

Proposal for Planting Native Woodland
on Strath Discretionary Trust Land
at Druim Dubh, Kinlochdamp

Environmental Statement

Under the terms of the European Directive No 85/337 and the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988 (S11988/1207), certain afforestation proposals require the preparation of an Environmental Statement before they can proceed to the grant application stage.

This proposal to afforest part of the Strath Discretionary Trust land comprises some 162 hectares at Druim Dubh lying in the Wester Ross National Scenic Area. The site lies close to Rassa Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Forest Authority has therefore determined that an Environmental Assessment is required.

2.4 LANDSCAPE

Loch Coultrie lies to the West of the site at the foot of a large flat valley. The Southern border of the site is contiguous with Rassal Site of Special Scientific Interest. Glen Shildaig lies to the north-west of the site and contains the single track A896 road from Lochcarron to Torridon. This road allows the only significant public view points, and from it the site is perceived as relatively distant within a large landscape. (Appendix C5).

To the south of the proposed site is an existing new native regeneration woodland scheme of similar scale to this proposal. The two schemes should complement and balance each other, linking across the Ghlas-Chnoic and Allt a' Ghiubhais valley, creating a unified view from the A896.

Vegetation is dominated by poor moorland and grassland. Trees are only found on some of the steeper rock faces and beside a few of the larger hillside streams.

2.5 SOCIAL ASPECTS

There are no dwellings within the site. Sheep grazing is the main economic activity; in addition, some stalking is carried out and a salmon smolt farm operates in Loch Damh.

2.6 ARCHAEOLOGY

The Archaeology report from Wordsworth Archaeological Services forms Appendix B7

2.7 RECREATION

From Ceann loch damh, there is a footpath on the north side of the Abhainn Dearg to Strath a' Bhathaich. Another footpath runs from Glasnock, following the north bank of the Allt a' Ghiubhais, passing between the Glasnock regeneration site and the proposal site. A right of way runs north west from the Allt a' Ghiubhais to Ceann loch damh. None of these paths cross the line of the proposed Deer fencing.

3 SITE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Landscape
 - 3.1.1 Sensitivity
 - 3.1.2 Character
 - 3.1.3 Heritage
 - 3.1.4 Elements of Diversity and Special Features
- 3.2 Flora and Fauna
- 3.3 Agriculture
- 3.4 Archaeology
- 3.5 Recreation
- 3.6 Water

3.1 LANDSCAPE

3.1.1 Sensitivity

The HRC IFS describes the area as being of high sensitivity in forestry terms indicating a generally unplanted, rugged mountain core area. Such areas are generally technically unsuited to commercial forestry because of altitude, exposure or thin soils.

Landscape, recreation and nature conservation are considered as key constraints within this sensitive area and HRC interpretation indicates that a limited range of forestry types may be acceptable. Where planting is appropriate it should be primarily of native species for nature conservation or amenity purposes. (HRC, IFS, 1992)

3.1.2 Character

The area is designated as lying within the "Western Seaboard Landscape zone" (HRC, IFS, 1992). This is described as "characteristically rugged with sparse woodland cover and pockets of native Caledonian Scots Pine."

The Applecross, Gairloch and Lochcarron Local Plan (1985) states that "the area comprises West Highland scenery of superlative quality".

3.1.3 Heritage

Sparse archaeological remains have been found, relating to a sheiling which existed in the area. The site may have been used for sheep grazing since the early nineteenth century. Please see the Archaeology report (Appendix B7).

3.1.4 Elements of Diversity and Special Features

There is an unusual area of lime-rich soil in the south of the site, derived from the limestone pavements on the eastern slopes.

3.2 FLORA AND FAUNA

A vegetation survey of the area has been carried out and mapped in accordance with the NCC Phase 1 vegetation survey. The survey did not highlight any species of special interest.

The site is used by red deer at certain times of the year.

3.3 AGRICULTURE

The site forms a small part of the 4860 hectares of Suath Discretionary Trust land.

