

Cairngorms National Park Authority

**Cairngorms National Park**  
Historic Designed Landscapes Project

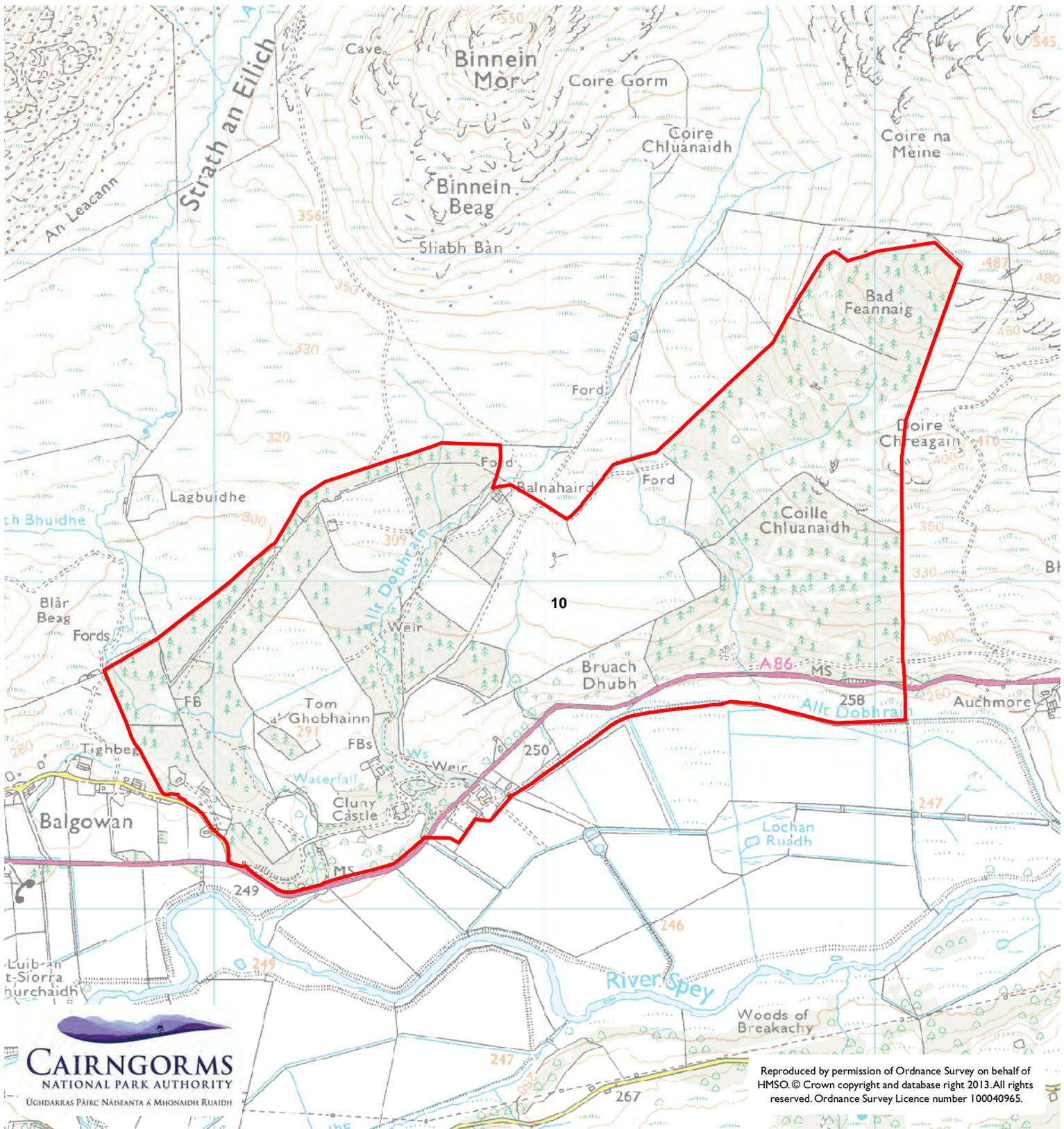
Site Research Report  
**10 Cluny Castle**

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May 2013

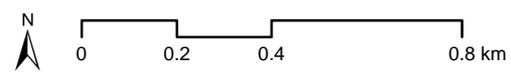


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- Legend**
-  Cairngorms National Park Boundary
  -  Designed landscape provisional boundary

Site 10

**Cluny Castle**



May 2013

## 10 Cluny Castle

County Inverness-shire  
Parish Laggan  
NGR NN 645 943; OS 1:25,00 Sheet 402

### DESIGNATIONS

Listing Cluny Castle, HB Number 6914 – Category A (1971)  
Stable & dwelling range, HB Number 6915 – Category B (1986)  
East Lodge, gates & gate piers, HB Number 6916 – Category B (1986)  
West Lodge, gate piers, quadrants and pavilion, HB Number 6917: Category B (1986)  
Burial ground, HB Number 6894 : – Category C (1979)

The majority of the surrounding plantations are designated as Ancient Woodland, save for blocks to the east and west of the 'core' landscape.

Larger area to north subject of WGS Mark 1 Agreements, with smaller areas to north, east and west subject of WGS Mark 2 and Mark 3 Agreements.

Upper part of most easterly woodlands included in Creag Dubh SSSI (SNH Ref. 455), designated for its upland birch woodland.

