

# Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT  
TO**

**MNV CONSULTING LIMITED**

**BALLINLOAN  
HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME**

**Desk study  
and  
walk-over survey  
February 2012**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a desk study of archaeological sites and monuments and a walk-over survey along the route of a proposed new hydro-electric scheme at Ballinloan, a short distance north-west of Trochry in Strath Braan and some 13km south-east of Aberfeldy, Perthshire.

The desk study and survey were undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology at the request of MNV Consulting Limited. The route of the proposed pipeline shown on the accompanying map is intended only as an indicative one although the area covered by the desk study and walk-over survey includes any variations there may be to it.

## THE DESK STUDY

The sources consulted for this work include:

the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), including the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS);

the National Library of Scotland and its Map Room; and

*Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*, the annual journal of Archaeology Scotland (formerly the Council for Scottish Archaeology).

Several known sites and monuments lie along or within a short distance of the proposed route. They are listed below according to the numbers allocated by:

RCAHMS, eg NN94SE 31;

Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, archaeological advisors to Perth & Kinross Council, eg MPK 7257; and

Historic Scotland (if they are Scheduled Ancient Monuments) eg SAM 9631.

The descriptions given below are edited versions of records held by RCAHMS. The locations of the sites are shown on the map accompanying this report.

### **1 NN94SE 34/MPK 7300 Pitleoch: farmstead, horse-engine platform**

A roofed farmhouse, a cruck-framed barn (now used as a stock shelter) with an associated horse-engine platform and traces of seven other buildings stand on a terrace 100m north of the Pitleoch Burn, at NN 9675 4145.

The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map of 1867 (Perthshire, sheet lxi) shows all of these buildings, with the exception of the farmhouse, as roofed.

### **2 NN94SE 35 Middle Pitleoch: building**

At NN 9659 4172, on the south-west side of the track between two farmsteads (NN94SE 34 and NN94SE 36) are the remains of a two-chambered building. It stands to gable height and

its interior measures 24m by 5m. Both the first (1867) and second edition (1898) OS maps show two buildings at this location although nothing now stands above ground of the one to the south-east.

### **3 NN94SE 36/MPK 7302 Upper Pitleoch: farmstead**

This farmstead, located at NN 9650 4190, has been abandoned since WWII although it is still largely roofed. It includes a farmhouse, an L-shaped range of buildings, a horse-engine platform and two small, unroofed outbuildings. Evidently, the farmstead was completely reorganized between the times of the first and second editions of the OS map.

### **4 NN94SE 37/MPK7303 Pitleoch: farmstead**

At NN 9648 4234 stand the remains of this farmstead, comprising three buildings and an enclosure. Two of the buildings are attached, the third independent and much reduced with a field dyke built over it. All the buildings are depicted as roofed on the first edition OS map but all had been abandoned by the time of the second edition.

### **5 NN94SE 38/MPK 5809 Pitleoch: farmstead, kiln**

Located at NN 9640 4250 this, the most northerly of the farmsteads at Pitleoch, comprised five buildings arranged around a rectilinear yard with a kiln approximately 100m to the north-east. The first edition OS map shows all the buildings roofed whereas, with the exception of part of one, all of them had been abandoned by the time of the second edition. The kiln is set into the slope of a terrace and measures 2.5m across and 1.3m deep.

### **6 NN94SE 13/SAM 9631/MPK 7257 Salachill: township**

The remains of Salachill township are situated on the hillside above the north-east bank of the Ballinloan Burn, about 2.7km upstream from Ballinloan Bridge. Most of the settlement is concentrated within an area of about 5ha which contains at least 23 buildings, most of them grouped into four farmsteads, linked by trackways and set within stone-walled fields scattered with field-clearance heaps. About 250m to the NNW is a fifth farmstead, abandoned but still partly roofed, which appears to be of later date (Site 7: see below). The first edition OS 6-inch map depicts only the two buildings at North Salachill as being roofed.

Within the main area of settlement four farmsteads can be identified, each comprising five or six buildings loosely clustered around an irregularly-shaped yard. Two farmsteads are located on a terrace immediately above the Ballinloan Burn, at NN 9542 4234 and NN 9547 4233, while the other two are situated on the hillside to the NE at NN 9553 4244 and NN 9556 4248. Only two buildings do not fit easily into any of these groups; they stand in isolation at the W edge of the site at NN 9545 4240 and NN 9544 4245 respectively.

