

Archaeological Survey of a proposed Woodland Grant Scheme plantation at Sandside Estate  
near Thurso, Caithness.

Cathy Dagg  
2, Ruigh Riabhach  
Scoraig Peninsula,  
Dundonnell,  
Wester Ross, IV23 2RE  
*Tel. 01854 633 337*

## Archaeological Survey of a proposed Woodland Grant Scheme plantation at Sandside Estate near Thurso, Caithness

### Introduction

The author was asked by Iain MacLennan Forestry to carry out a rapid archaeological survey of a proposed Woodland Grant Scheme application at Sandside Estate near Thurso, Caithness. The purpose of the survey was to identify areas of archaeological importance in advance of the submission of detailed planting plans. As certain proposals had been made concerning the incorporation of the archaeological sites in plans for the development of the woodland as a community forest, with public access, signage and interpretation, it was also considered a priority to assess the archaeological sites for their suitability for access and interpretation, and evaluate the possible impact of public access on the sites themselves.

### Method

A desk-based study was carried out at Highland Council's Sites and Monuments Record held by the Archaeology Service at the Town House in Inverness. This was followed by a rapid walk-over survey carried out on the 30th Sept to 2nd Oct. 1998 in damp conditions. An additional visit was carried out to the Inverness Library.

### Topography

The area of the proposed woodland is sited on the south and west of the basin draining into Sandside Bay, and extending south 3km from the sea to include the slopes of Beinn Ratha and Ceann Mor which reach a height of 251m. The main survey area is a north facing gentle slope broken by glacially eroded outcrops of igneous rock forming roughly North-South ridges, ranging from 200 to 800m in length. These high areas and adjacent slopes offer well-drained ground with a covering of grass or short heather. The surrounding lower-lying ground is a mixture of drained and improved fields under cultivation (which are excluded from the WGS), fields which have been improved but are now being colonised by coarse grasses, rushes, bracken and gorse, and fields which have reverted to rushy wetland, as well as areas of heather on shallow peat which have never been improved. The land is drained by two main burns running north into Sandside Bay and their tributaries, as well as an extensive network of artificial drainage ditches. There are virtually no native trees apart from a few small species along the Reay Burn, but to the south of Sandside House there is a plantation of deciduous species and some regeneration to the immediate West.

The area of the WGS to the North and West of Sandside House includes the heather-covered Cnoc na Moine, rising to 101m. The Allt Achaidh na Gaodha marks a geological boundary, with strata of Caithness sandstone breaking to the surface to the north, forming a terrain of bedrock and poor grasses.

The survey area is bisected by the East-West coastal road, and apart from estate access tracks, there are traces of several older routes. The area is also crossed by high-voltage electricity pylons.

### Archaeological and Historical background

The north coast of Caithness is rich in archaeological remains from the times of the first farmers some 5000 years ago and the area around Sandside Bay is no exception. The landscape to the East of the bay is dotted with cairns, standing stones and stone rows representing the funerary and ceremonial activities of Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples, while hut circles and brochs represent the farmsteads and defences of the last millenium. At Sandside House there are two Pictish carved stones and a carved fragment, although the original location of these is unknown, while at Old Reay burying ground there is a Pictish cross slab. There is evidence for the early settling of Vikings in the area in the form of five pagan Viking graves exposed by the weathering of the sand dunes in Sandside Bay, and in the Norse element in local place names, including Sandside itself (Sand-setr = dwelling or shieling at the sand.) When Caithness was divided into parishes in 1223, the revenues from

Reay parish were reserved for the bishop, and in late Mediaeval times Old Reay was a settlement of some importance. It was granted a charter in 1516, and held two fairs a year, the more important being the Tryst Fair held on August 8th for cattle which were droved down Strath Halladale. In the 18th century large numbers of young, unbroken horses were sent from Reay parish to Orkney. The Statistical account of 1755 listed for Reay 8 Lowlanders and 328 farmers and their families, with 3500 black cattle, 3000 sheep and 1000 horses. The earliest removal of people from the land was from Helshetter Strath in 1772. Around 1800, Major Innes of Sandside was experimenting with large-scale sheep farming, and in 1838 over 100 families were removed. Initially the village grew in size as people moved from the land, but later the dispossessed population sailed from Scrabster. Old Reay village is considered to have been located under the sand dunes of Sandwood Bay, but the village is now spread along the new road. There are crofts along the road, but with no access to hill land for common grazing. The old coast road passed immediately to the north of Sandside House, and in the first part of this century the kitchen gardens of the house were providing vegetables for the Thurso market. Sandside Estate is first mentioned in 1507 when Alexander Innes of Innes was granted the lands of Reay, Sandside and Dunbeath. The earliest Sandside house appears to have been built for Sir Donald McKay of Strathnaver who raised a regiment for King Charles 1st and was rewarded in 1628 with the lands of Reay and the title 'Lord Reay'. In 1637 the estate passed to the Innes family who held it for over 200 years. The present Sandside house is 18th century with many later additions and is considered to be the largest house in Caithness.

## Archaeological Survey

Apart from the existing 18 previously recorded sites on the Highland Council's SMR, 24 sites were noted as additional man-made features. Details of each site are listed below. Where the site has been recorded, the description includes its individual SMR reference number, its NSR coding, the name given to the site in the record and the site type. The NSR codings are as follows:

- C: Almost certainly of schedulable quality.
- V: Very probably schedulable, but needs to be visited for assessment
- N: Not likely to be of schedulable quality.
- R: Almost certainly of regional significance, but not of schedulable quality.

**Site 1. NC 9495 6580 Quarry.** Various workings and piles of spoil, aligned ENE-WSW to One large working about 100m long leading WSW to a rock face about 10m high. At the south of this is a rubble-constructed platform possibly used to facilitate loading of stone onto carts which could exit the quarry to the NE. Immediately north of this main quarry and extending 150m SW, overgrown mounds and collapsed or flooded scoops indicate more workings. The quarry is being used at present on a small scale as a dump. Associated locally with the original construction of estate buildings. (Photograph)

**Site 2. NC 9475 6570 Boulders.** An apparently random scatter of boulders covering an area roughly 50m square. Boulders average 1m in diameter. Only notable because six of the boulders have 2cm diameter holes drilled shallowly into approximately centre of their top surfaces, presumably done while the boulders were in situ, but no apparent pattern as to which boulders were selected.

