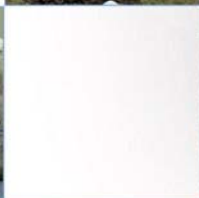
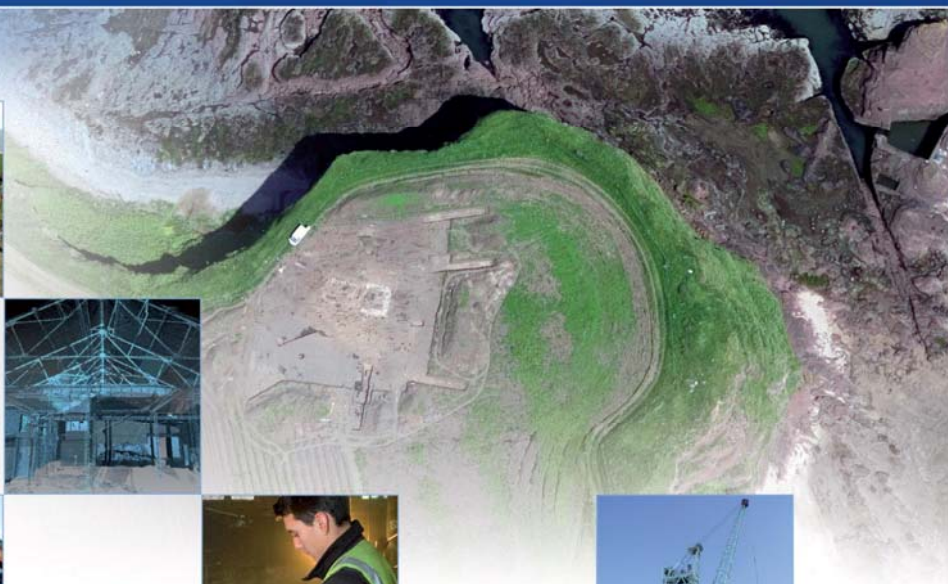


Erection of Four Houses Land to South of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe Archaeological Survey Report

AOC 70193

July 2017



Erection of Four Houses, Land to South of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe Archaeological Survey Report

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Abstract

This report details the results of a desk-based assessment and archaeological survey of the former site of the Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre located to the south of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe.

The survey was undertaken on 2nd June 2017. Eighteen individual archaeological features were recorded. The majority of the features were located under vegetation of varying densities, which made survey difficult in places.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological survey of a proposed development site for four houses on land located to the south of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe on the west side of the A832 was conducted on 2nd June 2017 on behalf of Fiona Tyers. The site forms part of the former Highland Fieldcraft Centre, a WWII training camp. The purpose of the survey was to provide an assessment of the character and extent of the site and to create a detailed record of the site prior to development works.
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of the Highland Council. The fieldwork was specified by the Historic Environment Team (planning reference 16/04595/FUL) in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011). The desk-based research was carried out in order to provide a detailed study of the site for the provision of information for an on-site interpretation panel. The walkover survey was undertaken to record the location of the remains of the Highland Fieldcraft Centre prior to any development taking place.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A development of four houses (Planning Reference 16/04595/FUL) is proposed for land to the south of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe, an area marked as the location of the former Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre, on the west side of the A832 (**Figure 1**).
- 2.2 The development is located on part of the site of the former Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre, which was one of the main residential bases for the military presence in the area during World War II when Loch Ewe was a strategic naval port. The development site overlies a number of concrete plinths and paths that connected the former timber buildings and Nissen huts to the Communications Building (still surviving to the south) and the Garrison Theatre (now replaced by the Community Hall). In order to protect and promote the archaeological and historic interest of the site, an archaeological study by way of archival research and measured survey was required. The results of the archival research and measured survey are to inform the production of an interpretation panel to be erected on the site.

3.0 Site Location

- 3.1 The development site is centred on NGR NG 85625 80626. It lies to the south of St Maelrubhas Close and to the west of the A832 within Poolewe. The site occupies a relatively flat area of ground, which is extremely overgrown with trees, bramble patches and high grass.

4.0 Desk-based Assessment

4.1 Methodology

- 4.1.1 A desk-based assessment of records held at Gairloch Museum was conducted on 2nd June 2017 in order to research the site with a view to producing an account of the site's functions, uses and significance both locally and within a wider national context. An online search was also conducted, which ascertained that although further records are held by the Scottish War Museum they are not openly accessible.

