

**Marbrack, Dumfries and Galloway:
Historic Environment Assessment & Survey
Appraisal**



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on behalf of Mark Hamilton Landscape Services

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	4
Topographic and Geological Background	4
Project Works	4
Historic Environment Baseline.....	5
Previous Archaeological Works	5
Prehistoric to Roman Land use.....	5
Medieval and Later Periods.....	5
Walkover Survey.....	6
Management Guidance	14
Conclusion	15
References	15
Documentary	15
Cartographic	15
Contact Details	16

Figures and Tables

Figure 1a: Extract from Roy's Military Survey of 1752-5.	7
Figure 1b: Extract from Thomson 1832.....	7
Figure 2a: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1853).....	8
Figure 2b: Extract from the 2 nd edition Ordnance Survey (1895).....	8
Figure 3a: Fragment of wall around enclosure in S1 , from the south.	9
Figure 3b: Enclosure of S2 with a section of ruined wall from the north.	9
Table 1: Historic Environment Sites located within the assessment area.....	10
Figure 4: Location Map showing Historic Environment Sites and assessment area.....	13
Table 2: Management Guidance for Historic Environment Sites	14

Executive Summary

1. A historic environment assessment was required by Mark Hamilton Landscape Services to inform a proposed planting scheme at Marbrack, near Carsphairn, Dumfries and Galloway. 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. Eight historic environment sites were identified and considered within this report. These are: two enclosures with associated sheep folds (**S1** and **S2**), two possible turf-walled houses (**S3** and **S4**), two sheepfolds (**S5** and **S7**) and two gravel pits (**S6** and **S8**).
3. Based on the evidence gathered for this assessment positive management has been recommended to safeguard sites **S1**, **S2**, **S5**, and **S7**.

Introduction

4. A historic environment assessment and survey was required by Mark Hamilton Landscape Services to inform a programme of tree planting in the vicinity of Marbrack, near Carsphairn, Dumfries and Galloway (centred on NS 598 941). These works were designed to inform on the nature, form and extent of any historic environment assets present within the defined areas, based on archival sources and site inspection undertaken 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 Mark Hamilton Landscape Services to address UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines (2011), specifically Good Forestry Practice Requirements 1 to 4.

Topographic and Geological Background

6. The assessment area is located 1.5km east of the village of Carsphairn. It comprises a single polygonal block of land, measuring approximately 353.2 ha in extent and located on the side of a glen running northeast-southwest. The southwest edge of the assessment area is adjacent to the B729 along the Waters of Dee. The assessment area skirts around Marbrack Cottage before taking in the southern and eastern slopes of Knockwhirn Hill and terminates at Poshagg Burn (Figure 4). Two sections were particularly targeted for investigation. The first was a group of lowland fields around Marbrack and Marbrae Farms. The second area was a collection of large fields on the lower slopes of Knochwhirn Hill. Each area measures 90 ha. in extent. The assessment area also included a number of linear field drains running north-south into the Polhay and Marbrack burns.
7. The assessment area can be characterised geologically as comprising lower (bedrock) geology of Portpatrick and Glenwhargen Formation Wacke. The southwestern portion of the assessment area has superficial deposits of Devensian – Diamicton Hummocky (moundy) Glacial Deposits, and the northeastern portion deposits of Diamicton Till. The assessment area comprises a number of fields containing pasture, bounded by a combination of post-and-wire fencing and stone walls.

Project Works

8. The programme of works agreed with Mark Hamilton Landscape Services comprised a desk-based assessment and walkover survey.
9. The desk-based assessment consulted resources within:
 - ❖ Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Collections (including Canmore, Scheduled Monuments and other designations & the National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP));
 - ❖ Dumfries and Galloway Archaeology Service Historic Environment Record (known archaeological sites);
 - ❖ National Library of Scotland (bibliographic records, estate plans, historic Ordnance Survey and pre-Ordnance Survey mapping); and

- ❖ Local museums, libraries and other archives (Old & New Statistical Accounts, local history books).
10. The walkover survey comprised:
- ❖ classification of the archaeological sites and monuments;
 - ❖ compilation of a written site description (objective measured description; subjective site interpretation; site condition; site evaluation [using FES categorisation guidelines]; and management recommendations if appropriate);
 - ❖ production of a photographic record (digital) of all sites; and
 - ❖ location of all archaeological site limits and elements by DGPS equipment (Leica GS50) allowing real-time correction to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.
11. All works complied with the UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

