



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Beauly to Mossford OHL Replacement

T4-6 Corriemoillie



Archaeological Watching Brief Interim Report

7 Duke Street Cromarty Ross-shire IV11 8YH

Tel / Fax: 01381 600491 Mobile: 07834 693378 Email: info@hi-arch.co.uk Web: www.hi-arch.co.uk
Registered in Scotland no. 262144 Registered Office: 10 Knockbreck Street, Tain, Ross-shire IV19 1BJ VAT No. GB 838 7358 80



Beauly to Mossford OHL Replacement

Corriemoillie

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Author	Pete Higgins and Anne Johnston

Summary

Highland Archaeology Services Ltd, acting on behalf of Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) commissioned Archaeology North Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Corriemoillie during construction of a new access track.

No known heritage assets were within the area of the watching brief, and no significant archaeological deposits or features were found.

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Aims and objectives

The objectives of the work were to:

- Monitor ground breaking works in agreed areas.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains; and to record these where necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.
- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.



Plate 1: The excavations by the ford, at the south end of the track (Photograph 4)

Location

The development is located at the Corriemoillie, Highland, centred at OS NGR 3565 6335



Figure 1 Project location

Reproduced from OS mapping under Licence. Not to original scale



Figure 2: Areas of track observed (in yellow) and floating track (red)

Introduction

Prior to replacement and reinforcement of the Beauly to Mossford 132kV power line, an assessment was made of the impact of the proposed works on cultural heritage¹. A programme of works² was then formulated, which included provision for archaeological watching briefs in potentially sensitive areas. This report covers a watching brief undertaken during construction of a new access track at Corriemoillie, Easter Ross. The fieldwork was conducted according to a Project Design³ drawn up by Highland Archaeology Services Ltd.

Professional standards during the present project were ensured by adherence to the *Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards* of the Institute for Archaeologists and the Highland Council's *Standards for Archaeological Work*.

¹ SCOTTISH HYDRO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LIMITED *Beauly Mossford 132kV Transmission Line Replacement*

² W A Archaeology Ltd 2012 *Construction Environmental Management Document: Beauly Mossford, Appendix 11, Archaeology Programme of Works*

³ Wood, J 2013 *Corriemoillie WB PD + RAMS* Highland Archaeology Services Ltd (report no. HAS130508)

Legislative and Policy Framework

The common principles underlying international conventions, national legislation and local authority planning policies are that cultural heritage assets should be identified in advance of development and safeguarded where practicable; if disturbance is unavoidable appropriate recording of features and recovery of portable artefacts should take place. These have been set out in international and European Union agreements, and UK and Scottish legislation, as well as national and local planning policies⁴.

Professional standards during the present project were secured by adherence to the *Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards* of the Institute for Archaeologists and the Highland Council's *Standards for Archaeological Work*.

Background

The site lies to the north of Loch Garve, in an area of low mounds and watercourses. British Geological Survey mapping shows the bedrock of the whole site to be Psammite of the Crom Psammite Formation, with glacial superficial deposits (the mounds) either side of alluvium along the course of a burn (called 'the tributary' below). The southern part of the track lay east of a ford just below the confluence of Allt Coire Muilidh, flowing from the north, with a tributary flowing from the east. The route of the track to the north followed the top of the east bank of the latter, rising and falling as it crossed one of the mounds.

The alluvial area was crossed by the floating track, which entailed no excavations. The northern area with road splay lay east of a levelled area used for storing silage bales and machinery, but possibly a former house platform.

Oral testimony from the owner and contractor, Mr MacKenzie, revealed that the tributary had been drag-lined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in the 1960s, and the spoil deposited along the route of the burn. This explains an intermittent line of stones noted there. Roy's map of the Highlands, 1747-52, shows a settlement marked 'Kenloch Luychart', but this seems to lie considerably to the southwest of the site, near the mouth of Allt Coire Muilidh. Corriemoillie township⁵ is some 400m north of the splay excavation.

Methodology

Desk-Based Assessment and Fieldwork

Evidence from available archival resources was reviewed and interpreted in context. The following sources were consulted: the National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS) online via Canmore and Pastmap; the Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER); the National Library of Scotland online historic map

⁴ A summary of relevant international, EU, UK and Scottish legislation and policies is available from the Highland Archaeology Services office on request.

