



ARDERSIER PORT ENERGY TRANSITION FACILITY PORT EXTENSION



November 2025

**Appendix 8.1 Legislation, Policy and
Guidance; Desk-Based Assessment and
Assessment of Effects**

**1072 Ardersier Port Extension
Ardersier
Highlands**

**Appendix 8.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidance; Desk-Based
Assessment and Assessment of Effects**

Project No: 1072

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this technical report is to support Chapter 8 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). This appendix includes:

- Annex 1: Legislation, Policy and Guidance
- Annex 2: Desk-based assessment (DBA) including a description of the baseline conditions, an examination of readily available documentary, cartographic and known archaeological evidence, and identifies any known and potential heritage assets within the proposed development site and its surrounding area.
- Annex 3: Assessment of Effects and Setting Impact Assessment (SIA) relating to heritage assets that could be potentially affected by the proposed development.
- Figure 8.A: Location of HER assets within 1km of the proposed development
- Figure 8.B: Designated heritage assets subject to setting impact assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the standards and guidance specified by Historic Environment Scotland/ NatureScot ¹and the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA).²

2 Site location and description

Ardersier Port (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') is bordered to the north by the Moray Firth, the Carse of Delnies to the east, Carse Wood to the south, and the sand dunes and tidal sandflats of Whiteness Sands to the west. Fort George's live firing range is to the south-west, and Whiteness Head Spit, which shelters a harbour is to the north-west.

Near to the Site there are a few houses and residences, with the village of Ardersier around 3km to the south and Nairn around 6.5km to the east. The Site is visible from the surrounding coastline, although extensive tree plantations and topography provide dense screening to the south and west.

The Site has an industrial history, having been a hub of activity for the energy sector in Scotland. In the 1970s a substantial area of land was reclaimed from the foreshore and utilised for industrial purposes for the fabrication and construction of offshore platforms for the oil and gas industry. Activity ceased in 2000, and the Site was vacant for around 18 years. Once closed, it became one of the largest brownfield sites in the UK and has undergone significant decontamination works since operations ceased.

3 proposed development

Full details relating to the proposed development are provided in Chapter 3 (Project Description) of the EIAR.

¹ EIA Handbook <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=6ed33b65-9df1-4a2f-acbb-a8e800a592c0> [accessed 04/09/2025]

² CIfA Standard and Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment: <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/2023-11/CIfA-SandG-DBA-2020.pdf> [accessed 04/09/2025]

For the purposes of the historic environment assessment not all elements of the proposed development are of relevance as they relate to activities that will be undertaken within previously developed and decontaminated land that has no archaeological potential and will not contain structures that are considered to have the potential to impact on the setting of heritage assets.

The historic environment assessment will therefore focus on:

- Terrestrial:
 - terrestrial site clearance of the extension lands – direct, physical impacts.
 - Installation of new drainage to extension land perimeter – direct, physical impacts
 - Port and offshore wind-related buildings including manufacturing, workshops, assembly facilities (principally bases), storage, offices and business units – direct impacts on setting.
- Marine:
 - the maintenance dredge to the west of Tern Island – direct, physical impacts

4 Annex 1: Legislation, Policy and Guidance

4.1 Legislation

The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (adopted on 16 January 1992), known as the Valletta Convention, contains provisions for the protection of archaeological heritage, preferably *in situ*, but with provisions for appropriate recording and recovery if disturbance is unavoidable.

The European Landscape Convention (ratified by the UK government in 2016), promotes the protection, management and planning of landscapes, including the historical and cultural aspects of landscapes.

The primary piece of GB legislation concerning archaeology is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), concerning sites or areas that warrant statutory protection due to being of national importance by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attached to it, and are Scheduled under the provisions of the Act. The Act is administered in Scotland by Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (1997) and amendments, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997 and amendments, and The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act are the primary legislation which govern onshore development planning and development management in Scotland in relation to the historic environment. Planning authorities, prior to granting planning permission, consult with HES as a statutory consultee on any development proposals that may affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Monument, a Category A Listed Building, an Inventoried Garden or Designed Landscape, or an Inventoried Historic Battlefield. This means that the presence of such sites within the area of a proposed development and the protection of its setting are material considerations in the planning process.