Historic Environment Baseline

12. The desk based assessment identified eight sites within the assessment area. None were protected by designation as a Scheduled Monument protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Previous Archaeological Works

13. No previous archaeological works have been carried out within the study area.

Prehistoric to Roman Land use

14. There is no evidence of occupation during the Neolithic, Bronze or Iron Age within the assessment area. There is a possible standing stone located approximately 500m to the south of the development area at Standing Stone Rig (Canmore ID: 63872). However, there is no evidence that the boulder was deliberately placed and its attribution as a standing stone is simply anecdotal. There is also a cremation cemetery 2.7km away on Bardennoch Hill (Canmore ID 63862). In addition, at Carminnows, a promontory fort (Canmore ID 64379) was located on the western back of Kendoon Loch, 2.5km to the east of the assessment area.
15. Despite the relatively low intensity of the land use evident across the assessment area and much of its surroundings, the limited survival of prehistoric field monuments as prominent features in the landscape is notable. The absence of such sites suggests either a consistent pattern of low-intensity land use extending back into this period, or occupation/use in a manner that has not resulted in the creation of discrete and identifiable field monuments.
16. Evidence for Roman activity is similarly lacking. No known or suggested Roman sites lie within the assessment area, and there are no known Roman sites in its vicinity. Roman activity in the uplands of southwest Scotland is as-yet poorly understood, despite there being a continuous array of military installations and an associated road network evident along the Solway coast. Arguably the nearest concentration of Roman sites occurring near the assessment area comprises the series of temporary camps and fort at Glenloch, some 32km to the southwest of the study area.

Medieval and Later Periods

17. No definitive early medieval or medieval features are located within the assessment area. Two early medieval cross slabs (SM1105) located on Bardennoch Hill, to the east of the previously mentioned cremation cemetery, are believed to date to the 8th or 9th century.
18. The village of Carsphairn, located 1.8km to the west of the assessment area, is first mentioned in 1635 when Charles I grants it to Robert Grierson of Lag, making Kirkcoun of Carsphairn into a Free Burgh. It is, however, possible that the village is significantly older and it may well date back to the medieval period.
19. Roy's map of 1752-55 is the earliest map that shows the assessment area in detail (Figure

- 1a). The southwestern end of the assessment area is shown as a series of large enclosures and the northeast section is open hillside. Marbrack farm is depicted as “Muirbraeck” and depicted as three buildings surrounded by three small enclosures. A larger farm is shown to the west of the assessment area named “Knock Gray”. The farm is a collection of four buildings surrounded by an enclosure. Unlike Muirbraeck, Knock Gray is also shown as having two areas of cultivated land. A number of other small farmsteads are located along the rivers to the east of the assessment area.
20. Thomson’s 1828 map (Figure 1b) shows a very similar picture to Roy’s. Marbrack farm is shown as “Murbrack” and Knockgrey farm is shown to the west surrounded by trees. An additional farmstead of “Burnfoot” is shown to the south of the assessment area. Thomson’s map also shows a road running northwest-southeast at the south of the assessment area in the same position as the modern B729.
21. Both the Old and New Statistical Accounts, compiled in the late 18th and mid-19th century respectively, describe the Parish of Carsphairn as primarily rural in nature and mainly focused on raising livestock, in particular sheep. There is very little change evidenced between the completion of the original account in 1792 and the second in 1845, although some of the land has been improved, mainly through the increased use of drainage. The main change in the parish was the opening of a lead mine at Woodhead (SM5184), 5km to the west of the assessment area.
22. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 2a)) shows the southwestern section of the study area as subdivided into polygonal fields. A road runs roughly northeast- southwest to the south. The farm shown on Thompson's map as “Burnfoot” is still depicted as a collection of buildings. The farm of Marbrack had expanded with the addition of a new courtyard farm to the west of the three buildings shown on Roy, which are also still depicted. The farms to the east of the northeast end of the assessment area are no longer shown. At the southern side of the assessment area, the land has been enclosed to form a group of large fields. These fields contain several sheepfolds and gravel pits (**S5**, **S6**, **S7** and **S8**). The northeastern portion of the assessment area remains unenclosed. It contains two enclosures (**S1** and **S2**). The enclosures are marked as “Old Fences”, indicating that they had fallen out of use before the 1860s. The sheepfolds however, appear to still be in use.
23. The farmsteads of Marbrack, Knockgray and Burnfoot are all listed in the Ordnance Survey Name Book. Marbrack farm is described as “A Farm house in good repair with out offices & a Farm of land attached the property of The Honb [Honourable] Colonel Cathcart Occupied by James Milligan” and Knockgray as “A farm house & offices in Good repair with a large farm of land Attached a considerable portion of which is Rocky Heathy pasture it is the property of Col [Colonel] Kennedy Clarke and occupied by J Wallace Esqr”. Burnfoot was said to consist of “Three cottages in middling repair Occupied by Agricultural Labourers, The property of Mr Grierson Esqr.. They are situated on the road side that leads from Carsphairn to Minnihive”.
24. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey shows much the same picture as the 1st edition (Figure 2b). The only notable changes are that gravel pits (**S5** and **S7**) and enclosures **S3** and **S4** are no longer shown. This suggests that that the gravel pits had fallen out of use between the surveying of the 1st and 2nd Ordnance Survey map editions. In addition, the enclosures may have been abandoned prior to the production of the second Ordnance Survey. This is likely to be connected to the improvements made to the land and changes in livestock keeping.
- Walkover Survey*
25. The walkover survey took place on a fine clear day. The assessment area was located approximately 2.5km west of the village of Carsphairn, Dumfries and Galloway. It consisted of a number of large enclosed fields running north from the Water of Deugh towards Knockwhirn Hill. The assessment area is currently used for grazing sheep. The area is enclosed with a mixture of stone walls and post and wire fences.