### LOCATION AND EXTENT

Cluny Castle stands on the west bank of the River Spey approximately 7 km to the south-west of Newtonmore, close to the A86 from which two carriage drives lead into the designed landscape. The 'core' landscape surrounding the castle is bounded by a broad belt of both mixed and coniferous planting, with additional coniferous plantations on the south-western end of Creag Dubh, to the east, separate from the 'core' landscape, but visually prominent. There is a disused walled garden on the opposite (eastern) side of the A86.

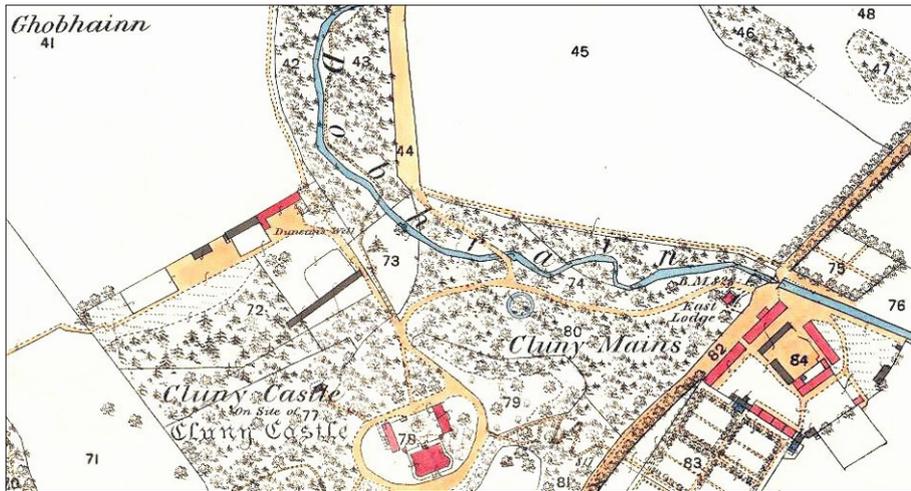
### LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

#### Maps and documentary evidence

Gordon (c1650) marks the name 'Cluny' on his map of Strathspey, but without additional information. Roy (c1750) recorded 'Clunie's House' standing on a spur, with a small rectangular walled enclosure to the north, and two small outbuildings symmetrically placed to the south. There is no other enclosure evident, as the castle stands amid unenclosed rig cultivation, with one unnamed township on lower ground to the east, and several more townships to the north, on higher ground. Extensive landscaping presumably came with the rebuilding of the house c1805, following the destruction of the earlier castle in 1746. Curiously Thomson (1832) does not name the castle, though he does mark a mansion house close to the site. Both OS First Edition (1870) and OS Second Edition (1899) show an extensive landscape, with the castle and 'core' policies embraced by broad belts of planting, and a small area of parkland around the castle, with more distant fields in cultivation. There are two lodges, one to the east and one to the west, from which the carriage drives converge on the castle. There is a walled garden, next to Cluny Mains, on the opposite side of the public road, though no other landscape features between the road and the River Spey. Although separated from the core landscape by fields, plantations on Creag Dubh to the east are visually prominent, especially for travellers on the A86, so may be considered as part of the wider setting. The



Roy's Military Survey c1750



Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 1st edition 1870

layout and extent of the landscape appears to have changed little in the 20th century

### Building history and ownership

Coventry (2006) comments that it has proved difficult to determine whether the present house incorporates elements of the pre-existing 14th century tower house, stronghold of the Macphersons. The original house was razed by the Duke of Cumberland in 1746 as punishment for Cluny Macpherson's support for the Jacobite cause. The estate was managed for a time in the late 18th century by the Commissioners for the Annexed Estates. The new house of 1805, described by Gifford (1992) as 'a light-hearted castellated classical villa' was added to by architect W L Carruthers c1890, and by A Mackenzie in 1908. Stables and East Lodge are described as early 19th century, with West Lodge c1840. The castle was visited by Queen Victoria in 1847, while staying nearby at Ardverkie. Coveted for a time, but never acquired by Scottish/American industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the house went out of Macpherson ownership in the 1940s, when the family line died out. Current owner is named as Egyptian-born businessman Mark Angelil. The estate is advertised for stalking and game shooting.



Portrait of Cluny Macpherson 1802-1899 (British Museum)



Cluny Castle, G W Wilson post 1904 (University of Aberdeen)

## APPENDIX

### Historical notes

Rev. Donald Cameron 1839 (NSA) describes "Cluny Castle, residence of Cluny Macpherson, surrounded with thriving plantations of fir and larch, and other symptoms of improvement ... The natural wood is birch, alder, hazel, willow; the planted Scotch fir, birch – with some hardwood of late years, planted around Cluny Castle".

J Murray 1852 noted "Cluny Castle, seat of the Clan Chattan. The house stands on a terraced and romantic site, close on the right (of the road), and commands a large extent of the valley. The castle is an elegant and compact Gothic building with turrets at the four corners. The approach to the house winds up a somewhat steep incline, and large plantations extend from the castle far up the mountainside ; while near the house the grounds are beautifully laid out in parks, hedges trees and shrubbery. The policies and lodges are judiciously allocated on the level ground below, near which the Spey, like an inconsiderable canal, steals unheeded down the strath".

**OS Name Book 1870** (Laggan, Inverness-shire Book 53, p52) describes “the castle and dwelling house of Cluny Macpherson, Chief of the Clan Chattan, built by Cluny’s father in 1800. The building is of modern style of architecture and is pleasantly situated on the north bank of the River Spey. The old castle was burnt by the Duke of Cumberland in 1746, but the date of its erection is not well-known. The present castle is built on the site of the old one”. Cluny Mains and East Lodge also noted.

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