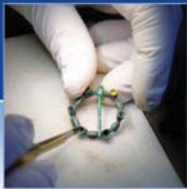


Cairnborrow, Aberdeenshire: Watching Brief Report

AOC 21426
23rd February 2010



Cairnborrow, Aberdeenshire: Watching Brief Report

For: **West Coast Energy Ltd**
The Long Barn
Waen Farm
Nercwys Road
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 4EW

National Grid Reference (NGR): **NJ 4498 4228**

AOC Project No: **21426**

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Date of Fieldwork: **30th January 2010**

Date of Report: **23rd February 2010**

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Contents

	Page
List of illustrations.....	2
List of appendices	2
Abstract.....	3
1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2 OBJECTIVES.....	5
3 RESULTS.....	5
4 CONCLUSION	7
5 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	7
6 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.....	7
APPENDIX 1: ANCHOR FOUNDATION PIT DESCRIPTIONS.....	9
APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD.....	10
APPENDIX 3: <i>'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND'</i> REPORT.....	11

List of illustrations

Figure 1: Location of watching brief

Figure 2: Location of mast and foundation pits

Plate 1: Anchor in FP 4

Plate 2: General view across working site from North

List of appendices

Appendix 1 Anchor Foundation Pit Descriptions

Appendix 2 Photographic Record

Appendix 3 *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* Report

Abstract

This report represents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the erection of an anemometer mast at a possible windfarm site, near Cairnborrow, Aberdeenshire (centred NGR: NJ 4498 4228). The work was commissioned by West Coast Energy Ltd to address the possibility of any adverse archaeological impact deriving from the creation of the mast. The archaeological works were designed in accordance with the principles inherent within SPP (2010) and PAN42 (1994).

The monitoring, carried out on 30th January 2010, did not identify any significant archaeological material.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group has been commissioned by West Coast Energy Ltd to undertake a Watching Brief at Cairnborrow, Huntly, Aberdeenshire. The work was required as a condition on planning consent (M/APP/2009/1055) for the erection of an anemometer mast. The proposed development area lies within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council, who is advised on archaeological matters by Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS). The substance and extent of this *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* is in accord with SSP23 (SG 2008) and PAN 42 (SOEnd 1994). The work undertaken was in keeping with the policies outlined in PAN42 and SPP23 order to gauge and safeguard any significant archaeological remains within ground impacted by the SI works.

1.2 Archaeological background

1.2.1 The anemometer mast was erected in an open field at Cairnborrow, near Huntly, Aberdeenshire (circa NGR: NJ 4498 4228; Figure 1).

1.2.2 The immediate area is rich in burial monuments. 'Glenshee' (NMRS: NJ44SW 4, NGR: NJ 4496 4233), lies approximately 50 m to the north-west of the proposed mast location. This was the site of a large cairn of stone and earth in which a cist containing human remains was found on its removal for building in 1860. It was regarded as being similar to the nearby cairns (NMRS NJ44SW 5, NGR: NJ 4445 4217; NMRS NJ44SW 6, NGR: NJ 4429 4223 and NJ44SE 11, NGR: NJ 4502 4216).

1.2.3 A beaker was recovered from *either* NMRS NJ44SW 4, NJ44SW 5, NJ44SW 6 or NJ44SE 11 (Coles 1906). The beaker was rediscovered in the Brander Library, Huntly in 1979 in a box containing human long bones, fragments of skull, teeth and 3 flint flakes. The hand-written label reads '*Urns and flints found with skeletons in stone coffins at Cairnmore, Glass. More than a thousand years old*' (information from Ian Shepherd). Although it is not possible to say conclusively that the beaker and other finds came from this cairn, it appears the most likely on the basis of the available evidence. The Name Book states that the other three cairns at Cairnmore were 'undisturbed' (although NJ44SW 5 had already been clipped by an enclosure).