4.2 Policy

Policy 7 of the current National Planning Framework (NPF4) deals with historic assets and places in the planning system. It is intended to *'protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration places'*. It specifies that *'development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets will be accompanied by an assessment of the impact based on their cultural significance'*.

In summary, development proposals will only be supported where they preserve the character, special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings, the character and appearance of conservation areas, and avoid direct impacts on scheduled monuments and significant adverse impacts on the integrity of their setting or where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify such impacts and where these can be minimised.

Development proposals affecting nationally important Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Historic Battlefields will be supported where they protect their cultural significance. Those affecting a World Heritage Site will only be supported where they protect and preserve its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

Non-designated heritage assets should be protected and preserved *in situ* wherever feasible. Where impacts are unavoidable, they should be assessed and minimised.

The glossary attached to NPF4 contains the following definitions that are relevant in the current context.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance can be embodied in a place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Historic environment means the 'physical evidence for human activity that connects people with a place, linked with the associations we can see, feel and understand.

Historic environment assets means an asset (or 'historic asset' or 'heritage asset') that is a physical element of the historic environment – a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance.

Setting is more than the immediate surroundings of a site or building and may be related to the function or use of a place, or how it was intended to fit into the landscape or townscape, the view from it or how it is seen from around round about, or areas that are important to the protection of the place, site or building. Setting is the way in which the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced.

4.2.1 Planning Advice Note PAN2/2011: Planning and Archaeology

In July 2011, the Scottish Government published the Planning Advice Note PAN 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology. It provides advice and technical information alongside SPP, HEPS and Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes, which together set out the Scottish Ministers' policies and guidance for planning and the historic environment.

Sections 4-9 of the PAN provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the policy of the Scottish Government relating to archaeological sites and monuments. Overall, the guidance can be summarised:

- Policy is to protect and preserve sites and monuments and their settings in situ where feasible. Where this is not possible planning authorities should consider applying conditions to consents to ensure that an appropriate level of excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving is carried out before and/or during development.
- In consideration of applications, planning authorities should take into account the relative importance of archaeological sites. Not all sites and monuments are of equal importance. In determining planning applications that may impact on archaeological features or their setting, planning authorities may balance the benefits of development against the importance of archaeological features.

Section 12 of the PAN notes that when determining a planning application, the desirability of preserving a monument (whether scheduled or not) and its setting is a material consideration. It reiterates that preservation in situ should be the objective but where not possible an alternative approach is recording and/or excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results.

Sections 13 and 14 note that prospective developers should undertake assessment to determine whether a property or area contains, or is likely to contain, archaeological remains as part of their pre-planning application research into development potential. Where it is known, or there is good reason to believe, that significant remains exist developers should be open to modifying their plans in order to preserve remains.

4.3 Local Planning Policy

Local planning policy is provided in the Highland Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan (adopted 2012). This contains the following policies relating to the historic environment.

Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

All development proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework. The following criteria will also apply:

- 1. For features of local/regional importance we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.*
- 2. For features of national importance, we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.*
- 3. For features of international important, developments likely to have a significant effect on a site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to appropriate assessment. Where were are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, we will only allow development if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature.*

In due course the Council also intends to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on the Historic Environment Strategy. The main principles of this guidance will ensure that future developments take account of the historic environment and that they are of a design and quality to enhance the historic environment, bringing both economic and social benefits; and it sets a proactive, consistent approach to the protection of the historic environment.

