

An Archaeological Survey of the  
Allt Eiricheallach Hydro Scheme,  
Glenquoich Estate,  
Lochaber, Highland.

For Hydroplan UK.

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## 1. Summary.

One archaeological site, comprising eight individual monuments, was recorded in a desk-based and walkover survey of part of the Allt Eiricheallach, Glenquoich Estate, Glengarry, Lochaber, Highland. This site was associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century occupation of Glenquoich Estate.

No Scheduled Ancient Monuments are situated within or near the survey area.

Impact assessment and mitigation is summarised in the table below.

Site No.	Impact Assessment	Mitigation
Site 1a-h Farmstead	Not at risk	No action required

## 2. Introduction.

An archaeological survey was undertaken on behalf of Hydroplan UK, in the Allt Eiricheallach valley, Glenquoich Estate, Glengarry, Lochaber, Highland (OS 1:10,000 Sheet NG90SE), prior to the proposed construction of a hydro scheme. The survey area is situated on the North shore of Loch Quoich, to the West of the bridge over Glen Quoich. (See Fig 1: Location Map)

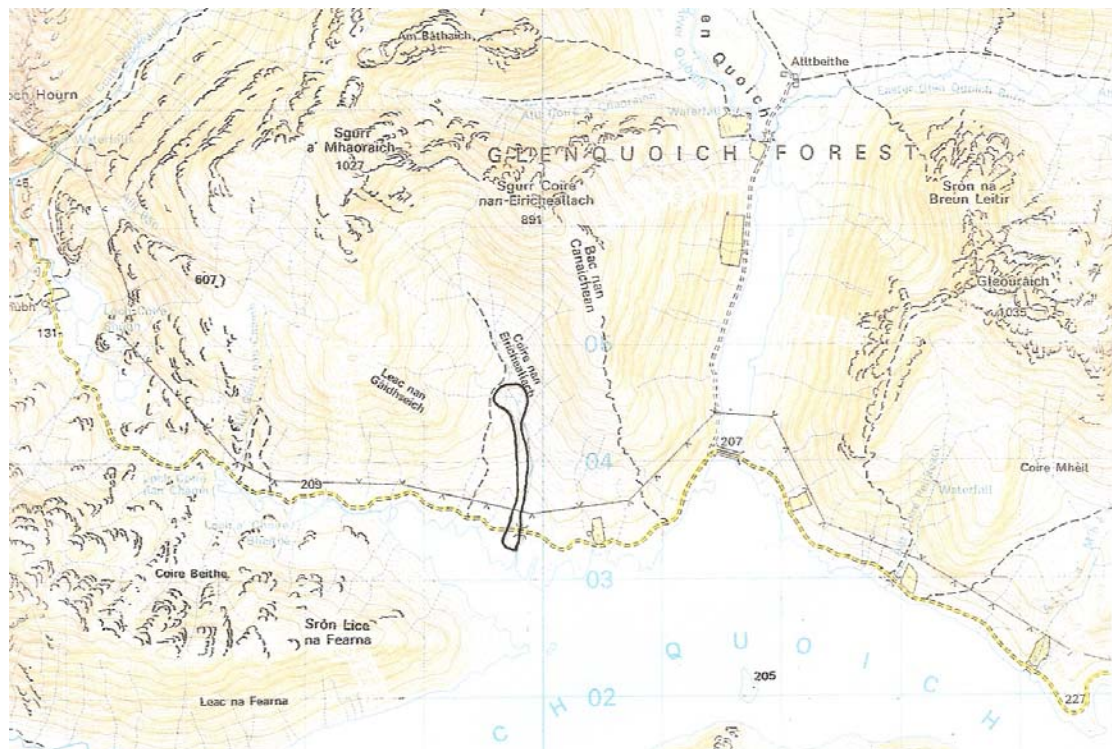


Fig. 1: Location Map (Extract from OS Landranger 33 1:50,000) (© Crown copyright 1989. All rights reserved. Licence number 10044103)

The Allt Eiricheallach hydro scheme consists of a pipeline running down the West bank of the Allt Coire nan Eiricheallach from various options of intakes on the main burn and tributaries at 335m,OD, 355m OD and 385m OD to Powerhouse 5 just below the Kinloch Hourn road. (See Fig. 4)

The survey area comprises a narrow strip of land, 50m either side of the pipeline. It also includes an area, 50m in diameter around the intakes and 100m in diameter around the powerhouse. The survey area consists of steeply sloping ground, which rises from 230m to 385m OD. It lies on metamorphic quartzes, feldspars and granulites of the Moine succession.