1.2.4 Further to the south is situated the Newton Hill long cairn (NMRS NJ44SE 7; NGR: NJ 4534 4140). This is a long horned cairn situated on the rounded crest of Newton Hill. The cairn is not set on the summit of the hill, however, but lies on the gentle northern slope, with its broad end on the crest and its narrower end extending down the slope to the west. Overall it measures 35 m in length and tapers from 19 m across the horns at the eastern end to 9.5 m on the west, and the height of the mound decreases correspondingly from 1.8 m to 0.6 m. One trench has been driven down the axis of the cairn from the forecourt, a second along the central section of the northern side and a third across the axis of the cairn about 10 m from the western end. These excavations, described by Henshall as unfinished (1963, 392) are apparently unpublished. The setting of the cairn suggests that its builders intended that the eastern end should be on the skyline when viewed from the valley of the River Deveron.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the watching brief were:

- i) to safeguard the archaeological resource that may be disturbed by the proposed development works;
- ii) to liaise with ACAS and the client in the event of significant archaeological features and /or small finds being unearthed as to the most appropriate response in safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording.

2.2 The planned default response to the discovery of any archaeological material was to allow its preservation *in situ* by moving the anchor trenches away from any significant features.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of five anchor trenches, each measuring approximately 3.0 m by 0.90 m by 2.0 m deep. The actual mast would be positioned on a wooden platform on the surface, but tensioned by cables anchored within five foundation pits (FP 1 - 4) at four points 30 m distant. The fifth trench (FP 5), approximately 14 m from the mast, serving as an anchoring point for the winching gear (Figure 2). All excavation was undertaken by a JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.

3.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken on Saturday, 30th January 2010 on snow covered ground. While the weather was bitterly cold, the bright conditions nevertheless provided excellent archaeological visibility.

3.2 Soil Profile

3.2.1 A similar soil profile was observed in each trench. A brown silty sand topsoil (conspicuous by the near complete absence of stone inclusions) overlay a grey/brown sandy silt natural subsoil. The gradual transition from topsoil to subsoil began at a depth of 0.30 m to 0.50 m. Excavation through the natural subsoil, with an increasing angular stone content with depth, ceased at 2.0 m. The only variation occurred in FP 5 where angular gravel was encountered at a depth 1.2 m. This gravel layer obviously acted as a localised natural reservoir as the trench immediately flooded at this point.

3.3 Observations

3.3.1 No archaeological features were observed within the foundation pits and summary inspection of spoil heaps from each trench did not identify any significant artefactual material.



Plate 1: Anchor in FP 4



Plate 2: General view across working site from North

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Neither significant archaeological features nor artefactual material were encountered during the watching brief.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 No further archaeological works are considered necessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by ACAS, acting on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Coles, FR 1906 'Report on stone circles surveyed in the North-East of Scotland, chiefly in Banffshire, with measured plans and drawings, obtained under the Gunning Fellowship', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.40, 186.

Henshall, AS 1963 *The chambered tombs of Scotland*, vol.1, Edinburgh.

PAN42 1994 *Planning Advice Note 42; Archaeology – the Planning Process and Scheduled Ancient Monument Procedures*. The Scottish Office, 1994.

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**Cairnborrow:
Watching Brief Report**

Section 2: Appendices



APPENDIX 1: ANCHOR FOUNDATION PIT DESCRIPTIONS

FP 1

Dimensions	3.0 m by 0.9 m
Orientation	N-S
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.50 m
Maximum depth	c.2.0 m
Features	None
Small Finds	None

FP 2

Dimensions	3.0 m by 0.9 m
Orientation	E-W
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.50 m
Maximum depth	c.2.0 m
Features	None
Small Finds	None

FP 3

Dimensions	3.0 m by 0.9 m
Orientation	N-S
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.50 m
Maximum depth	c.2.0 m
Features	None
Small Finds	None

FP 4

Dimensions	3.0 m by 0.9 m
Orientation	N-S
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.50 m
Maximum depth	c.2.0 m
Features	None
Small Finds	None

FP 5

Dimensions	3.0 m by 0.9 m
Orientation	E-W
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.50 m
Maximum depth	c.2.0 m
Features	None
Small Finds	None

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Frame	Description	From
1	Post-excavation - anchor in FP 1	S
2	Working shot of FP 2	W
3	FP 2 post-excavation	W
4	Working shot of FP 4	E
5	Post-excavation - anchor in FP 4	E
6	Working shot of FP 5	N
7	FP 5 post-excavation	N
8	FP 3 post-excavation	N
9-10	General view across the working site	N