Appendix 2 of the plan defines the importance of heritage assets as follows:

- National importance
 - Category A Listed Buildings
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Gardens and Designed Landscapes
 - Historic Battlefields
- Local/Regional Importance
 - Category B and C Listed Buildings: B listed buildings are considered to be of regional or more than local importance, and C listed buildings are of local importance
 - HER archaeological sites: the importance of such sites in terms of protection or professional recording prior to disturbance is advised on a case-by-case basis. The integrity of the site and its setting will be considered
 - Conservation Areas

In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment seeks to clarify the proposal development site's archaeological potential.

4.4 Guidance

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) stands alongside HEPS (2019) and outlines the principles and criteria that underpin the designation of historic buildings, sites and places.

HES Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Series: Setting (2020), states that *setting can be important to the way in which historic structures or places are understood, appreciated and experienced. It can often be integral to a historic asset's cultural significance. The setting of historic assets or places should be taken into account when considering environmental assessments/statements, and when making decisions on applications;*

HES and Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) (now NatureScot) Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: Guidance for competent authorities, consultation bodies, and others involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment process in Scotland, 2018, v5. This has been used to develop the approach to assessment as outlined in Appendix 8.2.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Codes, Standards and Guidelines for historic environment desk-based assessment (2020).

5 Annex 2: Desk-Based Assessment

5.1 Context and Aims of the Report

5.1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Assessment

The Desk-Based Assessment identifies any potential historic environment issues or constraints that will be assessed in the EIA historic environment chapter. More specifically, Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology (ORCA) was commissioned to:

- Review existing databases for the area for information on the historic environment, including cultural heritage sites and landscapes in order to identify known sites in the area and the potential for unidentified sites and landscapes;
- Provide an assessment of the historical development of the landscape covered by the Site;
- Identify any known or likely sensitive sites or areas and the potential for unknown remains in the area; and
- Present a gazetteer of the results of known sites and monuments.

5.2 Archaeological and historical background with assessment of value

This chapter reviews the available evidence for the proposed development and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPF4, considers the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence in the proposed development.

What follows is a review of heritage assets and entries in the HER for a study area extending 1km radius of the proposed development (Figure 8.A).

5.3 Non-designated heritage assets

There are nine non-designated heritage assets within the 1km study area as listed in the Highlands Historic Environment Record (HER). Two of these assets, ORCA 01 and ORCA 09 are located within the site boundary of the proposed development, and the remaining seven assets are located outside the site boundary.

These are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Non-designated heritage assets within 1km study area

Asset	Value	Reasoning
ORCA 01 MHG20808 ³ : farmstead, Carse of Ardersier, depicted on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1876).	Negligible	Located within the site boundary of the extension site, this asset no longer appears to survive. Any physical remains that exist would make a negligible contribution to our understanding or appreciation of the past.
ORCA 02	Medium	If the wreck is present at this location, it has the potential to

³ Highland HER: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG20808> [accessed 13/06/2025]

Asset	Value	Reasoning
MHG48913 ⁴ : wreck, Comet.		make a significant contribution to our understanding of mid-19th century cargo vessel design.
ORCA 03 MHG48721 ⁵ : wreck, Patriot.	Medium	If the wreck is present at this location, it has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of mid-19th century cargo vessel design.
ORCA 04 MHG52077 ⁶ : wreck, Bess.	Medium	If the wreck is present at this location, it has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of mid-19th century cargo vessel design.
ORCA 05 MHG45951: Ardersier oil rig construction yard.	Negligible	The remains of the oil rig construction yard have been removed and nothing remains that would contribute to our understanding and appreciation of it.
ORCA 06 MHG2818: natural feature, Glac Nan Ceannaichean. A natural hollow thought in local legend to have a burial place of rival packmen.	Low	If the heritage is a burial site, then it has local value or interest for cultural appreciation.
ORCA 07 MHG20826: farmstead, Upper Carse, depicted on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1876).	Low	A non-designated asset that is common to the area.
ORCA 08 MHG20816: farmstead, Upper Carse, depicted on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1876).	Low	A non-designated asset that is common to the area.
ORCA 09 Unnamed building recorded by walkover survey. Depicted on the 2 nd edition OS map of 1906.	Low	Located within the site boundary of the extension site, this is a non-designated asset that is common to the area.
ORCA 10 MHG20811: Muir of Balnagowan farmstead, depicted on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1876).	Low	A non-designated asset that is common to the area.

