

# **Dyke Farm, Neilston, East Renfrewshire: Historic Environment Assessment and Survey**

Data Structure Report




by Joss Durnan  
issued 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
on behalf of SAC Consulting

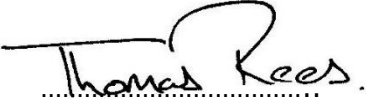
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Signed  ..... Date 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016

In keeping with the procedure of Rathmell Archaeology Limited this document and its findings have been reviewed and agreed by an appropriate colleague:

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## Executive Summary

1. A historic environment assessment was required by SAC Consulting to inform a programme of tree planting across an area of 32ha at Dyke Farm, Neilston, East Renfrewshire. A desk-based assessment and walkover survey was designed to establish a sound baseline on the historic environment within the landholding and to make recommendations on its management. The findings of the assessment and survey are presented in this report.
2. Five historic environment sites were identified and considered within this report. Four of these sites are potentially within the planting area: two 18<sup>th</sup> century farming settlements, Dyk/Bank **S1** and Spierston **S2** (both poorly located), an 18<sup>th</sup> century road **S3**, and a clearance cairn located in Field 1a **S5**. Duncarnock hillfort **S4**, a Scheduled Monument, lies approximately 1km southeast of the planting scheme and has been considered in terms of the potential for a setting impact on this nationally significant asset.
3. Based on the evidence gathered for this assessment, no positive management has been recommended for these sites.

## Introduction

4. A historic environment assessment and survey was required by SAC Consulting to inform a programme of tree planting across an area of 32ha at Dyke Farm, Neilston, East Renfrewshire (centred on NS 493 567). These works were designed to inform on the nature, form and extent of any historic environment assets present within the defined area based on archival sources and site inspection through a walkover survey. From this baseline, management guidelines are presented that seek to protect significant sites in an appropriate setting.
5. This report has been prepared to support SAC Consulting to address UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines (2011), specifically Good Forestry Practice Requirements 1 to 4.

### *Topographic and Geological Background*

6. The study area can be divided, north to south, into three areas (Areas 1, 2, and 3) located to the east of Dyke Farm. These are composed largely of improved pasture with some patches of rougher pasture, particularly around a raised ridge spanning Area 2 from the north to south. Most of the ground lies between 124m and 176m OD.
7. Area 1 is situated immediately to the south of the Neilston railway line and is bounded by modern field boundaries in the west, south, and east, and the railway to the north.
8. Area 2 is bounded by Springhill Road in the east and Kirkton Road in the south. Spierston Burn bisects this area flowing from the southwest to the northeast. Its course is largely canalised with some natural sections close to where it issues in the south. Various field boundaries form the west and north extents.
9. Area 3 is bounded by Craigton Road in the east, a field boundary transecting Dyke Hill (211m OD) in the west, Kirkton Road to the north, and a minor road to the south. Satellite imagery of the area shows a relict stream bed flowing north from the summit of Dyke Hill. This joins a small drainage channel which passes under the access road to Snyptes.
10. The field boundaries throughout the assessment area took the form of dry stone bases topped with timber post and barbed wire fencing. In Areas 1 and 2 this was mostly 3-wire barbed fencing, in Area 3 this was mostly 5-wire fencing topped by a single barbed wire. Occasional trees and intermittent hedging were present along the field boundaries.
11. The geology of the area consisted of topsoil overlying igneous trachyte bedrock.

### *Project Works*

12. The programme of works agreed with SAC Consulting comprised a desk-based assessment and walkover survey.
13. The desk-based assessment consulted resources within:
  - ❖ Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Collections (including Canmore & the

National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP));

- ❖ West of Scotland Archaeology Services (WoSAS) Sites & Monuments Record (known archaeological sites);
- ❖ HES records (Scheduled Monuments and other designations);
- ❖ National Library of Scotland (bibliographic records, historic Ordnance Survey and pre-Ordnance Survey mapping); and
- ❖ Local museums, libraries and other archives (Old & New Statistical Accounts, local history books).

14. The walkover survey comprised:

- ❖ classification of the archaeological sites and monuments;
- ❖ written site description (objective measured description; subjective site interpretation; site condition; site evaluation [using FES categorisation guidelines]; and management recommendations if appropriate);
- ❖ photographic record (digital) of all sites; and
- ❖ locating all archaeological site limits and elements by DGPS equipment (Leica GS50) allowing real-time correction to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.

