

VOLUME 1: CHAPTER 10: CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Figure 10.1: Cultural Heritage Assets

Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

There are no appendices associated with this Chapter.

10. CULTURAL HERITAGE

10.1 Executive Summary

- 10.1.1 This Chapter addresses the potential for both direct and indirect impacts on cultural heritage assets and archaeological features as a result of the Proposed Development and reaches conclusions as to the predicted likely significance of residual effects.
- 10.1.2 There are no designated heritage sites in the near surrounding area which would have significant visibility of the Proposed Development and would give rise to any significant direct or indirect effects. As such, a detailed assessment on designated heritage sites has been scoped out of assessment, as agreed with The Highland Council (THC) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) during the scoping process.
- 10.1.3 Four non-designated heritage assets were identified within or just outside the defined Limits of Deviation of the Proposed Development, all of which were identified as being of Regional heritage importance (medium sensitivity). The potential for unidentified archaeological remains is considered to be low to negligible.
- 10.1.4 The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid heritage assets where possible, however, an unavoidable direct impact considered to be Moderate adverse, and significant, has been predicted for one heritage asset; Site 4c: Bowside Hut Circle at Dallangwell, south of Uidh nan Con Luatha. Reduction of this impact to a not significant level is recommended through avoidance of laying or dragging conductors across the feature and if this proves not practicable, then the application of matting or temporary earth banking to be laid over the structure. Even with this protection in place, no plant, vehicles or other machinery should cross the feature during construction works. Monitoring of works by an Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW) is also recommended during the construction stage to ensure that the mitigation is carried out correctly.
- 10.1.5 Following the application of mitigation measures, the residual direct effect on this heritage asset is considered to be reduced to Negligible, and not significant.

10.2 Introduction

- 10.2.1 This Chapter assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on non-designated assets and reaches conclusions as to the predicted likely significance of residual effects. Non-designated assets are taken to include recorded and unrecorded archaeological heritage assets and areas of archaeological, historical or cultural significance within the study area, previously unevaluated policies and designed landscapes; and other elements of cultural heritage.
- 10.2.2 The assessment considers the potential for both direct impacts, meaning those that have potential to physically disturb or damage heritage features within the study area, and indirect impacts, meaning those which can adversely affect the historic setting of heritage features via the Proposed Development's visibility from each feature or its curtilage.
- 10.2.3 The assessment has been undertaken by field archaeologist and cultural heritage consultant Catherine Dagg who is an Associate of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. A table presenting relevant qualifications and experience of key staff involved in the preparation of this Chapter is included in **Appendix 5.1**, contained within Volume 4 of this EIA Report.

10.3 Scope of Assessment

Study Area

10.3.1 A study area to locate and define archaeological features with the potential for direct impacts was formed by the location of the Proposed Development infrastructure and set as a broad corridor within the defined Limits of Deviation, as set out in **Chapter 3 – The Proposed Development** and illustrated on **Figure 10.1**.

10.3.2 The potential for previously unrecorded minor features of land use within the study area that are associated with recorded cultural heritage assets which are located immediately outside the study area, is taken into account by including these cultural heritage assets in the assessment.

Scoped Out

10.3.3 There are no designated heritage sites (i.e. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Designed landscapes) in the near surrounding area which would have significant visibility of the Proposed Development, with the closest cultural heritage designated site being the Armadale Broch Scheduled Monument, located 3.5 km to the north-west. As such it is not considered that the Proposed Development would give rise to any significant direct or indirect effects on designated heritage sites, and a detailed assessment has been scoped out of assessment, as agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) during a formal scoping process (see **Table 10.1**).

10.3.4 Cumulative effects would only be considered in relation to significant visual impacts and impacts on the setting of designated assets. However, as no designated assets would be impacted either directly or indirectly, a cumulative assessment has been scoped out of this assessment.

10.4 Consultation

10.4.1 **Table 10.1** sets out the comments received from consultees in relation to cultural heritage and the actions taken to address them within this assessment.