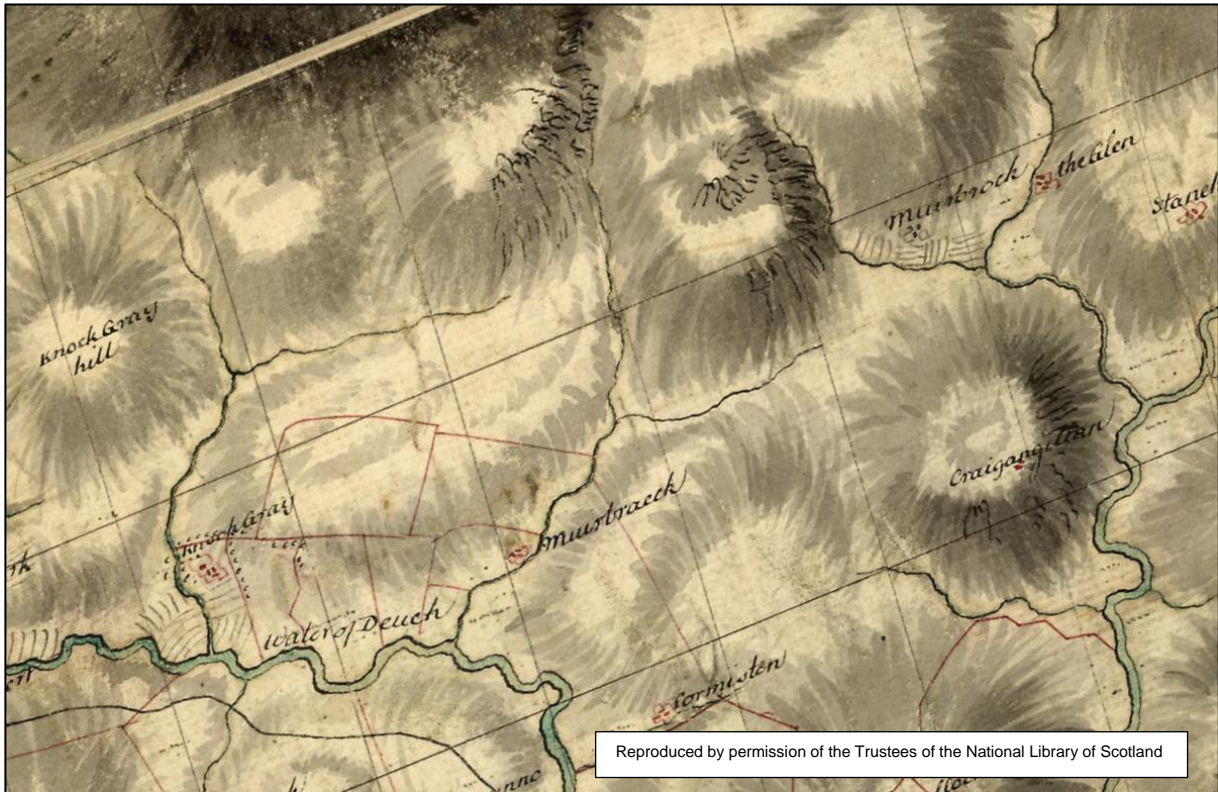


Figure 1a: Extract from Roy's Military Survey of 1752-5.



Figure 1b: Extract from Thomson 1832.

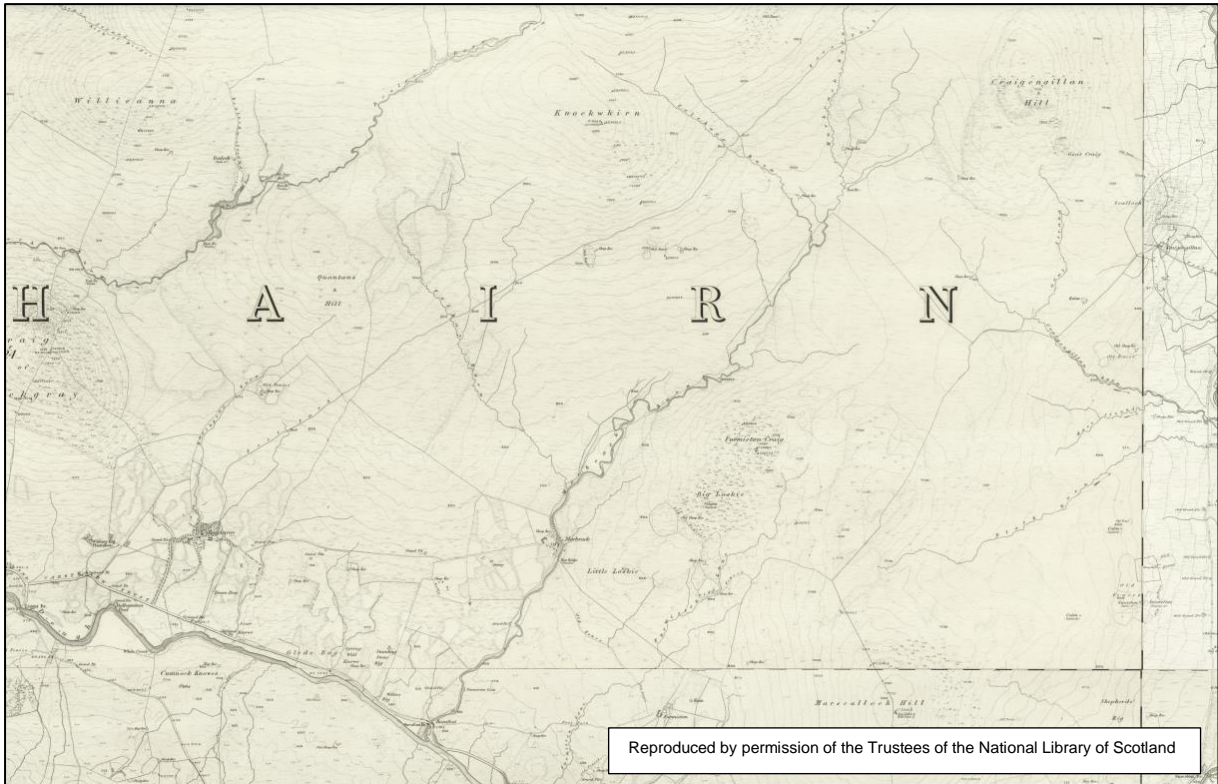


Figure 2a: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1853).

