

**Report of Archaeological Desktop
&
Walkover Survey
Melvich 81, Melvich, Sutherland, Highland.
Centred at NC 882/637**



Client: Fountains Forestry Ltd

**By
Stuart Farrell
B.A A.I.F.A F.S.A.Scot.
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Cover- Ruined croft directly East of access point.

Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Fountains Forestry Ltd in October 2010 to undertake an archaeological desktop and walkover survey for a block of proposed woodland at 81 Melvich, Melvich, Sutherland, Highland.

Work revealed two previously unrecorded archaeological sites to include a structure and remnants of a field boundary, both possibly related to the adjacent Melvich Township.

A number of recommendations have been made in relation to the proposed scheme.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological desktop and walkover survey conducted for Fountains Forestry Ltd for a block of proposed forestry at 81 Melvich, Melvich, Sutherland, Highland.

The fieldwork was conducted on the 4th of October 2010.

2. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

- Mr. Iain Imlack of Fountains Forestry Ltd;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

Stuart Farrell
39a Park Street
Nairn
Highland
IV12 4PP

Figure 1 – Site Location.

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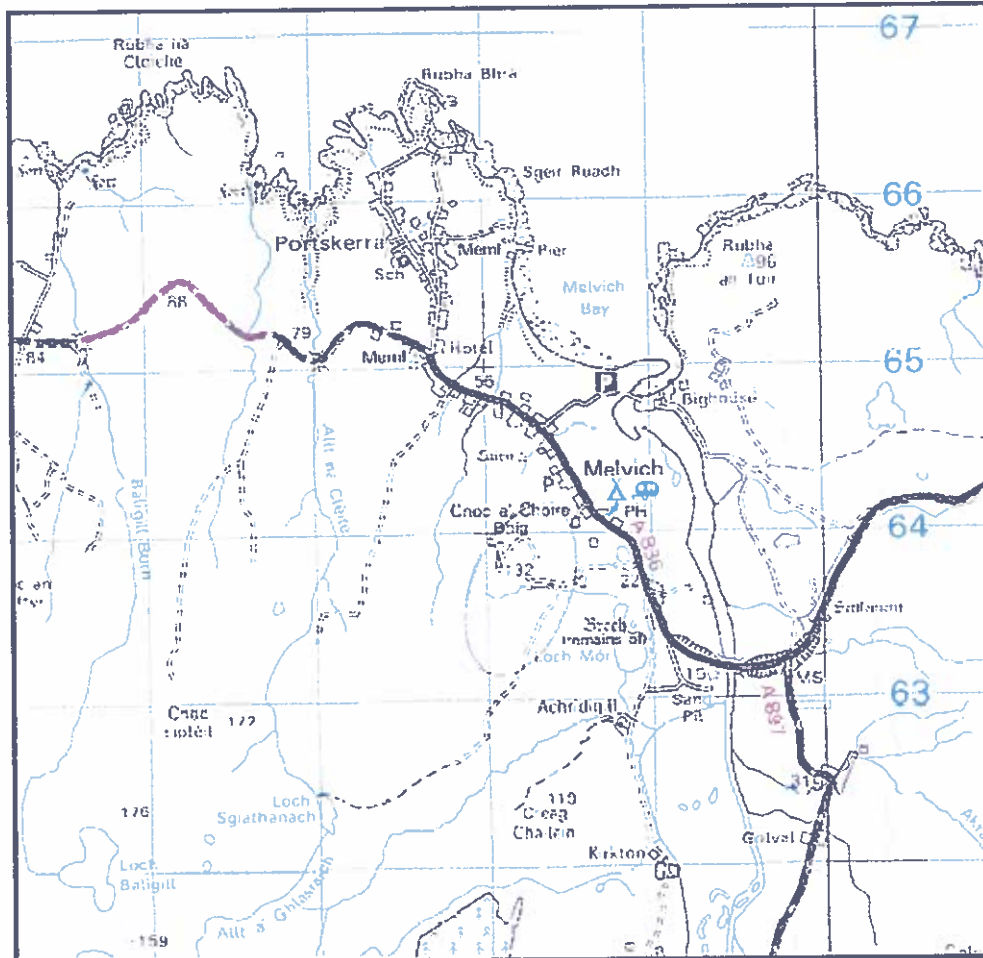


