

Reay Estate, Eddrachillis, Sutherland

Stack Woods SSSI Woodland Creation

Lochmoreside restructuring, SRDP case no. 4454700

Lochmoreside NP, SRDP case no. 4413121

Allt an Reinidh Planting Scheme SRDP case no. 4454975

Archaeological Evaluation



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For

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Archaeological Evaluation

1.0 Background

This evaluation covers four areas of proposed new planting or replanting on the Reay Estate, parish of Eddrachillis, Sutherland. The aim of the evaluation is to provide a detailed archaeological and historical background and a gazetteer of visible archaeological features and areas of potential archaeological interest.

The *Forests and Archaeology Guidelines*, produced by the Forestry Authority, recommend that:

- No new planting should occur on archaeological sites. Normally an unplanted area should extend for at least 20m beyond the outermost recognised feature of the site
- Where groups of archaeological features are close together they should be incorporated into a larger area of open space
- Fence lines should not cross the archaeological site
- Archaeological sites should not be used as a source for stone or other materials

In addition, it is generally accepted that the best management practice for archaeological features is light grazing, to prevent the features from being obscured or damaged by vegetation growth within fenced areas even if the site is left clear of tree planting. Where the site is close to the perimeter fence, the fence line should be altered to exclude the site.

2.0 Project Proposals

There are four distinct proposed planting areas:

1. **Stack Woods SSSI Woodland Creation c/o NC 290 415.** The planting area, measuring 700m N-S by 500m E-W, occupies NE-facing ground surrounding a poorly drained bowl to the west of Creag nam'Beart on the west shore of Loch Stack.
2. **Lochmoreside restructuring, SRDP case no. 4454700, c/o NC 315 375.** An area of felled mature coniferous plantation designated for restocking, measuring 650m NW-SE by 500m NE-SW occupying a steep NE-facing slope on the SW side of Loch More
3. **Lochmoreside NP, SRDP case no. 4413121 c/o NC 317 373.** An area of proposed new planting measuring 400m NW-SE by 400m NE-SW, immediately to the SE of Lochmoreside restructuring area and occupying a steep NE-facing slope on the SW side of Loch More

4. **Allt an Reinidh Planting Scheme SRDP case no. 4454975, c/o NC 345 365.** An area of proposed new planting measuring 900m NW-SE by 200m NE-SW, occupying a steep SW-facing slope on the NW side of Loch More

3.0 Archaeological Background

3.1 Sites and Monuments with Statutory Protection

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Designed landscapes in the vicinity of the proposed planting schemes which might be affected directly or indirectly by the proposals

3.2 Previous Archaeological Work

There has been one previous archaeological survey in the vicinity of the areas of proposed planting. This was carried out by Headland Archaeology Ltd in August 2001, Report no. 261, WGS Ref. 030/000802 and covered six small areas around Loch More, comprising a combination of regeneration, clear felling and restructuring:

- Compartment 26, Alltnasuileig at NC 255 455, 2km NW of Lochstack Lodge
- Compartment 25, Loch Stack Lodge at NC 270 438
- Compartments 19 and 20, Aultanrynie at NC 355 355, SE of the Allt an Reinidh but including a small area NW of the stream
- Compartments 14 and 15 at NC 338 358 and NC 343 353, extant coniferous plantings on the SW side of Loch More, 1km NW of Kinloch
- Lochmore West (B)

The survey identified eleven features or groups of archaeological interest; all but one likely to be post-Mediaeval in date, although a Bronze-Age cist demonstrated a human presence in the prehistoric period. Two of these sites are located within the present Allt an Reinidh planting area (Headland sites 6 and 7)

An archaeological desktop survey conducted for CKD Galbraith on behalf of the Reay Estate for a number of blocks of existing and/or proposed forestry on the Reay Estate, Highland by Stuart Farrell (2009) looked at both Headland's report and early mapping and aerial photographs of the 1940s. This report identified the following possible sites, previously unrecorded, within the present evaluation areas 2 and 3, Lochmoreside: (numbering and recommendations according to Farrell's report)

11.1 Lochmore

HER Ref n/a, NMRS ref n/a
Grid ref. NC 3175 3764
Type: building

2 roofed buildings aligned with road named 'Lochmore' on 1st edition OS with an enclosure to its S side. Same on 2nd edition OS of 1907. Roofed on OS of 1963 (NC33SW) marked on latest OS as unroofed. Visible on aerial photograph of 1946 as roofed (4136) of 3 compartments (4 chimneys visible).

