



Battery Energy Storage Project, Land East of Contullich, Aness

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

RES UK and Ireland Ltd

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SLR Project No.: 405.065021.00001

Client Reference No: UK.035390

20 December 2023

Revision: 03

Basis of Report

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1.0 Introduction

SLR Consulting was commissioned by the Client (RES UK & Ireland Ltd) to prepare an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in relation to a proposed development located on land to the east of Struie Road, Contullich (centred around NGR: NH 64186 70932), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The proposal is for the construction of a battery storage facility. This document reports on the findings of the assessment, which was conducted in July and August of 2023.

1.1 The Site

The Site (Figures 1 & 2 – Appendix A) totals 6.3 hectares, within the north of an agricultural field, located between the B9176 Struie Road and Coulhill Wood to the east. The north and east the Site is bounded by further fields. The Avern River passes to the east of the Site roughly north to south, c.280 m to the northeast of the Site at its closest point. The town of Alness is 1k southeast of the Site, with the Coulhill woodland forming a boundary between.

When this assessment was originally produced, a larger Original Land Under Option area (Figures 1 & 2) was considered, that encompassed the current Site (Figure 3) and fields to the south. This has been refined and updated to the current Site, and this report updated to reflect this.

1.2 The Development

The proposed development is a battery energy storage facility including battery containers sited within a compound with fencing, acoustic fencing, drainage channels and an attenuation basin, PCS / transformers, a DNO substation, auxiliary transformer, LV feeder panel, client substation and equipment and spares storage units. The surface finish of the compound will likely comprise stone or asphalt. This storage facility will comprise approximately 3 hectares in total within the Site (Figure 3). An access track is proposed from the western entrance from Struie Road and passing along the boundary to the north. The proposed development footprint comprises the storage facility and access track and is shown on Figure 3 (Appendix A).

1.3 Objectives

This report considered the likely effects of the proposed development on non-designated and unknown cultural heritage (archaeology) within the Site. The objectives are as follows:

- Set out the archaeological baseline of the Site;
- Assess the archaeological potential of the Site;
- Assess the effects of the proposals on the archaeological resource, within the context of relevant legislation and planning policy; and
- Determine whether, where any predicted adverse effects are identified, these effects can be mitigated.

1.4 Standards

The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with all relevant statutes, policies, and guidance, including the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014) and Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (CIfA 2017).

The assessment has been undertaken, and the report prepared, by Gwynnaeth McCullough, Project Archaeologist (ACIfA), at SLR Consulting with the input of Senior Consultant, Elliot Grater (ACIfA) and Principal Consultant, Alastair Becket (MCIfA).



2.0 Legislation, Planning Policy & Guidance

2.1 Legislation

The primary legislation relating to cultural heritage at the national level comprises:

- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (UK Government 1979).

2.1.1 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (UK Government 1979)

Under the 1979 Act, the Scottish Ministers are required to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments considered to be of national importance. The consent of the Scottish Ministers is required before any works are carried out which would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or covering up a Scheduled Monument. In addition, impacts of proposed development works upon the setting of a Scheduled Monument form an important consideration in the granting or refusal of planning consent to conduct development works.

2.2 National Planning Policy

Planning policy at the national level includes:

- National Planning Framework for Scotland 4 (NPF4) The Scottish Government 2023);
- Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HEPS) (Historic Environment Scotland 2019); and
- Planning Advice Note 2/2011 (PAN 2) (2011).

2.2.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023)

Under Policy 7 of NPF4: Historic assets and places, the policy sets out the following for all cultural heritage assets in Scotland. Primarily Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.

Scheduled Monuments in line with Policy 7 h:

Development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where:

- direct impacts on the scheduled monument are avoided;*
- significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument are avoided; or*
- exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact on a scheduled monument and its setting and impacts on the monument or its setting have been minimised.*

2.2.2 Historic Environment Policy Statement (HEPS) (Historic Environment Scotland (2019)

HEPS sets out the principles under which Historic Environment Scotland (HES) operates and provides a framework that informs the day-to-day work of a range of organisations that have a role and interest in managing the historic environment. The policy statement complements and is to be read alongside the Scottish Planning Policy and other relevant documents, including 'Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland' (2014).



2.2.3 Planning Advice Note 2/2011; Planning and Archaeology

Planning Advice Note 2/2011 (PAN 2) advises that, in determining planning applications, planning authorities should consider the relative importance of archaeological sites (para 5). It also notes that in determining planning applications that may impact archaeological features or their setting, planning authorities may on occasion have to balance the benefits of development against the importance of archaeological features (para 6). The desirability of preserving a monument (whether scheduled or not) is a material consideration and the objective should be to assure the protection and enhancement of monuments by preservation in situ, in an appropriate setting. When preservation in situ is not possible, recording and/or excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results may be an acceptable alternative (para 14).

2.3 Guidance

- Guidance at the national level includes:
- Our Place in Time - The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (2014); and the
- 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' guidance notes.

2.4 Local Planning Policy

2.4.1 Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, Continued in Force since April 2012

The relevant Policies related to the Cultural Heritage Environment are as follows:

“Policy BP2: The Council will permit development unless this would be likely to have a significantly adverse effect on, or be significantly adversely affected by, the features for which the area has been designated. Where it is concluded that any such adverse effects are likely to arise, development will only be permitted where it is considered that these would be outweighed by social or economic benefits.

BP3: The Council will only approve development if there are no significant adverse effects on heritage –“.

2.4.2 Highland-wide Local Development Plan, April 2012

The relevant Policies related to the Cultural Heritage Environment are as follows:

Policy 57; Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage:

“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:

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.

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. -”



Policy 28; Sustainable Design:

“The Council will support developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland.

Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- impact on the following resources, including pollution and discharges, particularly within designated areas: -

- *Cultural Heritage; -“*



3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Parameters

The following search areas have been used to establish the Site's baseline cultural heritage conditions:

- for purposes of assessing known and potential buried archaeological remains, a 1km buffer has been utilised; and

All cultural heritage assets identified within the Site and 1km of the Site are listed in **Appendix B** and shown in Figure 1.

3.2 Data Collection

Up-to-date cultural heritage information has been obtained from the following sources:

- Historic Environment Scotland's Spatial Warehouse Database (HES 2017a), for the locations and extents of Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas and Inventory Historic Battlefields, procured as GIS data;
- Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER), for known non-designated cultural heritage assets, complete with information on their character and condition;
- Canmore, the HES database, for additional information relating to cultural heritage assets;
- the National Library of Scotland, for historic Ordnance Survey maps and other historic maps, to provide information on sites of potential archaeological significance and on historic land use development;
- archival information, published and unpublished literature for additional background and historical information; and
- the online Historic Land-Use Assessment Map (HLA Map) for Scotland (HES 2017c), maintained by HES, for information on the historic land use character of the Site.
- NCAP (National Collection of Aerial Photographs) for a review of available aerial photographs covering the Site;
- The Scottish Remote Sensing Portal for LiDAR data;
- British Geological Survey (BGS) and National Soil Map for Scotland were used for geology and hydrology of soils within the Site;
- Google Earth Pro for satellite imagery;
- The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework, which provides a scope of archaeological understanding and further research aims.

3.3 Site Walkover

A Site walkover was undertaken on the 28th of July 2023 to verify the presence and condition of known cultural heritage assets, and to identify any previously unrecorded cultural heritage assets. The Site and larger Original Land Under Option area was walked over, as much as was possible given vegetation, and photographs and field notes were taken. This is further discussed in Section 4.5.



3.4 Assessing Impact

HEPS (2019) define impact as:

“The effect of changes on the historic environment is often referred to as the impact. This can be neutral, positive or negative. There can be impact on the physical elements of a place or on its setting, if its surroundings are changed so that our understanding, appreciation or experience is altered. Changes in the historic environment can also affect people’s associations with a place or its setting, and their responses to it.”

With the above definition and Historic Environment Policy 4:

“HEP4 Changes to specific assets and their context should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment. Opportunities for enhancement should be identified where appropriate. If detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place.”

Assessment of impact has been broken down into the following:

- Positive impact; in line with HEP2, that a positive impact will ensure that the understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment is preserved as well as secured for present and future generations;
- Neutral; The development would not diminish the ability to understand, appreciate or experience a cultural heritage asset or its integrity; and
- Negative; An impact that would significantly alter the ability to understand, appreciate or experience a cultural heritage asset and its integrity.



4.0 Archaeological Baseline

4.1 Designated Assets

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site or the 1km study area. There are a total of five Scheduled Monuments within 2km of the Site, four of which are prehistoric cairns (**SM5192**, **SM5223**, **SM4750** and **SM2406**) located on the upper slopes to the east and west of the River Averon. The fifth is a Scheduled chapel (**SM5572**). There are two listed buildings within the study area, the Category C Moultaivie Farmhouse (**LB371/MHG18299**), and Category B Daleich Bridge (**LB15037/MHG7999**). Due to the nature and lack of proximity of these assets to the Site, it is not considered that there is a potential for archaeological remains related to these assets to exist within the Site.

4.2 Topography, Geology, and Historic Land Use

The Site is located upon on the west bank of the Averon River valley, upon a gentle sloping elevated area ranging between 81 to 74 AOD at the southeast lower slopes of Cnoc Fyrish and Ceislein. The Averon river valley continues to the north between Cnoc Fyrish and Ceislein to the west and Cnoc Navie to the east (Figure 4). The topography remains elevated within Coul Hill and then drops to the Averon River and Cromarty Firth banks on which Ales is located.