Figure 2 – Site Location 1:5000.
 © Fountains Forestry Ltd

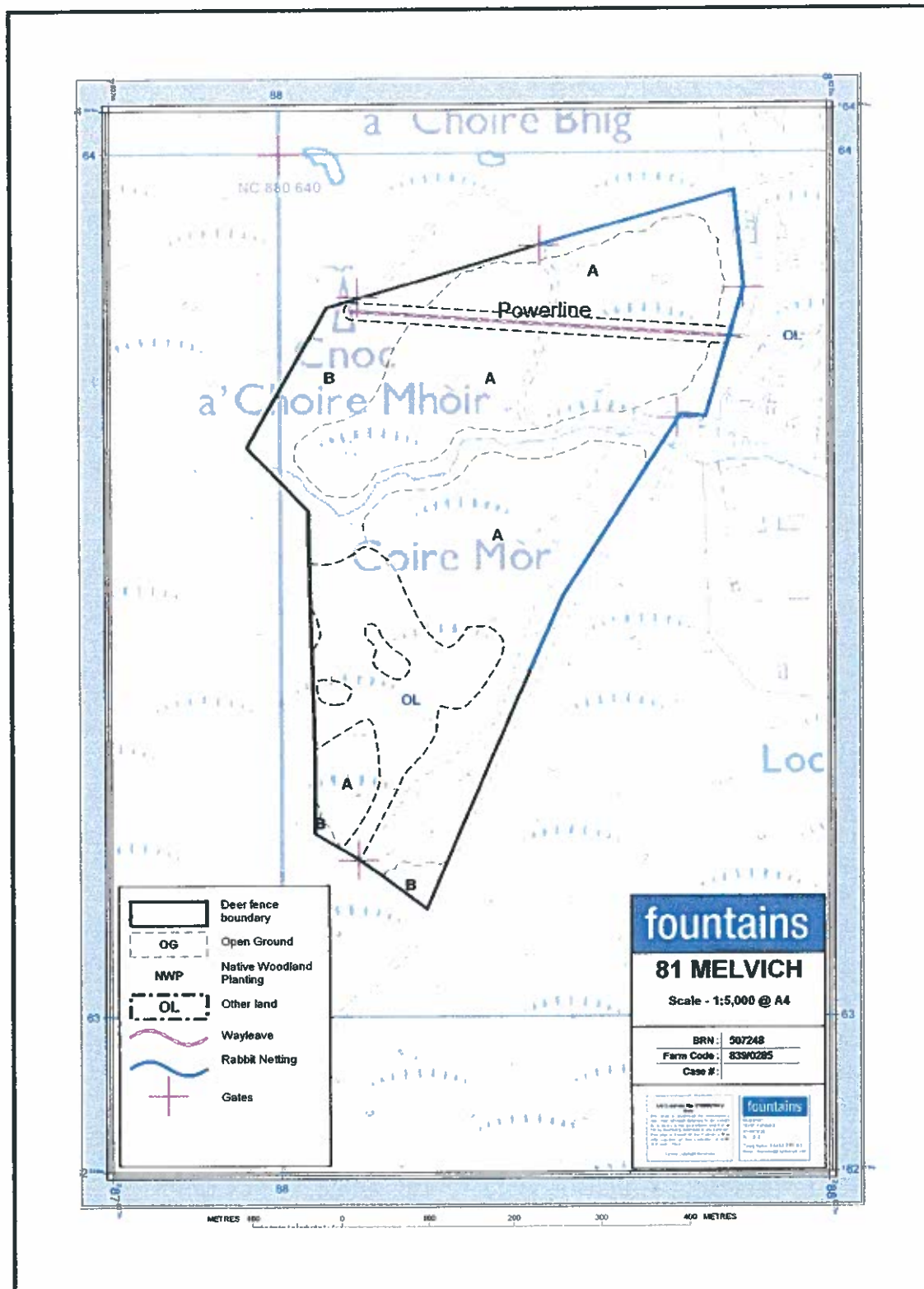


Figure 4 – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1876.
