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**Client:** Forestry Commission Scotland  
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## Archaeological Measured Survey of Sean Craig possible galleried dun, near Plockton.

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**Report Status:** Final

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT	5
4 SITE LOCATION, BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SITE MORPHOLOGY	6
5 SURVEY RESULTS	7
6 DISCUSSION	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
REFERENCES	9

#### FIGURES

Figure 1	Site location and first edition OS 6 inch map extract
Figure 2	Digital terrain model-Perspective Projection-Landscape context of Carn na Sean Craig
Figure 3	Digital terrain model: Perspective projection
Figure 4	Digital terrain model: Perspective projection
Figure 6	Digital terrain model: Orthographic projection
Figure 5	Digital terrain model: Orthographic projection
Figure 7	Shaded Relief model - Carn na Sean Craig
Figure 8	Carn na Sean Craig – Contour-based plan

#### PLATES

Plate 1	View of monument, facing southwest
Plate 2	View of Carn na Sean-Chreag, facing NNE
Plate 3	View of monument, facing south
Plate 4	Facing slabs on exterior of southeast wall, facing northwest
Plate 5	Facing slabs on exterior of northwest wall, facing southeast
Plate 6	Northwest wall with large exterior facing slabs, facing southwest
Plate 7	Gallery in northwest wall facing southwest
Plate 8	Detail of gallery in northwest wall, facing west
Plate 9	Entrance, facing southwest
Plate 10	Entrance and northeast wall, facing southeast
Plate 11	Interior of monument, facing south

#### APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Photographic Register
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the results of a topographical survey of the surviving remains of a possible galleried dun at Sean Craig located at NGR NG 8188 3147, 2.5 km to the southeast of the village of Plockton in the Parish of Lochalsh, County of Ross and Cromarty. The site became a scheduled monument (SM5532) in 1993. A detailed topographic survey was carried out by Rubicon Heritage Services in February 2014 on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland. The site, situated in the forestry district of Inverness, Ross & Skye is managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. The purpose of the survey was to provide an enhanced baseline record of the upstanding remains at the site which will inform future conservation and management of the monument including the extension of the present access path to the monument (subject to Scheduled Monument Consent). Results from this survey recorded the nature and extent of surviving remains within a zone as specified in the brief prepared by Forestry Commission Scotland.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the results of a detailed topographical survey undertaken at the possible galleried dun at Sean Craig located at NGR NG 8188 3147, 2.5 km to the southeast of Plockton in the Parish of Lochalsh, County of Ross and Cromarty. This survey was carried out in February 2014 by Louise Baker and Enda O'Flaherty of Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland. The primary aim of the survey was to enhance the historic environment record of the site and provide digital terrain models of the site which can be utilised to inform future conservation and management of the monument including the extension of the present access path to the monument (subject to Scheduled Monument Consent). It was one of a group of six such surveys carried out on Forestry Commission Scotland sites in February 2014. The other sites were at Castle Greg, Craig Phadrig, Round Dounan, Dun Deardail and Torr Dhuin.

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the topographical survey is to provide an enhanced record of the archaeological remains at Sean Craig. The objectives of the survey were to:

- identify any possible archaeological features within the specified survey area
- accurately record the identified archaeological features and then present the findings using terrain models, contour plans and photography
- accurately record the surrounding topography to place the monument in its immediate landscape context
- provide a short illustrated report incorporating the results of the above work

### 3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

Prior to fieldwork a desk based study was carried out which accessed all readily available cartographic and documentary sources. These sources include material held by RCAHMS, Historic Scotland, the National Library of Scotland (NLS), Highland Council HER and relevant publications. The topographical survey of Sean Craig late prehistoric fort was carried out by a team of two

Trimble VRS& Rover: The Trimble VRS system was used in conjunction with a GPS Rover unit, allowing for surveying without the use of a site specific fixed base station. This is achieved a +/- 2cm accuracy, connecting to the Trimble's network of fixed base stations by means of mobile phone communication.

Surveying: The GPS Rover has a custom designed feature code library allowing for the organisation and labelling of surveyed features. This system facilitates the creation of labels, strings and enclosed items (polygons) and utilises a layering system that is compatible with AutoCAD. Additional spot levels are taken across the entire survey area in order to obtain enough data to generate contours.

Trimble VRS & Rover output: The survey data was exported from the data logger as a comma delimited file (csv) and a Trimble data collector file (dc), then imported to a Trimble GeoSite Communicator (which recognises the feature code library and plots all strings, polygons and labels as intended). The data was then exported as an AutoCAD .dwg file to produce accurate plans of each site as required. Accurate, publication-quality, maps contours and digital terrain/ground models were produced using 'Surfer 11'3D visualisation, contouring and surface modelling package. Surfer's interpolation engine transforms the XYZ data into contour, 3D surface, 3D wireframe, watershed, vector, image, shaded relief, and post maps.

Topographical and archaeological features that were identified were primarily surveyed as line drawings and further supplemented by spot levels in order to generate a contour plan. Profiles were also generated where deemed appropriate. The frequency of spot heights taken for contouring was governed by the archaeological potential of the landscape feature, the nature of the topography, and the size of the survey area. Real-time interface using enabled the data to be viewed during survey. This ensured a thorough and even survey of the site. Drawings were finalised in AutoCAD. Digital terrain models, contour-based plans and oblique terrain models were generated using Surfer 9.

