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13. CULTURAL HERITAGE

13.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides an appraisal of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on archaeology and cultural heritage receptors. The chapter also provides: the policy context for archaeology and cultural heritage; consultation feedback on the Proposed Development; the assessment methodology and criteria; the baseline conditions currently existing at the Proposed Development and surrounding area (**Volume 3a Figure 13.1** and **13.2**); the mitigation measures the Proposed Development is committed to implementing; and the significance of the (residual) effects with these measures adopted.

13.2 Legislation Policy and Guidance

The assessment is conducted with reference to the relevant statutory and planning frameworks for cultural heritage, and this includes:

- The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014¹;
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979²;
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997³.
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Revised 2020): Valuing the Historic Environment, Paragraphs 135-151⁴;
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)⁵;
- Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland⁶;
- Highland Wide Local Development Plan⁷;
- Planning Advice Note (PAN) PAN 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology⁸;
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessments⁹; and
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Managing Change in the Historic Environment Series, specifically 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting'¹⁰.

Statutory protection for archaeology is principally outlined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)¹¹, as amended by the National Heritage Act (1983)¹², and nationally important sites are listed in a Schedule of Monuments. Both the 1979 and 1983 Acts make no reference to the settings of Scheduled Monuments. However, more recent policy, guidance and legislation (as above, outlined below) acknowledges the contribution of the setting and placement within the historic landscape, where the setting is considered to be

¹ Scottish Government (2014) *Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014*. Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/19/pdfs/asp_20140019_en.pdf (Accessed 28/06/2023)

² UK Government (1979) *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* [Online]. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

³ UK Government (1997) *The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997* [Online]. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

⁴ Scottish Government (2020) *Scottish Planning Policy* [Online]. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/pages/5/> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

⁵ Historic Environment Scotland (2019) *Historic Environment Policy for Scotland* [Online]. Available at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=1bcfa7b1-28fb-4d4b-b1e6-aa2500f942e7> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

⁶ Scottish Government (2014) *Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland* [Online]. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-time-historic-environment-strategy-scotland/> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

⁷ The Highland Council, *Highland-wide Local Development Plan*. Available at https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan (Accessed 26/08/2022)

⁸ Scottish Government (2011) *Planning Advice Note 2/2011* [Online]. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/> (Accessed 28/06/2023)

⁹ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020) *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*. Available at https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS%26GDBA_4.pdf (Accessed 28/06/2023)

¹⁰ Historic Environment Scotland (2020) *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting* [Online]. Available at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=80b7c0a0-584b-4625-b1fd-a60b009c2549>

¹¹ UK Government (1979) *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act*. Available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46

¹² UK Government (1983) *National Heritage Act*. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/47>

integral or contributory to the value of a Scheduled Monument. This stands contrary to earlier protections that focus on the material and bounded area of the designation.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas receive protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997¹³, as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (2013)¹⁴.

The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014¹⁵ defines the role of HES and the processes for the designation of heritage assets, consents and rights of appeal. Specifically, this pertains to Category A Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscape and Inventoried Historic Battlefields which sit within the remit of HES. Similarly, local authorities have remit over non-designated assets and Category B and C Listed Buildings.

13.2.1 National Planning Policy

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)¹⁶ is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out the Scottish Government's spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments, and national planning policy, which includes consideration of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and historical environments, with an enhanced approach to setting consideration.

An assessment of the potential impacts on the Cultural Heritage resource is required, as the Proposed Development lies within a landscape of potential archaeological interest.

13.2.2 Regional and Local Planning Policy

Regarding regional and local policy, the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)¹⁷, adopted 2016, is in effect for the next 20 years. It is to be read in conjunction with NPF4 to supplement management of the heritage environment. In particular, Policy 57 details the approach to assets of local and regional importance and associated setting guidelines.

The HwLDP states that regional, local, nationally, and internationally important sites must be given due consideration during planning stages of projects. It states it is essential to address impacts on cultural heritage features when considering and assessing development proposals, and background maps set out the locations of all these different features, in so far as they have been mapped, digitally on their system.

13.2.3 Guidance

Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology¹⁸ provides advice on dealing with archaeological remains. Whilst it covers a range of issues, of particular relevance is the planning balance associated with the preservation of archaeological remains and the benefits of development; the circumstances under which developers may be required to provide further information or field evaluation to inform decisions; and measures that can be taken to mitigate adverse effects.

Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG, 2019) accompanies HEPS and details the policy and selection guidance used by Historic Environment Scotland when designating heritage assets of national importance.

Guidance on how to apply the policies set out in the SPP is set out in Historic Environment Scotland's 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment Series'.

¹³ UK Government (1997) *Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997*. Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/pdfs/ukpga_19790046_en.pdf

¹⁴ UK Government (2013) *Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013*. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/24/contents/enacted>

¹⁵ Scottish Government (2014) *Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014*. Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/19/pdfs/asp_20140019_en.pdf

¹⁶ Scottish Government. 2023. National Planning framework 4. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/pages/3/>

¹⁷ Highland-wide Local Development Plan | Highland-wide Local Development Plan | The Highland Council

¹⁸ Scottish Government (2011) *Planning Advice Note 2/2011* [Online]. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/>

Standards and Guidance published by the ClfA have been followed, in particular the ‘Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment’¹⁹ and the ‘Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment’²⁰.

13.3 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

13.3.1 Scope of the Assessment

This cultural heritage assessment considers the potential to impact designated and non-designated sites. Designated sites include world heritage sites, registered battlefields, registered gardens and designed landscapes, scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. Non-designated sites will consist of those listed in the Canmore database and Historic Environment Record (HER).