Table 10.1: Consultee Responses

Organisation & Date	Summary of Consultation Response	EIA / Design Response to Consultee
Historic Environment Scotland 11 th April 2024	HES are content to agree with the scoping report that further detailed environmental assessment is not required for our specific historic environment remit at the national level and can be scoped out of the EIA Report for this development.	This has been noted.
The Highland Council 27 th June 2024	The application boundary may contain a number of historic environment assets, which may not be accurately represented on the Historic Environment Record (HER) so all upstanding remains should be identified by survey and the potential for buried features or deposits, stated in the report. Where impacts are unavoidable, methods to mitigate this impact are expected to be discussed in detail.	Details of the baseline cultural heritage findings are outlined in Section 10.7, an assessment of likely significant effects in Section 10.9, and proposed mitigation, where necessary, in Section 10.10.
	THC are content to scope out the impacts of the proposal on designated heritage assessments given there are no	This has been noted with regard to scoping out the impacts of the proposal on designated heritage sites

Organisation & Date	Summary of Consultation Response	EIA / Design Response to Consultee
	designated assets both within and immediately surrounding the site. The noted Cultural Heritage Assets require to be assessed at application stage given these are located in the vicinity of the proposal.	The potential for direct effects on cultural heritage assets have been addressed in Section 10.9.
	Given the application site is located within the candidate Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS) ¹ , perceived impacts on this designation required to be assessed within any future submission.	Given the Flow Country WHS was inscribed for purely nature criteria, being the most expansive and best example of blanket bog in the world and inscribed for its globally important natural ecosystems, this has not been covered in this cultural heritage assessment, but instead is discussed in Appendix 7.7: Flow Country WHS Assessment .

10.5 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

10.5.1 The key legislation, policy and guidance listed below has been considered in the assessment:

Legislative Context

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act (2011)); and
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011).

Policy Context

- National Planning Framework for Scotland 4 (NPF4) (Scottish Government, 2023);
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (HES, 2019a, finalised amended 2020);
- Planning Advice Note 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment (PAN 1/2013) (Scottish Government, 2013, revised 2017);
- Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology (PAN 2/2011) (Scottish Government, 2011);
- Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (Highland Council (THC), 2012):
 - Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage;
 - Policy 69: Electricity Transmission Infrastructure; and
 - Appendix 3: Definition of Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage Features.
- Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (HES, 2019);

Technical Guidance

- Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (ClfA, 2017);
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting (HES, 2016; updated 2021);
- Highland Council Standards for Archaeological Work (THC, 2012);
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy: Supplementary Planning Guidance (THC, 2013);
- Principles of Cultural Heritage Assessment (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and ClfA, 2021);

¹ The Flow Country candidate WHS has since been inscribed a WHS by Unesco in July 2024

- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook (Scottish Natural Heritage & Historic Environment Scotland (SNH & HES), 2018); and
- Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (CIfA, 2014; revised 2021).

10.6 Methodology

Desk Based Evaluation

10.6.1 The desk-based evaluation consisted of all databases available online including:

- The Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
- CANMORE database of Historic Environment Scotland.
- Historical Ordnance Survey maps and pre-Ordnance Survey maps held in the Map Library of the National Library of Scotland.
- Previous survey reports covering recent developments in the vicinity and accessible online through the Highland HER website.

Field Survey

10.6.2 Field survey was carried out in May 2021. The survey work targeted areas under consideration for various route options being considered during the route selection process, which had not been covered by previous survey work for developments in the near vicinity.

10.6.3 A further walkover was carried out in February 2024 at alignment selection stage, primarily focused on two recorded heritage assets (Bowside Hut Circles at Dallangwell and Brarathy Township). The purpose of the visit was to identify any associated visible minor features with these two particular heritage assets, and assess the potential for sub-surface remains, in order to advise on the careful placement of infrastructure for the Proposed Development.

10.6.4 No further archaeological features were identified within the study area. The present condition of the archaeological features listed in Section 10.7 was compared with previously recorded information and potential impacts of the Proposed Development identified.

Assessment of Effects

10.6.5 The significance of a direct impact depends upon the sensitivity of a cultural heritage asset, combined with the magnitude of the impact.

