



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Millness Drumnadrochit

Upgrade of 11,000 volt OHL



Site Safeguarding

7 Duke Street Cromarty Ross-shire IV11 8YH

Tel / Fax: 01381 600491 Mobile: 07834 693378 Email: info@hi-arch.co.uk Web: www.hi-arch.co.uk

Registered in Scotland no. 262144 Registered Office: 10 Knockbreck Street, Tain, Ross-shire IV19 1BJ VAT No. GB 838 7358 80



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Report No.	HAS120204
Site Code	MND12
Client	SSE
OS Grid Ref	NH 3912 3110
HCAU / Planning Ref	N/A
Date	13/2/2012
Author	L McKinney

Summary

Safeguarding of sites was undertaken ahead of upgrade works to the 11,000 volt OHL overhead line at Millness, Drumnadrochit. The two sites were visited, photographed and described, then marked off with a 10m buffer zone. The work was completed on 10th February 2012.

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Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains; and to preserve these where possible and record where necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by Leonard McKinney. The report was edited by J Wood.

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Location

The sites lie each side of Upperton of Buntait which is at OS National Grid Reference NH 3912 3110 at a height of about 192 m above sea level.

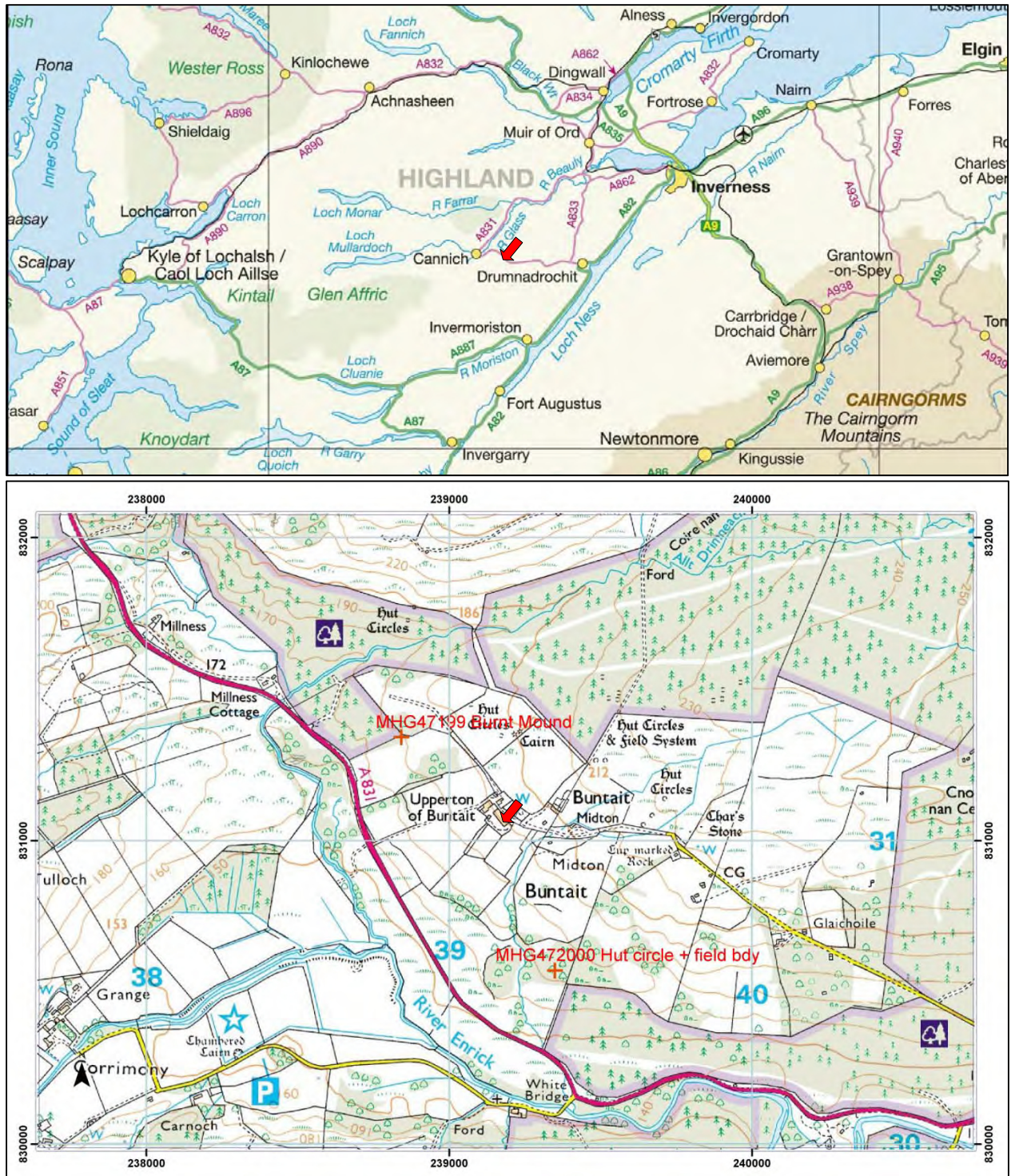


Figure 1 Site location

Introduction

Marking off of two sites was undertaken by Highland Archaeology Services Ltd in response to a requirement by SSE at Millness, Glenurquhart, Inverness-shire. The purpose was to identify and safeguard two archaeological features affected by the development.

The programme consisted of archaeological mitigation and recording in line with current legislation and Highland Council and Scottish Government planning policies and advice, and followed the methodology set out in a written proposal which was approved by the client and the Highland Council's Historic Environment Team before fieldwork¹.

Archaeology and policy background

There are many recorded archaeological sites in Glenurquhart including a large number dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages. In some cases there are extensive remains of former settlements and field systems, overlain by medieval and later townships. Recorded archaeology in this project area is shown in Figure 2 below.

The Electricity Act 1989², as amended by the Utilities Act 2000³, requires Electricity companies to preserve 'amenity' including the cultural heritage, and to mitigate impacts of new infrastructure works. The wider policy framework includes the Highland Council's *Structure Plan*⁴, and Scottish Government's *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP), issued in February 2010, which consolidates and supersedes the previous SPP and NPPG series. The fundamental principles underpinning all the above legislation and policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland's Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)⁵ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999).⁶

The Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards of the Institute for Archaeologists⁷ were applicable to this work.

¹ Wood, J 2012 *Millness Drumnadrochit: Upgrade of 11,000 volt OHL. Proposed Site Safeguarding* Highland Archaeology Services report HAS120203, Cromarty

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1989/ukpga_19890029_en_1

³ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/en/ukpgaen_20000027_en_1

⁴

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

⁵ www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf

⁶ <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

⁷ <http://www.archaeologists.net/>

Programme

At the request of the Highland Council's Historic Environment team (HCHET), SSE commissioned the marking off of two sites which might be impacted on by the proposed upgrading of overhead lines (OHL).

- A burnt mound (HHER MHG47199; NH 38839 31345) lying close to poles 16, 17, 18 and 19⁸.
- A hut circle and associated field bank (HHER MHG47200; NH 39349 30573) lying close to pole 2⁹.

The recommendation from the Highland Council's archaeologist was that these should be identified and clearly marked-out by an archaeologist (with a suitable buffer) so that impacts can be avoided (see Figure 2)

The sites were visited on 10th February 2012, and identified, recorded, and marked off using barrier tape.

Both sites survive largely as described by the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER), but there have been changes to their condition. This is to be expected as they were last visited in 1997 by The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)^{10&11}.

Burnt mound (HHER MHG47199) at NH 38839 31345

The burnt mound is described by the HHER as follows:

- This burnt mound is situated on the NW of an improved field about 350m NW of Upperton farm. It measures 8.5m from NE to SW by 4.5m transversely and 0.7m in height, and is partly obscured by field clearance⁹.

The dimensions have not changed a great deal (see plate1) as it is still measures 4.5m transversely, 0.7m in height but it has been truncated to c.8m along its NE to SW axis, due to animal erosion of its SE end (see plate 2). The field clearance noted on RCAHMS visit is still evident and does indeed obscure the mound as you approach it.

The site was marked off with canes and barrier tape, incorporating a 10m buffer zone from the nearest visible edge (see plate 3). This buffer zone runs underneath the existing overhead line, but should not be impacted directly by the line upgrading work as the site for the proposed new pole lies some 30m WSW of the mound.

