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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OF A
PROPOSED WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME
AT
MORVICH, SUTHERLAND

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Introduction

The authors were asked by Finlayson & Hughes Chartered Surveyors, Inverness to carry out an archaeological survey of Areas 1, 7 and 8 shown on Fig 1, part of a proposed Woodland Grant Scheme. The Sites & Monuments Record of Highland Council Archaeology Service and indeed, the standard OS maps show extensive archaeological remains within this area. As it is a condition of the Woodland Grant Scheme that archaeological areas should be respected, an archaeological survey was requested. The purpose of this survey was to define the areas of archaeological interest.

Survey method

A desk-bound survey was carried out at Highland Council's Archaeological Sites & Monuments Record and cartographic and documentary sources at Inverness Reference Library and Highland Council Archive were also examined. This was followed by site visits on the 30th April and 22nd May. The archaeological areas were plotted onto maps drawn at 1:2,500 and limits of archaeological areas were defined in accordance with the principles laid down in the **Forest Authority's** guidelines **Forestry and Archaeology**. Each discrete archaeological unit was defined by an individual specific number and the archaeological importance of each site has been discussed in relation to the history of land-use in this area.

Archaeological and Historical Background

Sutherland has long been recorded as an area of outstanding archaeological importance with not only individual monuments but whole landscapes of prehistoric and later archaeology being preserved. These make this an area of national importance reflected in the number of archaeological sites given Scheduled Ancient Monument protection. Strath Fleet is no exception to this preservation and hut circles, tumuli and burial cairns were recorded from the 1st Ordnance Survey of 1873-4. They were recorded in more detail in the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments Sutherland Inventory of 1911 and the records have been updated by surveys carried out by OS Field Investigators in 1964 and 1981. The land immediately to the west of the Morvich Estate was subject to a detailed archaeological survey in 1996 by the RCHAMS Afforestation Land Survey team..

The earliest remains such as the burial cairn at NH 7659 9975 may demonstrate that this area was being cultivated from the time of the earliest farmers some 5,000 years ago. No settlements connected with this earliest period have been noted and it is likely such settlements are masked by later occupation. A number of Bronze Age/Iron Age hut circles or roundhouses [*the term roundhouse is preferred as these were substantial permanent settlements*] have been recorded both within the proposed plantation areas and in the upland areas to a height of some 200mOD. The extent of these settlements with their associated field systems demonstrate an intensive use of this landscape by prehistoric man. The level terraces formed above the Morvich and Aberscross Burns would have been attractive areas for these early farmers to settle. Once the original tree cover was removed or at least reduced the fertility of this area will have been reduced by increased podsolisation, exacerbated by an increased rainfall following the onset of the Atlantic Climatic Period. The precise nature of

this change locally would require detailed palynological and archaeological study. Work at Achany Glen, Lairg [McCullagh 1992 *Lairg The Archaeology of a changing landscape*, Edinburgh] has shown that this was a complex and variable process. Continuity of settlement would depend on the input of the local inhabitants and appears to have been periodic rather than continuous. At Morvich some continuity is shown by the suggested by the deserted settlements at Morvich and Abercross. However the survival of the existing prehistoric roundhouse settlements and their coverage in peat does suggest there was a decline in settlement. It is probable the wetter conditions of the Atlantic Period led to a greater emphasis on a pastoral rather than an arable economy. Though it does not show in the archaeological record, a pastoral economy based on cattle, sheep and goats would have a significant impact on the vegetation of the area, inhibiting any natural regeneration. However crops were still being grown, as is shown later by the rent of Wester Aberscross in 1808 being 33 bolls 2 firlots of bear [*a form of barley*] as well as a cash rent of £28 4 shillings [Adam, I pp89 & 227]. Indeed the factor, Patrick Sellar described how the inhabitants were heavily involved in illicit distilling and the 4 corn-drying kilns noted in this survey may be connected with the malting process prior to distillation.

No distinctly medieval sites were identified and they probably lie under the later post-medieval structures that can still be viewed. These were abandoned at the beginning of the 19th century when Morvich was developed as a farm from 1813 by Young and subsequently by Patrick Sellar. The precise date that Wester and Easter Aberscross were cleared is not known, though it is likely to be in 1816 or shortly thereafter [Adam, I p182]. The earliest map of this area is General Roy's Military Survey of c1750 [*examined in the protracted copy - slide K111873*] which though schematic, shows extensive settlement in this area. The only woodland was shown to the north west of the Abercross Burn. Abercross is the only named settlement, though a house is shown at Morvich. The lower ground around the River Fleet, now drained, was not cultivated and the Aberscross burn was shown flowing directly into the sea or at least a tidal zone.

Detailed records of the townships may survive unpublished in the Sutherland Estate Papers. Adam has recorded [I, p89 & 227] that there were 15 named small tenants at Wester Aberscross in both 1808 and 1811 and though only 1 tenant was listed at Easter Aberscross, it is likely that he was a tacksman with several subtenants. Allowing for an average household of 5 persons the population of Wester Aberscross would have been c75 people.

