

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Land 650m South of Fyrish Substation, Alness

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Fyrish_DBA
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of land proposed for a Battery Energy Storage System and associated development 650m south of Fyrish Substation, Alness.

The assessment has been prepared in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and provides a description of the relevant cultural heritage baseline, identifies heritage assets that may be affected by the Proposed Development, assesses archaeological potential, and identifies the likely impacts of the Proposed Development upon heritage assets as a result of both its construction and operation.

There are no designated heritage assets in the Site.

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model indicates that, with two exceptions, the Proposed Development will not be visible from designated assets in the surrounding area or affect views of them that contribute to their cultural significance. The two exceptions are the Novar Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape and the Fyrish Monument, a Category B Listed Building. Whilst there is potential for the Proposed Development to be glimpsed in views from these assets or in combination with them, the site visit established that this will constitute a barely perceptible change in their settings that has no potential to adversely affect them.

It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have no impact upon designated heritage assets.

No heritage assets have been identified previously within the Site. However, the current study has identified remains of a former late 18th/early 19th century millpond located in the southwest corner of the site. This will be preserved in situ within the Proposed Development.

The potential for unrecorded assets to be present is considered to be moderate in respect of the Prehistoric period as there is a background of chance finds of Prehistoric artefacts and burials in the area. The potential in respect of the Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods is considered to be low and in respect of the Modern period negligible.

In the absence of mitigation, any archaeology present within the construction footprint would be removed or disturbed. This potential will be addressed through a programme of archaeological work, if required.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This historic environment desk-based assessment has been prepared by Richard Conolly of RPS on behalf of Field (the 'Client'). It has been prepared to support a planning application for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated development (henceforth the 'Proposed Development') on land 650m South of Fyrish Substation, Alness, IV17 0XH.
- 1.2 The land considered in this assessment (henceforth the 'Site') takes in approximately 53.5ha centred on NGR 263000, 869000 (Figure 1). It is located approximately 1km to the south-west of Alness. The main body of the Site, in which the BESS and associated landscaping are to be located, is uncultivated, with areas of grassland, scrub, scattered trees, dense bracken and bog. A cottage and associated garden lie just inside the south-western boundary. It is bounded to the north-west by a track, beyond which is woodland, and to the east, south and west by fields. Also, immediately to the south-east is Clashnabuiac, a 19th century steading with a timberyard and associated modern sheds. The Planning Boundary also takes in peripheral areas comprising:
- the fields to the east and west of the main body of the Site and corridors connecting it to the operational Fyrish substation. The eastern corridor runs along Struie Road and the access track serving the substation. The western corridor takes in grassland and a forest ride, along which a line of pylons runs.
 - The existing track leading to Clashnabuaic.
- 1.3 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon heritage assets, both during its construction and operation. It draws upon the following data sources:
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES) designations downloads;
 - Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER);
 - Maps held by the National Library of Scotland;
 - LiDAR data from Scottish Government;
 - Satellite imagery; and
 - Readily available published sources.
- 1.4 The desk-based work was augmented and verified through a walk-over survey.
- 1.5 The study provides an assessment of the archaeological potential of the Site and the significance of heritage assets within and around it, and considers the potential impacts of the Proposed Development upon these. The consideration of potential impacts upon designated heritage assets (see Figure 2) in the surrounding area has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting* (HES 2020), which advocates the use of a three-stage process:
- Stage 1: Identify the historic assets that may be affected by the Proposed Development.
 - Stage 2: define and analyse the setting by establishing how the surroundings contribute to the ways in which the historic asset or place is understood, appreciated and experienced.
 - Stage 3: evaluate the potential impact of the proposed changes on the setting, and the extent to which any negative impacts can be mitigated.
- 1.6 Stage 1 has been informed by a site visit and Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) provided by the client. The ZTVs are based on heights of 8m for the substation and 3.2m for the battery units. The ZTV presented here (Figure 2) takes account of the screening effect of vegetation and buildings data. The landform data was taken from Photography Derived 2m Digital Surface Model (gridded height data at 2m intervals).

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

Legislation

- 2.1 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provide the legislative basis for the protection of the historic environment. These were amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2 Policy 7 of the current National Planning Framework (NPF4) deals with historic assets and places in the planning system. It is intended 'to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places.' It specifies that 'development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets will be accompanied by an assessment of the impact based on their cultural significance.' In summary, development proposals will only be supported where they preserve the character, special architectural or historic interest of Listed Buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, and avoid direct impacts on scheduled monuments and significant adverse impacts upon the integrity of their setting or where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify such impacts and where these have been minimised. Development proposals affecting nationally important Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Historic Battlefields will be supported where they protect their cultural significance. Those affecting a World Heritage Site will only be supported where they protect and preserve its Outstanding Universal Value. Non-designated heritage assets should be protected and preserved in situ wherever feasible. Where impacts are unavoidable, they should be assessed and minimised.

- 2.3 The glossary attached to NPF4 contains the following definitions that are relevant in the current context.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance can be embodied in a place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Historic environment: The historic environment is 'the physical evidence for human activity that connects people with place, linked with the associations we can see, feel and understand'.

Historic environment asset: An asset (or 'historic asset' or 'heritage asset') is a physical element of the historic environment – a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance.

Setting: Setting is more than the immediate surroundings of a site or building, and may be related to the function or use of a place, or how it was intended to fit into the landscape or townscape, the view from it or how it is seen from areas round about, or areas that are important to the protection of the place, site or building.

'Setting' is the way the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced.

- 2.4 In July 2011, the government published the Planning Advice Note PAN 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology. It provides advice and technical information alongside SPP, HEPS and the Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes, which together set out the Scottish Ministers' policies and guidance for planning and the historic environment.

- 2.5 Sections 4-9 of the PAN, entitled Archaeology and Planning provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the policy of the Scottish Government relating to archaeological sites and monuments. Overall, the guidance can be summarised:
- Policy is to protect and preserve sites and monuments and their settings in situ where feasible. Where this is not possible planning authorities should consider applying conditions to consents to ensure that an appropriate level of excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving is carried out before and/or during development.
 - In consideration of applications, planning authorities should take into account the relative importance of archaeological sites. Not all sites and monuments are of equal importance. In determining planning applications that may impact on archaeological features or their setting, planning authorities may balance the benefits of development against the importance of archaeological features.
- 2.6 Section 12 of the PAN notes that when determining a planning application, the desirability of preserving a monument (whether scheduled or not) and its setting is a material consideration. It reiterates that preservation in situ should be the objective but where not possible an alternative approach is recording and/or excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results.
- 2.7 Sections 13 and 14 note that prospective developers should undertake assessment to determine whether a property or area contains, or is likely to contain, archaeological remains as part of their pre-planning application research into development potential. Where it is known, or there is good reason to believe, that significant remains exist developers should be open to modifying their plans in order to preserve remains.
- 2.8 Section 17 notes that in many cases a desk-based assessment (this document) may be sufficient to allow authorities to make a planning decision. Where the judgement of the authority's archaeological advisor indicates that significant remains may exist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request an archaeological evaluation before the application is determined. Planning authorities should require only the information necessary for them to make an informed decision on the proposal, and this should be proportionate to the importance of the potential resource. Section 19 notes that developers should supply the results of desk-based assessments and evaluations as part of their planning applications.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.9 Local planning policy is provided in Highland Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan (adopted 2012). This contains the following policies relating to the historic environment:

Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

21.2.1 All development proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework detailed in Appendix 2. The following criteria will also apply:

- 1. For features of local/regional importance we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.*
- 2. For features of national importance we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support*

communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.

3. *For features of international importance developments likely to have a significant effect on a site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, we will only allow development if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected, development in such circumstances will only be allowed if the reasons for overriding public interest relate to human health, public safety, beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or other reasons subject to the opinion of the European Commission (via Scottish Ministers). Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan within the meaning of Section 25(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.*

Note: Whilst Appendix 2 groups features under the headings international, national and local/regional importance, this does not suggest that the relevant policy framework will be any less rigorously applied. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Proposal Map.

[...]

In due course the Council also intends to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on the Highland Historic Environment Strategy. The main principles of this guidance will ensure that:

- *Future developments take account of the historic environment and that they are of a design and quality to enhance the historic environment bringing both economic and social benefits;*
- *It sets a proactive, consistent approach to the protection of the historic environment.*

2.10 Appendix 2 of the plan defines the importance of assets as follows:

- National importance
 - Scheduled Monuments;
 - Category A Listed Buildings;
 - Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Local/Regional Importance
 - Category B and C(S) Listed Buildings *Advice is that B listed buildings are considered to be of regional or more than local importance and C(S) listed buildings are of local importance.*
 - Sites and Monuments Record [HER] Archaeological Sites *The importance of such sites in terms of protection or professional recording prior to disturbance is advised on a case-by-case basis. The integrity of the site and its setting will be considered.*
 - Archaeological Heritage Areas
 - Conservation Areas

2.11 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment seeks to clarify the site's archaeological potential and the likely significance of that potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The Site is underlain by sandstone of the Raddery Sandstone Formation. Superficial deposits comprise glaciofluvial deposits of gravel, sand and silt.
- 3.2 The Site lies near the edge of the coastal plain at the foot of Cnoc Fyrish approximately 1km to the north-west of Alness Bay. A small ridge or esker and a knoll are present in the western part of the Site (Figure 6), but aside from these the ground within the Site is almost flat sloping down from approximately 45m AOD to 30m AOD. The top of Cnoc Fyrish is at 453m AOD, approximately 2.1km to the north-west of the Site.
- 3.3 The canalised Culcraggie Burn flows through the centre of the main body of the Site into a drainage ditch that forms the south-eastern boundary. There is a small pond to the south of the esker. This area is boggy and the pond does not appear on maps and may be seasonal.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 -	10,000 BC
Mesolithic	10,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age and Roman Iron Age	600 -	AD 410

Historic

Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1100
Medieval	AD 1100 -	1560
Post Medieval	AD 1560 -	1745
Modern	AD 1745 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPF4, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of designated heritage assets and entries in the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER) for a study area extending 2km from the main body of the Site (Figures 2 and 3), historic mapping (Figure 4), satellite imagery (Figure 5) and LiDAR data (Figure 6). The was considered sufficient given the height of the Proposed Development and the surrounding topography. The desk-based work was verified and augmented through a site visit.
- 4.3 Section 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the Proposed Development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.4 There are no designated heritage assets in the Site.
- 4.5 Within the study area (Figure 2) there are:
- One Scheduled Monument – Gun Port, burial mound 45m N of (SM5002).
 - One Inventory Garden or Designed Landscape (IGDL) – Novar (GDL00303)
 - 16 Listed Buildings, comprising 12 Category B and four Category C. It should be noted that these are composed of 13 individual listings.
- 4.6 Also, immediately outside the study area, is the Category B-listed Fyrish Monument (LB369). This is effectively a part of the Novar IGDL, although not designated as such, and has therefore also been considered.