Extent of the Study Area

For the Proposed Development, a 5 km radius Study Area (**Volume 3a Figure 13.1**) for designated cultural heritage assets and a 250 m radius Study Area (**Volume 3a Figure 13.2**) for the non-designated cultural heritage assets was established from the extents of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) Boundary. Access roads and project sitting infrastructure have been considered.

13.3.2 Methodology for Assessment of Effects

Potential impacts of the Proposed Development on Cultural Heritage resources comprise:

- direct physical damage to the fabric of Cultural Heritage resources, generally resulting from groundworks associated with the construction of the Proposed Development, but also potential secondary impacts from changes to groundwater levels or soil chemistry.
- indirect adverse impacts on the setting of Cultural Heritage resources, largely as the result of visual impacts;
- adverse impacts upon the historic landscape; and
- Non-designated Cultural Heritage resources are considered in addition to Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefields.

This assessment considers effects from both potential direct and indirect impacts (i.e., on settings) on Cultural Heritage resources caused by the different phases of the Proposed Development (**Table 13.1**).

Table 13.1 Scope of the Assessment and Proposed Development Study Area

Project Phase	Activity with Potential Impact	Proposed Development Study Area
Construction	Physical ground disturbance through earthworks has the potential to partially or wholly remove Cultural Heritage resources.	5 km for designated cultural heritage resources.
	Introduction of intrusive visual, acoustic and dust elements to the physical environment or ‘setting’ where a resource draws its value from its surroundings. Restriction zones associated with the construction phase have the potential to temporarily or permanently restrict access to existing cultural heritage resources.	250 m for non-designated cultural heritage resources.
Operation	Introduction of acoustic elements to the physical environment or ‘setting’ where a resource draws value from its surroundings.	5 km for designated cultural heritage resources.

¹⁹ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) *Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment*. Available at https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIFAS%26GCommissioning_2.pdf (Accessed 28/06/2023)

²⁰ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020) *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*. Available at https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIFAS%26GDBA_4.pdf (Accessed 28/06/2023)

	Restriction zones associated with the operation phase has the potential to permanently restrict access to existing Cultural Heritage resources.	250 m for non-designated cultural heritage resources
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13.3.3 Direct (Physical) Impacts

The assessment of physical impacts on cultural heritage resources considers direct effects on resources of cultural heritage interest where sites or potential sites / buried archaeology are in danger of being disturbed or destroyed. Ground disturbances due to excavations, piling and earthworks are the most likely sources of direct physical impacts on known and unknown cultural heritage resources, with the potential to partially or wholly remove these resources. Direct impacts have the potential to be one off, non-reversible and permanent. Unless the principle of avoidance is adopted in the first instance, mitigation measures will not significantly reduce the predicted residual effect of this impact on the cultural heritage.

Potential direct physical effects are discussed in **Section 13.4** of this chapter.

13.3.4 Indirect (Effect on Setting) Impacts

Indirect effects can occur during construction, operation and decommissioning. This assessment takes account of the potential for effects on the settings of internationally and nationally important designated cultural heritage resources that are situated within 5 km of the Proposed Development. 'Setting' is considered more than the immediate surroundings of a site or place and extends to include how a site was designed to function, how it was used, or how it was intended to fit within a landscape or townscape, and how it was meant to be seen or to allow areas to be seen. This definition also identifies that setting can include "areas that are important to the protection of the place, site or building".²¹ It must be noted that setting is not a fixed standard, instead it evolves over time²².

The setting of a nationally important designated monument, building or landscape is defined by the way in which surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is experienced, understood and appreciated. This can include a range of factors including views to, from and across the historic asset or place, key vistas, relationships between both built and natural features, aesthetic qualities, character of the surrounding landscape and non-visual factors such as sensory, historical or artistic factors.

Setting can be tangible, such as a defined boundary, or intangible, such as atmosphere or ambience. The main concern for visual effects on a cultural heritage setting is the potential for the Proposed Development to fragment the historic landscape, separate connectivity between historic sites and impinge on views to and from sites with important landscape settings. Potential indirect effects are discussed in **Section 13.4** of this chapter.

13.3.5 Assessment Criteria

Determining Sensitivity of Receptors and Magnitude of Change

To determine sensitivity of receptors, the assessment will use the methodology as outlined in **Volume 2 Chapter 4** of this EIA Report. In general, designated heritage assets with Grade A Listed Buildings, are considered high sensitivity, Grade's B and C are considered medium sensitivity, meanwhile historical context and professional judgement is incorporated and used to ascertain the sensitivity of non-designated assets.

Sensitive receptors for this assessment include designated and non-designated cultural heritage resources. Designated heritage assets are cultural heritage resources that are protected nationally under the relevant legislation (listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered historic parks and gardens and registered battlefields), world heritage sites, which are designated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and Conservation Areas, which are designated by Local Authorities. Designated assets have more protections than non-designated assets. Non-designated assets are cultural heritage resources that are locally identified buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes that are

²¹ Scottish Government. 2023. National Planning framework 4: Annex F – Glossary of definitions. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/pages/9/>

²² Historic Environment Scotland (2020) *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting* [Online]. Available at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=80b7c0a0-584b-4625-b1fd-a60b009c2549>

recognised as having an amount of heritage significance that warrants consideration in planning decisions, but do not meet the criteria for statutory designation²³.

To determine magnitude of change, the assessment will use the methodology as outlined in **Volume 2 Chapter 4** of this EIA.

13.3.6 Sensitivity of Receptors

Sensitivities were assessed following the guidelines in **Volume 2 Chapter 4** but are also summarized in the **Table 13.2** below.

