

NEW ROAD SCHEME

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND WALKOVER SURVEY

Glenshero Estate – Laggan, Highland



Wade's Road Bridge at Melgarve

National Grid Reference

NN 46334 95895

(Centred)

Site Code

GSH14

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Bidwells/Glenshero Estate

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the owners of Glenshero Estate and Bidwells for commissioning the work. Fieldwork was carried out by Steven Birch. All mapping, unless otherwise stated, is reproduced by permission of ProMap license LIG1044.

Plate 2: Wade's Bridge at the west end of a flooded Spey Dam on the day of the survey



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Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out between 12 and 13 August 2014 on behalf of Bidwells and Glenshero Estate, Laggan in advance of a proposed new road scheme. The work was undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any archaeological sites and features likely to be affected by the new road access and to inform recommendations for the protection and management of any sites located. The survey identified and recorded four new archaeological sites including a shieling group, circular stone/boulder settings, and a stone-built enclosure; while other known sites including a stone and turf enclosure, and two of Wade's Bridges were also visited. Mitigation measures are proposed to safeguard the sites during the establishment of the new road scheme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the visible archaeological monuments surviving within close proximity to a new proposed road access scheme centred on Melgarve (centred at grid reference NN 46334 95895), within the Glenshero Estate, was carried out by *West Coast Archaeological Services* between the 12 and 13 August 2014 (Figure 1). The survey was requested by Bidwells on behalf of Glenshero Estate because the areas proposed for the new road development are located in a landscape with a potential for sites of archaeological significance. In particular, the proposed road scheme passes in close proximity to; and in two locations crosses the abandoned route of General Wade's Military Road.
- 1.2 The purpose of the desk-based assessment and archaeological walkover survey was to identify and record the location and nature of any archaeological features of interest prior to the proposed development, whilst assessing any potential adverse impacts and proposing an appropriate strategy of mitigation. The *Scottish Planning Policy 2010*¹ describes how archaeology should be managed when considering planning decisions and determining conditions for developments that have an impact on the historic environment.

2. Site Location

- 2.1 The proposed new road scheme is centred on Melgarve, in Glenshero, which is located at the end of the tarred public road from Laggan (Badenoch and Strathspey). The new road scheme will traverse a wide variety of ground including gently-sloping ground to the northeast of Melgarve comprising a recently felled conifer plantation and rough, tussock-covered ground; while to the southeast and south of Melgarve the proposed route descends sloping ground on the north side of the River Spey. The new road scheme then traverses an existing tack to the southwest, which runs along the northwest side of the River Spey, between the river and a conifer plantation.
- 2.2 The general location of the survey areas comprises rough, undulating moorland with glacial moraine and drumlins and rough pasture with grass, heather and some bracken. There are several minor rivers and smaller streams crossing the route, which form wet boggy areas in places, especially along the flood plain of the River Spey. There is some well drained ground

¹ The Scottish Government 2010

surrounding Melgarve, which is located on raised ground above the Spey floodplain. The survey area is dominated by the Monadliath Mountains, comprising the Corrieyairack and Glenshirra Forests, and has a wild and remote atmosphere.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 There have been recent surveys through the Glenshero Estate as a part of the new Beaulieu to Denny Power-line, while previous surveys have focused on the route of General Wade's Military Road of 1731, which traverses the Corrieyairack Pass between Loch Ness and Laggan.
- 3.2 Prehistoric activity in the landscape surrounding Melgarve is represented by the standing stone of *Clach Chatail* (see MHG4669), which lies on the north edge of the River Spey floodplain at Drummin. Otherwise, post-medieval settlement dominates the archaeological sites in the landscape, which generally comprises shielings such as those recorded at *Tom Dubh* (MHG4652), *Allt Feith A'Mhoraire* (MHG24910) and a building at *Allt Feith A'Mhoraire* (MHG41493).
- 3.3 The scheduled section of General Wade's Military Road (see MHG14501 and Scheduled Monument number 6129) ends at Melgarve and although the military road obviously continues to the east beyond Melgarve, it has been dramatically impacted upon by recent developments including agricultural improvements and forestry operations. Several important monuments and features relating to the military road exist in the archaeological landscape surrounding Melgarve. These include the bridge over the Allt Feith A'Mhoraire (MHG4651 – Listed Building (B) 12373); and the Drummin bridge over the Caochan Riabhach Burn (MHG4667 – Listed Building (B) 6895).
- 3.4 Also of note, with regards to this walkover survey, is a record suggesting a spur road running off the main Corrieyairack Military Road at Melgarve, which runs to the southwest towards Loch Spey and on towards Glenroy and a possible link with the Fort William to Inverness Military Road (see MHG34661 and MHG34663). The proposed new access road surveyed as a part of this archaeological assessment, utilises a large section of this potential spur road, in order to access estate assets including forestry plantations located to the WSW of Melgarve.