The valley containing the proposed pipeline, up to NG 9972 0460, has been fenced in recent years and mounded and planted. Young trees, as well as dense vegetation, now cover the survey area.

### **3. Working Methods.**

The survey consisted of a combination of a desk-based assessment and a rapid walkover survey.

#### **3.1. Desk-based Assessment.**

The desk-based assessment consisted of the consultation of a variety of sources:

##### **3.1.1. Sites and Monuments Registers.**

a) The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), held by RCAHMS, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX, available on [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

b) The Historic Environment Record (HER), held by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit, Planning and Development Service, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX, available on [www.ambaile.org](http://www.ambaile.org)

No sites had been previously recorded.

##### **3.1.2. Maps.**

- a) William Roy's Map of Scotland, 1747-55.
- b) John Thomson: the Atlas of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1832.
- c) OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" Map Sheets: Inverness-shire LXXIX, XCIV, surveyed 1872, publ. 1876.
- d) OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 6" Map, publ. 1900.
- e) OS 1:10,000 Sheet: NH00SW, 1971.
- f) OS Explorer 414, 2007.

##### **3.1.3. Archives.**

- a) Glengarry Heritage Centre, Community Centre, Invergarry, PH35 4HD.
- b) RCAHMS MS 4028: "A Report of the 2006 Archaeological Survey of Loch Hourn, Inverness-shire", unpublished report by the North of Scotland Archaeological Society.

##### **3.1.4. Aerial Photographs.**

Aerial photographs were consulted in the RCAHMS Air Photo Unit:

- a) CPE/UK/0177; Date 07.10.46; Scale: 1:10,000; Frames 3035-6.
- b) CPE/Scot/288; Date 30.08.47; Scale 1:9,800; Frames 4334-6.
- c) CPE/Scot/298; Date 18.09.47; Scale 1:10,000; Frames 3175, 4176.
- b) 541/A/533; Date 25.05.50; Scale 1:11,700; Frames 4011-12.
- c) OS 63 100; Date 29.05.65; Scale 1:25,000; Frame 102-5.

##### **3.1.5. Published Sources.**

Cowan, EJ: "The Looting of Lochaber" in The Lochaber Emigrants to Glengarry, ed. Rae Fleming, 1994, Toronto.

Ellice, Edward, C.: Place Names of Glengarry and Glenquoich, 1931 (first published 1898)

Glengarry Heritage Association: The Glengarry Emigrations, 2000.

Glengarry Heritage Association: The Archaeology of Glengarry, 2000, revised 2007.

Glengarry Heritage Association: Historical Guide to Glengarry, 2007.

Glengarry Heritage Association: Victorian Glengarry, 2010.

Glengarry Heritage Association: A Short History of the Ellice Family, n.d.

Miers, Mary: Western Seaboard: An Illustrated Architectural Guide, 2008.

Ross, Donald: The Glengarry Evictions, 1853, Glasgow.

Ure, John: A Bird on the Wing: Bonnie Prince Charlie's Flight from Culloden Retraced, 1992.

### 3.2. Fieldwork.

The desk-based research was followed by a rapid walkover survey of the area, which was undertaken on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in dry sunny conditions, after a prolonged dry spell.

The walkover survey was hampered by the vegetation growth within the fenced enclosure, which may have masked archaeological features.

Further walkover survey may be required if the higher intakes are used, as the Coire nan Eiricheallach may well be the site of a shieling settlement.

