

Scotia *Archaeology*

**REPORT
ON BEHALF OF
MR FRANK McGIBBON**

**EASTER CAMGHOURAN
LOCH RANNOCH**

**Report of
archaeological evaluation
June 2011**

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INTRODUCTION

Perth & Kinross Council granted planning consent to Mr Frank McGibbon to erect two dwelling houses with vehicular access at Camghouran, near Rannoch, Perthshire. Plot 6 (Planning Reference number 09/01825/FUL) lies some 100m east of Mid Camghouran and adjacent Plot 7 (Planning Reference number 09/00671/FUL) is located a short distance further east.

The sites of these proposed dwellings lie within the limits of the former township of Camghouran. On the recommendation of its archaeological advisers, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), the council attached conditions that, prior to the commencement of development work, any upstanding remains associated with the township and which might be endangered by this project should be recorded and a field evaluation of the two plots undertaken to assess whether any significant archaeological record survived at these sites. The evaluation was to comprise the excavation of a series of trial trenches spread over the two plots, particularly in those areas likely to be disturbed by the development process.

Terms of Reference relating to this investigation were supplied by PKHT. The archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Historical Environment Policy and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) whose contents were based on the requirements set out in the Terms of Reference. Copies of the WSI, produced by Scotia Archaeology, were forwarded to PKHT and Mr McGibbon. The scheme was agreed by Perth & Kinross Council's Head of Planning and Building Control before fieldwork began.

The results of the field survey and evaluation could have resulted in a subsequent programme in which a larger area would have been investigated or the surviving record preserved in situ.

THE SITE

The two plots are located a short distance to the east of the Allt Camghouran and 600m from the south shore of Loch Rannoch and 12km west of Kinloch Rannoch. The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map of 1867 depicts the township of Camghouran straddling the burn and comprising 32 roofed, four partially roofed and nine unroofed buildings together with three kilns, several enclosures and a head-dyke. Many of these structures are still visible as ruins, spread over a wide area around the development site, around the more recent settlements of East, Mid and West Camghouran.

On the evidence of the roofless structures shown in the first edition OS map, the township dates from before the mid-19th century and it was thought possible that its origins lie in the medieval or early post-medieval periods. As a consequence, the evaluation was intended to test whether the remains of any pre-19th-century structures or features survived within the development areas.

The two plots are contiguous and are situated within pastureland which slopes gently down through well-drained fields towards Loch Rannoch to the north and upwards through much rougher ground to Rannoch Forest, a large area of commercial forestry to the south. In the immediate vicinity of the site there are several patches of very boggy ground but also the remains of Camghouran township.

THE EVALUATION

The evaluation and recording were undertaken on 13th June 2011 by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology.

The trenches were all 2m wide and, although the Terms of Reference state that none should be longer than 15m, some of those within Plot 6 were slightly longer in order to take advantage of those areas most likely to be affected by the construction of the house, its garage and septic tank.

The stratigraphic record was essentially the same throughout every trench in both plots. Excavation, using a toothless ditching bucket attached to a large mechanical excavator, continued until undisturbed glacial deposits were reached. Below vegetation of coarse grass was 0.1-0.4m of dark brown, humic topsoil containing some pebbles and boulders. This gave onto glacial till which varied in colour from grey to dark orange and comprised gravel, pebbles and boulders, some of them quite large. In more waterlogged parts of the site there were patches of dark brown to black peat.

Plot 6

Plot 6 covers an area of 3,463m², the footprint of the house proposed for this plot being fairly central within it, at NN 55158 56030. Planning consent was granted on the condition that the new house would be built over the footprint of a ruined structure, part of Camghouran township. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding between the architect and client resulted in that structure being totally removed before it was possible to record its remains.

A total of six trenches were opened within Plot 6. They were concentrated in a fairly tight arrangement because much of the rest of the Plot was either well away from those areas likely to be affected by the development or were low-lying and waterlogged and hence unlikely to yield evidence of early structures.