Recommend that site be given walkover survey for any other remains. Site be excluded from proposed scheme and given 20m wide exclusion area.

11.2 Lochmore

HER ref n/a, NMRS ref n/a
Grid ref: NC 3158/3760
Type: Sheepfold

Circular sheepfold or enclosure visible on aerial photographs (4136, 4460 and 3187) but not marked on any OS maps.

Recommend that site be given walkover survey for any other remains. Site be excluded from proposed scheme and given 20m wide exclusion area.

11.3 Lochmore

Grid Ref: NC 3105/3801
Type – Enclosure

Turf and stone rectangular enclosure visible on aerial photograph (4136 & 4460). Marked on OS of 1963.

Recommend that site be given walkover survey for any other remains. Site be excluded from proposed scheme and given 20m wide exclusion area.

The following site was identified within the present evaluation area 4, Allt an Reinidh. This information is from Headland's report and covers their sites 6 and 7

12.3 Aultanrynie

HER ref: MHG 10448, NMRS ref: NC33NW 2
Grid Ref: NC 3457/3614
Type - Shielings, Kiln, Buildings, Enclosure

Noted in HER and NMRS of 'NC 347 361 Aldrany Roy 1747-55, sheet 35/3. Aultanrynie. OS 6"-map, 1963. The present occupied house of Aultanrynie is dated 1868. The only evidence of earlier settlement is a group of five bothies or shielings, reduced to their footings, at NC 346 362. Visited by OS 6 June 1980

Two unroofed shieling-huts are depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Sutherland 1878, sheet li). One unroofed building is shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10,560 map (1963). Information from RCAHMS 1 September 1995

Noted by Dalland & Connolly (2001) as 'The remains of three buildings, a kiln and a small enclosure are located on the north side of Allt an Reinidh up from the shore of Loch More. The structures are located on the boundary of compartments and two of the structures lie just outside the area

A: A corn-drying kiln is located next to the shore of Loch More. It measures 4.5m to 5m externally. The bowl is up to 1.4m deep, 1.8m across at the top and 0.7m at the base. The flue is situated on the west side and is 1m long. The kiln lies some 10m outside the compartment boundary.

B: A sub-rectangular enclosure lies immediately to the east of the kiln. It measures 4.5m by 5m and is defined by a level platform surrounded by low banks. The enclosure lies some 5m outside the compartment boundary.

C: A rectangular building defined by dry-stone walls 0.8m wide and up to 0.8m high lies 7m to the east of the enclosure. The building is aligned NE to SW and measures 3.5m by 5m externally. There is no clear evidence of an entrance into the building.

D: Possible remains of a rectangular structure are located some 20m to the north of Building C. The remains consist of stony banks 0.8m wide and 0.15m high forming a u-shape, 2.5m wide and 3.4m long aligned E to W. Possible remains of another rectangular structure are located 3m to the

east of D. An L-shaped stone bank revetting a platform 0.3m high defines the outline of the structure.

Building C is located next to the eroding north riverbank of Allt an Reinidh. So far only part of the north-eastern corner has been washed away, but recently constructed flood defences for the house at Aultanrynie has lead to increased erosion of the north river-bank. It is therefore likely that the building will be further damaged during future flood events. The other structures showed no sign of recent disturbance

Nothing marked to W side of House on 1st edition OS, 2 structures shown on 2nd edition OS of 1907. Nothing visible on aerial photographs. 1 unroofed building on NC33NW of 1963

Recommend that site be given walkover survey for any other remains. Site be excluded from proposed scheme and given 20m wide exclusion area.

3.2 Recorded Archaeological Sites

The following sites are recorded on the Highland Historic Environment Record as within or adjacent to the planting areas:

Area 1, Stack Woods: no recorded sites

Area 2, Lochmoreside restructuring: no recorded sites

Area 3, Lochmoreside NP: no recorded sites

Area 4, Allt an Reinidh: one site recorded on HER (Headland sites 6, 7 and Farrell 12.3)

- MHG 10448 Aultanrynie, shieling hut at NC 3460 3620. The present occupied house dates to 1868. The only evidence for earlier settlement is 5 bothies or shielings (OS 1980). Two unroofed shieling huts are recorded at this location on the 1st edition OS map.