**Site 3. NC 9450 6575 Rubble piles.** Low lichen covered piles of small stones covering an area of about 20m square, obviously artificial but not immediately interpretable. No obvious walling or footings, and too widespread to be just field clearance. Located just behind a former gap in the wall now infilled, where the track running behind the dyke bears west towards Loch na Moine. (Photograph)

**Site 4. NC 9400 6515 to NC 9415 6550 Grouse butts.** Attached to a low rubble dyke climbing SSW to the summit of Cnoc na Moine, a line of 5 stone-built and 5 turf-built grouse butts, spaced from 25m to 40m apart. The stone-built butts are the lower, D-shaped with the straight line of the D formed by the dyke, with an entrance to the NE. The lowest butt is the most ruinous but the higher ones are well-preserved with capstones on the 1.5m high

walls. Internal width is 1.25m. The turf-built butts are not well-preserved, existing only as low mounds but with roughly the same dimensions as the stone ones. (Photograph)

**Site 5. NC 9395 6495** (SMR NC96NW0001 name: Cnoc na Moine, NSR: N, **Area of cairns and mounds**. Also recorded as NC96SW0012 name: Achad na Gaodha, Depopulated ) On the southern slopes of Cnoc na Moine just to the E of the dyke associated with the farmstead (site 6.), an area of clearance and cultivation covering 200m E-W and 150m N-S, consisting of approximately 20 cairns visible as low bracken-covered mounds on the short-cropped heather and some indication of short stretches of low walling. More likely to have been associated with the possible prehistoric settlement (site 7.) than the farmstead (site 6.) (Plan A. and Photograph)

**Site 6. NC 9386 6492** (SMR NC96SW0018 name: Cnoc na Moine, **Farmstead**) One highly visible building of rubble walling, about 20m in length and aligned NNW-SSE. Two other probable buildings visible as heather-covered footings aligned NW-SE and short lengths of dyke lines.

**Site 7. NC 9430 6515** ( SMR NC96NW0002 name: Sandside, NSR C, **Settlement**) Noted in a previous survey as consisting of eleven possible hut circles with signs of cultivation indicated by short stretches of walling and a small number of clearance heaps, covering an area 225m E-W and 200m N-S. None of the buildings appears to be a typical hut circle, they are small, appear crudely built and lack the regularity of form of Highland hut circles. The furthest south hut circle is crossed by a later dyke and is the most visible, with 2 arcs of banking and 4 orthostats, about 10m in overall diameter. The other features are less distinct, visible only as bracken-covered mounds, some rubble and some larger stones, on the lower eastern slopes of Cnoc na Moine and bordering on an area of gorse. (Plan A. and photograph)

**Site 8. NC 9418 6512** ( SMR NC96NW0003, NSR N, **probable plantation bank and ditch**) A circular/oval bank and ditch, about 60m in diameter, on the east slopes of Cnoc na Moine, its shape and size most visible from a distance. Too regular in shape to be contemporary with the adjacent settlement (site 7.). Areas of bracken within the circle suggest that it does cut through earlier areas of cultivation. Associated locally with the site of the last hanging of a sheep thief. (Photograph)

**Site 9. NC 9511 6436** (SMR NC96SE0024, name: Allt Torrigal, NSR C, **Cairn**) A cairn, 9.5m in diameter and 0.6m high. In the centre the side slab of a cist is discernable.

**Site 10. NC 9485 6378** **Water storage tanks** for Sandside House Not of archaeological interest

**Site 11. NC 9515 6344** (SMR NC96SE0050, **Farmstead**. Also recorded as NC96SE0045, Depopulated) Braxside farmstead, on an area of rocky high ground between Braxside Burn and a nameless tributary from the West, forming a green triangle of cultivated ground. Some areas of the bank just back from the northern burn have been reinforced with walling. 3 or 4 buildings aligned NE-SW, with rectangular enclosures to the West, making use at one point of a natural rock outcrop. The enclosures connect with a main boundary dyke running NE towards Achins

**Site 12. NC 9516 6380** **Water storage tank**. No archaeological interest.

**Site 13. NC 9494 6397** (SMR NC96SW0009, name: Allt Torrigal , **hut circle**) A hut circle with an internal diameter of 9m with no discernable entrance, probably to the WSW. To the SE is a curving stony bank 13m long and to the SW 10 clearance heaps. Occasional heaps also to the NW. (Photograph)

**Site 14. NC 9529 6413** (SMR NC96SE0033, name: Achins, NSR C, **Hut circle**) A hut circle, 15m diameter with the entrance to the East. Extending west up the slope is a field wall and 70m west is a substantial crescent-shaped pile of cleared stones. (Photograph)



**Site 15. NC 9525 6397 Enclosure.** Just south of the gorse-covered old dyke line and tucked under the crag in an area of bracken is a roughly rectangular enclosure of orthostatic walling approximately 24m N-S. Probably too rectangular to be associated with the hut circle (site 16.) so maybe associated with the farmstead (site 17)

**Site 16. NC 9539 6397** (SMR NC96SE0023, name: Achins, **Hut circle**) A hut circle 7.5m in diameter, with an entrance to the ESE and associated walling to the S and SE. A line of orthostats irregularly spaced run from the hut circle through the rushes to the farmstead (site 17.), with a possible field clearance cairn after 20m and another cairn where this line joins the boundary dyke running N-S. (Photograph)

**Site 17. NC 9545 6384 Farmstead.** 5 buildings and 2 enclosures straddling the dyke running from Braxside to Achins. 4 buildings are aligned approximately E-W. Of these, the northernmost is roughly square, 2m internally, the next is the largest with 3 sections measuring 3m, 4.2m and 5.4m in length. The third is also of 3 sections, 2.5m, 2.5m and 1m in length and the fourth, to the west of the main dyke, is in 2 sections, 1m and 3.5m in length. A fifth building aligned roughly N-S along the line of the dyke measures 5m and 1m internally, the southern section possibly a corn kiln. All the buildings are tumbled rubble and grass-covered but not reduced to their footings. (Photograph)