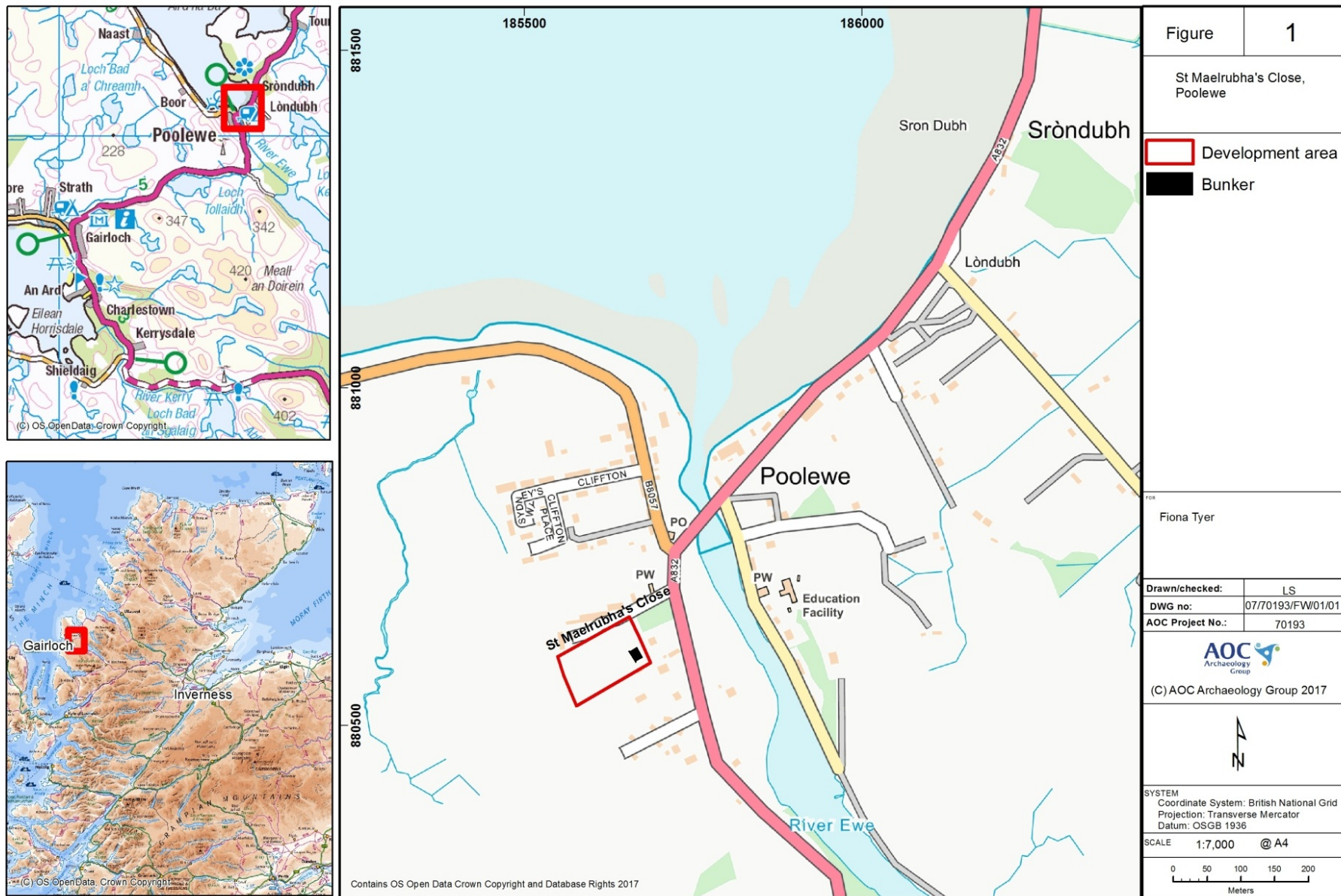


Figure 1: Site location

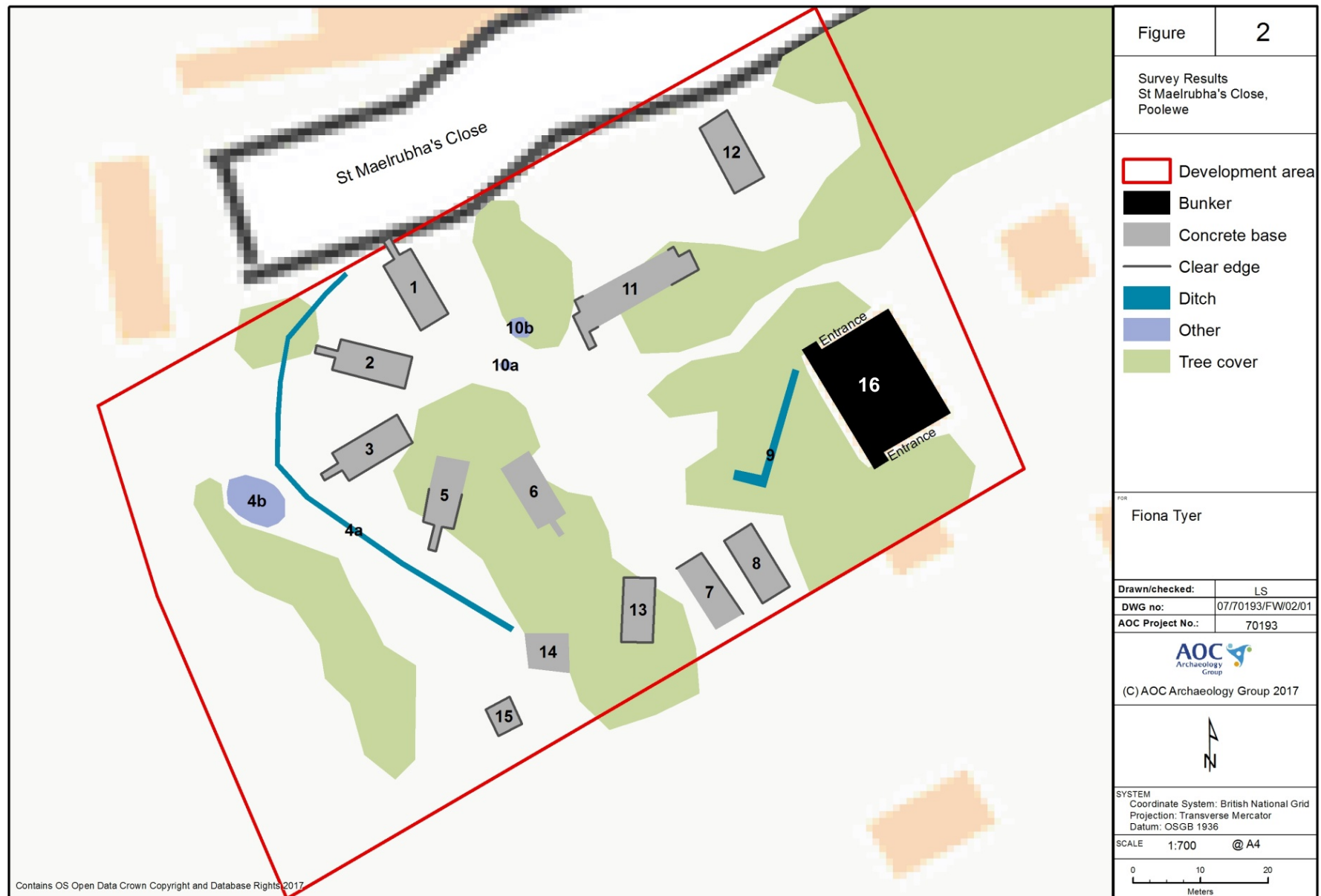


Figure 2: Location of the archaeological features

4.2 Aerial Imagery

- 4.2.1 Satellite imagery was consulted on Google Maps 2017 (online) and, although the site is clearly overgrown with vegetation and mature trees, several footings of buildings are visible. The current landowner has already created a record of the site with aerial drone photography.
- 4.2.2 Historical aerial imagery was consulted online on 31 July 2017 at the National Centre for Aerial Photography (NCAP). A 1973 image (**Plate 1**) clearly shows the footprint of the arc of 5 platforms, the faint bases of the other platforms and the bunker to east.

5.0 Survey Methodology

- 5.1 The archaeological survey was conducted on 2nd June 2017. The dense vegetation cover of trees, high grass, moss and bramble patches made the edges of building bases hard to discern, although concrete could be felt underfoot.
- 5.2 The survey was undertaken using a Trimble Geo-XR Rover capable of centimetre accuracy. Details of sites were recorded using written records and digital photography where possible.