5.4 Designated heritage assets

There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed development site or within the 1km study area.

Within the ZTV there 13 designated heritage assets have been identified for setting impact assessment, these comprise four listed buildings, three scheduled monuments, one garden and designed landscape, two conservation areas and one historic battlefield. These are shown in Table 2 below.

⁴ Highland HER: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG48913> [accessed 13/06/2025]

⁵ Highland HER: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG48721> [accessed 13/06/2025]

⁶ Highland HER: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG52077> [accessed 13/06/2025]

Table 2: Designated heritage assets within the ZTV and subject to setting impact assessment

Receptor/Feature	Value/ Sensitivity/ Importance	Reasoning
Listed Buildings: Category A		
ORCA 11 LB1721: Fort George, excluding the interior and roof of the Junior Ranks Mess and Kitchen with the rear enclosure of North Stores Block. ⁷	High	Category A listed building that is valued at a national level.
ORCA 12 LB31799: Chanonry Lighthouse, Keeper's House, Wall and Gatepiers. ⁸	High	Category A listed building that is valued at a national level.
Listed Buildings: Category B		
ORCA 13 LB1720: Kirkton, Old Burial Ground and Watch-house. ⁹	Medium	Category B listed building that is valued at a regional level.
ORCA 14 LB52544: Delnies Ice House and Bothy, The Nairn Golf Club, Nairn. ¹⁰	Medium	Category B listed building that is valued at a regional level.
Scheduled Monuments		
ORCA 15 SM4737: Moor of Balnagowan, enclosure 250m SW of ¹¹	High	Scheduled monument that is valued at a national level.
ORCA 16 SM2823: Cromal Mount, mound and earthworks ¹²	High	Scheduled monument that is valued at a national level.
ORCA 17 SM11608: Easter Lochend, fort 350m WNW of ¹³	High	Scheduled monument that is valued at a national level.
ORCA 22	High	Scheduled monument that is valued at a national level.

⁷ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB1721>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

⁸ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB31799>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

⁹ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB1720>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹⁰ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB52544>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹¹ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,SM4737>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹² HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,SM2823>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹³ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,SM11608>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

SM11607: Ackron, three cairns 325m ENE of, Kinchyle ¹⁴		
ORCA 23 SM11603: Hangman's Hill, cairn 380m E of Kinchyle ¹⁵	High	Scheduled monument that is valued at a national level.
Conservation Areas		
ORCA 18 Nairn Fishertown	Medium	Valued at a regional level due as a good example of a traditional fishing community with a distinctive layout and character.
ORCA 19 Rosemarkie	Medium	Valued at a regional level as a good example of a late 18 th /early 19 th century coastal village.
Gardens and Designed Landscape		
ORCA 20 GDL00357: The Fairy Glen ¹⁶	High	Valued at a national level for its unique geological features, cultural associations and scenic beauty.
Inventory Battlefield		
ORCA 21 BTL6: Battle of Culloden ¹⁷	High	Inventory Battlefield that is valued at a national level, holding deep cultural significance and serves as a place of reflection and remembrance.

5.5 Archaeological and historical background

The following provides information on the archaeological and historic background of the study area and its immediate environs.

5.5.1 Previous archaeological works

No archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in or adjacent to the proposed development previously.

5.5.2 Prehistoric Period

Early prehistoric (Palaeolithic/ Mesolithic: c12,000-BC to c4,000BC)

The Highlands HER holds no records relating to the early prehistoric periods for the proposed development.