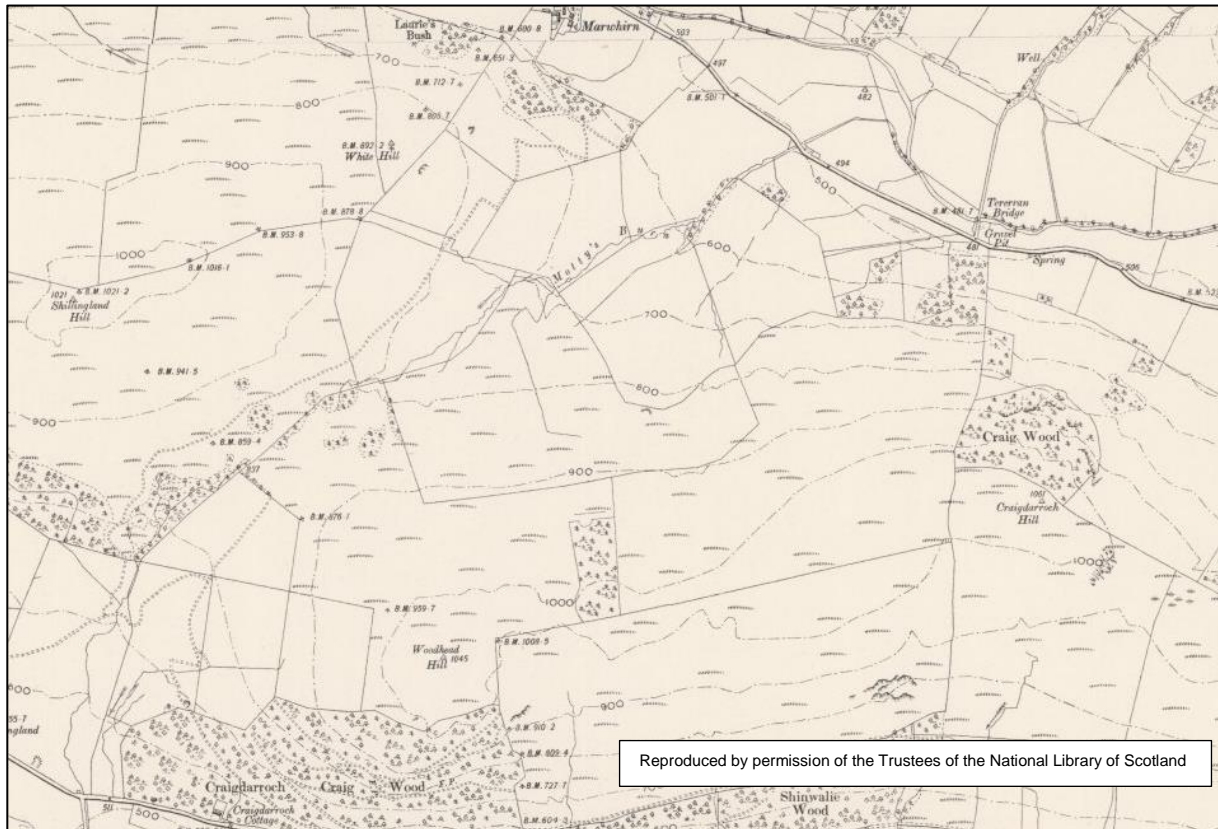


Figure 2b: Extract from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (1895).








Figure 3a: Fragment of wall around enclosure in **S1**, from the south.






Figure 3b: Enclosure of **S2** with a section of ruined wall from the north.

