

**Breconside Hill, Beeswing,
Dumfries and Galloway:
Historic Environment Assessment and Survey**

Data Structure Report



by Joss Durnan & Thomas Rees

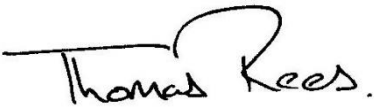
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on behalf of Scottish Woodlands Ltd

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Signed  Date 14th July 2017.....

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 Scottish Woodlands Ltd to inform a programme of tree planting across an area of 252ha at Breconside Hill, Beeswing, Scottish Borders. 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. There are 10 known sites of historic environment potential within the study area. For the distribution of sites see Figure 5, while details of each site are contained within Table 1.
3. In summary, the study area appears to have seen its most intensive period of use during the later Bronze Age and Iron Age. Later land use regimes - even in the post-improvement period - have had little impact on remains associated with this earlier landscape, which means that the archaeology survives in unusually good condition. However, it should also be recognised that further buried features may be present, obscured through the formation of blanket peat on upland areas.

Introduction

4. A historic environment assessment and survey was required by Scottish Woodlands Ltd to inform a programme of tree planting across an area of 252.38ha at Breconside Hill, Beeswing, Dumfries and Galloway (centred on NX 896 667). 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 the 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 Scottish Woodlands Ltd to address UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines (2011), specifically Good Forestry Practice Requirements 1 to 4.

Topographic and Geological Background

6. The study area comprises an area of ground which incorporates the summit of Breconside Hill just to the south of Loch Arthur, east of the A711 as it runs from Beeswing to Congeith, NE of Dalbeattie. The hills are bounded by the Breconside Burn to the southwest and the Lotus Hill to the northeast. The underlying solid geology is a porphyritic Grandodiorite with an overlying sediment of peaty gleys. According to Historic Land-use Assessment Mapping (HES HLA Map) the ground can be characterised as drained rough pasture.

Project Works

7. The programme of works agreed with Scottish Woodlands Ltd comprised a desk-based assessment and walkover survey.
8. The desk-based assessment consulted resources within:
 - ❖ National Collection of the Historic Environment (NCHE) (including Canmore, the National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP) Scheduled Monuments and other designations);
 - ❖ Dumfries and Galloway Council Sites and Monuments Record (known archaeological sites);
 - ❖ 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).
9. 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.
10. 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.

Walkover Survey

11. The walkover survey took place on the 31st May 2017 in sunny conditions. The assessment area was found to be generally undulating rough pasture on unimproved ground, with some partly improved areas and patches of bog. There were very few field boundaries within the area. Those enclosing the area took the form of dry stone dykes supplanted by timber post and wire fences.

Historic Environment Baseline

12. 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.

Prehistoric and Early Historic Activity

13. No known Mesolithic or Neolithic activity is known within the study area, though a single Mesolithic flint has been recovered from the crannog site on Loch Arthur, which lies to the north of the study area, and findspots of Neolithic stone axe hammers (Canmore ID 65733) have also been recorded to the north.
14. Known sites of potential Bronze or Iron Age date are located within the study area. These take the form of hut circles and cairns, thought to represent occupation sites and associated field clearance.
15. Three distinct concentrations of such features have been identified within the development area (**S1**, **S2** and **S10**). Two of these, **S1** and **S2**, are located on the summit and the southwest-facing slopes of Breconside Hill, extending across a ridge of ground in the southeast which climbs up towards the summit of Tannock Hill. The third, **S10**, lies to the east of Whiteside on the west-facing slopes of Lotus Hill. These sites are similar, each comprising a concentration of cairns with at least one probable hut circle.
16. There remains a degree of ambiguity with regards to these relict landscapes and their component features. While small cairns are generally used as field clearance, they may occur in association with larger cairns which were built to house cremated human remains. Sometimes these cairns take the form of annular 'ring cairns': often located on the summits of hills, these can appear similar to hut circles, though with hut circles also on occasion occupying hilltop locations, the two forms can often only be differentiated through intrusive investigation.
17. A fourth site, **S3**, a possible hut circle identified on aerial photographs, lies in isolation some 800m east of Breconside Hill.

