

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
ALLT ENTERGY LIMITED
AND ROSSAL HYDRO SCHEME**

**ROSSAL
HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME
PENNYGHAEL, MULL**

**Desk study
and
walk-over survey
April 2018**

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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 hydro-electric scheme at Rossal, near Pennyghael, Isle of Mull. The survey was carried out by Scotia Archaeology at the request of Allt Energy Limited who supplied a map showing indicative routes for the penstock and new access roads.

THE SITE

This proposed hydro scheme is located to the immediate east of Rossal Farm, near Pennyghael at the east end of Loch Scridain on its south shore.

The intake will be at NM 55368 26702, taking water from the Abhainn na h-Inbhire and running northwards to a powerhouse at NM 54370 28111, some 250m east of Rossal Farm and 300m south of the A849 road.

The northern part of the route crosses open moorland although most of the penstock will traverse mature coniferous forestry, part of it running alongside an existing estate road. Its upper reaches will pass through an open corridor in the forest where it was possible to survey the ground whereas within the forest itself any archaeological features would almost certainly have been destroyed during planting.

THE DESK STUDY

Prior to the commencement of the walk-over survey, a desk study was undertaken of readily available sources describing sites of archaeological and historical significance located within the vicinity of the proposed hydro scheme. A small number of such sites were identified. They are listed according to the numbers allocated by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) (eg NM52NE 2).

Site 1 NM52NE 2

The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (Argyllshire, Isle of Mull 1881, sheet 107) depicts a possible semi-circular enclosure at NM 551 270. Modern OS 1:10000 maps do not show this feature.

Site 2 NM52NW 6

A standing stone, measuring 2.1m high, is located at NM 5434 2820 within an arable field. It is thought to be a marker stone for pilgrims travelling to Iona.

THE WALK-OVER SURVEY

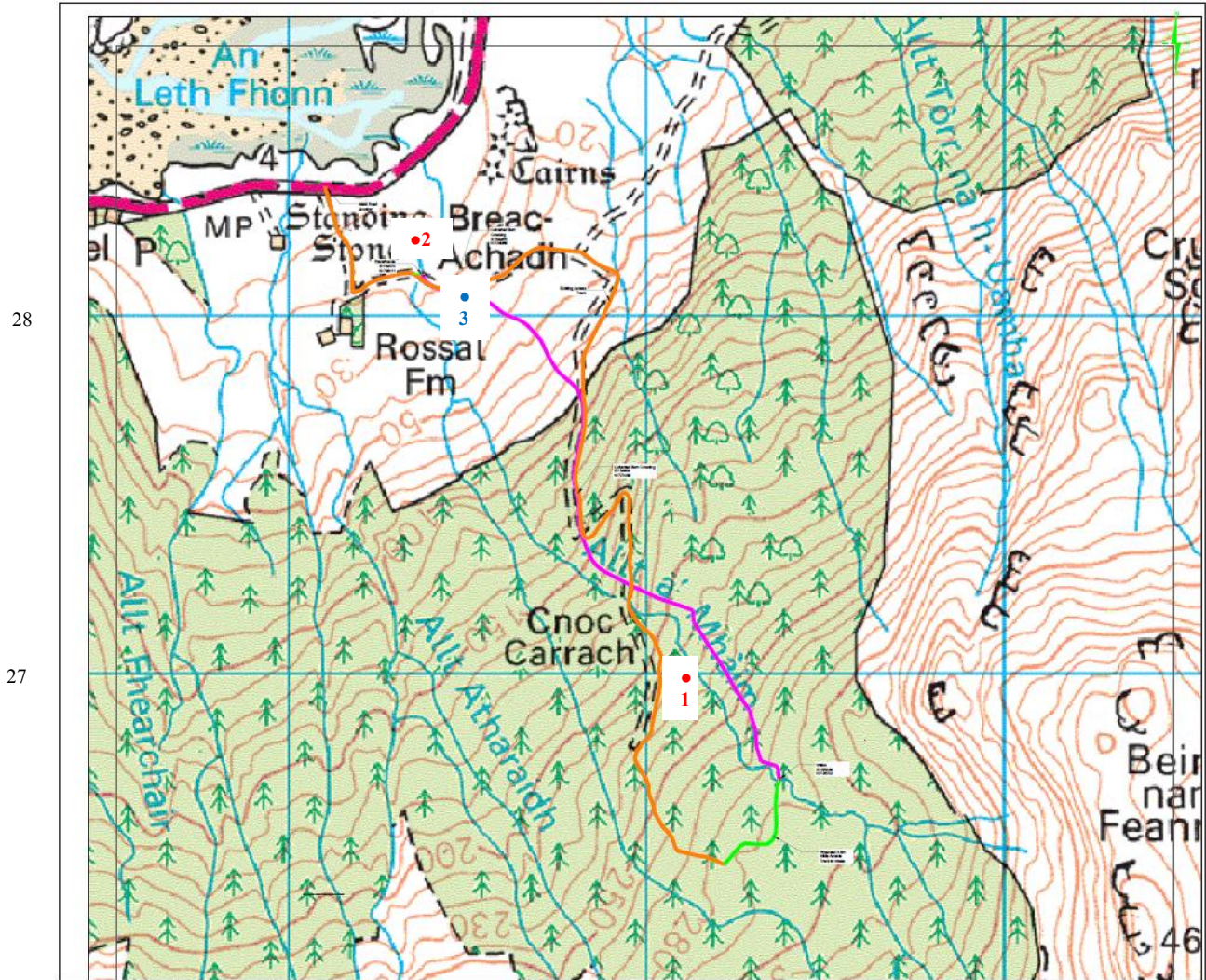
The walk-over survey was undertaken by John Lewis on 26 April 2018 during warm and sunny weather punctuated by heavy showers.