APPENDIX 3: 'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND' REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeenshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Cairnborrow Anemometer Mast Watching Brief
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21426
PARISH:	Auchindoir & Kearn
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	John Gooder
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NJ44SW 4
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Watching Brief
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 4498 4228
START DATE (this season)	30th January 2010
END DATE (this season)	30 th January 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was undertaken to address the potential negative archaeological impact of groundworks (five anchor trenches) associated with the erection of an anemometer mast near <i>Glenshee</i> ' cairn (NMRS: NJ44SW 4). Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	West Coast Energy Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	c/o AOC Archaeology Group
EMAIL ADDRESS:	admin@aocarchaeology.com

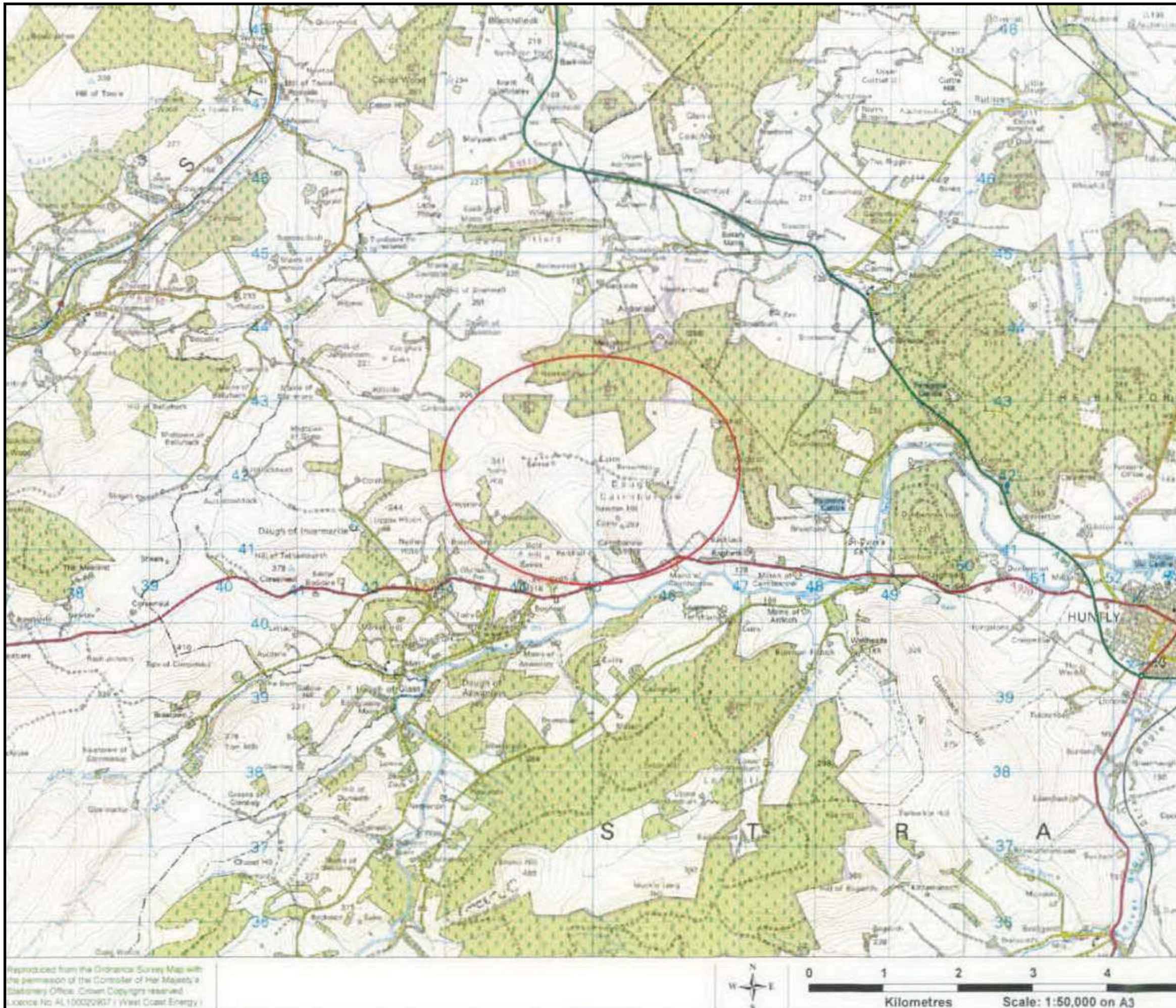


Figure 1: Site location

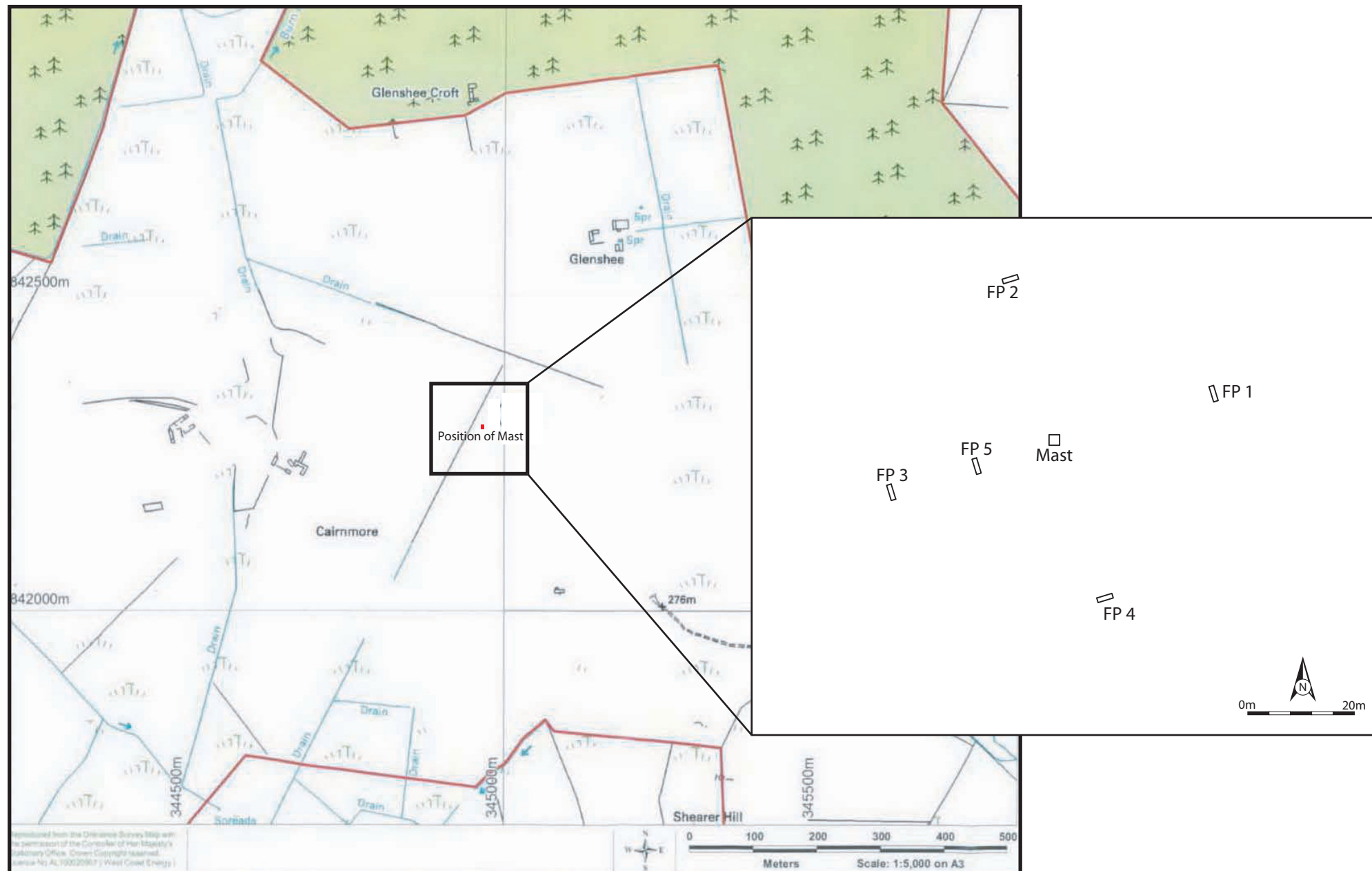
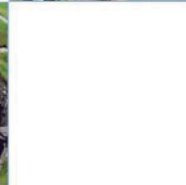
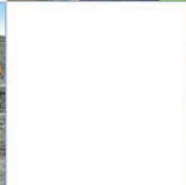
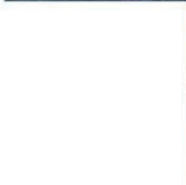
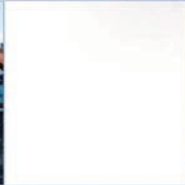


Figure 2: Location of foundation pits



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