The buildings are all broadly similar in construction: roughly rectangular with square corners and nearly all gable-ended. They have faced-rubble walls, 0.6-0.75m thick with cruck slots visible in a few cases. Many of them are set into the hillside or terraced up on their downhill side. Each farmstead consists of a group of buildings set around a yard with the largest building on the north side. These structures measure between 20.3m and 29.5m long and 3.8-4.5m wide and are divided into two or more compartments, each opening onto the yard. Two of them have fireplaces in their west gables while three have central drains running the length

of their east compartments, indicating their use as byres. The fifth large building and a smaller one are located at the west edge of the site.

The 18 smaller buildings measure internally between 5.2m and 14.3m long and 2.5m to 4.4m wide. Most of them are clustered close to the larger buildings, defining the limits of each steading's yard. Several of the larger ones are divided into two compartments while there is evidence of an upper floor in at least two of them. Occasionally features survive which suggest a particular function; for example, a fireplace in one building indicates domestic occupation while opposing entrances in four buildings (one in each farmstead) points to their use as barns.

The outline of the scheduled area is shown in pale blue on the accompanying map.

## **7 NN94SE 13.01 North Salachill: farmstead**

Situated about 250m NNW of Salachill township, at NN 9541 4271, is a farmstead comprising a farmhouse, still partially roofed, an L-shaped range of outbuildings standing to gable height and a third building reduced to its footings. The house is a three-bayed cottage with a garden plot to the south-west. The L-shaped building measures 16.3m east/west by 12.4m wide over mortar-bonded, rubble walls, 0.6m thick and 4m high. It is divided into two compartments with loft rooms over both wings. The east chamber is the larger with loft doors on its north and south ends as well as a door connecting it to the loft over the west wing. The ground floor of the main east wing is lit by a slit-window at its north end and there are doorways on the south and east while the west wing has a separate entrance on its south. The adjacent building measures 17.6m east/west by 3.6m wide within faced-rubble walls 0.75m thick and 0.4m high with an entrance in the south.

## **8 NN94SW 28.03/MPK 7161/MPK 7364 Ballinloan Burn: hut, settlement, field systems**

On the edge of a terrace high above the east bank of the Ballinloan Burn, at NN 9419 4301, are the remains of a homestead and hut. The homestead is roughly circular on plan and measures 12-13.5m across within stone walls 1.6m thick and surviving to a height of 0.5m; the entrance probably lay on the east. The hut, which overlies the north-east arc of the homestead, measures 6.5m north-east/south-west by 5m transversely over stone walls standing to a height of 0.4m and spreading to 1.2m wide. A drystone pen has been built within the south-east end of the hut and there is an enclosure to the north-west, built over the wall of the homestead.

Nearby are several patches of rig and furrow and a few enclosures, probably associated with the homestead.

## **THE WALK-OVER SURVEY**

The walk-over survey was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 17 February 2012 when Darragh Hoban of MNV Consulting Limited pointed out the possible routes for the pipeline.

There are two proposed intakes for the pipeline, one taking water from the Pitleoch Burn at approximately NN 9658 4250 and another on the Ballinloan Burn at either of two locations.

The most westerly of these is around NN 9414 4303, close to the homestead of Site 8, while the more likely option is some 300m downstream, at approximately NN 9436 4284. These two low-pressure lines will meet a short distance from one of the farmsteads (Site 4) at Pitleoch, at roughly NN 9645 4226, from where a high-pressure line will run to a power house near the junction of the Pitleoch and Ballinloan Burns, at or near an existing brick structure at NN 9673 4112. The outfall is intended to be at approximately NN 9670 4114.

Sites of archaeological significance encountered during the walk-over survey can be arranged into three groups:

Site 8 (the putative homestead) near one of the possible intakes on the upper reaches of the Ballinloan Burn;

the former township of Salachill and the adjacent settlement of North Salachill; and

five sites along the Pitleoch Burn, four of them farmsteads.

Little of interest was found elsewhere along the proposed routes of the pipeline other than sunken roads which extend beyond the township and farmsteads and drystone field walls probably dating to the 19th century.

MNV Consulting Limited has identified several possible courses for the pipe that will take water from the Ballinloan Burn. These can be condensed into two main variations, one beyond the northern limit of the Salachill township and the other through the settlement's north end (see accompanying map). While the north route would avoid the scheduled monument, it would increase problems of engineering as well as taking the pipe very close to Site 8. The potential impact on the sites identified during the desk study and field survey are outlined below.

### **Homestead (Site 8)**

This site of indeterminate date sits on the top of a terrace high above the level of the Ballinloan Burn and, should the stream be tapped near this point, the pipeline itself would not run through it. However, the terrace is composed mainly of sand which could easily suffer from construction work at its base.