⁵ Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) ref MHG24403

collection (pre-OS mapping); OS 1st edition 6 inch to 1 mile (1:10560) map (1881); Historic Scotland records including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Register of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

No known cultural heritage assets were identified in the study area, although it was noted that many of the stone dykes forming major field boundaries appear on the 1st edition OS 6" map of 1881.

Fieldwork

Topsoil was stripped along southern end of the new track and in the splay by the road to the north. The track between these areas was laid as a floating road with no topsoil stripping, and consequently was excluded from the area to be observed (see figure 2). Material to surface the track was quarried from a borrow pit dug into the side of one of the mounds (figure 3).

Topsoil stripping was observed by the archaeologist and deposits were recorded using a single context recording system using pro-forma context sheets together with photographs and drawings. Spoil heaps were checked for artefacts. The exposed surface was cleaned by hand wherever possible features were encountered.

Context locations were recorded using a hand held computer with GPS capable of sub-metre accuracy. Topsoil was stripped to a depth of between 0.10m and 0.40m, depending on overburden, and stored beside the excavation.



Plate 2: The splay excavation (Photograph 15)

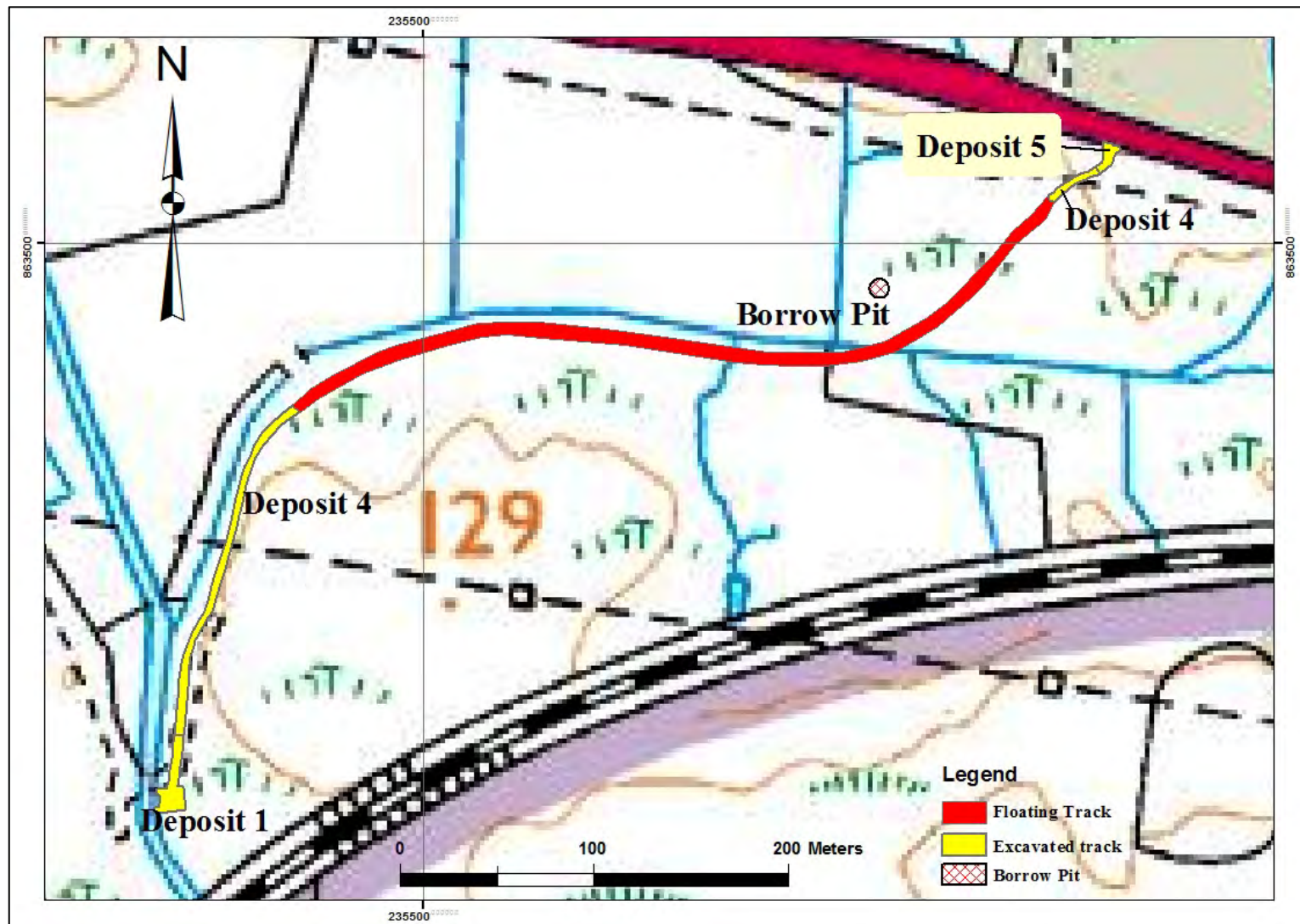


Figure 3: Excavation and deposit areas

Results

A total of five deposits were recorded; a peaty topsoil (context [1]) extended from the ford in the south for about 40m northwards along the track, where it was replaced by a sandier, loamier topsoil [4]. The change in topsoil coincided with a change in the underlying natural deposits. An alluvial deposit [2] lay below [1], and a glacial deposit [3] below [4] (Figure 3).

In the extreme north, extending from the gate by the splay southwards for about 16m, topsoil [4] was overlaid by re-deposited material comprising a mix of topsoil and natural. This is almost certainly associated with a borrow pit used during the construction of the modern road immediately to the north, the A832. The borrow pit was subsequently filled with [5] and roughly levelled⁶.