Post Medieval or Later Rural Settlement

18. The study area lies wholly within the parish of Kirkgunzeon. Originally, these lands belonged to the abbey of Holmcultran in Cumbria, but when the abbey took the side of the English in the 1300s against David Bruce, the estate was forfeited, passing into the possession of Sir John Herres of Terregles (Heron, 1791-99). It remained with the Herres family until 1697 when, on the death of the 3rd Lord Herres, it passed into the possession of a cadet branch of the Maxwell family through marriage with Agnes, the late 3rd Lord's eldest surviving daughter. According to the New Statistical Account, the Maxwells of Terregles still held lands in the parish as late as the 1830.



Figure 1: Extract from William Roy's Military Survey 1752-55



Figure 2: Extract from John Ainslie 'The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright' 1797

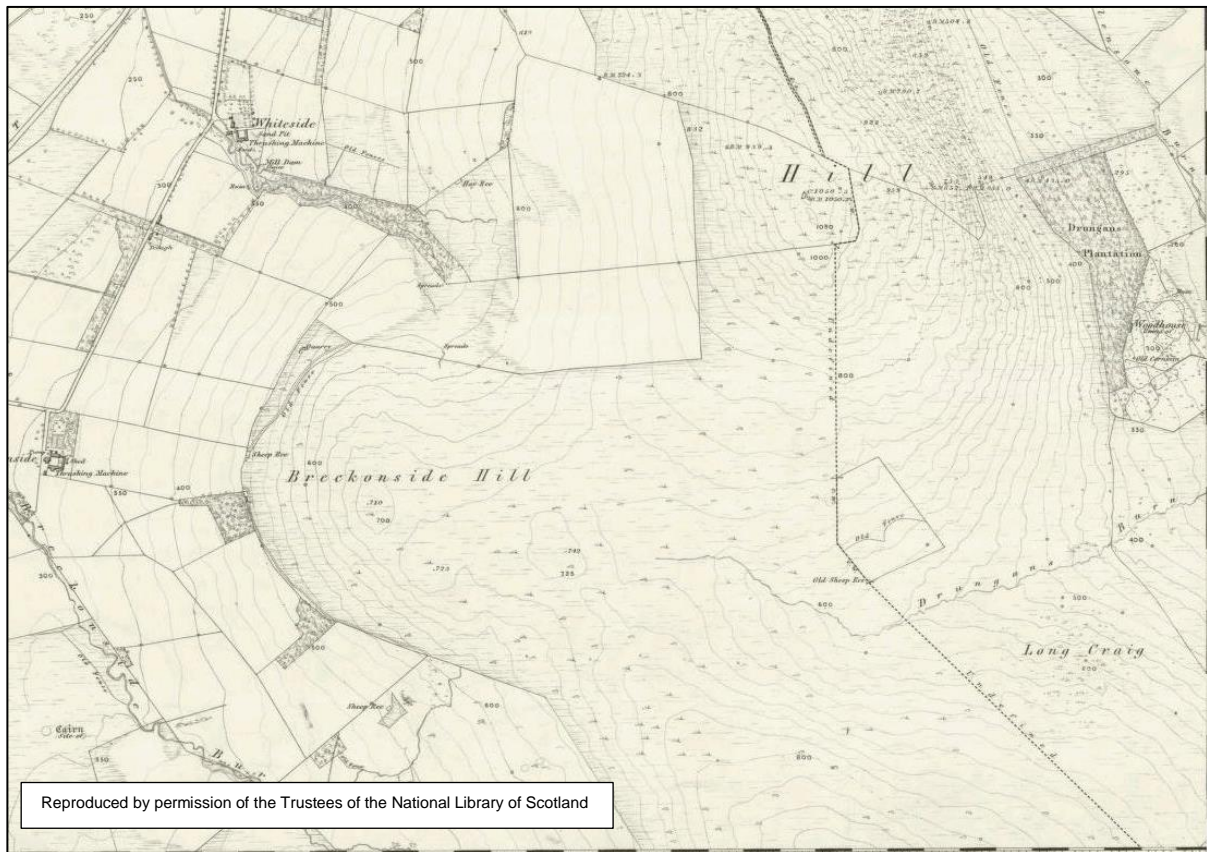


Figure 3: Extract from 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1854

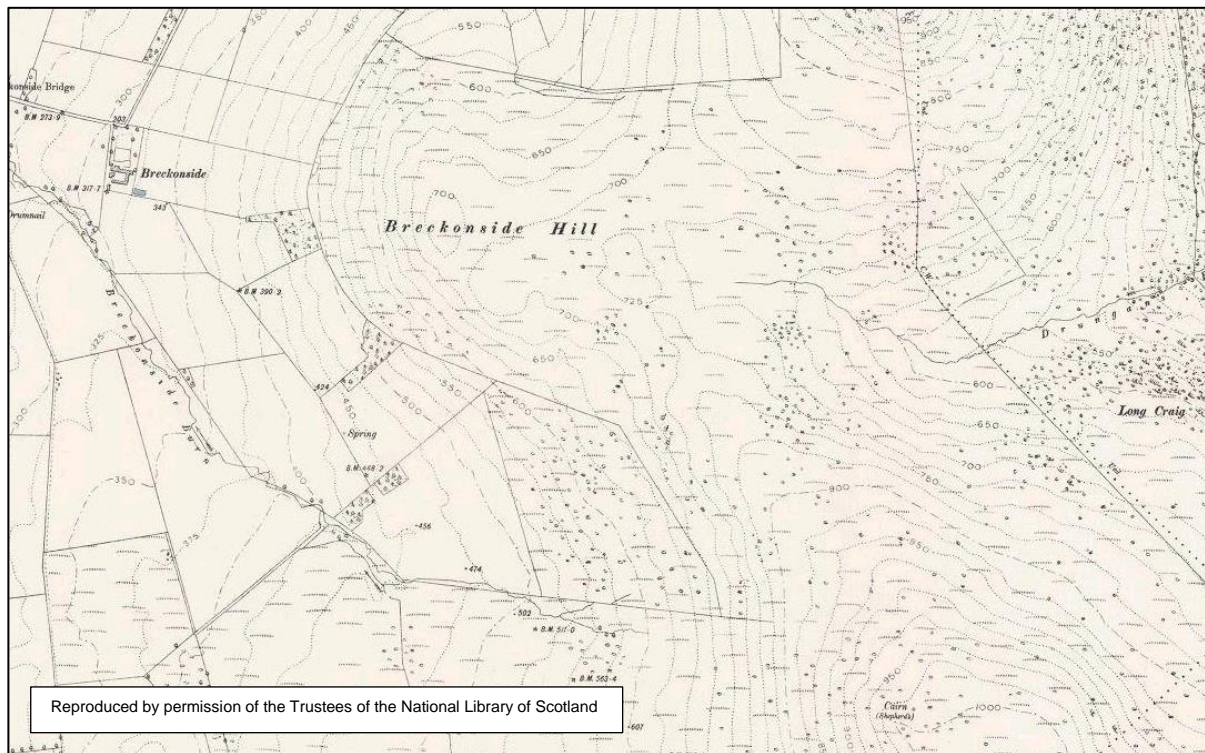










Figure 4: Extract from 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1895




19. Other important landowners in the area were the Abbey of New Abbey (also known as Sweetheart abbey) and the Irvines of Drumcoltran, associated with the late medieval tower-house at Drumcoltran, to the north of the development area. Within the study area, there are no upstanding remains which can be unequivocally linked with use in this period.
20. The earliest viable mapping which is available is William Roy's Military Map of 1752-55 (Figure 1). The main hill within the study area appears to be named 'Louthonis Hill' as opposed to Lotus Hill, though the writing is difficult to decipher. The upland areas which today comprise Breconside Hill are shown as open, uncultivated hillside. A road runs in a roughly southwest to northeast alignment to the north of the study area; this is the military road running from Dumfries to Portpatrick which in this particular location is still in use today.