4.0 Historical Background and Cartographic Evidence

4.1 Historical Background

The lands around Loch Stack and Loch More, in the possession of the Mackays of Reay since 1515, appear to have been of greatest value as hunting grounds, with little arable ground and a low population. Experiments in sheep farming began as early as 1780, at Glendhu, and removal of the local population to the coastal settlements of Scourie and Oldshoremore probably took place before the sale of the Reay lands to the Staffords (Sutherland estate) in 1829.

The 1841 census records only one shepherd at Achfary. In 1847 Earl Grosvenor paid his first visit and by 1850 had leased the entire estate from the Sutherlands. Around 1850 the Lairg-Laxford road was begun, with a large workforce of road builders, as recorded on the 1851 census, housed at Loch More barracks (40 men) and Loch More Claird. In 1850 Grosvenor had Loch Stack Lodge built, and between 1856 and 1866 Loch More Lodge, the offices at Achfary, new stalkers houses and tracks into the hills.

The 1881 census records John Mackenzie, gamekeeper, at Alltrhynie and David Beattie, shepherd, at Lochmore (possibly Lochmoreside). In 1891 and 1901 Lochmoreside is occupied by Ralph Mackenzie, retired ploughman from Achfary, but is possibly abandoned afterwards.

4.2 Roy's Military Survey

This survey records the pattern of settlements up to the improvements, or clearances of the late 18th century, but which probably reflect settlement from Mediaeval times. Only two townships are shown around Loch Stack: Riroy (Ruighe Ruadh) near Loch Stack lodge, and Loan (Lone) on the NE side of the loch. On Loch More, Roy records Achfary and Aldrony (Aultanrynie) and Loubanhanat (Kinloch). Cultivated ground is indicated on the loch side between Aldrony and Loubanhanat. No settlement or land use is indicated on the SW sides of Loch Stack or Loch More, both areas are indicated as lightly wooded.

4.3 19th Century Mapping

Forbes' map of 1820 shows a road running along the SW side of Loch More, then following Strath Stack and crossing the hills to Scourie. On this map a shieling site is indicated on a stream draining into Loch More NW of Aultanrynie. Similar details are shown on Thomson's map of 1823, including the shieling site. The slightly later map of Burnett and Scott, based on surveys carried out in 1831-2 but revised to 1853, shows the area after the commencement of improvements by Earl Grosvenor, including Loch More Lodge. At Aultanrynie a Forester's (keeper's) House is shown, not at the site of the present house, but slightly to the east where there is now a boat house. On the SW side of Loch More, the rectangular enclosure of Lochmoreside is clearly visible.

The 1st edition OS map of 1876 shows the enclosure and buildings of Lochmoreside in detail. There are four buildings in all, of which three are on the roadside, now demolished. The fourth is to the west of the stream, within the enclosure. No built features are indicated on this map between Lochmoreside and Loch More lodge on the SW side of the loch. At Aultanrynie all the buildings and improved ground are indicated east of the stream. The exception is two small unroofed buildings immediately north of the outflow of the stream into the loch (Headland sites 6, 7) and the stalkers path running NW from a footbridge over the stream. No built features are shown on the SW side of Loch Stack.

4.4 Modern Mapping

The 1:25000 OS pathfinder map, Sheet NC 23/33, revised to 1969 shows Lochmoreside South Plantation to the west of Lochmoreside, a rectangle of coniferous planting with a small extension along the road to the NW. The area of Aultanrynie planting to the Allt nam Mang is fenced, the fence line running just below the stalkers path. There is a separate fenced enclosure immediately NW of the Allt an Reinidh, and the head dyke of the old township is indicated. Sheet NC24/34, revised to 1993, shows on Loch Stack a small square roofed building is indicated at NC 2907 4168.