4. Methodology

The overall aim of this assessment was to identify and record any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by the proposed new road schemes centred on Melgarve within the Glenshero Estate and to propose mitigation as appropriate to ensure that archaeological evidence is not unnecessarily damaged or destroyed. The walkover survey was carried out in relation to the proposed new road schemes, as supplied by Matthew Trewin at Bidwells. A corridor between 50 metres and 100 metres wide was surveyed in relation to the new road access schemes.

4.1 Desk-based assessment

- 4.1.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation. This was done in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Standards and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment*².

² IfA 2008

4.1.2 The maps of the area, as supplied by the client, were checked in detail against the Ordnance Survey map sheets, Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and Historic Scotland's records of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Online satellite imagery and aerial photographs were checked and the map collections of the National Library of Scotland (NLS) were studied.

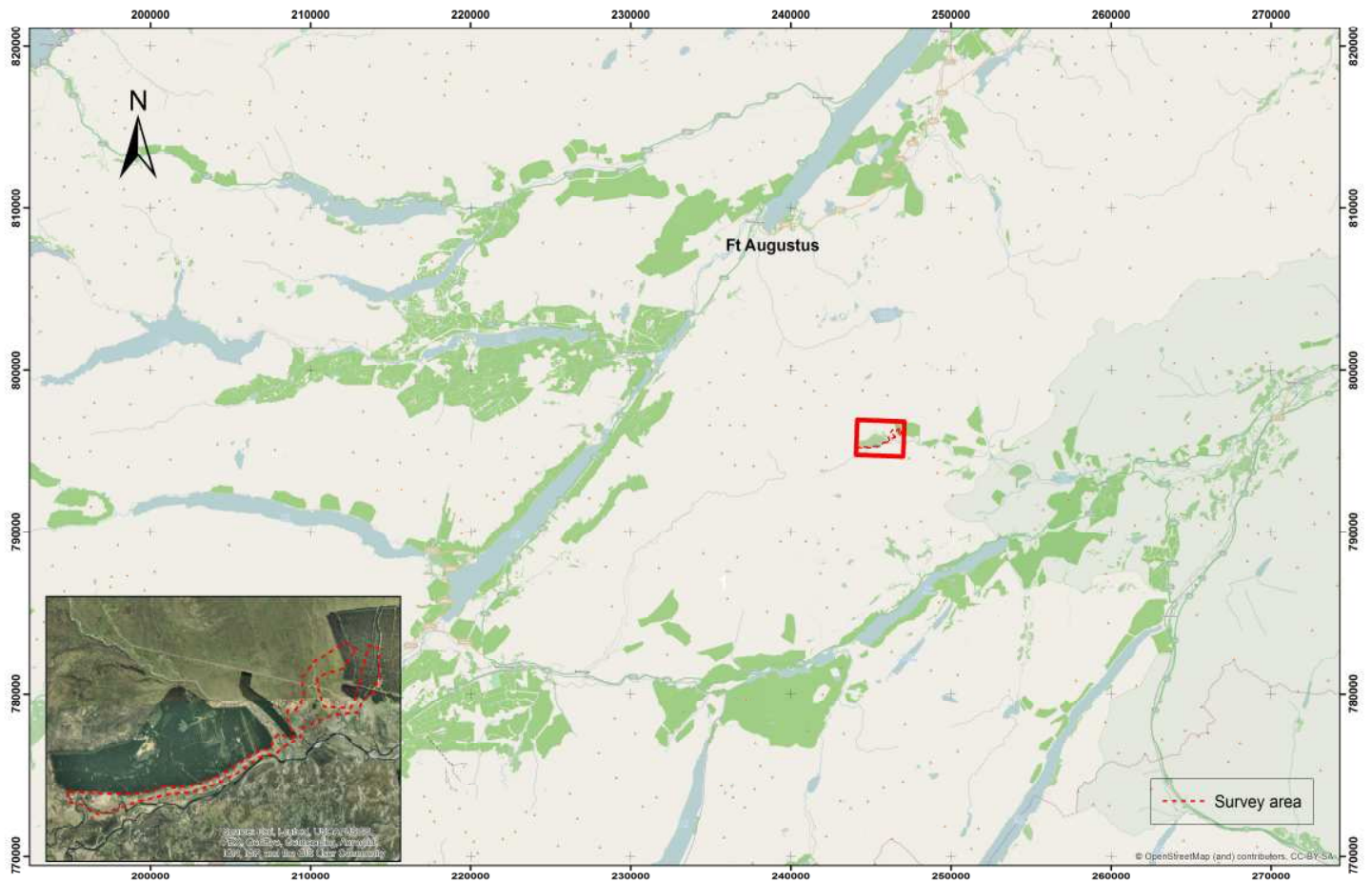


Figure 1: Location maps showing the survey area

4.2 Walkover survey

- 4.2.1 The areas proposed for the new road access routes were walked over and surveyed on 13 August 2014. The day was generally dry with sunshine and a little cloud, although there were several heavy rain showers. Winds were generally light and visibility was good, although the ground underfoot was very wet and waterlogged after recent heavy and prolonged rainfall, which had caused flooding through the Spey valley.
- 4.2.2 Archaeological sites were recorded individually including using high-resolution digital photography where possible, while sketch survey drawings were produced where necessary. The individual site locations were plotted using DGPS technology and ArcPad software on a handheld Windows Mobile-based computer. Details relating to the individual sites and monuments located during the survey can be found in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1.