Following the clearances the land was put to sheep and it as a sheep and cattle farm that it has remained.

Archaeological Conclusions & Planting Recommendations

1. As has been recorded from previous survey work the area is rich in archaeological remains. These are particularly concentrated in the Bronze Age/Iron Age and in the Post-medieval period, though there are probably traces of continuous occupation since neolithic times.
2. The density of the remains makes it difficult to decide which areas should be excluded from planting on the grounds of their archaeological importance. Ideally they should all be

preserved but it is recognised that this may be impractical on economic grounds. The criterion taken for excluding areas from planting is that structures are archaeologically more important than field systems. So where structures do survive they should be preserved. This includes the small enclosures such as Sites 1/11, 1/12, 1/17-19, & 7/18 as they may contain earlier features relating to the period between the Iron Age and the Post-medieval periods.

3. Though substantial areas of the post-medieval settlement such as 1/10, 1/16, 7/7, 7/12 & 7/15 are recommended to be kept clear of trees, a small amount of amenity planting of rowan and gean might be appropriate in these areas. Such planting should be sited well away from existing walling which might be damaged by root action.

4. The field systems are more problematic and their preservation depends on the planting policy to be followed. It is likely that the stone clearance heaps are the remnants of an extensive prehistoric field system. The lower areas have probably been re-used in medieval to modern times leading to the loss of these earlier fields. The upper areas are discrete rather than continuous suggesting that only some areas were cultivated. It would be desirable that a planting policy be followed that would allow these to be preserved as discrete units in the landscape. The least intrusive method would be to allow natural regeneration to occur exclusively in these areas. If this is not feasible then at least the clearance heaps themselves should be preserved as they may contain buried soil profiles or even structural evidence relating to Bronze Age or even Neolithic land-use. Such preservation may require periodic weeding of the cairns to prevent structural damage by tree roots. Whether such an approach is practical and cost-effective method of operating the WGS will also need to be discussed

5. The post-medieval field systems visible at Sites 7/16 & 7/17 are not unique but they are part of the landscape history of the area. No significant archaeological features are likely to be buried under the rigs and as one of the prime areas of fertile soil in the proposed woodland it is unlikely that they can be preserved unplanted. However it may be possible to retain them as a landscape feature by planting trees directly into the mounds of the rigs. This could also be accentuated by planting a single species of hardwood in these linear mounds. This suggestion will have to be balanced against the overall landscape design for the woodland.

6. The continued survival of the archaeological structures suggested for exclusion from planting and natural regeneration will require a continuing commitment to weeding of these areas to prevent further regeneration. The timetable for such weeding would need to be undertaken where appropriate but it should not be less than every 5 years. Once the plantations are established as mature woodlands the open areas may be maintained by grazing, though again this will need monitoring.

7. It has been assumed that the establishment of the woodland will require the extermination of the rabbit population within the plantations. The existing rabbits are possibly a greater threat to the archaeological integrity of the area than the proposed woodland.

8. Planting operations such as the construction of access routes should be designed in such a way that they do not impinge on the archaeological areas. Hand planting in archaeological areas should not involve scarifying of the surface or other machinery impacts. The precise approach will need to be discussed with the Highland Council Archaeology Service.

Gazetter of Archaeological areas**PROPOSED PLANTATION 1**

General Comments :- This area is dominated by an area of prehistoric settlement in the centre of the area site on a gentle slope now heather clad. Another small area of prehistoric settlement extends into the area from the NE. At the SW it is difficult to distinguish some of the ?post-medieval enclosures, sites 1/11 & 1/12, from earlier roundhouse sites. On balance these features are considered later but do not appear to be the most recent features in the area. They may well demonstrate some earlier medieval use of the area. A similar situation can be observed at site 1/19 where the existing enclosure overlies an earlier foundation. Both sites 1/10 & 1/15 are corn kilns showing that grain production was a feature of the post-medieval economy.

Some rabbit damage has occurred particularly on the post-medieval settlements. Damage has also occurred from recent farming activities, particularly at the S end of the area. The upland areas are mostly obscured by long heather.

The survey area included an area to the SE which may not form part of WGS proposal. For simplicity this has been included within the main section to form one area.

Site Number: 1/1

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 70 SE 012

Description: 2 roundhouses lie just outside the proposed plantation. 75m to the W is a probable field boundary defined as low bank running N for 30m from the slope above the burn. This defines a terrace and presumably a field associated with the roundhouse 20m wide.

Recommendation: The area defined by the field boundary should be kept clear of trees so that it can link with the roundhouses lying outside the fence line to form an intact unit. If this not feasible only natural regeneration should be allowed in this area.

