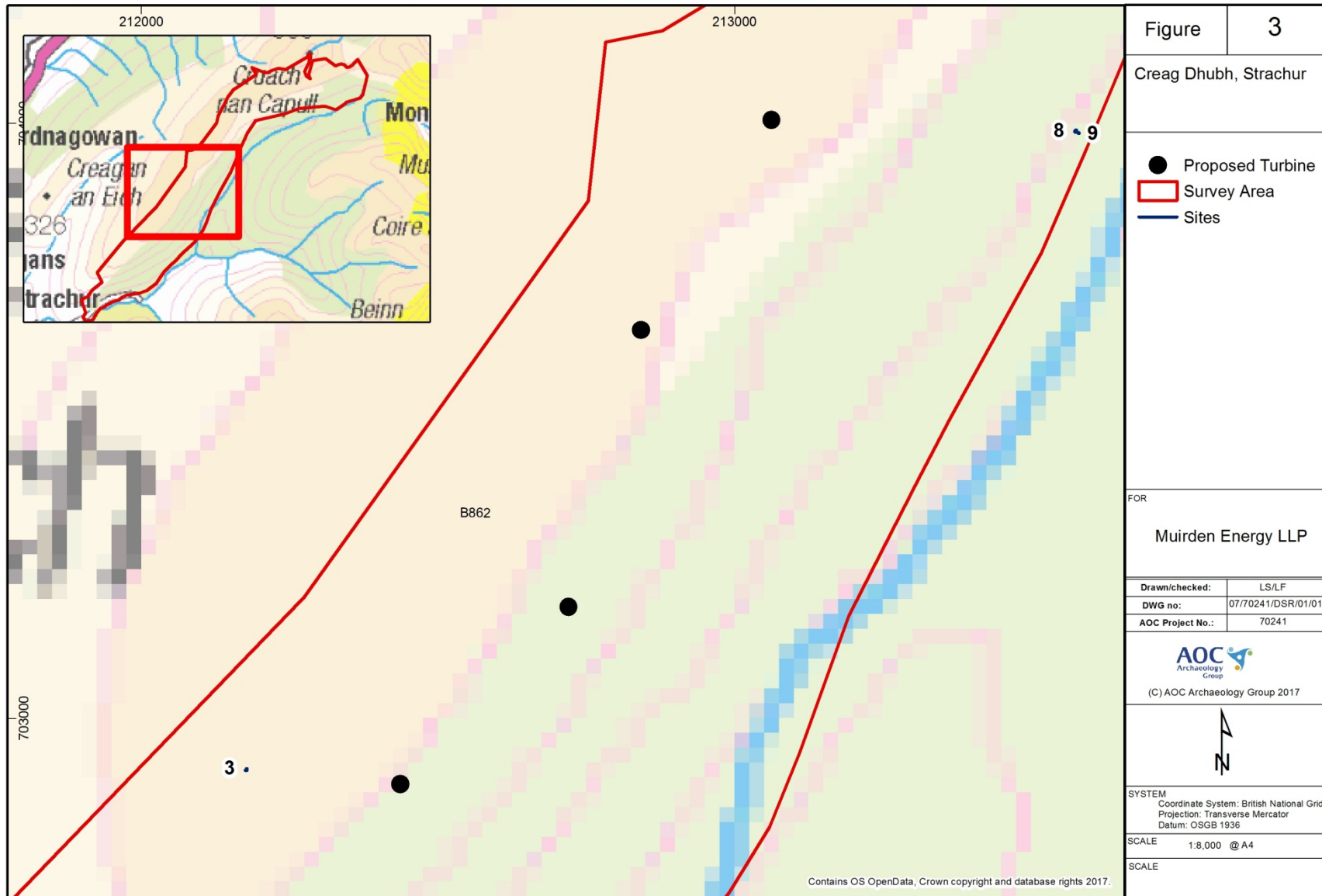


Figure 3: Location of sites 3 and 8-9

7.0 References

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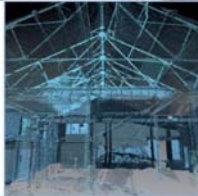
Appendix 1 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