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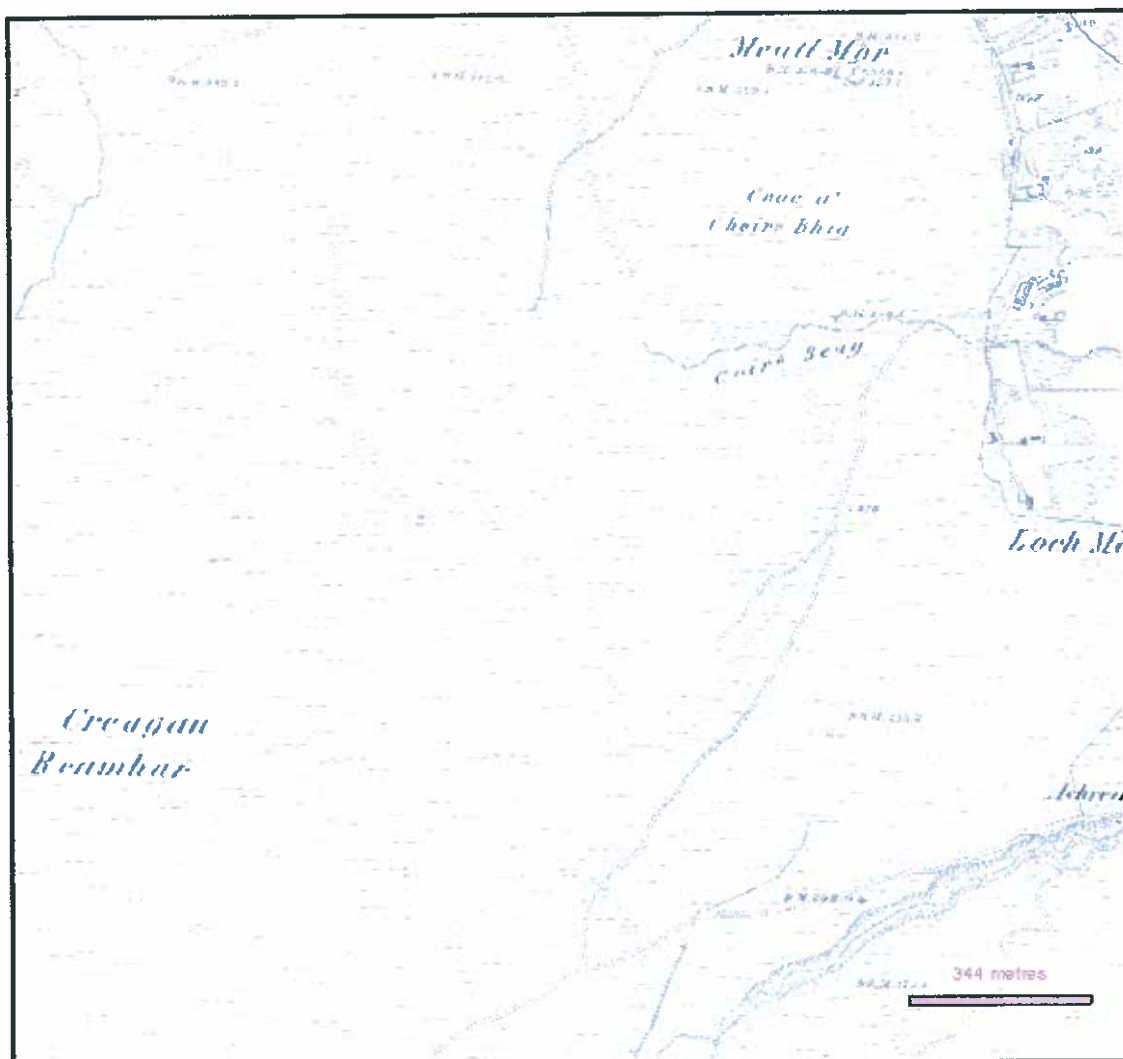
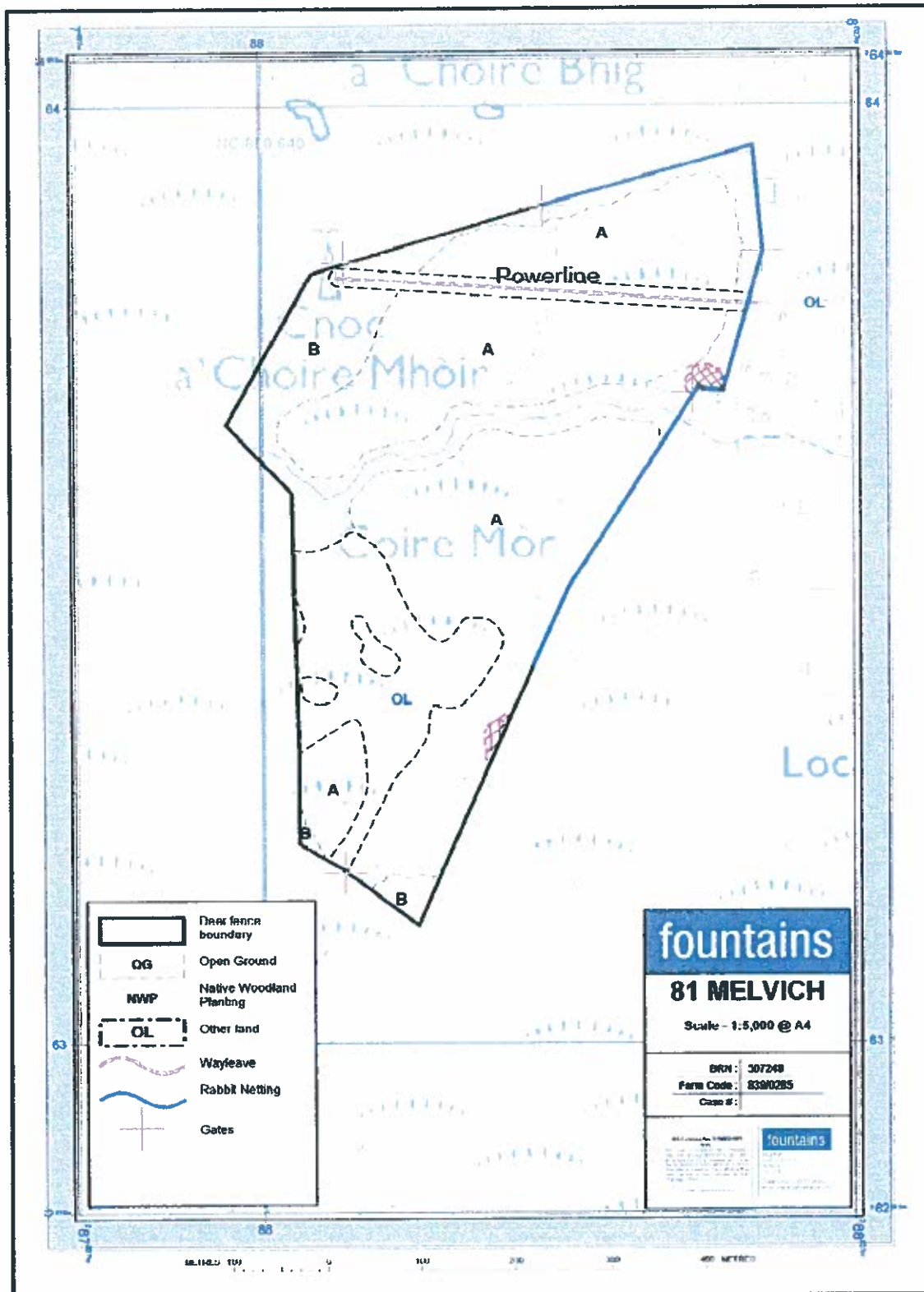