**Site 18. NC 9548 6374 Sheepwash.** A stone dam across the Braxside Burn with a gap for sluice gates, now removed although their settings are still in place. Repairs and mortaring of the dam bear the inscription 'RT 1954'. South of the area which would have been flooded when the sluice gates were closed are two lengths of drystone walling standing 1.5m high and 2m apart, 4m in length. This was apparently used to dip sheep to wash their fleeces before shearing, the lengths of walling presumably acting as a crush. (Photograph)

**Site 19. NC 9554 6323 Sheepfold.** A D-shaped drystone enclosure with well-made walls and dressed stone gateways. It measures 10m internally along the straight edge and the entrance is at the East of this straight wall. Parallel to the south is another wall forming a corridor with gateways at both ends. A further fallen length of walling extends from its eastern end to the SE for about 5m. (Photograph)

**Site 20. NC 9550 6320** ( SMR NC96SE0022, name: Allt Beinn Ratha, NSR C, **hut circles**) Two hut circles, the first is 20m SW of the corner of the sheepfold (Site 19.). Its banks are stony and well defined, with an entrance to the south. The second circle is 35m south of the first and has heather-covered banks with an entrance to the SW. There are clearance cairns to the south, and extending south of a rocky knoll is a sinuous field boundary. (Photographs)

**Site 21. NC 9550 6310 Structure** (possible) On the bank of Allt Beinn Ratha, two parallel artificial banks forming a possible structure 9m in length and 3m. wide, the banks standing about 1m high and aligned EW, covered in grass, moss and bracken. Where the southern bank is eroded no stones are visible, suggesting that the upper part at least was only of turf construction. On the far bank to the north of this structure are possible traces of lazybed cultivation.

**Site 22. NC 9584 6344 Hut circle and field system.** A hut circle, heather-covered with some stones visible, with an internal diameter of 9m. N-S but 12m. E-W where the circle seems to have been extended outwards. To the east by 50m are a line of 5 clearance cairns. To the SW by 14m. are two field walls, one aligned NW-SE visible only as a low turf-covered bank, the other, set with large stones, forming an L-shape 7mx7m, ending to the SW with a asemi-circle of stones suggesting a small structure about 3m. in diameter. (Photograph)

**Site 23. Centred on NC 960 635** (SMR NC96SE0029, NSR N, NC96SE0056, NSR R, NC96SE0057, NSR C, NC96SE0058, NSR V name: Sandside Burn Complex, **Settlement and field enclosures.**) Four hut circles and several field enclosures have been

recorded for the area covering the entire ridge of grass and rocky outcrops, and the heather slopes immediately to the south, covering in all an area 50m. NNW-SSE by 20m. E-W This rapid survey was unable to distinguish all the features recorded by the previous survey. To the north, heavy farm vehicles have broken the ground considerably, while at the hut circle and enclosure marked C on the plan, a high-voltage pylon is located, one foot having destroyed half of a clearance cairn. The clearest features are to the south, below the last rocky outcrop, where a D-shaped enclosure can be clearly traced, with a hut circle and a smaller enclosure at its southernmost point.  
( Plan B and photograph)

**Site 24. NC 9647 6405** (SMR NC96SE0012, name: The Knowe, NSR C, **hut circle**) The hut circle is only faintly discernable as a platform. Fieldwalls lead away from it to the NW, NE and ESE but become confused with the more rectangular enclosures of the farmsteads (site 25). One probably contemporary wall of stones curves round the knoll to the east of the hut circle.  
(Photograph)

**Site 25. Centred on NC 9655 6410, Farmsteads.** An area of farmsteads and enclosures on the southern part of the Knowes, a grassy ridge with rocky knolls:  
1. at NC 9642 6413 2 rectangular buildings aligned NE-SW, both measuring 8m by 2m. The lower building is better preserved and has an entrance in its SE wall. 2 lines of orthostatic walling extend SE and there are traces of lazybed cultivation to the NW  
2. at NC 9638 6419 four placed stones forming a crescent with an internal diameter of 7m.  
3. at NC 9663 6414 one building measuring internally 12m by 2m aligned NE-SW, beside a line of orthostatic walling running SW to join the enclosure of no.4  
4. at NC9658 6408 two square-ish buildings aligned NE-SW measuring 3m by 2m and 6.5m by 2.5m. A flattened area of enclosure to the SE is defined by orthostatic walling. The northernmost wall travels straight for about 60m before curving south of the sheepfold (site 26)  
5, at NC 9667 6409 one square-ish building measuring 4.2m by 5m attached to a dyke running east to join another dyke running SW from below no. 3.  
All these structures are reduced to their footings and covered in grasses apart from the stretches of orthostatic walling, whose stones stand up to 50cm above ground.(Plan C and photograph)

**Site 26. NC 9659 6394, Sheepfold.**Partly well preserved walling and partly reduced to rubble, circular with an internal diameter of 9m. and an entrance to the ESE  
(Photograph)

**Site 27. NC 967 635** (SMR NC96SE0011, name: Reay Burn, **3 hut circles**) Three clearly defined hut circles on a slight rise to the west of the Reay Burn, measuring internally 8m, 7.5m and 7m. The two southerly have entrances to the SE, the northernmost has no visible entrance. There are 2-3 slight mounds indicating field clearance.

**Site 28. NC 9690 6337, Structures.**On an area of rough grass and bracken bordering on the Reay Burn, grass-covered footings of rectangular structures and dykes connecting with a main boundary dyke running SE from the Knowes. Along the burn the bank has been reinforced with a retaining wall, at one point 1m. high with three courses of large stones. No obvious buildings though the two structures to the NE and the SW may have been small buildings. The large rectangular enclosure measures 6m by 5.5m, the spread of the walls is 2m with seemingly larger piles of rubble or small structures at the NE and SW corners  
(Plan D and photograph)

**Site 29. NC 9697 6333, 2 clearance cairns.**Two apparent field clearance cairns just south of a modern drainage ditch, each measuring 1m across and standing 30cm high.