The geology within the Site comprises part of a band of raddy sandstone formation (Figure 5) topped with superficial deposits of glaciofluvial gravel, sand and silts.¹ The Sites soils comprise mineral podzols (Figure 6) which are freely draining within the west and imperfectly drained within the east.² The footprint of the development sits across both soils of freely and imperfect draining soils at approximately 75m AOD.

An appraisal of the Historic Land-Use Assessment data provided by Historic Environment Scotland was undertaken. The Site is recorded as being agricultural land dating to the 18th century to the present, with the Site comprising part of an agricultural field.

¹https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html?layers=BGSBedrock50,BGSSuperficial50,BGSArtificial50,BGSMass50,BGSLinearFeat50&_ga=2.7263730.1776028249.1690460505-1992267621.1690460505

²https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/?layer=1



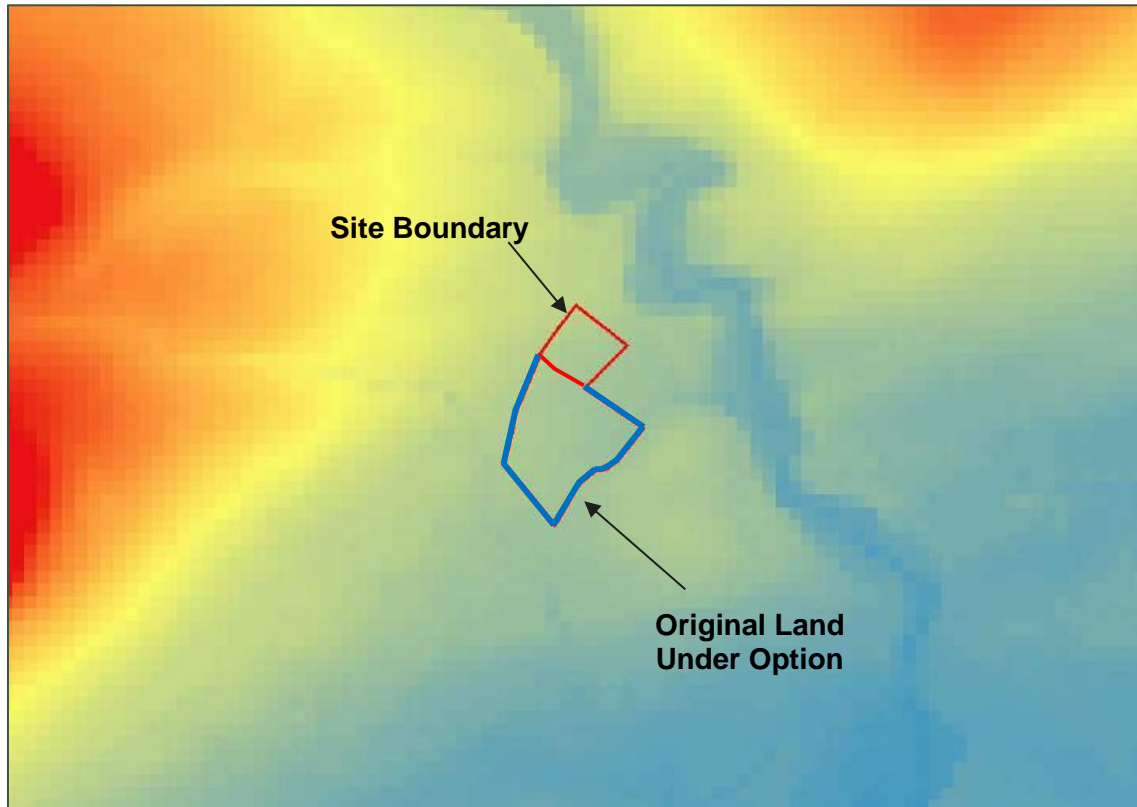


Figure 4 - Topographic map of the Site and its environment

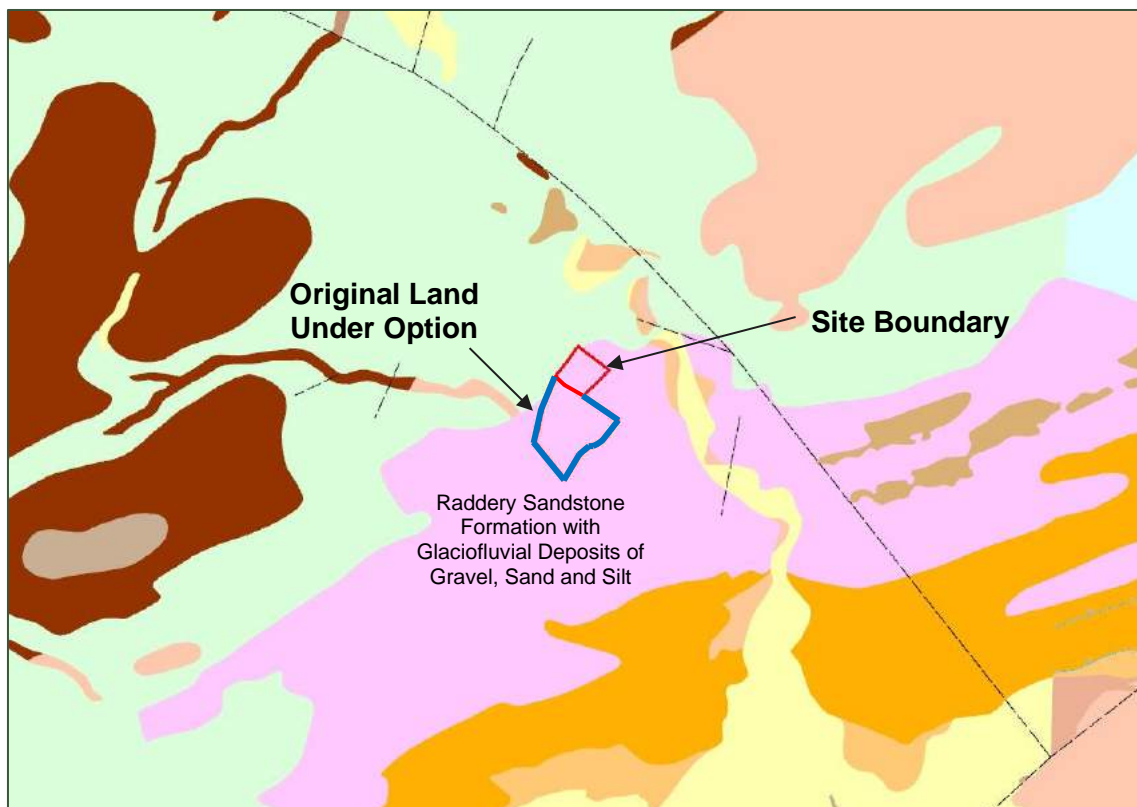


Figure 5 - BGS data³



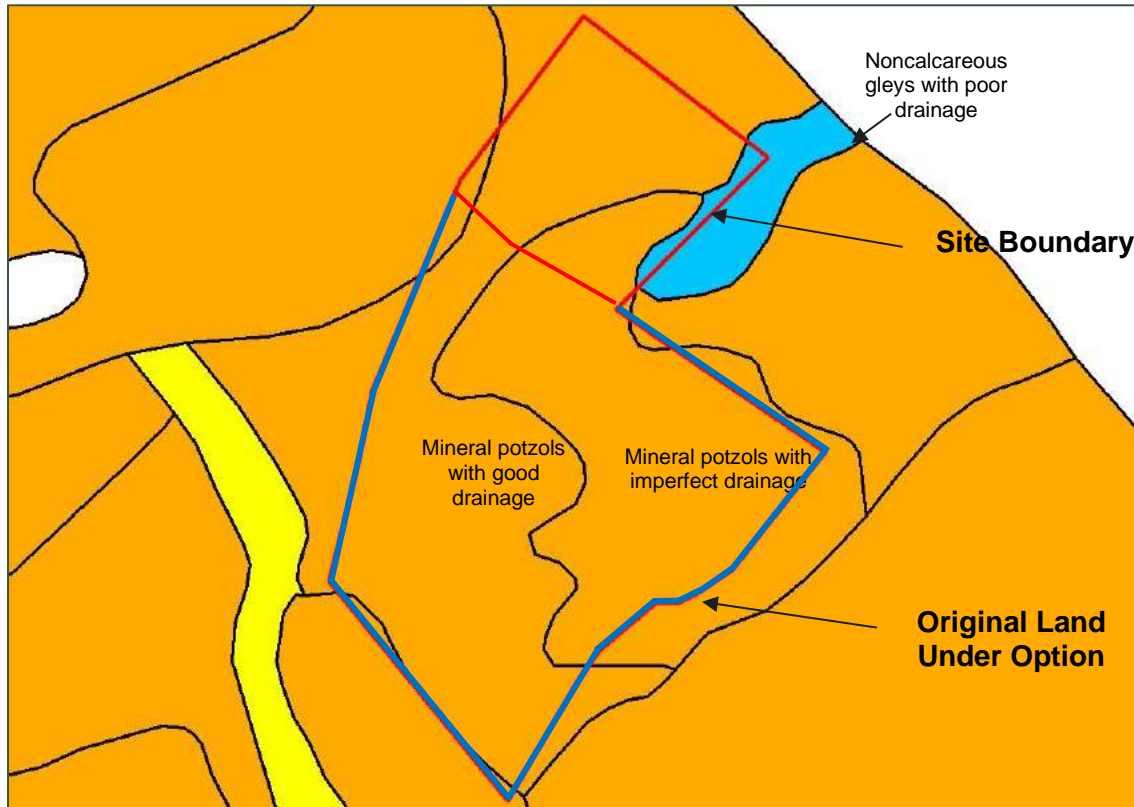


Figure 6 - Soil distribution⁴

³ Contains British Geological Survey materials © UKRI [2023]

⁴ Soil Survey of Scotland Staff (1970-1987). Soil maps of Scotland (partial coverage). Digital version 10 release. James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen. DOI 10.5281/zenodo.6908156. Used with the permission of The James Hutton Institute. All rights reserved.