⁸ <http://her.highland.gov.uk/SingleResult.aspx?uid=MHG47199>

⁹ <http://her.highland.gov.uk/SingleResult.aspx?uid=MHG47200>

¹⁰ <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/257370/details/cnoc+na+sgaile/>

¹¹ <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/257371/details/midton+buntait/>



Plate 1 General view of the burnt mound, looking SW (MHG47199)



Plate 2 View of burnt mound showing erosion at its SE end, looking NNW (MHG47199)



Plate 3 View of burnt mound as taped off, looking NNW (MHG47199)

Hut circle and associated field bank (HHER MHG47200) at NH 39349 30573

The HHER description is as follows:

- A hut-circle and a bank are situated in juniper and birch scrub about 700m SSE of Upperton Farm. The hut-circle measures 9.5m in diameter within a stony bank spread to 2.5m in thickness and 0.4m in height. The bank, which also forms a lynchet to the SSW of the hut-circle, runs roughly along the contour from ESE to WNW for a distance of 80m¹⁰.

This hut circle survives largely as described by the HHER, but the associated bank could not be identified with any certainty owing to the large numbers of birch trees growing in the area. This bank appears to be running away from the line of poles to be upgraded.

The dimensions of the hut circle have not changed, although it has become difficult to identify because of the trees growing out of the bank (see plate 4). The bank itself has become completely covered in rough grass save for a few stones that are still visible on the outer edge of the bank (see plate 5).

As mentioned above no evidence of a continuous lynchet could be found. In the surrounding area there are however several small grass-covered cairns. It may be that the lynchet recorded 15 years ago has since become segmented by animal erosion and no longer forms a continuous feature. In any case as mentioned above, the lynchet appears to run away from the area affected by the upgrading of the overhead line, so is unlikely to be affected.

This site was marked off with canes and barrier tape, allowing a 10m buffer zone from the nearest visible edge (see plate 6).



Plate 4 General view of hut circle showing trees growing out of the bank, looking NNW (*MHG47200*)



Plate 5 Exposed stone in the bank of the hut circle, looking E (*MHG47200*)



Plate 6 View of hut circle as taped off, looking NNW

Discussion

The results of the visit to both sites show that elements of both have been destroyed by erosion or obscured by vegetation growth. The burnt mound has been reduced in size by 0.5m at its SE end due to animal erosion and small amounts of sediments from the mound are now visible. Although the hut circle's physical dimensions remain the same the bank is now covered in grass and has numerous trees growing out of it. The associated bank cannot be identified with any certainty.

As the main elements of both sites are still visible, they were marked off allowing a 10m buffer from the nearest visible edge.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the site visit shows that whilst both sites have been damaged their main elements are still visible, and it was therefore possible to mark them off with a 10m buffer zone prior to the upgrading of the overhead line by SSE.

The method of marking-off was carried out on the understanding that upgrading works are likely to take place imminently. The tape is not designed to be left for an extended period and if overhead line work is delayed in this area the barrier should be checked and if need be strengthened or renewed.

Although not a matter for SSE, provided these features are safeguarded, as a general recommendation to the Highland Council we would draw attention to the ongoing erosion of the burnt mound,

especially the **exposure of sediments on its SE edge**. A small-scale survey and excavation might be advisable at some stage to monitor this and record any evidence before it is lost.

References

Canmore accessed at <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/>

Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER) accessed at <http://her.highland.gov.uk/>

The Scottish Government 2010. Scottish Planning Policy. Accessed at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf>

Wood, J (2012) *Millness Drumnadrochit, Upgrade of 11,000 volt OHL, Proposed Site Safeguarding*. Cromarty: Highland Archaeological Services. Report Number HAS120203

Appendix 1: Photographs

All photographs were taken by Leonard McKinney.

Photo	Looking	Taken from	Description
DSC033	E	10m W of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound
DSC034	E	10m W of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound
DSC035	NNW	10m SSE of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound, showing erosion at SE end of mound
DSC036	NNW	10m SSE of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound, showing erosion at SE end of mound
DSC037	SW	8M Ne of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound
DSC038	SW	8m NE of burnt mound	General shot of burnt mound
DSC039	NNW	20m SSE of burnt mound	View of burnt mound once taped off
DSC040	NNW	20m SSE of burnt mound	View of burnt mound once taped off
DSC041	NNW	10m SSE of hut circle	General shot of hut circle
DSC042	NNW	10m SSE of hut circle	General shot of hut circle
DSC043	SSE	10m NNW of hut circle	General shot of hut circle
DSC044	SSE	10m NNW of hut circle	General shot of hut circle
DSC045	E	5m W of hut circle	Exposed stone in bank of hut circle
DSC046	E	5m W of hut circle	Exposed stone in bank of hut circle
DSC047	NNW	30m SSE of hut circle	View of hut circle once taped off
DSC048	NNW	30m SSE of hut circle	View of hut circle once taped off