**Site 30. NC 9710 6322, Farmstead.**Footings of a rectangular enclosure about 19m by 29m surrounding a small rocky knoll and a flat area to the south. Over these footings stand a group of curving walls possibly some form of later sheep fank. Within the enclosure, ESE of the knoll is one rectangular building of two sections measuring internally 4m by 2.6m each. The standing curving walls are tumbled in places, but the rectangular walls would appear to have been robbed down to their footings.  
(Plan E and photograph)

**Site 31. NC 9683 6387, Bridge** on Reay Burn. An obsolete rubble-construction single-arched bridge over the Reay Burn, marking an old route to Milton township and mill (Photograph)

**Site 32. NC 9727 6405, Sheepfank.** At the back of Borlum house farm buildings, extending into the field which may be considered for planting. The fank and crush are constructed of Caithness flagstones. (photograph)

**Site 33. NC 9763 6408, Unroofed Dwelling.** A cottage or cottages probably belonging to Milton township but backing onto the area being considered for planting. Although unroofed the walling is in good condition; cruck slots are visible all along. Two internal and one external gables have fireplaces and chimneys, it is likely that these gables have been rebuilt to accommodate chimneys. The internal gables do not appear to be keyed in to the main housewalls. A back extension to the furthest north section of the building also contains a fireplace and chimney. (photograph)

**Site 34. NC 9764 6370 (SMR NC96SE0015, name: Little Rock, Kerbed Burial Cairn)** It was impossible to make out the features of this cairn, noted on a previous survey, as it is now overgrown with gorse.

**Site 35. NC976 635 (SMR NC96SE0013, name: Borlum Rock Complex, Settlement and field enclosures)** Five hut circles and two enclosures with associated clearance cairns. The two enclosures both make use of the rocky outcrops of Little Rock to complete their D-shape and both have two hut circles breaking their line to their south. These features are being obscured by gorse and bracken. A fifth hut circle under the crags of Borlum Rock, and its associated clearance cairns are concealed under chest-high bracken (Plan F and photograph)

**Site 36. NC 9775 6348 (SMR NC96SE0049, name: Little Rock, stone rows, stone setting and cairn.)** Although recorded on the Highland Council SMR, this is not a convincing site. One definite setting of a stone about 50cm. high but there are no surrounding stones of any size. The site is crossed by an old boundary dyke.

**Site 37. NC 9740 6375 (SMR NC96SE0021, name: Borlum Rock, Burned Mound.)** The mound is visible only as a slight crescent shaped mound about 3m across, slightly more grassy than the surrounding heather slopes. There are no exposed surfaces.

**Site 38. NC 9635 6095 'Stables', Farmstead.** Three buildings, two aligned north-south and a central third aligned east-west forming a 'T' shape extending eastwards. The northernmost building, measuring internally 3m by 2.4m, is roofed with arched corrugated iron sheets but this does not appear to have been the original shape of the gables. The southern gable has collapsed inwards. It is of mortared rubble construction with dressed stone surrounds to doorway and single window. The other two buildings survive only as footings reaching a maximum height of 1 metre. The central building measures internally 6.5m by 1.8m, and the southern building 3.5m by 2m. The area to the east of the northern building and north of the central building has been enclosed on 3 sides by rubble walling. (Photograph)

**Site 39. NC 964 609, Sheepfold.** 23 metres to the SE of site 38 is a ruinous circular sheepfold of drystone construction, with an internal diameter of 10 metres and a metre-wide entrance to the south. Roughly central is a low pile of rubble 2 metres across. The flat ground and possible traces of boundaries suggest a larger rectangular area extending to the south was originally enclosed.

**Site 40. NC 961 607 (SMR NC96SE0079, name: Beinn Ratha, Township of 5 buildings and 2 enclosures)** Not located by this survey due to the impenetrable nature of the forestry plantation, although an enclosure at NC 9616 6077 was located. This site will not be affected by the present phase of planting, but should be taken into consideration if any felling or clearing work is carried out in this existing plantation.



**Site 41.** On the NW slopes of Beinn Ratha and the W slopes of Beinn Ratha Beag are several springs for the water supply to Sandside House, marked by areas of disturbed ground and bracken cover. No archaeological interest.

**Site 42. Dykes.** The whole proposed planting area is covered with obsolete dykes which bear no relationship to the present day pattern of land use. These survive either as vegetation covered footings or as low turf banks showing occasional stones. Two main groupings link, firstly, to the farmsteads, sites 11. and 17., and secondly to the farmstead, site 30. and the structures at site 28.

## **Archaeological conclusions**

Apart from an earlier prehistoric presence indicated by the cairns, sites 9 and 34, the first major phase of settlement indicated in the archaeological record is the Bronze to Iron Age when almost every area of high ground was occupied by small farming settlements, typified by round house (hut circle) dwellings with associated areas of cultivation indicated by field clearance cairns and short irregular stretches of boundary walling. Stock enclosures frequently made use of natural features such as rock outcrops. It would be impossible to date these settlements more precisely without excavation.

The next phase of the archaeological record is marked by the farmsteads and boundary dykes. Before the second half of the 18th century no land was enclosed in Caithness, so it is probable that the construction of these dykes dates to this time. The date of the construction of the farmsteads could not be ascertained without excavation, but the clearance of people from the Sandside Estate is known to have taken place on the 1830s, so the abandonment of these farmsteads is likely to date to then. It is notable that while certain of the farmsteads favoured the higher ground as had the prehistoric settlements, others, sites 17 and 28 are located on low ground which is now, particularly in the case of site 17, waterlogged. This suggests that considerable land drainage must have taken place to render the low ground cultivable and habitable.

It is possible that the small holdings on the Knowes represent an intermediate phase during the clearances, when tenants were moved to less favourable ground while the estate was given over to sheep. The three sizeable and well-constructed sheepfolds within the survey area were possibly constructed at this time when modern methods of sheep management were introduced, as well as the fank constructed on top of the original farmstead at site 30. The sheepwash, site 18, was obviously still in use in the 1950s, although the emphasis of the estate had moved towards sporting activities, as evidenced by the line of grouse butts and the use of the standing farm building at site 38 as stabling, presumably for ghillies' ponies. Probably contemporary with the turning over of the majority of the estate to sheep is the enclosure of the better areas of cultivable land for use by the home farm, still evident in the improved fields surrounded by well-made and repaired drystone dykes. It is worth noting that up to the present day, stone for the construction and repair of these drystone dykes has been taken from obsolete buildings on the estate, so that the reduction of a building to its footings is no indication of antiquity.