Sensitivity / Importance

10.6.6 Archaeological sites, the definition of which extends to include areas considered to be of archaeological potential, and sites of historical or otherwise cultural interest fall into three categories:

- **National:** this category contains all sites and monuments with statutory protection, i.e. Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Other monuments, although not scheduled, may be considered to be of national importance if they are particularly rare and well-preserved examples of a type. Sensitivity of sites of National interest to direct or indirect impacts would be considered to be High;
- **Regional:** almost all prehistoric and mediaeval sites would be considered to be of regional importance. Post mediaeval sites would be placed in this category if they are particularly well-preserved or unusual, dependent on the distribution of similar sites in the vicinity and if they form an element within a complex archaeological or historical landscape. Post-mediaeval townships, shieling sites and the more substantial relict agricultural, sporting or military remains of the 19th and 20th centuries would fall into this category. Sensitivity of sites of Regional interest to direct or indirect impacts would be considered to be Medium; and

- **Local:** this category applies to minor landscape features of the post-mediaeval period, particularly those which are common or poorly preserved. Boundaries and trackways, unless forming elements of a well-preserved relict, archaeological or historical landscape, or bearing historical or cultural associations, would fall into this category. Sensitivity of sites of Local interest to direct or indirect impacts would be considered to be Low.

Magnitude

10.6.7 Criteria for assessing the magnitude of a direct impact include:

- **High Impact:** direct impact on sites of National importance is considered to be high, as these sites tend to be those with statutory protection. As such, any potential high impact would be unacceptable and would require a review of the development design in order to avoid or reduce direct impact;
- **Medium Impact:** direct impact on sites of Regional importance is considered to be medium, although each case will require separate consideration. In some cases this impact would be considered acceptable, most likely following a further programme of recording and investigation, while in other cases, the recommendation would be to modify the development design if possible to avoid or reduce direct impact;
- **Low Impact:** sites of local importance would not generally require modification of the development design to avoid direct impact. Some recording may be advisable as mitigation; and
- **Negligible Impact:** impact on sites which lie within the study area but would not be intentionally directly affected is considered to be negligible.

Significance

10.6.8 The predicted significance of impact is determined by professional judgement, considering an archaeological site's importance in conjunction with the magnitude of impact predicted on it. **Table 10-2** summarises the criteria for assessing the significance of a direct impact. An effect of Moderate or Major is considered to be significant (as highlighted in **Table 10.2**).

Table 10.2: Significance of Effect

Magnitude of Impact	Importance / Sensitivity		
	National / High	Regional / Medium	Local / Low
High	Major	Major	Moderate
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

10.7 Baseline Conditions

Overview

10.7.1 The Proposed Development is located entirely within the strath of the River Strathy. The strath extends over 10 km south from the coast and, similar to the other north coast straths, contains virtually the only sheltered arable and grazing land away from the immediate coastal strip in this section of north Sutherland. This land has been utilised from earliest times, as evidenced by the numerous hut circles dating to the Bronze and Iron ages

through to the early Modern townships such as Brarathy and Dallangwell, the latter place name indicating that it is one of many north coast settlements of Norse origin. A mediaeval cross slab is located on the hillside to the west of the strath indicating a mediaeval Christian presence but with no associated ecclesiastical structures or traditions.

10.7.2 After the clearance of the population of the strath to make way for commercial sheep farming, only a couple of shepherd's cottages were occupied in the strath, contemporary with stells, fanks, enclosures and the many long banks and dykes that rise from the river to divide the higher ground.

10.7.3 The first commercial forestry block at Brarathy was planted before 1956 and Strathy North in the early 1970s. While most of the archaeological record relating to the periods of settlement and land use listed above survive outwith the planted areas, some, including the largest Early Modern settlement at Brarathy have been completely covered by coniferous planting, now partially felled. However, with the exception of Brarathy, the archaeological landscape of the River Strathy survives in open ground unaffected by more modern development.

Cultural Heritage Assets

10.7.4 All recorded heritage assets located within the 100 m OHL LoD (50 m either side of the centreline of the OHL) and 50 m track LoD (25m either side of the track centreline), are listed below and displayed on **Figure 10.1**.

Site 1 and Site 2: Braerathy Township

10.7.5 The township of Brarathy extends for nearly 1 km along the terrace to the west of the River Strathy, partly within standing forestry to the north and partly within an area of felled forestry to the south. It now has one entry on CANMORE (6810) but two separate entries on the Highland Historic Environment Record (HER), as noted below:

Site 1: Brarathy Farmstead, Strathy Forest (HER ref. MHG 33017)

10.7.6 This consists of four structures, one long rectangular building and three smaller dispersed buildings, as marked on 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) Map of 1878. These are centred on NC 8249 5644.