The superficial geological deposits within the environs of the proposed development site comprise raised tidal flat deposits of Holocene age. These deposits are commonly charged

¹⁴ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,SM11607>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹⁵ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,SM11603>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹⁶ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,GDL00357>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

¹⁷ HES Portal:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,BTL6>
[accessed 04/09/2025]

with organic debris (plant and shell) that are now above the level of the present shoreline due to earth movement or general fall in sea level; and these deposits have the potential to contain evidence of the full palaeoenvironmental history of the area after the last Ice Age. Whiteness Bay and the wider area of Ardersier therefore provides a suite of deposits and landforms of considerable relevance to studies of ice sheet history, relative sea-level change and glacier deposition. There is also the potential for evidence relating to landscape and environmental changes in the time immediately after the retreat of the ice sheets, and any potential human activity from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods (Gordon & Merrit 1993¹⁸).

There is evidence for Mesolithic activity at Culbin Sands ([HER55366](#)), some 10km to the north-east of the proposed development site. A variety of finds from the Mesolithic period have been recovered, including shell middens and flint tools, indicating the presence of human activity within the wider environs of the proposed development site.

This evidence suggests that there could be the potential for similar deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest within the proposed development site, particularly in those areas not previously developed.

Later prehistoric (Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age: c4,000BC – AD 299)

The HER holds no records relating to the later prehistoric periods for the proposed development.

The proposed development site and its surroundings have many sites evidencing prehistoric activity. Nothing of prehistoric date is recorded within the HER in the 1km study area, however there are several scheduled monuments beyond the study area that provide evidence of domestic and funerary/ceremonial activities from the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods:

- Around 2.5km to the south-west of the proposed development site is Hillhead of Ardersier, a monument comprising the remains of a narrow ditched enclosure of prehistoric date that appears as a cropmark (Scheduled Monument, [SM5071](#)). The monument is considered to be the remains of domestic or ceremonial structures of the mid to late prehistoric period; and whether they are of domestic or funerary/ceremonial purpose, they are related structures of which very few survive in this lowland area.
- Just over 1km to the south of the proposed development site is the Moor of Balnagowan, an enclosure of a type associated with ceremonial and burial activity in the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age (Scheduled Monument, [SM4737](#)). The monument measures 16.5m in diameter and consists of a low platform surrounded by a ditch and outer bank, with a causeway crossing the ditch on the south-west side.
- Around 3km to the south of the proposed development site is a series of prehistoric enclosures and houses appearing as cropmarks in arable fields at Gollanfield (Scheduled Monument, [SM5167](#)). The monument represents at least three different forms of prehistoric enclosure, and it is considered that there may also be associated remains of funerary/ceremonial features as well.

¹⁸ Geological Conservation Review No. 6: Quaternary of Scotland, Chapter 7: Inverness Area: SITE: Ardersier, available online at: <https://hub.incc.gov.uk/assets/30518938-6ada-4033-8174-f4ed52026e7c> [accessed 12/06/25]

- Around 4km to the south-east of the proposed development site is an enclosure that appears as a cropmark in arable fields at Meikle Kildrummie (Scheduled Monument, [SM5308](#)). The remains could be a prehistoric burial or settlement feature.

In addition, there are potentially important palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological evidence associated with the earliest periods of the Holocene that could add to our understanding of climate change, sea level change and possibly early human activities which is attested through its proximity to Culbin Sands and recorded Mesolithic evidence from here.

5.5.3 Early Medieval and Medieval (AD 300 – 1500)

The HER holds no records relating to the early medieval period for the proposed development.

Just on the south-eastern periphery of the 1km study area is the Kebbuck Stone (Scheduled Monument, [SM9433](#)). This is an early Christian carved cross slab, of grey sandstone that stands at 1.80m high. While not yet proven, it is thought to potentially be a Pictish symbol stone.

The HER holds no records relating to the medieval period for the proposed development.