Table 13.2 Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

Importance of Receptor	Definition
High	Heritage Assets valued at an international or national level. These may include Scheduled Monuments, Category A Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and nationally important archaeological features and conservation areas (as defined in the Council's HER).
Medium	Heritage Assets valued at a regional level. These may include Category B and some Category C Listed Buildings as well as regionally important archaeological features and conservation areas.
Low	Heritage Assets valued at a local level. These may include Category C Listed Buildings, some conservation areas and non-designated assets of local value.
Negligible	Badly preserved and / or damaged or very common archaeological features and buildings of little or no value at local or any other scale.

13.3.7 Magnitude of Change

Magnitude is a measure of the nature of the expected effect. It has been classified, for direct and indirect effects on heritage assets, as shown in **Table 13.3**. For the purposes of visual assessment, proximity to the Proposed Development has been taken as one of the determining attributes. Within **Section 13.4**, distances are given from the resource to the nearest part of the Proposed Development.

Table 13.3 Cultural Heritage Magnitude of Change

Level of Magnitude	Definition
High	Total loss of or major damage to or significant alteration to a site, building or other feature. Extensive change to the setting of a feature (e.g. Blocking or severance of key visual or other relationship, loss of dominance, intrusion on key view or sightline).
Moderate	Damage or alteration to a site, building or other feature. Encroachment on an area considered to have a high archaeological potential for buried remains. Change in the setting of a feature, e.g. intrusion on designed sightlines and vistas.
Low	Minor damage or alteration to a site, building or other feature. Encroachment on an area where it is considered there is low potential for buried archaeological remains to exist. Minor change in the setting of a feature (e.g. above historic skylines or in designed vistas).
Negligible	No physical impact. Slight or no change in setting.

²³ Scotland's environment. People and the historic environment. Available at: <https://www.environment.gov.scot/media/1835/people-and-the-environment-historic-environment.pdf>. Accessed 06/07/2024

13.3.8 Significance of Effect

The assessment has taken an approach in which the sensitivity of a feature is set against the magnitude of the effect of the development. This calculation is made for both direct and indirect impacts. Where moderate or major effects are predicted this will typically represent a significant effect, although, where a moderate effect is identified, professional judgment will be applied in each instance, taking into account the asset's specific circumstances and context.

The general approach to the assessment of effects is based on the design envelope for the Proposed Development and is discussed in **Volume 2 Chapter 4**. This assessment proceeds from a consideration of the sensitivity of a Cultural Heritage feature against the magnitude of any potential change, to arrive at the significance of the effect (**Table 13.4**).

Table 13.4 Matrix for Determining the Significance of Effects

		Sensitivity of Receptor / Receiving Environment to Change / Effect			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change / Effect	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Where potential scores of moderate or major significance have been predicted using the matrix-based approach shown in **Table 13.4**, consideration for mitigation is presented.

This includes a definition of the setting of each feature affected indirectly, considering its designation status, and essential attributes. An assessment is made using professional judgement of the extent to which that setting is affected by the Proposed Development and an assessment of significance is given. Effects of minor significance are considered to be not significant in EIA terms and therefore are not discussed in further detail.

13.3.9 Assessment Limitations

This assessment has the following limitations:

- The information from externally procured databases may contain errors relating to locational accuracy, outdated information, incompleteness and representative reductionism (linear features as points), etc.
- Areas that were inaccessible during the initial site visit may contain previously unidentified archaeology. This may be mitigated by a qualified archaeologist conducting additional site visits as needed / possible or watching briefs during construction.
- Assigning sensitivity is an inherently subjective task and to mitigate potential errors arising from subjectivity, this assessment utilised the prescribed methods as established in this section to support professional judgment.

13.4 Baseline Conditions

13.4.1 Topographic and Administrative Background

The Proposed Development is located to the south of Loch Buidhe and immediately south of the existing Loch Buidhe Substation, on Meall Mòr hill (**Volume 3a Figure 13.4**). The bedrock geology consists of the Altnaharra Psammite Formation a series of interbedded Psammite, Semi-pelite and Pelite formed 720 million years ago during the Tonian Period.

The groundcover consists of ferns, gorse, shrubs, and grasses with a large area of forestry plantation in the south. The area is undeveloped and in a rural setting where it is bounded by an existing substation to the north and several overhead line towers cross the skyline.

13.4.2 Method of Baseline Data Collation

The proposed study area is considered appropriate for this assessment due to the need to understand the archaeological and landscape context and potential for an area with existing substation infrastructure in-place. The results of the known heritage baseline are presented below and in **Table 13.5**.

13.4.3 Archaeological / Historical Background

The Proposed Development is situated in Sutherland in the Highlands of Scotland which is an area of rich cultural heritage value, comprising of assets dating from the prehistoric period to present day.²⁴

Prehistory (12,700 BC – 400AD)

From the commencement of the Holocene Period, around 11,500 years ago, Scotland underwent a rapid deglaciation permitting the re-succession flora and fauna for habitable zones²⁵. It is anticipated that numerous routes were used to repopulate and expand north into Scotland, via land, coastal tracking as well as island hopping, taking advantage of both marine and terrestrial resources (Ibid). Exploitation of lithic sources, and emergent woodland permitted the development of the palaeolithic 'toolkit', and continuity of a highly mobile lifestyle. At this time, despite fluctuations in population densities until the transition to (semi-)sedentary Neolithization, the population appears to remain coastally oriented in the Highlands with early sites at South Cuidrach and An Corran on Skye and Inchnadamph in Sutherland²⁶.