## **Recommendations**

All the sites, with the exception of those specified below, should be protected from planting, following the Forest Authority's Forests & Archaeology Guidelines. The sites, with their associated enclosures and field systems, as well as can be defined, should be protected by a 20m. exclusion zone. This will result in certain sites being linked together, ie. sites (4,5,6,7 and 8), sites (19, 20 and 21), sites (22 and 23), and sites (38 and 39)

Action should be taken to clear the gorse in particular and the bracken if possible back to the limits of the exclusion zones and prevent their regeneration, from the following sites in



particular: sites 7, 34 and 35. Once planting has taken place, periodic weeding of all the sites might be necessary to prevent regeneration.

The exceptions to the 20m. exclusion zone are as follows:

1. Sites 32 and 33. are on the very boundary of the proposed planting area and would be adequately protected by a gap of 5m unplanted.
2. Sites 2, 29 and 37 would not appear to be of sufficient archaeological value to merit the full exclusion zone of 20m and would be sufficiently protected for archaeological purposes by a 5m. radius exclusion zone. The decision on these sites would be achieved in consultation with HC Archaeology Service
3. Sites 10,12 and 41 are of no archaeological value. however, should site 10 become redundant as the water storage for Sandside house, it should then be treated as an archaeological site and protected accordingly. It is assumed that planting will take into consideration the springs and pipelines for the water supply
4. Site 42, the boundary dykes, should be treated as archaeological structures and protected from planting to a width of 5m either side

The author is of the opinion that, while the sites are less vulnerable to the potential damage caused by moderate levels of public access than to the present damage of estate vehicles and gorse roots, they are not of sufficient visual impact or rarity to merit taking active steps to encourage visitors to seek them out. It would, however, do no harm to include them in a low key diverse package of information for visitors. Consultation with Highland Archaeology Service would have to take place before any particular sites were chosen to be highlighted.

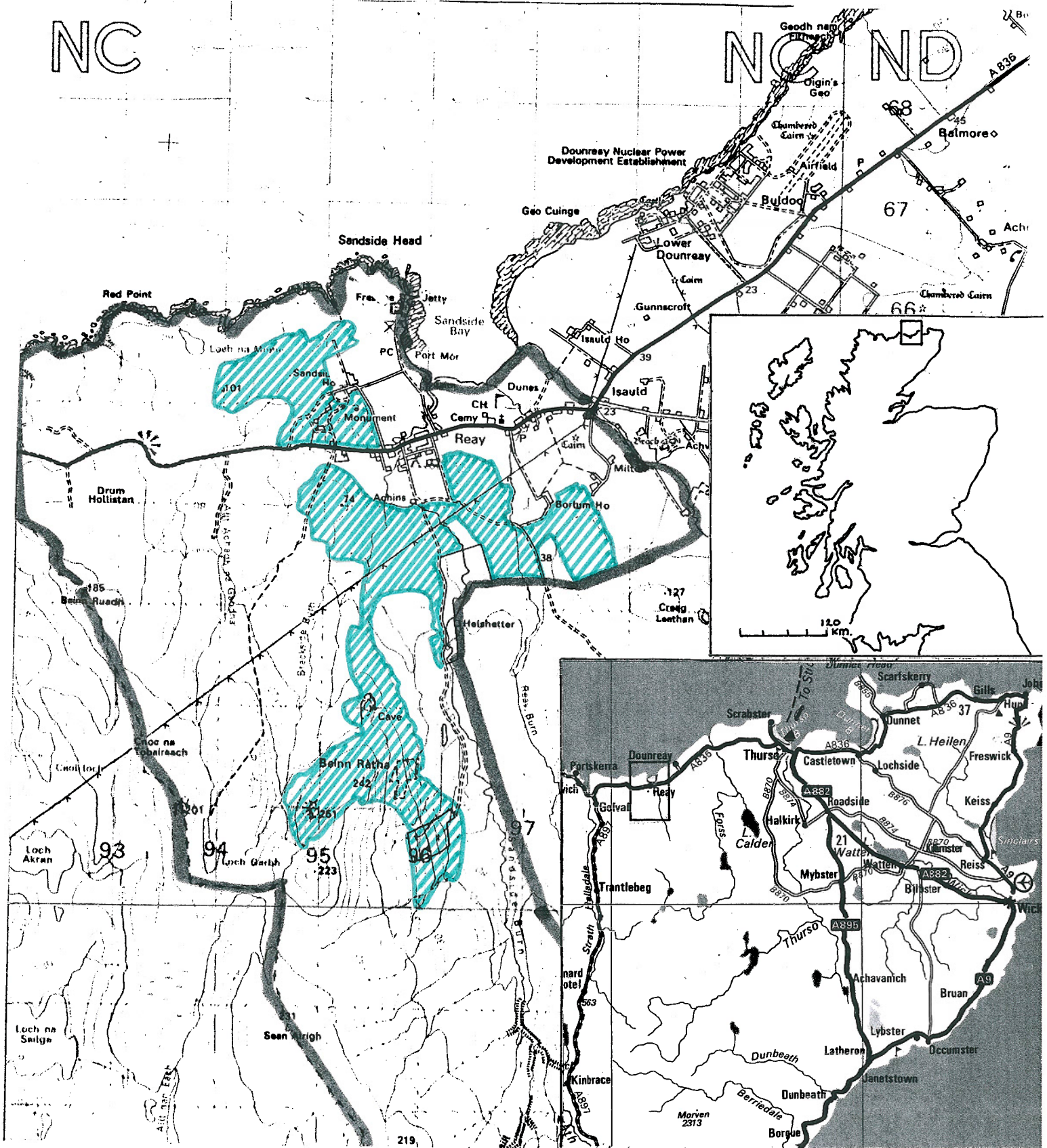
Cathy Dagg  
13th October 1998

#### *Acknowledgements*

*I would like to thank Highland Archaeology Service for permission to reproduce plans A, B and F, and Iain MacIennan Forestry for providing the OS maps.*

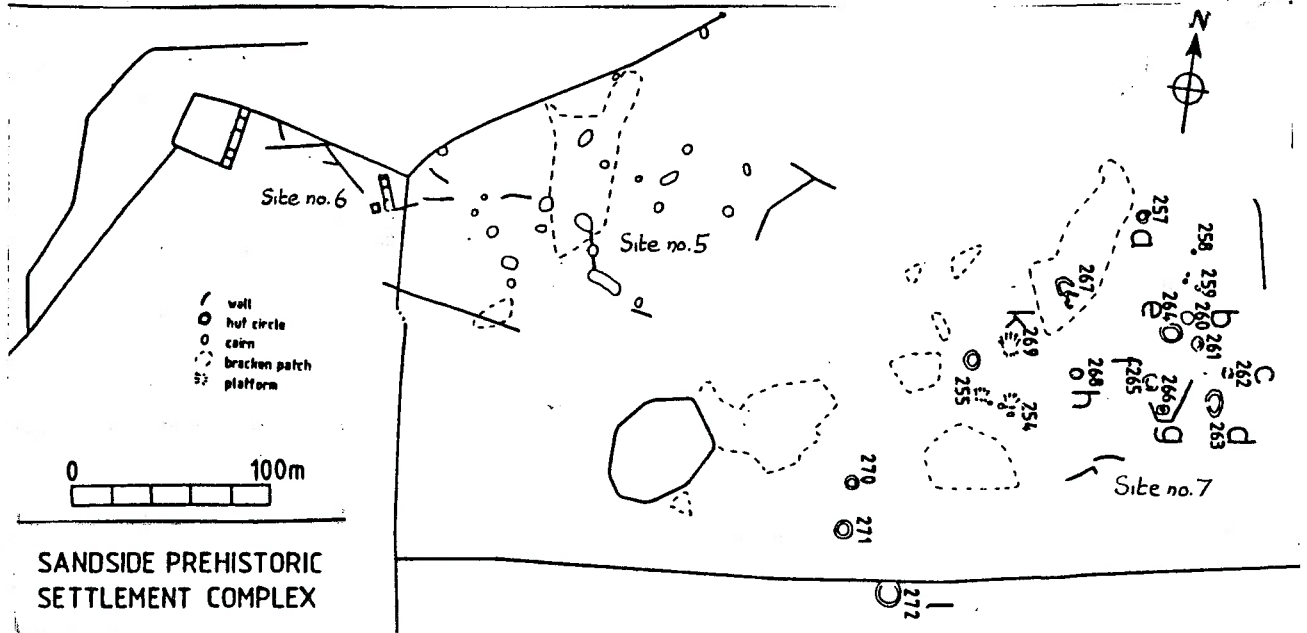
NC

NC ND

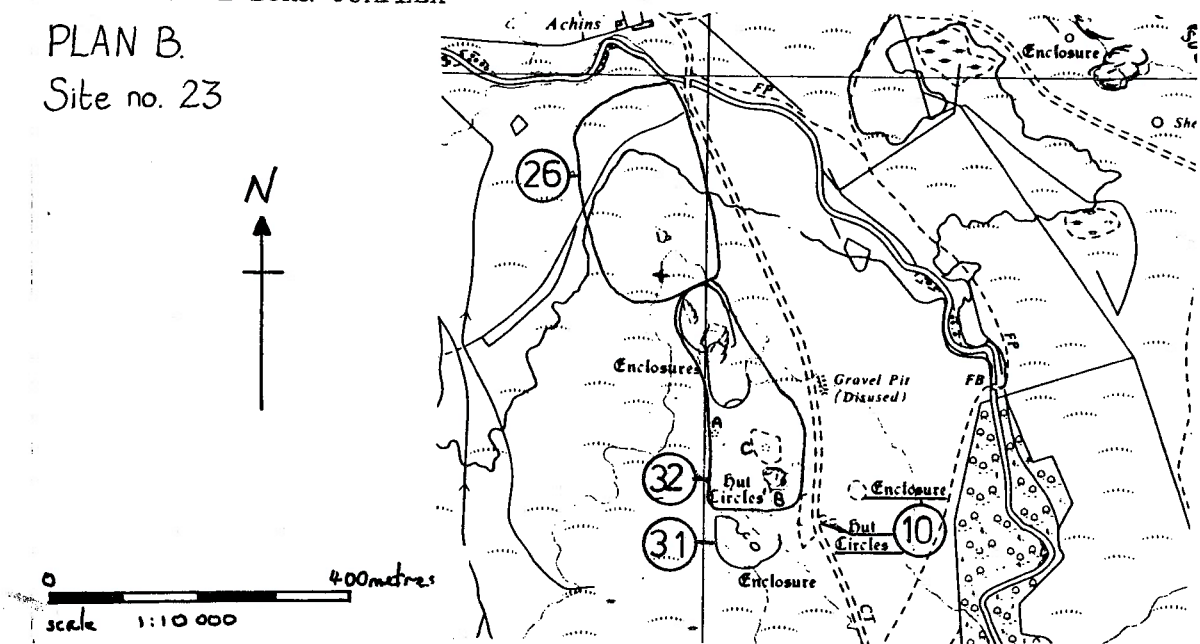


= approximate proposed W.Q.S.