- 4.2.3 Survey and recording methods from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)³ were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Code of Conduct*⁴.

5. Results

5.1 Desk-based assessment

5.1.1 Historical mapping

Historical maps, unless otherwise stated, were consulted using the National Library of Scotland's online collection⁵.

- 5.1.1.1 Roy's Military Survey of Scotland 1747-54 does not show much detail with regards to the complex of roads and bridges centred on Melgarve. Indeed, Melgarve is not named on the military map. In particular, the possible spur road running southwest from Melgarve is not shown clearly until beyond Loch Spey, so it is difficult from this source to confirm whether a military road did run southwest from Glenshero towards Glen Roy and Fort William.
- 5.1.1.2 **First Edition Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile map** (Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XCIX, surveyed 1870, published 1873)

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch-to-the-mile map sheet shows the Military Road running just to the north of a small settlement at *Meallgarbha* Melgarve, before continuing to the southwest, over fords on the Allt Feith A'Mhóraire, to pass a large sheepfold. Two roofed structures are shown at Melgarve, along with one enclosure. A second enclosure is shown to the southwest of the settlement.

A second group of buildings (two roofed structures) are shown immediately to the south of the Military Road and to the WNW of the current bridge crossing at Drummin. Two small enclosures are also depicted with this settlement. A u-shaped spur road runs north from the military road to the bridge crossing on the Allt Feith A'Mhóraire, returning on the east side of the stream to reconnect with the main Military Road.

³ RCAHMS 2004

⁴ IfA 2009

⁵ NLS 2014

A circular sheepfold is shown to the southwest of Melgarve, with what appears to be an area of cultivation to the southeast, close to the track (spur road?). The track, which has been interpreted as a possible Military spur road linking the Correiyaick road to the Fort William to Inverness Military Road, is shown traversing the Spey Valley as far as a small settlement at *Shesgnan* – before turning to the south. The adjacent map sheet CXIII shows the track continuing to Glen Roy.