Table 1: Historic Environment Sites located within the assessment area

No	Site	HER Ref:	Description	NGR	Image from Site Inspection
S1	Marbrack Burn Enclosure	Canmore ID 177487 MDG15850	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>Two sub-circular enclosures and a short length of wall annotated 'Old Fences' are depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1853 but they are not shown on current mapping. An associated rectangular multi-cellular sheepfold is shown on both historical and modern mapping to the west of the enclosures. The sheepfold is visible on aerial imagery as is a possible circular enclosure.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The area of the enclosures was heavily overgrown with bracken. The basal course of a drystone wall, composed of sub-angular stone blocks, was located at the south side of the southern enclosure.</p> <p>The sheepfold was a multicellular structure defined by drystone walls oriented east-west. The structure was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 30m east-west by 25m transversely. The walls were composed of sub-angular grey stone blocks measuring between 0.2m by 0.2m by 0.1m and 0.6m by 0.3m by 0.4m. The walls had a maximum height of 1.3m wide and 0.6m wide.</p>	NX 60001 94845	
S2	Marbrack Burn Enclosure	Canmore ID 177488 MDG15851	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>An enclosure or field annotated 'Old Fences' and an attached sheepfold annotated 'Sheep Ree' are depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1853. One enclosure and a sheepfold are shown on the current mapping. The site is visible on aerial imaging as an oval enclosure with an associated circular stone sheepfold.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The circular sheepfold was located to the immediate west of a sub-circular enclosure. The sheepfold was of random rubble construction, comprising subangular grey blocks with no trace of mortar. The blocks measured between 0.2m by 0.2m by 0.1m and 0.6m by 0.3m by 0.4m in extent. The walls had a maximum height of 1.2m and were 0.55m wide with an entrance 1.5m wide in southwest quadrant. The sheepfold had a diameter of 13m and its interior was overgrown with a thick growth of tall grasses.</p> <p>The enclosure was defined by a poorly preserved drystone wall that measured 0.6m wide with a maximum height of 0.4m. The individual blocks that made up the walling were sub-angular in form and measured approximately 0.54m by 0.35m by 0.35m in extent. The enclosure measured 124m north-south by 64m transversely. The interior of the enclosure was short grass but no trace of rig and furrow could be seen.</p>	NX 60330 94812	

<p>S3</p>	<p>Polhay Burn House</p>	<p>Canmore ID 63876 MDG3474</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A round turf 'house' with a sheep shelter was noted during a field survey in 1987. It was described as measuring 15m by 6.5m in extent and contained a room at the south end. It lay east northeast of bridge piers carrying a stone track over the Polhay Burn and close to a 'triskele'-shaped sheep shelter. The round ended turf house measured 15m by 6.5m containing a room 8m by 7m with a small 2m wide cell at the south end. Nearby is a turf walled oval enclosure, possibly a store, crossed by one leg of the sheep shelter, and some 5m long, beside a slightly hollowed mound c.4m across. This house is not shown on any historical mapping or visible on aerial imagery.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The modern Y-plan sheep shelter was identified during the field survey. It was surrounded by a sub-circular area of short cropped grass. The bridge piers and track where not identified. In addition, no trace of the turf house could be located.</p>	<p>NX 59339 94541</p>	
<p>S4</p>	<p>Knockwhirn House</p>	<p>Canmore ID 64328 MDG3918</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A turf walled house was identified during field survey in 1987. A short distance east of a 'triskele' sheep shelter is an oval stone and turf walled house measuring 7m by 5m, with over 1.5m wide walls. There was a faintly turf outlined annexe attached to the south end. This house is not visible on modern aerial imagery and is not shown on the historical mapping.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The modern Y-plan sheep shelter was identified at the base of a steeply sloping section of hillside. It was surrounded by a large area of tall bracken and occasional natural bedrock outcrops. The turf walled house was not located during field survey.</p>	<p>NX 60441 95195</p>	
<p>S5</p>	<p>Marbrae Sheep Ree</p>	<p>- -</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A rectangular sheep ree is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1853 and also visible on modern Ordnance Survey mapping. The sheep ree can be seen in modern aerial imagery as a rectangular stone structure.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The sheep ree was located as a rectangular stone structure in very good repair. It was oriented northeast-southwest. The sheepfold measured 16m northwest-southeast by 12m transversely. The walls were 1.4m high by 0.6m wide. The walls were constructed from sub-angular grey stone blocks and were made from mortared random rubble. The entrance was 1.5m wide and located at the southeastern corner. A 15m long section of wall ran northwest-southeast from the southwestern corner of the structure towards the farm track. Inside the sheepfold was a small wood and corrugated metal and wooden structure. A small tree has also taken root there. The structure appeared to still be in use.</p>	<p>NX 58302 92099</p>	