The A832 more or less follows the line of the earlier military road, and a length of bank associated with that road was observed about 45m to the northwest of the splay excavations, in the garden of a new dwelling.



Plate 3: Profiles at 10m (left) and 45m (right) from the south end of the track. (Photographs 5 and 6)

Conclusions and Recommendations

No archaeologically significant deposits or features were encountered, and no further work is recommended in this area.

⁶ Mr MacKenzie, *pers. comm.*



Plate 4: The borrow pit and floating track (Photograph 14)

Appendices

Contexts

No.	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)			Before	After	Interpretation
			Length	Width	Depth			
1	Layer	Topsoil and turf; partly-mixed rather peaty loam, thinning out to N after c.40m	>40	>15	0.27	2	-	Topsoil, occasionally ploughed
2	Layer	Peaty sand with silty lenses and common sub-angular boulders	>40	>15	>0.12	3	1	Natural alluvial deposit. Overlaps context 3
3	Layer	Gravelly sand and coarse gravel, common sub-angular boulders	>170	>4	>0.40	UE	2, 4	Natural glacial deposit
4	Layer	Topsoil; sandy loam, replaces 1 after c. 40m from S end	>170	>4	0.21	3	5	Topsoil, occasionally ploughed
5	Layer	Gravelly sand and coarse gravel, with abundant lenses and lumps of sandy loam	>16	>4	0.60	4	-	Redeposited material, a mix of 3 and 4. From road-making, now grassed over.

Photo Index

Photo no.	Camera Point	Description	Facing	Scale
1	CP1	Enclosure HA1, from 235864, 863212	E	1 x 1m
2	CP1	Wall of HA1, from 235864, 863212	SE	1 x 1m
3	CP2	S end of track, by ford	E	-
4	CP3	S end track, partly dug	N	1 x 1m
5	CP4	Profile of deposits near ford	S	1 x 1m
6	CP5	Profile of deposits on mound	SE	1 x 1m
7	CP5	Track being dug	NW	1 x 1m
8	CP6	Route of N part of southern track, before excavation	NE	-
9	CP6	Track as dug	SW	-
10	CP7	Track as dug	W	1 x 1m
11	CP8	Floating road completed	W	-
12	CP8	Floating road completed	NE	-
13	CP9	Borrow pit	NW	-
14	CP9	Borrow pit deposits	NE	1 x 1m
15	CP10	Bell mouth with context 5	W	1 x 1m
16	CP10	Bell mouth completed	SW	1 x 1m