Sites featured in the desk study are shown as red dots on the map below; the single one identified only during the walk-over survey is shown in blue.

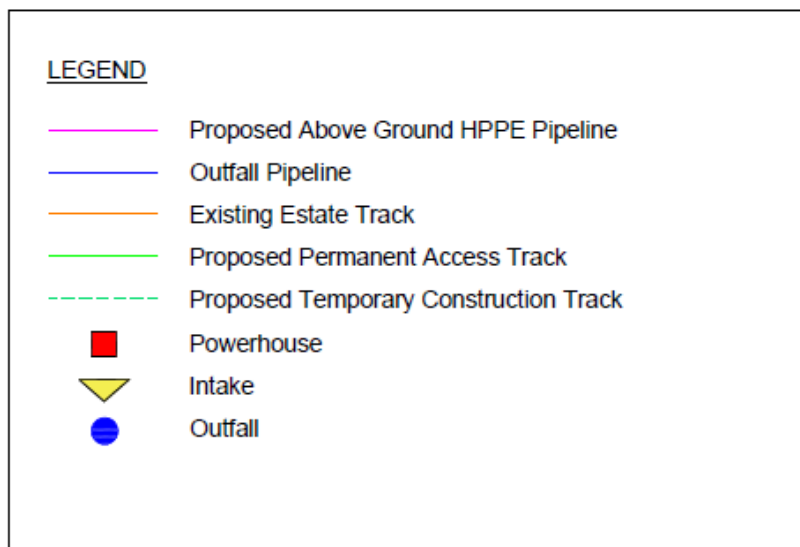
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Map showing the penstock route and new access road



Key to symbols used in the above map

Those parts of the penstock that will run through forestry were not followed during the survey for two reasons: planting would almost certainly have destroyed any archaeological record that might have existed there; and the route could simply not be traced through dense tree cover. However, it did prove possible to cover the route of a new access road (shown in green on the map above) that will run between the existing estate road and the intake point.



View to the north from near the proposed intake point

Most of the penstock will either follow the existing estate road (shown in orange on the map above) or pass through dense forestry although northwards from the intake to approximately NM 5497 2724 it will run through a cleared corridor in the trees. This stretch, together with the northern stretch of the route, passes through boggy moorland covered with coarse grass.

Observations on the sites noted in the desk study and on the ground are listed below.

Site 1

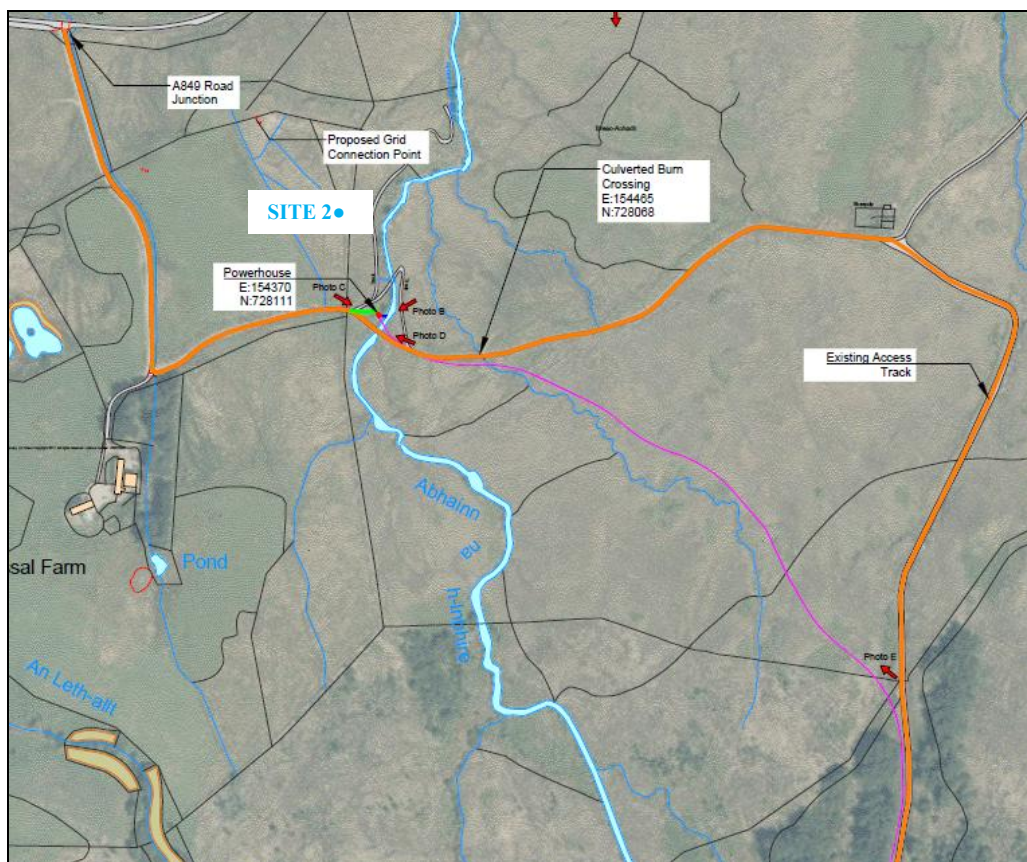
This possible enclosure (NM52NE 2), now located within coniferous forestry plantation, was not located during the walk-over survey.

