

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
ASH DESIGN+ASSESSMENT**

**CRARAE SUBSTATION
MINARD, ARGYLL**

**Walk-over survey
July 2014**

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a walk-over survey at the site of the proposed new Crarae electricity sub-station associated with a windfarm on A'Cruach, some 5km north-west of Minard, a village on the north-west shore of Loch Fyne. The sub-station will be located approximately 2.5km north of Minard. In February 2012 a survey was undertaken for Scottish & Southern Energy plc (SSE) by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology at the sub-station's original intended location but, since that time, its location has been moved a short distance to the south to avoid an area of blanket bog.

THE SITE

The survey area is located on very rough sheep pasture and is covered with heather, coarse grass, reeds, cotton grass and moss. It is very boggy in places although ground conditions were relatively dry during this second survey. Access to the site is by a gravel farm road which runs from Minard to Garvachy and beyond, passing very close to the proposed site of the sub-station. Although within undulating hills, the site itself is quite level.

Passing directly through the development area is the Port Ann to Inveraray overhead tower line, Tower 92 of that line being roughly at its centre, at approximately NR 9717 9805. The proposed development area measures some 300m north/south by 200m wide and is located a short distance south of the area surveyed in 2012: it is shown on the accompanying maps supplied by ASH.

One feature of archaeological significance was identified during the earlier survey. It comprised the remains of a low earth and stone boundary bank which runs to the north-west from approximately NR 97187 98260, as far as NR 97107 98358 where it is cut by a modern farm track. This feature, thought to be the remains of a stock enclosure, was located within the then intended development area, as a result of which three small trenches were cut across it to determine its nature before it was destroyed.

The enclosure is not shown on any Ordnance Survey maps, including the first edition 6-inch map of 1873 (Argyllshire, sheet cli). However, an estate map of 1839 (Sang 1839) depicts what is probably this feature as a triangular structure in roughly the same location as the enclosure. The map also shows quarries within and around the survey area as well as extensive tracts of rig cultivation stretching to the north and west of Minard but not extending as far as the enclosure.

The results of the 2012 survey and the subsequent excavations are contained within reports submitted to SSE and archived with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (Lewis 2012a; Lewis 2012b).

THE 2014 WALK-OVER SURVEY

The second survey was carried out by John Lewis on 3 July 2014 during cloudy but dry weather and, although much of the survey area is boggy, ground conditions were relatively good at that time.

The actual area investigated extended well beyond the designated limits of the development site. With the exception of the presumed stock enclosure identified to the north of this area in 2012 and small quarries located well beyond the site limits, no archaeological structures or features were identified during the survey. There is clear evidence of former peat-cutting, particularly to the west of Tower 92 although there are no indications as to when this activity was carried out. No trace of the rig and furrow shown in Sang's map of 1839 was evident within or near the site.

CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during this survey and there seems to be little or no possibility of any features of importance being disturbed during the construction or operation of the proposed new sub-station.

REFERENCES

Lewis 2012a *A'Cruach Grid Windfarm Sub-station: walk-over survey, February 2012*. Unpublished report to Scottish & Southern Energy plc.

Lewis 2012a *A'Cruach Grid Windfarm Sub-station: exploratory excavations, March 2012*. Unpublished report to Scottish & Southern Energy plc.

Sang 1839 Plan of the Estate of Minard, Argyleshire, RHP/ 1194/3. National Archive of Scotland.