Highland Mesolithic sites are rare, and when they are located, they consist primarily of cave and rock shelters, middens, and surface scatters. All sites identified thus far seem to be temporary, multi-activity sites and archaeological evidence is sparse. Due to climatic and taphonomic processes the Mesolithic remains are primarily stone artefacture (Ibid). One example of possible Mesolithic inhabitation of Sutherland can be found at Creag Nan Uamh caves near Inchnadamph (Canmore ID 4615). There is only a low probability of identifying Palaeolithic or Mesolithic sites in the footprint of the Proposed Development.

The Neolithic Period c.4100 BC to 2500 BC, saw the adoption of new lifeways, specifically agricultural and animal husbandry. This change from hunter-gathering to agro-pastoralism was coincident with the arrival of new communities from the European continent. With these changes, new technologies were utilised in the area, including pottery. New practices also appear in the area, including the construction of megalithic chambered tombs and cairn mortuary activity. Despite the technological changes from the Mesolithic to Neolithic in areas, continuity from the Mesolithic is common beyond the Neolithic transition with hunting and gathering still being performed. Apart from megalithic tombs little is known about the Highlands during the Neolithic, as settlement sites are difficult to identify, and more research is needed²⁷. Despite this paucity of data, there are several Neolithic sites near the Proposed Development, such as Kyleoag (SM1799) and Rivra (SM1813) chambered cairns located approximately 4 km south and Drumliah chambered cairn (SM1785) located approximately 6 km southwest.

During the Bronze Age (c.2500 BC to 800 BC) more people inhabited the Highlands, and this may have been related to an influx of new people and technology. Evidence of the Bronze Age in the Highlands is unevenly distributed across the region and more research is required to fully understand it. However, there is much more archaeological evidence than from previous time periods. During the Bronze Age, the Highlands experienced the arrival of new people from the continent who brought with them a new type of pottery – Beaker pottery, as well as new technologies such as metal working.²⁸ Over the subsequent centuries, the influence of the Beaker

²⁴ Highland Historic Environment Strategy. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/11047/highland_historic_environment_strategy. Accessed 09/05/2024

²⁵ Mithen, S. *et al.* 2015. A Lateglacial archaeological site in the far north-west of Europe at Rubha Port an t-Seilich, Isle of Islay, western Scotland: Ahrensburgian-style artefacts, absolute dating and geoarchaeology. *Journal of Quaternary Science*. July 2015. DOI: 10.1002/jqs.2781

²⁶ Wickham-Jones, Caroline and Susan Kruse. (2023) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. Settlement. Available at: 4. Palaeolithic and Mesolithic | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (scarf.scot). Accessed 07/07/2023

²⁷ Sheridan, Alison (2023) Neolithic: Settlement. Available at: <https://scarf.scot/regional/higharf/neolithic/>. Accessed 07/07/2023.

²⁸ Susan Kruse, Rod McCullagh and Alison Sheridan. 6. Chalcolithic and Bronze Age | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (scarf.scot). Accessed 09/05/2024

people became widespread throughout the Highlands and integrated into the way of life. Evidence of the Bronze Age can still be seen in Sutherland today, mainly through burial monuments such as cairns. Examples of these can be found along the River Shin and Dornoch Firth which flow from northwest to southeast approximately 5 km from the Proposed Development. This area of northeast Scotland is also home to a unique type of Bronze Age monument, the multiple stone row. These monuments are made up of small standing stones positioned in parallel rows, often associated with a burial monument. The function or purpose of these monuments is unknown, but they are unique to Caithness and northern Sutherland.²⁹ Evidence of the Bronze Age can be found within the Proposed Development area with a large number of prehistoric hut circles (including Can ID 13932, 13950, 13923, 13930, 13933, 87358) located within forestry land to the south of the site.

The Iron Age in the Highlands is not demarcated as in many parts of the UK by the arrival of the Romans, as the Romans did not create permanent settlements in the region³⁰. Although scholars debate the period's beginning a tentative definition of the period can which be used is 1–299 AD – 300-1000 AD. The period is marked by the introduction of iron working technologies and additional settlement types including brochs, duns, wheelhouses, timber and stone-built roundhouse settlements, unenclosed platform settlements, crannogs, enclosed farmsteads and hillforts. Notably, Brae broch (SM1840) is located approximately 3.6 km northeast of the Proposed Development.

The settlement of Achany Glen (SM2208) is located approximately 6 km northwest of the Proposed Development. This scheduled monument consists of a large number of prehistoric and later dwelling sites spanning over 3000 years of land use. This emphasises the prehistoric context of this area of the Highlands and the Proposed Development.

Medieval Period (c AD 400 – c AD 1600)

The Medieval period (400-1600 AD) in the Highlands differs from other parts of Scotland. It was a contested zone with primarily three external influences from the Norse, Scottish Kings, and the King of the Isles. The Norse were dominant in northern Scotland, until the 11th century. Then the following centuries were marked by feuding kingdoms and clans vying for control of the region. Medieval rural settlements are rare in the Highlands, the National Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) noted there were fewer than ten medieval houses on the mainland dated between 400–1100. However, there are documented castles; and in the north and eastern Highlands, where Norse-style structures have been documented. Evidence for medieval occupation around the area of the Proposed Development is comparatively sparse, this paucity of data suggests there is only a low probability of finding Medieval sites near the Proposed Development.

Post-Medieval Period (c AD 1600 – AD 1900) to Modern (AD 1900 - Present)

Throughout the post-medieval period in the Highlands dates (1600 to the Present), there have been enormous changes in the landscape of Scotland. By the 17th century, the multitudinous and joint occupancy farmsteads changed to single ownership farms and state-owned forests, and people moved into towns.