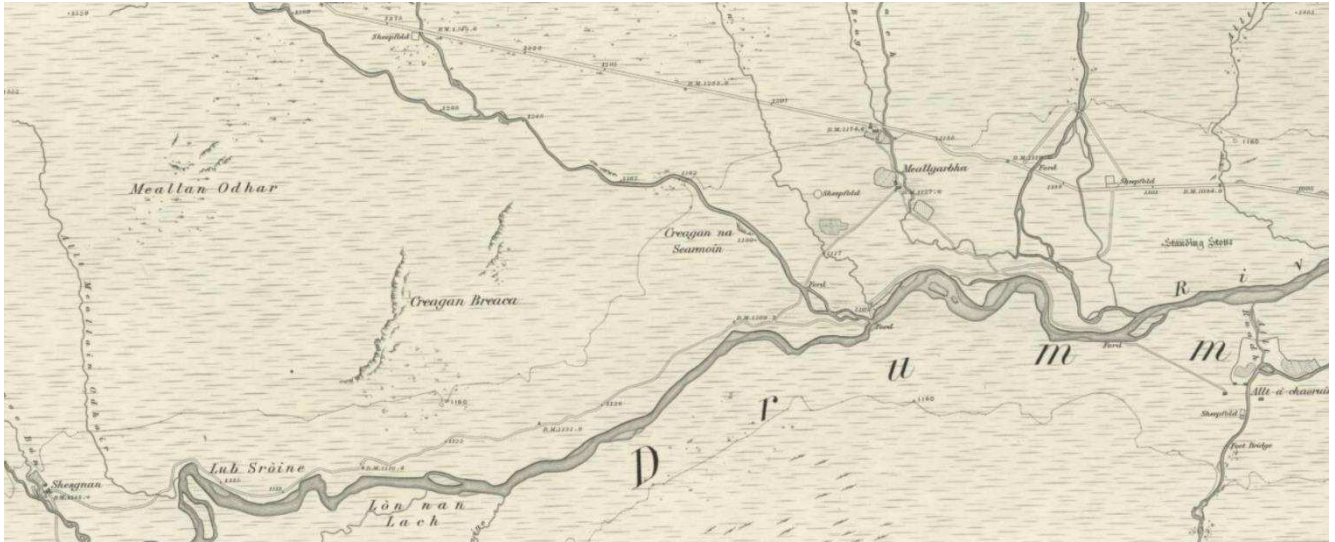


Figure 2: Excerpt from the 1870 Ordnance Survey First Edition map sheet (c. NLS)

5.1.1.3 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Six-inch to the mile map (Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XCIX, revised 1899 and published 1902)

The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch -to-the-mile map sheet shows similar features for the settlements at Melgarve, although there only appears to be one roofed structure in each group of buildings. The circular sheepfold is still shown to the WSW of Melgarve, but the cultivation patch has disappeared.

5.1.2 Highland Historic Environment Record (HER)

The Highland Historic Environment Record was consulted online⁶ and the following sites were recorded near to Areas 2 and 3:

1. MHG 4651 Allt Feith A'Mhoraire NN 4687 9610

On a diversion of the Wade Road of 1731 (Lin 503) which crosses the Corrieairack Pass, an arched bridge (span 6.79m) over the Allt Feith a'Mhoraire near Melgarve (Drummin) had deteriorated. There were gaps in the parapets, a hole in the arch and, most recently, erosion of the right hand upstream training wall. In 1984 the arch and parapets were repaired, the right hand abutment was grouted, and the training wall was strengthened with concrete and stone-filled gabions. Most of the original masonry was repointed.

⁶ Highland HER 2014

2. MHG 4667 Drummin Bridge NN 4634 9610

On the Wade Road of 1731 which crosses the Corrieyairack Pass, a low arched bridge (span 5.6m) over the Coachan Riabhack at Melgarve (Drummin) had deteriorated in recent years. The upstream half of the bridge (arch, voussoirs, spandrel and parapet) had collapsed. In 1986 this half of the arch was rebuilt in reinforced concrete and embedded stones, the original voussoirs were reinstated, the parapet was rebuilt, and the SE approach wall was taken down and rebuilt course by course. Most of the original mason work was re-pointed.

3. MHG 14501 Melgarve to Allt Ruadh Military Road NN 4629 9610

A section of General Wade's Military Road, constructed in 1731, which traverses the Corrieyairack Pass between Loch Ness and Ruthven Barracks in the Spey Valley.

4. MHG 24910 Allt Feith A'Mhoraire Shieling Settlement NN 4680 9594

Two long, rectangular building footings, oriented north-south and parallel to each other. Each building has four compartments, each 2m square. The entrance to each compartment faces onto a 'street' formed by the two buildings.