21. A number of the farms which are shown on the modern map appear to have origins which predate Roy's Survey. Continuity is shown variously by the settlements which are dispersed around the foothills of Breconside and Lotus hills, and the military road: the modern farm names of Whiteside, Drumjohn ('Drumjoan'), Lochend, Breconside ('Brakinside'), Glaisters ('Gleisters') and Blairshinnoch are all present, set within lands that are clearly in cultivation. There is also evidence of tree-planting around the banks of Loch Arthur.
22. An intensification of settlement is evident by the end of the 18th century (see Ainslie's 1797 map, Figure 2), with Burnside shown upstream of Whiteside and the Breconside name being ascribed to multiple farms. This suggests an increasing population and potentially attempts to more intensively farm upland ground. However none of these settlements appear to be within the study area. The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey of 1854 (Figure 3) depicts 'old fences' (inc **S4** and possibly **S9**) suggesting some of this late eighteenth century 'high tide' of arable use proved unsound.
23. Unfortunately, the Statistical Account (Heron, 1791-9) yields little insight into the management of upland areas during this key period of the agricultural improvements. By contrast, however, the New Statistical Account of 1834-43 is more helpful in this respect. It notes how in the 'coarse and high-lying lands, a number of highland bulls are wintered', and it also highlights the large numbers of grouse (presumably red grouse) and 'black game' (presumably black grouse) which are present on the hills. This might suggest that the area is being managed for shooting, but doubt is cast on this possibility by a complete absence of mapped shooting butts.
24. By the time the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey of 1854 (Figure 3) was surveyed, the northeastern summit is now marked as Lotus Hill and it has also been divided into fields on the lower slopes. Two plantations have now appeared: 'Lotus Plantation' is located on the north side of the hill and 'Drungans Plantation' on the east side.
25. Finally, the presence of sheep rees (inc **S6**) and shepherd's cairns on the high ground, plus the enclosure of a large tract of land encompassing the summits of both Breconside and Lotus Hills suggest that prior to the 1850s, the area was enclosed for use as a sheep run. That this enterprise proved short-lived and unsuccessful is hinted at by the fact that already by this time, the high level enclosure is described as an 'old' sheep ree.
