



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the past and future together

Laggan Water Main



Archaeological Survey

December 2006

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Summary

An archaeological survey was carried out ahead of the construction of a new water main at Laggan, Inverness-shire. Two sites of archaeological significance were found and marked on the ground in order to safeguard them during the construction work. There are no recommendations for further archaeological work in this case.

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Francis Williams of Halcrow Group Ltd for commissioning the work. The archaeological fieldwork and all photography was undertaken by Mary Peteranna; the project overall was managed by John Wood. Mapping is reproduced here by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217

Introduction

An archaeological survey was carried out on 15 December 2006 by Highland Archaeological Services Ltd on behalf of Halcrow, acting for Scottish Water, for the burial of a water main pipeline above the village of Laggan. The purpose of the work was to identify and record the nature and extent of any archaeological features likely to be affected by the pipeline burial.

A desk-based and field survey were undertaken to identify and record the nature and extent of any archaeological features likely to be affected by the water main. This report describes the work and presents the results.

Location

The pipeline runs from south to north along the burn between Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference points NN 613 947 and NN 616 954, directly north of the village of Laggan. The portion of the pipeline to be buried starts from the water utility building at the southern point (NN 613 947) and runs northerly up a slight hill for approximately 250 metres. After this, it plateaus on a river terrace for about 100 metres and then rises again over hilly, river terraced terrain for approximately 200 final metres.

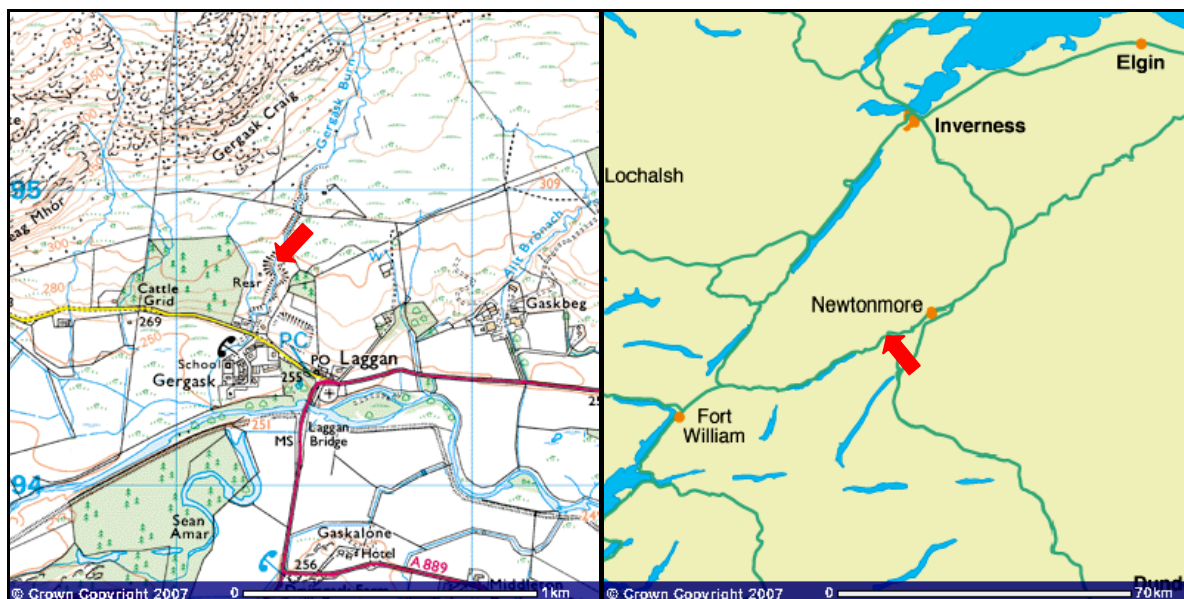


Figure 1 Site Location

Site details and archaeological background

The northern point of the proposed pipeline trench (NN 616 954) is at the base of mountains from which the burn falls. The pipeline trench was to be dug west of the burn/river. Most of this landscape is well-eroded by the river along which the pipeline runs and the remains of earlier river beds are surround the northern third of the site. The southern end of the middle third of the site levels out over a broad river terrace and the last third slopes downhill towards Laggan.