Site Number: 1/2

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 70 SE 011 (D)

Description: Roundhouse as previously described, 9.5m in diameter. 2 hut circles are shown on the 1:2,500 map supplied but only one could be recognised on the ground and only one is recorded here in the SMR. Various level terraces nearby may mark the site of former fields or platforms for other structures. No clearance cairns are visible in the immediate locality (see Site 1/6 below). 20m to the SW is a short stretch of field wall defined as a line of boulders. (Another unrecorded structure lies just outside the boundary and to the E of the burn measuring 6m by 3m.)

Recommendation: A 20m exclusion zone should be put around the main roundhouse. As no field system is directly associated with this no special protection will be required outside this limit. However it would be desirable to leave this general area for natural regeneration rather than destroy hidden features by mounding or ploughing.

Site Number: 1/3

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 011 (A)

Description: A roundhouse as previously described, 12m in diameter, lies at the western edge of a former field system [see Site 1/6 below].

Recommendation : The site should be protected by an exclusion zone of 20m.

- Site Number:** 1/4
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 011 (B)
Description: Roundhouse as previously defined, 10.5m diameter, showing as a prominent feature in the landscape due to recent heather burning. It lies to the NE of a substantial field system [see Site 1/6 below.]
Recommendation: *This should be protected by an exclusion zone of 20m.*
- Site Number:** 1/5
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 011 (C)
Description: Roundhouse as previously described, 12m in diameter. It lies on the SE edge of an extensive field system [see below].
Recommendation: *The site should be protected by a 20m exclusion zone.*
- Site Number:** 1/6
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 011
Description: Clearance cairns in long heather define an area of probable prehistoric cultivation 200m by 150m., lying between roundhouse sites 1/3, 1/4 & 1/5.
Recommendation: *No direct planting or other ground disturbance should take place in this area. Natural regeneration may be acceptable.*
- Site Number:** 1/7
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: Beside the burn at this point is a mound 10m long by 5m wide and 1.5m high. From angular stone fragments and a charcoal flecked soil this can probably be identified as a burnt mound, a prehistoric cooking site.
Recommendation: *This should be protected by a 20m exclusion zone.*
- Site Number:** 1/8
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 042
Description: A rectangular building 12m by 3m with an irregular enclosure appended is part of an extensive post-medieval settlement in this area. The other lines (shown dotted in plan) recorded in the vicinity may be stone dumps at the edge of an earlier field rather than wall lines. The feature has been partially damaged by tractor and cattle erosion.
Recommendation: *This feature should be preserved as part of the general complex associated with Site 1/10. However the state of preservation is so poor that it may merit no more protection than being excluded from the planting.*
- Site Number:** 1/9
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 042
Description: The feature is as drawn, a substantial probably post-medieval enclosure. It also contains the remains of a rectangular structure as drawn. The NE corner has been obscured by dumping of material during construction of the modern track. The stone dyke to the S is as drawn, disappearing to the SE in an area of birch and then re-emerging. It has been cut by the modern track.
Recommendation: *The enclosure and structure should be excluded from planting as illustrated*

Site Number: 1/10
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 042
Description: This enclosure as drawn contains at least 3 longhouse structures. As the the most northerly contains a corn-drying kiln, this may well have been a grain processing area with the long building to the S being used for threshing. These features are relatively well preserved.
Recommendation: *These should be preserved from planting and an exclusion zone of 20m established around the perimeter.*

Site Number: 1/11
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 042
Description: This enclosure measures 10m in diameter and has drystone walling raised on an upright stone wall. Though superficially similar to a roundhouse this is probably medieval/post medieval in date.
Recommendation: *This should be preserved from planting and an exclusion zone established around the outside.*

Site Number: 1/12
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 042
Description: Another irregular drystone enclosure incorporating large boulders lies just to the E of the modern track and was not shown on the 1:2,500 map. It appears to consist of an oval building 9m by 5m with an enclosing wall to the E. This looks earlier in date to the rectangular buildings at Site 1/10.
Recommendation: *This should be protected from planting and an exclusion zone of ?20m established around the outside.*

Site Number: 1/13
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 044
Description: 2 drystone enclosures sited on either side of the path as shown are thought to be post-medieval in date. A third slighter enclosure lies to the SW. They have been described as 'ruined sheepfolds', though this may not be correct. They presumably formed part of the settlement at Site 1/16
Recommendation: *These should be left as open spaces with a small exclusion zone but they are less significant than the features to the N.*

Site Number: 1/14
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 002
Description: This rectangular structure on the S side of the burn and N of the track forms an isolated element of the settlement at Site 1/16. Its function is not known.
Recommendation: *The site should be excluded from planting.*

Site Number: 1/15
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 002
Description: A substantial corn-drying kiln, not shown on the 1:2,500 map lies to the E of the path and the main settlement at Site 1/16. This is a well preserved feature.
Recommendation: *This is a significant feature which should be linked to Site 1/16 in a substantial area excluded from planting.*

- Site Number:** 1/16
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 002
Description: The footings of at least 6 rectangular buildings and their associated enclosures survive here. They form part of a small post-medieval farm complex in fairly good preservation, apart from rabbit damage. Stone clearance lines to the W mark the area of former fields.
Recommendation: *The buildings and enclosures should be protected from planting as shown. The area of former cultivation is less well-defined but it could be incorporated into the planting scheme as a landscape element by differential planting of trees. The cultivated soil might be suitable for hardwood planting.*
- Site Number:** 1/17
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 002
Description: An irregular enclosure some 9m in diameter is based on substantial upright boulders and is similar to the earlier enclosures at Sites 1/11 & the earlier version of 1/19. It sits on a slight knoll and may well be based on an earlier site. A dyke runs between Sites 1/17 & 1/18 S to the main complex at Site 1/16.
Recommendation: *This enclosure should be excluded from the area of planting, as shown.*
- Site Number:** 1/18
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: An irregular shaped structure 13m long and tapering from 6 to 3m wide lies about 40m ENE of Site 1/17. It is made from large boulders.
Recommendation: *This should be excluded from the area of planting, as shown.*
- Site Number:** 1/19
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: The enclosure drawn here lies on the site of an earlier one as shown. An irregular boulder links to this and then continues to the W almost to Site 1/18 as drawn. The earlier enclosure may be medieval in date.
Recommendation: *The enclosure and wall should be excluded from the planting as shown.*
- Site Number:** 1/20
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: 33m to the N of the enclosure at Site 1/19 is a line of stones 4m by 1m sited on a slight hill. This might be the remains of a robbed out cairn. There are no clearance cairns in the vicinity.
Recommendation: *This should be excluded from the area of planting, but should only require a 5 m exclusion area.*

PROPOSED PLANTATION 7

General Comments:- *The prehistoric areas of settlement lie to the N and E of this plantation in areas largely obscured by long heather. It is likely that there is more remains of this type than has been recorded, though it is unlikely that any major structures have been missed.*

The centre is dominated by the remains of the post-medieval settlement of Abercross which survives largely intact. However many of the buildings have been damaged by extensive rabbit burrowing. The surviving buildings all appear to be late in date and there was no evidence for earlier more rounded buildings that might be medieval in date. Some of the walling and enclosure 7/19 may be earlier in date.

The former rig system contemporary with this settlement still survives though poorly defined. It may be possible to preserve this field pattern by planting along the line of the rigs at appropriate intervals or by allowing natural regeneration to preserve the slight surviving traces of rig.

As with Area 1., no distinction has been made between the priority and the possible areas for the proposed plantation.

Site number: 7/1
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 021
Description: A roundhouse as previously described, 12m in diameter. 20m to the ENE is a smaller structure, 3m in diameter with substantial stone walls 1m thick..
Recommendation: A 20m exclusion zone should be left around these features.

Site Number: 7/2
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 004
Description: An area of clearance cairns extends almost from Site 7/1 towards the Abercross Burn. The cairns are irregularly distributed but no clear field system could be observed. The track forms the boundary between this and Site 7/6.
Recommendation: *It would be preferable if this area was left unplanted and perhaps linked to Site 7/6 as a clearing in the natural woodland. If this is not possible then there should be no ground disturbance in this area and it should be left to natural regeneration*

Site Number: 7/3
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 018
Description: A roundhouse as previously defined, 10m by 9m, largely obscured by long heather. Identification is made easier by this remaining a favoured area for cattle as shown by dung in the interior.
Recommendation: *This should be preserved with a 20m exclusion zone.*

Site Number: 7/4
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: A basin shaped feature sited here may be a natural feature or possibly a largely robbed out roundhouse.

Recommendation: *Because this is not positively identified, a 20m protection zone will not be required. No planting should take place within or 5m around this feature.*

Site Number: 7/5

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 037

Description: This burial cairn as previously identified and recorded, 10m diameter by 0.6m high, has been badly robbed and disturbed. The area of clearance cairns is ill-defined.

Recommendation: *The cairn should be protected within a 20m exclusion zone. The clearance cairns are too poorly defined to merit protection, though regeneration should be preferred to direct planting in this area.*

Site Number: 7/6

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 004

Description: Though only described briefly before, this is a well-defined post-medieval farming unit containing a roughly rectangular enclosure 120m by c50m. Within the enclosure is rectangular longhouse 17m by 4m and a small corn-drying kiln. There is some evidence for rig cultivation to the N of the house. The formerly cultivated ground to the S is not rigged. The area within the enclosure is defined as a mossy/bracken grassy flush in contrast to the surrounding heather moorland. The altitude and location suggest this site has not been touched since it was abandoned in the early 19th century.

Recommendation: *This site should be preserved in its entirety, as it is one of the most intact post-medieval units in this area. It could perhaps be linked to Site 7/2 to produce a clearing in the wood.*

Site Number: 7/7

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE 046

Description: A small post-medieval settlement is sited here containing a corn-drying kiln and one longhouse. The modern track has been cut through this settlement causing some damage to the dykes and longhouse. The fields to the S & E show neither clearance heaps nor rigs and have probably been ploughed since the settlement was abandoned.

Recommendation: *This settlement should be excluded from the area of planting. The fields do not require to be excluded.*

Site Number: 7/8

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: Above the present tree line in an area of long heather is a group of clearance cairns within an area roughly 100m by 60m.

Recommendation: *Ideally these should be left as an open area within the proposed woodland. If this is not possible then this should be an area of natural regeneration rather than an area of intrusive planting.*

Site Number: 7/9

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: A group of clearance cairns are visible here in heather moorland. The boundaries were indistinct. The exact location is uncertain as no contours or other topographic features are shown on the 1:2,500 plan.

Recommendation: *As an ill-defined feature these may not require protection, though*

it would be desirable either to leave this as an open area or restrict it to being an area of natural regeneration. Certainly no planting should take place on or adjacent to individual cairns as they may contain archaeological layers preserved by the stones.

Site Number: 7/10

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: Along the N side of an unmarked burn are the remains of a turf dyke probably connected with the post-medieval settlement of Aberscross. A small patch of grassland lying on a terrace to the E, may be the site of a small building, probably rectangular in shape. The area is obscured by long heather making the sites difficult to spot.

Recommendation: *The features are not well-defined and do not justify a 20m exclusion zone. However both the dyke and the house site should be excluded from the area of direct planting and a small area of protection (?5m) established around them.*

Site Number: 7/11

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: A single rectangular house 12m by 4.5m lies in the position shown on the E edge of the birch woodland. It is badly obscured by bracken growth but is reasonably well preserved.

Recommendation: *No planting should take in the vicinity of this building which is part of the post-medieval settlement of Aberscross and a 20m exclusion zone should be established around it.*

Site Number: 7/12

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: Partly bisected by the current deer fence are the remains of a post-medieval settlement as shown.

Recommendation: *This should be protected by leaving it as an open area as shown*

Site Number: 7/13

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: Sheltered by a ridge to the W, is an area of clearance cairns measuring c150m by 70m as shown. It lies to the N of the modern deer fence and is currently heather clad. Though lying just to the N of the post-medieval settlement at Site 7/15, these clearance cairns are thought to represent the remains of a prehistoric field system.

Recommendation: *Direct planting should be avoided in this area and ideally it should be left as a clearing in the new woodland.*

Site Number: 7/14

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: A single rectangular longhouse 10m by 3m with an extra chamber 2m long is sited here. There has been some rabbit damage to the structure. The surrounding area is grassy rather than heather moorland, though this may in part be the effect of rabbits. This appears to be part of the post-medieval settlement of Aberscross.

Recommendation: *This should be left unplanted as shown with a 20m clearance zone..*

Site Number: 7/15

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: This complex consists of 3 rectangular longhouses associated with an enclosure and 3 separate longhouses. Apart from the 28m long building to the S with 3 chambers, they are all 11m long by 3.5-4m wide and appear to form the heart of the post-medieval settlement of Aberscross. There has been rabbit damage to all the buildings, that nearest the deer fence being so badly tunnelled that the position of the walls has to be inferred.

Recommendation: *This area should be left unplanted as shown.*

Site Number: 7/16

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: To the N of the burn and W of a partially robbed out turf & stone dyke, are the remains of cultivation rigs now showing as a grassy field.

Recommendation: *The enriched area of cultivation shows in the verdant vegetation growing here. This could survive as a landscape feature by single species planting by hand in the centre of the rigs.*

Site Number: 7/17

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: To the S of the unnamed burn and E of the illustrated dyke is another field still retaining traces of rig cultivation.

Recommendation: *As with Site 7/16, This could be preserved as a landscape feature by differential planting of trees.*

Site Number: 7/18

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: A substantial drystone enclosure some 19m in diameter as shown with vertical stones at the base occupies a prominent position on a low knoll. It appears to be a stock enclosure relating to the post-medieval settlement of Aberscross but may be derived from an earlier structure.

Recommendation: *This should be preserved as an unplanted feature with a 20m zone of protection.*

Site Number: 7/19

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: 20m to the SE of Site 7/18 is a corn drying kiln 6m by 4m with an internal chamber 1.5m diameter by 1m high surviving.

Recommendation: *This should be preserved unplanted, probably in conjunction with Site 7/18.*

Site Number: 7/20

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE

Description: c50m E of the enclosure at Site 7/18 is a rectangular structure 5m by 4m partially enclosed by a wall as shown. There appear to be the remains of other dykes in this area, though they were too slight to plot in detail.

Recommendation: *The structure & partial enclosure should remain unplanted within a 20m zone of protection.. It would be desirable that the immediate area be naturally regenerated or at least hand planted rather than mounded or ploughed.*

Site Number: 7/21
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: On the E side of the terrace above the burn are the remains of enclosure dykes as shown.
Recommendation: *Though too incomplete to justify being excluded from the planting, it is to be hoped that planting should be carried out in a manner that respects these dykes rather than allows them to be planted over. This may require hand planting or natural regeneration.*

Site Number: 7/22
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: A rectangular drystone enclosure 12 by 10m is sited here.
Recommendation: *It should be left unplanted.*

Site Number: 7/23
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 76 SE
Description: A small area of clearance cairns lie to the N of a slight dyke as shown. The dyke is probably post-medieval but the cairns may be the remnant of former prehistoric cultivation.
Recommendation: *Natural regeneration would be the preferred planting policy in this area.*

PROPOSED PLANTATION 8

General Comments

Most of this proposed Enclosure is either mature woodland or improved grassland. The two features described have already been recorded and it is hoped that both will lie outside the fenced area. However the proposed fence line appears to bisect Site 8/1

Because the cairn has been so heavily robbed it is impossible to interpret it as either chambered or cisted and therefore it cannot be precisely dated.

Site Number: 8/1
HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s: HNC 79 NE
Description: A substantial cairn has been described here previously and is shown on current & previous OS maps. It has been heavily robbed so that the interior is marked by several hollows. Fragments of the stone kerbing survive but it is difficult to work out the original form of the cairn. It is at least 20m in diameter and must originally have been a substantial feature in the local landscape. Along the S of the cairn are several mature oak trees.
Recommendation: *Most of the cairn lies outside the proposed enclosure and the fence for the enclosure must be constructed so that it does not bisect the cairn. This may require the fence to be positioned around the existing stand of oak trees..*

Site Number: 8/2

HC Sites & Monuments No./No.s:

HNC 79 NE

Description:

A substantial corn-drying kiln with a chamber 2m diameter by 1.5m high survives here. The building extends a further 5m to the SSE

Recommendation:

This structure probably lies outside the proposed enclosure. The enclosure fence should be sited so that it does not bisect the S end of this building.

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2nd June 1997

KEY

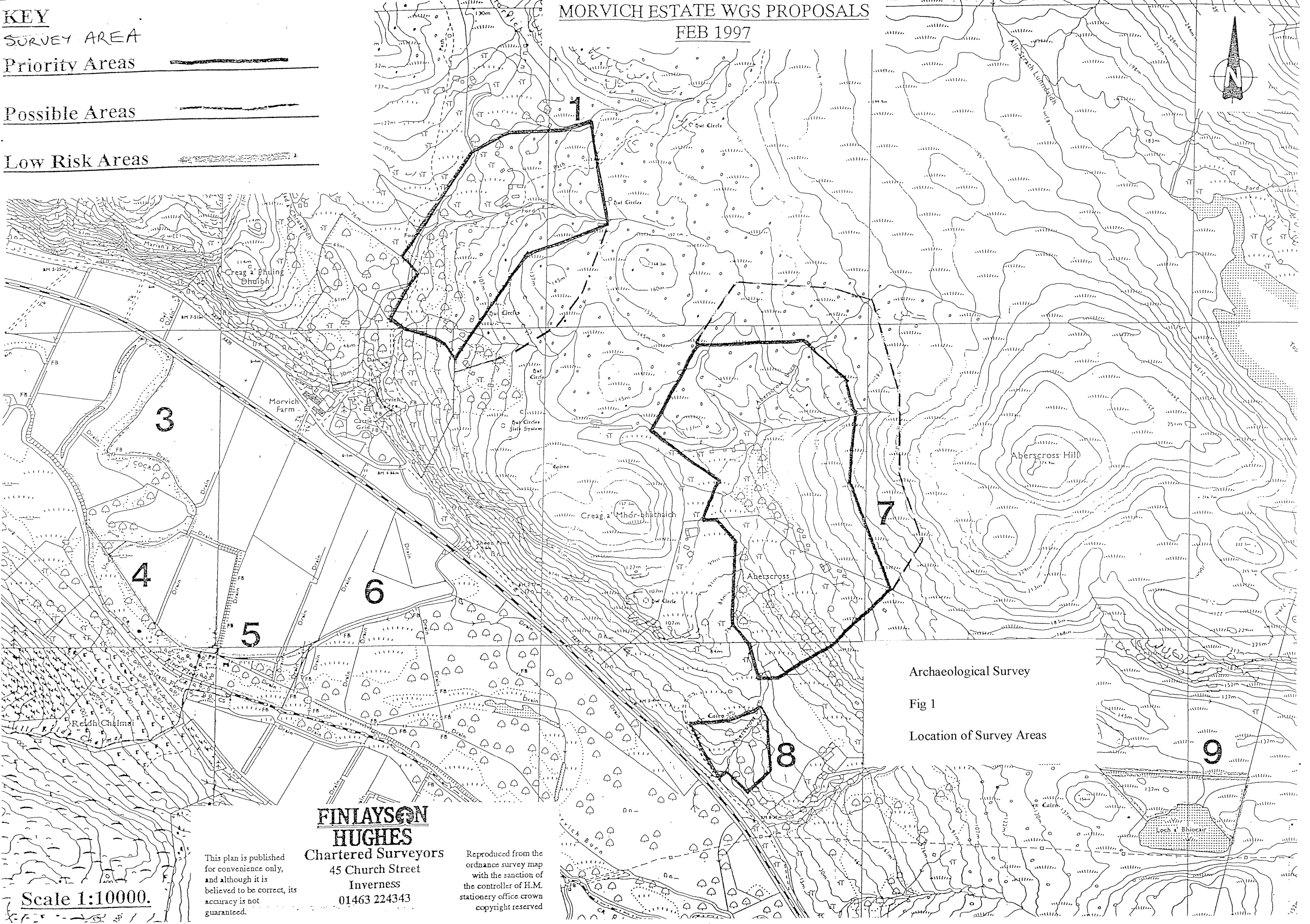
SURVEY AREA

Priority Areas

Possible Areas

Low Risk Areas

MORVICH ESTATE WGS PROPOSALS
FEB 1997



Archaeological Survey

Fig 1

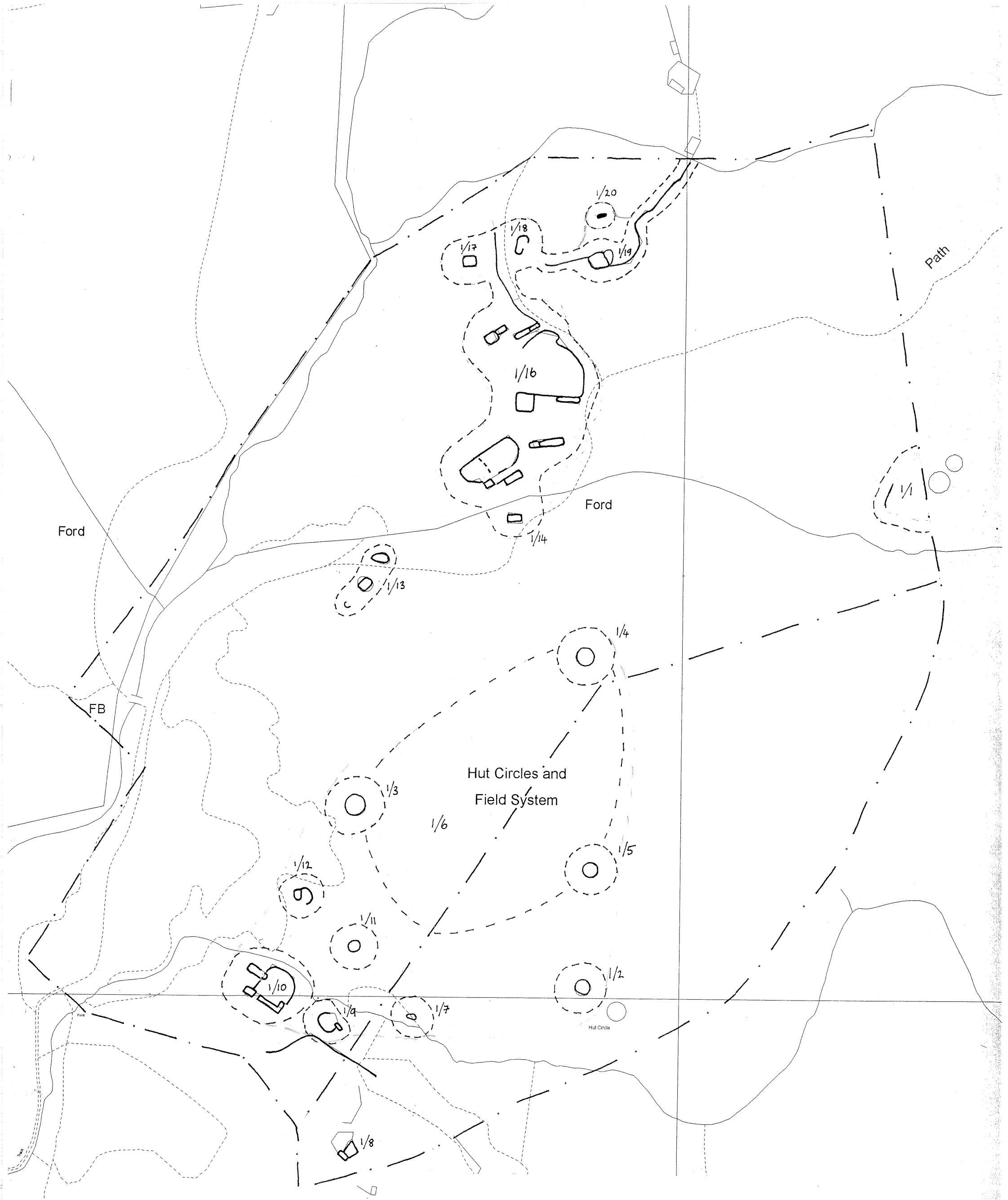
Location of Survey Areas

FINLAYSON
HUGHES
 Chartered Surveyors
 45 Church Street
 Inverness
 01463 224343

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MORVICH ESTATE WGS

