

98/50T

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
of
CARROL WOOD

Undertaken by
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FCC/1660

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Introduction

This archaeological assessment looks at the north-east facing slopes to the south of Carrol Farm proposed for afforestation. It has taken advantage of an archaeological aerial photographic survey undertaken in August 1994. Ground survey work was undertaken in February and April 1995, when the vegetation cover was low and the vast majority of archaeological features should have been visible. Nevertheless, due account should be taken of the possibility of archaeological features appearing as planting operations take place. New discoveries should be reported to Highland Regional Council's Archaeology Service.

Geographical description

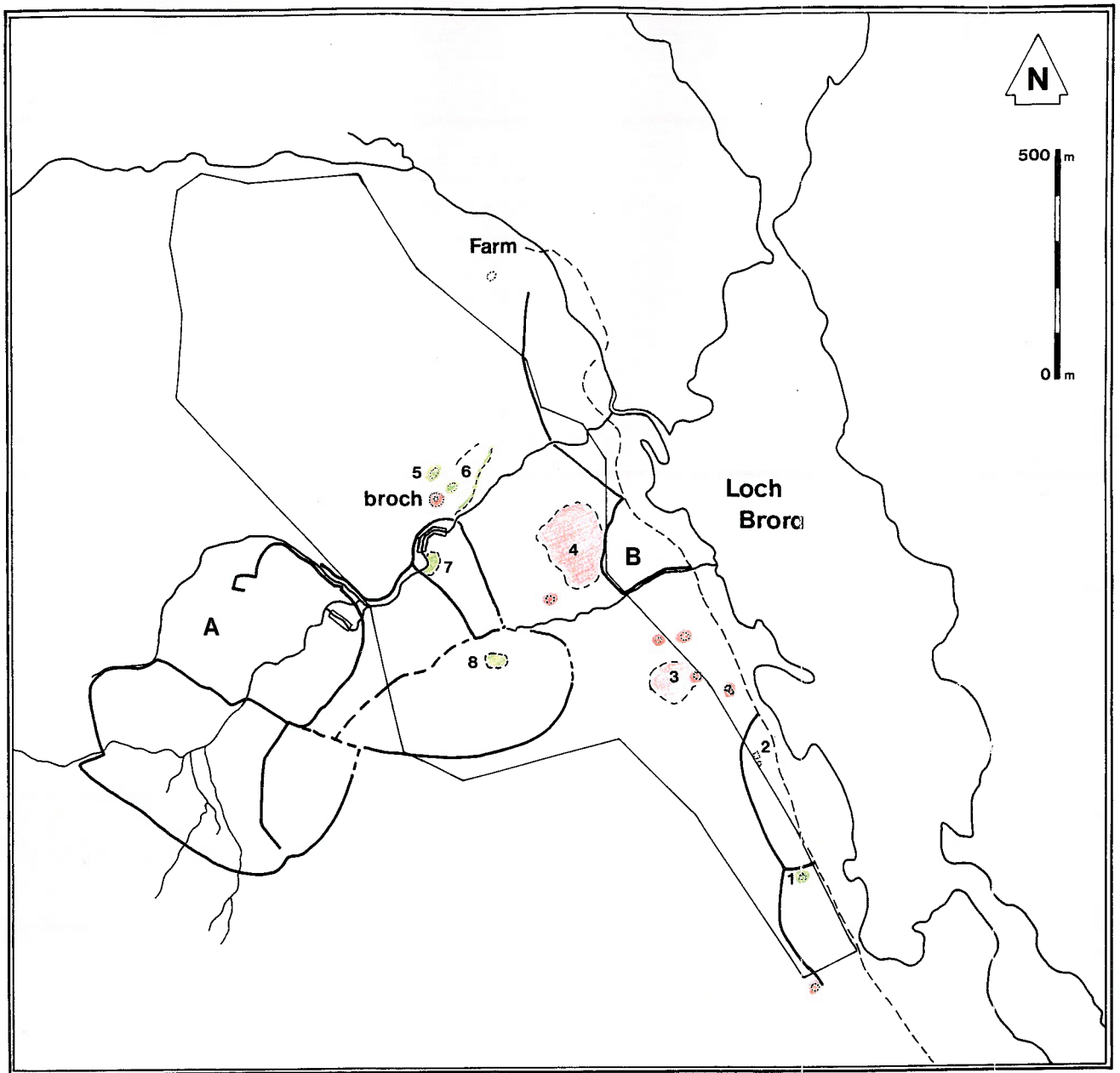
The area in question stretches from the 30-40m contour to a maximum of 315m OD, and is generally north-east facing. It is situated between the heights of Carrol Rock to the north and Duchary Hill to the south. Various small burns flow down the slope to Loch Brora. Most of the area is heather clad, although there are some very small patches of grass.