3.4 ARCHAEOLOGY

There are two archaeological sites within the area affected by the proposal (Sites 2 and 3 in the report). It has been recommended that these should be protected with a holdback during planting, and this recommendation will be followed. (Appendix B7).

3.5 RECREATION

At present the site has limited recreational use, due to problems of access and peaty ground conditions.

3.6 WATER

This is a fairly wet site containing several streams. These streams flow east to west through the site and eventually drain into Loch Damh to the North.

Loch Damh contains fish cages owned and operated by Kinlochdamph Ltd.

HRPB wish for ongoing monitoring of the oligotrophic status of Loch Damh, (see Appendix D5).

4.5 ARCHAEOLOGY

There will be no significant effect on the archaeology of the site.

4.6 RECREATION

It is the Trust's intention to encourage public access. Once the woodland is established, signposted walks with information boards will be set up.

4.7 WATER

Potential negative effects on water quality with afforestation schemes may arise from siltation and nutrification of lochs and watercourses following fertiliser inputs.

This scheme combines low impact dolloping techniques, no drainage works and hand application of rock phosphate fertiliser around each tree to minimise any potentially detrimental effects.

HRPB are advising that monitoring be carried out on Loch Damh. As this scheme is likely to be the only one of its kind within the catchment this matter may be further investigated during consultation. (see Appendix 5).

4.8 SOIL AND GEOLOGY

The proposal is considered to have no significant effects on the underlying geology. The increased natural drainage due to transpiration of the trees, and the seasonal leaf fall and litter should improve soil conditions in the long term.

4.9 CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY

Air quality is unlikely to be affected by the scheme. As the trees mature carbon fixation will remove some carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Interception of precipitation within the water catchment will increase as the trees mature. Transpiration will increase from the canopy. The cumulative effect is difficult to quantify, but water yields from the site may decrease in the long term.