## 4. Historical Background

*"Throughout this whole stretch of nearly 34 miles, from Fort Augustus to Loch-hourn-head, there is scarcely one crofter or tenant. The whole country is under sheep and game. Had I been walking through the wild territories of the Hudson Bay Company, or moving across through some of the unexplored parts of Africa, I could scarcely see greater signs of desolation."*

(Ross, 1853, 4)

Thus was the area around Loch Quoich described by a visitor in 1853. The writer went on to lament the absence of tenant farmers on the "once cultivated fields", a result of wholesale emigration and evictions from Glengarry in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (*ibid*)

However, the survey area may not ever have been densely populated. It is a landscape dominated by high mountains and steep-sided valleys, which gave rise to the place name, Glen Quoich or *Glen na cuaich*, meaning "Glen of the cup". (Ellice, 1931, 94)

No evidence of prehistoric occupation has been recorded in the area around Loch Quoich. While this might be attributed to the lack of systematic archaeological survey, it is significant that few prehistoric remains have been found around the shores of Loch Hourn, the focus of several seasons of intensive survey by the North of Scotland Archaeological Society. (NOSAS, 2006, 12) Thus it is possible that, in this case, the absence of evidence is, indeed, evidence of absence.

The area still seems to have been sparsely populated in Medieval times. While Loch Garry to the East and Loch Hourn to the West are bordered with small settlements on Blaeu's Atlas of 1654, "Loch Coich" and "Glen Coich" are apparently empty lands. This pattern continued into the 18<sup>th</sup> century; several townships, accompanied by parcels of arable ground, flank the shores of Loch Garry and the head of Loch Hourn



on Roy's map of 1747-55, while no settlement is recorded around "Loch Queich". The area contains only lonely mountains, apart from parcels of woodland: one at the mouth of Glen Quoich and another in the area between All Coire Peitireach and Allt a' Mheil, corresponding to the later woodland planted in 1842 by Edward Ellice. (Roy's Map, 1747-55) A small copse upstream in Glen Quoich might represent the birch trees, commemorated in the place name, Alltbeithe.<sup>1</sup>

However, if there was little permanent settlement around the survey area, it is likely that the land was used seasonally and temporary residents were attracted by "the extraordinarily rich summer grazing. In early summer, from Glengarry, from Loch Hourn, and from Kintail, herds with their cattle and goats came trooping to the rich pastures of the hills." (Ellice, 1931, 87) Thus seasonally occupied shieling settlements may have been established around the shores of the loch, such as at Alltbeithe and Allt Coire a' Bhuirich, which were described on Thomson's Atlas of 1832 as *Rieanailtbhegh* and *Riecorrybhuirick* respectively. (See Fig. 2) "Rie" is often used on maps as a corruption of the Gaelic *arigh*, meaning shieling or summer residence.



Fig. 2: Extract from Thomson's Atlas, 1832, showing Glen Quoich with the shielings at Rieanailtbhegh (Alltbeithe) and Riecorrybhuirick (on Allt a' Bhuirich)

More permanent occupation may gradually have developed; thus in 1784, eleven tenants were evicted from Glenquoich when it was let as a sheep farm. (Glengarry Heritage Centre, 2000, 5, 10) It is not clear where these tenants had lived as no settlements were recorded on Roy's map around 30 years earlier. It is possible that they were some of the seasonal tenants, using the shielings and summer grazing. However, the sheep farms are more easily identified; Camban farm in Glen Quoich (now under water) was recorded on Thomson's Atlas of 1832 and associated with two sheepfolds on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map of 1876. Another sheepfold was depicted at Bunchaolie Farm, **Site 1**, at the foot of Allt Eiricheallach, also dating from at least 1832 and now under water. (See Fig. 3) The arrival of sheep may also have given

<sup>1</sup> *Alltbeithe* = "the birch-tree burn". (Ellice, 1931, 89)

rise to the place name *Allt a' Mheil*, meaning “The burn of bleating, though the latter could have older origins associated with summer pasture of goats.