#### **4 SITE LOCATION, BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SITE MORPHOLOGY**

The possible galleried dun at Sean Craig is situated within the forest district of Inverness, Ross & Skye at NGR NG 8188 3147, 2.5 km to the southeast of Plockton in the Parish of Lochalsh, County of Ross and Cromarty. It is located at around 165 m AOD on a low crag known as Carn na Sean-Chreag which overlooks Loch Achnaidh na h-Inich to the southwest (Plates 1 to 3). The monument presently has vegetation cover of rough grass, heather, blaeberreries and bracken. The interior of the possible galleried dun and surrounding area were previously planted with conifers. These were cleared from the interior and a 20 m zone around the monument within the last few decades. Timber and brash from this felling are located in the area around the possible galleried dun and inhibit easy access in this area. A newly constructed footpath provides access to the edge of the scheduled area from a forestry track ascending from Loch Achnaidh na h-Inich Birch saplings are recolonizing much of the cleared ground. Due to the felled zone surrounding the monument and the local topography there are extensive views of the surrounding landscape in all directions. The site and surrounding forestry is presently managed by Forestry Commission Scotland.

The upstanding remains comprise a ruinous dry-stone wall enclosing a sub-rectangular area which measures 30.0 m northwest/southeast by 28.0 m. On the northwest, northeast and southeast sides, only the lowest courses survive and the wall is around 3.9 m thick. In some places the large facing stones remain in situ (Plate 4). These are especially notable on the exterior of the northwest wall (Plates 5 & 6). Near the northwest corner the remains of a gallery are present within the wall (Plate 7). This is around 1.0 m high and 0.9 m wide with a lintel in place (Plate 8). The entrance is central in the northeast side and is 1.4 m wide (Plates 9 & 10). The southwest wall has largely slipped over the crag and only a small quantity of stones remain on the crag edge. The interior of the dun is undulating with the remains of tree stumps and ploughing ridges from previous forestry visible (Plate 11).

## 5 SURVEY RESULTS

The topographical survey covered an approximate area of 10,780 m<sup>2</sup>, centred on the visible upstanding remains of the monument and including a zone of 25 m around the site. Access to the site was gained via a short walk on a footpath which leads to the edge of the scheduled area from a forestry track ascending from Loch Achnaidh na h-Inich

A series of measured plans were produced from a detailed topographical survey of the archaeological remains at Sean Craig (Figures 3 to 8). Figures 3 and 4 show shaded relief terrain models of the possible galleried dun and the surrounding topography in both perspective and orthographic projections with contour details also marked. Perspective projections preserve slightly differing viewpoints that correspond to the left and the right eye. The picture plane is placed between the observer and the object: and parallel lines in space project to lines which converge to vanishing points on the picture plane. Orthographic projections are also used because parallel lines represented in the digital terrain model correspond to real-world parallel lines, and thus zonally relationships are preserved visually.



## **6 DISCUSSION**

The possible galleried dun at Sean Craig utilised the natural topography to great effect with the crag enhancing the defensive nature of the southwest side. It is likely to be of late prehistoric date and part of a tradition of galleried stone structures present on the Atlantic coast. While these are typically round in plan variations are known such as the D-shaped example at Dun Ardteck, Skye. The condition of the monument at Sean Craig is stable at present and it remains as described during previous site visits by RCAHMS and Ordnance Survey. The digital terrain models created as a result of the recent survey work enhance the existing Historic Environment Record and will facilitate the continuing management of the monument by Forestry Commission Scotland and the extension of the present access path to the monument (subject to Scheduled Monument Consent).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The surveyors and authors would like to thank the staff of Forestry Commission Scotland for commissioning the work and their co-operation during fieldwork.

## REFERENCES

### Online references

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland>

<http://www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/>

<http://maps.nls.uk/>

<http://her.highland.gov.uk/>

<http://www.scottishheritagehub.com/content/iron-age-panel-report>

### Published references and unpublished reports

Feachem, R W 1977 *Guide to prehistoric Scotland*, London

Forest Enterprise, 1997 *Scheduled Ancient Monument Management Plan: Sean Chreag*, unpublished report

### Cartographic references

Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile Ross-shire & Cromartyshire (Mainland), Sheet CLX, Surveyed 1875, Published 1880

Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile Ross and Cromarty Sheet CXVII, Revised 1902, Published 1905

## APPENDIX 1 – Photographic Register

Shot Number	Direction Facing	Description	Taken by	Date
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_001	WSW	General view of site	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_002	SW	Facing stones on exterior of NE side of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_003	SW	Facing stones on exterior and wall on NE side of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_004	W	View of fort showing exterior facing stones on NE side of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_005	NE	View along SE wall of fort from crag edge	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_006	E	Possible modern shelter feature in interior side of NE wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_007	E	Possible modern shelter feature in interior side of NE wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_008	NW	View along NE wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_009	SW	Entrance in NE wall from exterior	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_010	SE	East side of entrance	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_011	SE	East side of entrance	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_012	NW	West side of entrance	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_013	N	Modern shelter feature in NE wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_014	SE	Facing stones on exterior of NW wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_015	S	Facing stones on exterior of NW wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_016	SW	View along NW wall showing facing stones on exterior	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_017	SW	View along NW wall	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_018	SW	Gallery in NW wall at NW corner of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_019	WSW	Gallery in NW wall at NW corner of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_020	W	Gallery in NW wall at NW corner of fort	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_021	NE	Facing slabs on exterior of NW wall adjacent to gallery	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_022	E	View of site	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_023 to 027	SE	View of fort interior from NW corner	LB	8/2/14
CGRF14_Seal_Craig_028	NE	View of fort location showing crag on SW side	LB	8/2/14