Several sites have been recorded along this burn, providing clear evidence of prehistoric settlement. The boundary dyke is representative of later 18-19th century occupation of the area. There was therefore potential for archaeological features or artefacts to be affected by the work.

Policy background

The planning and policy framework in this case included the Highland Council's *Structure Plan*¹, and the Scottish Executive's *National Planning Policy Guidance Notes 5 (NPPG5)*² and 18 (NPPG18)³, and *Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN42)*⁴ (SOEND 1994). The fundamental principles underpinning the above policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland's Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)⁵ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999).⁶

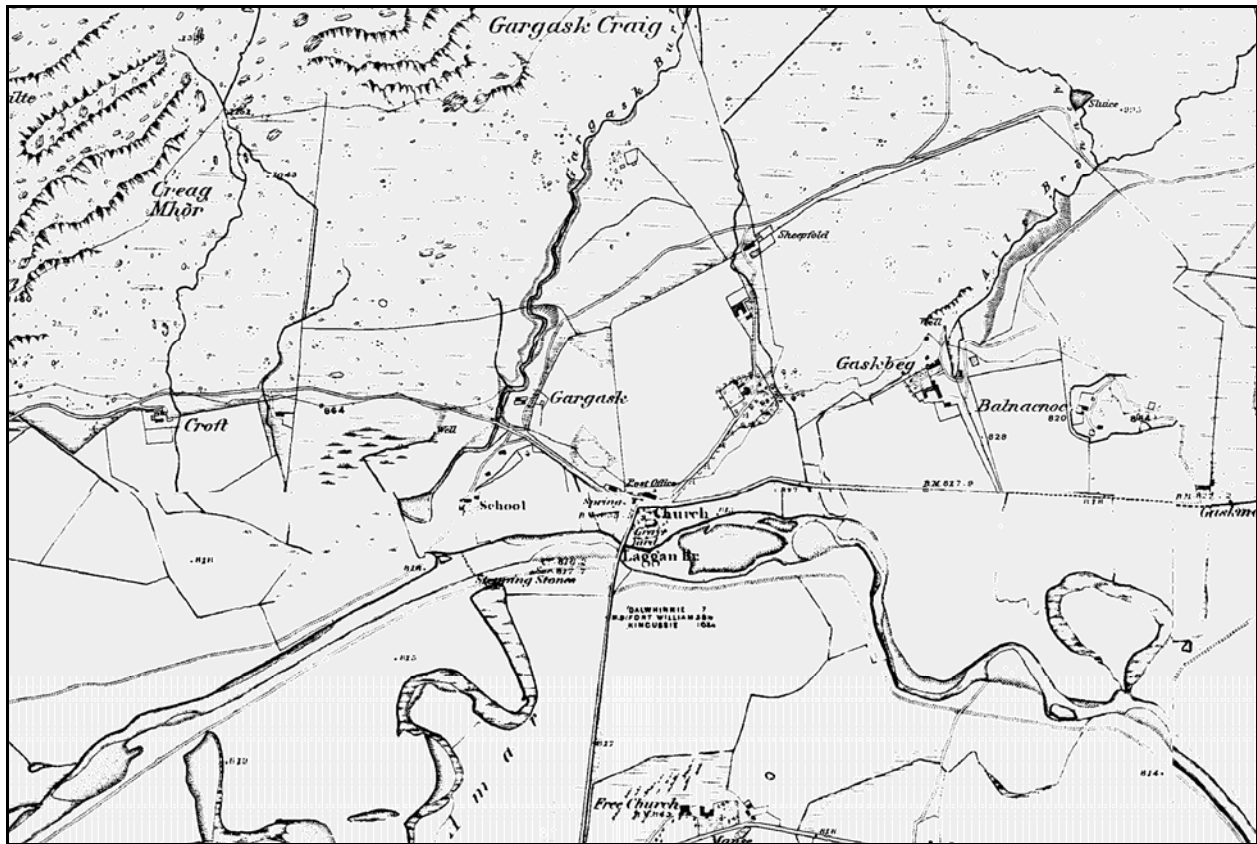


Figure 2 1st Edition OS 1:10560 map 1872 (not to scale)

Derived from digital mapping courtesy of Landmark Information Group Ltd.

