



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Archaeological Desk-Based and Walkover Survey



Proposed Alness and Cambusmore Electricity Substations

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Summary

An archaeological desk assessment and walk-over survey were carried out to identify sites and features (including Scheduled Monuments) that might be affected by the construction of new electricity substations at Alness, Ross and Cromarty and Cambusmore, Sutherland. Seven alternative sites at Alness, and four sites at Cambusmore were checked to assist in site selection and design processes. This forms part of the Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment for the Beaulay to Dounreay 275kv Line Phase 2 Reinforcement Project.

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Acknowledgements

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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 fieldwork 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.

Location

Four sites were checked at Cambusmore, centred at approximate OS Grid reference NH 646 973

Seven sites were checked north-west of Alness, centred at approximate OS Grid reference NH 632 710.

The 275kv electricity line runs for about 154 Km from Dounreay on the north Caithness coast at approx OS grid ref NC979 666 to Balblair, near Beaulieu at approx. NH 507 447.



Figure 1 Site locations.

Black line shows approx. route of 275kv Dounreay – Beaulieu Transmission line.

Introduction

An archaeological walk-over survey was undertaken by Highland Archaeology Services Ltd to identify and record any archaeological features which might be affected by the construction of electricity substations at Alness and Cambusmore. The work forms part of the Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment for the Beaulieu to Dounreay 275kv Line Phase 2 Reinforcement Project

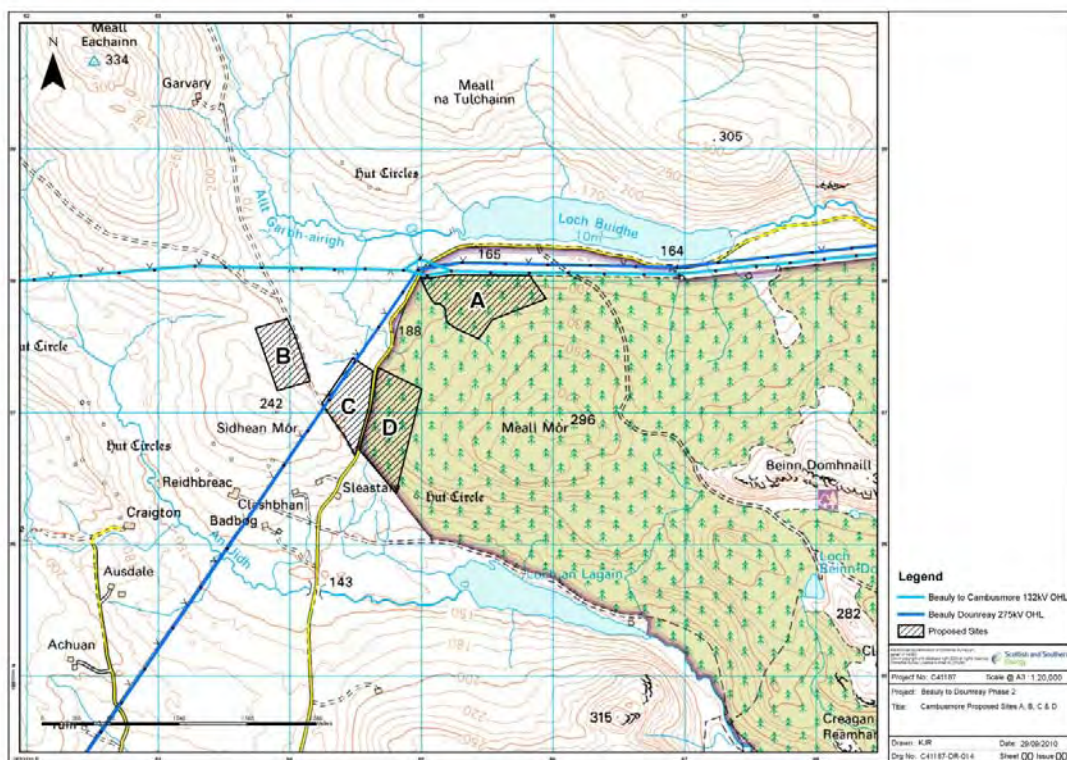
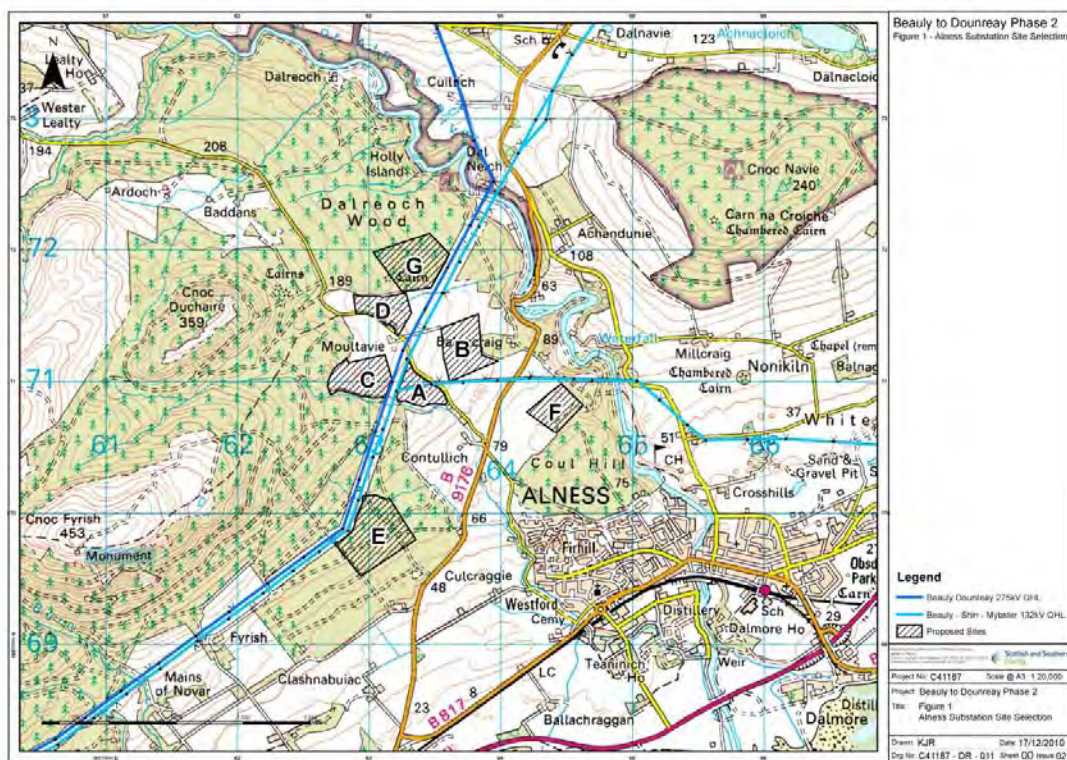