5.0 Gazetteer of Sites

The following sites were noted during a field survey carried out on 28.3.11 in overcast and occasionally drizzly weather conditions. Sites were recorded using GPS to an accuracy of +/- 4m

Stack Woods SSSI Woodland Creation

1. Rubble revetting at NC 29002 41756 and 29000 41713

On a steep slope, two locations where rubble has been deliberately placed across the slope, possibly to form revetting to support a pathway. The lower, more substantial section is 8m in length and has more of the appearance of a retaining wall, while the upper is only 2m in length and consists of a single row of stones (Photo 1)

2. Building at NC 29073 41696

This is the building recorded on modern mapping. It stands to full height, and is constructed of mortared rubble with roofing of a concrete slab. It is divided into two unequal compartments, with access through the two gable ends. A small aperture in the stonework at ground level in the NE face may be significant. Of unknown function but possibly associated with extraction of water to tanks on the roadside which formed part of a fish hatchery. (Photos 2, 3) This structure stands within the rubble founds of an earlier building which is presumed to be part of the group, Site 3.

3. Building footings, centred on NC 29091 41696

Low indistinct footings of three buildings in addition to a fourth which is now overlaid by site 2. Building a. on the east side of the stream, at NC 29091 41696 is aligned E-W and measures 5m by 3m internally (Photos 4, 5). Building b, also on the east side of the stream at NC 29089 41716 is also aligned E-W and measures 6.5m by 4m (Photos 6, 7). These two structures consist of low, spread banks with no visible stone. Building c, on the west side of the stream at NC 29082 41721 is aligned NW-SE, measures 3.5m by 2.5m internally and has a possible entrance in the NW gable end. Much more rubble is visible in the walling of this structure (Photos 8, 9) This group of buildings are too substantial to be shielings and do not correspond to any known settlements. It is possible that they formed temporary accommodation for labourers occupied in building the massive retaining walls for the road in 1850-1.

4. Building footings at NC 29246 41541

Low mossy banks define a rectangular structure built against a vertical rocky outcrop, measuring 4m by 2m internally. (Photos 10-12). This may, similarly to site 3, be a temporary hut for road labourers, and may be placed significantly adjacent to the quarry, site 5.

5. Quarry at NC 29213 41532

A natural knoll of glacial gravels has been extensively quarried out on the NE side, although the excavated face is now overgrown. This is a typical source of material for road construction and probably dates to work in 1850-51 (Photo 13)

6. Area of Peat cuttings centred on NC 29313 41402

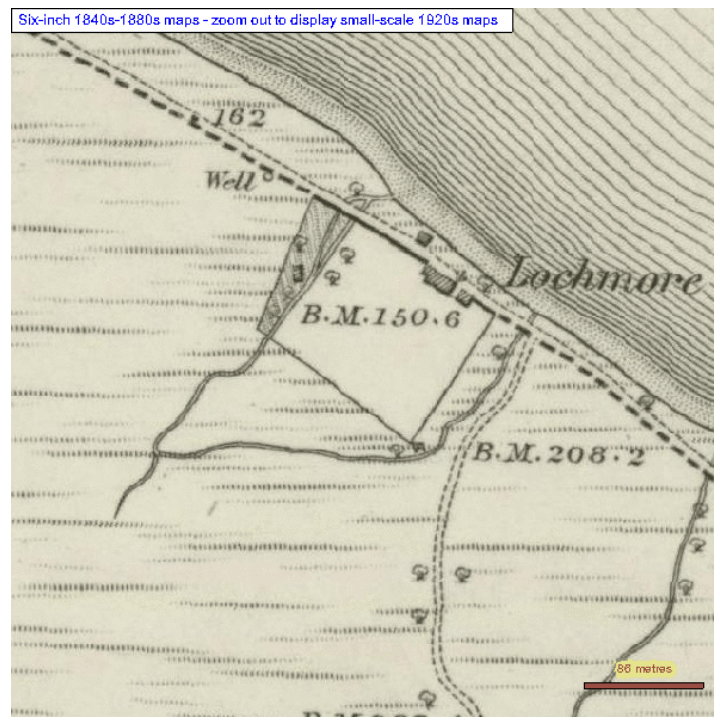
At least four long, shallow cut faces of peat extraction, mostly aligned NNW-SSE, but with one deeper bank to the north aligned NW-SE.