4.10 INTERACTIONS, IMPACT MATRIX CUMULATIVE EFFECT

B2: Wester Ross National Scenic Area

Countryside Commission for Scotland

NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

WESTER ROSS

HIGHLAND

Scale 1:250,000

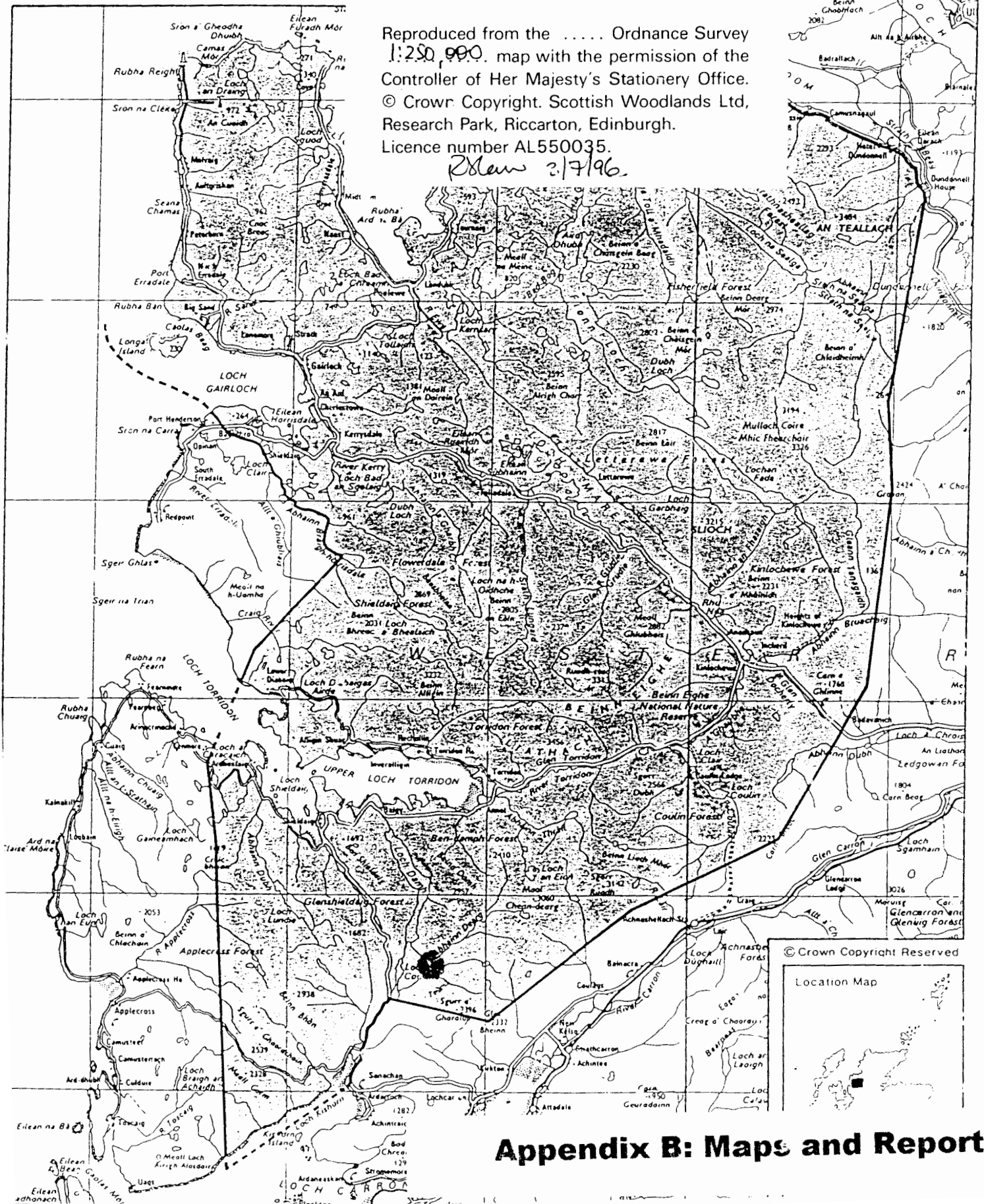
145,300 hectares



SITE LOCATION

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28 Jan 2/7/96.