¹ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1998/10/nppg5>

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/04/nppg18>

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1994/01/17081/21711>

⁵ www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf

⁶ <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

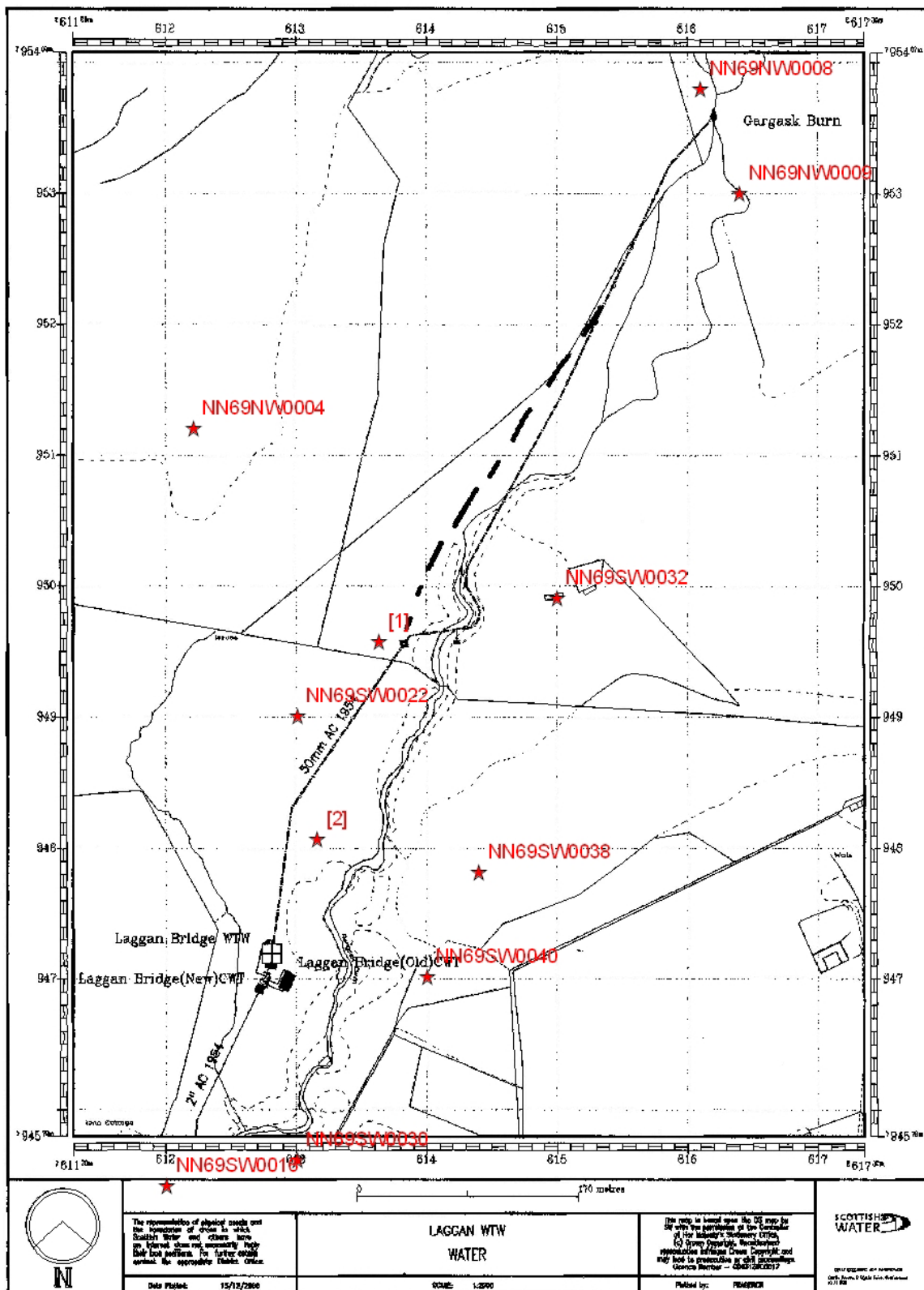


Figure 3 Line of proposed water main

Plan courtesy of Scottish Water; Highland Sites and Monuments Record data and survey results superimposed.