Figure 5 – Areas Recommended for Exclusion.
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3. Objectives

To conduct a desktop and walkover survey to record any archaeological features to the block of proposed forestry. This survey to follow those guidelines as proposed by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 1999); and those of the Forestry Commission (FC, 1995).

4. Archaeological Survey

Desktop & Walkover Results

A desktop survey was conducted using the following sources:

- Highland Council Historic Environment Record;
- National Monuments Record of Scotland, Edinburgh;
- National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Maps);
- Local archives.

Map coverage was limited to the area of interest, as the 1st edition OS of 1876 was almost the same as the 2nd edition of 1906 and little survey work has been carried out in detail in the 20th century, with the next edition being the early 1960's. Early historical maps of the area do not provide enough detail for the area of forestry. Map coverage shows only open ground.

Limited archaeological survey work has previously been conducted to the area of forestry; work by Cathy Dagg (2001) for a new water main noted the buildings to the East of the forestry scheme as part of a desk-based assessment.

Currently no archaeological sites are recorded to the area in Highland Council's Historic Environment Record or the National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE or PASTMAP databases.

The following archaeological sites were to be found in or close to the forestry block. Grid references on-site were obtained using a Garmin II GPS using OS data. Sites are as follows:

HER – Highland Council Historic Environment Record
NMRS - National Monuments Record of Scotland
N/a – not available

Recommendations are given after each site.

1 – Melvich
HER – MHG 17818
NMRS – NC86SE 24
Grid Ref: NC 8842/6455
Type – Township

Noted in HER and NMRS of 'A crofting township comprises 83 roofed and 2 unroofed buildings as depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Sutherland 1878, sheet x). 45 roofed and 33 unroofed buildings are shown on the current OS 1:10,560 map (1962). Information from RCAHMS 9 August 1995.'

