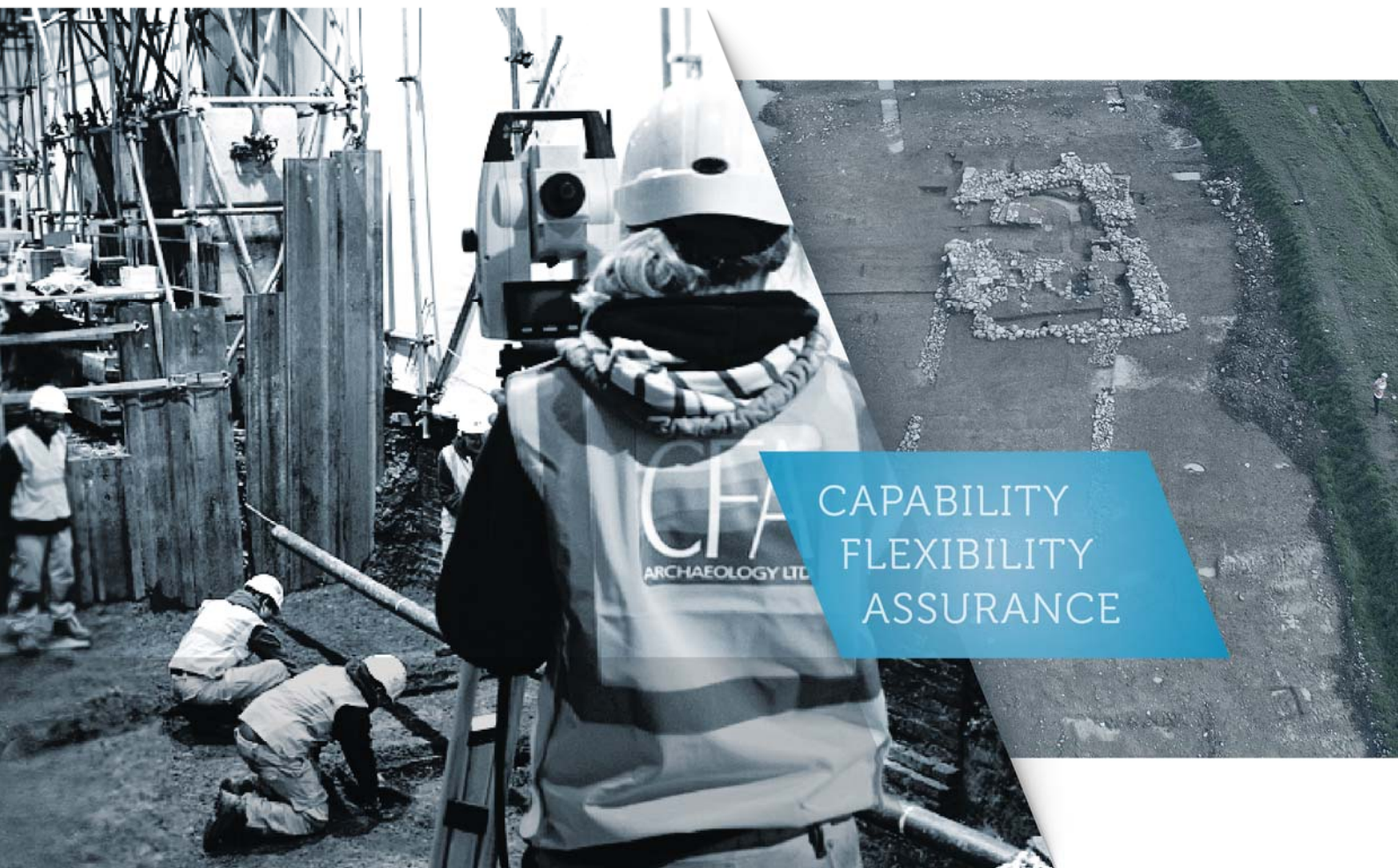




# CFA ARCHAEOLOGY

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A drystone structure identified by  
Keith Coghill at Strone  
overlooking Urquhart Castle,  
Loch Ness, Inverness-shire

Archaeological Survey, February 2018  
Report No. [HES-PIC323-2018-02](#)

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standard operating procedures.

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## **1. Introduction**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) were contacted by Mr Keith Coghill regarding a drystone structure on his land at Strone, around 310m to the North-West of Urquhart Castle on Loch Ness, Inverness-shire. CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) were then requested by HES to undertake the recording of this site during a planned programme of fieldwork at Urquhart Castle. The work took place on 13 February 2018.