26. It is during this period that a small enclosure and rectangular structure **S7** appear above the head dyke. This may related to stock management on the hill.
27. By the time the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map was surveyed in 1895ⁱ (Figure 4), a small quarry was present in Lotus Plantation, while the farmstead named 'Drungans' is by now depicted only as a three-chambered structure, with the additional ruins no longer depicted.

Table 1: Historic Environment Sites located within the study area

Site	Site Type	NGR Ref:	UID	Description	Period	Image
S1	Cairnfield	NX 8943 6614	Canmore ID: 72331 / 64923 HER ID: MDG8869 / MDG4496	At least seventy partially turf-covered clearance cairns up to 3.0m in diameter and standing to a maximum height of 0.8m are interspersed amongst outcropping rock occupy gently sloping SW-facing ground at around 190m OD. The cairns appear random in distribution, and no trace of field banks or lynchets. Site inspection confirmed some of these cairns, though tall vegetation inhibited the full identification of these features. Some of these cairns could be grass-covered outcrop Three penannular banked structures are either sound or possible hut-circles as well as a sub-circular platform (S1.1 to S1.4 – see entries below) survive among the cairns.	Later Prehistoric	
S1.1	Hut circle	NX 8950 6615	Canmore ID: 72333 HER ID: MDG8516	This hut-circle, situated among the field clearance cairns of S1 , is slightly oval, measuring 14.5m NE-SW by 13.5m overall. Its turf-covered stone bank stands to a maximum height of 0.5m and has an entrance in the SE. Presence and character confirmed by site inspection.	Later Prehistoric	
S1.2	Hut circle	NX 8948 6610	Canmore ID: 72332 HER ID: MDG8412	This hut-circle, situated among the field clearance cairns of S1 , measures 16.5m in diameter overall. The turf-covered stone bank is spread to 2m wide and stands to a height of 0.5m. The suggestion of an entrance in the E side is obscured by a cairn 7.5m in diameter, 0.5m high. Presence and character confirmed by site inspection.	Later Prehistoric	