Programme

The work was designed to meet the brief supplied by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

1. Desk Based Assessment

A check of all relevant archaeological / historical records, maps and aerial photographs was undertaken. An online check was made of the Statistical Accounts, National Library of Scotland Map collection, National Monuments Record and Highland Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The SMR was then checked for updates in the Council offices in Inverness, where the RAF 1947 aerial photographs were also examined. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping was also checked. The First Edition 1:10560 (6 inch) map of 1878 is reproduced above (Fig 2).

2. Survey

A walk-over survey was undertaken and record photographs were taken of the site before excavation started. Two areas were marked off to safeguard them during construction of the water main.

Results

The following sites have been recorded in this area. (See Fig. 3 above)

Survey	SMR	NMRS	Name	Type
	NN69NW0004	NN69NW 4	Gergask Craig or Gaskbeg	Fort?
	NN69NW0008	-	Gergask Craig	Butt, shooting; Dyke;
	NN69NW0009	-	Gergask Craig	Building; Dyke; Enclosure;
	NN69SW0016	NN69SW 31	Gergask, School and Schoolhouse	School
	NN69SW0022	NN69SW 11	Gergask Burn	Roundhouse, Cairnfield
	NN69SW0030	NN69SW 17	Gergask	Farmstead
	NN69SW0032	NN69SW 19	Gergask Burn	Farmstead
	NN69SW0038	NN69SW 37	Gergask Burn	Roundhouse?
[1]	NN69SW0040	-	Gergask Burn	Clearance cairn
[2]	-	-	[=SMR NN69SW0022]	Roundhouse, Cairnfield
	-	-	-	Possible corn kiln?

Several of these sites were recorded by Jonathan Wordsworth during a walk-over survey for an agri-environment scheme in 1997⁷. No additional sites were visible on the RAF aerial photographs.

⁷ Wordsworth, J (1997) 'Gaskbeg Farm (Laggan parish), ESA management survey',

The roundhouses and cairns demonstrate that this landscape has been occupied in later prehistory; while there are also features from the 19th and 20th centuries. The apparent lack of medieval and early post-medieval features is to be expected in the highlands, where much use was made of organic materials that do not survive and extensive recycling also occurred.

All these archaeological features were well clear of the area to be excavated for the water main, apart from SMR NN69NW0008 and the roundhouse and cairnfield SMR NN69SW0022 (=Feature 1). SMR NN69NW0008 and 9 were avoided when the trench line was diverted east to join the river south of 9.

Feature [1] (SMR NN69SW0022) was clearly visible (See Fig 4 below). Although the grid reference has been slightly relocated from the previously recorded position as a result of this fieldwork, it was safely clear of the area to be dug for the pipeline trench. The landscape west of Feature [1] is covered by multiple small clearance cairns, but all are well clear of the trench.



Figure 4 Feature [1]

Feature [2] had not been recorded previously. It was located between the trench line and the river, approximately 75 metres from the Water Treatment Works. The structure was sub-circular, measuring approximately 5 metres by 3.5 metres, and interpreted as a possible corn kiln (See Fig 5).

Both these features were marked with canes and yellow tape, and the areas of interest were discussed with the site agent from Scottish Water. Because the proposed trench was approximately 0.30 m wide, the areas of interest are clearly out of danger from destruction. An area east of Feature 1 and an area west of Feature 2 were marked off to safeguard them. There is ample room on the site for the trench to remain well clear of these features and they are not in danger of being destroyed.



Figure 5 Feature [2]

Recommendations

1. The client was advised to avoid the marked-off areas around Features [1] and [2] to help ensure their preservation.
2. No further action is proposed along the proposed pipeline trench.

Appendix 1: Index of Photographs

Photo No.	Camera Location	Notes	Taken by	Date
1	CP1	View south-southwest along river, proposed trench	MKP	15/12/2006
2	CP2	View south-southwest along river, proposed trench	MKP	15/12/2006
3	CP2	View southwest towards parking area	MKP	15/12/2006
4	CP3	View south-southwest along river over proposed trench	MKP	15/12/2006
5	CP1	View north, towards mountains, river visible	MKP	15/12/2006
6	CP4	View south-southwest over start of level, terraced third of site	MKP	15/12/2006
7	CP4	View north along river towards mountains	MKP	15/12/2006
8	CP5	Feature 1 - Hut circle (photo scale to left), view east	MKP	15/12/2006
9	CP5	View north, over small clearance cairns west of Feature 1	MKP	15/12/2006
10	CP6	Feature 2	MKP	15/12/2006
11	CP6	View north-northwest along proposed trench	MKP	15/12/2006

A version of this index in Excel spreadsheet format, together with copies of all photographs taken, are available on the accompanying CDROM.