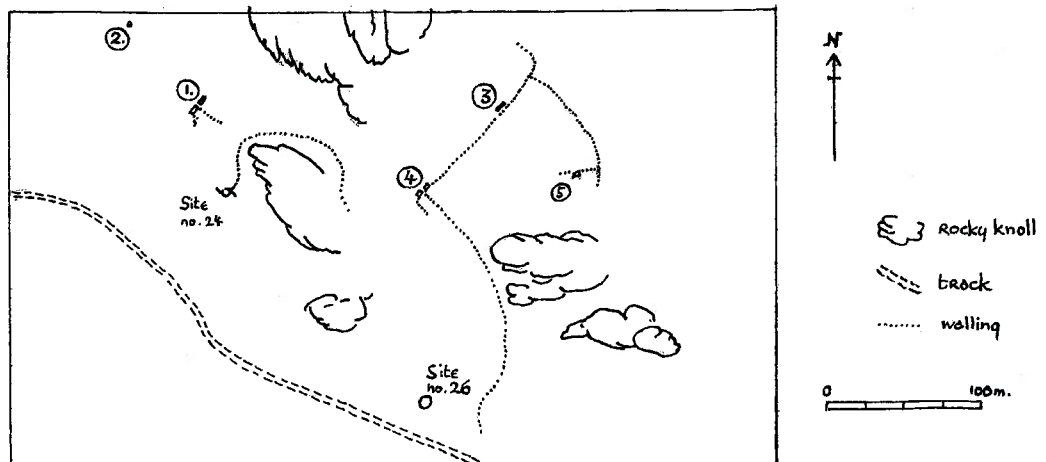
# PLAN A. Site no. 7

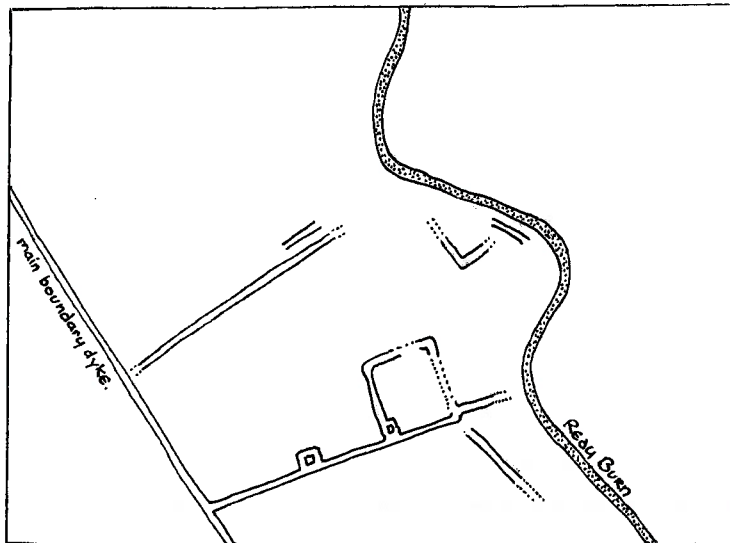


## SANDSIDE BURN COMPLEX PLAN B. Site no. 23

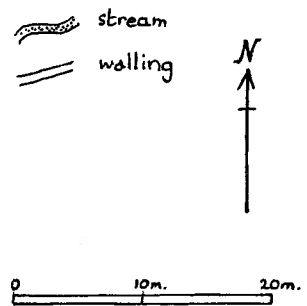


## PLAN C. Site no. 25 The Knowes.

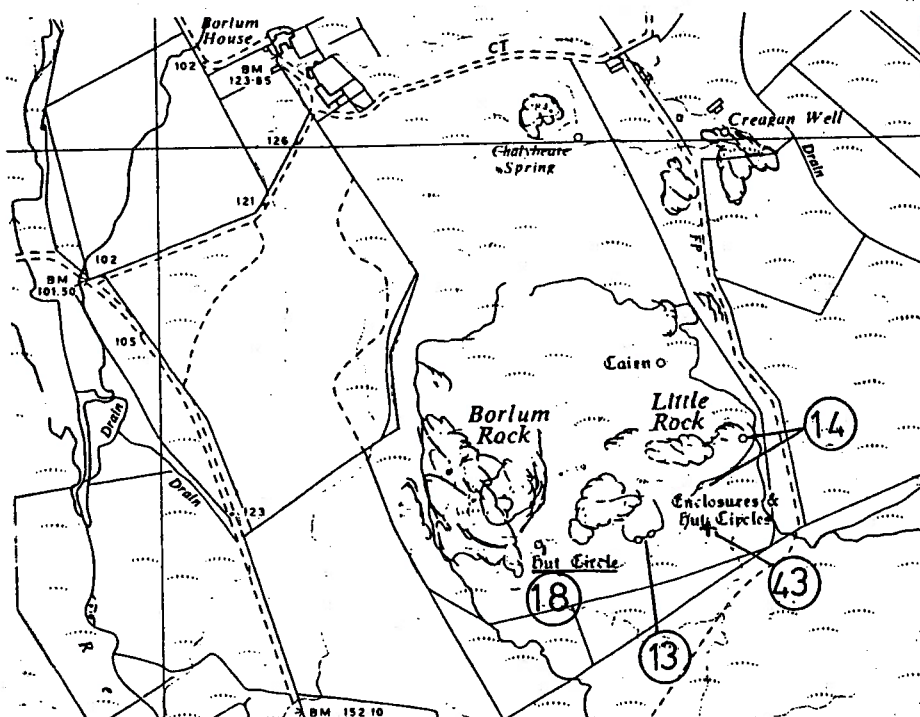
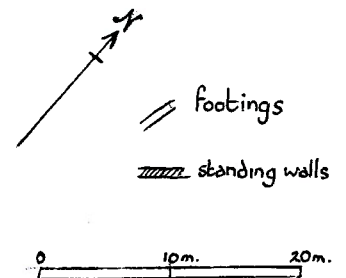
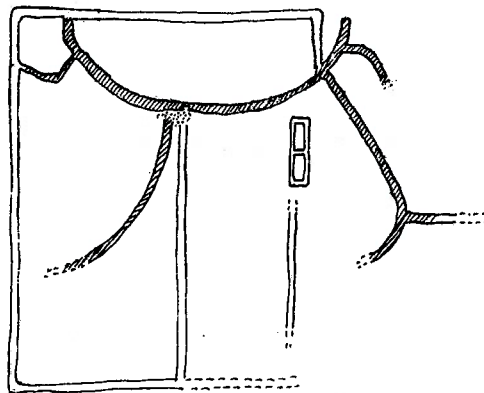




PLAN D.  
Site no. 28.

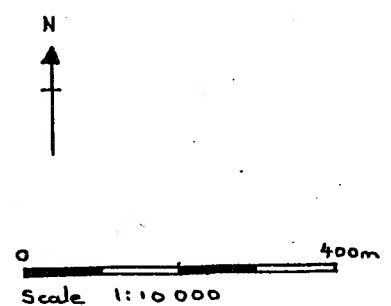


PLAN E.  
Site no. 30



PLAN F  
Site no. 35

Borlum Rock Complex





Site no. 1



Site no. 3



Site no. 4





Sites no. 5+6



Sites no. 7+8



Site no. 7





Site no. 13



Site no. 14



Site no. 16

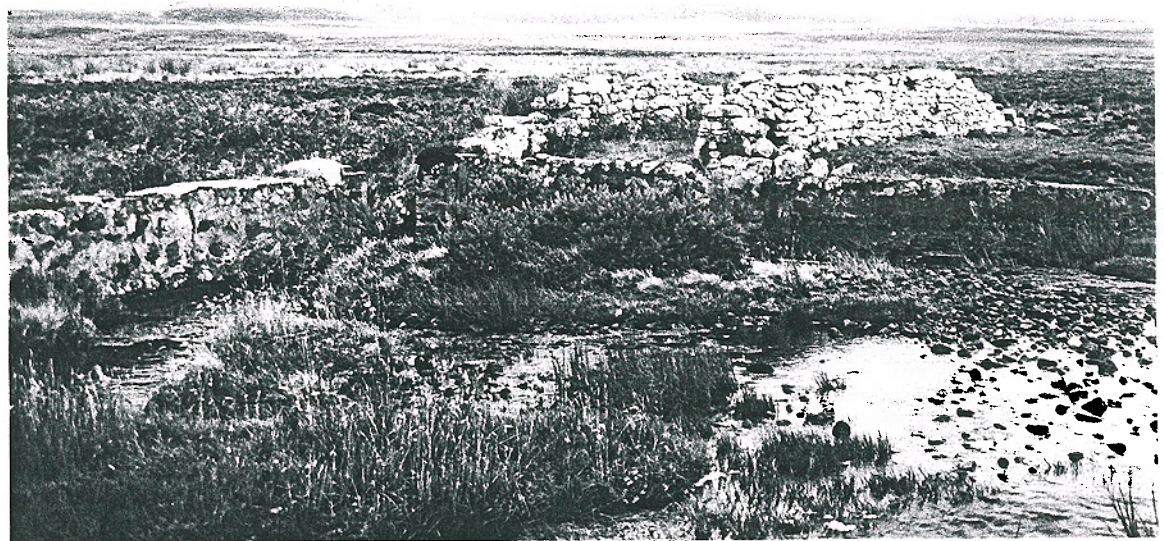




Site no. 17



Site no. 18



Site no. 23





Site no. 19



Site no. 20



Site no. 20





Site no. 22



Site no. 22



Site no. 22





Site no. 25



Site no. 26



Site no. 30





Site no. 31



Site no. 32



Site no. 33





Site no. 35



Site na 35

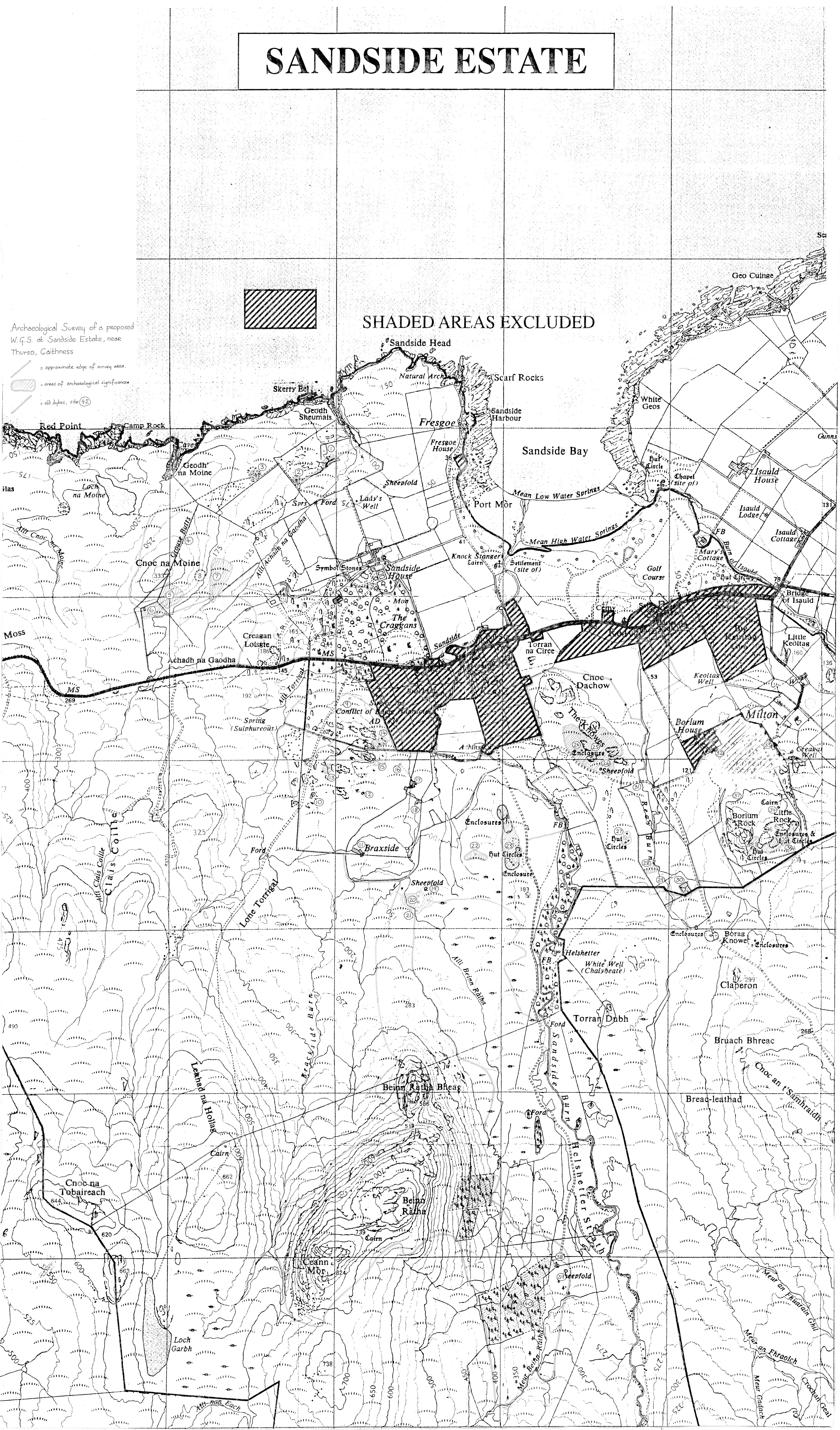


Site no. 38





# SANDSIDE ESTATE



Archaeological Survey of a proposed  
W.G.S. of Sandside Estate, near  
Thurso, Caithness

— = approximate edge of survey area  
▨ = areas of archaeological significance  
—+— = old dykes, site 42

SHADED AREAS EXCLUDED