SITE NO	SITE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT	CONDITION	PERIOD	EASTING	NORTHING
1	Shooting Butt	Possible shooting butt. Horseshoe shaped hollow cut into the turf slope measuring 5m NW-SE by 2m internally with an opening at the SE. Up to 0.8m deep.	NW-SE	Degraded	Unknown	214747	705568
2	Bank	Turf bank under moss and grass running NE-SW, spread to 1m wide and up to 0.2m high. A narrow dug channel runs parallel on its NW side measuring 0.5m wide and up to 0.5m deep.	NE-SW	Very degraded	Unknown	214795	705624
3	Bank	L-shaped turf bank under heather and moss, measuring 5m ENE-WSW by 4m. Bank spread to 1.5m wide and up to 0.2m high. Could be a very degraded possible shieling but may just be a natural turf bank.	ENE-WSW	Very degraded	Unknown	212179	702912
4	Bank	Turf bank under moss and grass running N-S. Very degraded but spread to 1m wide and up to 0.5m high. A few stones visible. Ditch/channel running parallel on the W side measuring 0.5m wide and 0.3-0.4m deep. Bank and ditch continue S into thick forestry.	N-S	Very degraded	Unknown	213476	704727
5	Bank	Turf bank under moss and grass running E-W. Very degraded but spread to 2m wide and up to 0.5m high. Ditch/channel runs parallel on the N side measuring 0.5m wide and up to 0.5m deep.	E-W	Very degraded	Unknown	213551	704784
6	Bank	Turf bank under moss and grass running E-W. Very degraded but spread to 2m wide and up to 0.5m high. Ditch/channel runs parallel on the N side measuring 0.8m wide and up to 0.6m deep. Stream running within channel, which has possibly widened it at some points.	E-W	Very degraded	Unknown	213512	704812
7	Bank	Turf bank under moss and grass running E-W. Very degraded but spread to 2m wide and up to 0.5m high. Ditch/channel runs parallel on the N side measuring 0.8m wide and up to 0.6m deep. Stream running within channel, which has possibly widened it at some points.	E-W	Very degraded	Unknown	213615	704892

SITE NO	SITE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT	CONDITION	PERIOD	EASTING	NORTHING
8	Shieling	Stone built shieling structure under commercial forestry plantation, measuring 3.5m NE-SW by 2m internally. Coursed stone walls up to 0.8m high and 0.6-0.7m wide. Stones are varied in size and shape but mostly large and natural shapes. Very degraded with no obvious entrance but there are two gaps in the stonework on the SE side. WoSAS Pin: 43806	NE-SW	Very degraded	Post-medieval	213575	703985
9	Hollow	Circular hollow measuring 2.5-3m diameter internally with earthen banks around the exterior spread to 2m wide. Three large stones are visible in the bank on the NW side. The hollow is water-filled and has been planted over by commercial forestry.	-	Very degraded	Unknown	213580	703983

Appendix 2 List of Site Photographs

Photo No.	Site No.	Description	Direction Facing	Date
1	-	Forestry track	NE	06/11/2017
2	-	Survey area	SW	06/11/2017
3	-	Survey area	NE	06/11/2017
4	Site 1	Possible shooting butt	NW	06/11/2017
5	Site 2	Turf bank and ditch channel	SW	06/11/2017
6	Site 2	Turf bank and ditch channel	SW	06/11/2017
7	-	Survey area (NE end)	E	06/11/2017
8	-	Survey area	SW	06/11/2017
9	-	Survey area (SW end)	S	07/11/2017
10	-	Survey area (SW end) showing steep slope	SSE	07/11/2017
11	-	Survey area (SW end) showing steep slope	SSE	07/11/2017
12	-	View over Loch Fyne	SW	07/11/2017
13	Site 3	L-shaped turf bank	ENE	07/11/2017
14	-	Survey area	NE	07/11/2017
15	Site 4	Turf bank and ditch channel	N	07/11/2017
16	Site 4	Turf bank and ditch channel	S	07/11/2017
17	Site 5	Turf bank and ditch channel	E	07/11/2017
18	Site 6	Turf bank and ditch channel	W	07/11/2017
19	Site 6	Turf bank and ditch channel	E	07/11/2017
20	-	Forestry plantation on a steep slope, showing ground conditions covering most of the survey area	SSE	07/11/2017
21	Site 8	Stone shieling	NE	07/11/2017
22	Site 9	Circular hollow	SE	07/11/2017



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