- 4.7 The Gun Port burial mound is a 4m high mound covered by trees, partially within a shelter belt in the Novar IGDL, approximately 1km to the south-west of the Site. It has been scheduled as a burial mound of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. However, this is uncertain and it may be a glacial deposit, as noted in the National Record for the Historic Environment entry (Canmore 13660). Assuming it is a burial mound, its cultural significance resides primarily in its archaeological potential but it also has value as a visible trace of the Prehistoric landscape. It has no appreciable relationships with the surrounding landscape. The ZTV indicates a very slight degree of potential intervisibility between the mound and the Proposed Development. This is supported by the site visit. It is considered that there is no potential for slight change at a distance of 1km to affect the mound's cultural significance and it is not considered further.
- 4.8 The Novar IGDL is a major later 18th century formal designed landscape established by military officer, politician and landowner, Sir Hector Munro. It lies approximately 250m to the west of the Site at its closest point. The ZTV indicates that there is some potential for the Proposed Development to be visible from it and to appear in views of it. Given this and its proximity to the Site it has been taken through to assessment. The designation description is appended (Appendix 1) and its significance and setting are discussed in detail in Section 5, with the impact assessment.
- 4.9 The Listed Buildings within the Study Area lie over 1km from the Site and the ZTV demonstrates that there will be very little or no intervisibility between them and the Proposed Development, owing to multiple areas of woodland or the built form. Nor is there potential for them to be seen in combination with the Proposed Development. Consequently, there is no potential for these to be affected by the Proposed Development and they are not considered further.
- 4.10 The Fyrish Monument was built by Sir Hector Munro and on the hill overlooking Novar. It is a striking landmark in the wider landscape. It lies approximately 2.1km to the west of the Site. The ZTV indicates that there is potential for a degree of intervisibility between the monument and the Proposed Development and for the Proposed Development to appear in combination with the monument. It has accordingly been taken through to assessment. The designation description is appended (Appendix 1) and its significance and setting are discussed in detail in Section 5, with the impact assessment.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.11 No non-designated heritage assets have been recorded previously within the Site.
- 4.12 HER entries for the surrounding area (Figure 3) are discussed below where appropriate. Most, including those closest to the Site (MHG20016 & MHG34989), relate to late 18th century or later buildings or military installations and have little relevance to the current assessment.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.13 No archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in or adjacent to the Site previously. In 2004, a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) and walkover survey was undertaken ahead of a proposed water mains project, the line of which crosses the Site, but no features were identified within the Site and no subsequent work is recorded. A DBA and walkover was also undertaken in relation to the overhead lines in the running west from Fyrish substation, the line of which is followed by the western corridor linking the Site to the substation.
- 4.14 Very little fieldwork has been undertaken in the study area (Figure 3). That which has been undertaken has no bearing on the archaeological potential of the Site, as it has been small scale and remote from the Site.

Prehistoric

- 4.15 The HER holds no records relating to the Prehistoric period for the Site.
- 4.16 There is a scattering of recorded evidence of Prehistoric activity in the study area, including:
- The Gun Port burial mound (SM5002).
 - Two cropmarks that are likely to represent a Prehistoric enclosures (MHG8110 & MHG8114). These are respectively approximately 400m to the south-west and 1km to the east of the Site.
 - Two Bronze Age cist burials (MHG8104) found approximately 780m to the west of the Site. Quernstones have been found in the same area (MHG8106), but the findspot and circumstances of their recovery are unknown.
 - A find of a Bronze Age axe and possible cist (MHG14210) approximately 550m to the east of the Site.
- 4.17 The above scatter of recorded features - given the absence of intrusive field work in the area - is indicative of the area in which the Site lies having seen relatively intensive occupation throughout prehistory. This presumably reflects the generally well drained nature of the underlying geology and proximity to a range of resources, including the Alness Bay and the wider Cromarty Firth. Given the size of the Site as a whole, it is considered that the Site has moderate potential to contain hitherto unrecorded archaeology of the Prehistoric period.

Early Medieval

- 4.18 The HER holds no records relating to the Early Medieval period for the Site or study area.
- 4.19 It is considered that the potential for previously unrecorded archaeology of this period to be present is very low.

Medieval, Post-Medieval and Modern

- 4.20 The HER holds no records relating to the Medieval, Post-Medieval or Modern periods for the Site. However, the current study has identified a former millpond within the Site. This is discussed further below.
- 4.21 The area in which the Site lies can be broadly identified on Roy's Military Survey (1747-52), but it is not possible to do with certainty. Broadly the map shows Novar House, Fyrish and Alness Kirk, with the land between being for the most part cultivated. A small area is, however, depicted as uncultivated. Given the boggy character of parts of the Site and that these parts were not farmed in the 19th century or subsequently, it is likely that this corresponds with the western part of the Site, with the remainder in the cultivated land. Although the map dates to the mid-18th century this is likely to have also been the landuse in the Medieval period.
- 4.22 The 1880 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 4) shows the Site and surrounding area largely in its current situation. It is shown as three improved fields, with the esker depicted as wooded and the area to its south as marsh and moor. In the southern corner of the Site is a mill pond with sluice, serving a mill lade leading to the steading at Clashnabuaic. A shelter belt forms the north-eastern boundary of the Site and mixed woodland occupies the area to the north-west. The mill pond survives as a wet area and bank (Plate 2). The sluice-gate has been removed and the opening blocked with poured concrete (Plate 3). The field boundary shown running along the northern edge of the esker survives as a slight bank that can be discerned on LiDAR data (Figure 6) and on the ground.
- 4.23 Subsequent maps show little change. The 1906 map is the first to show the knoll to the east of the esker as wooded and to show the cottage within the Site. The 1959 map shows an Over Head

Line (OHL) crossing the Site. A building in the western corridor first appears on maps surveyed in 1973. It is now unroofed. Satellite imagery dating to 2004 shows tree planting immediately to the west of the Site and with the exception of the esker, the area to its south and the knoll the ground appears improved. There appears to be quarrying of both the esker and the knoll, which is also apparent on the LiDAR data (Figure 6). A track crossing the eastern part of the site presumably relates to the water main replacement. Subsequent satellite imagery shows the colonisation of areas of the Site by scrub and scattered trees.

- 4.24 It is concluded that through the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods and much of the Modern period the greater part of the Site lay in farmland with areas of uncultivated ground. A mill pond was built in the late 18th/early 19th century to power the threshing mill at Clashnabuaic. This survives though its sluice gate has been removed. It is concluded that the Site has very low potential to contain hitherto unrecorded features of archaeological interest dating to the Medieval or Post Medieval periods and negligible potential for hitherto unrecorded features of archaeological interest of Modern date.

Assessment of Significance

- 4.25 A single heritage asset has been identified within the Site. This is a late 18th/early 19th century millpond. Its cultural significance resides in its value as visible trace of Improvement-period agricultural infrastructure. Such infrastructure features are relatively common survivals and the millpond is considered to be of local importance.
- 4.26 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely importance of any archaeological remains if present is summarised in table form below.