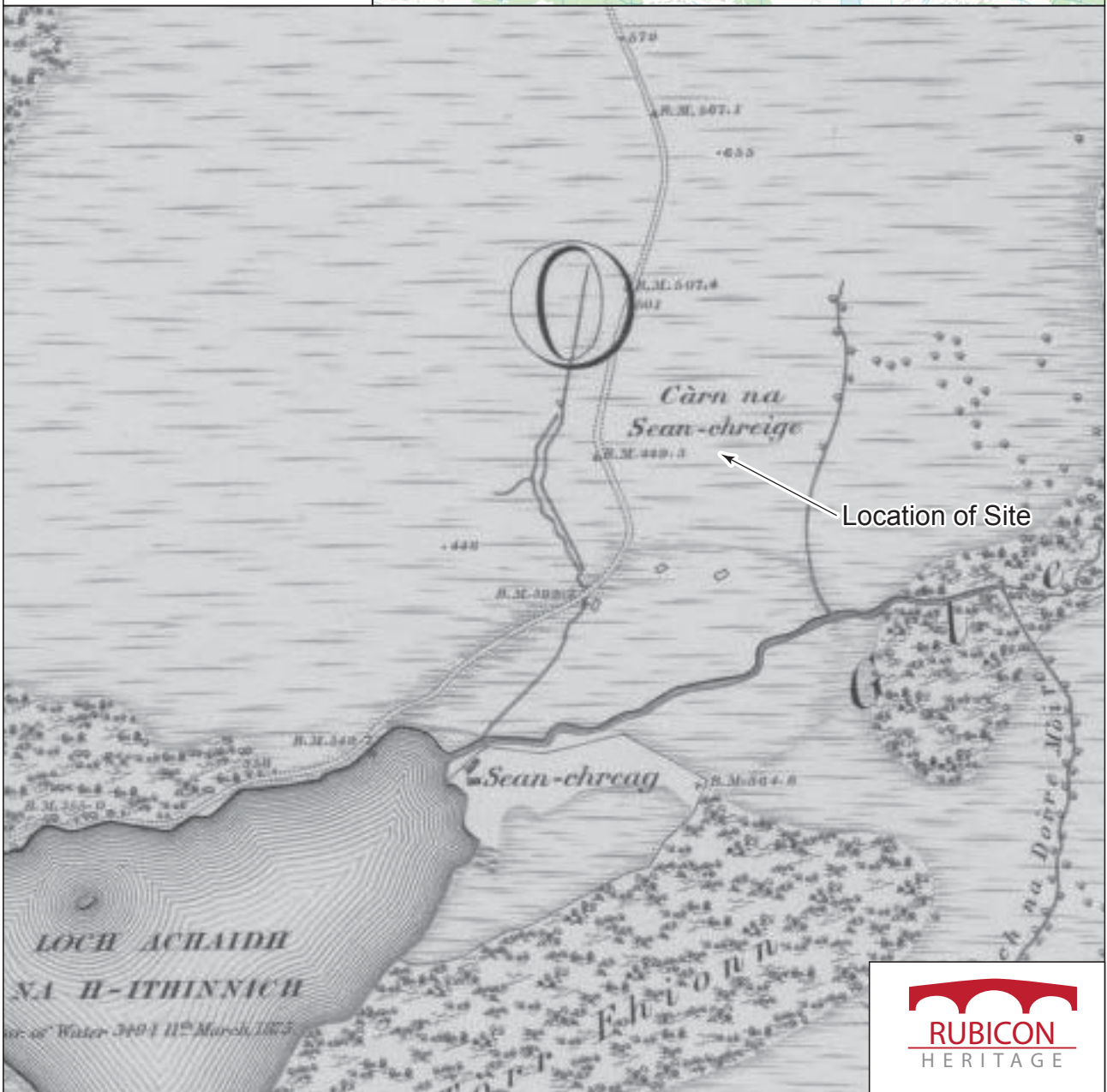
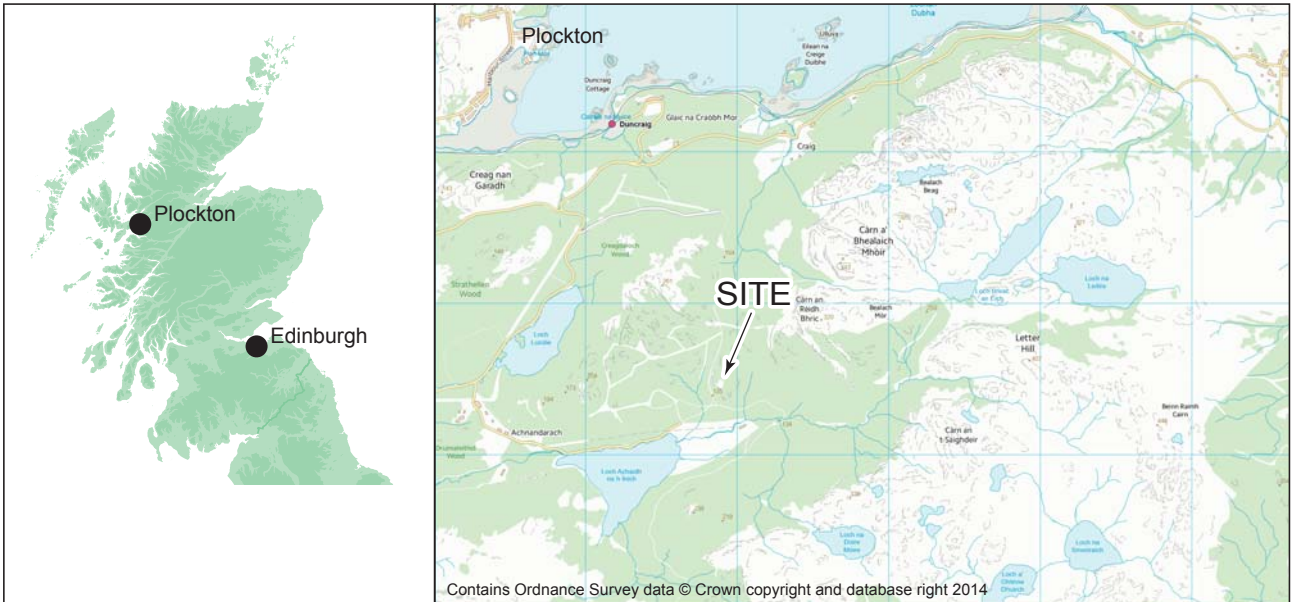