15. All works complied with the UKFS Standard Guidelines, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

## Historic Environment Baseline

16. The desk-based assessment did not identify within the planting area the presence of any sites protected for their archaeological or historical merit. This includes monuments protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and buildings protected under the Town and Country Planning Act 1997. Nor were any prehistoric or early historic sites identified, nor any sites with the potential to contain human remains.

17. No sites were listed within the Sites and Monuments Record held by WoSAS, or within the HES Canmore database.

### *Historical sources*

18. The location of the assessment area on pre-Ordnance Survey historic mapping was traced through the farm name 'Dyke'. The earliest cartographic depiction of Dyke is Timothy Pont's 16<sup>th</sup> century map of the *Baronee of Renfrew* (1583-96) which shows 'Dyk' located to the southeast of Neilston (Figure 1). 'Dyk' is also depicted on Blaeu's *Atlas of Scotland* (1654) in a similar location.

19. Roy's Military Survey of Scotland map of the Lowlands (1752-55) depicts a settlement named 'Bank' **S1** in the approximate location of Dyke Farm. It is therefore assumed that the vernacular 'Dyke' was substituted with 'Bank', or that this was an alternative name for Dyke. Roy's map also depicts the settlement 'Spearston' **S2** located to the north of Dyke and south of Wraes ('Wrays'). Spearston and Bank are depicted as lying on uncultivated land. Both are flanked by unenclosed arable land (Figure 2). Bank appears to lie further east than the current Dyke Farm, being located some distance from Greenhill and immediately west of the 'Cart Road from Irvin to Glasgow' **S3**, and north of a track to 'Neelston'. This track to Neilston is likely the modern Kirkton Road, with the section of Cart Road north of its junction with Kirkton Road likely the modern Springhill Road. This Cart Road continues south towards Muirhead and Snypes, before continuing on to Irvine.

20. Spearston also appears in 19<sup>th</sup> century maps by Ainslie (1800) and Thomson (1832) as 'Spierston' **S2**. On both of these maps it is depicted as being located to the west and slightly south of Netherton, and north of Dyke (depicted as 'Dikes' on both maps). Additionally, the New Statistical Account of Scotland (1834-45, 327) lists one Alexander Spiers, Esq. of Elderslie as a landowner within Neilston parish. Whether Spiers is connected with Spierston

or not is not specified. In both Ainslie and Thompson, Dyke **S1** has shifted west from its depicted location in Roy and is much closer to Greenhill, similar to the current Dyke Farm. Both of these maps also depict the Cart Road **S3** as having fallen out of use, reaching only as far as Muirhead. Additionally, a road to Craigton (modern Craigton Road) is depicted running south.

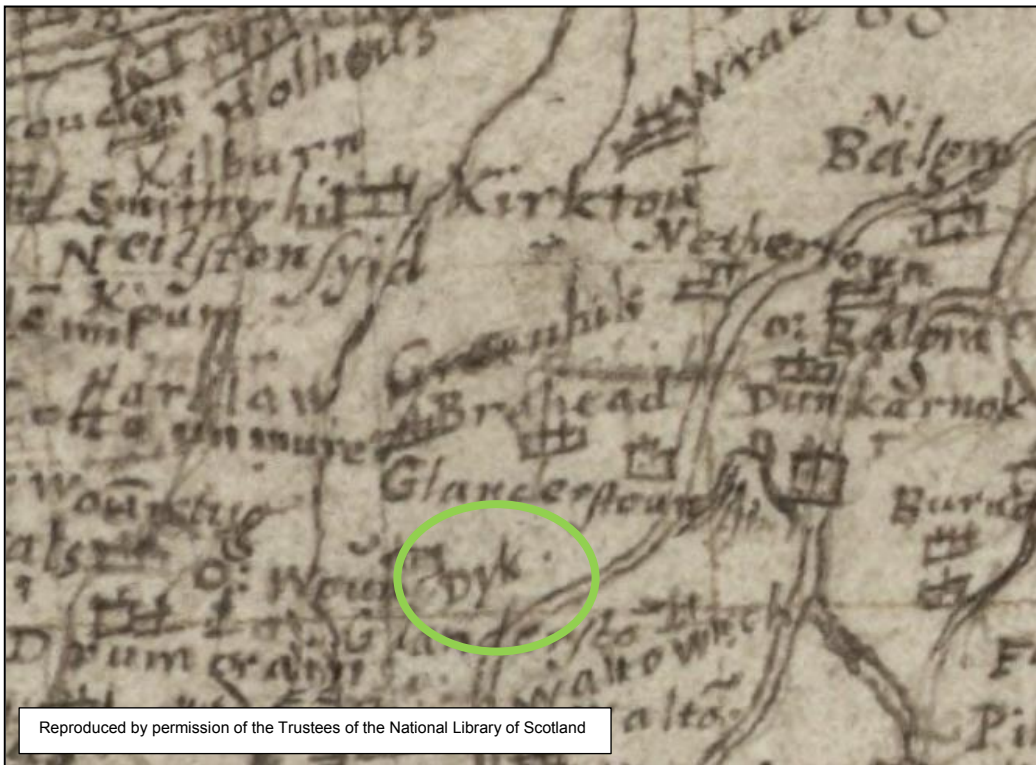
21. By the time of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1863) Spierston **S2** is no longer shown (Figure 4). The six-inch and 25-inch sheets depicting the study area were surveyed in 1856, suggesting that Spierston fell out of use some time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before 1856, with its name surviving in Spierston Burn. The date range suggested for its abandonment is indicative of the settlement being a pre-improvement fermtoun. Dyk / Bank **S1** was likely of a similar character, with both replaced by the more substantial Dyke to the west, which preserved the latter's name within a larger landholding.