Figure 2 Survey Areas: Alness (above) and Cambusmore (below)

Background

Policy

The Electricity Act 1989¹, as amended by the Utilities Act 2000², requires Electricity companies to preserve ‘amenity’ including the cultural heritage, and to minimise impacts of new infrastructure works. The wider planning and policy framework includes the Highland Council’s *Structure Plan*³, and the Scottish Government’s *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP), issued in February 2010, which consolidates and supersedes the previous SPP and NPPG series⁴.

The fundamental principles underpinning UK and Scottish 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

Archaeology

Both the Alness or Cambusmore areas have been settled since the end of the last Ice Age. Although there had not been any recent systematic archaeological survey of either, a number of sites have been recorded over the years.

At Alness, a Neolithic carved stone ball was reported as found at Contullich farm in 1907. Other features in the vicinity of the possible substation sites include Bronze Age burial cairns (two are Scheduled Monuments); cist burials; a medieval castle and post-medieval sites.

At Cambusmore there are Bronze Age round houses and field systems as well as medieval or later settlements and shielings.

The objectives of the present project were to clarify how far these recorded features might be impacted by the construction of substations; identify any previously unrecorded sites and features and areas of archaeological potential; and propose mitigation measures.

Programme

¹ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1989/ukpga_19890029_en_1

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/en/ukpgaen_20000027_en_1

³ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/8>

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

⁶ The Burra Charter is accessible online at <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

A desk-based assessment and walk-over survey were carried out between 24 February and 4 March 2011, in accordance with Institute for Archaeologists standards and the Highland Council Archaeology Unit's (HCAU) Development Guidance.

Following a check of all relevant archaeological and historical records accessible locally or online, the writer visited each of the proposed development sites to check for visible archaeology and areas of potential buried archaeology.

Results

No recorded archaeological features lie within the areas apart from a possible burnt mound (F2 below) in Alness Area F (see Figures 3 and 4 below). The 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps, surveyed in 1874-5, were checked as was Roy's map of 1747-55, but no features were noted within the proposed areas that are not shown on modern maps. The Statistical Accounts⁷ and the current aerial photographs⁸ were checked online but revealed no further information.

At Alness, there is a scheduled cairn approximately 50m outside the south-western boundary of Area G (MHG8013; Scheduled Monument 5192: Moultaivie, cairn 450m N of). If Area G is chosen, associated buried archaeology could possibly be present within this area and a watching brief should be maintained during stripping.