Within the wider environs it is notable that Nairn was established as a royal burgh towards the end of the 12th century, and there are a number of medieval sites recorded within 5km of the proposed development site:

- 3km to the south-west of the proposed development site on the northern side of Ardersier is Cromal Mount (Scheduled Monument, [SM2823](#)). This is earthwork remains of a late medieval fortification that overlooks the Moray Firth to the west. Originally thought to be an entirely artificial motte, it is more likely a re-shaped and enhanced natural feature, exploited for its naturally strong defences and a dominating position in the landscape.
- 2km to the south of Cromal Mount (and 3km to the south of the proposed development site) is Viewhill (Scheduled Monument, [SM5001](#)). Located at the southern end of Ardersier this monument comprises the remains of a medieval fortalice (religious house) belonging to the Knights Templar. It appears in arable fields as a cropmark and is a rectilinear enclosure measuring 100m square within two ditches that are 20m apart. The fortalice was recorded as standing in the 18th century, and it represents rare archaeological evidence of the activities of the Knights Templar in the north of Scotland.

Kirkton Old Burial Ground and Watch-House (also known as Ardersier Old Parish Church) (Category B Listed Building, [LB1720](#)) is located immediately to the north-west of Cromal Mount. It is the site of a church which dated from at least 1227, and the site is now occupied by late 18th/early 19th century walled burial ground.

5.5.4 Modern (1500 – present)

The HER holds seven records relating to the post-medieval period for the study area, one of which is located within the proposed development.

In terms of military influence, the construction of Fort George in the 18th century marked a major strategic development following the Jacobite Rising of 1745. The fort functioned as a key military stronghold, prompting economic growth, improvements in transport infrastructure,

and changes in local population dynamics. More information on Fort George is provided in Section 0.

The post-medieval period saw substantial changes in land use, industry, and settlement patterns in the vicinity of the proposed development. The area was predominantly agricultural, with grain production and cattle grazing forming the core of local economic activity. Fishing was also a significant industry, evidenced by the Easter Delnies fishing station, located near the proposed development within Nairn Golf Course. Remains of the ice house, constructed in 1877, and the bothy, added in 1904, survive within the landscape, providing physical testimony to the area's maritime heritage.

Nine of the assets identified within the 1km study area are from the post-medieval period, and these comprise residential and agricultural buildings, a site that is traditionally associated with packmen burials and three wreck sites:

- ORCA 01: Carse of Ardersier ([HER MHG20808](#)): a farmstead comprising one roofed and one unroofed building and an enclosure depicted on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1876, sheet i). The location of the asset was visited during the scoping phase of this assessment and it was found to no longer survive above ground.
- ORCA 10: Muir of Balnagowan ([HER MHG20811](#)): a farmstead comprising one roofed and one unroofed building and an enclosure depicted on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1876, sheet i). The current condition of these assets is unknown.
- ORCA 07 and 08: Upper Carse ([HER MHG20816](#) and [MHG20826](#)): two adjacent farmsteads comprising roofed and unroofed structures and two enclosures depicted on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1876, sheet i). The current condition of these assets is unknown.
- ORCA 09: A farmstead comprising a group of three buildings shown on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps and was recorded during the walkover survey. The farmstead survives as a ruin above ground. A large ditch located to the north-west of the ruins is a drain shown on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps.

At the Moor of Balnagowan is a hollow (ORCA 06) which, according to 19th century legend, is where rival packmen slew each other and are buried ([HER MHG2818](#)), with the Gaelic name *Tom Eanruig* being translated as *the Merchant's Graves* or *Hollow*. No evidence to support the legend has been found to date.