Any public sector information contained in these data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v.2.0



4.3 LiDAR Review

The LiDAR data (Figure 7) has been reproduced using the Relief Visualisation Tool⁵ on data sources from the Scottish Remote Sensing Portal⁶. LiDAR was also processed on ArcMap using the Image Analysis tool.

The results show that the Site is relatively flat due to agricultural ploughing. In the wider field the Site belongs to this is much the same, although two ridges seem to occur within the centre of the field. These ridges are likely natural features within the field, either natural topographical features or formed by historic water courses which flowed through the field to the river Averon from Cnoc Fyrish and Contullich Burn, since otherwise ploughed out.

The specific area of the development's footprint within the Site is relatively level with no features evident.

The ridge to the east of the Site is related to a spring, which connects to the river Averon to the east. Other topographical anomalies are the result of the woodland to the southeast and east and modern trackways. There seems to be no indication of the prehistoric cropmark within the east or northeast of the Site, however the appearance of cropmarks are normally due to their degradation due to agricultural activities, and therefore any earthworks of the feature would have been ploughed flat.

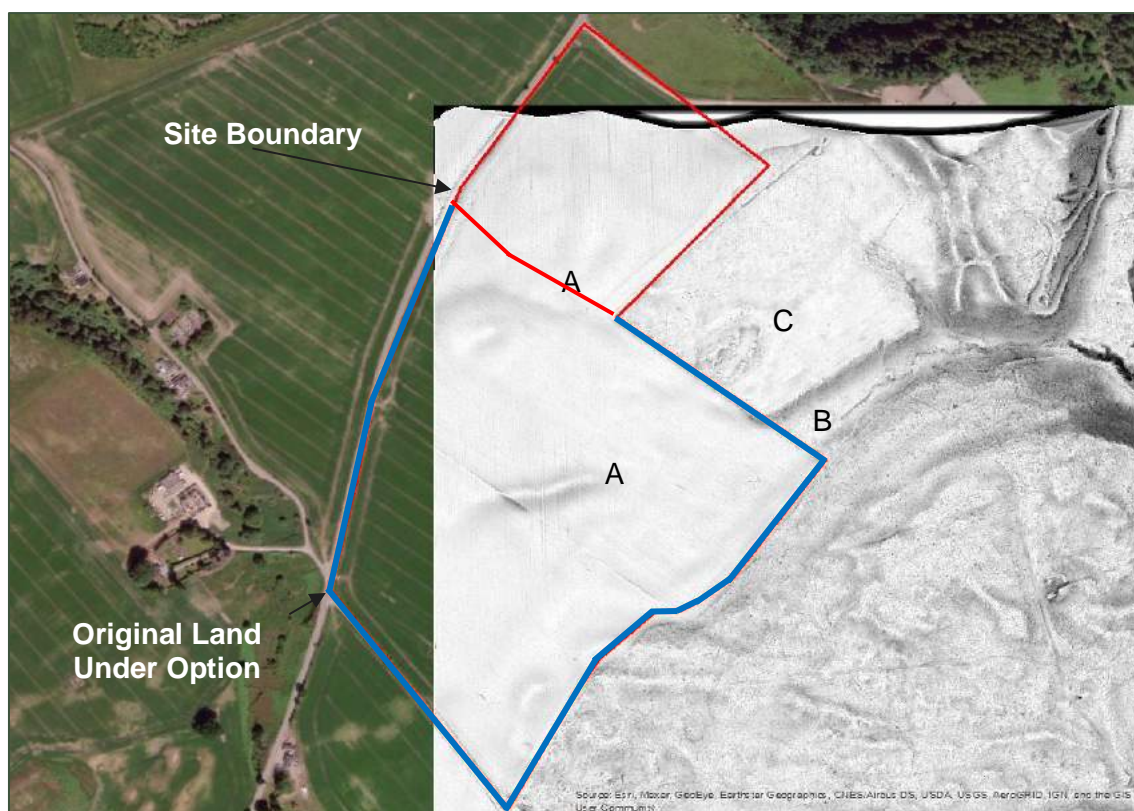


Figure 7 - Processed LiDAR dataset⁷

Sky View Factor: Number of Search Directions, 32, Min – Max of 0.7 and 1 with Multiply Blending Mode. A; Natural topographical features. B; Natural spring and stream. C; Pond.

⁵ <https://www.zrc-sazu.si/en/rvt>

⁶ <https://remotesensingdata.gov.scot/data#/map>

⁷ Crown copyright Scottish Government, SEPA and Scottish Water (2012).



4.4 Previous Archaeological Works

This section summarises the previous archaeological and cultural heritage events in proximity to the Site within the HER record. These assessments and investigations can collectively contribute to the predictive model for archaeology within the Site. They are shown on Figure 2.

- **EHG3463**; Desk based assessment and walkover survey - proposed Alness substation. Conducted in a number of areas, including bounding the Site directly to the northeast, a number of land parcels c.250m northwest of the Site and c.1100m to the southwest.
 - The assessment and survey identified a former quarry works and modern field clearances. The presence of a Bronze Age burnt mound was also confirmed (MHG8008).
- **EHG5870**; Watching brief c.170m to the west of the Site:
 - An archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief were carried out in 2021 at Contullich House. One archaeological feature was recorded comprising a stone-filled pit containing degraded leather shoes and boots, post-medieval ceramics and glass and fragments of roofing slate.
- - **EHG5202**; Watching brief c.360m to c.850m to the southwest of the Site;
 - A watching brief was conducted for the construction of the Fyrish – Alness 132kV cable route. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found.
- **EHG815**; Desk-based assessment and Walkover Survey c.1300m to the south of the Site in 2002;
 - The desk-based assessment identified no further features but does make note of a potential crop mark within the vicinity of the event on an aerial photograph in 1982 and a findspot of a bronze age axe found in 1971 but now lost.
- **EHG3360**; Desk-based assessment, EIA and walkover survey – Beaully – Dounreay 275kV overhead transition line; second circuit, c.700m to the northwest;
 - The study identified 460 archaeological and heritage sites within a 200m wide corridor along the 50km track route. No features were identified within the Site.
- **EHG1264**; Walkover Survey – proposed Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm cable route, Alness, location c.90m to the northeast of the Site;
 - A number of monuments were identified along the cable route but none were identified within or in proximity to the Site.
- **EHG1161**; West Contullich water mains renewal project (desk-based assessment and walkover survey) c.1100m to the southwest of the Site;
 - Four built heritage assets were identified during the assessment. No assets were identified within the vicinity or within the Site.



4.5 Site Walkover

The site walkover was conducted on Friday 28th July, in clear, sunny weather. The area of the Site and wider field were under crop (wheat), which partially blocked access across the Site, though the boundaries of the field were accessible, including those in proximity to the proposed area of development. During the walkover, several features were identified, including a several post-medieval/modern cairns (SLR1 and SRL3 within the Site, SLR5, SLR 6 within the Original Land Under Option), and a modern concrete platform, likely related to services (SLR 4, within the Original Land Under Option). A cropmark identified in the HER (**MHG8317**) to the south of the Site was potentially observed and is discussed in Section 4.6. A further possible cropmark (SLR 2), was identified in the northeast corner of the Site within the footprint of the planned development, though an archaeological origin is uncertain, as is discussed in Section 4.6.

Assets identified during the walkover are depicted on Figure 2 (Appendix A), and photographs from the walkover are displayed in Appendix C.

4.6 Chronological Background

All HER assets within the Study Area are set out in Appendix B and shown on Figure 1. Not all assets are necessarily discussed in the following section, only those that are relevant for determining the archaeological background and potential of the Site.

4.6.1 Prehistoric

There is a presence of potential prehistoric activity to the south of the Site, within the Original Land Under Option. Approximately 250m south of the development area is an undated and unclassified enclosure cropmark (Appendix A, Figure 1: **MHG8317**), measuring approximately 10m in diameter. This enclosure might be visible on an aerial photograph in May 1989, but the cropmark is small and not conclusive as to whether it is an enclosure or natural feature⁸. An appraisal of satellite imagery⁹ shows faint indications of natural features in the form of cropmarks that align with those identified in the same area during the Site visit (Appendix C, Photographs 8, 9 and 10). We interpret these as natural features caused by geological variation or historic water courses, which have been flattened by ploughing.

Another curvilinear cropmark was identified during the Site visit within the vicinity of the development area (Appendix C, Photograph 15), although the crop variation is consistent with agricultural track marks within the Site, and it is likely modern and not of archaeological significance.

The general positioning of the Site, close to the Cromarty Firth and in an elevated position close to the river, would have been ideal for communication and trade with other communities. This raises the potential for the Site to contain prehistoric settlement remains. The location of the development, however, is on the boundary between good and imperfect drainage which lowers the potential for prehistoric settlement archaeology within the development footprint.