Lochmoreside restructuring, SRDP case no. 4454700

1. **Lochmoreside: buildings and enclosure, centred on NC 31520 37100 (SF site 11.1)**
Of the four buildings and rectangular enclosure recorded on the 1st edition OS map, only the enclosure wall survives, the buildings adjacent to the road having been demolished fairly recently and the building west of the stream not being apparent. The enclosure wall, of dry stone construction, is in good condition (Photo 14). The west part of this lies within the deer fenced area of extant coniferous woodland.
2. **Lochmore, sheepfold** at NC 3158/3760 (SF site 11.2)
There is no trace of any structure at this location. The ground has been deeply ploughed, planted and harvested since the air photo, but it is possible that the circular feature noted by Farrell was in fact natural
3. **Lochmore, enclosure** at NC 3105 3801 (SF site 11.3)
Described by Farrell as a turf and stone enclosure, as visible on aerial photograph and recorded on 1963 OS map. This appears to correspond to the fence which enclosed the coniferous plantings of Lochmoreside South, possibly recently erected at the time of the aerial photograph, as there is no trace of a stone dyke.

Lochmoreside NP, SRDP case no. 4413121

4. **Stalkers Track from NC 31763 37490 to NC 31400 37088**
Track, in good condition and still used for stalking purposes, as constructed around 1850 and as recorded on 1st edition OS map. (Photo 15)



Lochmoreside as recorded on 1st edition OS map, with no circular sheep shelter to west. Stalkers path rises from road to east

Allt an Reinidh Planting Scheme SRDP case no. 4454975

- 1. Stalkers Track from NC 34240 37000 (footbridge) to NC 34765 36175**
The path is as recorded on the 1st edition OS map (Photo 16) apart from the east end, where a new footbridge has been constructed. The original path alignment was slightly down the slope and features, including a borrow pit and culvert (Photo 17) are still visible.
- 2. Fence line from NC 34242 36963 to NC 34734 36195.** A removed fence line is still visible immediately below the stalkers path (Photo 17). This enclosure is as recorded on the 1969 OS map, and the north, west and south sections of fence still stand.
- 3. Head dyke from NC 34543 36273 to NC 34748 36161**
A substantial turf and rubble dyke defines the north edge of the alluvial fan and has the appearance of a typical Early Modern township head dyke (Photos 19, 20)
- 4. Field Clearance Piles at NC 34574 36245**
Two probable rubble piles at the north edge of the area of possible former cultivation (Photo 21)
- 5. Structures, centred on NC 34652 36200**
Three shieling-type huts at the NE end of the area of rigs, site 6. Structure a. at NC 34634 36199 is roughly circular (Photo 21) Structure b. at NC 34652 36200 is rectangular (Photo 22) and Structure c. at NC 34653 36208 is roughly oval (Photo 23)
- 6. Rig cultivation at NC 34559 36218**
Six rigs run from this point to just below site 5 (Photos 25, 26)
- 7. Township, buildings, corn kiln at NC 34561 36134 (SF site 12.3)**
As recorded by Headland and Ordnance Survey, one truncated rectangular building (Photo 27) and a corn kiln, the latter with a well-preserved bowl and flue but the SW part of the structure removed (Photos 28, 29). As noted by Headland, these features are being badly eroded by the stream after flood protection altered its course.

6.0 Summary

Within the areas covered by this evaluation, no sites dating to the Prehistoric period were identified. The Early Modern township of Aultanrynie contains several features typical of this period of settlement, including the enclosing head dyke, site 3 and the former buildings and corn kiln, site 7. The three small hut structures, site 5, are less typical, and may represent an earlier phase of land use before the township extended to the west side of the stream.

The shielings recorded on the 1820s maps of Forbes and Thomson were not located on the Allt nam Mang. It is possible that they are upstream of the footbridge, but more likely that they are sited further west, near Loch na Mucnaich.

The enclosure and buildings at Lochmoreside are not recorded on early mapping before 1853 and may have been built originally for sheep farming. It is more likely, however, that the enclosure was a pony park serving the deer forest accessed via the adjacent stalkers path and that this and the buildings all date to around 1850. In this case, no features dating directly to the period of sheep farming were noted within the areas covered by this evaluation.