There are three other building footings just to the north and the west of these. These are less distinct, but appear to be L-shaped and could be shieling-huts. A possible trackway leads up the east side of the burn towards a bridge on a diversion of the military road. All the buildings lie on a very gently sloping area, close to a burn, the south-east side of which has been revetted. The military road passes immediately to the south of the multi-compartment buildings. Their orientation would suggest that they are related to this routeway (rather than to the possible trackway running north). A modern fence line lies between the south end of the buildings and the military road.

5. MHG 41493 Allt Feith A'Mhoraire Building NN 4680 9594

See MHG 24910 above for details.

6. MHG 34661 Melgarve to Fort William Spur Road NN 4600 9557

At Melgarve a track goes off to the SW heading for Loch Spey, via Glenroy and ultimately possibly to Fort William to link with the Fort William to Inverness military road.

7. MHG 34663 Melgarve to Fort William Spur Road NN 4458 9515

The course of the spur road continues to head SW as a track.

5.2 Walkover Survey Results

The walkover survey identified and recorded four new archaeological sites including a possible shieling group, circular stone/boulder settings, and two enclosures; while other known sites including a circular sheepfold and two of Wade's Bridges were visited (Figure 3). Appendix 1 provides details of the sites identified during the survey.

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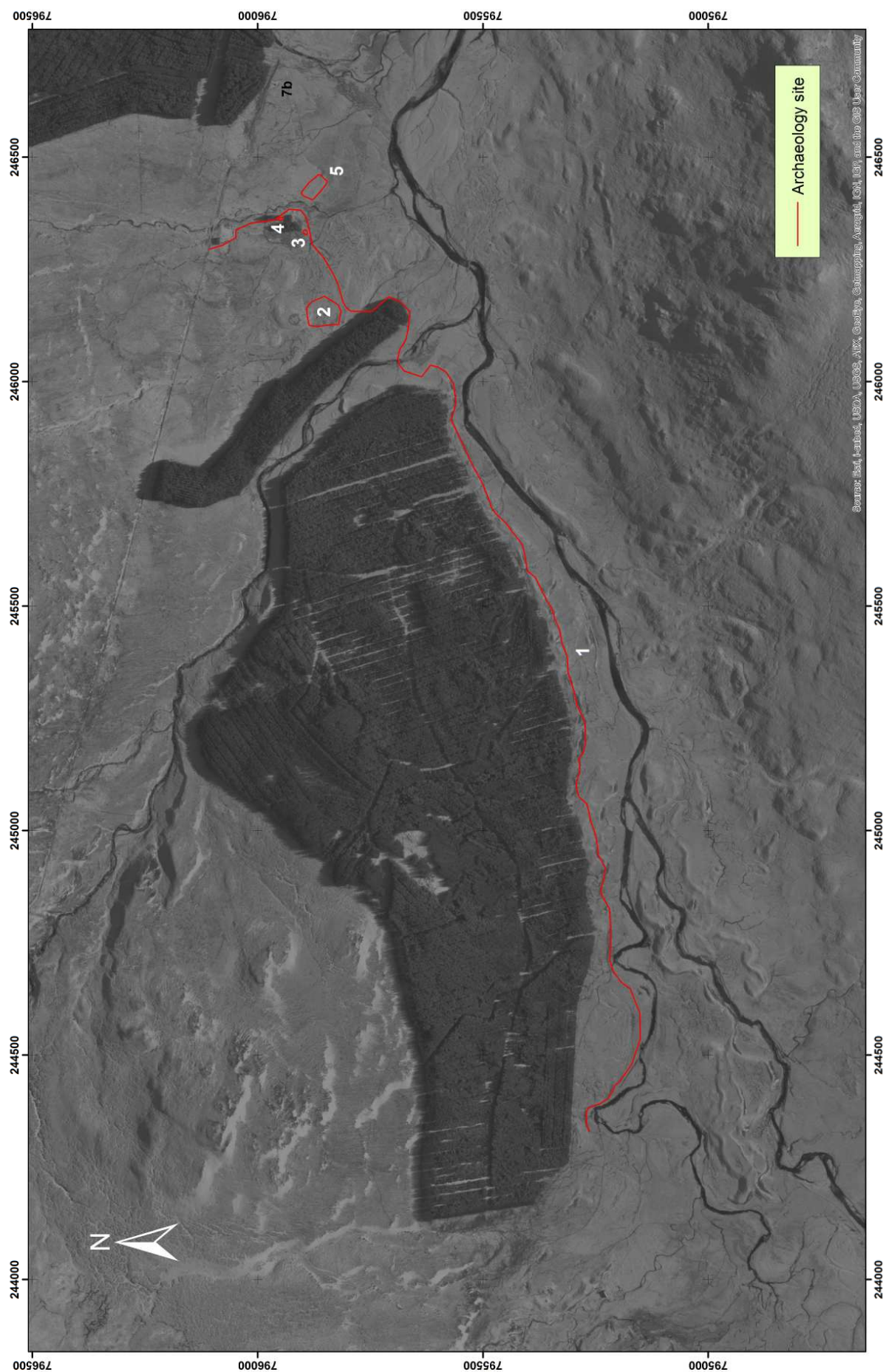