## **2. Background**

In the immediate vicinity of the surveyed structure, the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Inverness-shire Sheet XXIX, 1875) shows what appears to be a rectangular roofed building within an irregular enclosure containing what may be rigs. A path runs to the North from the eastern side of the building. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (Inverness-shire Sheet XXIX, 1905) shows an unroofed irregular small enclosure attached to the Northern side of an East-West land boundary which forms part of an irregular field extending to the South. It is not clear that the building and the enclosure are in the same location.

## **3. Description**

The site (Fig. 1) is located on a moderate to steep East or South-East facing slope. Several mature trees and bushes now intrude but the elevated site offers a commanding view of Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness (Fig. 2). The remains are moss covered and partly hidden beneath trees, brambles and broom bushes but they consist of several phases of drystone walls around what appears to be an irregular level platform on the slope (Fig. 3). This measures roughly 6m North-South by 7.5m East-West. The internal surface is grassy and contains no features.

On the Eastern side, what may be bedrock is exposed below the platform but quantities of tumbled stones below suggest this was either faced with stones, or a wall was once present on the edge of the platform above. On the southern side, a low revetting wall with a height of 0.2m is present at the edge of the platform along with an area of quarried bedrock. Less than 0.5m to the south is a ruinous drystone field wall. On the western side, a continuation of the revetting wall is present with a continuation of the same field wall at a distance of 2m beyond (Fig. 4). On the Northern side, the platform is revetted or retained by a drystone wall with a height of 1m. This wall abuts a second retaining wall running to the North. The walls of the platform are of quarried red sandstone. Those of the field wall are of more rounded schist and red sandstone.

A number of features are present in the surrounding area. Partly terraced into the slope with revetting walls, a path runs from the western side of the platform to the North past an apparently rock-cut pit, towards inhabited buildings and a second path runs steeply upslope to the West into dense undergrowth. A linear field bank also runs upslope to the West, continuing the alignment of the drystone wall to the South of the platform. Traces of a second bank running East downslope can be seen 20m to the North of the platform. This can be traced towards the A82 before it becomes indistinct. To the SSE, a substantial track runs NNW from the A82 towards the platform but this terminates midway up the slope.

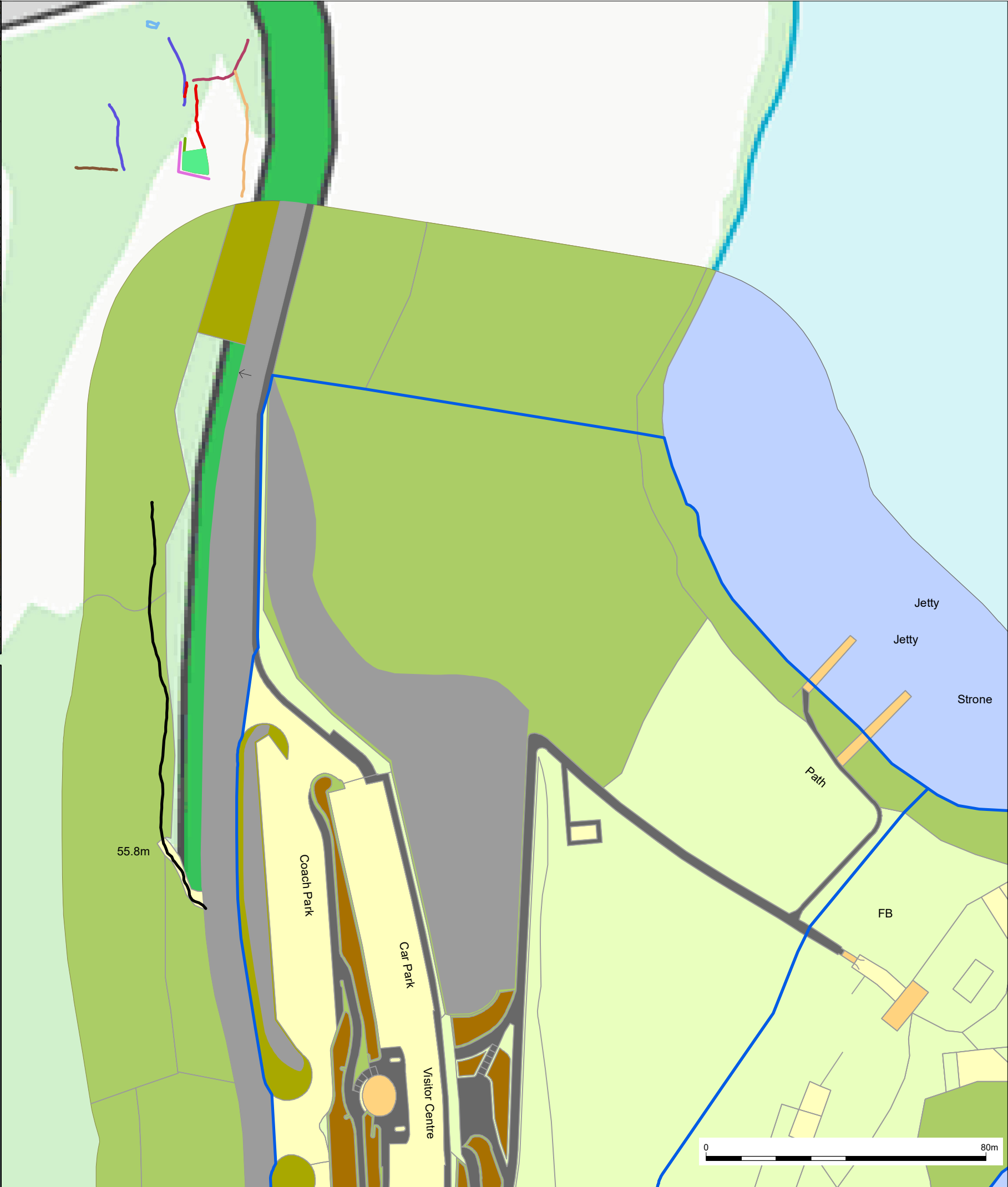
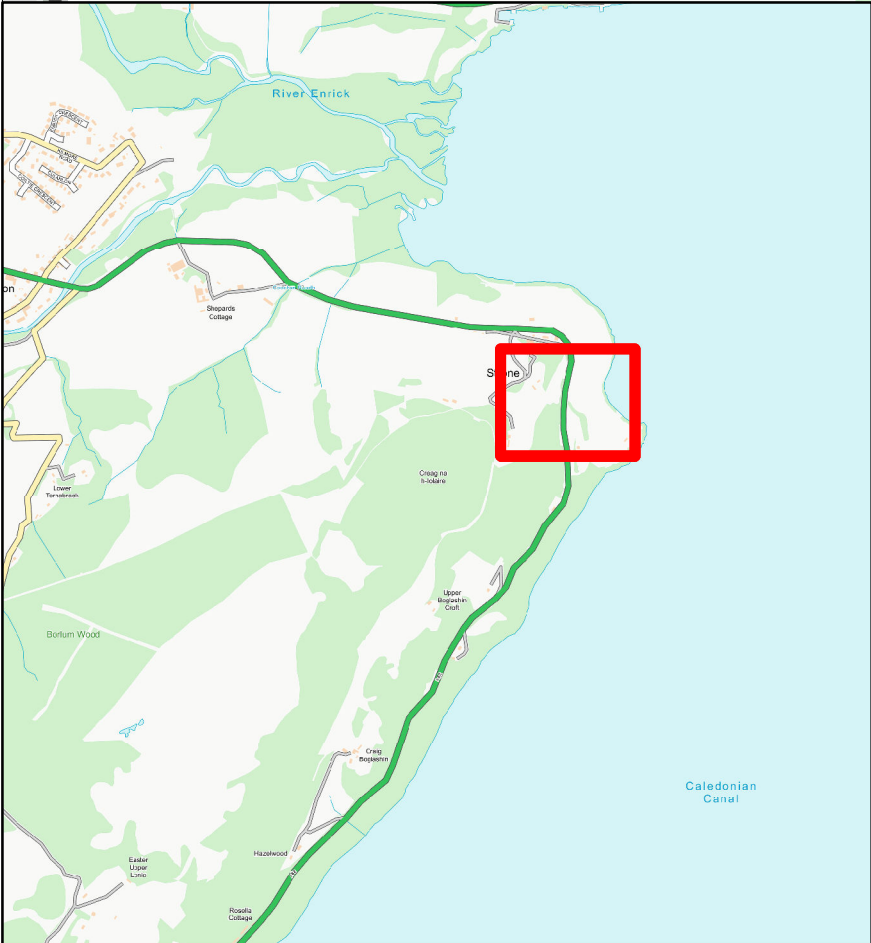
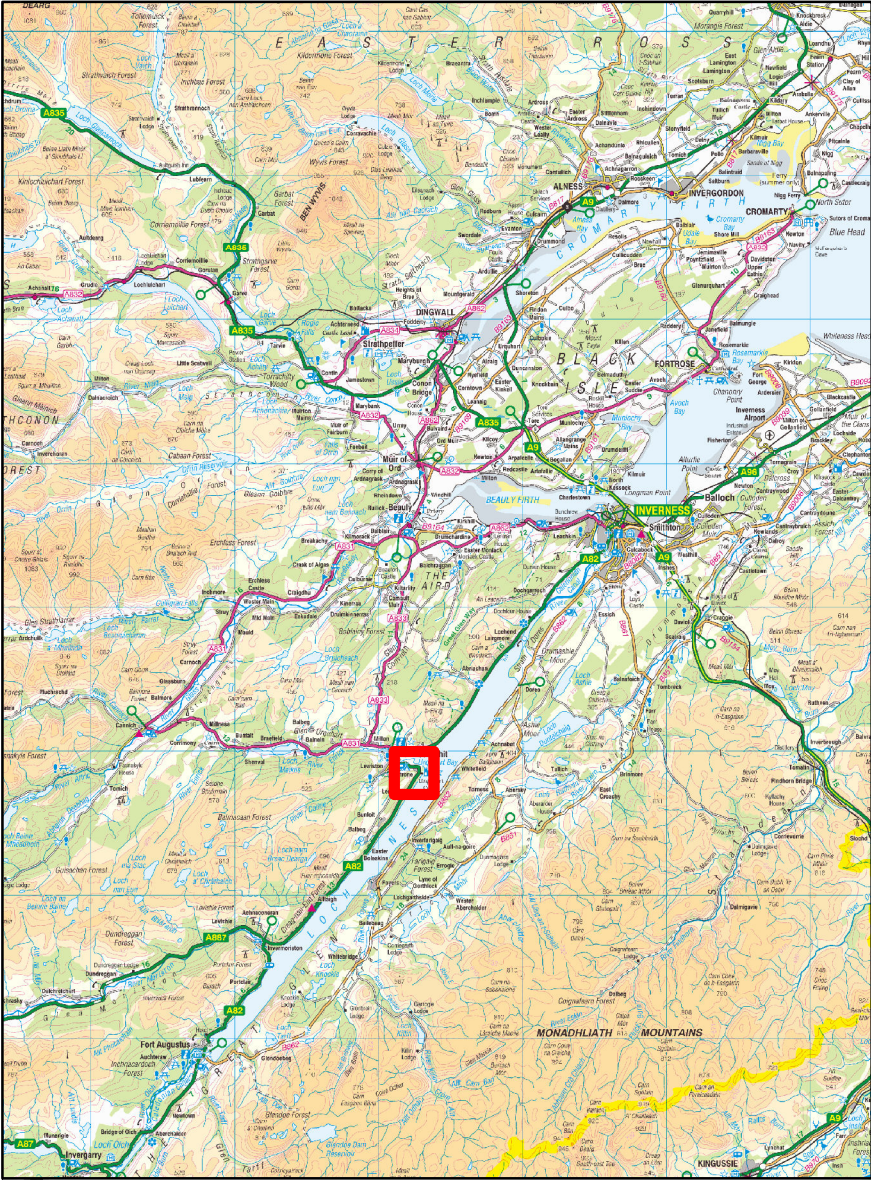
#### **4. Interpretation**