Site 2

This standing stone (NM52NW 6), thought to be a marker for pilgrims en route to Iona, stands on the edge of a pasture field a short distance to the west of the Abhainn na h-Inbhire and some 100m north of the proposed site of the powerhouse.



Standing stone NM52NW 6 (Site 2) viewed from the west



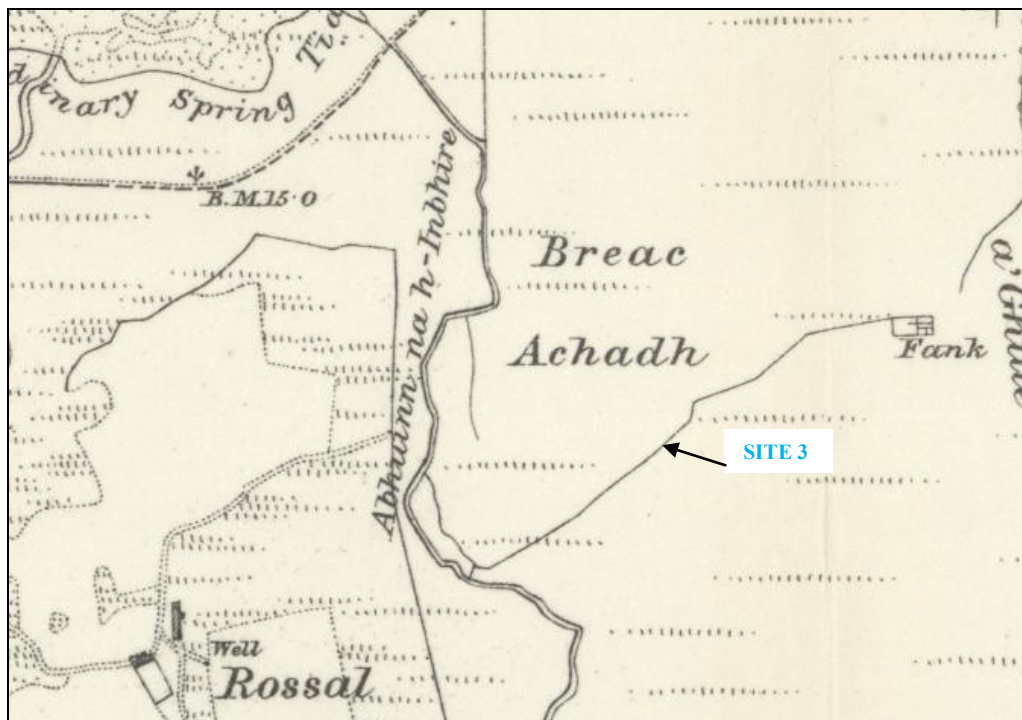
North part of the scheme showing penstock, track, powerhouse and Site 2

Site 3

One feature not ascribed a monument number but shown on early OS maps and encountered during the field survey comprises the remains of a field boundary, now much reduced.



The north end of the survey area with the remains of Site 3 in the foreground



Extract from first edition OS 6-inch map showing field boundary Site 3

This boundary bank is shown on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Argyllshire Isle of Mull 1881, sheet 95) extended to the east and west of NM 54512 28047 (the position of the ranging rod in the photograph above) although it has collapsed over much of its length. It appears to be built of boulders and earth, surviving to a maximum height of approximately 1m and a width of some 1.2m. It is now covered with bracken and other vegetation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the evidence of the desk study and walk-over survey, there are few archaeological features threatened by the proposed construction of the Rossal hydro-electric scheme.

Site 1

This putative enclosure is located within a forestry plantation and may have been destroyed during planting. Furthermore, it appears to lie some distance from the penstock route and is unlikely to be affected during construction work.

Site 2

Although relatively close to the proposed location of the powerhouse, this standing stone will be separated from it by a field wall and the Abhainn na h-Inbhire. Nevertheless, it is recommended that its position is noted by those involved in the construction of the scheme.

Site 3

Probably the only site directly threatened by the proposed development is what appears to be a pre-Improvement boundary bank. It appears that the penstock will pass directly through this feature although it should be possible to avoid damaging it by ensuring that all vehicles and other machinery passes through one of the many gaps that pierce it.