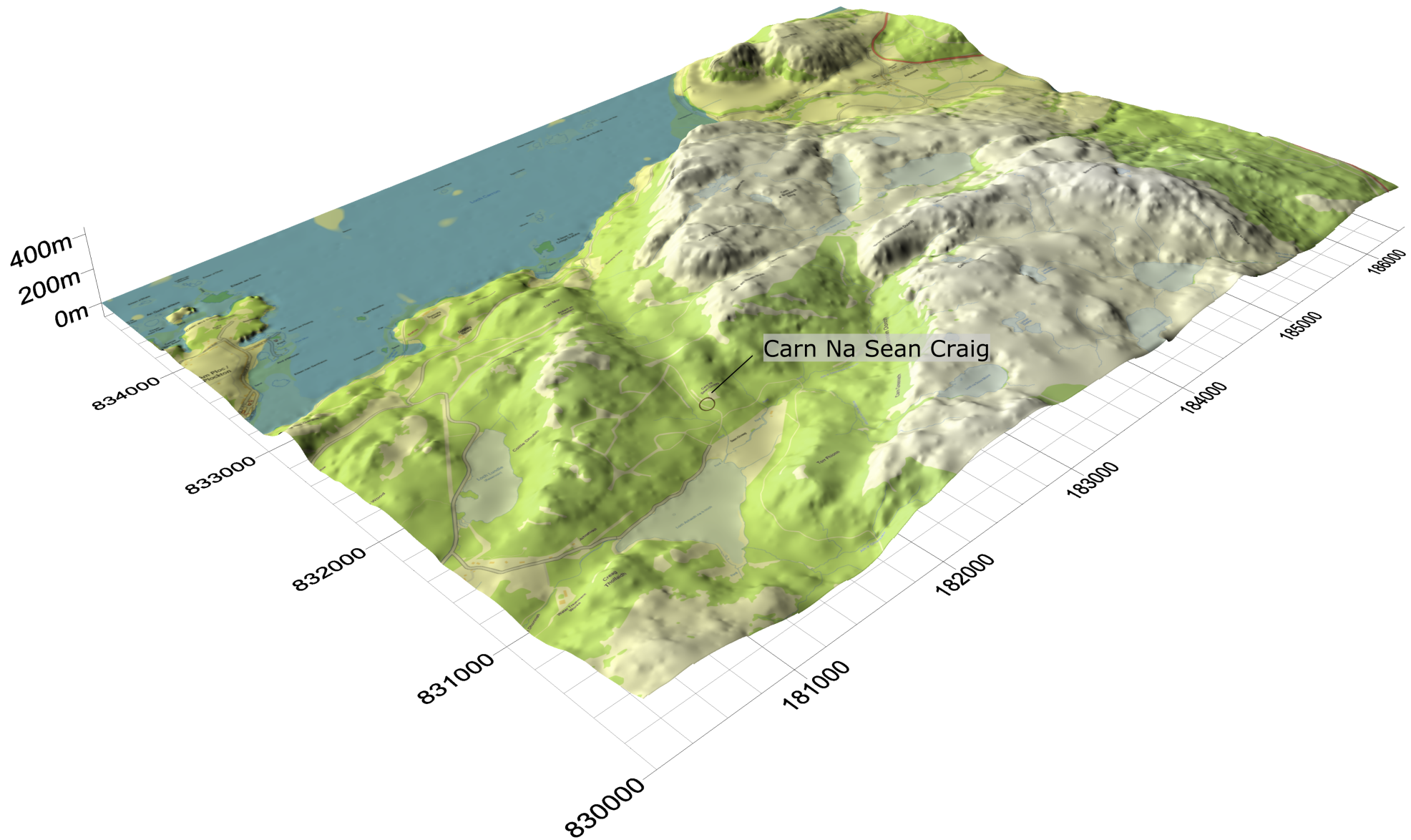