<p>S6</p>	<p>Marbrae Gravel Pit</p>	<p>- -</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A circular gravel pit is shown on 1st edition ordnance survey map. It is not shown on later mapping and is not visible on modern aerial imagery.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The site was not located during field survey. The area consisted of undulating ground gradually sloping downhill to the south and covered with short cropped grass.</p>	<p>NX 58418 93220</p>	
<p>S7</p>	<p>Glede Bog Sheep Ree</p>	<p>- -</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A rectangular sheep ree is depicted within a rectangular enclosure on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1853 and 1895. It is visible on modern aerial survey as a rectangular stone structure.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>A square sheepfold was located during field survey levelled into the side of a hill. The sheepfold measured 13m on each side. The banks had a maximum depth 1.2m and were covered with a revetment of rectangular grey stone blocks. These blocks had an average size of 0.4m by 0.3m by 0.2m. The entrance to the sheepfold was The revetment was best preserved at the northwest and western sides of the sheepfold. To the north of the sheepfold was the remains of a rectangular enclosure measuring 16m east-west by 23m north-south surrounded by the bottom course of random rubble drystone wall.</p>	<p>NX 58624 93158</p>	
<p>S8</p>	<p>Marbrack Gravel Pit</p>	<p>- -</p>	<p>Desk Based Assessment</p> <p>A rectangular gravel pit is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey but not shown on the later mapping. It is visible on aerial imagery.</p> <p>Walkover Survey</p> <p>The gravel pit was seen as a sub-circular pit with a maximum depth of 2m. The pit measured 16m east-west by 20m transversely. The sides of the pit ranged from steeply sloping to vertical. The entrance to the pit was from the south side where it was level with the surrounding field.</p>	<p>NX 59043 43228</p>	