#### *Historic Environment Record*

22. No sites of historical significance are recorded within the assessment area in either the Canmore database (HES) or the local authority Sites & Monuments Record (WoSAS). There are no listed buildings in the assessment area.
23. The Scheduled Monument of Duncarnock **S4** lies 1km southeast of the planting scheme. This fort (Scheduled Monument No: 4339) is believed to be prehistoric or early medieval in date and has been considered in terms of the potential for a setting impact on this nationally significant asset. The fort is situated on the summit of Duncarnock, a steep-sided volcanic plug rising to 204m OD. Roughly rectangular with rounded corners on plan, the fort measures about 145m from E to W by 95m transversely within a stone wall up to 4m in thickness, which is pierced by an entrance in the SE corner.

#### *Walkover Survey*

24. The walkover survey took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 in overcast, windy conditions. The study area was found to be mainly pasture, with patches of rougher pasture and recently cleared bracken in the more hilly terrain of Area 2. The field boundaries throughout the assessment area took the form of dry stone bases topped with timber post and barbed wire fencing (Figure 5 and 6).



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Figure 1: Extract from Pont's *Baronee of Renfrew* (1583-96)



Figure 2: Extract from Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1752-55)



Figure 3: Extract from Thomson's *Atlas of Scotland* (1832)



Figure 4: Extract from six-inch 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey (1863)



No	Name	Area	Type	HER Refs	Description	NGR
<b>S1</b>	Dyk / Bank	2	Fermtoun (possible)	None	Possible pre-improvement settlement which was likely a precursor to the modern day Dyke Farm, by which it was replaced in the late 18 <sup>th</sup> or early 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Roy depicts this precursor as three buildings contained within a small rectilinear enclosure, with rows of trees on the north, east, and south sides.	NS 492 564
<b>S2</b>	Spierston	1 / 2	Fermtoun (possible)	None	Possible pre-improvement settlement which appears to fall out of use in the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Roy depicts this as four buildings on a mall knoll, two of which are contained in a rectilinear enclosure with rows of trees on the west and south sides.	NS 493 570
<b>S3</b>	Cart Road from Irvin to Glasgow	1, 2, 3	Cart Road	None	A cart road dating from the 18 <sup>th</sup> century (possibly earlier) which originally ran from Irvine to Glasgow but now terminates in the south at Snypes. Survives as the modern-day Springhill Road and tarmacked single-track road to Snypes.	NS 49217 57258 (junction with Kirkton Road)
<b>S4</b>	Duncarnock	N/A	Fort	Canmore ID: 43882 Site No.: NS55NW 3	Situated on a volcanic plug rising to 204m OD. Roughly rectangular with rounded corners on plan, the fort measures about 145m from E to W by 95m transversely within a stone wall up to 4m in thickness, which is pierced by an entrance in the SE corner. The interior of the fort measures about 1.5ha in extent.	NS 5010 5590 (centred)
<b>S5</b>	None	1	Clearance Cairn	None	A clearance cairn measuring 9m x 18m in field 1a. Probably 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> century in origin. Surmounted by recently deposited clearance.	NS 49235 57304 (centred)

Table 1: Historic Environment Sites located within or immediately adjacent to the assessment area