### **Salachill (Sites 6 and 7)**

It is highly likely that the pipeline would cross the scheduled area containing the pre-improvement township of Salachill. It would be possible to run the pipe across the north side of the site without affecting any of the buildings within that area although it would mean passing the pipe trench through some of the boundary walls associated with the settlement.

North Salachill (Site 7) should remain unaffected by the proposed development.

### **Pitleoch (Sites 1-5)**

The remains of the farmstead and kiln at Site 5 lie some distance to the north of the proposed intake point on the Pitleoch Burn. It should be possible to avoid the remains of the three buildings at Site 4 although it is inevitable that the pipe route will pass through one or more

boundary walls near the settlement. Running northwards from the farmstead is a sunken road that appears to end in a sheep pen. The pipeline will pass within a short distance of this feature although it should be relatively easy to avoid it.

The farmsteads of Sites 1, 2 and 3 appear to be of more recent dates than those at Sites 4 and 5 although it is possible that remnants of earlier structures have been absorbed into those settlements. Nevertheless, it should not be difficult to run the pipe sufficiently far from those sites as to prove no threat to them.

## CONCLUSIONS

The installation of a new hydro-electric scheme can potentially cause severe disruption to the archaeological record, not only during the excavation of pipe trenches but also the deposition and retrieval of spoil, the movement of plant and other vehicles and the storage of materials. At Ballinloan, particular care should be taken in the vicinity of known and suspected archaeological sites and monuments of which several have been identified during the desk study and walk-over survey.

Clearly the most vulnerable site is the former township of Salachill, a Scheduled Monument, meaning that it is given protection by the Scottish Ministers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. Other sites where development could potentially impact on archaeology are the homestead at Site 8, beside the Ballinloan Burn, and the several farmsteads (Sites 1-5) located near the Pitleoch Burn.

At present, only an indicative route is known for the pipeline and, until a definitive one is agreed, it is difficult to prescribe what mitigation measures can be applied at specific locations. However, following the walk-over survey and discussions with MNV Consulting Limited, it is likely that the Pitleoch sites can be avoided during the development although it may prove advisable to cordon off at least the sunken road and putative sheep pen near Site 4.

Should the lower option be taken for the Ballinloan Burn intake, then the homestead at Site 8 would not be affected. If the upper option is adopted, then the route would pass near this site and, although the pipe would run at a level well below that of Site 8, construction work could cause the terrace on which it stands to erode. In this case, the sandy cliff would have to be protected, perhaps by the installations of gabions.

At Salachill the strategy should be to circumvent completely the remains of all buildings and as many other structures and features as possible. However, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to run the pipeline through this area without disrupting at least some boundary walls. At these points archaeological watching briefs could be undertaken to record details of these features. Watching briefs should also be carried out wherever trenches are excavated within the scheduled area in case hitherto unknown structures, features or deposits of archaeological significance survive below the ground. Structures and features of potential archaeological or historical significance lying close to the pipe route should be protected by secure fences, this work being undertaken by the developer in conjunction with an archaeologist.

Wherever pipe trenches have to cut through field boundaries and other walls, every effort should be made to take those trenches through existing breaks in the walls. Where this is not possible, the walls should be reinstated following the completion of pipe-laying.

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The photographs described below form part of the project archive and are not included in hard copies of this report.

- 1 Homestead (Site 8), viewed from the south-west
- 2 Homestead (Site 8), viewed from the north-west
- 3-4 Homestead (Site 8), viewed from the north-east
- 5 View to the north-west from NN 95058 42720 along a sunken road
- 6 View to the south-east from NN 95058 42720 along a sunken road
- 7 Bridge carrying an early road at NN 95277 42637, viewed from the east
- 8 North Salachill (Site 7), viewed from the north-west
- 9 The west building at North Salachill, viewed from the north-east
- 10 The east building at North Salachill, viewed from the north-west
- 11 The farmsteads on the south side of Salachill township (Site 6), viewed from the north
- 12 The north side of Salachill township, viewed from the north-west
- 13-14 The north side of Salachill township showing a possible route of the pipeline (indicated by red flags), viewed from the north-west
- 15 The point (NN 95585 42510) where the pipeline might cut through a drystone dyke between the remains of two buildings at Salachill, viewed from the north-west
- 16 Site 5, viewed from the south
- 17 Site 5, viewed from the west
- 18-19 Site 4, viewed from the north-west
- 20 Possible sheep pen, viewed from the north at NN 96542 42461
- 21-22 Site 3, viewed from the west
- 23 Site 3, viewed from the south
- 24 Site 2, viewed from the north
- 25 Sunken road running southwards from the east end of Site 2, viewed from the north
- 26 Site 1, viewed from the north-west
- 27 Possible site of new power house at NN 96733 41124, viewed from the north