There are three 19th century wreck sites recorded on the HER, the locations of all should be considered to be tentative as information from the time of the wreck are often inaccurate. The recorded wrecks comprise:

- ORCA 03: Patriot, Whiteness Bay ([HER MHG48721](#)): the Patriot was a sloop sailing from Dunbeath to Waterford and sunk at Whiteness, the crew were all saved – Monday September 17 1838.
- ORCA 02: Comet, Whiteness Bay ([HER MHG48913](#)): the Comet was sailing from Cromarty to Peterhead and went ashore east of Whiteness Head Buoy on the 1 November 1859.
- ORCA 04: Bess, Whiteness Bay ([HER MHG52077](#)): the Bess was a full-rigged ship with a cargo of merino rams that was wrecked near Fort George in October 1803.

Just to the north of the 1km study area is the recorded wreck site of *Mary* ([HER MHG46440](#)), a sloop carrying herrings that was stranded on Whiteness in October 1854.

The late 19th and 20th centuries saw further industrialisation, most notably with the establishment of the Ardersier oil rig fabrication yard (ORCA 05, [HER MHG45951](#)) in the 1970s. As one of the largest oil rig construction sites in the UK, it provided significant employment until its closure in 2001.

5.6 Historic maps

5.6.1 Roy Map of the Highlands, 1747-52

Roy's Map of the Highlands (1747-52)¹⁹ shows the area of the proposed development as being open coastal with no houses, farms or other structures shown.

Fort George can be seen, as can the Ardersier Old Parish Kirk, Ardersier, Crook, Milton, Newton, Treetown and Cattertown.

5.6.2 Six-inch 1st edition OS: Inverness-shire (Mainland) I, Surveyed: 1870, Published: 1876²⁰

The map (Image 1) shows a cluster of three un-named buildings (ORCA 09) within the western extension land area. These buildings do not appear on the HER and are likely to be farm houses or ancillary farm buildings of post-medieval date. The buildings were recorded during the walkover survey (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Image 1: Six-inch 1st edition OS Map



¹⁹ Roy's Map of the Highlands cannot be reproduced due to copyright; however, it can be viewed on the National Library of Scotland's map site: <https://maps.nls.uk/roy/> [accessed 11/06/2025]

²⁰ All historic OS maps in this report are reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (CC-BY).

5.6.3 25-inch 1st edition OS: Inverness-shire (Mainland) I.3, Revised 1903, Published 1905

The complex of three un-named buildings has been reduced to two in number (Image 2). No other changes are evident from the 1st edition OS.

Image 2: 25-inch 1st edition OS Map



5.6.4 Six-inch 2nd edition OS: Inverness-shire (Mainland) I, Surveyed: 1903, Published: 1906

The complex of two un-named buildings and their surroundings has unchanged since the previous map published in 1905 (Image 3).

Image 3: Six-inch 2nd edition OS Map



5.6.5 Inverness-shire, OS NH7856-NH7956 – AA, Published 1965

The map shows that the extension lands are now occupied wholly by forestry plantation, and that the buildings identified in previous maps are no longer shown. The oil rig fabrication yard has yet to be constructed, and there is nothing else of note shown (Image 4).

Image 4: OS NH7856-NH7956 – AA



5.7 Walkover Survey

The walkover survey was executed in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by ClfA (2014, updated 2020²¹).

The survey was undertaken on Tuesday 10 June 2025 in bright, sunny weather conditions by an ORCA specialist in the company of a member of the client team for safety and to help orient the specialist around the site.

5.7.1 Limitations

The area of Leitchfield Farmhouse and Juniper Cottage/Lower Carse in the western area of the extension lands was not accessible for the survey.

It was not practicable or safe to walk the entirety of the dense woodland plantation in the western part of the extension lands. In the eastern part of the extension lands dense scrubland made it difficult for access and to observe any surface features.

5.7.2 Western Area

This area comprised a conifer plantation to the south of the existing development site and comprised dense woodland plantation with wide tracks (Image 5). The site of 'The Pines' was accessible from the south side of the plantation and provided access to the remaining areas to the west. These were walked and the tracks leading to the western extents of the area were walked. This included the remains of a building and large ditch that was not recorded on the HER (Images 6, 7 and 8)

A building (ORCA 09) was identified within the western portion of the site. No trace of the farmstead at Carse of Ardersier (ORCA 01) was found and it is considered that this has been removed by previous development within the site.