Site 2: Brarathy (HER ref. MHG9642)

10.7.7 This consists of four structures, one long and one L-shaped building and two smaller buildings. The furthest west of these structures is at NC 82449 56778 and the furthest east is at NC 82545 56832. The HER entry for the township gives the following information:

“This deserted township, situated on a terrace below Am Bodach on the west side of the River Strathy, comprises the footings of at least eighteen buildings, varying in size from 35 m by 4 m to 7 m by 3 m, a corn-drying kiln, and several kaleyards and enclosures. Traces of lazy beds occur on the river floodplain, now occupied by a modern field, and afforestation has encroached on the south part of the township”.

Site 3: Reidhean a Bhainne

10.7.8 Located to the west of the existing access track at two adjacent sites:

- Site 3a: Farmstead (HER ref. MHG 9640 and CANMORE 6812) at NC 82760 57485. One long building, aligned approximately N-S and measuring 45 m in length with a kailyard attached to its west and a smaller enclosure to the north.
- Site 3b: Hut Circle (HER ref. MHG 9641 and CANMORE 6811) at NC 82743 57519. Well preserved large hut circle contained within the later enclosure.

10.7.9 Although associated cultivation features are noted to the west of these features, on low ground by the river, there are none to the east above the existing access track.

Site 4: Bowside Hut Circles at Dallangwell (HER ref. MHG 9528 and CANMORE 6923)

10.7.10 Three hut circles to the west of the existing access track, centred on NC 8291 6006. Occupying slightly raised ground cut through by the Uidh nan Con Luatha and possibly formed from alluvial material are three hut circles. Two adjacent structures are north of the stream at NC 82900 60113 (Site 4a) and NC 82887 60102 (Site 4b) while the third and best preserved is south of the stream at NC 82951 60026 (Site 4c). Some field clearance cairns have previously been noted on the raised platform but are now obscured by vegetation.

10.8 Embedded Mitigation

10.8.1 Embedded mitigation in the form of avoidance of direct damage to the cultural heritage assets listed in Section 10.7 has been incorporated during the design stages of the Proposed Development.

10.8.2 Protection of all four heritage assets (listed in Section 10.7) from accidental damage during the construction phase is recommended in the form of identifying and clearly marking off with some form of barrier and appropriate signage. The exclusion zones should extend as far as practicable out from the visible features of the heritage assets. This measure would prevent temporary parking and laydown of materials during construction.

10.8.3 In addition, awareness of site workers to the significance and sensitivity of the archaeological exclusion zones should be raised through on-site toolbox talks.

10.8.4 These mitigation measures should be carried out by, or under the supervision of, a qualified archaeologist or Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW) using the baseline information provided in this EIA. The archaeologist should also be on call in case of any unanticipated archaeological discoveries or concerns.

10.8.5 Subsequent sections of this Chapter assume that the embedded mitigation described above will be fully implemented.

10.9 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Direct Impacts

10.9.1 Potential direct impact on non-designated heritage assets are as follows:

Site 1: Brarathy Farmstead, Strathy Forest (HER ref. MHG 33017)

10.9.2 This heritage asset lies north of one proposed tower location (Tower 2) and adjacent to both the proposed OHL alignment and a section of new permanent access track, which would run alongside. The heritage asset is considered to be of regional importance (and medium sensitivity).

10.9.3 Consideration of this heritage asset at the design stage for the Proposed Development (siting of towers and track design) has resulted in no direct damage being anticipated for the heritage asset. Although it remains vulnerable to accidental damage during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, potential direct impacts on the heritage asset would be avoided through the implementation of best practice mitigation measures (as detailed in Section 10.8). As such, the magnitude of impact through any damage or destruction is considered to be negligible.

10.9.4 The significance of potential impact is considered to be **Negligible** and **not significant**.

Site 2: Braerathy (HER ref. MHG9642)

- 10.9.5 This heritage asset lies between the proposed OHL alignment and one proposed tower location (Tower 4) to the east and the proposed new permanent access track to the west. This heritage asset is considered to be of regional importance (and medium sensitivity).
- 10.9.6 Consideration of this heritage asset at the design stage for the alignment of the OHL and the new permanent access track has resulted in no direct damage being anticipated for the heritage asset. Although it remains vulnerable to accidental damage during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, potential direct impacts on the heritage asset would be avoided through the implementation of best practice mitigation measures (as detailed in Section 10.8). As such, the magnitude of impact through any damage or destruction is considered to be negligible.
- 10.9.7 The significance of potential impact is considered to be **Negligible** and **not significant**.