Industrialization and Clearances in the 18th century changed the way the landscape was used and traversed in Scotland. Large parts of the Highlands were cleared for converting the already predominately rural lands into lands strictly devoted to sheep pastoralism. Rapid industrialisation in the 18th century resulted in the construction of a wide variety of structures, including those that result from military campaigning, such as the network of roads constructed under the auspices of Major General George Wade.

Historic 19th century Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and modern aerial imagery of the Proposed Development indicate it was rough or healthy pasture until the 20th century where it was later a site of conifer tree plantation. Much of the Proposed Development remains covered in tree plantation except for the centre and northwest sections. Evidence of post-medieval farming can be seen within the Proposed Development, with remains of

²⁹ Susan Kruse, Rod McCullagh and Alison Sheridan. 6. Chalcolithic and Bronze Age, 6.6.4. The Stone Rows of Caithness and Sutherland | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (scarf.scot). Accessed 09/05/2024

³⁰ Kruse, Susan (2023) Iron Age Introduction. Available at 7.1 Introduction | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (scarf.scot). Accessed 07/07/2023.

post-medieval sheiling huts, enclosures and field systems visible (CanID 13924, 13926, 13935) as well as the remains of a post-medieval Blackhouse (CanID 348673).

13.4.4 Field Visit

A programme of ground investigation works was conducted across the Proposed Development site, including the excavation of 21 trial pits, 18 boreholes and two soakaway pits. The archaeological watching brief was conducted by AOC Archaeology as subcontracted by ERM in October and November 2023. The objectives of the watching brief were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area;
- Expose and record any archaeological deposits or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible;
- To sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating;
- To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development; and
- To make recommendations for post-excavation work that will require completion to fulfil the planning condition.

Further information regarding fieldwork can be found in **Volume 4 Appendix 13.1** Data Structure Report.

13.4.5 Baseline

Designated Assets

There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Inventoried Gardens and Designed Landscape, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Inventoried Historic Battlefields or Conservation Areas located within the PAN Boundary or within 250 m.

There are 13 Designated assets located within 5 km of the Proposed Development.

Seven Listed Buildings.

- Lydsurach Crofthouse, Balblair Estate, near Bonar Bridge - Category B (LB52528);
- Migdale Free Church wall and gate piers - Category C (LB268);
- Migdale Free Church parish room and adjoining cottage – Category C (LB269);
- Migdale Free Church parish room and adjoining cottage – Category C (LB269);
- Migdale Free Church manse – Category C (LB270);
- Migdale Mill – Category C (LB2710);
- Migdale Mill house – Category C (LB272).

Six Scheduled Monuments

- Creagan Reamhan, farmstead, kiln, and fields (SM4505);
- Brae Cottage, two hut circles (SM1830);
- Brae, broch, Strath Carnaig west of Mound Junction (SM1840);
- Drumliah, chambered cairn, hut circles & clearance cairns, Tulloch (SM1785);
- Kyleoag, chambered cairn (SM1799);
- Rivra, chambered cairn (SM1813).

Non-designated assets

There are 25 non-designated assets located within the Proposed Development.

- Allt Na Sean-Airigh, hut circle (Canmore ID 13932)
- Loch An Lagain, corn drying kiln (Canmore ID 13928)
- Meall Mor, hut circle (Canmore ID 13950)
- Meall Mor, hut circle (Canmore ID 13923, MHG10317)
- Meall Mor, shieling huts (Canmore ID 13924, MHG10318)
- Meall Mor, shieling huts (Canmore ID 13926)
- Loch An Lagain, hut circle (Canmore ID 13927)
- Loch An Lagain, hut circle (Canmore ID 13930)
- Allt Na Sean-Airigh, hut circle (Canmore ID 13933)
- Loch An Lagain, enclosure (Canmore ID 13935, MHG10343)
- Leathad A' Chuailein, farmstead (Canmore ID 13925, MHG10319)
- Leathad A' Chuailein, hut circles (Canmore ID 87358)
- Ainess / Criech, possible burnt mound (Canmore ID 333193)
- Torbreck, Loch Buidhe, blackhouse (Canmore ID 348673, MHG61685)
- Leathad A' Chuailein, hut circle (MGH17419)
- Leathad A' Chuailein, hut circle (MHG62730)
- Leathad A' Chuailein, hut circle (MHG62731)
- Possible hut circle - east of Sleastary (MHG62732)
- Possible hut circle - east of Sleastary (MHG62733)
- Possible hut circle - east of Sleastary (MHG62734)
- Possible hut circle - east of Sleastary (MHG62735)
- Sheep fold - southwest of Loch Buidhe (MHG62914)
- Farmstead - Sallachy, Loch Bhuidhe (MHG63030)
- Dyke - near Loch Bhuide (MHG63032)
- Dyke - near Loch Bhuide (MHG63033)

There are five non-designated assets located within 250 m of the Proposed Development.

- Loch Buidhe, Crannog (Canmore ID 13929)
- Ceann-Loch-Lagain, building foundations (Canmore ID 13931)
- Two hut circles - east of Sleastary (MHG62736)
- Hut circle - north of Sleastary (MHG62740)
- Township - Sleastary (MHG18352)

Full baseline information can be found in **Volume 4 Appendix 13.2** Cultural Heritage Baseline.