6.0 Results

6.1 Historical Background

- 6.1.1 Early in 1943, the War Office was concerned at the failure rate of young candidates at Officer Cadet Training Units. In consultation with Dr Kurt Hahn, the founder of Gordonstoun, Lord Rowallan was asked to set up a unit to instil leadership into potential officers classified as 'not yet mature enough for commissions'. The Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre was established in May 1943 at Glenfeshie in the Cairngorms. Glenfeshie can become impassable in winter, so, by the winter of 1943, Poolewe had been chosen as the ideal coastal base with its mix of sea and mountains (Chadwick 2014, 85; The Scotsman, undated).
- 6.1.2 The training programme was designed to be progressive starting with hill walking, gentle mountain exercises, canoeing, abseiling, and other tests of personal initiative such as all-night exercises using the stars as guidance and over-night camping without tents. Self discipline was the order of the day and it was policy to brave the cold waters of adjacent lochs and the sea for health benefits. In his initial address to the cadets, Lord Rowallan said that these exercises were designed to give them a belief in themselves and to illustrate what they were capable of doing when put to the test and stretched to the limit (Carruthers undated). The motto was 'Bash on and shut up' (Barnes-Gorell 1944).
- 6.1.3 The cadets slept in wooden beds in quite comfortable wooden huts rather than more basic bunk beds in Nissen huts. They were able to spend time within the community, visiting the YMCA hostel where they could access books, write letters and eat (Baldwin 1944). The Pool House Hotel served as an officers' mess (Press & Journal 1982). At the end of each ten week programme, each company put on a show to which the general public were invited to attend.
- 6.1.4 The cadets present at the camp in February 1944 were involved in the rescue of the crew of the American Liberty ship, William H Welch, which had foundered on a rock half a mile offshore in a 40 mile per hour gale. They spent the day scaling the cliffs, battling against the elements, recovering victims and carrying them on improvised stretchers over the rough terrain (Chadwick 2014, 95).

6.2 Survey Results

- 6.2.1 Eighteen individual sites were recorded within the development area consisting of thirteen concrete bases, two ditches, a pit and a mound (**Figure 2; Plates 2-6**). Sites 1-3 measured 12m x 5m with a small extension at one end; thick vegetation made complete survey of sites 5-6 difficult, but these appeared to be the same in terms of shape and size. Likewise sites 7-8 and 12-13 were all rectangular, measuring approximately 12m x 5m. Site 11 measured 21m x 6m with irregularly shaped ends, but vegetation cover made these difficult to discern accurately. Sites 14 and 15 comprised smaller bases measuring 8m x 6m and 5m x 4m respectively. A description of all the features is contained in the Gazetteer of Sites (Appendix 3).
- 6.2.2 In the southeast corner of the site, surrounded by thick vegetation and trees was a brick-built bunker, Site 16, with a flat roof measuring 18m NNW-SSE by 14m and approximately 4m high. The building had two protruding porch-like entrances at its northwest and southwest corners. A third entrance (big enough for a vehicle) was built into the north wall and was partly below ground level. A sloping, dug track led out from this entrance (**Plates 7-8**).



Plate 1: Aerial image from 22 August 1973 (National Centre for Aerial Photography), image no. NCAP-000-000-192-336



Plate 2: Aerial drone photograph of the proposed site, with the concrete platforms clearly visible (provided by Fiona Tyers)



Plate 3: Site 1, facing NNW



Plate 4: Site 8, facing SE



Plate 5: Site 12, facing N



Plate 6: Site 13, facing S



Plate 7: View over the brick bunker, Site 16, facing S



Plate 8: View over the brick bunker, Site 16, facing WNW

7.0 References

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The Scotsman undated. Lord Rowallan: An appreciation. Gairloch Museum record 24j (ii) d/1

Land to the South of St Maelrubhas Close, Poolewe Archaeological Survey Report

Section 2: Appendices

Appendix 1 List of Survey Photographs

Photo No.	Site No.	Description	Direction Facing	Date
1	1	Concrete footing of building 12m x 5m with 3.5m x 1m extension at the NNW end	NNW	02/06/2017
2	2	Concrete footing of building 12m x 5m with 3.5m x 1m extension at WNW end	ESE	02/06/2017
3	3	Concrete footing 12m x 5m	SW	02/06/2017
4	4a	Ditch 0.75m wide and 0.5m deep aligned SE-NW	SE	02/06/2017
5	4a	Close-up of the ditch	S	02/06/2017
6	4b	A pit 10m x 7m and up to 1m deep, filled with terram	S	02/06/2017
7	5	Concrete footing of building 6m x 5m with 4m x 1m extension at SSW end	S	02/06/2017
8	6	Concrete footing 12m x 5m with 4m x 1m extension at SE end	SE	02/06/2017
9	13	Concrete footing 12m x 5m	S	02/06/2017
10	13	Concrete footing 12m x 5m	S	02/06/2017
11	7	Concrete footing 13m x 5m	SE	02/06/2017
12	8	Concrete footing 12m x 5m	SE	02/06/2017
13	9	Ditch	NNE	02/06/2017
14	9	Ditch terminates in low corrugated iron structure at SSW end	W	02/06/2017
15	10	Grassy mound surrounding a round concrete square	WNW	02/06/2017
16	11	Concrete base 21m x 1.6m	NE	02/06/2017
17	12	Concrete base with raised kerb 12m x 5m	NNE	02/06/2017
18	12	Concrete base with raised kerb 12m x 5m	NW	02/06/2017
19	12	Concrete base with raised kerb 12m x 5m	N	02/06/2017
20	12	Concrete base with raised kerb 12m x 5m	N	02/06/2017
21	-	General view of the site	SW	02/06/2017
22	16	Bunker	SE	02/06/2017
23	16	Bunker	S	02/06/2017
24	16	Bunker	SW	02/06/2017
25	16	Bunker	WNW	02/06/2017
26	16	Bunker	NE	02/06/2017
27	7, 8, 13	View over the site	SSW	02/06/2017
28	-	Panorama of the SW end of the development site	WSW	02/06/2017
29	14	Overgrown Concrete base 8m x 6m	NE	02/06/2017
30	15	Heavily overgrown concrete base 5m x 4m	NE	02/06/2017
31	1-3	General view over the site	S	02/06/2017