Appendix B: Maps and Reports



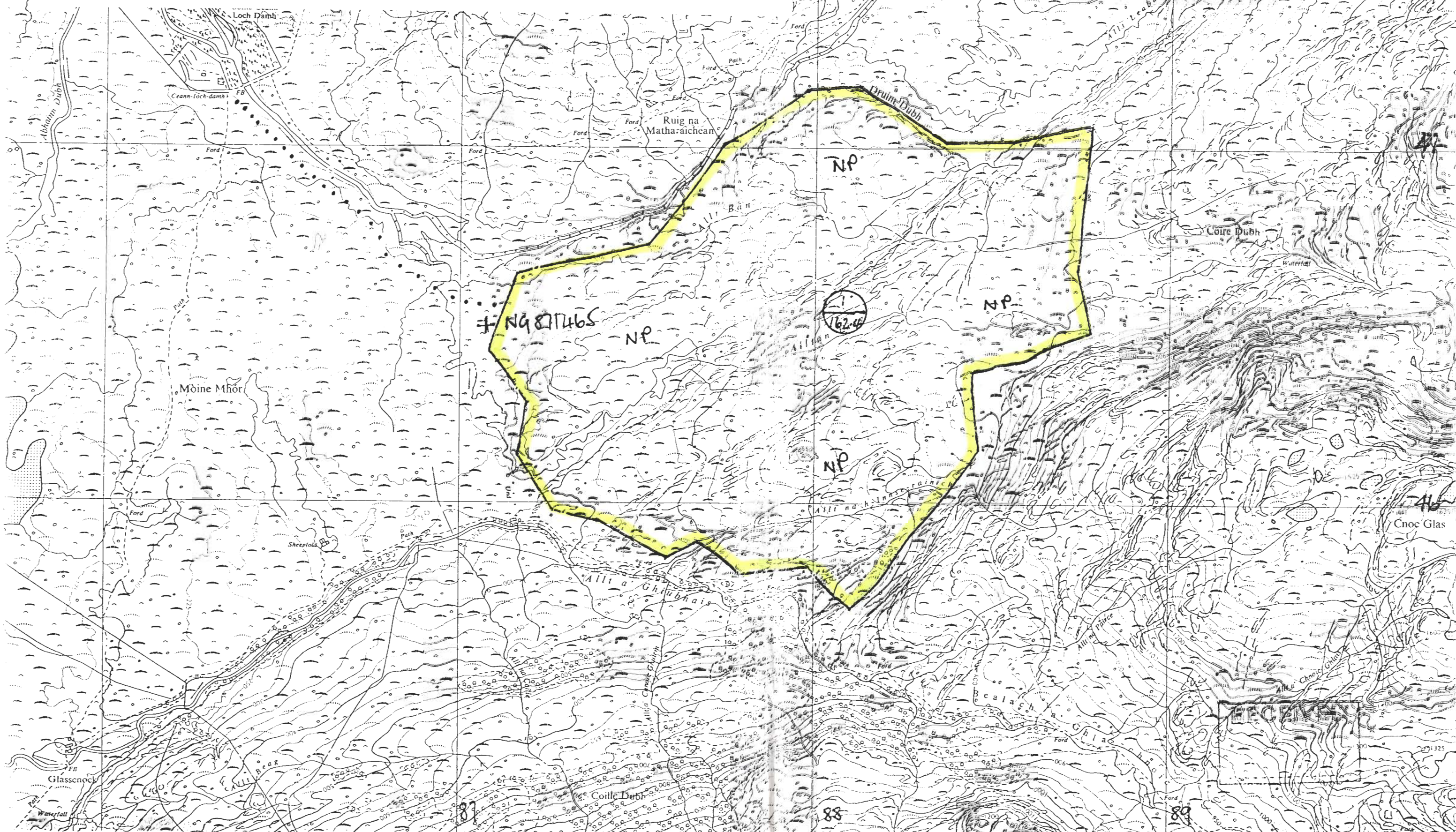
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Appendix B: Maps and Reports

B1: Druim Dubh Proposal Site Map



B7: Archaeological Survey

An Archaeological Survey of Proposed Plantation at Druim Dubh, Kinloch Damph

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Balbeg, Balnain, Glenurquhart
Inverness-shire IV3 6XQ
(tel 01456476288)

Archaeological Survey of Proposed Plantation at Druim Dubh, Kinloch Damph

Introduction

The author was asked by **Scottish Woodlands**, on behalf of **Kinlochdamph Estate**, to supply an archaeological survey of a proposed plantation at **Druim Dubh, Kinloch Damph** to form part of an Environmental Assessment. This involved an initial deskbound survey of all known reference material including the earlier OS map series and the Sites & Monuments Record held by Highland Regional Council in Clachnaharry Schoolhouse. This was followed by a field visit to look for sites on the ground.

Historical Background

The area of proposed planting lies on Kinloch Damph Estate. It is not known when the natural tree cover was removed in this area. It may have been relatively early as there dates from a pollen core taken in **Loch Coulin** that suggest farmers were active here more than 5,000 years ago. The location of the plantation on an exposed hillside mostly open to the prevailing westerly winds suggests this was an unlikely area for permanent settlement. Nothing was recorded on earlier maps within the survey area, apart from an enclosure at NG 8712 468 shown in 1875. This was almost certainly a sheepfold and is no longer visible on the ground.

It is not known when this area was cleared for sheep. As tenants were being evicted from their hill grazings in Coulin and Strathcarron c1818, it is likely that Kinlochdamph would have been put under sheep at the same time. (*Report of the Royal Commission on the Highlands & Islands 1892 - Evidence of Roderick Mackenzie, p461*). A slump in the sheep trade in the 1860s led to many sheep runs being converted into deer forests but it is not clear whether this occurred here, as it lies outside the area of deer forest shown in the Royal Commission report of 1892.