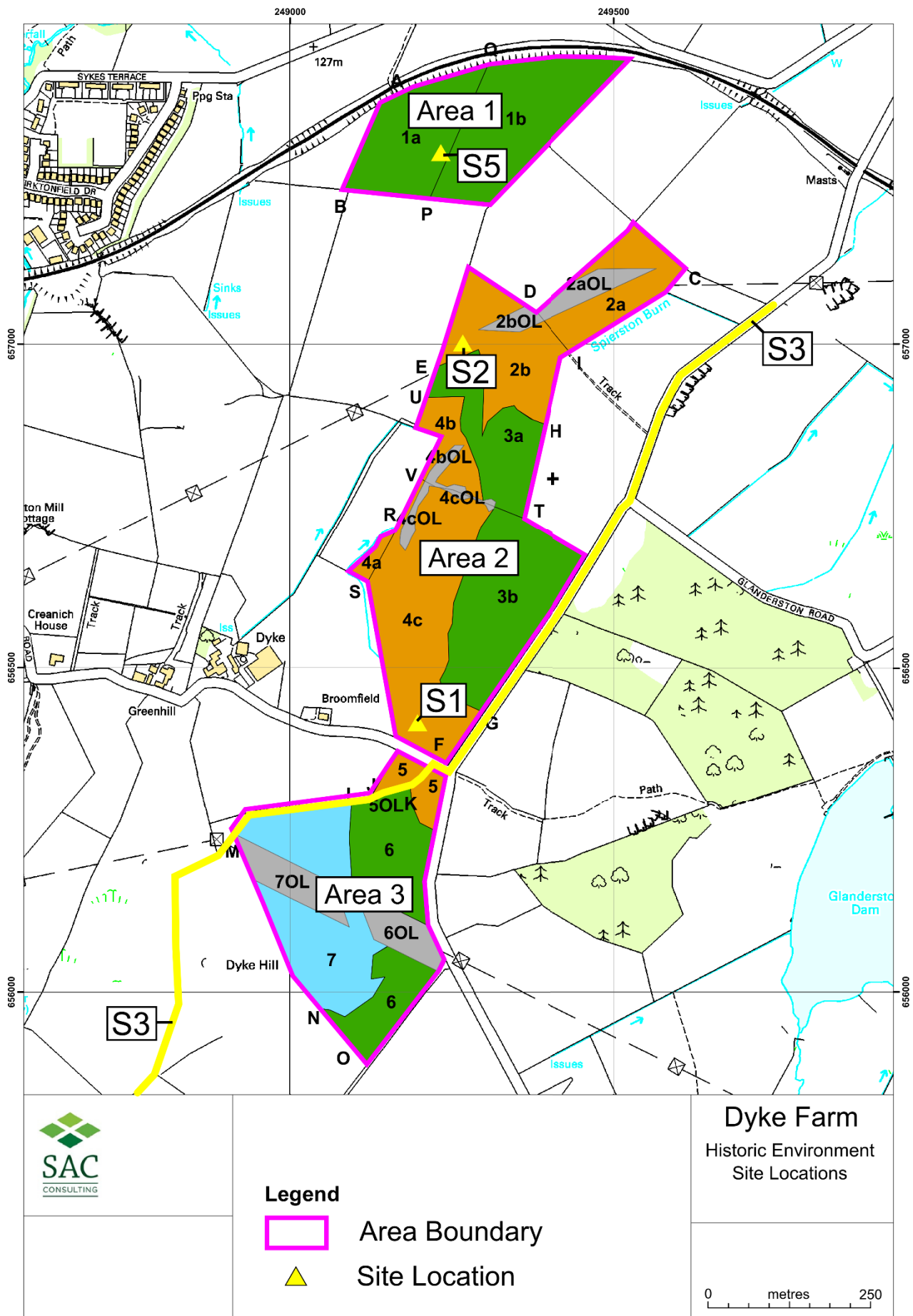


Figure 4: Historic Environment Sites (excluding Duncarnock Fort S4)

25. The possible fermtoun of Dyk/Bank **S1** could not be identified during the survey. Based on cartographic evidence it was probably located in Area 2 close to the junction of Kirkton Road and Springhill Road.
26. The possible fermtoun of Spierston **S2** could not be identified during the survey. Based on cartographic evidence it was probably located in the central raised ground of Area 2.
27. The Cart Road **S3** depicted on Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* was identified as modern minor roads in the assessment area. It runs partway through Area 3 as the single-track access to Snypes, between Areas 2 and 3 as Kirkton Road, and along the eastern boundaries of Areas 2 and 3 as Springhill Road and Craigton Road respectively. These roads are all tarmacked. There were no identifiable sections of historic alignment of the cart road on the margins of these modern road surfaces.
28. Duncarnock Fort **S4** was observed at a distance from the summit Dyke Hill. Visibility of the fort was only possible from this summit area, with no comparable sight lines from the rest of the proposed planting area. Rig and furrow (orientated east to west) was visible on satellite images of Dyke Hill but was not visible upon field inspection.
29. A clearance cairn **S5** (Figure 7) measuring 9m x 18m was noted in Field 1a. The upper deposits of this cairn were very recent, with the lower bulk being of an indeterminate age. It is likely that much or all of this stone derived from field clearance in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Management Guidance