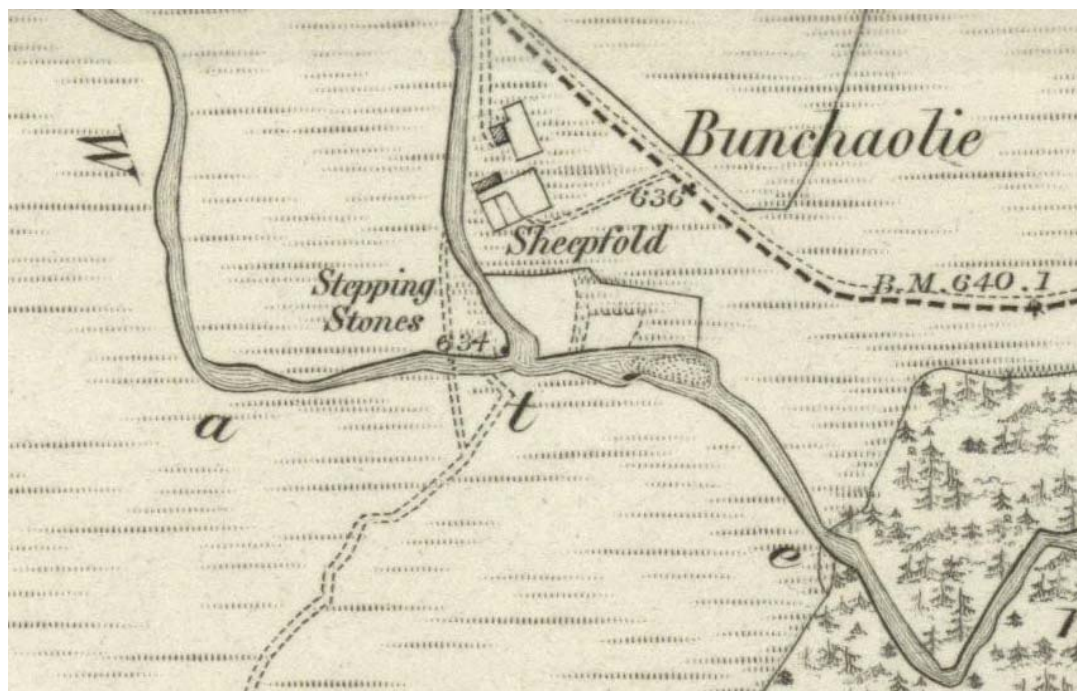


Fig. 3: Extract from OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map Inverness-shire LXXIV.

For centuries the area was part of the territory of the MacDonells of Glengarry, a vast tract of land, covering 170 square miles. (Ross, 1853, 2) The chiefs lived in Invergarry Castle, the ruins of which remain on the shore of Loch Oich, though their territory reached westwards almost to Loch Hourn. Glen Quoich was renowned for its red deer herds and “Glengarry and his deer-stalkers found abundant sport among the famous red deer of Glenquoich”. (Ellice, 1931, 87) Glen Quoich formed one of the oldest deer preserves in the Highlands, jealously guarded by the chief. (Ellice, 1931, 87) The Glen Quoich herd, later, inspired Landseer, while he stayed at Glen Quoich Lodge, and, it has been suggested, may even have provided the model for “The Monarch of the Glen”.

National events impinged on the area in 1746, when Bonnie Prince Charlie reached Loch Quoich during his long trek around the West Highlands, in an attempt to escape after Culloden. On 20<sup>th</sup> July, his party rested “in a fast place in the face of a hill at the head of Loch Quoich”, while “about one hundred of the redcoats were marching up the other side of the hill his royal highness lodged in”. (quoted in Ure, 1992, 158) Waiting until evening, they climbed Druim Cosaidh, to the SW of Loch Quoich, and managed to skirt past the military camp in Glen Cosaidh, reaching Coire Sgoireadail above Kinloch Hourn next day (Ure, 1992, 158-9)

The financial constraints, which afflicted most Highland landowners in the aftermath of Culloden, also affected Glengarry and, after the death of one of the most colourful, though profligate, of the McDonell chiefs in 1828, parts of the great Glengarry Estate had to be sold. (Cowan, 1994, 18)

Glenquoich Estate was bought for £32,000, from the Duke of Gordon, in 1838 by Edward “Bear” Ellice. He set about developing the land as never before seen. It was said that “until Mr Ellice purchased the estate, there was not a house – not one inch of arable land – not a tree of any kind.” (Glengarry Heritage Centre 2010, 5) Ellice

built Glenquoich Lodge near the foot of Allt Coire Peitireach in 1838. The house, although simple, became one of the most fashionable shooting lodges of the time and accommodated up to 1,000 guests in a single year. (*op.cit.* 6) 100 acres were reclaimed for a garden, trees were planted and paths were built. (*op. cit.* 5)

The Ellice family later moved to Invergarry House and, in 1873, Mr Michael Bass MP, who later became Lord Burton, took a 31 year lease on Glenquoich. (*op cit.* 6) Making a colossal investment of £225,272 by 1892, as well as extensive improvements to the lodge and outbuildings, he built 130 miles of roads and paths and 50 miles of fences. (*op.cit.* 7) Many of the tracks and paths, recorded in the present survey and appreciated by walkers and stalkers today, probably date to the extraordinary efforts of Lord Burton. He may also have been responsible for a water supply or even an early hydro scheme for the lodge, taking water from Allt a' Mheil.