Walkover reveals the area of proposed forestry is on a steep slope overlooking the township, with at least 3 ruined buildings and walls being visible outside the existing fence line.

No recommendations to be made, as site is outwith boundary of scheme.

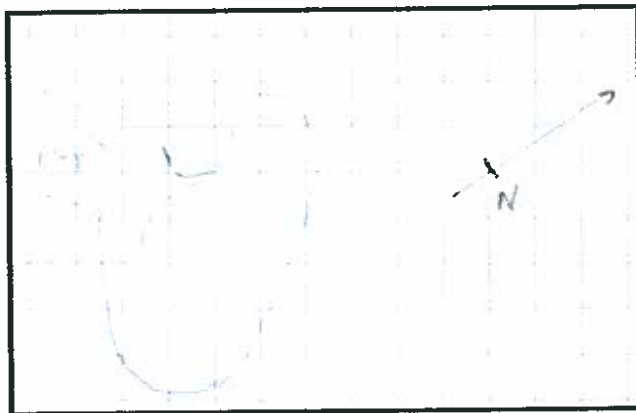
2 – Melvich

HER – N/a

NMRS – N/a

Grid Ref: NC 88467/63689

Type – Structure, Possible Cairn



Walkover reveals odd shaped structure situated close to existing gate at 223ft (EPE 15ft) possibly a cairn either reused or partly robbed out. It measures 10m EW by 6.5m NS and visible to the S to a height of 1m rising to a height of about 2m to the centre. Damage to W side possibly by quarrying, also a ramp to W. Eroded on E side by burn/drainage.

Recommend that site be excluded from proposed scheme and 20m wide exclusion area be put in place.

3 – Melvich

HER – N/a

NMRS – N/a

Grid Ref: NC 88246/63321

Type – Field Wall

Walkover reveals corner of field wall at 369ft (EPE 16ft) aligned N-S, to S it runs c20m to track (as shown on OS map) it also runs NE for c25m and is lost in heather. It is 1m wide and up to 0.3m high. It lies adjacent to a path/track which is also shown on OS map. The path/track looks modern.

Recommend that site to be given 20m exclusion area.

The following site is recorded in the vicinity in Highland Council HER and CANMORE but the grid reference may be incorrect.

4 – Melvich

HER – MHG 9695

NMRS – NC86SE 15

Grid Ref: NC 88/64

Type – Socketed Bronze Axehead

Noted in HER and NMRS of 'A decorated LBA socketed axe was found on 'the Sutherland - Caithness border' in 1961. (The map sites the find to approximately the Melvich area. (NC 88 64).'

No recommendations to be made, true location unknown.

5. Conclusions

Overall the sites revealed probably relate to a former landscape related to the nearby Melvich Township though they seem to have been abandoned in the early 20th century.

Any unexpected archaeological discoveries made during forestry operations should be notified to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

6. Archive

A copy of this report is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record of Scotland in Edinburgh.

7. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

8. References

Dagg, C (2001) Delta North Project, Archaeological Desk-based Assessment – Revised Routes. Unpublished report – copy held in HCAU EMG 648.

Forestry Commission (1995) Forests & Archaeology Guidelines. Forestry Commission. Edinburgh.

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE entry for NC86SE15.

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 10 Sutherland of 1876.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 10 Sutherland of 1906.

Ordnance Survey map NC86SE 1:10,560 of 1962-64.

Ordnance Survey map NC86SE of 1977 1:10,000.

Top: Plate 1 – View of Melvich Township (site 1) from NE corner of scheme facing NE.
Bottom: Plate 2 – View of Melvich Township (site 1) from NE corner of scheme facing NE.



Top: Plate 3 – View of site 2 facing E – Scales 2m.
Bottom: Plate 4 – View of site 3 facing S – Scales 2m & 1m.



Photo Register

- 1 – View of site 2 facing E – scales 2m.
 - 2 – View of site 2 facing E – scales 2m.
 - 3 – View of site 3 facing SW – scales 2m & 1m.
 - 4 – View of site 3 facing S – scales 2m & 1m.
 - 5 – View of site 3 facing S – scales 2m & 1m.
 - 6 – View of site 3 facing S – scales 2m & 1m.
 - 7 – View of scheme facing N.
 - 8 – View of scheme facing SSW.
 - 9 – View of township from NE corner.
 - 10 – View of township from NE corner.
 - 11 – View of township from NE corner.
 - 12 – View of building E of access track.
 - 13 – View of building E of access track.
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