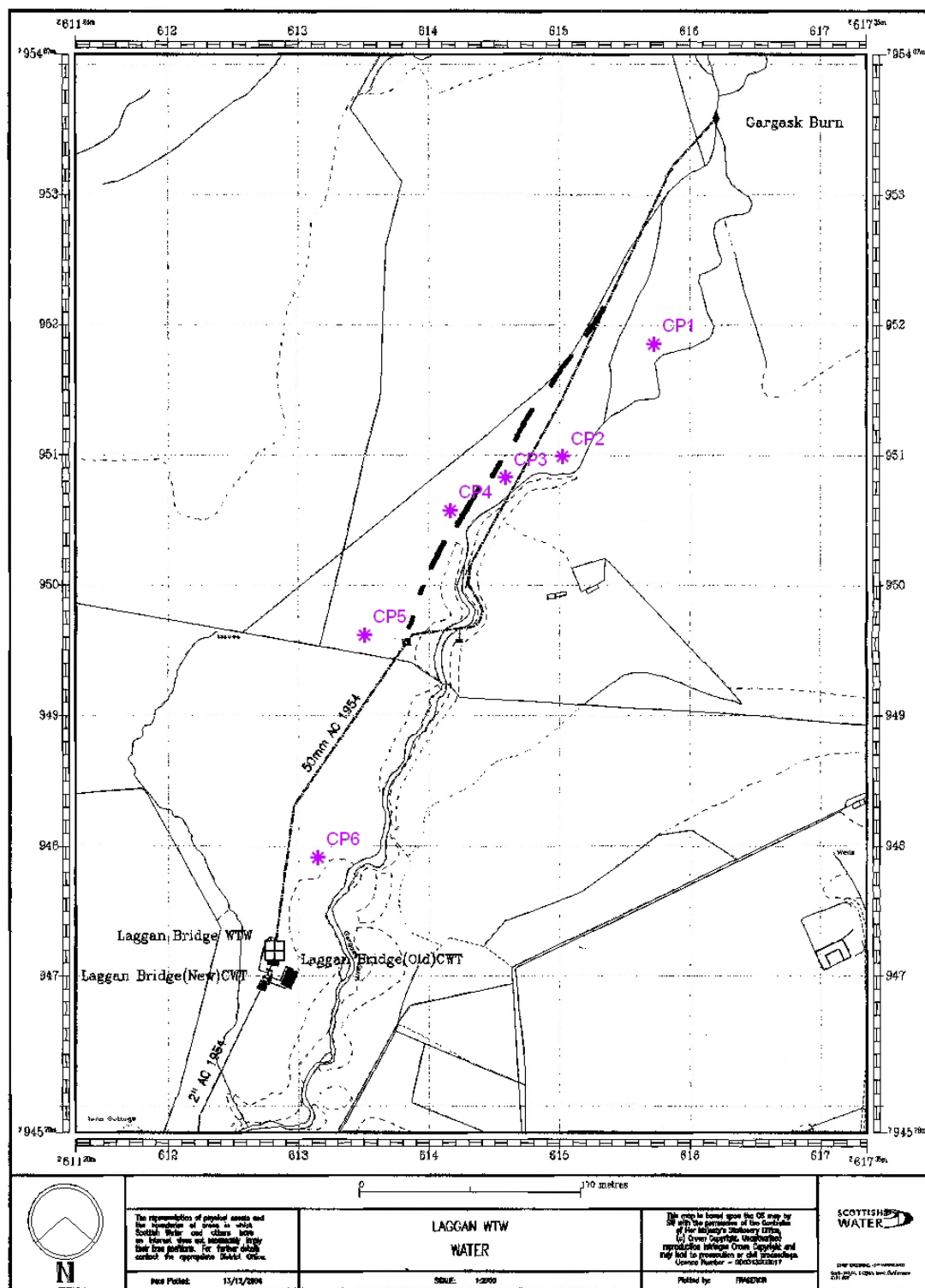


Figure 6 Camera points
Plan courtesy of Scottish Water; camera points superimposed.