The 20th century saw one of the most dramatic alterations to the glen with the construction in 1955 of Loch Quoich Dam, which raised the water level of the loch by up to 100ft. (Miers, 2008, 55) Glenquoich Lodge, along with Camban and Bunchaolie farms was inundated, though reports that a snooker table was left in the lodge, set out ready to play in advance of the rising water levels, are probably apocryphal.

## 5. Results of the Survey.

One archaeological site, comprising eight individual monuments, was recorded in the present survey. It was associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural land use of Glenquoich Estate. It is situated just outside the survey area but had not been previously recorded, so is noted in this report to add to the record.

## 6. Gazetteer.

### Site 1. Bunchaolie Farmstead.

**NGR (house) NG 99727 02938**

A farmstead, named Bunchaolie on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. map, is situated below the high water level of Loch Quoich at the former mouth of Allt Eiricheallach. It was inundated after the construction of the Loch Quoich Dam in 1955 but is visible in low water levels. It may have been in use until shortly before the construction of the dam and some of the buildings had been demolished prior to flooding. Part of the enclosure, **Site 1h**, survives above the loch shore and is marked on current OS maps.

The farmstead may have origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> or possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century; it is depicted on Thomson's Atlas of 1832. It appears on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map and, as it was then in use with no roofless buildings, was not recorded in the First Edition Survey Project and thus has not been entered in the NMRS, unlike other farmsteads now under water in Loch Quoich, such as one at Coire Liath at NH 022 017 (NMRS NH00SW.3) and another to the North of Glen Quoich Bridge at NH 016 047 (NMRS NH00SW.2).

Refs: Thomson's Atlas, 1832.

OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map Inverness-shire LXXIV, surveyed 1872, publ. 1876.

OS 1:10,000 Map Sheet NG90SE – shows enclosure, **Site 1h**.

OS Explorer 414, 2007 – shows enclosure, **Site 1h**.

AP CPE/Scot/UK298, Frame 3175.

**Impact Assessment:** **Site 1** is not at risk from the proposed scheme.

**Mitigation:** No action is required.



**Site 1a. House.**

**NGR NG 99727 02938**



A substantial rectangular house, 19.50m E-W by 5.50m, is represented by the basal layer of stones; the house has been completely demolished and the stones removed. A door opened in the South side towards the sheepfank, Site 1b. (Photo from E)

**Site 1b. Sheepfank.**

**NGR NG 99731 02920**

A sheepfank, 29m N-S by 21m E-W, consists of one rectangular compartment with an annexe added on the West side. The fank is still standing to a height of up to 1.20m and includes a calf creep in the South wall. It is connected to the house, Site 1a, by a short wall. A cobbled yard extends to the East of the fank.



The sheepfank, from N.



The calf creep in South wall, from S.

**Site 1c. Structure.**

**NGR NG 99756 02917**

A small structure, demolished to its foundation, is situated on the SE corner of the yard.



**Site 1d. Bridge.**

**NGR NG 99725**

**03032**

An arched bridge formerly carried the old Kinloch Hourn road over the Allt Eiricheallach. The river, on the East side of the bridge, has been revetted with coursed masonry. (Photo from N)



**Site 1e. Bridge.**

**NGR NG 99662 02848**



A substantial bridge carried an old road across the Caolie Water. Constructed on mortared stone and concrete, it consists of a central pier and abutments on either bank. It was built after 1872, when the Caolie Water was crossed by stepping stones. (OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map) (Photo from NE)

**Site 1f. Site of structure.**

**NGR NG 99689 03035**

A structure, depicted on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 6" map is no longer extant. It may have been completely removed prior to the inundation or at an earlier date.