Site	Site Type	NGR Ref:	UID	Description	Period	Image
S1.3	Hut circle (prob)	NX 8942 6609	Canmore ID: 72334 HER ID: MDG4734	The fragmentary remains of a possible hut-circle were re-identified by the site inspection, forming a partial arc in the southern circuit. The bank was spread to 2m broad and 0.5m high, it was identifiable for 8m of its circuit.	Later Prehistoric	
S1.4	Platform	NX 8950 6611	None	The site inspection identified a roughly 15m diameter sub circular level platform that appeared to be artificial in origin within the larger S1 cairnfield.	Later Prehistoric	
S2	Cairnfield	NX 8939 6656	Canmore ID: 64924 HER ID: MDG4497	A small cairnfield is located in the gently sloping plateau to the east of the summit of Breconside Hill. There are approximately fifty small cairns from 2m to 4m in sub-circular diameter and up to 0.8m high. The cairns appear random in distribution, and no trace of field banks or lynchets. Site inspection confirmed some of these cairns, though tall vegetation inhibited the full identification of these features. Some of these cairns could be grass-covered outcrop. One penannular banked structure, a hut-circle (S2.1), survives among the cairns.	Later Prehistoric	
S2.1	Hut circle	NX 8939 6656	Canmore ID: 62924 HER ID: MDG4497	The penannular bank is situated towards the western side of the cairnfield S2 and occupies a slight eminence. The hut circle is 14m in overall diameter, it comprises an earthen and stone bank averaging 5.0m wide and up to 1m high externally, enclosing a slightly dished and featureless interior measuring 5m by 3.5m. Presence and character confirmed by site inspection.	Later Prehistoric	

Site	Site Type	NGR Ref:	UID	Description	Period	Image
S2.2	Enclosure or Cairn (poss)	NX 8960 6657	Canmore ID: 72330 HER ID: MDG8346	A much denuded sub-rectangular stone feature survives. It measures 11m WSW-ENE by 8m overall. Irregular piles of stone heaped within the turf-covered bank, spread up to 2.3m wide, have obscured the overall character. Presence and character confirmed by site inspection.	Prehistoric	
S3	Hut circle (prob)	NX 8993 6669	Canmore ID: 258854 HER ID: MDG21467	A annular bank, possibly a hut circle, was identified from oblique aerial photography on gently sloping ground north of Drungans Burn. Site inspection could not locate this feature possibly due to tall vegetation.	Later Prehistoric	
S4	Dyke, head dyke, rig	NX 8897 6718	None	The 1 st edition Ordnance Survey of 1854 depicts an 'old fence' running along the upslope side of a farm track. Site inspection identified a small fragment of field system. The dyke S4.3 depicted on the 1 st edition was still identifiable as a turf clad bank upto 4.5m broad and 1m high, with an associated outer ditch - it was much mutilated by the modern track. The associated ditch has been emptied and may be a modern feature. A subsidiary bank S4.1 was recorded falling downslope, having been cut by this track, to the NNW/SSE with faint traces of rig and furrow within the ground bounded by these dykes, orientated NE/SW.	Post Medieval to early 19 th century	
S5	Quarry	NX 8893 6715	None	A quarry is depicted on the 1854 1 st edition Ordnance Survey, but not on subsequent mapping. Site inspection identified an extraction scoop adjacent to S4 that measured 8m cross-slope by 20m downslope.	19 th century	

Site	Site Type	NGR Ref:	UID	Description	Period	Image
S6	Sheep ree	NX 8878 6690	None	A rectangular sheep ree is depicted on the 1854 1 st edition Ordnance Survey and the 1895 2 nd edition Ordnance Survey. Site inspection failed to identify any structures at this location, though a scatter of displaced stone suggests a dismantled structure.	19 th century	
S7	Enclosure & Structure	NX 8877 6680	None	<p>An enclosure and adjacent unnamed roofed rectangular structure are depicted on the 1854 1st edition Ordnance Survey, both integral to the field boundary to the southwest. The combined site is not depicted on subsequent mapping.</p> <p>Site inspection identified the rectilinear structure S7.1 some 15m by 5m consisting of three runs of single course single-face stones set against a field dyke to the SSW. This structure, of a single compartment, has no obvious openings.</p> <p>A low rubble wall S7.2 running for 15.5m parallel with the dyke starting some 3m from the edge of S7.1 appears to be the fragmentary remains of the adjacent enclosure.</p>	Post Medieval to early 19 th century	
S8	Shooting butt	NX 8930 6635	None	A probable shooting butt of drystone construction measuring 2m by 2m and 1.1m high formed on the northern side of a field dyke.	19 th to 20 th century	