30. The assessment identified a total of five historic environment sites within or immediately adjacent to the assessment area (Table 1). Not all sites are of equal merit or have equal potential to contribute to the comprehension of the Historic Environment. A fourfold significance is used to reflect the scale of contribution running, from high to low, as National, Regional, Local and Other, where Other denotes a minimal significance. Presented below is our guidance on how we recommend the known historic environment sites should be treated within any Forest Design Plan (summarised in Table 2).
31. The possible pre-improvement fermtoun of Dyk/Bank **S1** was almost certainly located within the planting scheme. No visible remains of the site were identified and it has therefore been ascribed Other (minimal) significance. As a result, no positive management is recommended for this part of the assessment area.
32. The possible pre-improvement fermtoun of Spierston **S2** was probably located within the planting scheme. As the site could not be located or identified, however it has been ascribed Other (minimal) significance. As a result, no positive management is recommended for this part of the assessment area.
33. The Cart Road **S3** is reasonably of Local significance as a historic routeway from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, this site remains in use as modern, tarmacked roads hence it will not be impacted by the proposed planting.
34. Duncarnock fort **S4** is located outwith the planting scheme some 1km to the SE and is of National significance. There is very limited intervisibility between the fort and the proposed planting area, with only the summit of Dyke Hill being clearly visible to the fort. Further the orientation of the fort is to the SE, where its entrance lies – generating important views to the SE of this asset. Given the limited visibility, the orientation of the entrance away from the planting area and the character of the setting impact being generated (a modest planting proposal) no positive management is recommended.
35. The clearance cairn **S5**, located in Field 1a at the north end of the assessment area, is probably of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century origin and remains in use. It has therefore been ascribed Other (minimal) significance, no positive management is recommended for this site.

No	Name	Area	Significance	Management Guidance	UKFS HE Guidelines
<b>S1</b>	Dyk/Bank	2	Other	Not positively located or identified. No action recommended.	None
<b>S2</b>	Spierston	2	Other	Not positively located or identified. No action recommended.	None
<b>S3</b>	Cart Road	1, 2, 3	Local	Regularly maintained modern roads on the route of former trackway. Of little historical significance. No action recommended.	None
<b>S4</b>	Duncarnock	N/A	National	Site location outwith the study area. No action recommended.	None
<b>S5</b>	Clearance Cairn	1	Other	A relatively recent feature of little or no archaeological significance. No action recommended.	None

Table 2: Management Guidance for Historic Environment Sites



Figure 5: Field boundary at the north end of Area 2.



Figure 6: Field Boundary crossing the summit of Dyke Hill in Area 3.



Figure 7: Clearance cairn **S5** in Field 1a viewed from the west.

## Conclusion

39. A historic environment assessment was required by SAC Consulting to inform a programme of tree-planting at Dyke Farm, Neilston, East Renfrewshire. This process identified five historic environment sites relating to the assessment area. One of these was a Scheduled Monument, the remaining four were not protected for their significance.
40. Our management guidance has been that no positive action need be taken in regard to these sites. These recommendations are compliant with UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines.

## References

### *Documentary*

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

*New Statistical Account of Scotland: Neilston, County of Renfrew. Account of 1834-45, volume 7, page 307*

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

UK Forestry Guidelines, 2011, *Forests and Historic Environment: UK Forestry Standard Guidelines*, Forestry Commission: Edinburgh

### *Cartographic*

Ainslie, J	1800	<i>Map of the County of Renfrew</i>
Blaeu, Joan	1654	<i>The Baronie of Renfrow</i>
Pont, T	1583-96	<i>Baronee of Renfrew</i>
Roy, W	1752-55	<i>Military Survey of Scotland (Lowlands)</i>
Thomson, J	1832	<i>Atlas of Scotland, Renfrew-shire</i>
Ordnance Survey	1863	<i>Six-inch 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Renfrewshire, Sheet XVI</i>
Ordnance Survey	1863	<i>25-inch 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Renfrew, Sheets XVI.3, XVI.7</i>

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