Table 13.5. Cultural Heritage Gazetteer Table

Gazetteer ID	Name	Designation	Description	Distance from project element	Sensitivity	Impact type
LOB_001	Lydsurach Crofthouse, Balblair Estate, near Bonar Bridge	Cat B Listed Building	A remarkably unaltered single storey and attic, three-bay, former crofthouse probably dating to around the mid-19th century. An important example of a 19th century crofter's cottage for its remarkable lack of later alteration.	c. 3.5 km from Proposed Development	High	Setting
LOB_009	Leathad A' Chuailein	Non-Designated	Farmstead of four recent rectangular buildings around yard overlying earlier building foundations contemporary with field dyking and to the NW there is a recent bothy and enclosure.	Within PAN Boundary and within peat restoration area	Low	Direct
LOB_010	Leathad A' Chuailein	Non-Designated	Settlement of three hut circles.	Within PAN Boundary and within peat restoration area	Low	Direct
LOB_011	Torbreck, Loch Buidhe	Non-Designated	Post-medieval Blackhouse, excavated in 2013.	Within PAN Boundary	Low	Direct
LOB_012	Leathad A' Chuailein	Non-Designated	Hut circles (may form part of LOB_010)	Within PAN Boundary and within peat restoration area	Low	Direct
LOB_013	Possible hut circle - Leathad A' Chuailein	Non-Designated	Possible prehistoric hut circle (may form part of LOB_010).	Within PAN Boundary	Low	Direct
LOB_019	Dyke - near Loch Bhuide	Non-Designated	Remains of a stone and turf bank aligned east - west and measuring approximately 50 m in length.	Within Footprint	Low	Direct
LOB_020	Dyke - near Loch Bhuide	Non-Designated	Sinuuous wall alignment on the north side of the road forming a small enclosure on the east side of a burn draining north into the Allt Garbh-airigh, with a short section continuing on the west side of the burn	Within PAN Boundary	Low	Direct

LOB_034	Meall Mor	Non-Designated	Three post-medieval Shieling huts	Within PAN Boundary	High	Direct
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13.5 Issues Scoped Out

The following conditions have been scoped out of further assessment:

- Any designated assets within 5 km that are not located within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV);
- Any direct impacts to designated and non-designated assets beyond the boundary of the Proposed Development; and,
- Temporary indirect impacts (e.g. dust, noise and vibration) to assets beyond the boundary of the Proposed Development.

A Bare Earth ZTV (**Volume 3a Figure 13.3**) concludes that the Proposed Development will not be visible from any Scheduled Monuments within 5 km and therefore, these assets have been scoped out as there is no anticipated change to their setting. The ZTV also concludes that the Proposed Development will not be visible from six out of the seven Listed Buildings within a 5 km radius. These have therefore also been scoped out as there is no anticipated change to their setting. These include:

- Migdale Free Church wall and gate piers - Category C (LB268);
- Migdale Free Church parish room and adjoining cottage – Category C (LB269);
- Migdale Free Church parish room and adjoining cottage – Category C (LB269);
- Migdale Free Church manse – Category C (LB270);
- Migdale Mill – Category C (LB2710);
- Migdale Mill house – Category C (LB272);
- Creagan Reamhan, farmstead, kiln, and fields (SM4505);
- Brae Cottage, two hut circles (SM1830);
- Brae, broch, Strath Carnaig west of Mound Junction (SM1840);
- Drumliah, chambered cairn, hut circles & clearance cairns, Tulloch (SM1785);
- Kyleoag, chambered cairn (SM1799); and,
- Rivra, chambered cairn (SM1813).

Additionally, assets within the PAN Boundary that are located away from any proposed infrastructure have been scoped out at this stage, including some assets within forestry plantation to the south of the development boundary. This is due to the low probability of direct impact in this area. If development infrastructure changes (such as movement of access tracks or peat restoration area), these assets will need to be re-assessed.

Operational activities have been scoped out of further assessment, as routine maintenance is not anticipated to introduce new or different effects, however, emergency replacement may require cultural heritage assessment. It is also anticipated that indirect impacts to setting during construction are maintained through the operation phase.

13.6 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects

National planning policies and planning guidance, SPP (Scottish Government 2014), PAN2/2011 (Scottish Government 2011) and NPF4 (Scottish Government 2024) apply. These require a mitigation response that takes account of the potential for archaeological remains within the site to be impacted upon, enabling the preservation or recording of any significant remains which may be present.

The potential for buried archaeological remains to be present is considered to be moderate and cannot be discounted, consequently a programme to mitigate the effects of any direct impacts is recommended in accordance with national and local planning policies on heritage. Any archaeological remains encountered within the Proposed Development area would likely be agricultural in nature and of low archaeological interest. However, due to the presence of prehistoric archaeology in the area, potential discoveries of higher archaeological value within the Proposed Development are also possible.

Any mitigation strategy developed should involve consultation with THC as the regulatory authority, while concerns for designated assets necessitates consultation with HES.

In the first instance, mitigation measures should include, where possible and proportionate, avoidance of direct impacts to cultural heritage assets. The Proposed Development area contains 20 non-designated assets which should be avoided.

The Proposed Development has screened out setting impacts for assets beyond 5 km due to the Proposed Development's location, expanding an existing substation site that already forms part of the baseline environment. Current embedded mitigation measures are outlined below in **Table 13.5**. These embedded mitigation measures will evolve further as the Proposed Development progresses:

Implementation of an appropriate mitigation strategy or management plan should be agreed with the Heritage regulator and local Council Heritage Officers before construction of the Proposed Development commences.

13.6.1 Construction Phase

Ground disturbance due to earthworks are the most likely source of direct, physical impacts to known and unknown cultural heritage resources, with the potential to partially or wholly remove these resources. Direct impacts have the potential to be once off, non-reversible and permanent. Unless the principle of avoidance is adopted in the first instance, mitigation measures will not significantly reduce the predicted residual effect of this impact on the cultural heritage. Avoidance is required for eight assets within the Proposed Development.