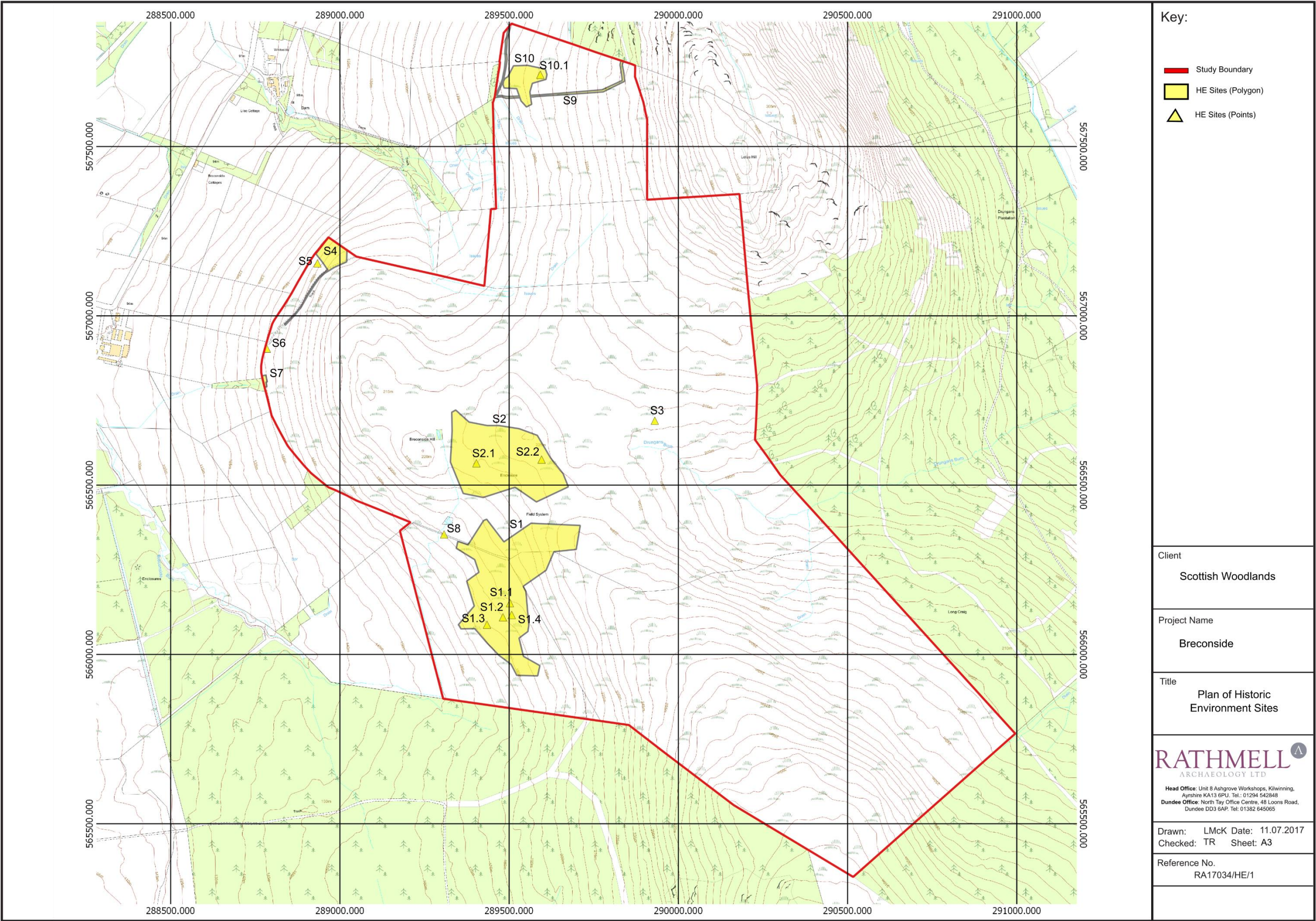
Site	Site Type	NGR Ref:	UID	Description	Period	Image
S9	Dyke	NX 8965 6774	Canmore ID: 64922 HER ID: MDG4495	Two portions linear earthen bank bound an area some 375m east to west and 210m from north to south. An associated ditch is visible on the dyke's upslope face. The dyke is 2.5m broad, up to 1m high, and the ditch is 1.5m broad and 0.5m deep.	Post Medieval to early 19 th century	
S10	Cairnfield, hut circle	NX 8954 6770	Canmore ID: 64922 HER ID: MDG4495	<p>A group of thirteen turf-covered cairns occupy a west-facing pasture field. All are of irregular shape, mainly oval, averaging 4m by 3m and up to 0.8m high. Composed of large, angular stones, they appear to have a random distribution with no evidence of lynchets or contemporary banks (though see S9).</p> <p>A hut-circle, S10.1, is situated upslope and on the eastern edge of the field cairn field. Formed of a penannular turf-covered stone bank is spread to 2m wide and stands to a height of 0.5m measures 15m in diameter overall. This feature becomes more fragmented to the west, but the underlying platform remains distinct.</p>	Later Prehistoric	