Burnt mounds were identified within the vicinity of the Site, c.150 m and 250 m to the east (Figure 1: **MHG8008** and **MHG8007**) and c.600 m to the west (Figure 1: **370421**). Although burnt mounds are of debatable function, those that have been excavated have shown complex

⁸ <https://ncap.org.uk/frame/8-1-3-1-63-217> - Coul Hill; Alness; ROSS AND CROMARTY; SCOTLAND | NCA - National Collection of Aerial Photography

⁹ Google Earth Pro accessed August 2023



internal structures and finds, and those in the Northern Isles have revealed relationships between the mounds and sites with other prehistoric monuments.¹⁰

There is a potential cairn c.590 m to the west of the Site, located along Contullich Burn (Figure 1: **13778**), c.390 m to the west of the burnt mound (Figure 1: **370421**), which would be consistent with the trend of prehistoric cairns within the wider landscape, as evidenced by four Scheduled cairns (see Section 3.1), and would contribute to the potential of prehistoric settlement within the surrounding landscape.

Two findspots are noted within the records. The first was a Neolithic to Bronze Age carved stone ball (Figure 1: **MHG8016**) was found sometime before 1907, 2 miles (3.2km) north of Alness (c.1-2km north of the Site) in a cultivated field near Contullich. The other findspot was found within the bounds of Alness golf-course, proximate to the burn, and comprised a socketed bronze blade (Canmore ID **13756**). These finds can indicate a human presence within the wider landscape during the Neolithic to Bronze Age.

4.6.2 Early medieval and medieval context

The assessment found no evidence of early medieval activity within the Site or its vicinity. This does not indicate no potential, considering the long-term use of the local landscape, and certain medieval dated assets may have existed earlier into this period such as Contullich Castle (Figure 1: **MHG8021**). Overall, however, the lack of assets within the study area indicates a very low potential for such remains to exist within the Site.

The location of Contullich farmstead, c.400 m to the southwest of the Site, is the historic seat of Contullich Castle; a fortalice belonging to Andrew Dubh Munro (Figure 1: **MHG8021**) (Figures 10 and 11). The medieval castle existed above ground until it was demolished in 1826 AD and the stones were reused for the current Contullich farmhouse and steading. Human remains were found within the walls of the castle during its dismantling, and some drains were noted by Mr Munro during drain digging to the southwest side of the current farmhouse.

A faint trace of potential medieval rig and furrow was identified c.200 m to the northeast of the Site (Figure 1: **MHG49937**) where the Alness Substation is now constructed. This rig and furrow was likely more widespread during the occupation of Contullich Castle and beyond, but later ploughed flat in the post-medieval period.

The other medieval remains within the landscape comprise a cist burial to the east of the River Averon (Figure 1: **MHG6317**) and a findspot of a medieval cross penny dating to Henry II or III (Figure 1: **MHG61592**). As the burial is located, and likely associated with, settlement to the east of the river, and the findspot is a portable material, these do not further raise the potential of medieval remains within the Site.

4.6.3 Post-medieval and modern context

The appraisal of the Historic Land Character assessment, historic mapping and the HER data depict the Site as agricultural land throughout the past few centuries. The Site is depicted as agricultural as early as the 18th Century on Roy's Military mapping (available through the National Library of Scotland¹¹, not reproduced here), and on the 1875 OS mapping the boundaries of the wider field have not markedly changed (Figure 8). The surrounding landscape has also remained relatively unchanged, with Coul Hill and the west banks of the river Averon being occupied with woodland since at least the 19th century.

¹⁰ <https://scarf.scot/national/scarf-bronze-age-panel-report/3-lifeways-and-lifestyles/3-3-settlement-landuse-and-resources/3-3-1-burnt-mounds/>

¹¹ <https://maps.nls.uk/>



Photograph 14 (Appendix C) shows a modern clearance cairn (SLR 1) in the northwestern corner of the Site. This cairn is fairly large and potentially represents spoil from a disused drystone wall, but otherwise consistent with stone clearing for continued agricultural use. Stone clearing cairns were noted in several corners of the field, most of which were likely very recent given the lack of vegetation/overgrowth on the stones, though one cairn (SLR 3), was considerably more overgrown, with mature trees growing from it, which may suggest a post-medieval or earlier origin.

A number of post-medieval agricultural buildings are recorded on the HER, although many of which are not definitively dated. Most notably, Contullich Farm, c.170 m to the west, appears to have been in use throughout the post-medieval period, and potentially earlier.

Some rural industry has also occurred within the vicinity of the Site including: a sawmill by the river Avern c.75 m to the west (Figure 1: **MHG33575**) depicted on historic mapping (Figures 8-11); a smithy depicted on historic mapping in the 1870s (Figures 8-11) c.640m southwest; and a fishery (Figure 1: **MHG18303**) c.260 m to the northeast of the Site. However, these sites are isolated to the areas depicted on historic mapping and modern satellite imagery and are not expected to have any remains within the Site.



4.7 Historic Map Regression¹²

An appraisal of available historic mapping was reviewed online. Earliest available detailed mapping is Roy's Military Survey (not reproduced within this report), where the approximate area of the Site is illustrated as being cultivated land with a number of isolated farmsteads and settlements based around the river Averon.

Maps between the late 19th century to early 20th century and to the modern day, the Site remains unchanged and under agricultural use. Only boundaries in the wider field have changed, with the most north field boundary divide seen on the Ross-shire and Cromartyshire LXV 1875 map being now removed, and the boundary halving the central field on the Ross and Cromartyshire Sheet LXV 1907 map also removed. These post-medieval to modern boundaries are not located within the footprint of the proposed development.

The 1890 Alness 1-inch map (Figure 10) depicts an earthwork or small hillock to the south of the Site. This feature may be a depiction of the natural topographical feature which is identifiable on the LiDAR. (Figure 7).