Table 13.6 below identifies that three assets will have a negligible effect and five assets will have a moderate effect as a result of the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

Avoidance in the first instance should be implemented for two assets with direct impact (LOB_019 and LOB_034). LOB_019 is partially located under a proposed access road. Avoidance of this asset should be implemented in the first instance by moving the proposed road. LOB_034 which lies within the proposed peat management area. Avoidance of this asset should be implemented in the first instance by moving the peat management boundary in this area. Avoidance of these assets reduces the overall effect from moderate to negligible. Where avoidance is not possible, an archaeological watching brief must be installed to monitor the ground works. The removal in whole or in part would result in a moderate adverse effect.

Additionally, avoidance should be implemented for three assets within the forestry land to the south of the proposed development site (LOB_009, 012, 013) which may be impacted by the peat management plan area. Avoidance of these assets in the first instance will reduce the overall effect from moderate to negligible. Where avoidance is not possible, an archaeological watching brief must be installed to monitor the ground works. The removal in whole or in part would result in a moderate adverse effect.

Avoidance via barricading has been recommended for three assets located to the northwest of the site, near the existing substation. These are unlikely to be directly impacted however, monitoring of machine movements in this area is required to ensure avoidance. A watching brief should be implemented here to avoid any above ground remains.

There are multiple non-designated assets within the forestry area to the south of the site which have been excluded from this assessment. This is because of the low probability of direct impact. However, if the location of infrastructure changes, these assets will need to be re-assessed for direct impact. As such any construction related activity such as machine tracking or lay down areas should avoid this area and staff involved in construction should be made aware of archaeological potential through the use of a toolbox talk at the beginning of the project.

Mitigation measures put in place for assets within the Proposed Development includes movement of construction activities, implementing exclusion zones around the asset, barricades where appropriate, watching brief and vehicle monitoring to avoid interactions with the assets (**Volume 2 Chapter 16 CH1**). Recording of features to ensure a record is made of the features for future purposes is also suggested. This will have the potential to reduce all impacts. Where cultural heritage or archaeological assets have above-ground elements

such as walls, cairns, etc., barricades should be used to create exclusion zones to prevent machinery, people, or debris from harming the asset, where appropriate (**Volume 2 Chapter 16 CH2**).

Given the potential for unknown buried archaeology within the Proposed Development footprint and proximity to known prehistoric archaeology, a watching brief should be undertaken during all ground disturbance works in previously undeveloped areas, wherein the identified archaeology can be suitably assessed and mitigated.

The construction phase of the Proposed Development will have a potentially negligible effect on the setting of one listed building, Lydsurach Croft house, Balblair Estate, near Bonar Bridge (LB52528). Although the siting of the asset in the landscape alongside existing floral screening is likely sufficient to interrupt any potential site lines, this cannot be assumed and there is the potential for long-range glimpsed views of the Proposed Development. As such, the impact to this asset cannot be reduced to no impact but is likely negligible.

13.6.2 Unknown buried archaeology

There is a potential for unknown archaeology to be present during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. During construction, there is a low-medium potential for this unknown archaeology to be impacted.

The area in which the majority of the infrastructure of the Proposed Development is situated has a low potential for archaeology as evidenced through ground investigation work, however, there is higher potential for archaeology to be present within the access track routes for this development, specifically to the south and southwest where an access track lies directly over a non-designated asset. The Proposed Development is also situated in close proximity to prehistoric settlement sites, located near the south of the development in existing forestry land. As such, the area may have a wider prehistoric landscape and the development may encounter unknown buried archaeology during construction.

To mitigate this impact, a watching brief is recommended for all ground-breaking work, which should be undertaken and supervised by a professional and qualified archaeologist (**Volume 2 Chapter 16 CH3**). Further to this, all assets identified above should also have a watching brief undertaken when construction is occurring. It is also recommended that any construction or activity associated with the development avoid the area to the south of the development. Watching brief should be informed of the prehistoric potential of the Proposed Development area.

Table 13.6 Construction Phase Impact Assessment

Moderate / Negligible* - Moderate relates to direct impact, Negligible relates to avoidance.

Gazetter ID	Name	Type of Impact	Sensitivity	Impact	Effect	Mitigation	Effect Post Mitigation
LOB_001	Lydsurach Crofthouse, Balblair Estate, near Bonar Bridge	Setting	High	Low	Negligible	Intentional location in a dip hides it in the landscape, and nearby surrounding is unchanged. Potential long-distance glimpsed views.	Negligible
LOB_009	Leathad a' chuailein	Direct	Low	High	Moderate	Located within the PAN Boundary and within the peat restoration area. As such, direct impacts may be possible through BNG actions. In the first instance, any BNG activities should be moved away from this area so not to disturb the asset and a 5 m buffer should be erected around any visible remains. If movement BNG activity is not possible, the presence and extent of the asset should be investigated by a suitably qualified archaeologist during the watching brief and a 5 m buffer should be erected around any identified remains. If BNG activity must take place, the asset should be recorded and excavated by a suitably qualified archaeologist before removal.	Moderate/Negligible*
LOB_010	Leathad a' chuailein	Direct	Low	Low	Negligible	Located within the PAN Boundary but not within site infrastructure. Asset is located within forestry land to the south of the proposed BNG area, as such it is unlikely to be disturbed. However, the location and extent of the asset within the field system should be identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a 10 m buffer erected to minimise any potential impact.	Negligible
LOB_011	Torbreck, loch buidhe	Direct	Low	Low	Negligible	Asset is Located within the PAN Boundary but not within site infrastructure. Excavated in 2013 nut there is a potential for associated features to be present. Asset should be identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a buffer zone of 10 m erected to avoid machine movements. Machine movements near asset should be monitored during watching brief.	Negligible

