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Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Rapid Archaeological Survey of proposed Anemometer site, Lairg, Sutherland



Report and Recommendations

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Contents

Contents	2
Figures.....	2
CDROM.....	2
Summary	3
Introduction:.....	3
Site Location and Details:	3
Aims of the Investigation:	5
Method:	5
Desk Based Assessment.....	5
Rapid survey	5
Photographs.....	6
Discussion and Recommendations	7
References.....	7

Figures

Figure 1 General Location	4
Figure 2 Local Location; approx camera locations P1, P2, P3	4
Figure 3 Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition 6"map 1879.	5
Figure 4 Peat cutting from P1	6
Figure 5 Peat cutting from P2, looking towards mast site	6
Figure 6 Peat cutting from P3, looking towards mast site	7
Cover: View from site to East	

CDROM

Contains –

Digital photographs

This report in Adobe Acrobat pdf format

Summary

A rapid archaeological survey was carried out at the site of a proposed wind-speed measuring mast, in response to an archaeological planning condition. The site lies near Lairg in a general area where extensive archaeological landscapes of prehistoric and later date have been recorded.

The proposed mast site and access track were walked and examined for archaeological evidence. There were extensive, though fragmentary, signs of peat cutting but otherwise no significant features or finds were noted. There are no recommendations for further work at this site, but if a wind-farm proposal is developed here, environmental assessment should include archaeology.

Introduction:

Planning permission for two anemometer masts was granted in 2003, subject to a condition requiring a walk-over survey by an archaeologist (*Highland Council 03/00407/FULSU; Condition 4*). Only one of these sites is to be developed at present. The access track and the site itself was visited and checked for archaeological features on 27 September 2004. The top of Cnoc na h-Inghinn was examined taking a radius of about 30m from the proposed mast itself to include locations for bases for supporting cables. The full access route being taken by tractors to move materials onto site for construction was also checked.

The purpose of the work was to establish whether there was any buried archaeology on site, and if so, to obtain an indication of its nature and extent. Archaeological features that might be affected would be marked with flags and avoided during the construction of the mast.

The work was carried out for Highland Archaeology Services Ltd by John Wood MIFA. The weather was cloudy but dry with a steady breeze. Ground conditions were wet underfoot, with the area largely covered by peat. The peat has clearly been cut on the top of the hill for fuel, reducing its depth. Outcrops of rock are visible.

Site Location and Details:

The wind-speed mast site is at Cnoc na h-Inghinn, about 1km south of Tomich near Lairg in Sutherland. It is centred approximately at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NC 612 041, within the local authority area of the Highland Council which is advised on archaeological matters by its Archaeology Unit staff based within the Council's Planning and Development Service (HCAU)

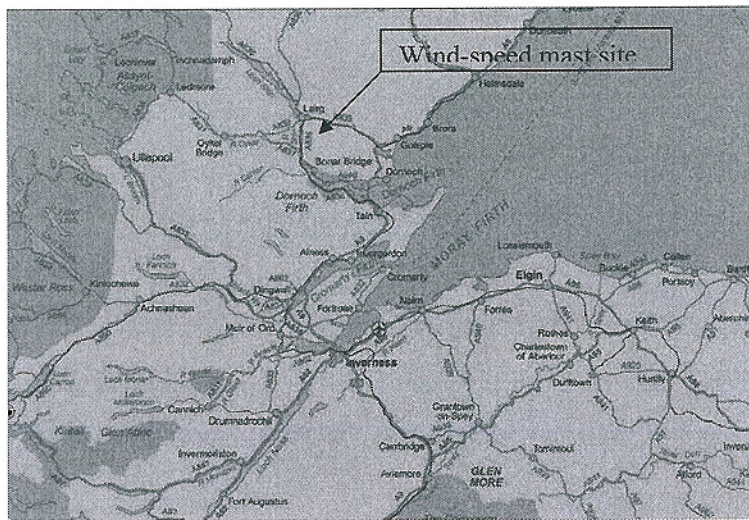


Figure 1 General Location

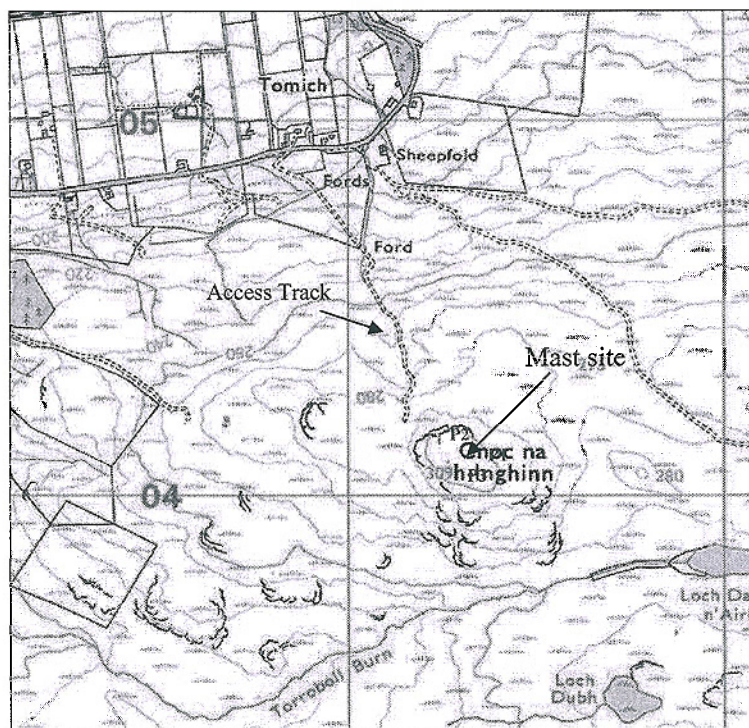


Figure 2 Local Location; approx camera locations P1, P2, P3

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Aims of the Investigation:

- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeologically significant remains
- To mark off any sensitive features on the ground with flags to ensure they are not damaged during construction work.
- To report the results

Method:**Desk Based Assessment**

The first edition Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map (1879), the National Monuments Record, Historic Scotland Listed Buildings Record and Scheduled Monument Record, and the Highland Sites and Monuments Record were all checked on-line. No archaeological features were noted.

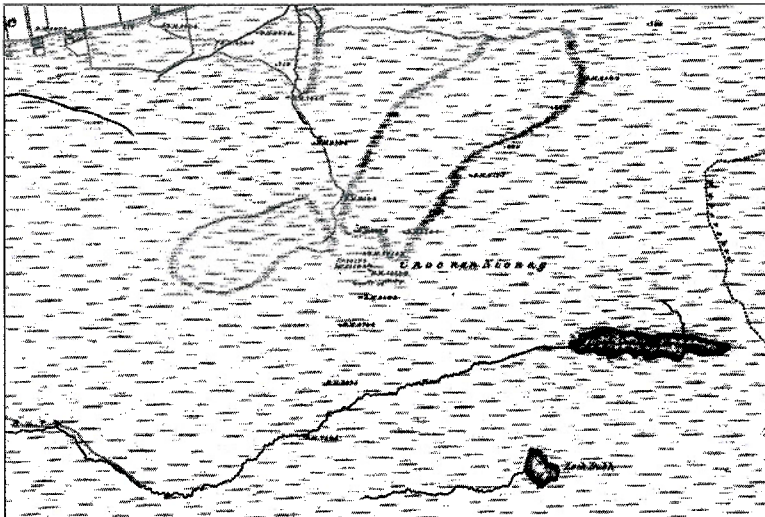


Figure 3 Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition 6" map 1879.
(Not to scale)

Rapid survey

The site was visited on 27 September 2004. DGPS equipment, canes and flags were carried to record and mark any archaeological sites but in the event these were not necessary. The top of Cnoc na h-Inghinn and the well-defined access track were inspected, and the proposed mast site and stay anchor locations were checked with staff on site. Extensive shallow peat cuttings and eroded, former peat banks were encountered on the top of the hill. The track is

shown on the 1879 map and was no doubt used to carry peats. It is expected to be used to access the wind-speed mast site.

No other upstanding features were noted anywhere on the site.

Photographs

Photographs were taken from the approximate locations P1, P2, P3 shown in Fig 2 above.



Figure 4 Peat cutting from P1



Figure 5 Peat cutting from P2, looking towards mast site



Figure 6 Peat cutting from P3, looking towards mast site

Discussion and Recommendations

The lack of visible archaeological evidence does not of itself rule out the possibility that buried features could be present. In particular there is some potential in peatland areas for buried prehistoric features that predate the peat formation. However the extensive peat-cuttings in this area have reduced the peat depth considerably and there are bare rock areas present.

There were no finds.

There are no recommendations for further work at this site, but if a wind-farm proposal is submitted environmental assessment should include archaeology, given the undoubted archaeological importance of the wider area.

References

SOEND 1994 **National Planning Policy Guidance 5: Archaeology and Planning**
SOEND 1994a **Planning Advice Note 42: Archaeology and Planning**

www.rcahms.gov.uk
www.old-maps.co.uk
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