¹² All maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland



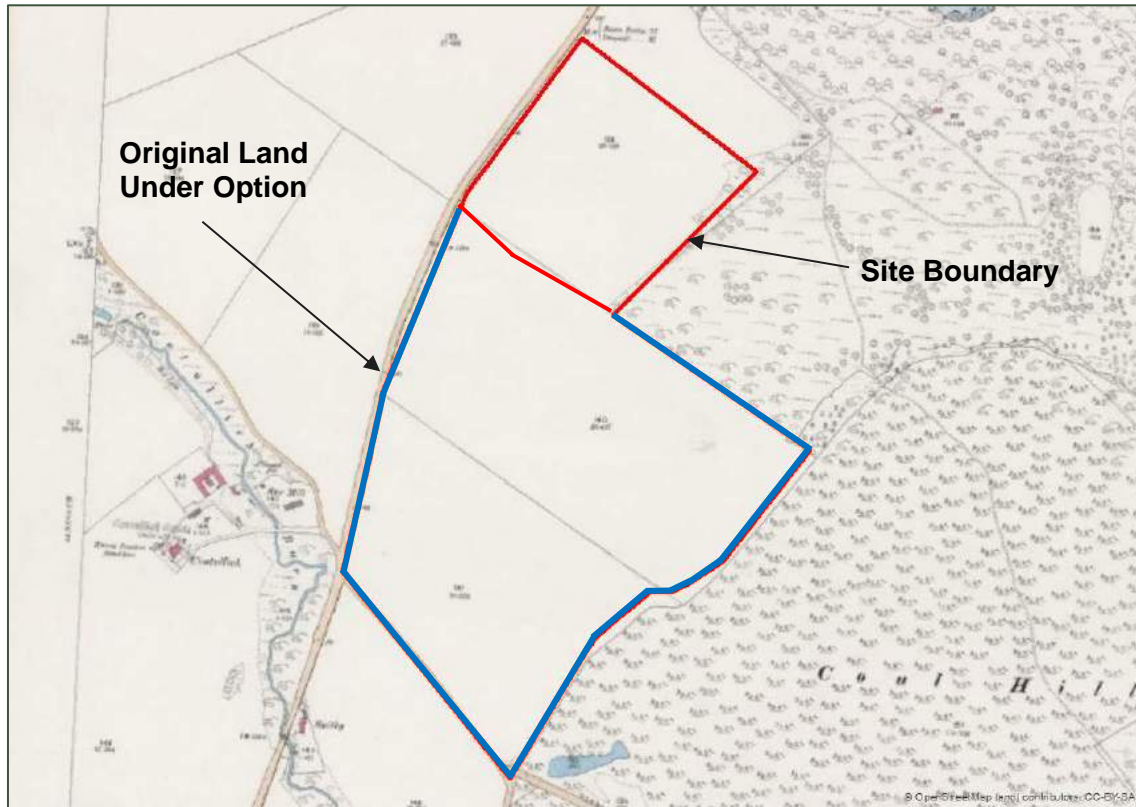


Figure 8 - OS Ross-shire and Cromarty LXV.3, 1875, 25-inch

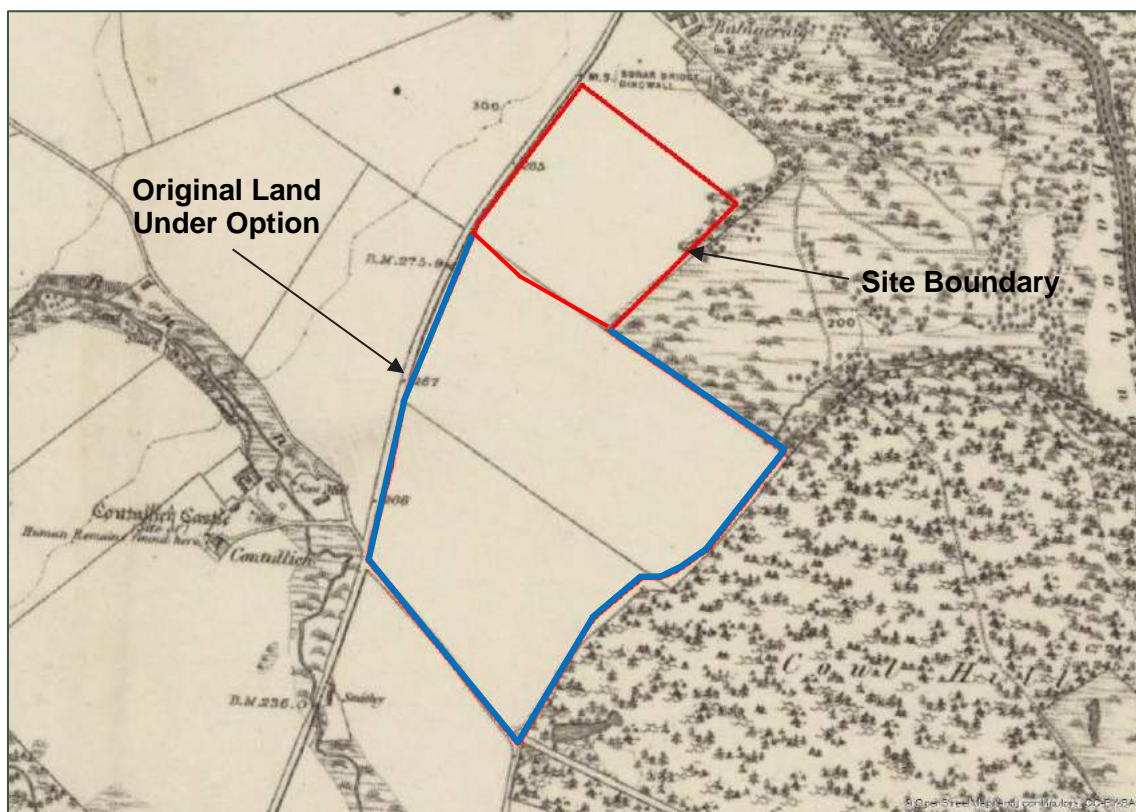


Figure 9 - OS Ross-shire & Cromartyshire Sheet LXV, 1880, 6-inch



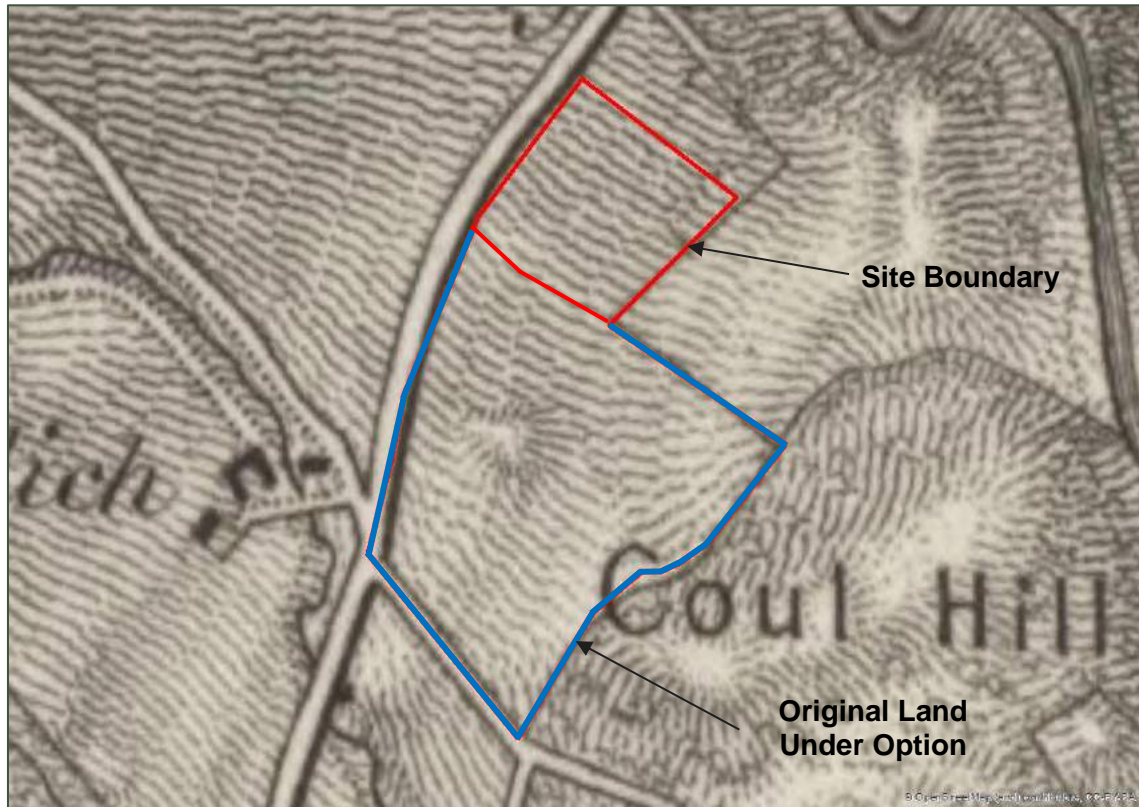


Figure 10 - OS Sheet 93 - Alness, 1890, 1-inch

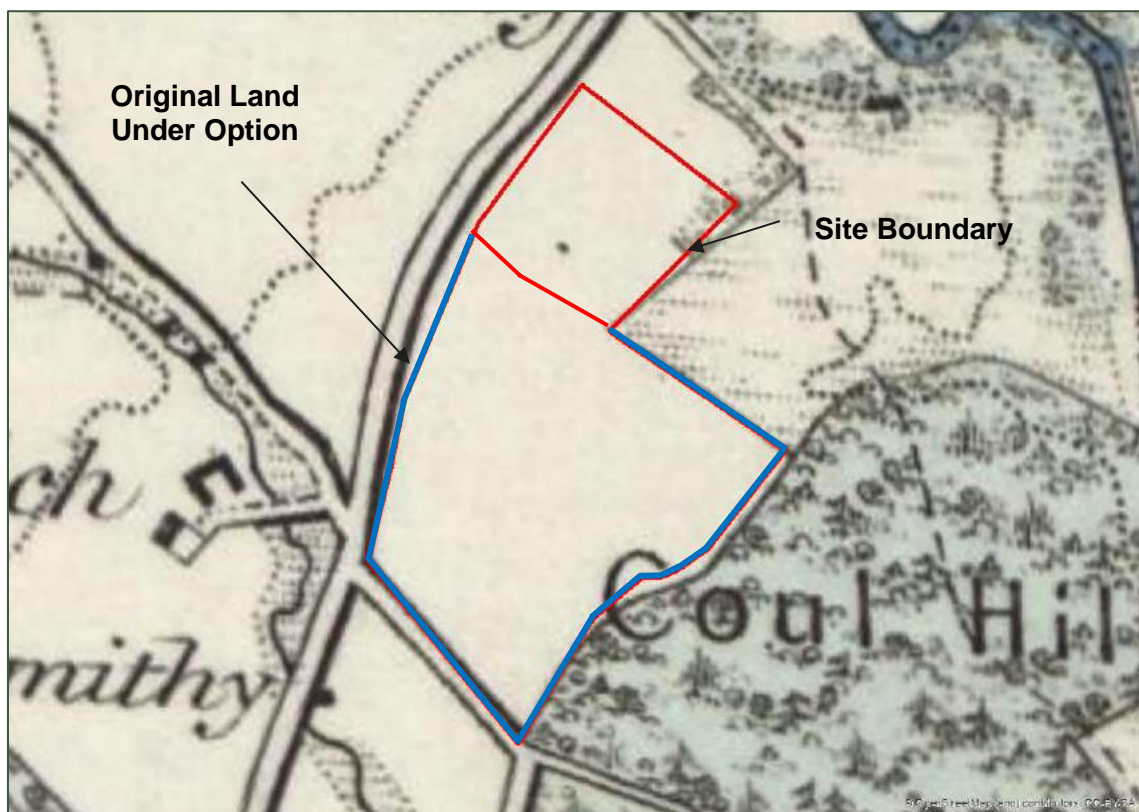


Figure 11 - OS Sheet 93 - Alness, 1896, 1-inch



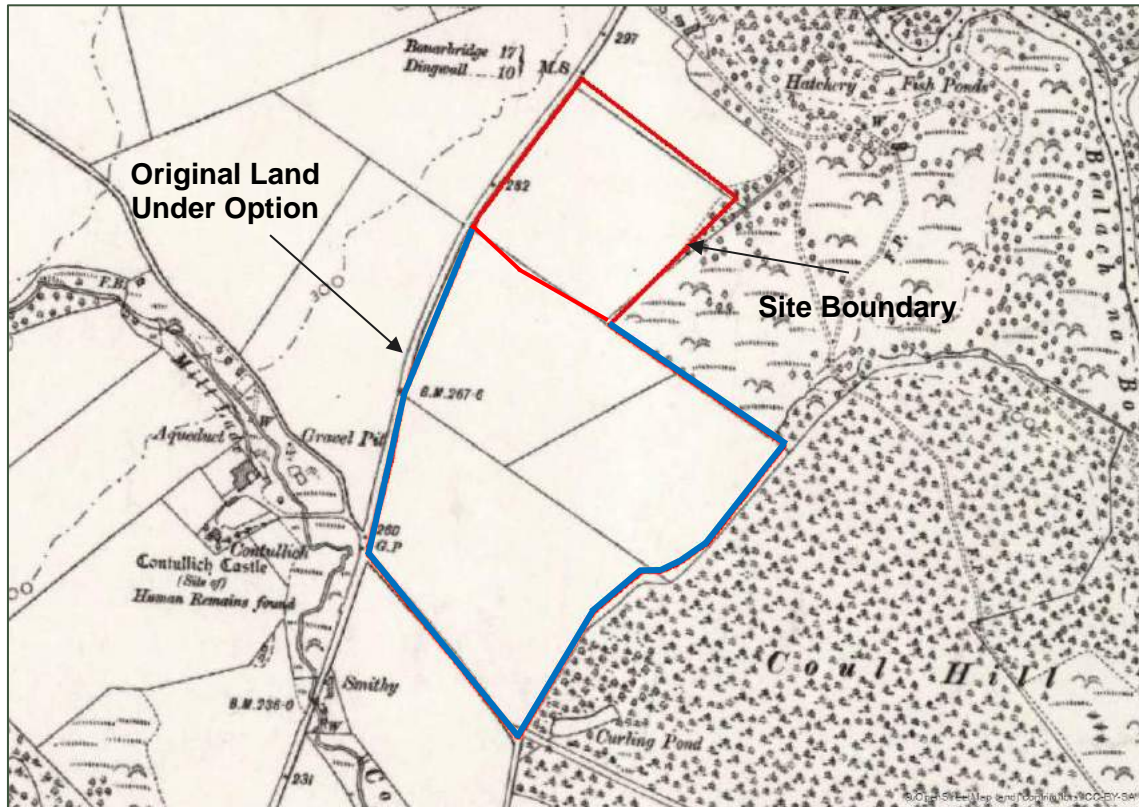


Figure 12 - OS Ross and Cromarty Sheet LXV.NE, 1907, 6-inch



4.8 Summary of potential

To understand the potential for unknown cultural heritage assets within the Site, the baseline provided above has been used to inform a predictive model for the presence of any, as of yet undefined, buried remains which may exist within the Site. The Site comprises improved farmland, which has likely been extensively ploughed, which may have affected the survivability of archaeological remains.

- Prehistoric

There is a **low** potential for prehistoric remains within the proposed development footprint.

- There are no known prehistoric features within the Site.
- Within the wider field a cropmark has been identified in the HER (Figure 1: **MHG8317**) as a potentially prehistoric feature. Our assessment of the feature has concluded that it is likely natural (see Section 4.6.1).
- Within the wider study area there is scattered prehistoric activity, including two burnt mounds southeast of the proposed development footprint, focused on a water course that is located outside of the Site.

- Medieval

There is a **low** potential for medieval remains within the proposed development footprint.

- There are no known medieval features within the Site.
- There are no known medieval features within the wider field.
- Contullich Castle, located southwest of the Site, demonstrates medieval activity within the immediate area. Within the study area there is limited medieval activity, including potential rig and furrow northeast of the proposed development footprint. Remains of rig and furrow are unlikely to survive within the Site due to ploughing.

- Post-Medieval

There is a **low** potential for post-medieval remains within the proposed development footprint.

- There are no known post-medieval features within the proposed development footprint.
- Within the Site and wider field, post-medieval remains relate to agricultural activity and include field boundaries and clearance cairns (some/all of which may be modern).
- Within the wider study area there is general post-medieval activity, primarily agricultural.



5.0 Discussion

5.1 Significance