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Importance
Prehistoric	Moderate	If present most probably of local importance
Early Medieval	Low	If present most probably of local importance
Medieval	Low	If present most probably of local importance
Post Medieval	Low	If present most probably of local importance
Modern	Negligible	If present most probably of local importance

5 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON HERITAGE ASSETS

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The main body of the Site was visited on 9th July 2024. Conditions were good. However, the esker was covered by tall bracken and other areas by long grass (Plates 1-7). In all probability, this vegetation would have obscured any upstanding features present. The one exception to this was the knoll, which was covered by short-cropped grass. Here there were rabbit burrows; the upcast was examined for lithics and other artefacts. None were noted. The millpond survives as a damp hollow bounded by well-preserved banks topped by trees.
- 5.2 The availability of LiDAR data for the greater part of the site offsets the limits upon the site visit to some extent, as substantial features would probably present as features if present.

Proposed Development

- 5.3 The Proposed Development comprises a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 200 MW with associated infrastructure (including cable route to substation), access and ancillary works (including landscaping and biodiversity enhancement) (Appendix 3).

Development Component	Number of units	Maximum Dimensions
Battery Storage Units	up to 384	6.06mL x 2.44mW x 3.20mH
MV Skid AC Twin Skid includes MV transformer and two PCS (inverter) units	up to 96	12.69mL x 2.44mW x 3.60mH
Transmission Operator (TO) Substation building	1	28mW x 38mL x 5.5mH
132 kV High voltage transformer	2	4.41mW x 7.56mL x 6.32mH
Substation building; including office, welfare and SCADA	1	20.47mW x 25.42mL x 4.92mH
Auxiliary Transformer	6	1.96mW x 2.23mL x 2.71mH
Standby Generator	1	3.8mL x 2.4mW x 2.6mH
Fire water storage tank	1	8.2mL x 8.2mW x 5.09mH
Site Access	-	8mW
Internal Access Tracks	-	5mW
Acoustic Fencing	-	5mH

Development Component	Number of units	Maximum Dimensions
Construction Compound	1	150m x 60m
Lighting Columns (15)	TBC	5 mH
Car Parking (up to 4)	Up to 4	5 mL x 10 mW

Embedded Mitigation

5.4 The Proposed Development incorporates mitigation measures in its design. These comprise:

- The Site has been chosen to minimise visibility from the surrounding area;
- Retention and management of existing trees fringing the Site to provide screening;
- Battery units will be painted subdued colours to minimise visibility from the surrounding landscape;
- Landscaping plan to provide screening; and
- Retention of the mill pond and former sluice located in the south-west corner of the Site.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Heritage Assets

5.5 Potential impacts have been identified in respect of two designated heritage assets:

- Novar IGDL; and
- Fyrish Monument

5.6 Whilst the Fyrish Monument does not lie within the boundaries of the designated landscape, it is effectively a part of the landscape within which the IGDL sits. Consequently, the landscape and monument have been considered together. Their significance, setting and contribution of setting to their significance are described together but the potential impact is assessed individually.

Description

5.7 The designed landscape at Novar is a country estate landscape centred on Novar House, a Category B Listed Building, with ancillary buildings, woodland, parkland, farmland and a formal walled garden. The house was built in 1720, but the current designed landscape was not established until the later 18th century. The work was commissioned by Sir Hector Munro, an army officer and politician, and funded from the profits he gained during his time in India. The landscaping was accompanied by widespread agricultural improvements on the estate.

5.8 In 1792 Munro funded the building of the Fyrish Monument on the top of Cnoc Fyrish. This comprises a series of arches based on the gates of the fortress of Negapatam which Munro had captured in 1781. The work was in part commissioned to provide work for the unemployed.

5.9 The landscape remains largely unchanged since 1800. The most significant changes being that the land to the east of the eastern drive, which was originally punctuated by trees and split into small fields, is now occupied by large arable fields, the northern part of the landscape is crossed by pylons running along the base of Cnoc Fyrish and large agricultural sheds have been erected at Novar Mains.

5.10 A full description of the landscape's components and development is presented in Appendix 1.

Setting

- 5.11 The landscape is designed to provide the house with long range views to the south, whilst woodland wraps around the house to its west, north and east curtailing views in these directions (Plates 8-10). Whilst the woodland restricts views in and out of the designed landscape, it is itself widely visible including from as far south as the Black Isle. It consequently announces the house's presence in the landscape. This is amplified by the Fyrish monument. From the south, its striking form is seen silhouetted on the skyline, above the woodlands of the designed landscape, again from substantial distances. The monument commands extensive views over the designed landscape and across the Cromarty Firth to the Black Isle.
- 5.12 In views of the designed landscape from the south and from Cnoc Fyrish, it is seen in combination with modern development on the northern shore of the Cromarty Firth, in particular the Deephaven and Evanton Industrial Estates (Plates 11-12). From the Fyrish Monument, the works at Nigg are clearly visible to the east.

Significance and Contribution of Setting

- 5.13 The cultural significance of the Novar IGDL derives from its architectural, artistic and historic interest as it represents a largely complete 18th century designed landscape with close associations to a significant historical figure, with the design reflecting aspects of his career. It has a high degree of aesthetic value and makes a substantial contribution to the surrounding landscape. In addition, it has horticultural and nature conservation value. For the same reasons, Fyrish Monument likewise has architectural, historic and aesthetic value.
- 5.14 Views from Novar House to the south and general views of the designed landscape from the surrounding area, particularly those in combination with and from the Fyrish Monument, are important to an appreciation of the landscape's design and its aesthetic experience. These views are likewise important to the appreciation of the monument's design. Whilst designed as a landmark, the monument has become a destination in its own right. Consequently, close range views of the monument against the backdrop of extensive views to the south and north contribute to its present day aesthetic appreciation. Modern features appear in many general views of the designed landscape and from the Fyrish Monument. However, these do not significantly detract from the appreciation of the designed landscape and monument owing to the scale of the landscape.