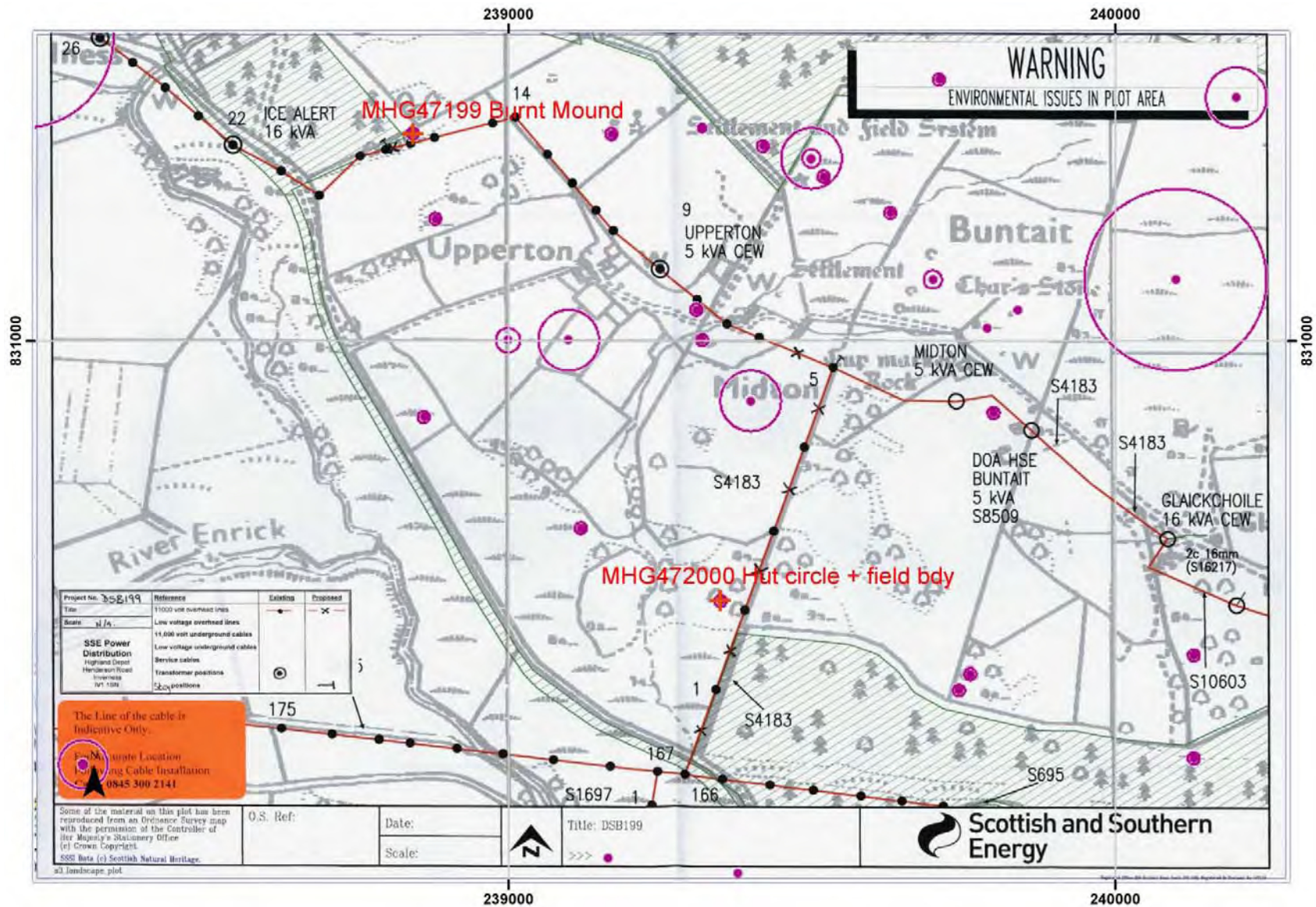


Figure 2 SSE plan showing lines, proposed new poles (X) and archaeology (HHER)