Figure 4: Location of archaeological sites within the survey area.



Plate 3: Enclosure at Melgarve (Site 4) looking NNW



Plate 4: Stone and turf-built enclosure to the SE of Melgarve (Site 5) looking SSE



Plate 5: Wade's Bridge spanning the Allt Feith A'Mhoraire (Site 6) looking SE



Plate 6: Looking W from Wade's Bridge (Site 6) along the continuation of the road under felling waste

6. Discussion

- 6.1 The walkover survey recorded three previously unrecorded archaeological sites within the survey area, along with two sites located off the road route that had previously been noted, but not recorded on the Historic Environment Record. With the exception of the standing stone of *Clach Chatail*, the landscape contains Post Medieval structures as well as associated boundary dykes, enclosures, tracks and cultivation plots.
- 6.2 Surviving elements of General Wade's Military Road were noted outwith, and within, the survey area, along with the associated infrastructure of bridges. Although it is thought that a spur of the military road extends southwest from Melgarve towards Loch Spey and onwards towards Glen Roy, no evidence could be found during the survey to support this. The current track on this alignment has been heavily modified with steel and plastic culverts bridging streams and applied new track surfaces (small quarries identified at the side of the track testify to this recent resurfacing).

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 At least a 10 metre buffer zone should be maintained around any individual buildings and structures, and a 5 metre buffer zone should be retained to each side of boundary dykes. One of the proposed road access routes passes close to the stone and turf enclosure (Site 5) and a buffer zone of at least 5 metres should be retained.
- 7.2 Special note should be made of the Scheduled section and eastern end of Wade's Military Road at Melgarve, including the old bothy and Wade's Bridge spanning the Coachan Riabhack (Drummin Bridge). Vehicular transport including plant/machinery, should refrain from entering this area. If the access route down the east side of the Coachan Riabhack is used for the access point from the new hydro road on the Beaully to Denny Line, then a thick layer of 75mm crush and run over the crossing point of the military road would provide a new structure on top of this important feature, dissipating pressure on the structure below.
- 7.3 If the proposed vehicle access route from the Beaully to Denny Line road down the west side of the Allt Feith A'Mhoraire is used, then the route should run as proposed on the client's map to the west of the Wade's Bridge. Again, to dissipate pressure on any surviving elements of the old military road in this area, a thick layer of 75mm crush and run should be laid down over any proposed crossing points of the military road. If possible, the new access road should run to the west of the old diversion route of the military road that was used in times of flooding, to where it crosses the main line of the Military Road to the southwest. This crossing point should also be protected using a thick layer of 75mm crush and run.
- 7.4 The potential Military spur road running from Melgarve along the northwest shore of the River Spey, has already been subjected to major modification in the past. It is intended to upgrade this section of track, overlaying the surface with additional metalling and replacing the wooden bridges and constructing bridge abutments. Some turning areas for larger vehicles will also be constructed to the side of the track. This upgrade would extend for approximately 1.8km to the southwest of Melgarve. I do not propose any recommendations with regards to the upgrading of this track, as long as the proposed works are not intrusive with regards to any underlying, buried track deposits and associated features.