Figure 1 - Sean Craig: Site location and OS 6 inch first edition map extract.





**Key**



Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

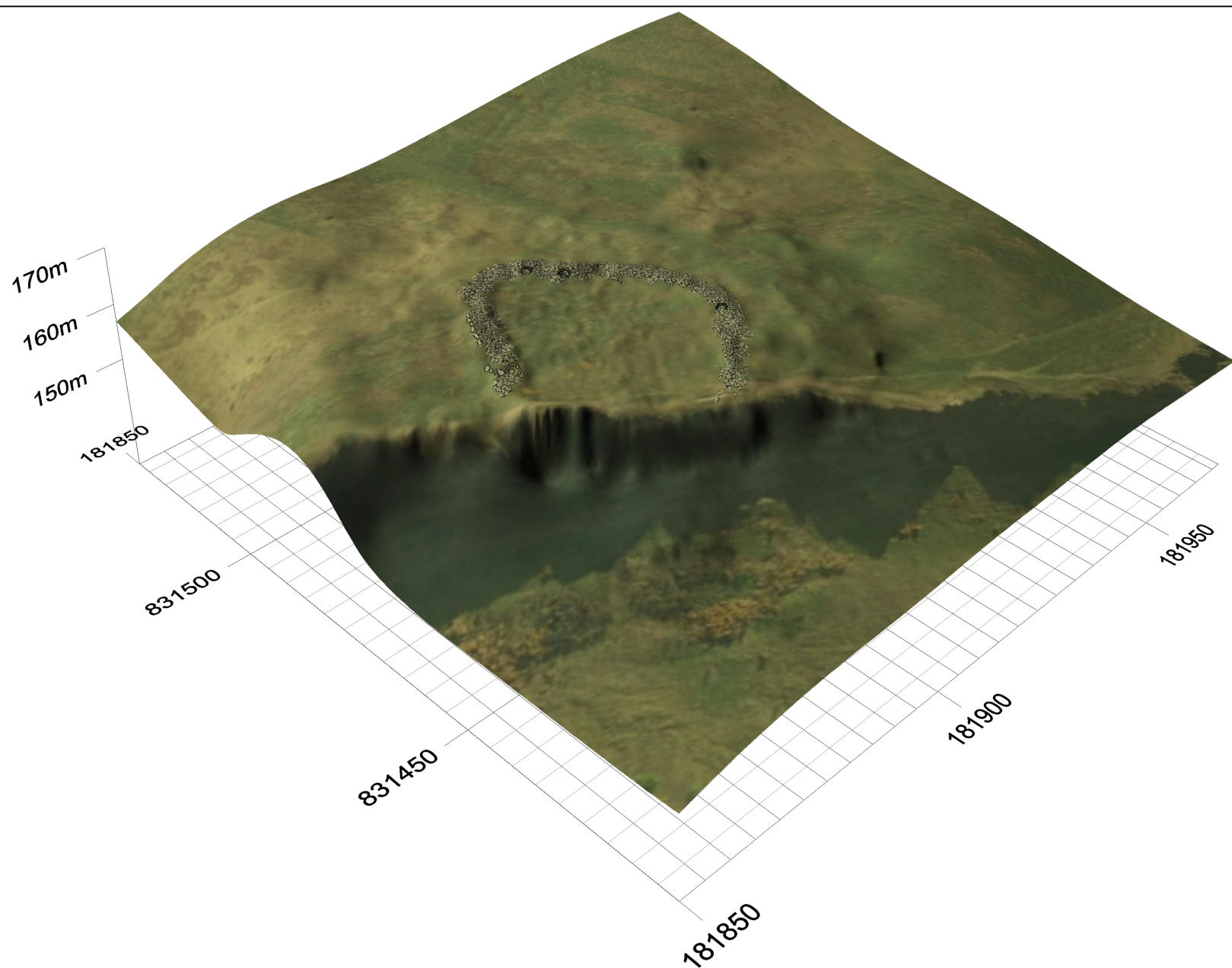
Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 2 - Digital terrain model  
Landscape context of  
Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty 1st edit by:

2nd edit by: Signed off:



**Key**

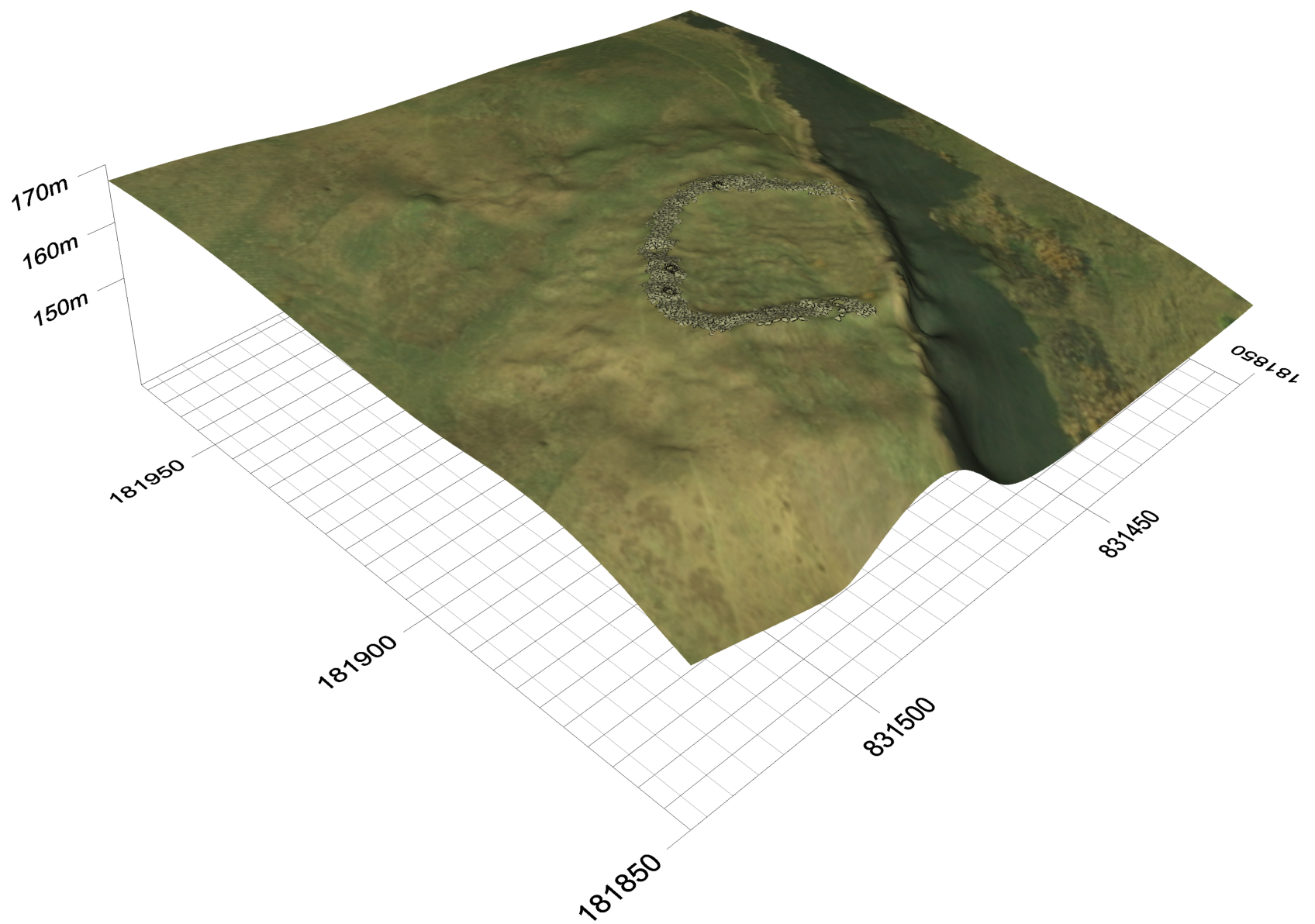
Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 3 - Digital terrain model  
- Perspective Projection -  
Landscape context of  
Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:



**Key**

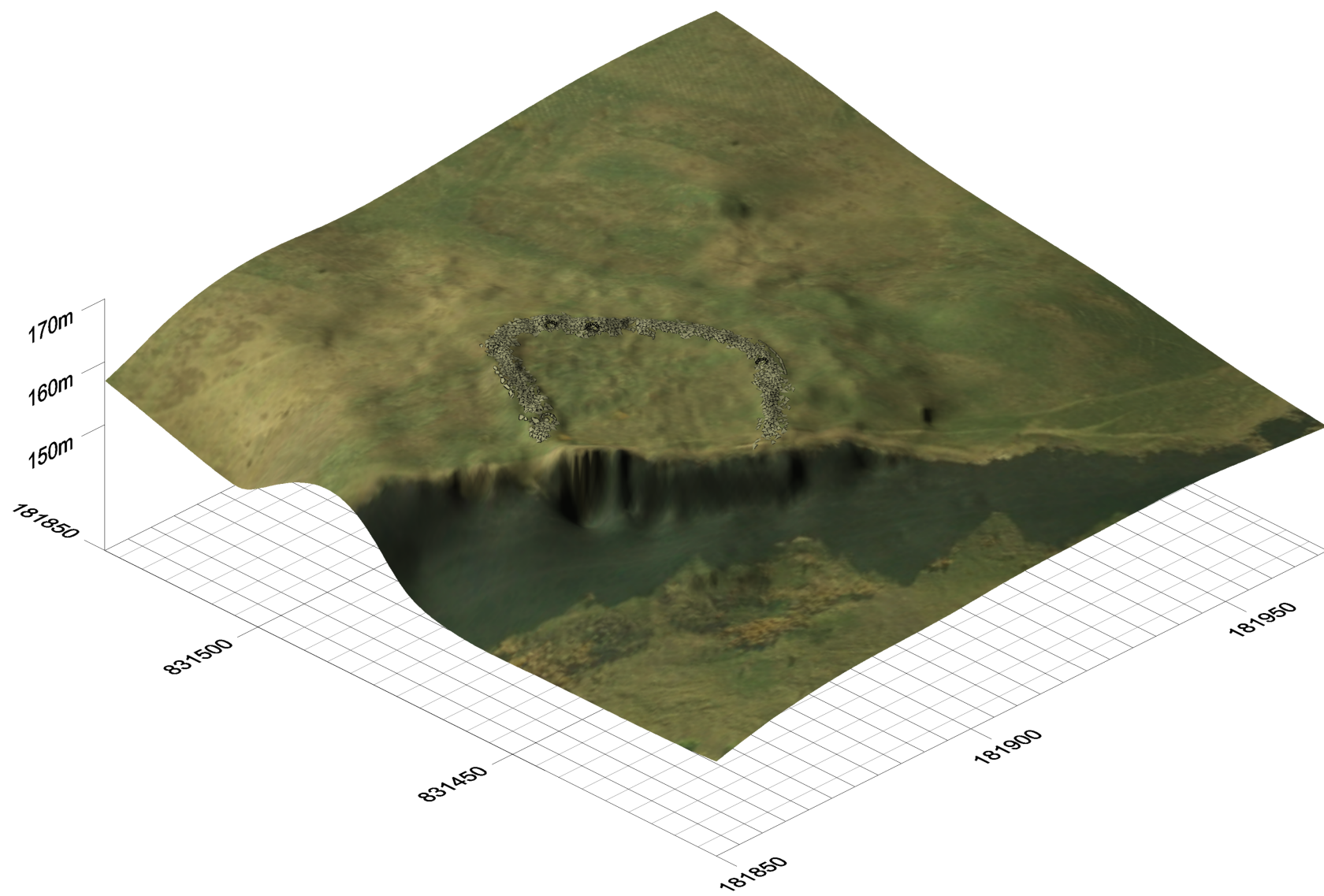
Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 4 - Digital terrain model  
- Perspective Projection -  
Landscape context of  
Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:



**Key**

Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

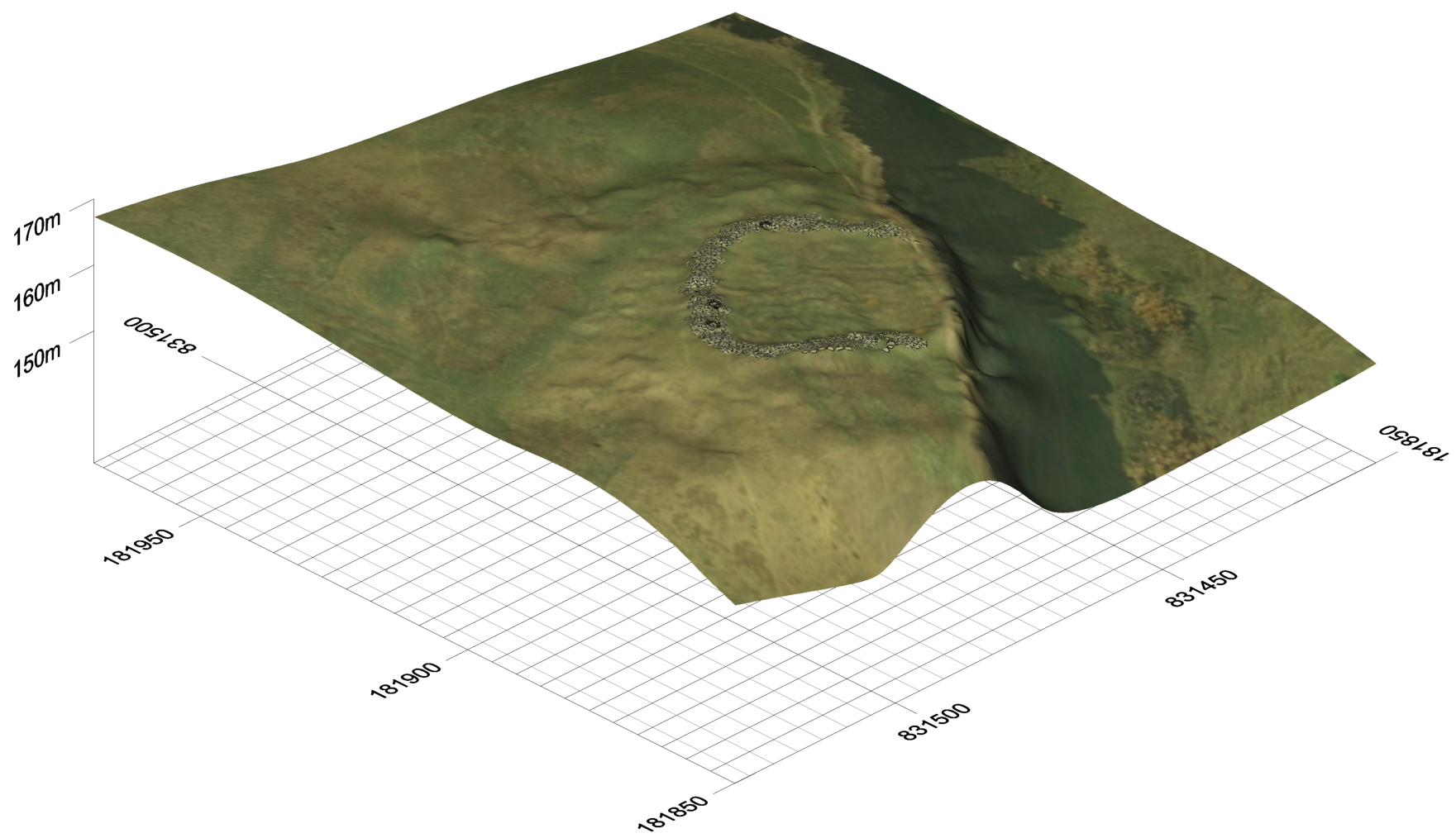
Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 5 - Digital terrain model  
- Perspective Projection -  
Landscape context of  
Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:





**Key**

Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 6 - Digital terrain model  
- Perspective Projection -  
Landscape context of  
Carn na Sean Craig

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2nd edit by:	Signed off:

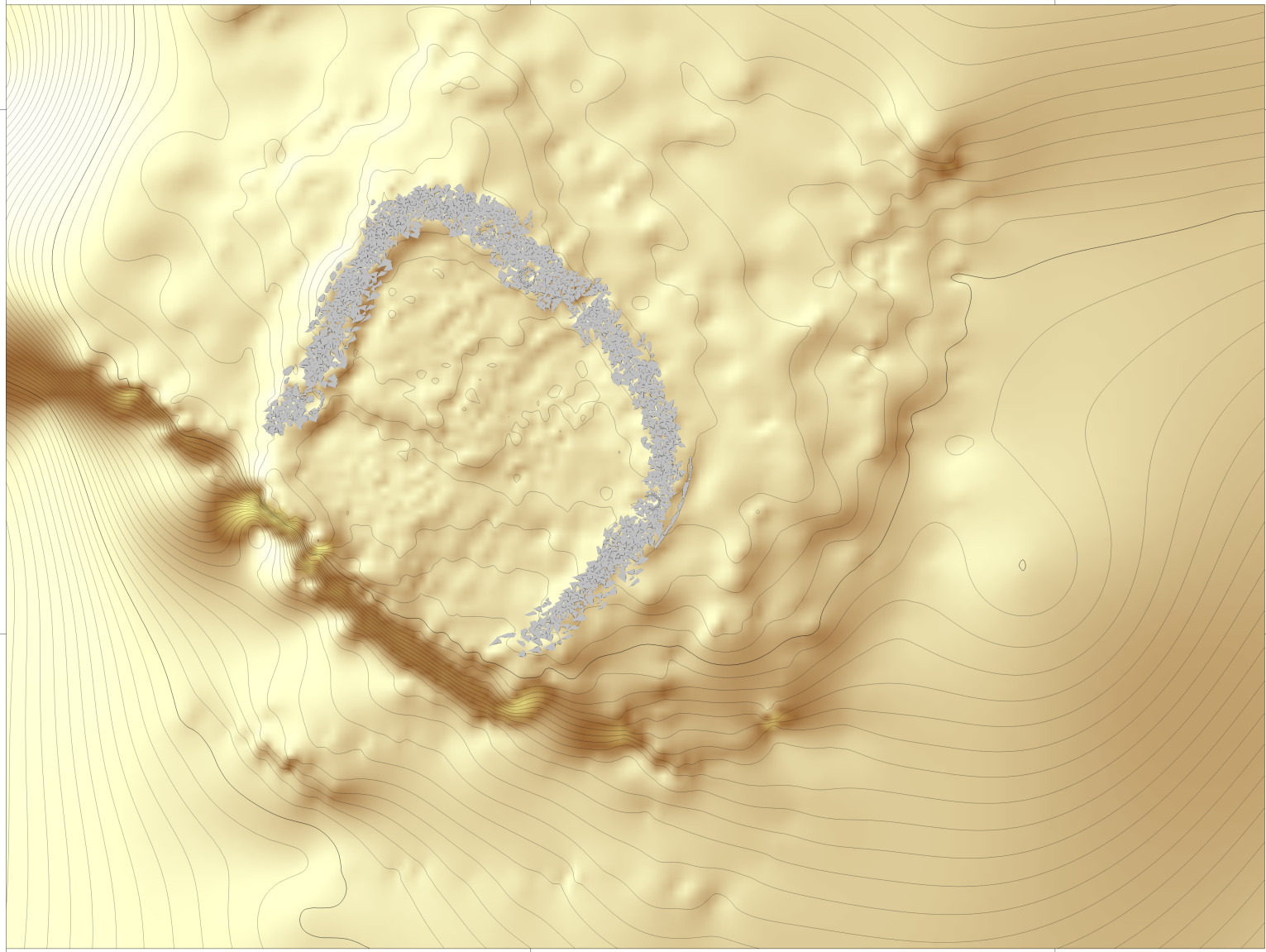
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831450