Impact Assessment

- 5.15 The ZTV (Figure 2) indicates that there will be minimal intervisibility between the Novar IGDL and the Proposed Development. This is a result of the screening effect of the trees fringing the Site combined with those lining the eastern drive and areas of woodland immediately to the east of the designed landscape. This was supported by the results of the site visit (Plates 8-10). It may be possible to achieve glimpsed or filtered views of the Proposed Development during the winter. The Proposed Development will therefore result in no appreciable change in views out from the designated landscape.
- 5.16 The ZTV similarly indicates that there will be little potential to see the Proposed Development in combination with the IGDL from locations to the north of the Cromarty Firth, primarily owing to the screening effect of vegetation. From locations where this is possible, such as the eastern shore of Alness Bay (Plate 13), the Proposed Development will be seen glimpsed between trees in the context of a landscape that includes numerous modern features. There will be no potential for such slight change to adversely affect the contribution of these views to the significance of the GDL.
- 5.17 It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have no impact upon Novar IGDL.

- 5.18 The Proposed Development will not be visible in views of the Fyrish Monument from the top of Cnoc Fyrish, owing to topography (Plate 11). It will however be partially visible from the area to immediately to the south of the Fyrish Monument (Plate 12). The site visit established that it will be peripheral to the panoramic views available from this location, being largely obscured by topography. It will constitute a very slight change in these general views, which include substantially larger modern features, with no potential to dominate or otherwise detract from the appreciation of these views in conjunction with the monument. Owing to its scale and surrounding vegetation, the Proposed Development will not be perceptible in views that include the monument from the surrounding landscape (Plate 13).
- 5.19 It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have no impact upon the Fyrish Monument.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.20 One heritage asset has been recorded within the Site. This is a late 18th/early 19th century mill pond. This will not be affected by the new build element of the Proposed Development and will be retained in situ.
- 5.21 It is considered that there is moderate potential for Prehistoric archaeology to be present and low potential in respect of Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. Construction of the Proposed Development is likely to remove any archaeology present within the construction footprint. However, it should be noted that this does not take in the entire area of the Site (see Appendix 3).

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of land proposed for a Battery Energy Storage System and associated development 650m south of Fyrish Substation, Alness.
- 6.2 The assessment has been prepared in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and provides a description of the relevant cultural heritage baseline, identifies heritage assets that may be affected by the Proposed Development, assesses archaeological potential and identifies the likely impacts of the Proposed Development upon heritage assets as a result of both its construction and operation.
- 6.3 There are no designated heritage assets in the Site. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model indicates that, with two exceptions, the Proposed Development will not be visible from designated assets in the surrounding area or affect views of them that contribute to their cultural significance. The two exceptions are the Novar Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape and the Fyrish Monument, a Category B Listed Building. Whilst there is potential for the Proposed Development to be glimpsed in views from these assets or in combination with them, the site visit established that this will constitute a barely perceptible change in their settings that has no potential to adversely affect them. It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have no impact upon designated heritage assets.
- 6.4 No heritage assets have been identified previously within the Site. However, the current study has identified the remains of a late 18th/early 19th century millpond in the southwest part of the Site.. This will be preserved in situ.
- 6.5 The potential for other unrecorded assets to be present is considered to be moderate in respect of the Prehistoric period as there is a background of chance finds of Prehistoric artefacts and burials in the area. The potential in respect of the Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods is considered to be low and in respect of the Modern period negligible.
- 6.6 In the absence of mitigation, any archaeology present within the construction footprint would be removed or disturbed. This potential will be addressed through a programme of archaeological work, if required.

Sources Consulted

General

National Library of Scotland
Highland Council Historic Environment Record
Historic Environment Scotland downloads
Canmore

Internet

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Bibliographic

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard & Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment 2014, updated 2020.