The cairn was visited by the Ordnance Survey in 1967 and described as follows:

The remains of a heavily robbed cairn, with surrounding bank. It is situated on false crest of an east-facing spur in a new forestry plantation. The cairn measures c10m diameter and 1m maximum height; and its S arc is still retained by a kerb of small boulders. It is centrally placed within a circular stony bank 15.5m crest to crest, and 2m wide by 0.5m high, which is destroyed on E side. There is no evidence of an internal ditch, although there is a hollow, probably a later mutilation, in SE between cairn and bank, in which lies a flag-stone.

A Wessex type cairn situated in the false crest of an eastern span in Dalverds wood at a height of 500ft OD. It consists of a bowl-type cairn measuring c.11m in diameter and 1m in height with a massive retaining kerb, surrounded by a substantial stone bank measuring 15.5m centre to centre, mutilated in the E side heavily overgrown with firs and heather.

Another site recorded close to the cairn (MHG8017) refers only to cists etc found 'at Moultaivie' and is highly uncertain.

At Cambusmore, to the south of Area C lies Sleastary, a deserted settlement of post-medieval and probably medieval date; and south-east of Area D bronze Age / Iron Age hut circles and associated features have been recorded in the forest, but these should not be affected.

⁷ <http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/>

⁸ <http://www.getmapping.com>

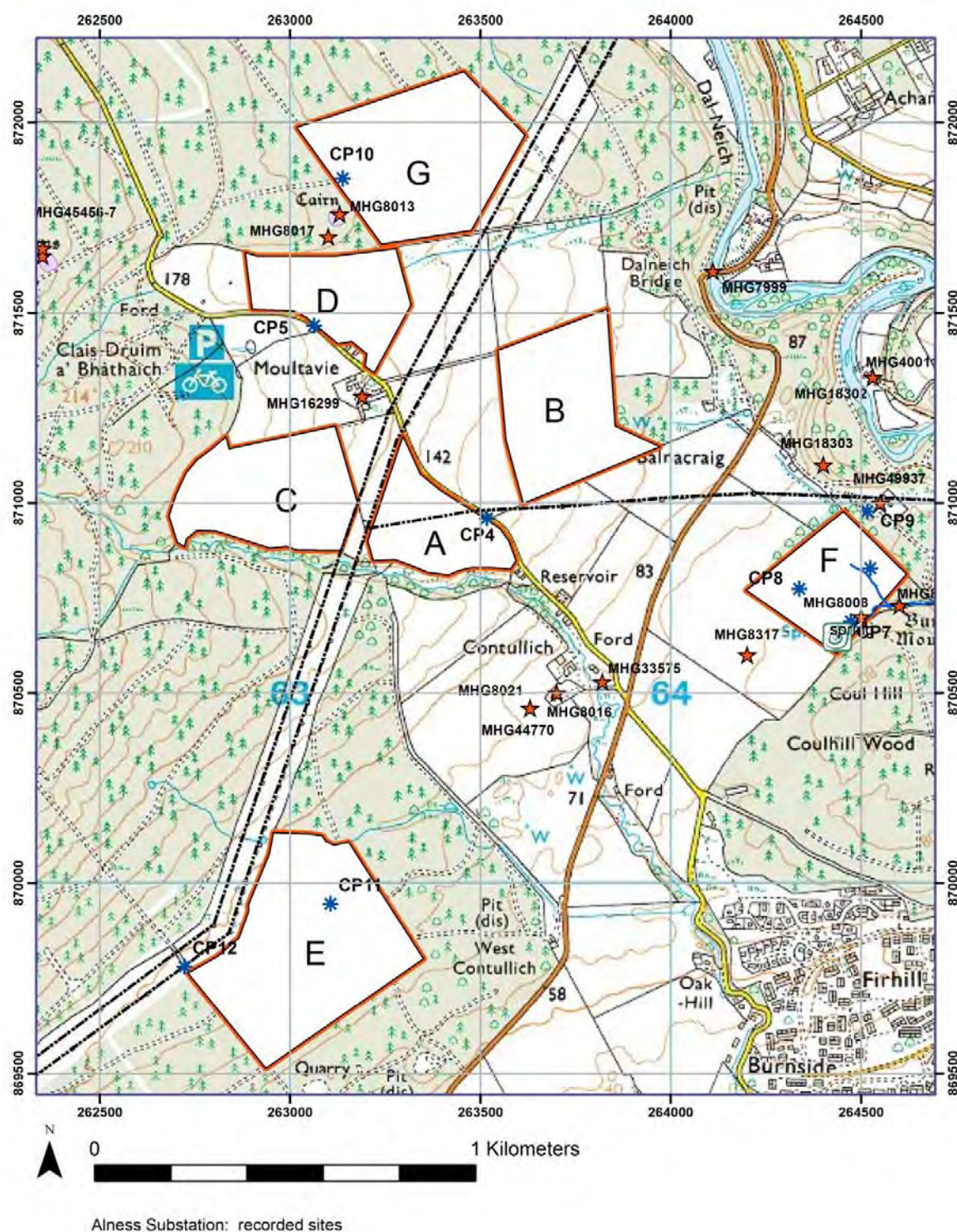
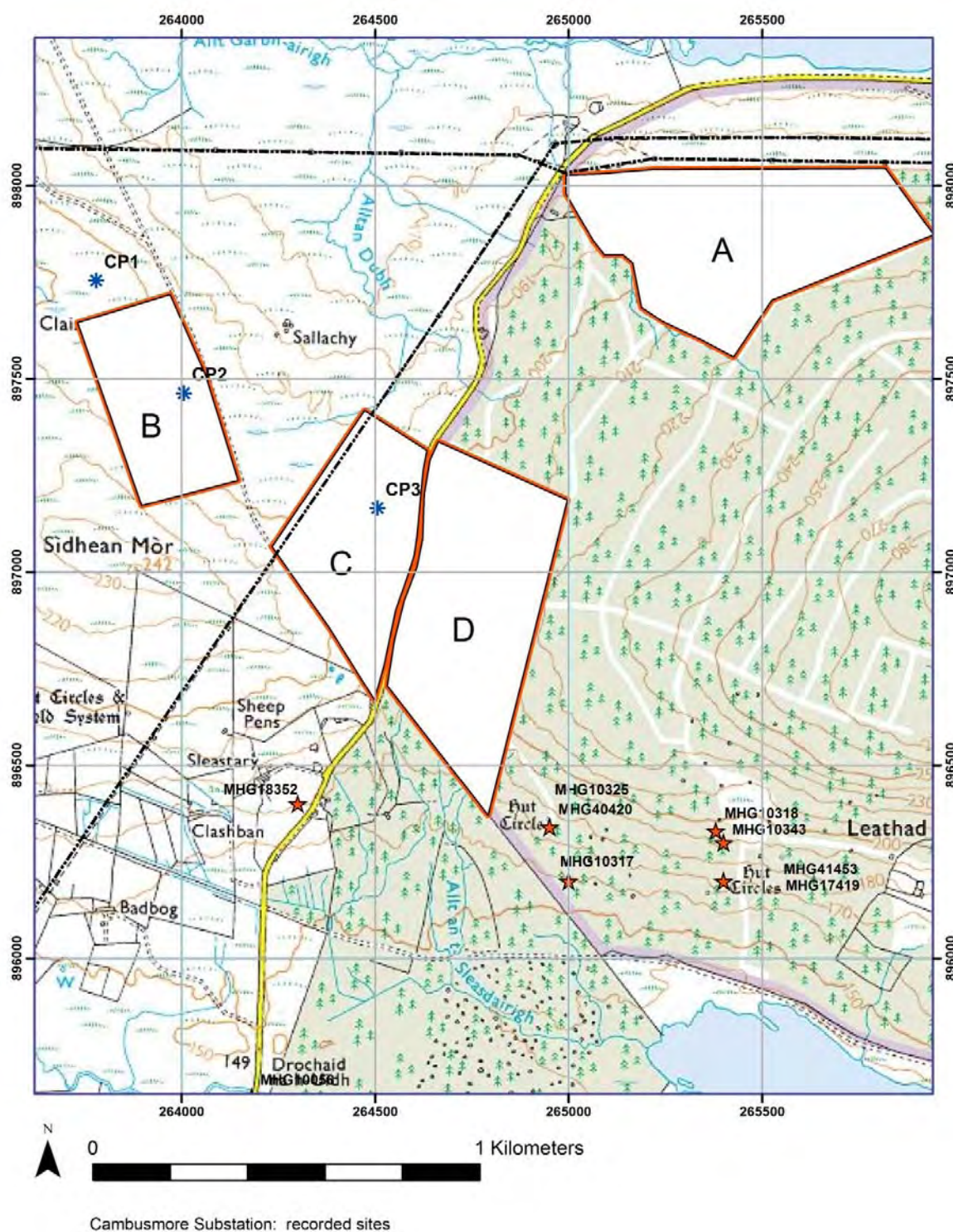


Figure 3 Recorded sites: Alness



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Figure 4 Recorded sites: Cambusmore

Alness

Area A

This is improved arable land in use for cereals. No archaeological features were visible.

Area B

This is improved arable land, part of which is in use for young trees. No archaeological features were visible.

Area C

This is improved arable land in use for cereals. No archaeological features were visible.

Area D

This is partly-improved pasture land. No archaeological features were visible.