There are no known archaeological remains and a generally **low** potential for previously unknown archaeological remains within the proposed development footprint. On the basis of the wider archaeological potential of the area, any previously unknown archaeological remains encountered are likely to be of **local significance**, either associated with scattered localised prehistoric activity within proximity to the river Averon, or medieval/post-medieval agricultural remains associated with the wider farming landscape. As such features of this type would be unlikely to warrant preservation *in situ* or other preclude development.

5.2 Potential Direct Impacts

The proposals comprise a battery energy storage facility with an area of approximately 6.3 hectares. This will include battery containers sited within a compound with fencing, drainage and other associated development and will have a capacity of up to 45 MW.

The footprint of the proposals would necessitate ground disturbance associated with, but not limited to, the following construction activities:

- cable trenching for electricity cables
- hard standing surfaces for infrastructure such as battery containers and other required buildings;
- fencing posts on the boundary of the Site;
- drainage groundworks; and
- any further groundworks associated with construction and access to the Site.

Any groundworks associated with the proposed development footprint would have the potential to truncate or entirely remove archaeological remains.

5.3 Conclusions

This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has defined the Site's cultural heritage baseline conditions, including known/recorded cultural heritage assets within the Site and the potential for any unrecorded remains to survive buried within the Site.

The assessment identified a **low** potential for unknown archaeological remains to exist within the footprint of the development. Any such remains are likely to be of **local significance**.

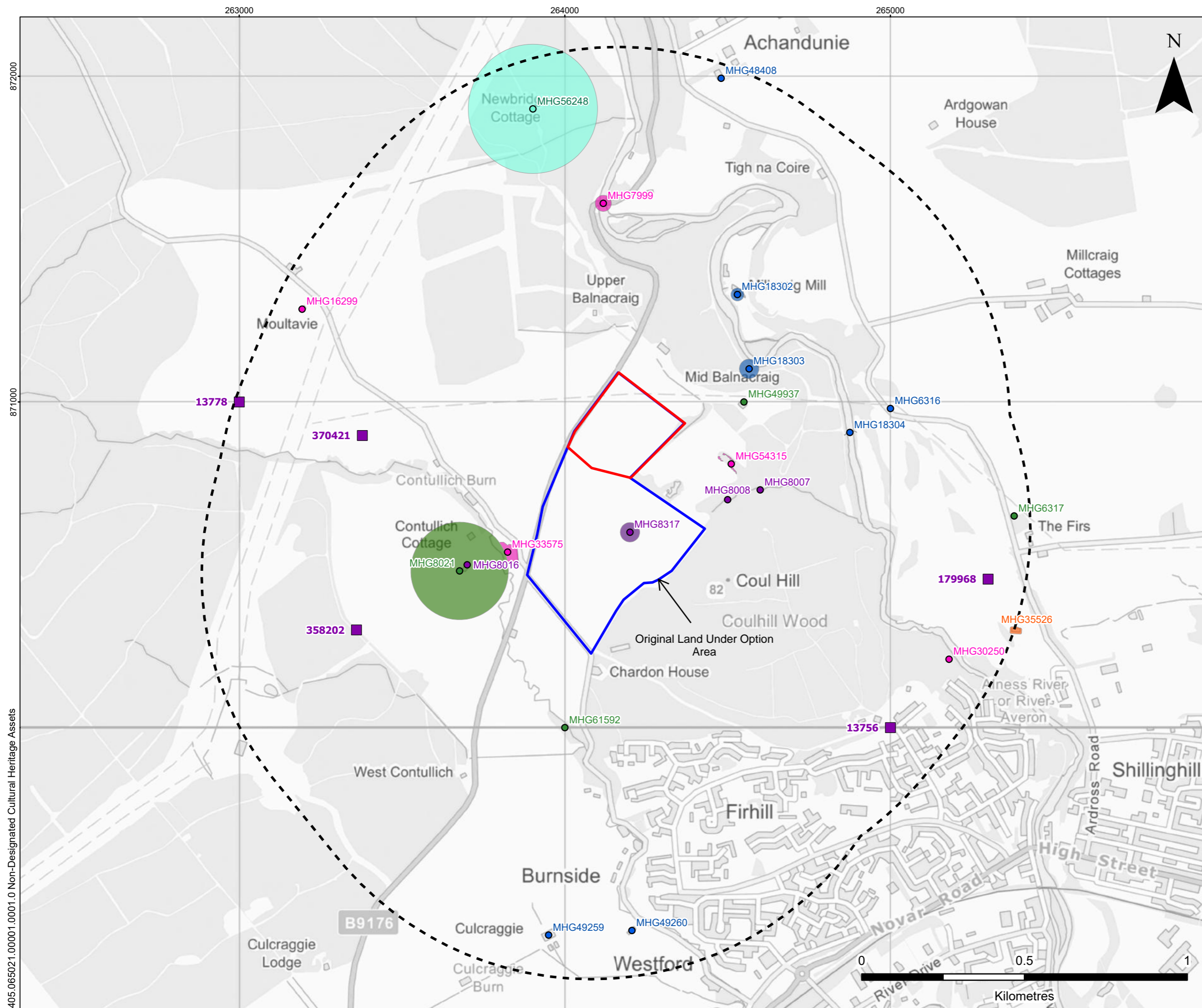
This assessment has not identified anything that would preclude development within the Site, in principle, in relation to cultural heritage. The proposals would be consistent with the provisions of NPF4 (2023), HEPS (2019), the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (2012) and the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012).

Consideration should be given to the need for energy storage units for renewable energy projects, and weight should be given to the public and environmental benefits of the proposal, in line with local, national and international goals for reducing climate impacts.