**Site 1g. House.**

**NGR NG 99665 03080**



A large substantial house, 19m E-W by 5.50m is situated on the North side of the former Kinloch Hourn road. The walls are very dilapidated but still *in situ*. The old road had been revetted with stone at this point and was once lined with very large trees, presumably felled prior to inundation. (Photo from E)

**Site 1h. Enclosure.**

**NGR N end NG 99890 03180  
S end NG 99820 02982**



A large enclosure, c. 210m N-S by 180m, is the only part of the farmstead, **Site 1**, which still survives above the higher water levels of Loch Quoich. The enclosure is defined by walls of coursed stone, which are dilapidated but survive in places, with coping stones *in situ*, to a height of 1.30m. (Photo from N)

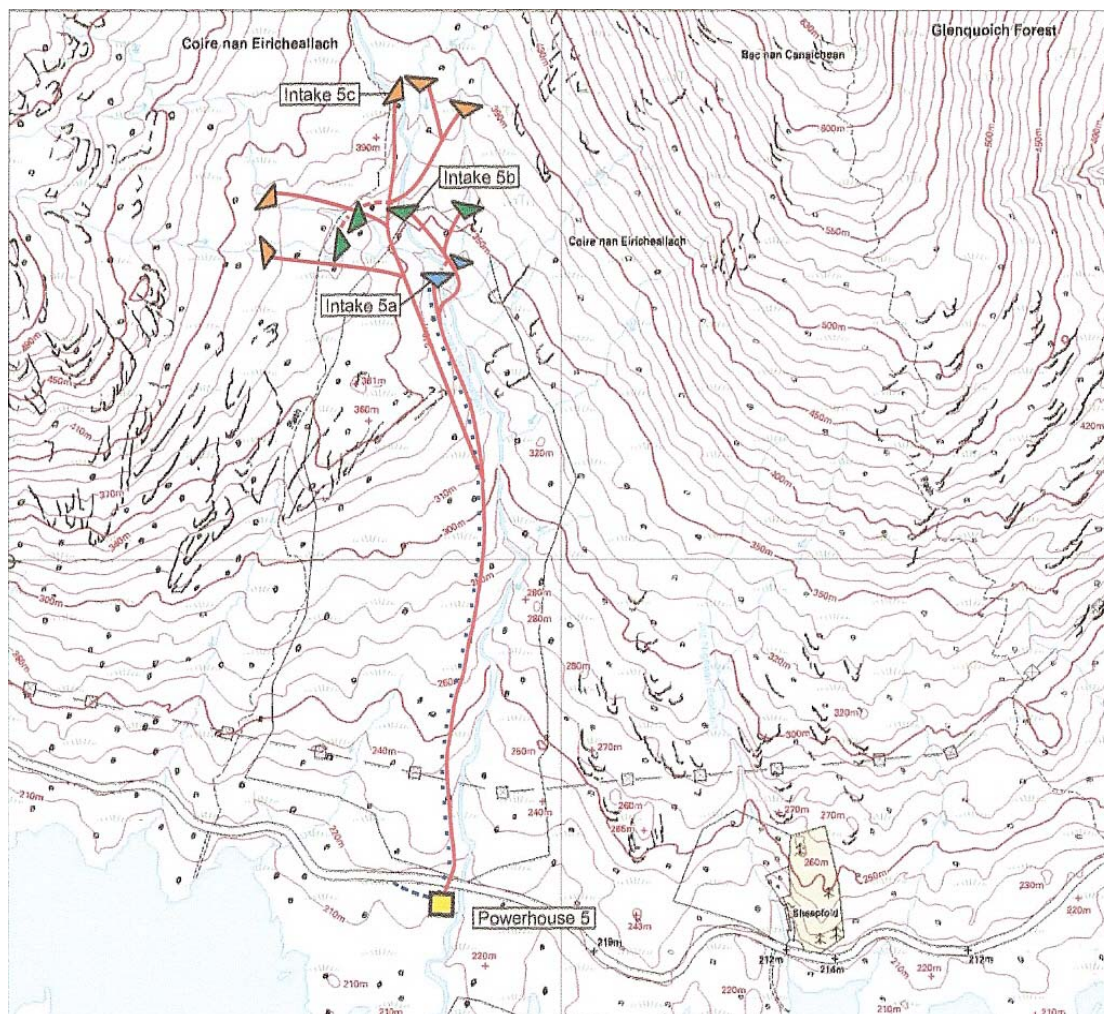


Fig. 4: The Proposed Hydro Scheme at Allt Eiricheallach (Map from Hydroplan)