Area E

This is mature commercial forest. The northern part, perhaps a third of the whole, has been clear felled. The western end was impenetrable owing to dense undergrowth but for the most part it was possible to check and confirm that no archaeological features were visible, apart from former quarry workings which are shown on the current OS mapping.

Area F

This is rough pasture land on the spring line, and wet in places. On the south there are substantial tree-covered eskers.

A fenced-off spring, apparently a private water supply, is sited in the field and to its south is a buried 20th c. reservoir. Beside this on both sides are considerable field clearance heaps which appear modern, but some might conceal footings of former buildings (See plate 2).

A Bronze Age Burnt Mound has been recorded by the stream near the southern edge of this site. This was located, but found to be covered by trees, grass and other vegetation. No burned material could be seen (See plate 2).

A group of ponds on the western edge of this field has recently been landscaped and re-formed, apparently as a wildlife habitat.

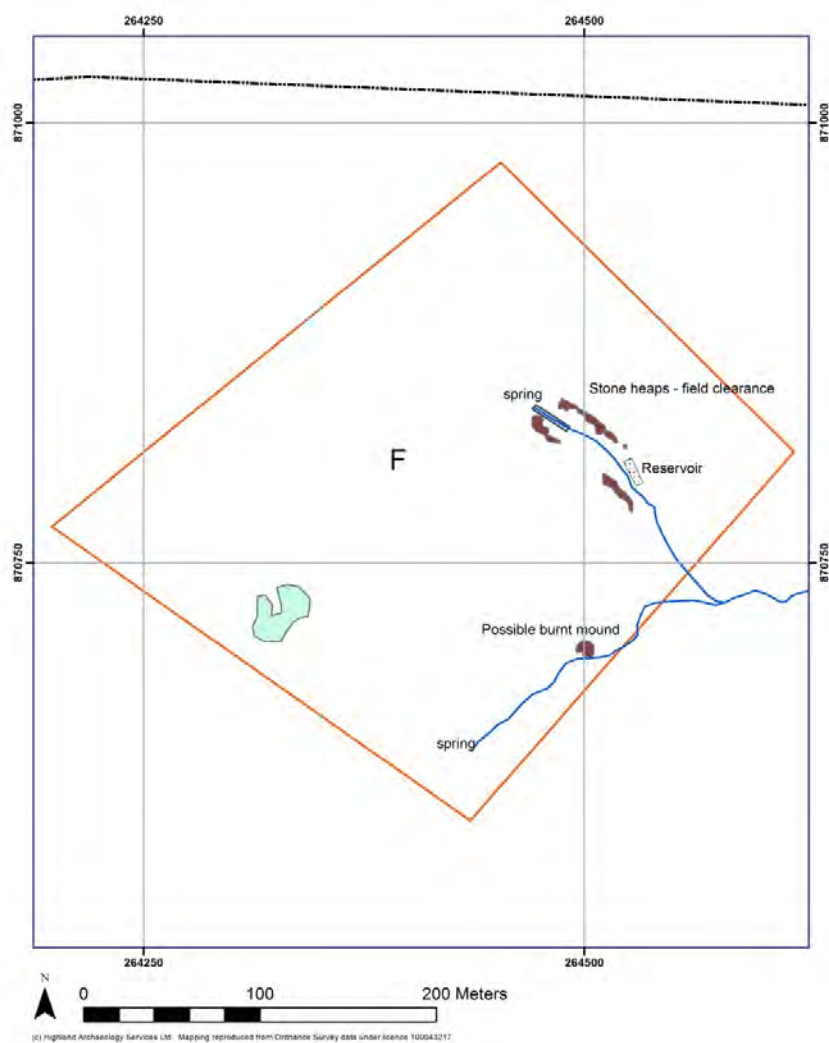
**Figure 5 Area F**



Plate 1 Feature 1, Area F (Field clearance)



Plate 2 Feature 2, Area F: Possible burnt mound (HHER MHG8008)

Area G

This is mature commercial forest, but accessible. No archaeological features were visible.



Plate 3 View (E) across Cambusmore Areas B, C, D, showing peat cutting in centre. Areas A and D are within the forest.

Cambusmore

Area A

This area was found to be densely planted with a mature but apparently un-thinned crop of commercial conifer forest. The trees have been planted on land that had been prepared with a forestry plough. It was inaccessible, and it seems likely that any archaeological sites within the forest will have been severely damaged.

Area B

This is an area of open heather moorland which has been cut for peat over many years and one currently active peat cutting was noted. Outcrops of bedrock are visible. No archaeological features were recorded.

Area C

This is another area of open heather moorland, alongside the public road. No archaeological features were noted.