8. References

Highland Council Historic Environment Team (HET) 2011. *Development Guidance: Archaeology*, v 1.3. Accessed at:
[Http://her.highland.gov.uk/hbsmrgatewayhighland/DataFiles/NewReports/DevelopmentGuidance_v1.3.pdf](http://her.highland.gov.uk/hbsmrgatewayhighland/DataFiles/NewReports/DevelopmentGuidance_v1.3.pdf)

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NLS 2014. National Library of Scotland. Accessed 12 August 2014 at <http://maps.nls.uk/>

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2004. *Corporate Plan 2004-9: Annex - Survey and Recording Policy*
http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/rcahms_media/files/foi/survey_and_recording_policy.pdf

The Scottish Government 2010. *Scottish Planning Policy*
[Http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf)

Cartographic References accessed at <http://www.nls.uk/maps/>

Ordnance Survey 1873 *1st Edition 6-inch to the mile: Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XCIX, surveyed 1870.*

Ordnance Survey 1902 *2nd Edition 6-inch to the mile: Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet XCIX, revised 1899.*

Roy, William 1747-55 *Military Survey of Scotland.*

APPENDIX 1 Glenshero Road Scheme Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

No.	Site Name	Site Type	Description	Align- ment	Condition	Period	Height OD (m)	Easting (centre)	Northing (centre)	Photo No.	HHER No.
1	Melgarve	Wade's Spur Road (Track)	A very windy track, lightly metalled runs SW from Melgarve. There are no visible bridge abutments, while most streams are carried through metal and plastic pipes below the track bed. Numerous, recently-used stone quarries to the NW side of the track.	NE- SW	Degraded	Unknown	340	-	-	1,6	34661 34663
2	Melgarve	Shieling Group	Group of at least ten very degraded stone and turf mounds up to 6m diameter and 0.8m high, located under rushes and grass. Located to NW of spur track SW of Melgarve and to SW of circular sheepfold.	-	Very Degraded	Unknown	340	46161	95817	3,4	-
3	Melgarve	Circular Stone Settings	Group of three circular stone/boulder settings measure between 3.5m and 4.0m diameter and stand up to 0.4m high. Located between 5 and 10 metres NW of spur track at Melgarve.	-	Very Degraded	Unknown	338	46334	95895	5	-

No.	Site Name	Site Type	Description	Align- ment	Condition	Period	Height OD (m)	Easting (centre)	Northing (centre)	Photo No.	HHER No.
4	Melgarve	Enclosure	Very degraded footings of a stone/boulder-built house is located adjacent and WNW of the track passing through Melgarve. Measures 22m long x 10m wide over walls up to 0.7m wide and standing to 0.4m high.	N-S	Very Degraded	Post Medieval	340	46371	95954	6	-
5	Melgarve	Enclosure	Boulder, stone and turf-built field enclosure is located to the SE of Melgarve. Walls 0.8m wide and stand up to 0.6m high.	NW- SE	Very Degraded	Post Medieval	334	46426	95896	8	-

APPENDIX 2 Glenshero Road Scheme: Index of Photographs

No.	Direction Facing	Site No.	Notes	Taken By	Date
1	WSW	1	Wade's spur road showing track and wooden bridge	SB	13/08/14
2	SE	1,3	General view from circular sheepfold over Spey Valley and Wade's spur road	SB	13/08/14
3	W	2	View over several of the very degraded shieling mounds to the SW of Melgarve	SB	13/08/14
4	NW	2	View over shieling group towards circular sheepfold	SB	13/08/14
5	N	3	One of the three boulder settings located to the NW of Wade's spur road at Melgarve	SB	13/08/14
6	NNW	4	Wade's spur track and the stone/boulder-built enclosure at Melgarve	SB	13/08/14
7	NNW	MHG 4667	General Wade's Bridge at Drummin, Melgarve, spanning the Coachan Riabhack	SB	13/08/14
8	SSE	5	View over the stone, boulder and turf-built stock enclosure at Melgarve	SB	13/08/14
9	SE	MHG 4651	Wade's Bridge spanning the Allt Feith A'Mhoraire to the ENE of Melgarve	SB	13/08/14
10	W	MHG 4651	View from the bridge spanning the Allt Feith A'Mhoraire towards the continuation of the road, now buried under forestry felling brash	SB	13/08/14
11	E	MHG 4480	Wade's Bridge at Drochaid A' Bhuilg Bhuidhe, Glen Shirra, during flooding of Spey Dam	SB	13/08/14
12	E	MHG 4480	Wade's Bridge at Drochaid A' Bhuilg Bhuidhe, Glen Shirra, during flooding of Spey Dam	SB	13/08/14