

Chleansaid Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Connection Environmental Appraisal (EA) Report

Appendix 9.1: Cultural Heritage Background and Gazetteer

November 2024



Cultural Heritage Background

Introduction

- 1.1.1 The following presents a brief outline of the historical and archaeological background relating to the study area and key designated heritage assets within the wider area. It focusses on the nearby recorded heritage assets that may provide information about the archaeological potential of the Proposed Development area.
- 1.1.2 Several archaeological investigations have been carried out within the Proposed Development and the Inner Study Area. Most of the investigations have revealed heritage assets that have since been registered in the Historic Environment Record of Highland Council:
- A walkover survey (HER ref. EHG3637) was carried out in November 2010 and January 2011 within North and South Dalchork Forest, recording a large number of new heritage assets.
 - A walkover survey (HER ref. EHG4391) was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd in February 2011 in advance of a proposed wind farm development at Dalnessie, during which 59 heritage assets were recorded which included a farmstead and possible hut circles. This covered a significant part of the central portion of the Proposed Development.
 - A walkover survey (HER ref. EHG4321) carried out by L Prentice in August 2013 in advance of the Dalchork Woodland Development Project, to the south west of the Proposed Development. The survey identified several previously unknown heritage assets, including field boundaries, drystone dykes, clearance cairns, probable borrow pits and stone dumps, a hut circle, and a possible farmstead.
 - An evaluation, excavation, and watching brief (HER ref. EHG5640, and EHG5641) was undertaken at Dalchork substation, by AOC Archaeology in 2020 over an area of prehistoric settlement, which indicated that the preservation was variable across the evaluation area, affected by woodland planting and felling operations. The five roundhouses showed evidence for either stone or stone and turf construction, with most of them demonstrating collapsed and spread walls with rough facing stones. Four of these were excavated. Four cairns that were evaluated showed areas of rapid deposition of stone with periods of soil formation in places indicating periods between deposition in some of the cairns.
- 1.1.3 The heritage assets within the study area are described in the context of a timeline of archaeological periods from prehistoric through to modern. The location of the heritage assets can be cross-referenced with **Figure 9.1 – Cultural Heritage Assets**. These have been allocated a unique heritage asset reference number (HA01, HA02, etc.), which is listed in the gazetteer below and is referred to in the text.
- 1.1.4 Prehistoric Period (12,700 BCE to CE 400)**
- 1.1.5 The landscape within the study areas contains rich and diverse archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period, found principally within pastureland and in heather moorland areas and on the higher slopes overlooking Loch Shin and Loch Beannach.
- 1.1.1 These consist of prehistoric settlement in the form of hut circles and traces of field systems that comprise clearance cairns, enclosures, and linear earthworks (**HA03, HA06, HA07, HA10, HA14, HA15 and HA20**). Some of these settlements have been designated as scheduled monuments due to the condition of the heritage assets in the area and their inclusion within an area that highlights continual use from this period through to the post-medieval period.
- 1.1.2 Medieval Period (CE 400 – CE 1614)**

- 1.1.3 The study areas and the surrounding areas of Lairg show evidence of prehistoric settlements and agriculture, which may have continued into the medieval period. The Pictish tribes occupied most of Sutherland until the rise of the kingdom of Alba in 900 CE, with their kingdoms stretching from the River Forth to Shetland. However, there are no known heritage assets conclusively dating from the medieval period within the Proposed Development or the surrounding study areas.
- 1.1.4 There is a battle site at Cnoc Chatha (Canmore ID – 81981, HER Ref. MHG9361, **HA17**) that took place between the Master of Sutherland and the MacKays in about 1522 in which the MacKays were defeated.
- 1.1.5 It is possible that the medieval land use of the study areas remained agricultural. The post-medieval field systems, dwelling places and agricultural remains in the vicinity could have originated in the medieval period. However, the Proposed Development would probably have been located in a sparsely populated rural landscape throughout this period.

1.1.6 Post-Medieval Period (CE 1614 – CE 1900)

- 1.1.7 Though schematic, early historic maps provide a good insight to settlement locations. Pont's 1614 map annotates Loch Shin to the west of the study areas and the River Shin situated to the south. Sparse rural settlement are shown at the southern end of Loch Shin, but no settlements are noted within the Proposed Development boundary.¹
- 1.1.8 Roy's military map of the Highlands (1747-52)² shows most of the study area as occupying uninhabited uplands. The area to the south-west of the Outer Study Area shows a few settlements- Achinraad, Achafish, Kolliball and Dalcork. The presence of the settlements suggests that related agricultural and pastoral activity was present in the area.
- 1.1.9 There are only a few late 18th and early 19th century maps that cover the study area but it seems that the area around the Proposed Development was sparsely populated during this period. In the mid-18th century, Sutherland was affected by the Highland Clearances, making way for large sheep farms. The Sutherland Estate amounted to approximately 1.5 million acres and the Countess of Sutherland realised the financial benefit of pasture lands and hundreds of people renting these lands were forcibly displaced.
- 1.1.10 The scheduled settlements north of Feith Osdail Dalnessie (SM4563, **HA03**), Loch Beag na Furalachd (SM5081, **HA07**), and Cnoc a' Bhreac-leathaid (SM5300, **HA10**) are all evidence of these clearances, representing abandoned settlements from this period, with some other walls and structures noted as part of these settlements (**HA09**, **HA16**, **HA18**, and **HA19**).
- 1.1.11 Other post-medieval heritage assets in the Inner Study Area are shielings and sheepfolds that represent the new way of life after the abandonment of the townships (**HA04**, **HA05**, and **HA11**).
- 1.1.12 As per the Old Statistical Account (OSA) for Lairg the population of the parish is recorded to have risen between 1736 and 1794, from 750 to approximately 1350. It is possible that the increase in Lairg's population was a result of clearances undertaken further to the north.³
- 1.1.13 The final heritage asset from this period is the Feith Osdail Bridge Over Feith Osdail Burn (LB8018, **HA13**), which was built in 1815 as a single span rubble bridge with later renewed concrete footings. It is a Category C listed building.
- 1.1.14 Modern Period (CE 1901 – present)**
- 1.1.15 By the end of the 19th century, Lairg saw the arrival of railways. This brought the opportunity to reduce agricultural dependence on sheep and diversify. However, historic map regression suggests that the Proposed Development has undergone little to no change since 1879.

¹ AOC Archaeology (2019). Lairg II Wind Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Report – Volume I, Chapter 7: Archaeology & Cultural Heritage

² National Library of Scotland (2023). Roy's Military Map of 1742-52

³ AOC Archaeology (2019). Lairg II Wind Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Report – Volume I, Chapter 7: Archaeology & Cultural Heritage

- 1.1.16 The Lairg Wind Farm was constructed between 2010 and 2012 and became operational in September 2012.
- 1.1.17 There are no modern heritage assets within the study areas, and it is likely that land use was largely unchanged from the post-medieval period.

Cultural Heritage Gazetteer

HA No.	Ref No.	National Grid Ref		Heritage Asset Type	Designation	Heritage Asset Name	Description	Period
		Easting	Northing					
1	HER Ref. MHG62230	262250	915890	Sheep Fold	Non-designated	Sheepfold - Cnoc na Fuaralachd	The sheepfold at Cnoc na Fuaralachd is circular and approximately 12 m in diameter, depicted on the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st or 2nd Edition maps.	Post-medieval
2	Canmore ID – 75094 HER Ref. MHG10496	263100	915200	Farmstead	Non-designated	Dalnessie	The asset consists of a farmstead.	Post-medieval
3	SM4563 Canmore ID – 5529, 5524 HER Ref. MHG12505, MHG12784, MHG40123, MHG55491, MHG43667	262095	914700	Settlement	Scheduled Monument	Dalnessie, settlement N of Feith Osdail	The monument consists of a township or complex of foundations of more than 30 small rectangular houses and subcircular enclosures, including a few larger multiperiod house foundations up to 15 m long and a modern sheepfold. The complex stretches over 400 m along the side of the hill. There are patches of lazybedding interspersed with the structures. The monument includes the southern edge of a prehistoric cairnfield and a single roundhouse measuring 10 m by 8.5 m internally over a rubble bank spread to 2 m in width and up to 0.3 m high.	Medieval / post-medieval
4	SM5084 Canmore ID – 5527	262357	913942	Shieling	Scheduled Monument	Achadh nan Eun, shieling 1400 m N of	The monument consists of the remains of a post-medieval building. The surviving foundations indicate a building of about 9 m by 6 m on a north to south axis. The building was sited on a grassy mound. The majority of buildings of this type in the area north of Lairg occur in clusters and isolated examples are rare.	Post-medieval

HA No.	Ref No.	National Grid Ref		Heritage Asset Type	Designation	Heritage Asset Name	Description	Period
		Easting	Northing					
	HER Ref. MHG12503, MHG45158							
5	SM5159 Canmore ID 5531 HER Ref. MHG12507, MHG43678	260195	914673	Settlement	Scheduled Monument	Loch Beag na Fuaralachd, shielings 1000 m SW of SW end of	<p>This post-medieval settlement consists of at least five structures preserved in a forestry clearing. Three of these are circular or oval, including one well defined circle of stones. One structure is rectangular and a further example is irregular in form. The structures vary from 7 m by 4 m to 6 m by 15 m and represent the remains of small medieval/post-medieval buildings of 'shieling' type.</p> <p>They would appear to represent part of a 'cottar town', many of which were destroyed during the Clearances of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The settlement was probably occupied over a long period of time and this is indicated by the varying condition of survival of the buildings.</p>	Post Medieval
6	SM5401 Canmore ID – 5530 HER Ref. MHG12506, MHG55489	260041	914919	Settlement	Scheduled Monument	Loch Beag na Fuaralachd, prehistoric settlement 950 m SW of SW end of	<p>This monument consists of a hut circle and traces of a field system which are located on a south facing hill side. The hut circle measures 9 m by 8 m within a wall which consists of a rubble spread 2.5 m wide and up to 0.7 m high. The field system consists of 12 or more clearance cairns which surround the house and a linear earthwork along the slope to the N.</p>	Prehistoric
7	SM5081 Canmore ID – 5144	259855	914908	Settlement	Scheduled Monument	Loch Beag na Fuaralachd, cairn and shielings 1175 m ESE of SW end	<p>This monument consists of two elements. One is a prehistoric cairn composed of rubble stones and partly turf covered (NC59791501). The other is a post-medieval settlement lying to the southeast. These would appear to represent part of a 'cottar town', many of which were</p>	Prehistoric; post-medieval

HA No.	Ref No.	National Grid Ref		Heritage Asset Type	Designation	Heritage Asset Name	Description	Period
		Easting	Northing					
	HER Ref. MHG43672, MHG12799, MHG55490, MHG55487, MHG55488, MHG13267						destroyed during the clearances of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.	
8	HER Ref. MHG12365	259500	914450	Structure	Non-designated	Structures, Feith Osdail	The asset consists of two structures situated on a low-knoll, surrounded by a young plantation.	Post-medieval
9	Canmore ID – 5217	259390	914410	Structure	Non-designated	Feith Osdail	The asset consists of the remains of a former rectangular stone structure, situated within a recently ploughed and planted area of low, poorly-drained ground.	Post-medieval
10	SM5300, Canmore ID – 5214, HER Ref. MHG12840, MHG40520, MHG12851, MHG12841	259210	913895	Settlement	Scheduled Monument	Cnoc a' Bhreac-leathaid, shielings and cairnfield 700 m NNE of	The monument consists of multiple elements. These include a small prehistoric cairnfield (NC591138), a prehistoric hut circle (NC593138), a group of rectilinear structures (NC593140), and a few other associated structures.	Prehistoric / post-medieval
11	Canmore ID – 5229, HER Ref. MHG10462	258460	914200	Shieling Hut	Non-designated	Feith Osdail	The asset consists of a grass-covered stone shieling, measuring 5.5 m by 1 m.	Post-medieval

HA No.	Ref No.	National Grid Ref		Heritage Asset Type	Designation	Heritage Asset Name	Description	Period
		Easting	Northing					
12	HER Ref. MHG33613	258130	914090	Sheep Fold	Non-designated	Sheepfold, Dalmichy	The asset consists of the remains of a circular sheepfold.	Post-medieval
13	LB8018 Canmore ID – 5209	257480	913941	Bridge	Category C Listed Building	Feith Osdail Bridge Over Feith Osdail Burn	The asset consists of a single span rubble bridge, consisting of dressed rubble arch ring and parapet cope. It is furthermore provided with shallow end buttresses and has a splayed approach on a long raised causeway.	Post-medieval
14	Canmore ID – 5201, HER Ref. MHG12168	257700	911400	Enclosure(S)	Non-designated	Dalchork	The asset consist of at least three enclosures and the partial remains of two others. These structures seem to have formed a settlement of three closely-grouped hut circles situated on a slight northeast to southwest rise. A few scattered clearance cairns could also be sighted in the area. However, according to the field visit report by RCHAMS (JRS) in 1989, these hut circles were probably built for agricultural purposes.	Prehistoric
15	Canmore ID – 5047, 5048, 5051, HER Ref. MHG11870, MHG11871, MHG11873, MHG40487	257930	909950	Settlement and cairn	Non-designated	Cnoc Chatha	The asset consists of a settlement of hut circles and four enclosures, situated along the western slopes of Cnoc Chatha. The settlements could be former sheepfolds or could have been scooped into the hillslope. The enclosures have been damaged and the form cannot be recognised. One of the cairns consists of a small round cairn, covered by thick heather and measuring about 5.5m in diameter. Excavation of the cist structure showed that it is partially filled with dead vegetation.	Prehistoric
16	HER Ref. MHG55465	257840	909900	Wall	Non-designated	Wall, Cnoc Chatha	The asset consists of a degraded length of moss- and bracken-covered drystone walling, that measures about 1 m in width. The structure seems to have served as a boundary wall.	Post-medieval

HA No.	Ref No.	National Grid Ref		Heritage Asset Type	Designation	Heritage Asset Name	Description	Period
		Easting	Northing					
17	Canmore ID – 81981, HER Ref. MHG9361	257990	909900	Battle	Non-designated	Battlefield, Cnoc Chatha	The location of a battle between the Master of Sutherland and the MacKays about 1522 in which the MacKays were defeated.	Post-medieval
18	HER Ref. MHG55464	258050	909800	Wall	Non-designated	Wall, Cnoc Chatha	The asset consists of a stretch of heavily degraded drystone walling, along with some large boulders, set amidst a dense bracken and stone-strewn hillside.	Post-medieval
19	HER Ref. MHG55463	258040	909870	Wall	Non-designated	Wall, Cnoc Chatha	The asset consists of heavily degraded remains of drystone walling.	Post-medieval
20	Canmore ID – 4999, HER Ref. MHG11994, MHG40495	258200	909600	Settlement	Non-designated	Cnoc Chatha	The asset consists of a settlement of at least three hut circles that is situated on the southern-facing slopes of Cnoc Chatha. The huts have been fully excavated as part of the Dalchork substation development.	Prehistoric