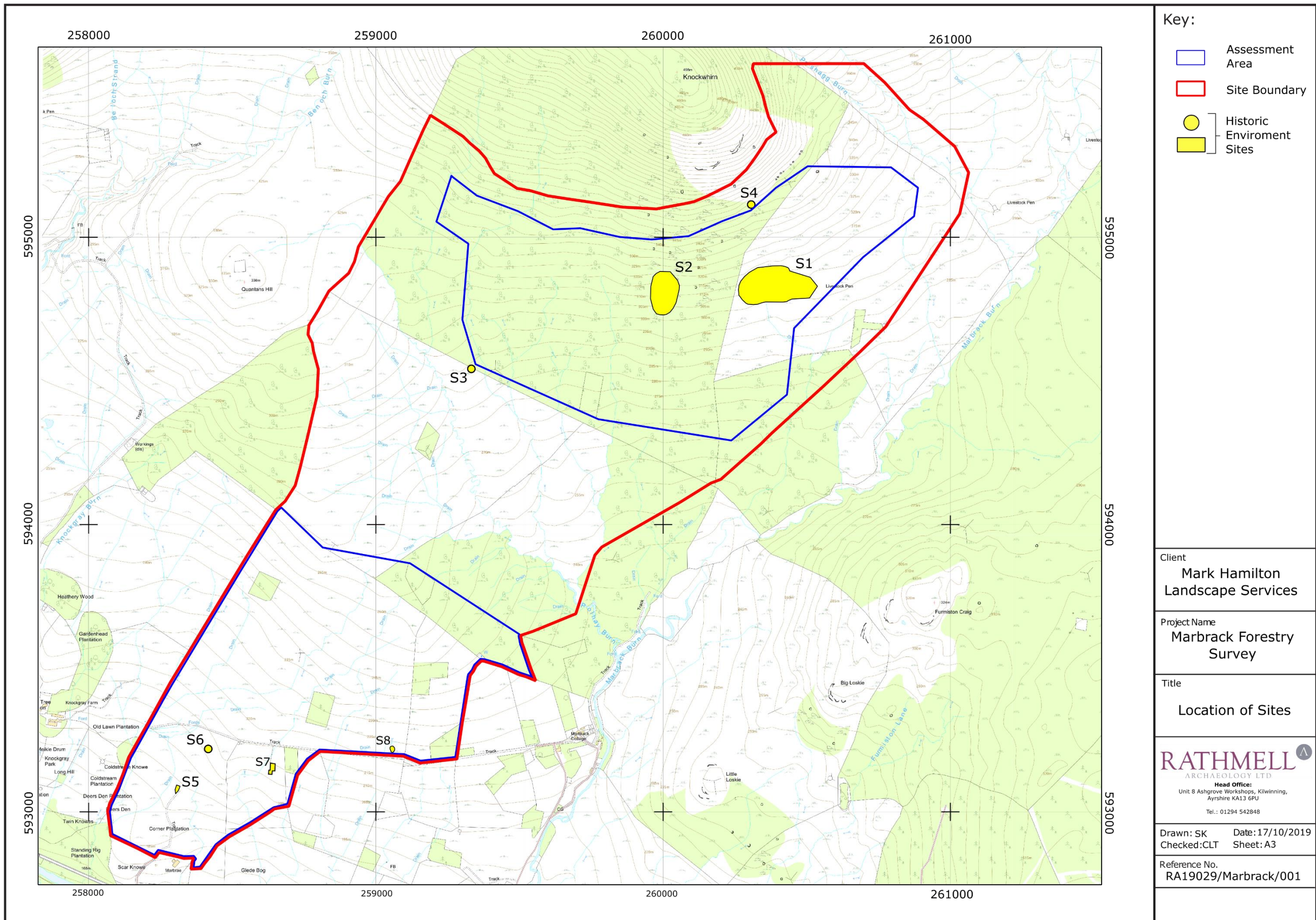


Figure 4: Location Map showing Historic Environment Sites and assessment area

26. The sheepfold **S1** was located as a multicellular stone-walled structure. The base of a stone wall associated with one of the enclosures shown in **S1** was also located during field survey (Figure 3a). No evidence of the second **S1** enclosure was found. A circular drystone stone sheepfold **S2** was located in association with an oval enclosure. The enclosure was defined by a poorly preserved drystone wall (Figure 3b).
27. Turf-walled houses **S3** and **S4** were not located during the field survey. **S3** was in an area of short cropped grass in the vicinity of a Y-plan sheep shelter. **S4** was also located near a Y-plan sheep shelter in an area of high bracken and occasional bedrock outcrops.
28. Sheepfolds **S5** and **S7** were located during the field survey. **S6** was a rectangular stone structure that appeared to still be in use. **S7** was a square structure levelled into the side of the hill in association with a ruined enclosure.
29. Gravel pit **S6** was not located during field survey. The area was an undulating field of short cropped grass. Gravel pit **S8** was located as a large circular pit with a maximum depth of 2m.

Management Guidance

30. The assessment identified eight historic sites within the Marbrack assessment area. 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. Enclosures **S1** and **S2** pre-date the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, which indicates that they date to at least the early 19th century. Therefore they represent an earlier phase of agricultural activity within the area. As such, they contribute to the historic character of the landscape. They have been ascribed Local significance and should be protected by a 5m buffer. Each should be retained within a managed clearing that is maintained as an open space.
32. **S3** and **S4** were not located during field survey and hence have been ascribed Other significance. In addition, gravel pit **S6** was also not located and has been ascribed Other significance. **No** action is recommended.
