

# ARCHAEOLOGY COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

## Monument Record Form

### Location

Reidh-dhail, to west of  
Ormsaigbeg

ACA Monument  
Number:

**439644**

HER Ref No  
/ Canmore

Canmore ID 145196  
Site Number NM46SW 1

Record Date

08/05/15

### Monument Type

Settlement & fields

### What it's made of

Surveyors:

Jon Haylett

### Dimensions in Metres:

Length

Width

Height

Diameter

N/A

Monument Condition:

5 = Very Good

1 = Very Poor

2

Grid reference

NGR

Easting

Northing

Accuracy (m): Height OD

(local NGR is NM)

NM

439

644

**Detailed description, further notes, observations** – *continued on next page*

Reidh-dhail is a settlement about 3km WNW of Ormsaigbeg, on Ormsaigbeg common graings. The site lies at the top of NNE-SSW tending glen which leads down to a port, An Acairseid, about 1km away. A 250m long lozenge-shaped walled field trending WNW-ESE is divided about 2/3 along its length by a straight wall. Most of the buildings are at the ESE end, some within the wall, but the one building to the west is outwith the field. While the name Reidh-dhail suggests a Norse origin for the settlement, the existing buildings appear much more recent, some being similar to shieling huts, others of the same dimensions as typical 18<sup>th</sup> century clachan dwelling houses. The site is remembered as an Ormsaigbeg shieling.

### Present land use

Rough grazing

### Past land use

Arable

### Present vegetation cover

Fields bracken, surroundings heather, grasses,  
willow

### Nearby monuments or associated features

none

### Topography

In a glen....

### Nearby, associated or incorporated natural features

....surrounded by hills.

**Date:** Don't Know / Prehistoric /  
Early Historic / Mediaeval / Post-  
mediaeval / Post-Clearance / 19<sup>th</sup> C, etc:

From Norse into 19<sup>th</sup> century

### Reason for interpretation

Name Norse, fields recently  
worked.

### Confidence

**in date:**

5 = High

1 = Low

3





Satellite image courtesy Bing Maps



View from SW



## The Structures:

**Structure 1:** NM4365364356. Lies on a knoll about 100m to the west of the field. 4m x 4m, roughly built of stone with remains of an attached outbuilding (?byre) to its south. It is surrounded by irregular, unwallled fields which, judging from their bracken, may have been used for arable farming.



**Structure 2:** NM4385664440. Lies within the main walled field on the north side. Sub-rectangular stone structure, roughly built, 2m x 3m, set into a bank to its north so it protrudes into the field. Its style resembles many other local shieling huts.



**The remaining buildings are at the eastern end:**



**Structure 3:** NM4397464312. Lies outside main head dyke. 3m x 3m, stone built with rounded corners and entrance on south side. This doesn't resemble other local shieling huts but is small for a permanent dwelling.

**Structure 4:** NM4395464287. Lies within head dyke, on the arable land. 7.5m x 4.5m, stone built with rounded corners and ?entrance on north side. This has the standard dimensions of a pre-clearance, perhaps 18<sup>th</sup> century dwelling, the only unusual feature being that it lies within the field wall.





**Structure 5:** NM4402964335. Lies on the head dyke on the SE side. Stone built, 3.5m x 3m, with entrance on north side. As with Structure 3, this is small for a permanent dwelling.





**Structure 6:** NM4405764320. Two structures: A, 3m x 2m, to the west and B, 3m x 2.5m, close together, to the east of, and lying outwith the header dyke. As with 3 and 5, these are small for permanent dwellings. Both have their entrances on the west side.



**Structure 7:** NM4407564229. A stone building comprising a main section, possibly a dwelling, at one end, 2.5m x 2.5m, with two smaller, open structures to the west side, possibly byres.





### **The fields:**

The main field, approx. 250m x 125m, is divided by a straight wall leaving a little more than 2/3 of its area to the west. This western section shows rig and furrow markings along its length, these being absent from the eastern portion. Both areas are covered with bracken, indicating a reasonable quality soil and relatively recent working. The east end of the field seems to lack rig & furrow workings.

There are signs of two small, walled fields to the SE of the main one, both now heather-covered but both with rig & furrow markings. Several other areas which are currently clear of heather and have bracken cover exist to both east and west of the main field, and may have been used for arable farming.

### **Peat banks:**

To the south of the fields there are clear indications of peat workings.

### **Summary:**

The size of the enclosed arable area, the existence of further, less-developed fields to the south and SE, the clachan-style house (structure 4, and possibly 1 and 7), and extensive peat workings to the south, suggest this was at one time a permanent settlement. The existence of smaller buildings suggest later use as a 'normal' shieling for Ormsaigbeg, but the shieling's most unusual feature are the number of stone buildings measuring roughly 2.5m x 2.5m, which are large compared to other shieling huts on Ardnamurchan but small for permanent dwellings.