Appendix 2 Gazetteer of Sites

Site Number	Site Type	Site Name	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Photo Number	Easting	Northing
1	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Partially overgrown concrete footing 12m x 5m with an extension 3.5m x 1m at the NNW end.	NNW-SSE	Degraded	WWII	1	185593	880625
2	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete footing 12m x 5m with an extension 3.5m x 1m at the WNW end.	WNW-ESE	Degraded	WWII	2	185583	880609
3	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Overgrown concrete footing 12m x 5m with an extension 3.5m x 1m at the NNW end.	WSW-ENE	Degraded	WWII	3	185584	880592
4a	Ditch	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	A ditch measuring 0.75m wide and 0.50m deep with square, straight sides.	-	Degraded	WWII	4-5	185586	880622
4b	Pit	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	A pit 10m x 7m and up to 1m deep lined with terram.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	6	185571	880585
5	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete footing 6m x 5m with an extension c. 4m x 1m at the SSW end. The last 2.5m of the extension are raised. NNE end obscured by trees.	NNE-SSW	Degraded	WWII	7	185599	880581
6	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Overgrown concrete footing 12m x 5m. SE end has an extension c. 4m x 1m under trees at the SE end.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	8	185616	880584
7	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Overgrown concrete footing 12m x 5m.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	11	185641	880569
8	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Overgrown concrete footing 12m x 5m.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	12	185648	880573
9	Ditch	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	A ditch c. 18m long running NNE-SSW from the corner of a bunker 1m wide and 0.5m deep with the remains of a pipe in the base. It returns to the W at the SSW end where it terminates in an overgrown, low corrugated iron covered structure (c1.5m x 4m).	-	Degraded	WWII	13-14	185643	880591

Site Number	Site Type	Site Name	Description	Alignment	Condition	Period	Photo Number	Easting	Northing
10a	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Grassy mound surrounding a raised concrete square measuring 1.5m x 1.5m. Concrete block is 0.10m thick. May not be in its original position.	-	Degraded	WWII	15	185610	880607
10b	Concrete and rubble mound	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete and rubble mound about 3m in diameter.	-	Degraded	WWII		185612	880612
11	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete base measuring 21m x 1.6m. Irregular shapes attached at both ends, but hard to discern as the site is very overgrown. Row of trees planted along the SE side.	NE-SW	Degraded	WWII	16	185635	880620
12	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete base with a raised kerb around the edges measuring c. 12m x 5m. Overgrown with small trees growing in the centre. Fallen tree over W corner.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	17-20	185643	880646
13	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Concrete base with a stepped edge measuring 12m x 5m. Tree growing at the S end. Almost completely overgrown.	N-S	Degraded	WWII	9-10	185627	880577
14	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Extremely overgrown concrete base 8m x 6m. Trees growing at edges and moss- and bramble-covered.	E-W	Degraded	WWII	29	185614	880563
15	Concrete footing	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	Heavily overgrown concrete base measuring 5m x 4m.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	30	185610	880559
16	Bunker	Highland Fieldcraft Centre	In the southeast corner of the site, surrounded by thick vegetation and trees was a brick built bunker with a flat roof measuring 18m NNW-SSE by 14m and approximately 4m high. It has 2 protruding porch-like entrances at northwest and southwest corners and a 3 rd entrance built into the north wall and was partly below ground level. A sloping, hand-dug track led out from this entrance.	NW-SE	Degraded	WWII	22-26	185648	880573



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