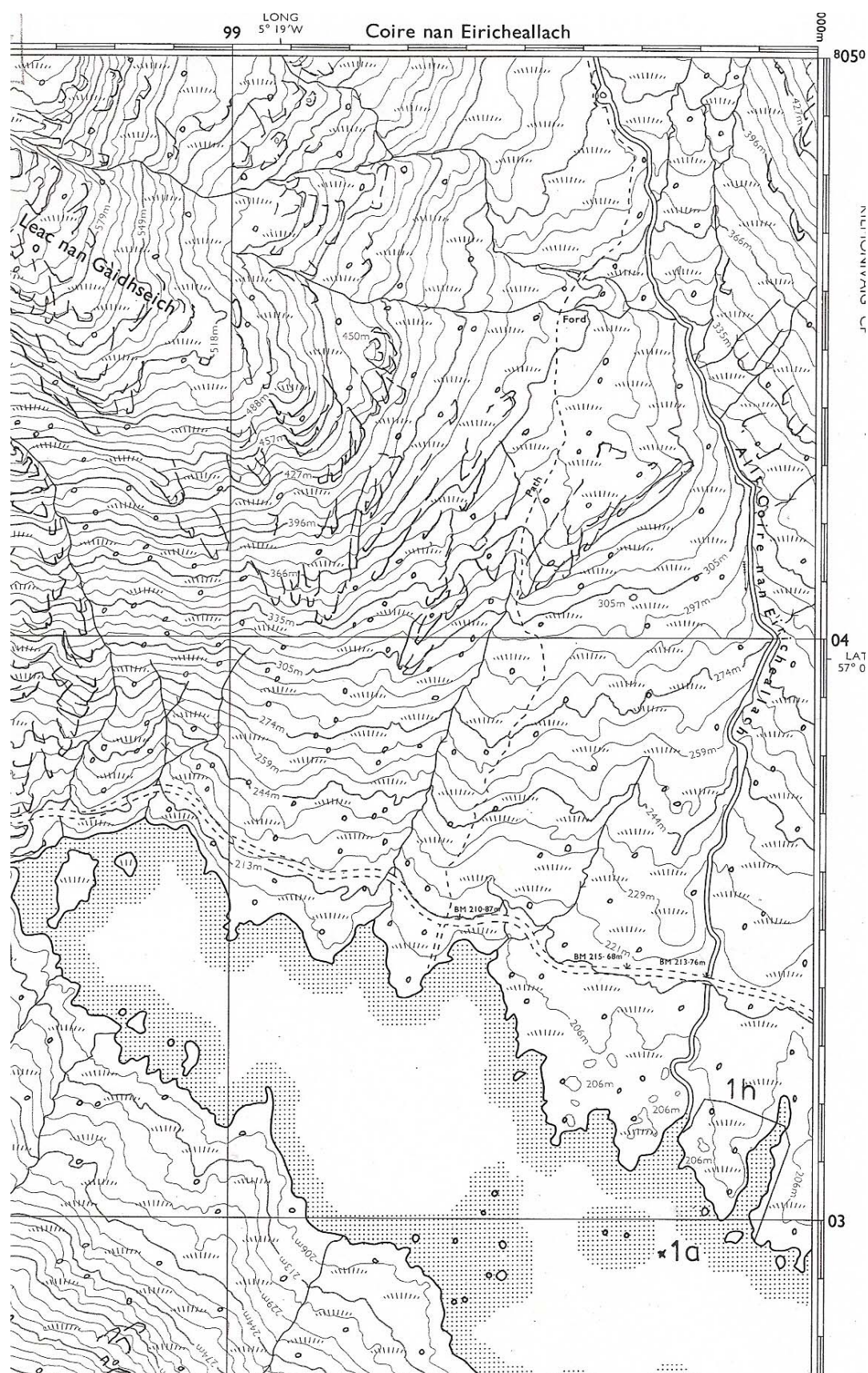


Fig. 5: Plan of Sites in Allt Coire nan Eiricheallach from OS 1:10,000 NG90SE  
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