Field survey

The site was visited on the 1st November during good weather. The plantation was approached from **Ceann-loch-damh** and certain features were noted on this approach. Particular attention during the survey was concentrated on the grassy flushes beside the **Allt Ban** and **Allt an Eisg**. Three areas of archaeological interest were recorded and are listed below. Canes were placed on the features to help locate them in the future.

Site 1 NG 8703 4679

Allt Ban

In a grassy flush on the north bank of this burn was found an oval drystone structure 1.8m by 1.5m internally. A similar structure lay 12m to the E.

These would appear to be shieling stores connected with dairying, though no shieling hut was found.

Archaeological Survey of Proposed Plantation at Druim Dubh, Kinloch Damph

Recommendation

Ideally these structures should be preserved and preferably within a 30m exclusion zone, perhaps defining the grassy flush in which they are sited.. However as they appear to be unassociated with a shieling hut and the area is to be hand-planted, a smaller exclusion may prove acceptable to the Regional Archaeologist.

Site 2. NG 882 467

Allt Ban

This site is divided into two parts. The most obvious are 2 oval drystone structures at the base of a small waterfall on the west bank of the **Allt Ban**. They are respectively 1.3m by 0.9m, standing up to 0.4m high and 1.4m by 1.2m, standing up to 0.7m high. The latter which lies closest to the waterfall also has an entrance 0.3m wide facing west.

30m to the SW also at the base of a ridge is a poorly defined oval shieling bothy set in a small area of grassland. It measures 3m by 2m internally.

Together these mark the site of a small shieling with the waterfall structures being stores either for implements connected with dairying or for the dairy products themselves.

Recommendations

Both these sites should be preserved from planting and ideally linked within the same exclusion zone, so that they remain a thematic unit.

Site 3 NG 8783 4648

Allt an Eisc

Sheltered by a large ridge and lying between two branches of the **Allt an Eisc** is an oval drystone structure 2m long by 1.4m maximum width. It is 1.2m wide at the south west end and tapers to an entrance 0.3m wide at the north east.

It is not clear what the function of this structure was. It is too small to be a dwelling and may be connected with the shieling site to the north east.

Recommendation

This building should be preserved by excluding it from the area of planting. Ideally there should be a 30 metre exclusion around it, but this may depend on the local topography.

Site 4 NG 866 470

Ceann-loch-damh

Immediately to the south east of the modern lodge and its enclosure are the remains of a prehistoric roundhouse settlement. It lies on a terrace on the west bank of the **Abhainn**

Archaeological Survey of Proposed Plantation at Druim Dubh, Kinloch Damph

Dearg. The settlement is now heavily overgrown by blanket bog making the individual features difficult to see. There appear to be at least 4 roundhouse structures visible as rings of dark green heather slightly raised above the yellow grasses. The best preserved measures 10m internally. Other heather clad mounds are probably the remains of clearance cairns, though some may have been stone dumps left by the river in spate. There are the remains of a low stone dyke forming the southern boundary of the settlement at a point where the terrace narrows. There is no obvious edge to the north and the settlement may well have extended into the area of the modern lodge.

Recommendations

*This settlement lies outside the area of the proposed plantings but is included here because the access route to the survey lies directly through this settlement. There has already been some erosion on the track and since there is not a prescribed route similar erosion could extend to other areas. It is going to be difficult to restrict access across this as it is the natural route to **Druim Dubh**. A fence around the site or at least at the north end might dissuade vehicles, though obviously there would be some costs involved in this. These might be part funded by one of the statutory authorities*

Jonathan Wordsworth MIFA, FSA(Scot)
10th November 1995



Fig 2 (i) Stone structures of Site 2 besides Allt Ban waterfall. Looking north east.



Fig 2(ii) Location of site 3 near Alltan Eisg. Looking south west.



Fig 3 Location of Roundhouse settlement at Ceann-loch-damh. Looking north west.