The locations of the trenches are shown on an accompanying plan. Their lengths are as follows:

- Trench 1: 16m north/south
- Trench 2: 19m east/west
- Trench 3: 16m north/south
- Trench 4: 20.5m north-east/south-west
- Trench 5: 15.5m north-west/south-east
- Trench 6: 9.5m east/west.

The total area excavated in Plot 6 was 193m². No structures or features of archaeological significance were uncovered in any of these trenches and no artefacts predating the 19th century were retrieved from them.

Plot 7

The larger of the two parcels of land, Plot 7 extends over 6,315m², the house footprint being centred at NN 55227 56056. To its immediate north-east were the remains of another building belonging to the former township.

Nine trenches were excavated in Plot 7, the locations of which are shown on an accompanying plan. Their lengths are as follows:

- Trench 1: 13m north/south
- Trench 2: 12.5m north/south
- Trench 3: 14.5m east/west
- Trench 4: 13m north/south
- Trench 5: 11.5m north/south
- Trench 6: 14.5m east/west
- Trench 7: 12m north/south
- Trench 8: 10.5m north/south
- Trench 9: 9.5m east/west

The total area excavated in Plot 7 was 222m².

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of the trenches although a photographic survey (see photographs 13-17 and 36) was undertaken on the structure adjacent to the footprint of the proposed house. No artefacts predating the 19th century were retrieved from the trenches in Plot 7.

This bicameral building measured 16.5m east/west by 6.8m wide over walls of drystone rubble construction of which only one to two courses survived. A short surviving stretch of a drystone field boundary wall projects southwards from the east wall of the building.

Its east chamber had been entered through a doorway, 1m wide, midway along the south wall. Curiously, nothing whatsoever remained of the south wall of the west chamber and it is unclear whether this compartment had lain open, had had a timber wall or the wall had been robbed.

A brief investigation inside the building demonstrated that almost all its floor materials had been robbed, presumably for later houses in the area. However, traces of both flagged and cobbled floors survived in the west chamber. The flags were found towards the south side of the building whereas the cobbles lay close to its north wall. There was no evidence of a 'grip' (OE *grype*), a drainage channel often set into the floors of a byre. The relationship between these two surfaces remains unclear.

CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of the evaluation trenches although the area of investigation covered only a small part of the former township of Camghouran and it is possible that hitherto unknown structures and features still await discovery there.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The photographs listed below are contained within the digital site archive and are not reproduced in the report itself.

Plot 6

- 1 Trench 1, viewed from the south
- 2 Trench 1, viewed from the north
- 3 Trench 2, viewed from the west
- 4 Trench 2, viewed from the east
- 5 Trench 3, viewed from the south
- 6 Trench 3, viewed from the north
- 7 Trench 4, viewed from the north-east
- 8 Trench 4, viewed from the south-west
- 9 Trench 5, viewed from the south-east
- 10 Trench 5, viewed from the north-west
- 11 Trench 6, viewed from the east
- 12 Trench 6, viewed from the west

Plot 7

- 13-14 Ruined building, viewed from the north-east
- 15 Ruined building, viewed from the east
- 16 Ruined building, viewed from the south-east
- 17 Ruined building, viewed from the south
- 18 Trench 1, viewed from the south
- 19 Trench 1, viewed from the north
- 20 Trench 2, viewed from the south
- 21 Trench 2, viewed from the north
- 22 Trench 3, viewed from the east
- 23 Trench 3, viewed from the west
- 24 Trench 4, viewed from the south
- 25 Trench 4, viewed from the north
- 26 Trench 5, viewed from the north
- 27 Trench 5, viewed from the south
- 28 Trench 6, viewed from the west
- 29 Trench 6, viewed from the east
- 30 Trench 7, viewed from the south
- 31 Trench 7, viewed from the north
- 32 Trench 8, viewed from the north
- 33 Trench 8, viewed from the south
- 34 Trench 9, viewed from the west
- 35 Trench 9, viewed from the east
- 36 Remnants of flagged and cobbled floors in the west chamber of the ruined building; viewed from the north