Appendix A Figures





LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary 1 km Buffer

Canmore Points

- Prehistoric

Cultural Heritage Related Monuments - Points

- Medieval
- Post-Medieval
- Prehistoric
- Second World War
- Undated

Cultural Heritage Related Monuments - Areas

- Medieval
- Modern
- Post-Medieval
- Prehistoric
- Second World War
- Undated

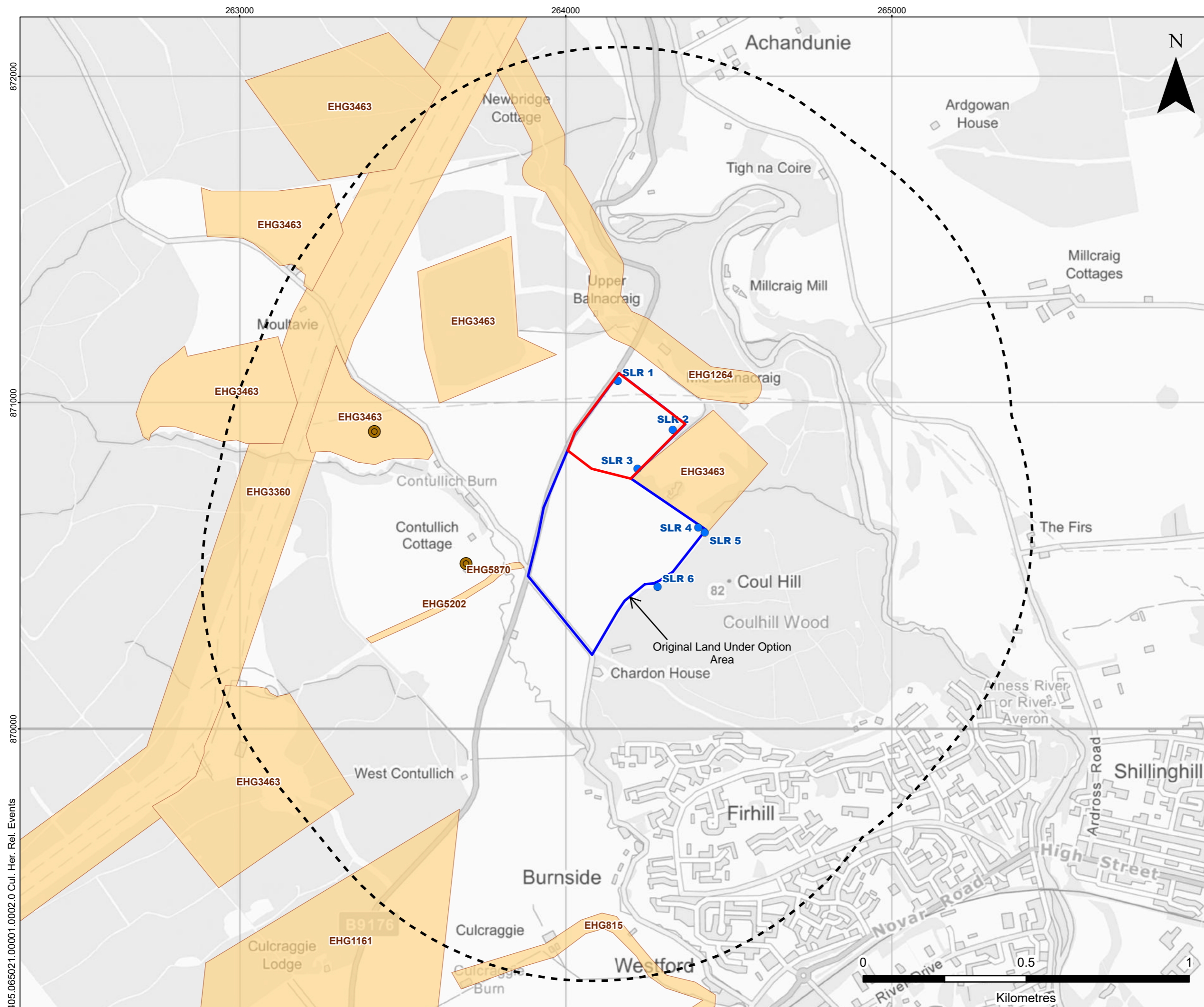


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CONTULLICH BATTERY STORAGE
 PROJECT DBA
 CULTURAL HERITAGE DESK-BASED
 ASSESSMENT
 NON-DESIGNATED CULTURAL
 HERITAGE ASSETS

FIGURE 1
 Scale 1:11,000 @ A3 Date AUGUST 2023

405.065021.00001.0001.0 Non-Designated Cultural Heritage Assets



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary 1 km Buffer
- Walkover Points 28th July 2023
- Cultural Heritage Related Events
- Cultural Heritage Related Events




























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CONTULLICH BATTERY STORAGE PROJECT DBA
CULTURAL HERITAGE DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
CULTURAL HERITAGE RELATED EVENTS

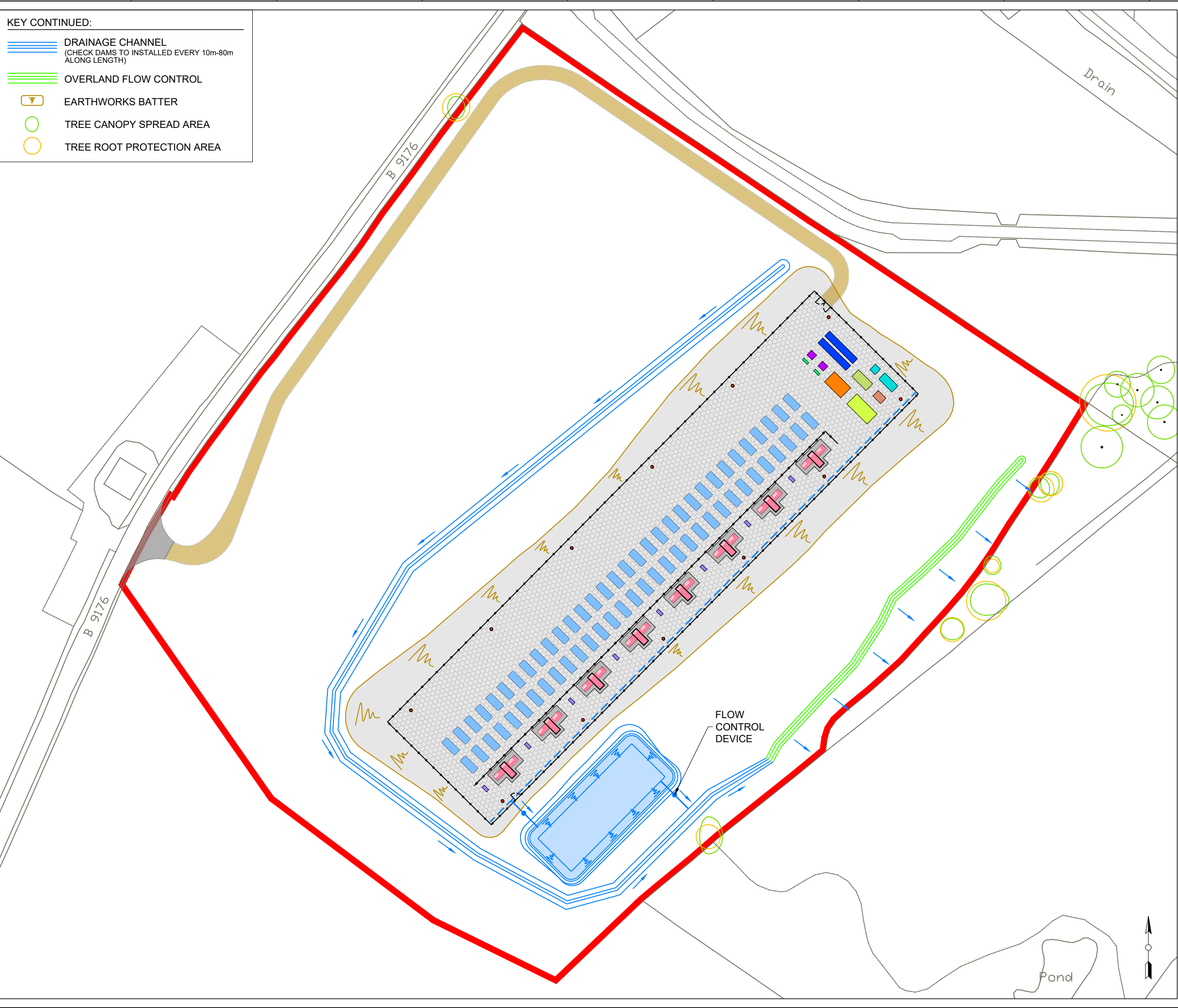
FIGURE 2
 Scale 1:11,000 @ A3 Date AUGUST 2023

405.065021.00001.0002.0 Cul. Her. Rel. Events

- KEY CONTINUED:**
-  DRAINAGE CHANNEL
(CHECK DAMS TO INSTALLED EVERY 10m-80m ALONG LENGTH)
 -  OVERLAND FLOW CONTROL
 -  EARTHWORKS BATTER
 -  TREE CANOPY SPREAD AREA
 -  TREE ROOT PROTECTION AREA

- KEY:**
-  DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY
(OUTSIDE OF LINE DENOTES BOUNDARY)
 -  BATTERY STORAGE ENCLOSURE (BSE)
 -  2 No. POWER CONVERSION SYSTEMS (PCS) WITH TWIN MV SKID AND APRON SLAB
 -  DNO SUBSTATION BUILDING
 -  BESS SUBSTATION BUILDING
 -  AUXILIARY TRANSFORMER
 -  LV DISTRIBUTION EQUIPMENT
 -  AGGREGATION PANEL WITH LV PILLAR
 -  PRE-INSERTION RESISTOR
 -  CAPACITOR BANK
 -  HARMONIC FILTER AND RESISTOR
 -  SPARES CONTAINER
 -  LIGHTING / CCTV COLUMN
 -  SECURITY FENCING
 -  ACOUSTIC FENCING
(UP TO 4m IN HEIGHT)
 -  ACCESS TRACK - GRAVEL
 -  ACCESS TRACK - ASPHALT
 -  SURFACE FINISH TYPICALLY COMPRISING STONE OR ASPHALT
 -  LINEAR DRAINAGE CHANNEL
 -  ATTENUATION BASIN
(STORAGE AREA = 890m²)

CONTINUED...



