

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
ON BEHALF OF
MR RANDOLPH MURRAY**

WESTER CAMGHOURAN

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

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INTRODUCTION

Following an appeal to the Local Review Board, Perth & Kinross Council granted planning consent to Mr Randolph Murray to erect a cottage adjacent to Wester Camghouran, near Rannoch, Perthshire (Planning Application reference number 09/00733/FUL). The site of the proposed dwelling lies within the limits of the former township of Camghouran. On the advice of its archaeological advisers, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), the council attached conditions whereby any upstanding remains associated with the township that fall within the development area should be recorded and a field evaluation of the area undertaken before the development began in order to assess whether any significant archaeological record survived on the site.

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 were forwarded to PKHT and Mr Murray. 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 was investigated or the surviving record preserved *in situ*.

THE SITE

The site is located some 50m north-east of Wester Camghouran, near the west bank of the Allt Camghouran, 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. Some of these structures still survive as ruins.

On the evidence of the roofless structures shown in the first edition OS map, the township dates from before the mid-19th century and may well have been founded considerably earlier than that. Indeed, it was believed possible that elements of medieval or early post-medieval structures might survive below ground at Camghouran. As a consequence, an evaluation was undertaken in order to test whether such remains might exist within the development area.

The new cottage will be built directly over a ruined building, one of those depicted in the first edition OS map and centred on NN 5478 5607. It is located towards the north-east corner of a grassy field to the immediate east of Wester Camghouran. The field is defined on its east by a drystone retaining wall, beyond which, at a lower level, is a terrace leading to the Allt Camghouran. The total area covered by the proposed development is roughly half of the 1,670m² formerly estimated. A drain will take waste from the cottage southwards to a septic tank, from which a channel will run to a soakaway.

THE PROGRAMME OF INVESTIGATION

Fieldwork was undertaken on 6th February 2011 by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology, at the behest of Mr Murray. Initially, a photographic survey was carried out in order to record the remains of the ruined building over which the new house is to be built. The ruin (termed

Structure 1 in this report) measured 21m east/west by some 8m wide over walls 1.3-1.5m thick. Its north side had been built into a bank which made its overall width difficult to assess accurately. Structure 1 (Photos 1-4) was a bicameral building, its east and west chambers being 9.5m and 3.7m long, respectively. Fragments of a crude, flagged floor (Photos 26, 27) were visible in the west chamber although it was clear that most of the flooring, which had been laid directly on glacial deposits, had been removed from most of this room.

The walls of Structure 1, which were overlain with turf, were built of drystone random rubble, a maximum of four courses of which survived in the north-west corner of the building. No trace of a doorway, hearth or any other diagnostic features could be seen within this building and its function is unknown.

A short distance to the west of Structure 1 was Structure 2 (Photos 13-16) whose sparse remains were very poorly defined. It appeared to be sub-rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 13m north/south by 6m wide with a possible entrance midway along its west wall. Only one course of its turf-covered rubble walls survived and its function was anything but obvious although some clues were forthcoming from the excavation of Trench 2 (see below).

Following the completion of the photographic survey, a series of slit trenches were opened using a toothless ditching bucket attached to a large 360°, tracked excavator. The trenches, all of which were 2m wide, were spread across those parts of the site most likely to be affected by the development. A total of six trenches were excavated, their layout being shown in an accompanying plan. The overall area trenched was approximately 73m², some 9% of the site.

Trench 1 (Photos 13-14, 17)

Trench 1 was excavated through the west chamber of Structure 1 and beyond its south wall and measured 8.2m north/south. No trace of the building's floor was uncovered in this trench, only 0.2-0.3m of dark brown loam with gravel and some rubble overlying glacial deposits of sand, gravel and boulders.

Trench 2 (Photos 19, 20)

Measuring 7.4m east/west, Trench 2 was excavated through the remains of Structure 2. Below the turf was up to 0.4m of dark brown, humic loam from which were retrieved many fragments of 19th-century ceramics. This material sat directly on glacial till with no trace of a floor of any sort. It was considerably deeper and contained far fewer stones than the soil in Trench 1 and is believed to have been imported deliberately as garden soil. From this evidence, Structure 2 is interpreted tentatively as a vegetable plot.

Trench 3 (Photos 18, 19)

Trench 3 was located 4m south of the west chamber of Structure 1 and measured 5.2m east/west. It cut through a rubble field drain, as a result of which the trench flooded rapidly. However, nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered within Trench 3, only 0.2m of dark brown loam and rubble which gave directly onto glacial till of sand, gravel and boulders.

Trench 4 (Photos 20, 21)

This trench was located to the south of the east chamber of Structure 1 and measured 8.3m east/west. It too became flooded but again nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered, only 0.2m of dark brown loam and rubble over glacial till.

Trench 5 (Photos 22, 23)

Trench 5 was located close to the proposed site of the septic tank for the new cottage. It measured 4.2m east/west. As in Trenches 3 and 4, it contained 0.2m of topsoil over glacial sand, gravel and boulders.

Trench 6 (Photos 24, 25)

Located some 4m south of Trench 5, approximately on the site of a soakaway from the proposed septic tank, Trench 6 measured 3.3m east/west. Although there is little obvious variation in the topography of this part of the site, the soil stratigraphy in this trench was manifestly different from that in nearby Trench 5. In marked contrast to Trench 5, the topsoil of dark brown loam was up to 0.5m deep and was almost stone-free. It is not clear why there should be such a variation over so small a distance although it might simply point to more garden features in this part of the site.

CONCLUSIONS

No evidence of any structures or features predating the 19th-century farmstead was uncovered in any of the trenches and no pre-19th-century artefacts recovered from them. Perhaps the only unforeseen discovery was that Structure 2 may have been a garden plot. Its location coincides approximately with that of a structure shown on the first edition OS 6-inch map and it is possible that a demolished building had been used for this purpose. The ceramics retrieved from Structure 2 suggest that it had been used as a contained garden in the 19th or early 20th century although the building's date of construction remains unknown.

REPORTS

Copies of this report, together with the photographic archive, are lodged with the client, PKHT and the National Monuments Record of Scotland. Details of the project can be found on the online OASIS recording system and a summary account will be published in the 2011 edition of *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*, the annual journal of Archaeology Scotland.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

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

- 1-2 Structure 1 viewed from the south
- 3-4 Structure 1 viewed from the west
- 5 The west chamber of Structure 1 viewed from the east
- 6 The west chamber of Structure 1 viewed from the west
- 7 View to the south from the north end of the site
- 8 Wester Camghouran viewed from the north
- 9 Structure 2 viewed from the south-west
- 10 Structure 2 viewed from the south
- 11 Structure 2 viewed from the north-west
- 12 Structure 2 viewed from the north-east with Wester Camghouran beyond
- 13-14 Trench 1 viewed from the north
- 15 Trench 2 viewed from the east
- 16 Trench 2 viewed from the west
- 17 Trench 1 viewed from the south
- 18 Trench 3 viewed from the east
- 19 Trench 3 viewed from the west
- 20 Trench 4 viewed from the west
- 21 Trench 4 viewed from the east
- 22 Trench 5 viewed from the east
- 23 Trench 5 viewed from the west
- 24 Trench 6 viewed from the east
- 25 Trench 6 viewed from the west
- 26 Remnants of the flagged floor in the west chamber of Structure 1, viewed from the west
- 27 Remnants of the flagged floor in the west chamber of Structure 1, viewed from the south.