181850

181900

181950



**Key**

Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 7 - Shaded Relief model  
- Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:

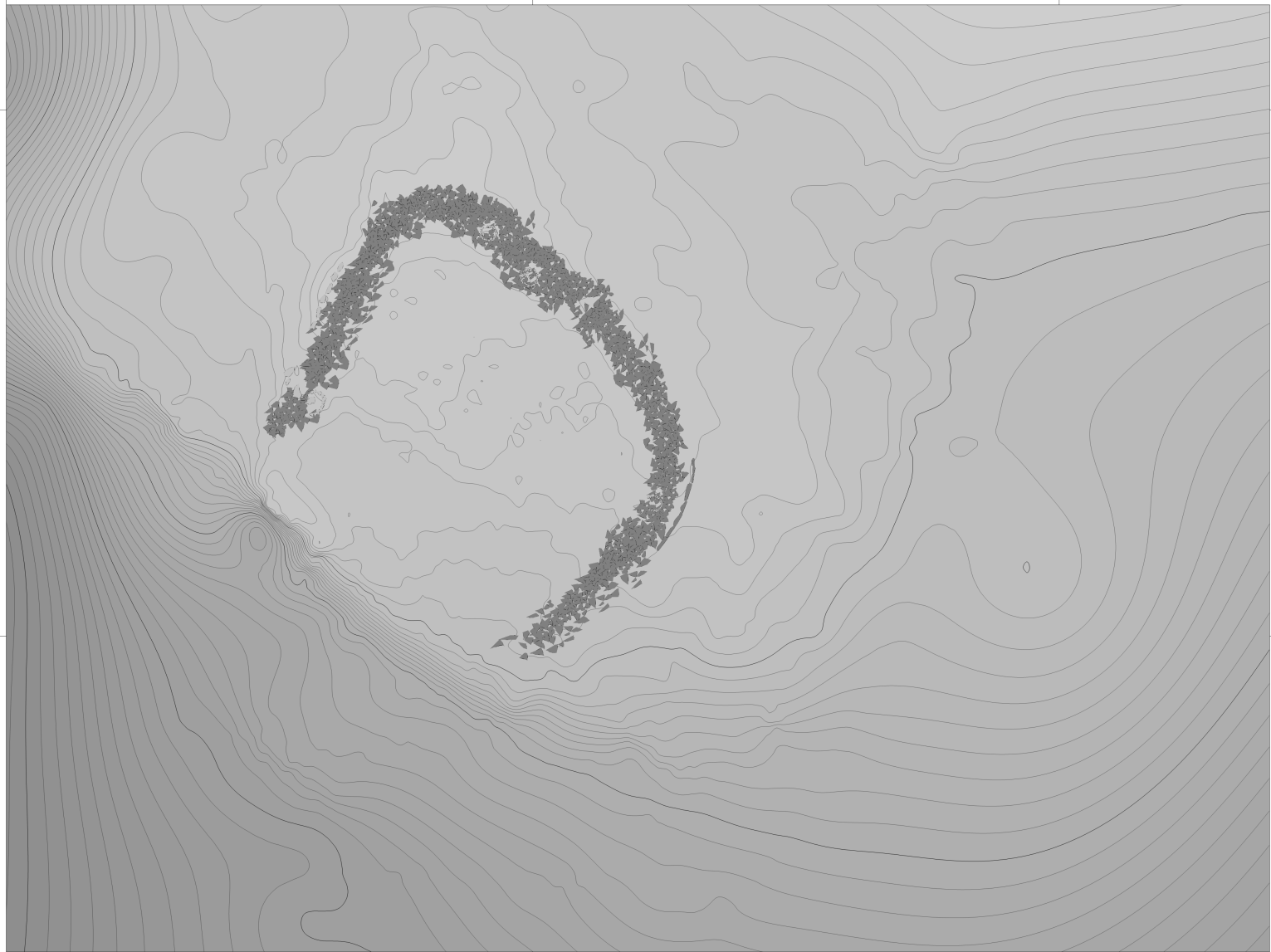
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831450

181850

181900

181950



**Key**

Project Name:  
Archaeological Measured Survey of  
Carn Na Sean Craig

Project Code: CGRF14



Figure 8 - Shaded Relief model  
- Carn na Sean Craig

Drawn by: Enda O'Flaherty	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:



Plate 1 - View of monument, facing southwest



Plate 2 - View of Carn na Sean-Chreag, facing NNE



Plate 3 - View of fort from southwest side facing northeast.



Plate 4 - Facing slabs on exterior of southeast wall, facing northwest



Plate 5 - Facing slabs on exterior of northwest wall, facing southeast



Plate 6 - Northwest wall with large facign slabs on exterior, facing southwest



Plate 7 - Gallery in northwest wall, facing southwest



Plate 8 - Detail of gallery in northwest wall, facing west



Plate 9 - Entrance, facing southwest





Plate 10 - Entrance and northeast wall, facing southeast



Plate 11 - Interior of monument, facing south