

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Cairngorms National Park
Historic Designed Landscapes Project

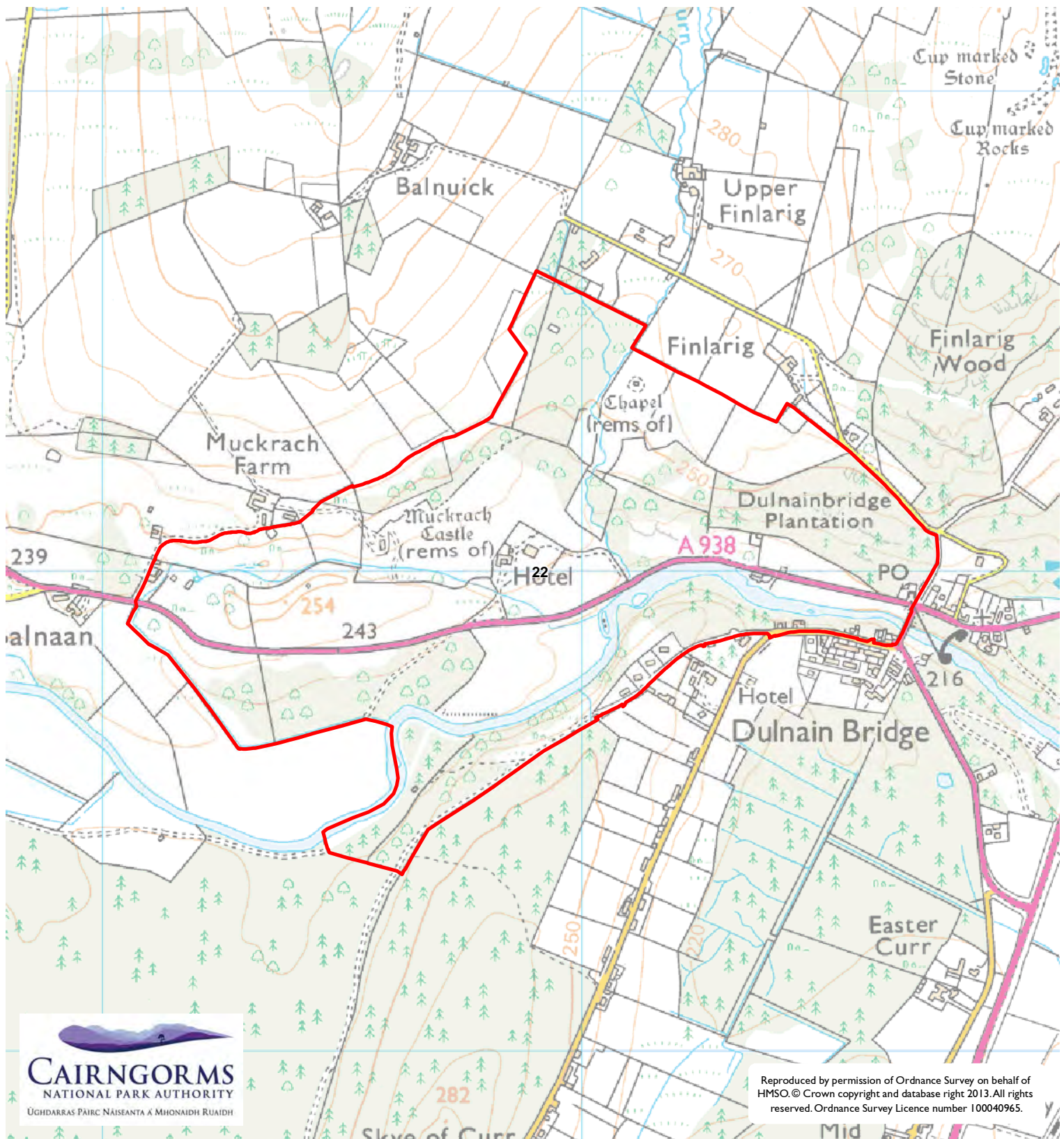
Site Research Report
22 Muckrach Lodge (Castle)

Consultants

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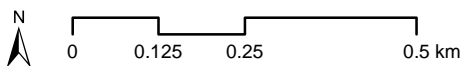


Legend

- Cairngorms National Park Boundary
- Designed landscape provisional boundary

Site 22

Muckrach Lodge



May 2013

22 Muckrach Lodge (Castle)

County Aberdeenshire
Parish Cromdale / Duthil & Rothiemurchus
NGR NH 989 250; OS 1:25,000 Sheet 418

DESIGNATIONS

Listing Muckrach Castle, HB 249 - Category A (1971)
Muckrach House is not listed.

Finlarig Chapel and Enclosure, within the site boundary, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (HS Ref. MFA 8073).

Strips and blocks of woodland on both sides of the River Dulnain, running eastwards to Dulnain Bridge, are designated as Ancient Woodland.

Two small patches of woodland within the site boundary are the subject of a WGS Mark 1 Agreement.

LOCATION AND EXTENT

Muckrach Lodge lies on the north bank of the River Dulnain, approximately 1km west of Dulnain Bridge, and 5km south-west of Grantown-on-Spey. It is accessed by short drives leading off the A938 road, a short distance to the west of Dulnain Bridge. Apart from the immediate environs of the lodge, the landscape is a loosely structured combination of agricultural land and blocks of planting, making it difficult to gauge the extent of any design.

LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

Map and documentary evidence

The name 'Muccarah' is noted by Gordon (c1650). Roy (c1750) marks 'Muckrach C[astle]' with a small tree-lined park or enclosure to the west, surrounding unenclosed rig cultivation, and a small township to the east. The public road is seen to run from Dulnain Bridge around the north side of the castle. By the OS First Edition (1871) Muckrach Castle is noted as being 'in ruins', with 'Knock of Muckrach' possibly being former outbuildings or the home farm associated with the castle, a short distance to the west. Muckrach Lodge also appears as a new feature on this map, set back slightly from the road, now re-aligned to run south of the house, with a small amount of policy planting around it, and both a carriage drive to the house and a service drive to its offices. The OS Second Edition (1900) shows much the same landscape layout, though with Knock of Muckrach re-named Braes of Muckrach. Apart from the compact policy planting surrounding the now lodge, much of the surrounding landscape is comprised of informally arranged agricultural fields and strips or blocks of planting.



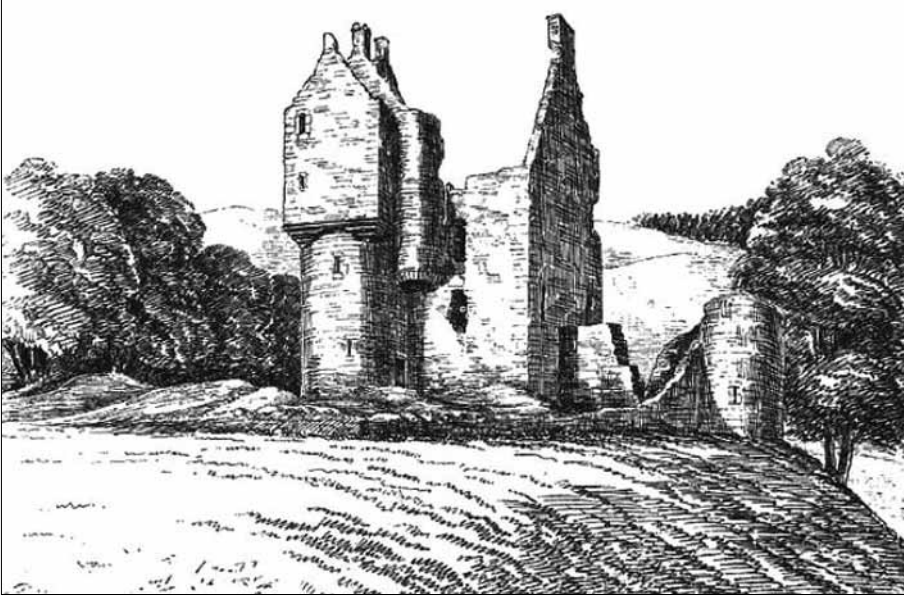
Gordon c1650



Roy's Military Survey c1750

Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 1st
edition 1871





Muckrach Castle prior to restoration



View from terrace at Muckrach Lodge

Building history and ownership

The land in this part of Strathspey was historically within the orbit of the Grant family, associated with several nearby estates such as Castle Grant, Rothiemurchus and Ballindalloch. Historic Scotland speaks of Muckrach Castle having been built for Patrick Grant, son of John Grant of Freuchie (Castle Grant) in 1598, and of the house having served as the original seat of the Grants of Rothiemurchus. The history of the castle and the date of its ruination have not been determined, though it seems to have been ruinous before the end of the 18th century. The castle was restored by architect Ian Begg in the 1908s, and is currently advertised as luxury self-catering accommodation. Nearby Muckrach Lodge was built for Sir John Charles Ogilvie Grant, 7th Earl of Seafield in 1865, as a hunting lodge, set within what appears to be a well-farmed and well-planted landscape. This would chime with descriptions of the 7th Earl as an enthusiastic ‘improver’ of his estates. Later sources such as Groome (1884) would seem to indicate that it had been sold before the end of the 19th century. Requisitioned during World War II, the house became a hotel in the late 1940s, and remains in use as such.



John Ogilvy-Grant, 7th Earl of Seafield

APPENDIX

Historical notes

Rev. James Grant 1841 (NSA) noted of Cromdale Parish that “within the last fifteen years 1500 acres have been planted towards the lower end of the parish;” and of Muckrach itself that “the old Castle of Muckerach, in the north west part of the parish, is rather a picturesque ruin, and beautifully situated, but it is now much dilapidated ; the roof has entirely fallen away”.

OS Name Book 1871 (Cromdale, Inverness-shire Book 24, p53) describes “an elegantly built house, two storeys high with coach house and other outhouses attached, the former slated and in excellent condition, the latter thatched and in good repair. Property of the Earl of Seafield, Castle Grant.

Francis Groome 1884 describes Muckrack as “a mansion in the Inverness portion of Cromdale parish, on the left bank of the Dulnain ... seat of John Dick Peddie Esq. Liberal MP for the Kilmarnock Burghs since 1880. Muckrach Castle, built in 1598 ... is now a roofless ruin, itself somewhat picturesque, and beautifully situated”.