Area D

Like Area A, this area was found to be densely planted with a mature but apparently un-thinned crop of commercial conifer forest. The trees have been planted on land that had been prepared with a forestry plough. It was inaccessible, and it seems likely that any archaeological sites within the forest will have been severely damaged.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There would appear to be few archaeological concerns with these sites. There are no recorded sites within them apart from the possible burnt mound in Area F (HHER MHG 8008), which should be safeguarded as a precaution. The field clearance heaps to the north of the spring might possibly conceal footings of buildings so if these are to be affected this possibility should be investigated. Any of them could contain buried evidence which cannot be detected by a walk-over survey, so it would be advisable that a further check be made when the chosen site is stripped.

Appendix: Photographs

Photo No.	Location (camera point)	Direction	Subject	Date
DSC_0003	CP1	NE	Cambusmore - View across area towards Loch Buidhe (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0004	CP1	ENE	Cambusmore - View across area (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0005	CP1	E	Cambusmore - View to area A (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0006	CP1	SE	Cambusmore - View across areas B, C, D (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0007	CP1	S	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0008	CP2	NE	Cambusmore - View across area towards Loch Buidhe (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0009	CP2	ENE	Cambusmore - View to area A (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0010	CP2	E	Cambusmore - View across area (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0011	CP2	SE	Cambusmore - View across areas B, C, D (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0012	CP2	S	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0013	CP2	SSW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0014	CP2	SW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0015	CP2	WSW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0016	CP2	W	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0017	CP2	WNW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0018	CP2	NW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0019	CP2	NNW	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0020	CP2	N	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0021	CP2	NNE	Cambusmore - View across area B (panorama)	01/03/2011
DSC_0022	CP3	W	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011

Photo No.	Location (camera point)	Direction	Subject	Date
DSC_0023	CP3	NW	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0024	CP3	N	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0025	CP3	NNE	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0026	CP3	NE	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0027	CP3	ENE	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0028	CP3	E	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0029	CP3	ESE	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0030	CP3	SE	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0031	CP3	S	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0032	CP3	SSW	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0033	CP3	SW	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0034	CP3	WSW	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0035	CP3	W	Cambusmore Area C- panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0036	CP4	SE	Alness - Panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0037	CP4	E	Alness - Panorama (Area B)	01/03/2011
DSC_0038	CP4	ENE	Alness - Panorama (Area B)	01/03/2011
DSC_0039	CP4	NE	Alness - Panorama (Area B)	01/03/2011
DSC_0040	CP4	N	Alness - Panorama (Area B)	01/03/2011
DSC_0041	CP4	NNW	Alness - Panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0042	CP4	NW	Alness - Panorama	01/03/2011
DSC_0043	CP4	W	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0044	CP4	WSW	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0045	CP4	SW	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0046	CP4	S	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0047	CP4	SSE	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0048	CP4	SE	Alness - Panorama (Area A)	01/03/2011
DSC_0049	CP5	SE	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0050	CP5	ESE	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0051	CP5	E	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0052	CP5	NE	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0053	CP5	N	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0054	CP5	NW	Alness - Panorama (Area D)	01/03/2011
DSC_0055	CP6	NNW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0056	CP6	NW	Alness - Panorama (Area F) showing F1	03/03/2011
DSC_0057	CP6	W	Alness - Panorama (Area F) showing F1	03/03/2011
DSC_0058	CP6	SW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0059	CP6	S	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0060	CP6	SE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0061	CP6	E	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011

Photo No.	Location (camera point)	Direction	Subject	Date
DSC_0062	CP6	ENE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0063	CP6	NE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0064	CP6	NNE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0065	CP6	N	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0066	CP7	NE	Alness Area F: F2 (Burnt mound)	03/03/2011
DSC_0067	CP8	SSW	Wildlife Ponds	03/03/2011
DSC_0068	CP8	SSE	Wildlife Ponds	03/03/2011
DSC_0069	CP8	SE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0070	CP8	E	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0071	CP8	ENE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0072	CP8	NE	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0073	CP8	N	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0074	CP8	NW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0075	CP8	W	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0076	CP8	WSW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0077	CP8	SW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0078	CP8	SSW	Alness - Panorama (Area F)	03/03/2011
DSC_0079	CP9	ESE	Alness - existing substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0080	CP9	E	Alness - existing substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0081	CP9	ENE	Alness - existing substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0082	CP9	NE	Alness - new road to substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0083	CP9	N	Alness - new road to substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0084	CP9	NW	Alness - new road to substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0085	CP9	W	Alness - new road to substation	03/03/2011
DSC_0086			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0087			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0088			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0089			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0090			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0091			(deleted)	03/03/2011
DSC_0092	CP10	ESE	Alness (Area G)	03/03/2011
DSC_0093	CP10	E	Alness (Area G)	03/03/2011
DSC_0094	CP10	NE	Alness (Area G)	03/03/2011
DSC_0095	CP10	NW	Alness (Area G)	03/03/2011
DSC_0096	CP11	N	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0097	CP11	NW	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0098	CP11	W	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0099	CP11	SSW	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0100	CP11	SSE	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011

Photo No.	Location (camera point)	Direction	Subject	Date
DSC_0101	CP11	SE	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0102	CP11	ESE	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0103	CP11	E	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0104	CP11	ENE	Alness (Area E)	03/03/2011
DSC_0105	CP12	SW	Alness - Panorama: view along line	03/03/2011
DSC_0106	CP12	S	Alness - Panorama	03/03/2011
DSC_0107	CP12	SE	Alness - Panorama - Boundary of Area E	03/03/2011
DSC_0108	CP12	E	Alness - Panorama - Boundary of Area E	03/03/2011
DSC_0109	CP12	ENE	Alness - Panorama: view along line	03/03/2011
DSC_0110	CP12	NE	Alness - Panorama: view along line	03/03/2011
DSC_0111	CP12	NNE	Alness - Panorama	03/03/2011
DSC_0112	CP12	NNW	Alness - Panorama	03/03/2011
DSC_0113	CP12	WNW	Alness - Panorama	03/03/2011
DSC_0114	CP12	W	Alness - Panorama	03/03/2011
DSC_0115	CP12	WSW	Alness - Panorama: view along line	03/03/2011

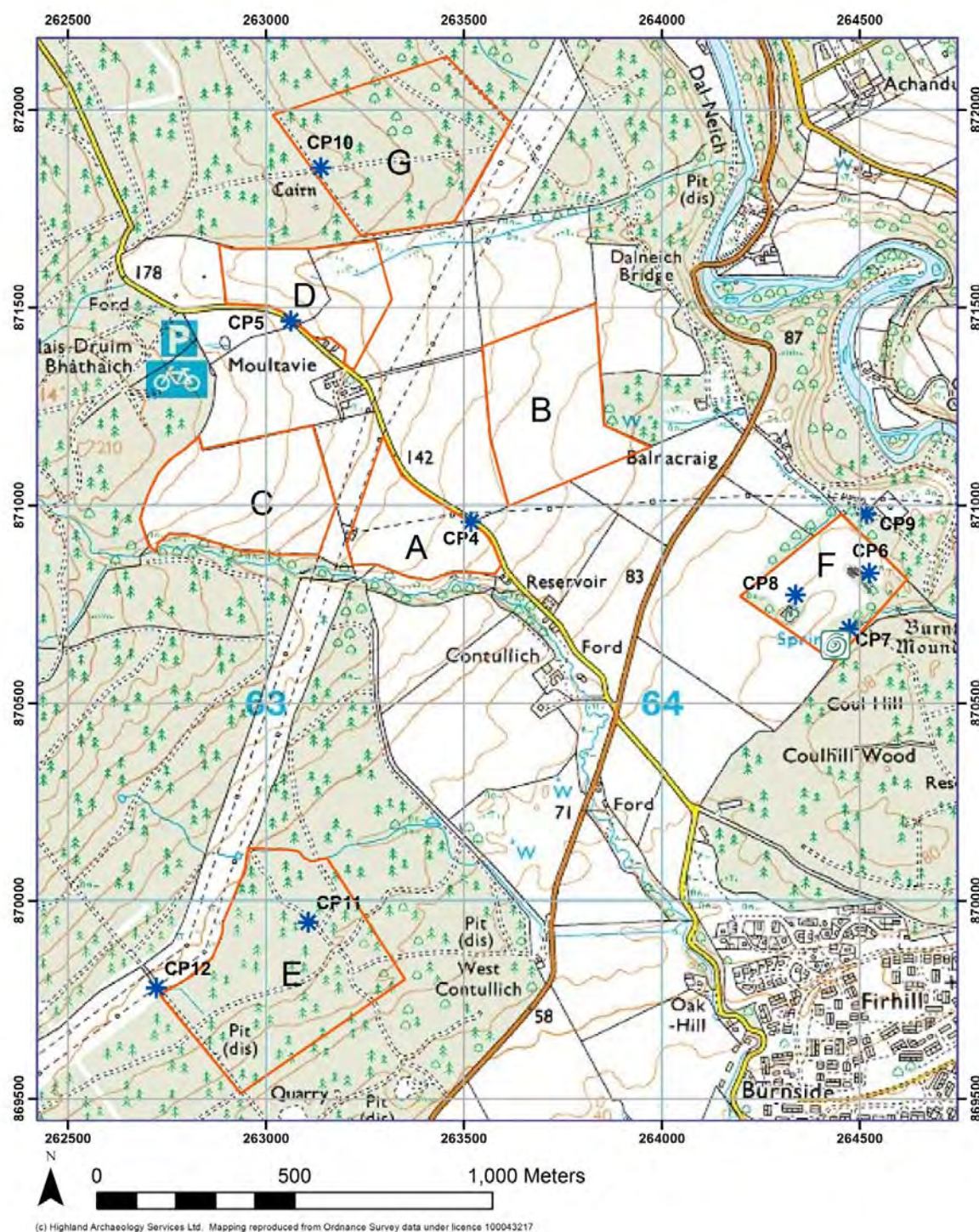


Figure 6 Camera points - Alness

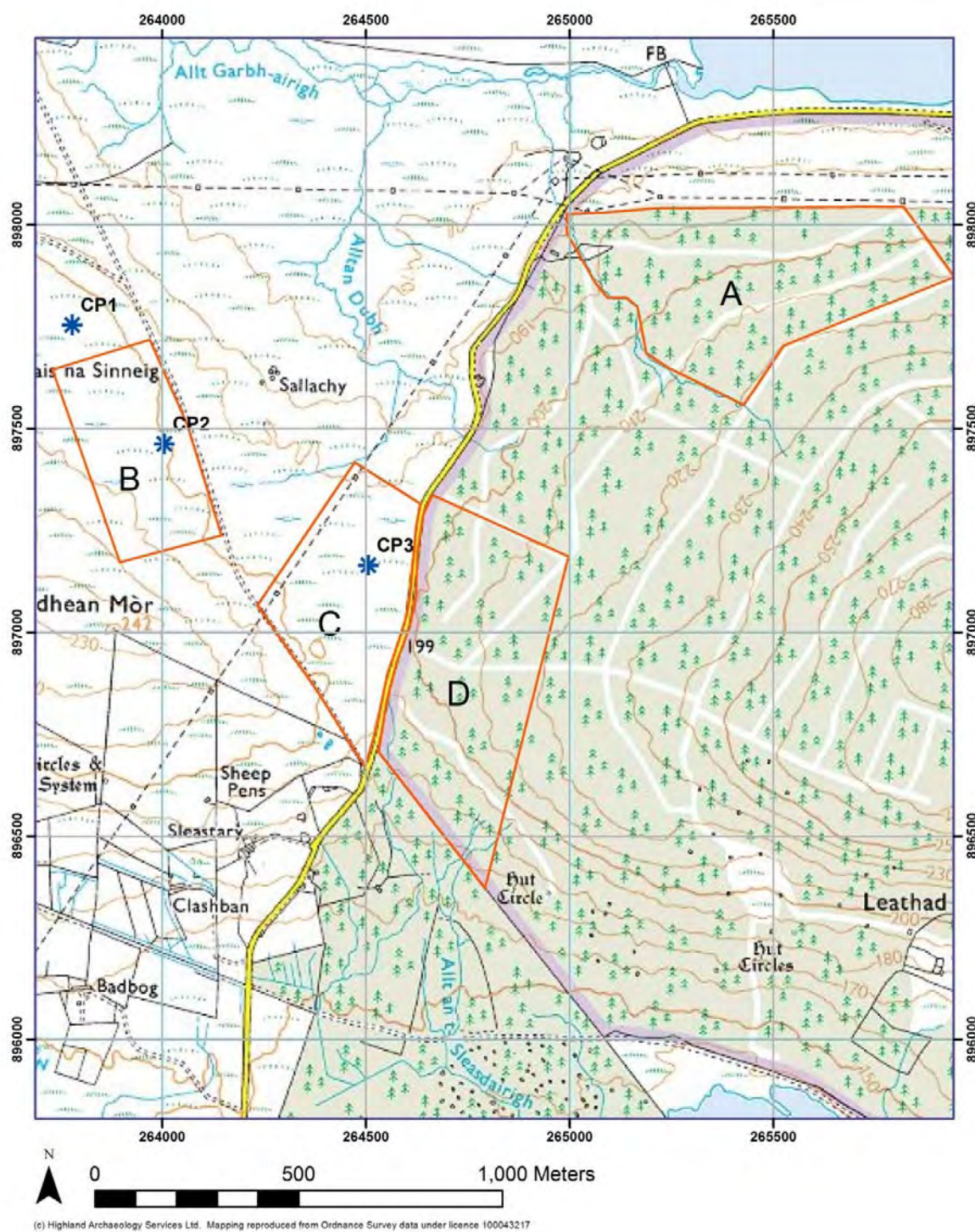


Figure 7 Camera points - Cambusmore