1	BM	VM	MA	2023-12-21	FIRST ISSUE
ISSUE	DRAWN	CHKD	APPD	DATE	REVISION NOTES
PURPOSE				COORDINATES	
PLANNING				OSGB 1936	
SCALE			DATUM		
1:1,250 @A3			N/A		
LAYOUT DRAWING				T-LAYOUT NO	
N/A				N/A	

PROJECT TITLE
CONTULLICH ENERGY STORAGE FACILITY

DRAWING TITLE
INFRASTRUCTURE LAYOUT

RES DRAWING NUMBER	REV
05196-RES-LAY-DR-PT-001	1

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Appendix B HER and Canmore Data

Table 1: Historic Environment Record and Canmore Monuments

HER/ CANMORE ID	Name	Monument Type	Period
MHG16299	Moultavie Farmhouse	House	Post-Medieval
MHG18302	Millcraig Mill	Watermill; Lade; Sluice	Undated
MHG18303	Balnacraig	Fish Farm	Undated
MHG18304	Bealach Na Bo	Footbridge	Undated
MHG30250	Coulhill Wood	Structure	Post-Medieval
MHG33575	Saw mill, Contullich	Saw mill	Post-Medieval
MHG48408	Achandunie House	House	Undated
MHG49259	Culchraggie	Farmstead	Undated
MHG49260	Culchraggie	House	Undated
MHG49937	Alness To Beinn Tharsuinn	Rig and furrow; Mound	Medieval - Post-Medieval
MHG54315	Possible building footings, Balnacraig	Building? Linear clearance cairn	Post-Medieval
MHG56248	Newfoundland Camp 2 - near Dalneich, Rosskeen	Construction Camp	Second World War
MHG6316	Burial w Urn, 0.5 mile W of Millcraig	Human remains	Undated
MHG6317	Cist w Coin hoard, Coilbeag	Cist	Medieval
MHG7999	Dalneich Bridge	Bridge	Post-Medieval
MHG8007	Burnt Mound, Balnacraig	Burnt mound	Prehistoric
MHG8008	Burnt Mound, Balnacraig	Burnt mound	Prehistoric
MHG8016	Carved Stone Ball - Contullich Farm	Findspot	Neolithic - Bronze Age
MHG8021	Contullich Castle	Castle; Human remains	Medieval
MHG8317	Enclosure nr Coulhill Wood	Enclosure	Prehistoric?
MHG61592	Coin – Alness	Findspot	Medieval
13756	BLADE (BRONZE)	MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING,	Bronze Age



HER/ CANMORE ID	Name	Monument Type	Period
		TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT	
13778	CAIRN(S) (PREHISTORIC), CIST(S) (PREHISTORIC)	MONUMENT (BY FORM), RELIGIOUS RITUAL AND FUNERARY	Prehistoric
179968	GOLF COURSE (20TH CENTURY) (1904)	RECREATIONAL	Modern
370421	BURNT MOUND (PREHISTORIC)(POSSIBLE)	DOMESTIC	Prehistoric?

Table 2: Historic Environment Record Events

Event ID	Name	Date
EHG1161	West Contullich Water Mains Renewal Project	08 July 2004
EHG1264	Walkover survey - proposed Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm cable route, Alness	Mar-June 2005
EHG3360	Desk-based assessment and walkover survey - Beauly-Dounreay 275kV Overhead Transmission Line: Second Circuit	2006-2008
EHG3463	Desk based assessment and walkover survey - proposed Alness substation	February to March 2011
EHG815	Alness Water Mains Renewal Project	11 Sept 2002
EHG5202	Watching Brief - Fyrish-Alness Cable Route	April-May 2017
EHG5870	Watching brief - new garage, Contullich House, Alness	Aug 2021



Appendix C Site Photographs





Photograph 1: (NH 64194 71046) View facing southeast from the north of the Site along the north boundary. No cultural heritage assets were identified.



Photograph 2: (NH 64132 71031) View facing south from the north corner of the Site along the west boundary. No cultural heritage assets were identified.





Photograph 3: (NH 64250 71004) View southwest from the northern boundary of the Site. No cultural heritage assets were identified.



Photograph 4: (NH 64323 70953) View south-southwest along from the northeast corner of the Site, facing along the northeast boundary. No cultural heritage assets were identified.





Photograph 5: (NH 64281 70857) View northeast from the northeast of the Site, facing toward the northeast corner. No cultural heritage assets were identified.



Photograph 6: (NH 64187 70774) View northeast from the inner east corner of the Site boundary, facing along the northeast boundary. No cultural heritage assets were identified.





Photograph 7: (NH 64189 70753) View southwest from the inner east corner of the Original Land Under Option boundary toward the centre of the field. Topographic features on the LiDAR are identifiable.

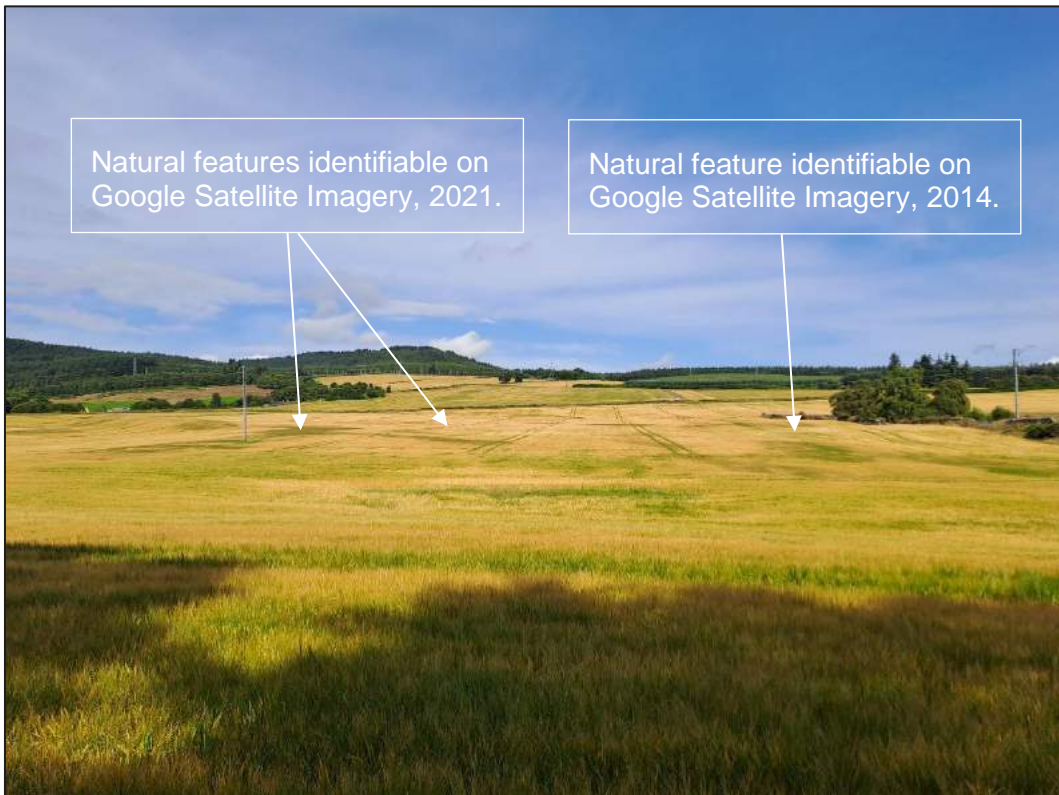


Photograph 8: (NH 64291 70696) View southwest from the east boundary of the Original Land Under Option, toward the cropmark (MHG8317). Faint colouration in the wheat is visible.





Photograph 9: (NH 64378 70555) View facing southwest from the east outer corner of the Original Land Under Option. There is some discolouration within the crops, but the enclosure cropmark (MHG8317) is not discernible.



Photograph 10: (NH 64360 70531) View west from the southeast boundary of the Original Land Under Option facing the location of MHG8317. Likely to be natural cropmark features.





Photograph 11: (NH 64214 70432) View north from the southeast boundary of the Original Land Under Option. No cultural heritage assets were identified.



Photograph 12: (NH 64184 70412) View southwest from the southeast boundary of the Original Land Under Option. No cultural heritage assets were identified.





Photograph 13: (NH 64019 70889) View northeast from the entrance to the field along the northwest boundary of the Original Land Under Option from the B9176.



(SLR 1) Photograph 14: (NH 64147 71049) View facing north within the north-most corner of the Site. Modern clearance cairn.





(SLR2) Photograph 15: (NH 64317 70921) View west within the northeast most corner of the Site. A potential curvilinear cropmark, although consistent with track marks.



(SLR 3) Photograph 16: (NH 64190 70780) View north at the inner east corner of the Site. A late post-medieval to modern clearance cairn with overgrowth.





(SLR 4) Photograph 17: (NH 64396 70615) View east within the east outer corner of the Original Land Under Option. A modern concrete slab, likely related to below ground infrastructure.





(SLR 5) Photograph 18: (NH 64416 70604) View northeast within the east outer corner of the Original Land Under Option. A modern clearance cairn.



(SLR 6) Photograph 19: (NH 64278 70416) View northeast along the southeast boundary of the Original Land Under Option. A modern clearance cairn with very little overgrowth.





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