33. Sheepfolds **S5** and **S7** have both been given Local significance. In particular, **S7** is of unusual character in that it has been levelled into the hillside. Each should be protected by a 5m buffer and retained within a managed clearing that is maintained as an open space.
34. Gravel pit **S8** appears to have been relatively short-lived, as it is only shown on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey. It has been ascribed Other significance and **no** action is recommended.

Table 2: Management Guidance for Historic Environment Sites

No	Site	Significance	Management Guidance	UKFS HE Guidelines
S1	Marbrack Burn Enclosure	Local	Protection with a 5m buffer, managed as clearing and maintained as an open space.	GFPR 2 SFM 11,18
S2	Marbrack Burn Enclosure	Local	Protection with a 5m buffer, managed as clearing and maintained as an open space.	GFPR 2 SFM 11,18
S3	Polhay Burn Enclosure	Other	No action is recommended	-
S4	Knockwhirm	Other	No action is recommended	-

	Enclosure			
S5	Marbrae Sheep Ree	Local	Protection with a 5m buffer, managed as clearing and maintained as an open space.	GFPR 2 SFM 11,18
S6	Marbrae Gravel Pit	Other	No action is recommended	-
S7	Glede Bog Sheep Ree	Local	Protection with a 5m buffer, managed as clearing and maintained as an open space.	GFPR 2 SFM 11,18
S8	Marbrack Gravel Pit	Other	No action is recommended	-

SFM sustainable forest management. LR legal requirement. GFPR good forestry practice requirement

Conclusion

39. A historic environment assessment was required by Mark Hamilton Landscape Services to inform a programme of tree-planting near Marbrack, Dumfries and Galloway. This process identified eight Historic Environment Sites (Table 1).
40. Our management guidance has given protective measures to four of the sites. These recommendations are compliant with UKFS Historic Environment Guidelines.

References

Documentary

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

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