Site 3. Reidhean a Bhainne

- 10.9.8 The Early Modern farmstead (Site 3a) and hut circle (Site 3b) both individually and together form a multi-period site and are of regional importance and therefore of medium sensitivity.
- 10.9.9 These heritage assets are located entirely west of the existing access track and immediately outwith the study area. No elements of construction or operation of the Proposed Development would extend west of the existing access track and no direct impacts are predicted for these heritage assets. As such, as damage or destruction is not anticipated, the magnitude of impact is considered to be negligible. Nevertheless, the implementation of best practice mitigation measures (as detailed in Section 10.8) would still be applied to ensure these heritage assets are not vulnerable to accidental damage during the construction phase.
- 10.9.10 The significance of this potential impact is considered to be **Negligible** and **not significant**.

Site 4. Bowside Hut Circles at Dallangwell

- 10.9.11 The broad area of this heritage asset is crossed by the proposed OHL. Of the three individual hut circles forming the heritage asset, two of the hut circles (identified as Sites 4a and 4b on **Figure 10.1**), are located approximately 40 m and 60 m respectively, to the south-west of Tower 18. The third hut circle (identified as Site 4c on **Figure 10.1**, located to the south of Uidh nan Con Luatha watercourse), is under 10 m to the west of the centreline of the OHL, but 180 m and 105 m from Towers 17 and 18 respectively.
- 10.9.12 It is predicted that there would be no actual ground disturbance within the defined boundaries of these heritage assets, but there is a high probability of damage during the construction phase through the laying out of conductors between the two towers, particularly to Site 4c. Any ground disturbance also has the potential to disturb sub-surface features within the defined boundaries of the heritage asset, an area measuring 100 m E-W and 140 m N-S.
- 10.9.13 According to the criteria set out in **Table 10.2**, the importance of these heritage assets is defined as regional and therefore of medium sensitivity.
- 10.9.14 Any damage to Site 4c would be considered to be of medium magnitude and the significance of potential impact, prior to mitigation, is considered to be **Moderate Adverse** and **significant**.
- 10.9.15 The magnitude of predicted direct impacts on Site 4a and 4b and its environs are considered to be low and the significance of this potential impact considered to be **Minor** and **not significant**.

10.10 Mitigation

10.10.1 Unavoidable direct impact is predicted for one heritage asset; Site 4: Bowside Hut Circles at Dallangwell (only Site 4c to the south of Uidh nan Con Luatha). Reduction of this impact is recommended by, firstly, avoidance of laying or dragging conductors across the feature. If this proves not practicable, then the application of matting or temporary earth banking should be laid over the structure and that, even with this protection in place, no plant, vehicles or other machinery cross the feature.

10.10.2 Archaeological monitoring of works in the vicinity of Site 4c is recommended to be carried out by an ACoW during the construction stage of works, to ensure that the mitigation proposed above is carried out correctly.

10.11 Residual Effects

10.11.1 One cultural heritage asset, Site 4c, has been considered to be vulnerable to potential significant direct impacts. However, with the implementation of the mitigation outlined in Section 10.10, the residual effect is considered to be reduced to **Negligible** and **not significant**.

10.11.2 Following implementation of the mitigation measures listed above, no residual effects on cultural heritage assets are predicted.

10.12 Summary and Conclusions

10.12.1 An assessment has been made of the predicted significance of effects of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage interests. This assessment identified no significant residual effects, assuming application of the proposed mitigation measures noted above.

10.13 References

CFA Archaeology Ltd (2006). Cultural Heritage, Strathy North Wind Farm Environmental Statement. Prepared for Scottish and Southern Energy Generation Limited.

Headland Archaeology Ltd (2011). Cultural Heritage, Strathy Wood Wind Farm Environmental Statement. Prepared for RWE Renewables

Dagg C. (2012). Cultural Heritage, Strathy North Wind Farm. Prepared for Scottish and Southern Energy Generation Limited.

Dagg C. (2013). Strathy South Wind Farm Environmental Statement. Prepared for Scottish and Southern Energy Generation Limited.

Dagg C. (2012) Strath Halladale to Dallangwell 132 kV OHL. Prepared for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc