

Scotia *Archaeology*

**REPORT
TO
AUCHNAFREE ESTATE**

**LARICHFRASKAN
HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME
GLEN ALMOND**

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

*5 Bank Street
ABERFELDY
Perthshire
PH15 2BB
Tel & Fax No: 01887-820880
email: scotarc@o2.co.uk*

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 Larichfraskan in Glen Almond, Perthshire. The survey was carried out by Scotia Archaeology at the request of Green Highland Renewables Ltd, being instructed and commissioned by Auchnafree Estate.

THE SITE

The proposed hydro scheme will take water from the Larichfraskan Burn which runs off Auchnafree Hill on the south side of Glen Almond, the intake point being at NN 81336 32580. The powerhouse will be a short distance east of Larichfraskan, the outflow from it returning to the burn at NN 81528 33104. The overall length of the pipeline will be approximately 600m: a map showing its indicative route accompanies this report.

THE DESK STUDY

A desk study of readily available source material undertaken prior to the commencement of field work revealed no known sites of archaeological or historical significance along or close to the route of the proposed pipeline.

THE WALK-OVER SURVEY

The walk-over survey was undertaken by John Lewis on 12 June 2012. From the intake point the pipe route follows roughly the course of the burn, in places coming close to a metalled estate road that meanders southwards to grouse butts on the upper slopes of Auchnafree Hill. The precise route of the pipeline has yet to be determined and hence the entire area between the road and the burn was investigated during the survey.

For most of its length, the burn runs through a narrow, steep-sided valley clad with heather and bracken which gives way to better quality pasture as it nears the small settlement of Larichfraskan. Along the entire length of the valley its slopes and base are littered with scree, including many large boulders. Towards its lower reaches, on the right bank of the burn, is an intermittent terrace of level ground that could be considered suitable for a small settlement and upon which one small structure was identified (see below).

The only other feature of archaeological or historical significance noted during the walk-over survey consisted of the scant remains of a field boundary wall, also described below.

Field wall (Photos 1-3)

The route of the proposed pipeline cuts across the remains of a drystone field wall running westwards as far as the burn although it does not continue further west of it. The wall survives as a maximum of two courses of field boulders and is cut by the estate road at NN 81493 32890. There was no other clear evidence of early field systems in its vicinity.

Structure (Photos 9-12)

On a terrace on the east bank of the burn, at NN 81470 32966, stand the remains of a single-celled, sub-rectangular structure measuring 4.1m east/west by 2.7m wide over rubble walls some 800mm wide of which a maximum of two courses remain. The possible remnant of a wall, surviving as 2m of single-skin, drystone rubble masonry, extends from the south-east corner of the structure. No other structures or features that might be associated with this building were noted nearby.

The character and size of this structure suggest that it represents the remains of a shieling hut although its proximity to Larichfraskan, a mere 300m to the north-west, might suggest otherwise.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are two features of archaeological/historical significance that might be affected by the construction of the hydro scheme. It will be impossible to divert the pipeline around the drystone field wall near NN 81493 32890 and it is recommended that, to minimise damage to it, the pipe trench should cut through this feature where its masonry has already collapsed.

It is advisable to avoid completely the remains of the putative shieling hut by ensuring that the pipe trench is located as far from it as possible. In addition, the structure should be given further protection by constructing a secure fence around it. The fence should include a buffer zone to ensure that the spoil resulting from trenching does not impinge on the structure or the area immediately around it.

PHOTOGRAPHS

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

- 1-2 View from the east along the remains of a field wall, close to the point where it is cut by the estate road, at NN 81493 32890
- 3 View from the west along the remains of a field wall, close to the point where it is cut by the estate road, at NN 81493 32890
- 4 View to the south from NN 81287 32491
- 5 View to the north from NN 81287 32491
- 6 View to the south from NN 81281 32469, just beyond the intake point
- 7 View northwards, down the valley, from NN 81375 32523, near the estate road
- 8 View to the north from NN 81447 32877, showing the boulder-strewn, level terrace to the right of the burn
- 9-10 The putative shieling hut at NN 81470 32966, viewed from the east
- 11-12 The putative shieling hut at NN 81470 32966, viewed from the south
- 13 View upstream from the putative shieling hut
- 14 Presumed site of the powerhouse, viewed from the south