The building footings noted to the SW of Loch Stack do not correspond to any known Early Modern settlement and do not have the appearance of shieling structures. They are therefore tentatively interpreted as temporary housing for road labourers working on the massive retaining walls for the road along the loch side, and date to a brief period at the beginning of the 1850s.

7.0 Recommendations

Stack Woods SSSI Woodland Creation

Sites 2, 3, 4 should be protected from planting within exclusion zones extending at least 20m from the visible edge of the archaeological features

Sites 1, 5 should be protected within exclusion zones extending 5m from their visible edge

No recommendations are made for the protection of site 6, peat banks

Lochmoreside restructuring

No recommendations are made for the protection of sites 2, 3, which are taken to be non-sites

The west side of Site 1, the Lochmoreside enclosing dry stone dyke, is at present partially within the standing plantation, and may be vulnerable to damage during future felling. This should be noted.

Lochmoreside NP

No recommendations are made, as the only archaeological feature, the stalkers path, is still in use and unlikely to be affected by planting

Allt an Reinidh Planting Scheme

It is recommended that the SE boundary of the proposed planting area be altered to exclude all the features of the township. This would place the fence line NW of the head dyke, site 3 and ensure that sites 3-7 are not affected

No recommendations are made for the protection of site 1, path or site 2, former fence line.

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7.4.11

Appendix 1 Data Sources and Bibliography

The following data sources were consulted during this evaluation:

- Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) held by the Archaeology Unit within the Dept of Planning and Development at Highland Council
- Early maps held by the Map Library within the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh

The following sources gave background information to the evaluation:

Dalland and Connolly 2001: Headland Archaeology investigation: Loch More EH526

Farrell, S 2009: Reay Estate, desk-based evaluation of forestry areas.

Appendix 2. Photographic Archive (digital)

Photo no.	Area	Site no.	Description	Viewpoint
1	Stack Woods	1	Row of set stones at top of slope, possible retaining for a pathway	From NW
2		2	Building: mortared rubble walls and concrete slab roof, entrance to SE chamber. To right are rubble footings of earlier building	From SE
3		2	Building, within rubble footings of earlier structure. Entrance to NW chamber	From NW
4		3a	Building footings, low banks defined by moss and bracken, with more substantial bank to right	From SE
5		3a	Building footings. Pole is on S corner	From S
6		3b	Building footings, low bracken and moss-covered banks define rectangular structure. Building 3c is to left by tree	From S
7		3b	Building footings, low bracken and moss-covered banks define rectangular structure	From NW
8		3c	Building, rubble SE gable end under tree	From S
9		3c	Building, NE face, moss-covered rubble	From N
10		4	Building, low bracken-moss covered banks built onto rock outcrop	From NW
11		4	Building, low bracken-moss covered banks built onto rock outcrop. Pole is on N corner	From N
12		4	Building in relation to road. Building is right of centre against rock outcrop	From SW
13		5	Quarry: overgrown scoop into knoll	From NE
14	LMS restructuring	1	Lochmoreside: dry stone walling of rectangular enclosure, east side	From E
15	LMS NP	4	Stalkers path rising diagonally to left	From N
16	Allt an Reinidh	1	Stalkers path, passing along top boundary of planting area	From SE
17		1	Redundant section of stalkers path to west of new alignment, stone culvert	From SW
18		2	Removed fence line runs up centre of image with stalkers path to right	From SE
19		3	Turf and rubble head dyke rising from loch edge	From E
20		3	Turf and rubble dyke running round former arable ground on alluvial fan	From SSE

21		4	Bank of field clearance rubble	From W
22		5	Three rough rubble hut structures: a., circular footings with area of rig cultivation behind	From E
23		5	Three rough rubble hut structures: b. the most substantial, rectangular footings	From NNE
24		5	Three rough rubble hut structures: c, sub-oval footings	From WNW
25		6	Rig cultivation: view up from shore, rigs indicated by brown heather	From WNW
26		6	Rig cultivation seen from head dyke: lines run from left to right behind fence line	From NNE
27		7	Township feature: remaining section of rectangular building washed away by stream. SW face	From SW
28		7	Township feature: corn kiln bowl now immediately adjacent to loch shore	From E
29		7	Township feature: corn kiln bowl and remains of kiln barn walling	From W