LOB_012	Leathad A' Chuailein	Direct	Low	High	Moderate	<p>Asset is largely located within forestry land to the south of the proposed BNG area, as such it is unlikely to be disturbed. However, the area listed for this asset may be clipped by BNG activity in the north and avoidance in the first instance should be implemented.</p> <p>As such, the location and extent of the asset should be identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a 10 m buffer erected to minimise any potential impact. If the asset is to be disturbed by BNG activity, the asset should be recorded in situ by a qualified archaeologist during a watching brief, before removal.</p>	Moderate/Negligible*
LOB_013	Possible hut circle - Leathad A' Chuailein	Direct	Low	High	Moderate	<p>Asset is largely located within forestry land to the south of the proposed BNG area, as such it is unlikely to be disturbed. However, the area listed for this asset may be clipped by BNG activity in the north and avoidance in the first instance should be implemented.</p> <p>As such, the location and extent of the asset should be identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a 10 m buffer erected to minimise any potential impact. If the asset is to be disturbed by BNG activity, the asset should be recorded in situ by a qualified archaeologist during a watching brief, before removal.</p>	Moderate/Negligible*
LOB_019	Dyke - near Loch Bhuide	Direct	Low	High	Moderate	<p>Asset lies partially under a proposed access road in the east, micro sitting of the road should be implemented to avoid this. If avoidance is not possible, the asset should be recorded in situ by a qualified archaeologist during a watching brief, before removal.</p>	Moderate/Negligible*
LOB_020	Dyke - near Loch Bhuide	Direct	Low	Low	Negligible	<p>Asset is Located within the PAN Boundary but not within site infrastructure. Asset should be identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a buffer zone of 10 m erected to avoid machine movements. Machine movements near asset should be monitored during watching brief.</p>	Negligible
LOB_034	Meall Mor	Direct	Low	High	Moderate	<p>Located within the PAN Boundary and within the peat restoration area. As such, direct impacts may be possible through BNG actions.</p> <p>In the first instance, any BNG activities should be moved away from this area so not to disturb the asset and a 5 m buffer should be erected around any visible remains. If movement BNG activity is not possible, the presence and extent of the asset should be investigated by a</p>	Moderate/Negligible*

						suitably qualified archaeologist during the watching brief and a 10 m buffer should be erected around any identified remains. If BNG activity must take place, the asset should be recorded and excavated by a suitably qualified archaeologist before removal.	
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13.6.3 Operational Phase

Identified setting effects identified during the construction phase are maintained during operation.

13.6.4 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects include the total effects resulting from the Proposed Development in combination with other similar developments within a ZoI. Given the nature of the heritage baseline for the area, a ZoI for the Proposed Development of 2 km was determined to be appropriate (**Volume 3a Figure 4.1**). All relevant current and planned developments within this 2 km ZoI are included below:

- Acheilidh (Lairg III) Wind Farm
- Balblair Wind Farm
- Beauly – Spittal 400 kV Overhead Line (Associated Development)
- Carnaig 400 kV – Loch Buidhe 275 kV UGC (Associated Development)
- Twenty-five-metre-high lattice tower ancillary development, land 1800 m north east of Sleastray Bonar Bridge. There are no anticipated significant effects as a result of Cumulative impacts.

13.7 Summary

There is one asset with setting effects (LOB_001), these will be temporary during the construction phase and will become permanent during the operational phase. This will result in a Negligible effect, given the siting of the Listed Building. This is Not Significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

For the construction phase, there are eight assets within the PAN Boundary that have the potential for direct impact as a result of the site infrastructure. For three of these assets (LOB_010, 011, LOB_020) the effects are deemed to be Negligible and therefore not significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

As a result of the Construction Phase, there are three non-designated assets (LOB_009, 012, 013) within forestry land to the south of the development that will experience a moderate adverse effect in the absence of avoidance. This is deemed to be Significant in the context of the EIA Regulations. This is due to the presence of BNG activity in the area in which they are located and potential for direct and/or indirect impact resulting from this.

LOB_034 is at risk of direct impact as it lies within the proposed peat management area. Avoidance of this asset reduces its overall effect from moderate to negligible (LOB_019 is located under a proposed access track and as such will experience a moderate effect. Avoidance of this asset reduces its overall effect from moderate to. Where avoidance is not possible, an archaeological watching brief must be installed to monitor the ground works. The removal in whole or in part would result in a moderate adverse effect. All moderate impacts are deemed to be Significant in the context of the EIA Regulations

The following mitigation works, detailed in the CEMP documentation (and associated WSI), of avoidance via movement of construction activity, buffer zones, control of machine movement and a watching brief should be implemented in the first instance to avoid direct impact to these assets. Additional mitigation via surveying and excavation may be implemented where avoidance is not possible. The use of mitigation for these assets will remove the risk of direct impacts, whilst minimising the indirect effects of dust and vibration. Watching briefs will allow for the monitoring for potential unknown archaeology during the construction phase. Toolbox talks will also identify possible areas of direct impact outside planned construction activities and should be implemented to educate site teams on high-risk areas.

Due to the possibility of unidentified sub-surface archaeological remains a watching brief should be conducted during all ground-disturbing activities in conjunction with the mitigation methods defined in **Table 13.6**.