Historic and archaeological records

Various areas of archaeological interest had been noted on the Sites and Monuments Record held by Highland Regional Council's Archaeological Service. The planting scheme had been designed to take these into account. Nevertheless, it was recognised that the potential for the existence of prehistoric and historic settlement in the area should be investigated further. This detailed archaeological survey has attempted to identify other visible features.

The survey

The heather-covered ground was surveyed systematically, by walking along and across the slopes and the flatter land to the north-west and south-east of Carrol broch. The area to the N and NW of the broch was found to be devoid of archaeological features.



Recommendations

- The small number of features newly discovered should be not be planted over. Most of them occur in areas planned for broadleaves, although there is one significant area that is in the heart of the coniferous planting. Nevertheless, it is expected that this recommendation could be incorporated within the current proposals.
- Shortly before any forestry work - taking vehicles across the ground, fencing, preparing access routes, ploughing, etc - all areas of archaeological importance should be marked on the ground to protect them from accidental damage or destruction.
- The areas should be permanently marked in some way, to protect them from machine damage in the future, when developing rides and access routes or using areas for turning large machines.
- The open land should be managed to ensure that self seeded trees do not take hold over the areas left unplanted - tree roots damage archaeology.

The results of the survey

1: Abandoned post-medieval structure: [centred at NC 85410561] NC80NE0044



This small, unroofed building, aligned cW-E, is situated in an area of grass and bracken near the track. It measures c8.5m long by 3m wide across wall centres. There is a small extension on the north side of the structure, c3m square. The walls are still upstanding to a height of 1-1.2m.

Advice: According to the planting plan, this structure probably lies in an area of open ground. This should be assured when planting occurs.

2: Abandoned post-medieval enclosures: [centred at NC 85330590] NC80NE0063

Two small areas of ground, protected by the ridge that runs alongside the loch, have been defined by low turf dykes. One slopes to the S and measures c17m by 10m, the other slopes to the N and measures c6m square.

Advice: According to the planting plan, these enclosures probably lie outwith the boundary fence for the planting. This should be assured when fencing occurs.

3: Prehistoric settlement: [NC 79410469] (HRC No.NC80NE21 & 22)



This settlement is described in the Sites and Monuments Record held by Highland Regional Council. It consists of four circular structures, not necessarily contemporary, ranging in diameter from 9.5m to 14m between very low wall centres. One has a sub-rectangular extension c11m by 5m, apparently opening from it. Two of the structures are set on the top of the ridge that runs alongside the loch. One is set on a platform on the hillside, the other is in a hollow in a break of the ridge, with an area of clearance cairns covering the quite steep, heather-clad slope to the SW.

Advice: Two of the probable round houses lie within the fenced area, but have been accounted for by leaving the ground unplanted. However, they are extremely close to the proposed line for the boundary fence and the edge of the coniferous planting. It should be assured that these structures are not crossed by the new fence, nor touched by the machinery when planting takes place. They should be clearly marked to ensure that no damage occurs as they are the most difficult to identify.

The clearance cairns to the SW lie within the area of coniferous planting. A reassessment of the area of open ground to the NE should be undertaken to decide whether some of these clearance cairns could be included within it. If the area is to be ploughed, the operative or forest agent should check any damaged clearance cairns, in case any had in fact been small burial cairns.

Round house within the hollow:

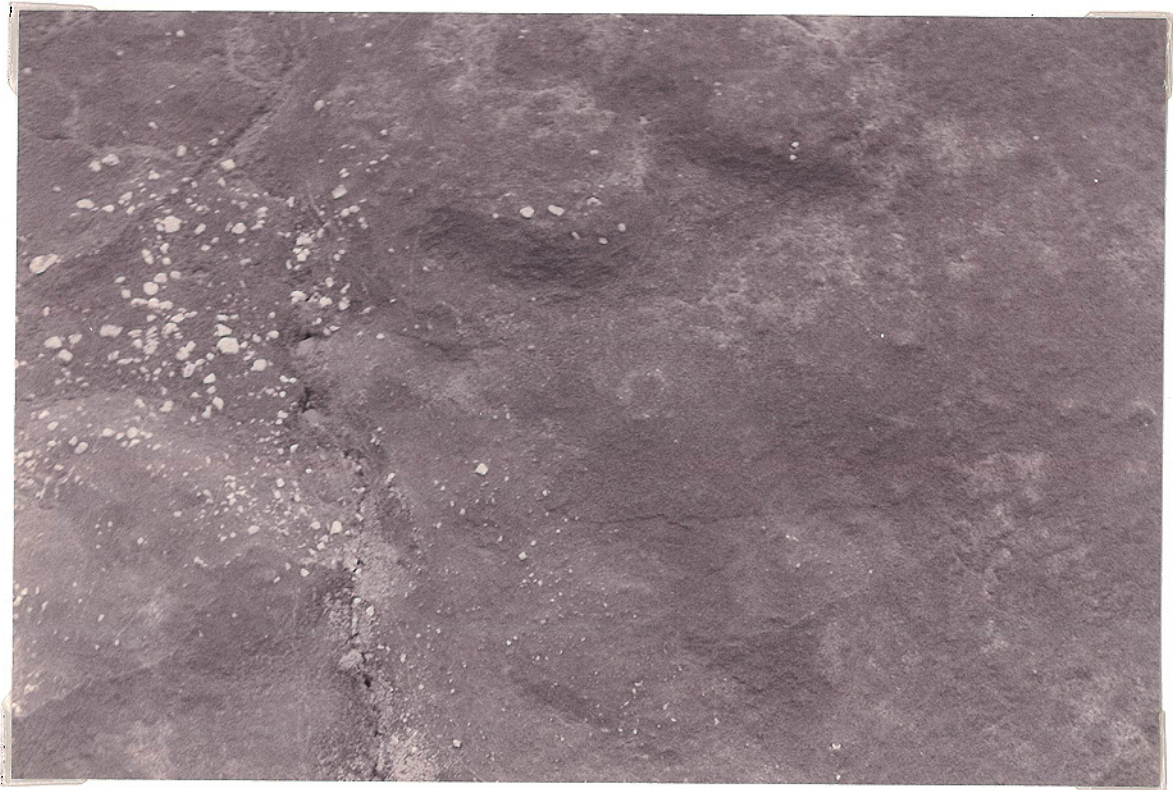


Clearance cairns on hill side:



4: Prehistoric settlement: [centred at NC 84920635] NC 80NW 0025

On the steep, heather-clad hill-slope above the abandoned post-medieval settlement B, is an area of clearance cairns. At its SW extent are the remains of a heather-covered round-house. It measures c13m in diameter between wall centres, which are c0.3m high and spread to c1.5m. There is an entrance to the SE.



Advice: This area is within the coniferous planting. The round-house and a few of the associated clearance cairns should be marked before machinery is taken onto the ground and left out of the planting area. If the area is to be ploughed, the operative or forest agent should check any damaged clearance cairns, in case any had in fact been small burial cairns. It seems highly unlikely that this would have been the case. However, cremated bone might be disturbed, and if so should be reported to Highland Region's Archaeology Service before planting actually occurs.

Settlement B was not surveyed in detail as it lies outwith the planting proposals.

**5 & 6: Carrol broch and associated structures: [NC 84620646]
(HRC No.NC80NW01-3)**

The broch is described in the Sites and Monuments Record held by Highland Regional Council. It was excavated in the last quarter of the 19th century, probably at the suggestion of Revd Joass of Golspie. The finds were taken to Dunrobin Castle for display in his museum there. The grass-covered, flat-topped, stone mound c30m to the ENE of the broch is presumably the spoil heap from those excavations.



The heather-covered enclosure c40m to the N of the broch is sub-rectangular in shape, although when sighted from the wall-top of the broch appears as a circular feature with an extension to the NE. Whatever its original form, it is situated in such an open position that it is difficult to interpret with any confidence. Whether it is contemporary with the use of the broch, an earlier feature, or the remains of a structure associated with the excavations is unclear.

At the time of the excavations, Revd Joass identified a "weem" or souterrain to the ESE of the broch. Today this feature is bounded by heather and marked by a grassy line, which can be interpreted in quite different terms. From well down the slope, a route in a SSW direction towards the broch is defined by a slight dip in the ground. This becomes increasingly well-defined as the brow of the hill-side is approached. The way is U shaped, c1.5m wide at most, and continues past the SE side of the broch to the edge of the burn as it flows from a drained marshy area to the S. It seems quite likely that the weem that was seen by Revd Joass was the remains of a sunken way to/from the abandoned settlement A.



Advice: This area has been identified as one of open ground in the afforestation regime. Machinery should not drive across the area of archaeological interest, as identified on the attached plane, in any circumstances.

7: Abandoned medieval/post-medieval settlement: [centred at NC 846063]

On the S and E side of the burn above the drained marshy area, are four structures associated with an abandoned settlement. The settlement consists of a long-house within the heather, aligned WNW-ESE, c19m by 3m. By the burn, and therefore in a grassy patch, are two other structures which may originally have been roofed, measuring c10m by 3.5m and c8.5m by 3.5m. All three have drystone walls standing to between 0.2m and 0.4m high. The fourth is a sub-rectangular heather-clad enclosure defined by small boulders, measuring c14m by 5m.

NC 80 NW
0024



Advice: This area lies within an area of broadleaf planting. The area in question is extremely close to the burn and is immediately adjacent to the area of open ground. It is suggested that it could be included within the open ground, by taking an equivalent area into broadleaf planting NW of the broch.

8: Abandoned medieval/post-medieval structure: [centred at NC 848061]

NC 80NW2₂

Some 250m SSE of settlement 7 is an individual, heather-covered, dry-stone walled long-house with an attached enclosure. It is near a small burn, where there is a small irregular enclosure in the grass, but this may or may not be contemporary.



The long-house is aligned WNW-ESE, and measures c38m long by 3m wide. At its W end it has been sub-divided into two distinct areas. That at the W gable appears to be a kiln c2.5m in external diameter - the corbelling of the roof still being in place. Immediately E, it is abutted by a small "room" c6m long, and then the open long-house extends E of this. Half way along its length are two small square extensions to the N and S of the long-house, both c 3m square.

The attached enclosure measures c22m by 12m. The detached enclosure is c15m by 7m in area with a small structure on one side only c5m by 2m.

Advice: This is situated at the junction of open ground, broadleaf and coniferous planting. It will need to be marked out to ensure that it is not damaged by machinery or planting.

Various heather-covered stone and turf dykes

There are a number of boundaries that cross the area, and they have been plotted on the accompanying plan. In some instances the planting proposals have taken account of these dykes and used them as boundaries for the new land use. In other cases the boundaries cut right across the area and it is presumed that they will be largely destroyed by the afforestation.

The extensive post-medieval abandoned settlement B was not surveyed as it lies outwith the area to be afforested. However, it was briefly examined. Its inherent complexity, and the associated drainage works to the NE of the area, would be worthy of further study.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The afforestation proposals for Carrol Wood have taken account of the known archaeological resource and, because of the variety of the planting and open ground, should be able to take cognisance of the additional features recorded during this survey.

The advice set out in association with each site is of importance, although there may be other requirements set down by the Regional Archaeologist and other advisers.

It is proposed that:

- The advice contained within this survey report and on the associated plan should be incorporated into the afforestation proposals.
- Shortly before any forestry work - taking vehicles across the ground, fencing, preparing access routes, ploughing, etc - the areas of archaeological importance should be marked on the ground to protect them from accidental damage or destruction.
- The areas should be permanently marked in some way, to protect them from machine damage in the future, when developing rides and access routes or using areas for turning large machines.
- The open land should be managed to ensure that self seeded trees do not take hold over the areas left unplanted - tree roots damage archaeology.