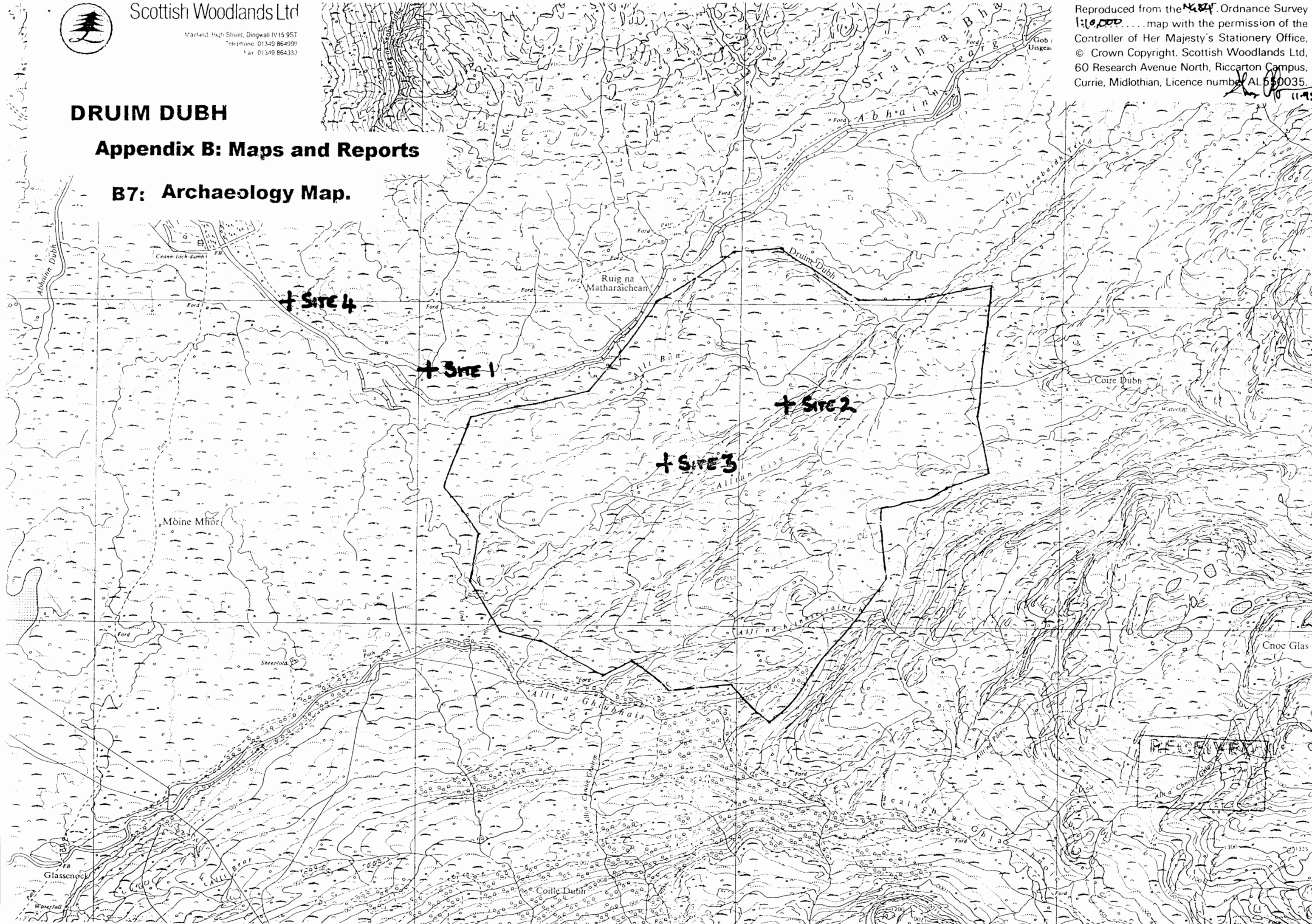
DRUIM DUBH

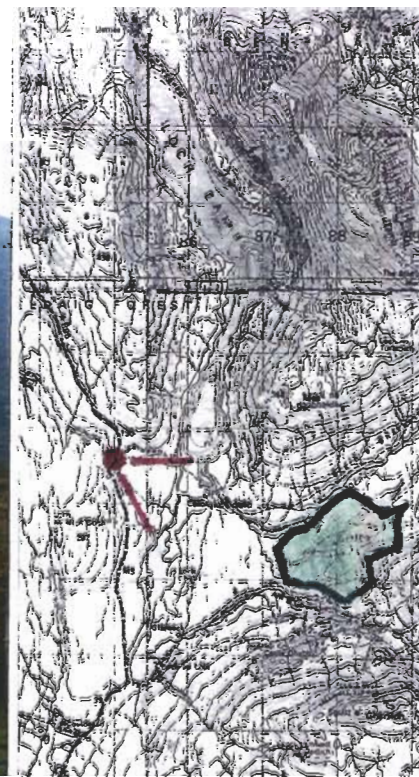
Appendix B: Maps and Reports

B7: Archaeology Map.

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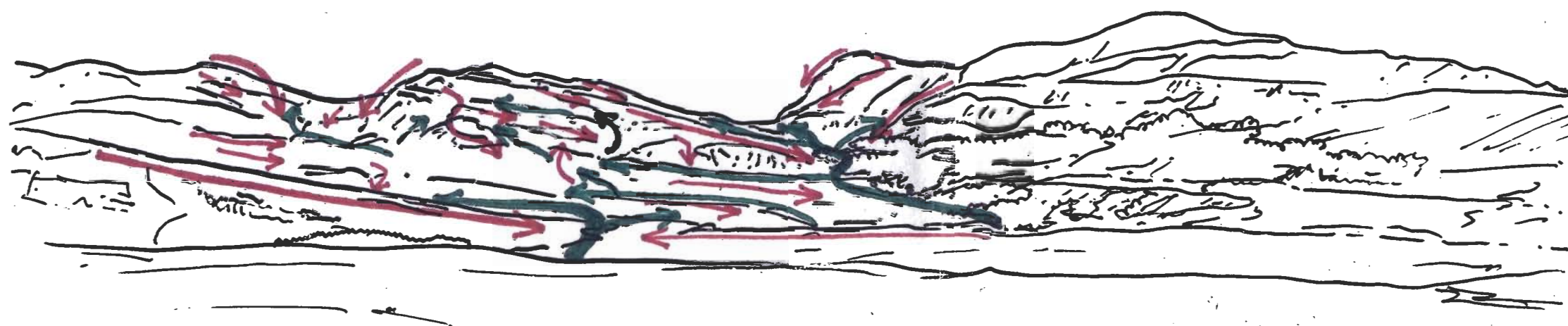
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Drawn 3/7/96.



LANDFORM APPRAISAL



IMPRESSION OF FUTURE VIEW

C5: Landform Appraisal

Roinn na
Gaidhealtachd



Highland

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Please ask for

John Wood

Our ref.

EA1/JW/MKI

Direct Dial No.

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Your ref.

Date

12.5.95

R.G. Wilson
Branch Manager
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Mayfield
High Street
Dingwall IV15 9ST.

Dear Mr. Wilson

STRATH DISCRETIONARY TRUST
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT - DRUIM DUBH.

Thank you for your enquiry. Our observations and comments are as follows:

No archaeological sites are recorded within the proposed area. However no systematic archaeological survey has been undertaken in this area and there is therefore a possibility that unrecorded sites may be damaged.

The Environmental Statement should therefore include a report by a qualified field archaeologist prepared to the attached brief. This will ensure any features of importance have been identified and suitable conservation measures included in the overall management plan. I can supply details of local archaeologists who would provide estimates for this, or could make the necessary arrangements if desired on a rechargeable basis. In either case the cost will be relatively small but the benefits to the archaeology and future management of the land would be considerable.

Yours faithfully

A.J.R. Wood
Regional Archaeologist.

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