HES 2020 Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting

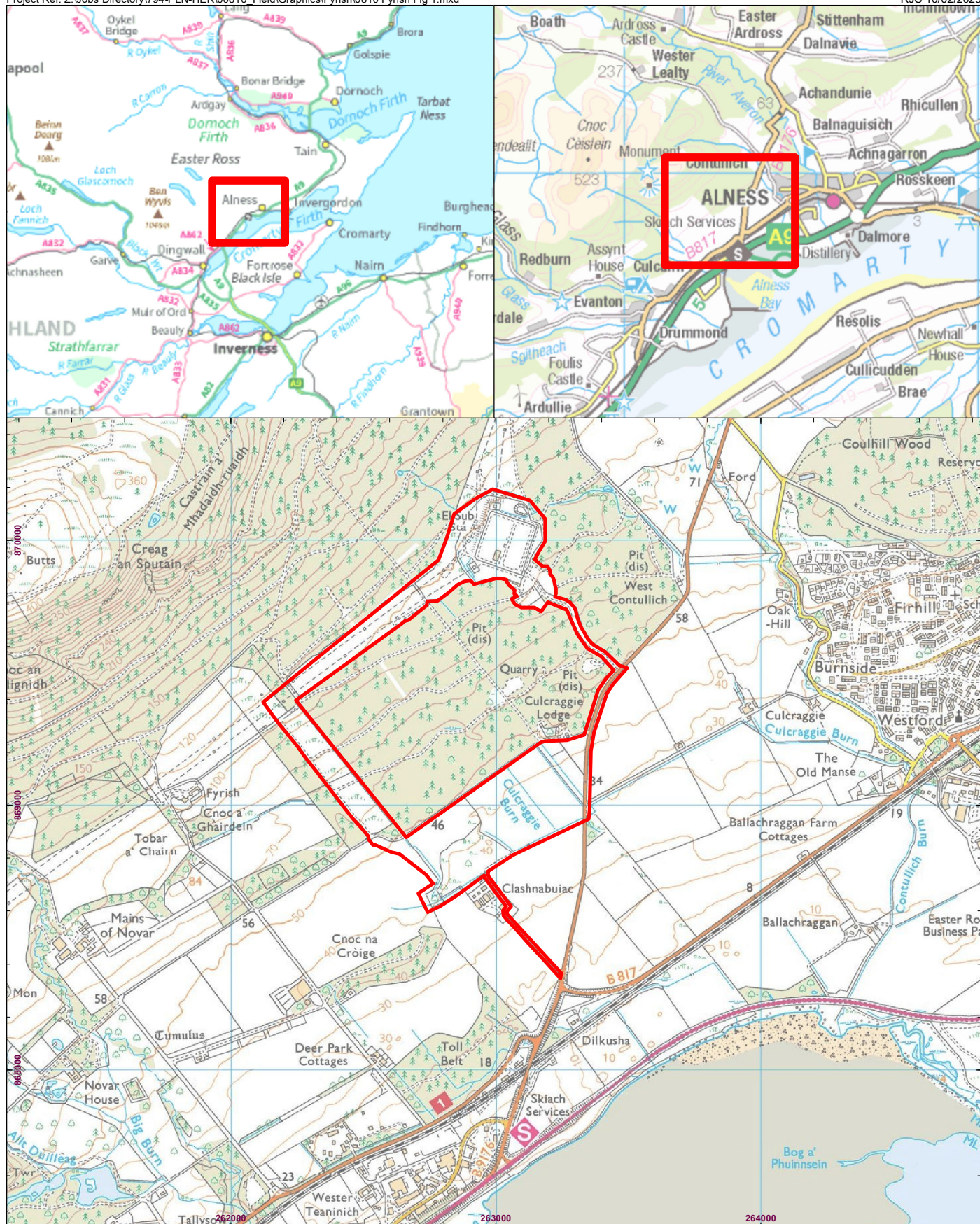
HES 2018 EIA Handbook

Cartographic

Roy, W Military Survey 1747-52
Craig, J 1826 Ross & Cromarty
Johnston, W & AK 1850 Ross & Cromarty
Ordnance Survey 1881, 1905, 1970



FIGURES



 Site

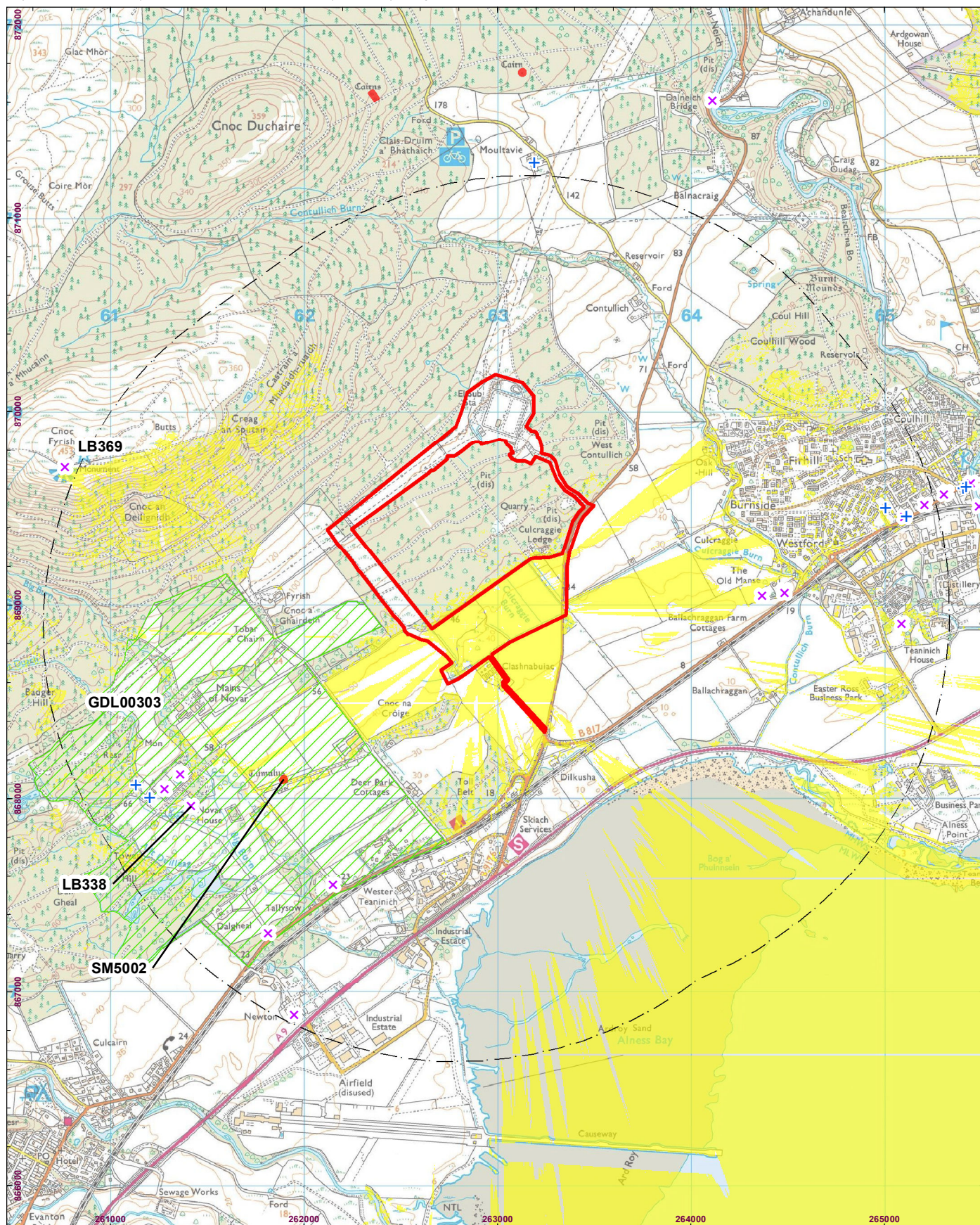


0 210 420 630m
Scale at A4: 1:20,000

rps
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Figure 1

Site Location



- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------|
| | Site | | Listed Building |
| | Study Area | | Category A |
| | Scheduled Monument | | Category B |
| | IGDL | | Category C |
| | | | ZTV (with screening) |

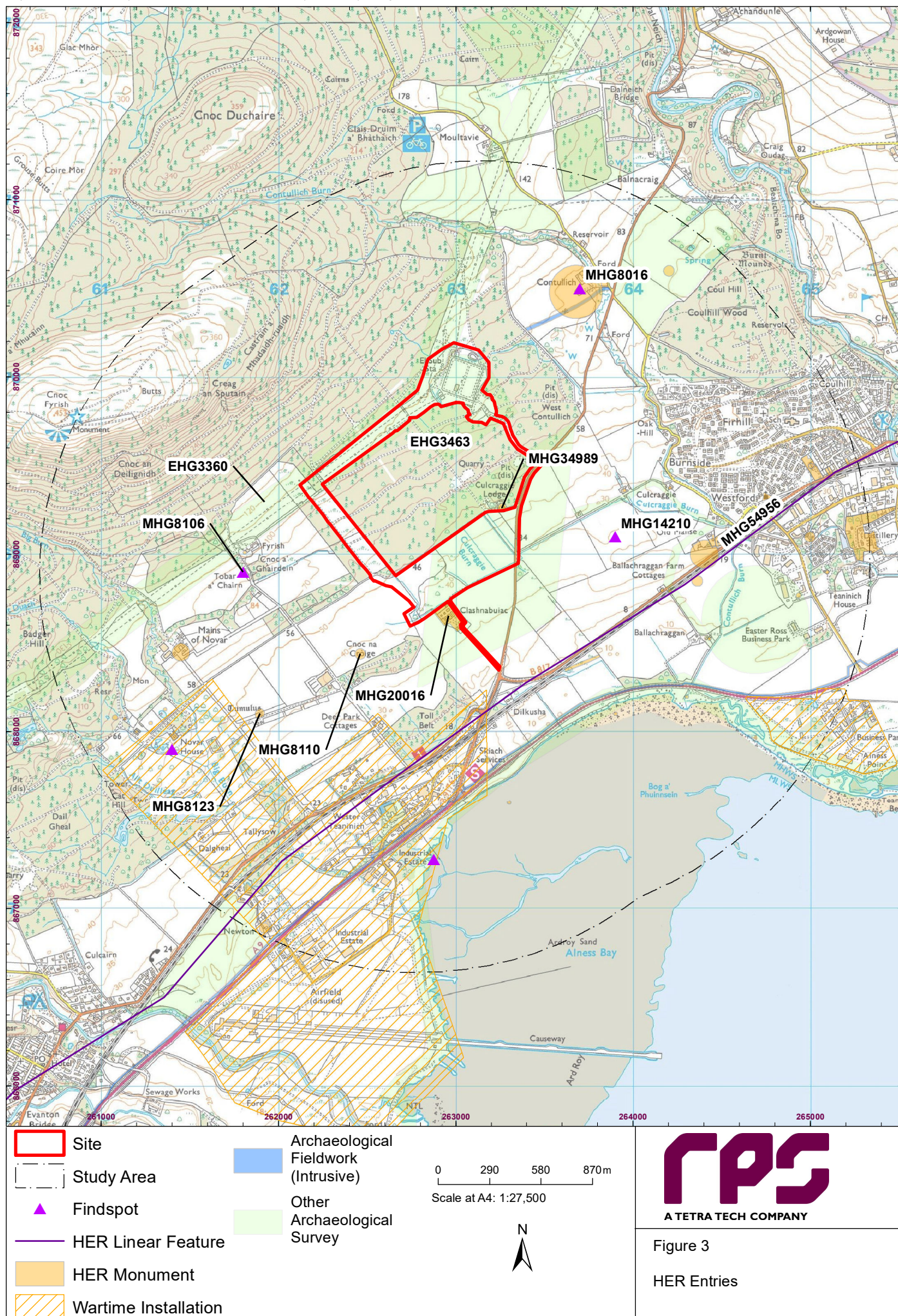
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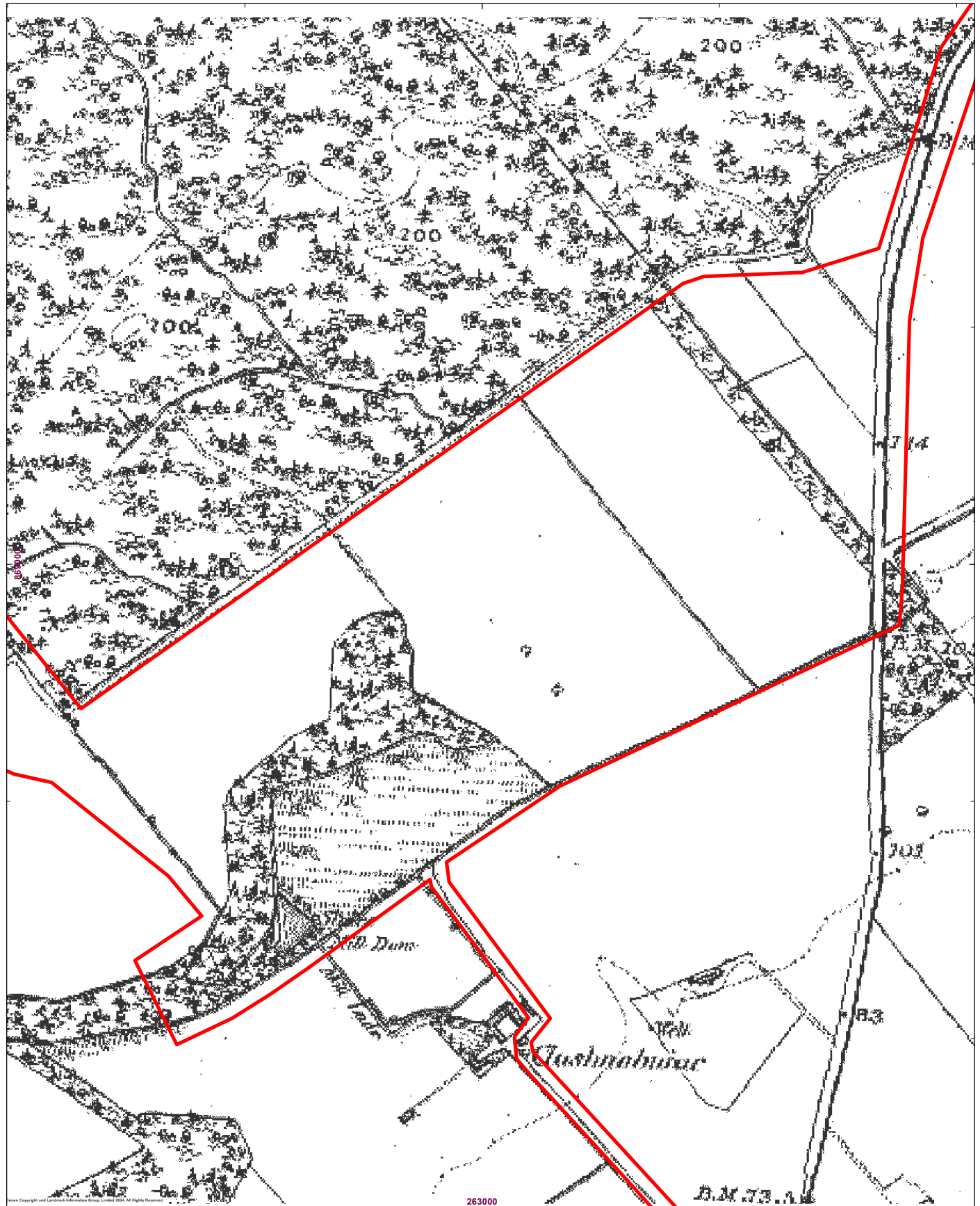