The work has recorded what may be a natural bedrock knoll which has been levelled and enhanced by the addition of revetting walls to create a platform. A number of paths, tracks and land boundaries are present nearby.

The recorded remains are clearly the product of several phases of work. The revetting walls of the platform do not in all cases bond at the intersections and are therefore unlikely to be the same build. The 'L' shaped drystone wall to the South and West is not concentric with the platform and the stones are of a different character. There are a number of other features in the vicinity which may be associated with the platform or the rectangular building on the 1875 map.

It is considered unlikely that the East-West aligned irregular platform is the North-South aligned rectangular building seen on the 1875 map. The path leading to the North is on the west of the platform and on the east of the roofed building. However, the platform may well be the unroofed enclosure shown on the 1905 map, the shapes are certainly similar.

The function of the platform is unknown as no finds were recovered and neither the form, nor the structure are dateable. Despite it appearing on maps between 1875 and 1905, there is a possibility that this could be a cannon stance, perhaps used in the 1689 attack on the castle.



**Key:**

- PIC Boundary
- (Field) Wall
- Fence
- Platform
- Rectangular Pit
- Revetment
- Revetting Wall
- Path
- Stony Bank
- Track
- Turf Bank

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**Title:**  
The site location overlooking Urquhart Castle

**Project:**  
A drystone structure identified by Keith Coghill at Strone overlooking Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness, Inverness-shire

**Client:**  
Historic Environment Scotland

**Scale at A3:**  
1:1,200

<b>Drawn by:</b> MP	<b>Checked:</b> MJ	<b>Date:</b> 19/06/2018
<b>Report No:</b> N/A		<b>Fig. No:</b> 1



Fig. 2 - The view from the site South-East to Urquhart Castle



Fig. 3 - General view of the site from the North-West

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Drawn by: <b>MP</b>	Checked: <b>SW</b>	Date: <b>14/06/18</b>
Report No: <b>N/A</b>		Fig. No: <b>2-3</b>



Fig. 4 - The revetting wall on the Western side of the enclosure  
with the field wall beyond from the South-East

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Report No: <b>N/A</b>		Fig. No: <b>4</b>