Figure 5: Map of Historic Environment Sites



Management Guidance

28. The assessment identified a total of ten historic environment sites within the study 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).
29. The cairn fields and hut circles **S1**, **S2** and **S10** are characteristic of later prehistoric unenclosed settlement and small scale arable use of the land. As a result these sites have been ascribed Regional significance. The protection of these sites from planting and other forestry operation impacts is recommended with the cairnfields and structures within coherent blocks of unplanted ground – this will in effect form a larger clearing given the spread of cairns that have been mapped. As such additional exclusion buffers from the mapped boundary of these sites is not appropriate. The Forest Plan should manage the vegetation in these areas to ensure any clearing is sustained over time.
30. The solitary hut circle **S3** should also be ascribed a Regional significance. However, as a discrete, small site we recommend a minimum 20m exclusion from the site, which assuming a 10m diameter gives a 50m diameter circle to be excluded. The Forest Plan should manage the vegetation in these areas to ensure any clearing is sustained over time.
31. The dyke and rig **S4** has been much damaged by the modern track, later quarrying and is of poor condition. As a result, it has been ascribed Other significance and no positive management is recommended.
32. The quarry **S5** is 19th century in origin. Due the ubiquity of such sites across Scotland throughout history the site has been ascribed Other (minimal) significance. No positive management is recommended.
33. The sheep ree **S6** is 19th century in origin and has been substantially demolished already. Due the ubiquity of such sites across Scotland and its degraded condition the site has been ascribed Other (minimal) significance. No positive management is recommended.
34. The structure and enclosure **S7** while denuded are of at least early 19th century origin and remain identifiable. The presence of a structure raises the potential for complex archaeological strata related to the occupation and use of this complex. This site has been ascribed a Local significance as a discrete, small site we recommend a minimum 10m exclusion from the site (ie in addition to that mapped on Figure 3).
35. The shooting butt **S8** is of either 19th century or 20th century origin and contributes little to the character of the landscape. Due the ubiquity of such sites across Scotland and it has been ascribed Other (minimal) significance. No positive management is recommended, although the retention of dyke and butt would be preferable to unnecessary loss.
36. The dykes **S9** were clearly identifiable and form part of a pattern of earlier enclosure. They are not associated with more complex contemporary agricultural or settlement evidence. As a result, it has been ascribed Other significance. No positive management is recommended, although the retention of dyke and butt would be preferable to unnecessary loss.

Table 2: Management Guidance for Historic Environment Sites

No	Site	Significance	Management Guidance	UKFS HE Guidelines
S1	Cairn field and hut circles	Regional	Protection of site elements through establishing clearing. Clearing to be managed as open space.	11, 18
S2	Cairn field and hut circles	Regional	Protection of site elements through establishing clearing. Clearing to be managed as open space.	11, 18
S3	Hut circle	Regional	Protection of site through 20m buffer off an inferred diameter of 10m. Clearing to be managed as open space.	11, 18
S4	Dykes and rig	Other	No action recommended.	
S5	Quarry	Other	No action recommended.	
S6	Sheep ree	Other	Not positively located or identified. No action recommended.	
S7	Structure & Enclosure	Local	Protection of site through minimum 10m buffer. Clearing to be managed as open space.	11, 18
S8	Shooting butt	Other	No action recommended	
S9	Dyke	Other	No action recommended.	
S10	Cairn field and hut circles	Regional	Protection of site elements through establishing clearing. Clearing to be managed as open space.	11, 18

Conclusion

45. A historic environment assessment was required by Scottish Woodlands Ltd to inform nforest design at Breconside Hill, Beeswing, Dumfries and Galloway. This process identified ten historic environment sites relating the study area, none of which were protected for their significance.
46. Our management guidance has covered protection measures for five of these sites. These recommendations are compliant with UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines.

References

Documentary

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Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

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Cartographic

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Ordnance Survey	1895	Six-inch 2nd Edition, Kirkcudbrightshire Sheets XXXVII

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