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Figure 2

Designated Heritage Assets in the Study Area





 Site

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Scale at A4: 1:4,433



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Figure 4
Ordnance Survey (1880)



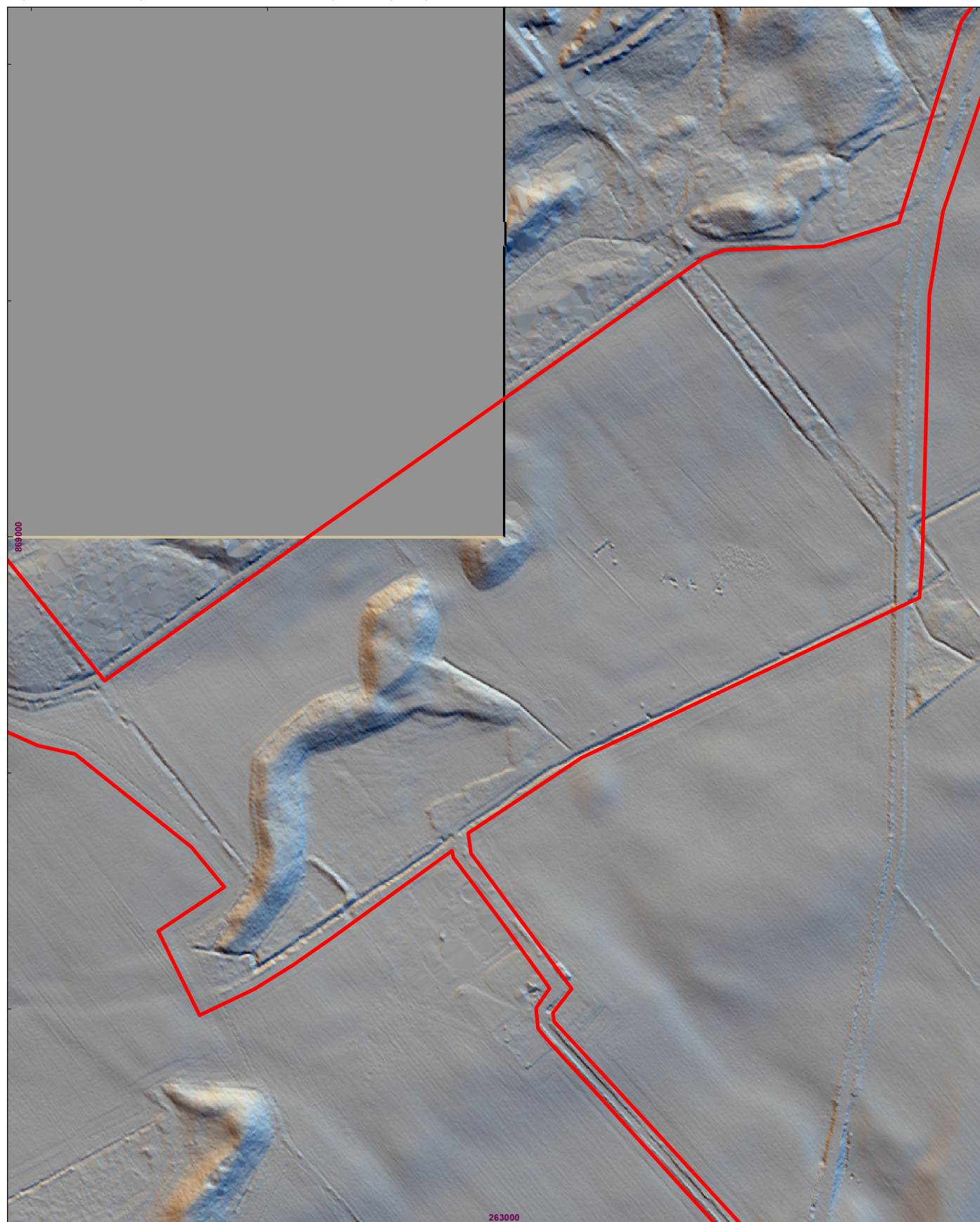
 Site

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Scale at A4: 1:9,000



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Figure 6
Satellite Imagery



 Site

0 40 80 120m
Scale at A4: 1:4,500



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Figure 6
LiDAR Data
DTM with Multi-Directional
Hillshading



PLATES



Plate 1 View of Site from southern limit towards esker, Cnoc Fyrish and Fyrish Monument beyond



Plate 2 Former Millpond seen from the south