Archaeological Survey May 1997

Fig 2

Proposed Enclosure 1

Scale 1:2,500

KEY

SURVEY AREA

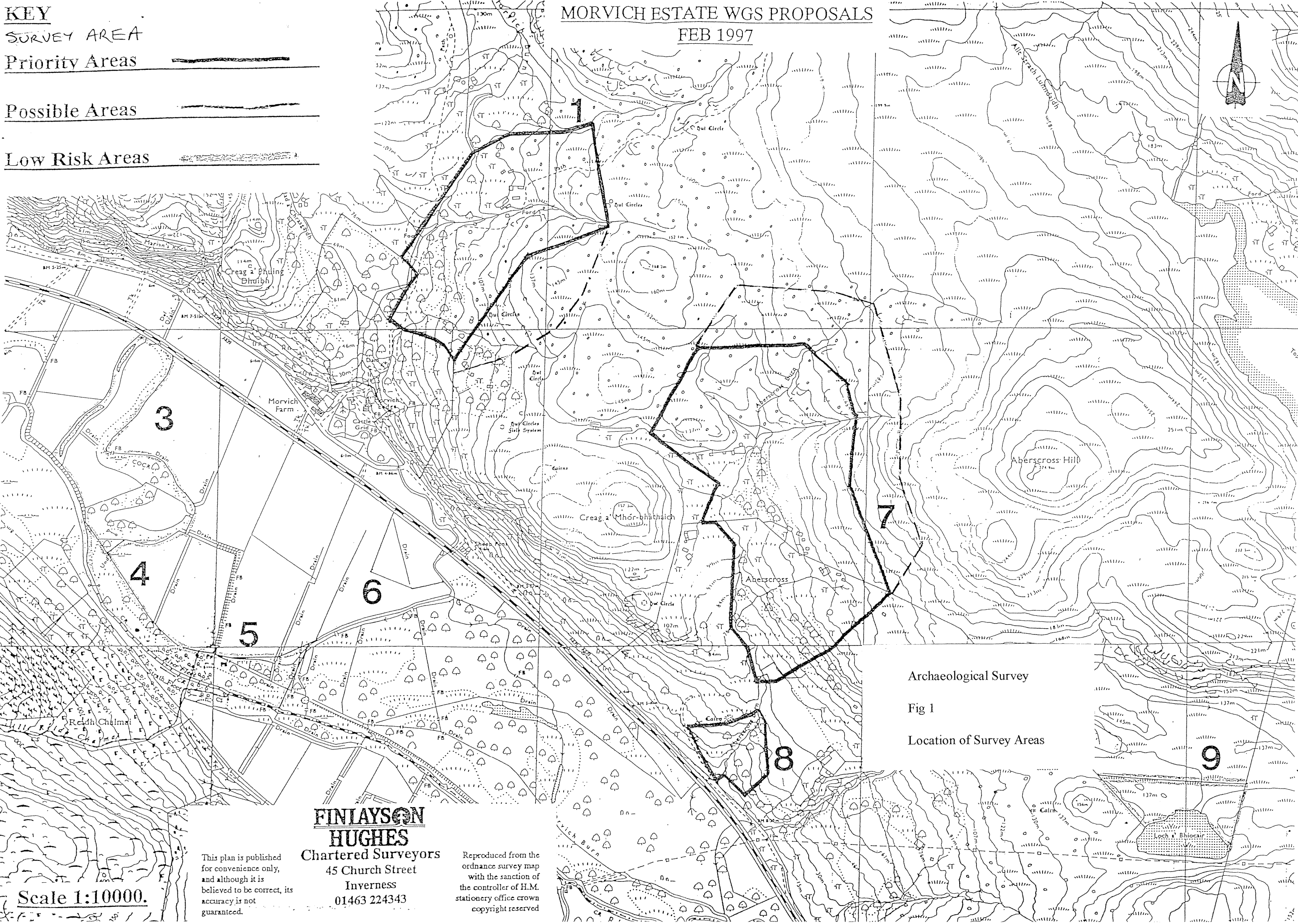
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Archaeological Survey

Fig 1

Location of Survey Areas

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Fig 3
Proposed Enclosures 7 & 8
Scale 1:2,500

Scale 1:2500

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