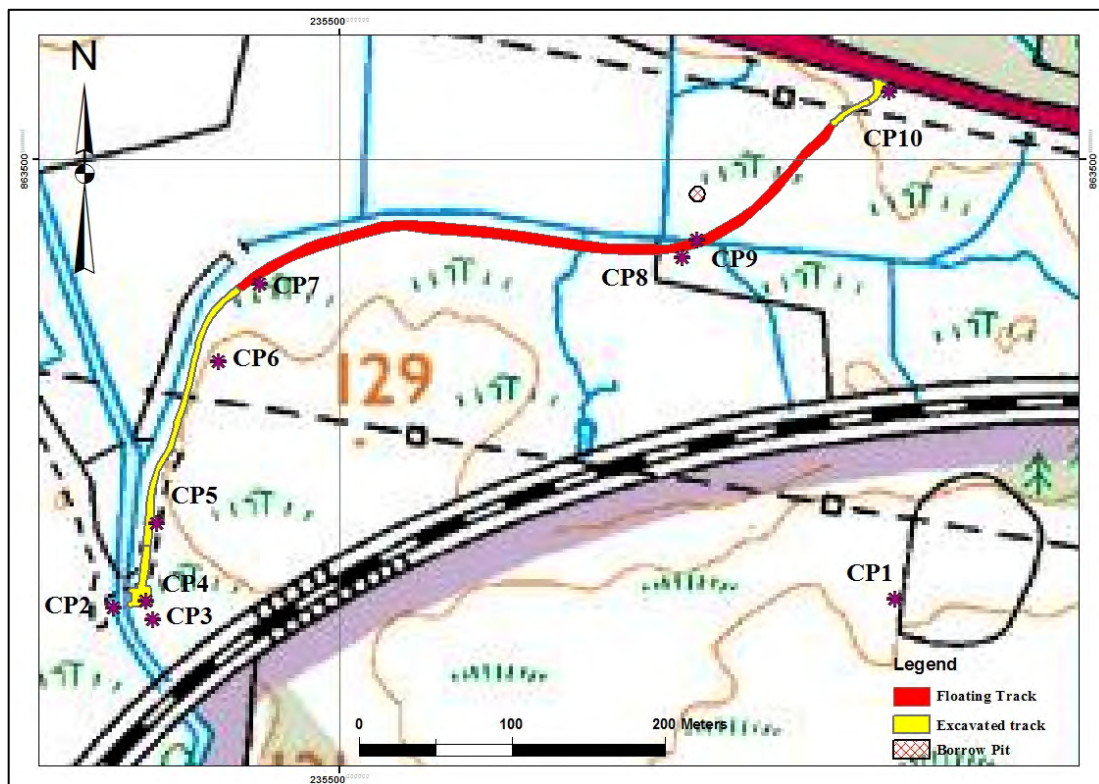


Figure 4: Camera Points

Gazetteer of recorded features

HHER ref	NAME	Type	DESCRIPTION	NMRS	NGR
MHG21493	Corriemoillie Lodge	House	Demolished for Hydro Electric Scheme 1955.	NH36SE13	NH 3602 6364
MHG21762	Corriemoillie	House	Single unroofed building on OS 1st edition map, 1880, but not on current map	NH36SE12	NH 3530 6390
MHG24403	Corriemoillie	Township	One unroofed, three roofed buildings, an enclosure and a head dyke on OS 1st edition map, 1881; eight unroofed buildings, two enclosures, and a head dyke on 1989 map.	NH36SE6	NH 3600 6390
MHG35308	Contin to Poolewe	Military Road	Military road appears to follow line of A832; military type bridge at Little Garve	NH36SE18	NH 3800 6226
MHG40957	Corriemoillie	Head Dyke	Head dyke of MHG24403, qv	NH36SE6	NH 3600 6390
MHG48419	Corriemoillie	Farmstead / house	Not to be confused with Corriemoillie Lodge (NH 36027 63646), for which see NH36SE 13.	NH36SE26	NH 3548 6384
MHG48420	Torriegorie	Farmstead	-	NH36SE25	NH 3768 6309
MHG54631	Corriemoillie	Road / earth bank	A short stretch of earlier road can be seen on the S side of Corriemoillie Wood, defined by a bank and level area and following the base of the scarp.	NH36SW21	NH 3469 6358