Image 5: Wide track recorded within western area of extension lands



²¹ Available on the ClfA website: <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/2023-11/ClfA-SandG-DBA-2020.pdf>

Image 6: ORCA 09, southwest corner of building looking northwest



Image 7: ORCA 09, external eastern wall looking southwest



Image 8: ORCA 09, north wall of the building with window, looking north



5.7.3 Eastern Area

The area comprised a small area of grass and scrub bounded by the site access road on its north-eastern side, the site compound to the west and areas of exposed sand to the south. The dense gorse had been tracked through and some of the tracks were recently overgrown (Image 9). All the tracks through the area were walked, along with some areas of open ground on the north side. The remaining areas were too dense with scrub to walk through effectively.

Image 9: Eastern area of extension lands looking northeast



Some of the tracks exposed the sand below, showing a very thin layer of topsoil above the reclaimed salt marsh sands (Image 10).

Image 10: Eastern area of extension lands looking northeast



A possible bank running east to west across the track was recorded (Image 11) although it was considered likely that was a result of natural undulations.

Image 11: possible bank, likely natural in origin



5.8 Archaeological potential

Given that the proposed development is located within an area of known Holocene deposits (see 5.5.2) there is the potential for deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest to be present within the proposed development site where there has not been extensive development activity in the past. In order to understand more about the potential for deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest, it is recommended in the EIAR that borehole logs that have been taken across the proposed development site are assessed by a suitably qualified specialist, and to use these results to inform on an appropriate approach to mitigation.

Within the extension lands, a single heritage asset, ORCA 01, a post-medieval farmstead is recorded in the HER. This structure is believed to have been removed during development works associated with the former Ardersier oil rig fabrication yard, and no visible remains were identified during the walkover survey conducted in June 2025.

However, the survey did record the surface remains of a building (ORCA 09) which is likely to correspond with features depicted on the first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps (refer to Images 6 to 8). These findings suggest the presence of unrecorded post-medieval or later structures within the western portion of the extension lands.

Three recorded wreck sites are noted in the HER. Although the precise locations of these wrecks are uncertain—being based on 18th-century records and observational accounts—there remains a possibility that elements of these sites could survive.

While much of the seabed in the vicinity has been subject to significant disturbance from the construction and operational dredging activities associated with the former Ardersier oil rig fabrication yard. It is considered that there is therefore no potential for marine archaeological remains.

5.9 Past impacts within proposed development boundary

5.9.1 Extension lands

The eastern area of the extension lands has experienced limited anthropogenic disturbance. While there is evidence of tree planting along the southern boundary, the majority of this area is characterised by gorse and scrub vegetation, suggesting minimal historical ground alteration.

In contrast, the western portion of the extension lands has undergone more extensive modification due to forestry plantation activities. Historical cartographic analysis indicates that plantation efforts commenced in the early to mid-1960s. Such forestry practices are known to pose risks to subsurface archaeological resources through:

- **Physical disruption** caused by the deep and widespread root systems of coniferous species, which can displace or destroy archaeological deposits.
- **Mechanical disturbance** associated with site preparation techniques, including deep ploughing, drainage installation, and other groundworks, which may result in significant degradation of archaeological integrity.

5.9.2 Dredging areas

The zones identified for targeted deepening within the inner harbour, as well as areas west of Tern Island proposed for potential maintenance dredging, are considered likely to have been previously affected by activities related to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the former oil rig fabrication yard.

5.10 Potential archaeological resource

The proposed development site lies within a broader landscape known to contain raised beach formations dating to the early Holocene, alongside evidence of early and later prehistoric activity, as well as post-medieval settlement and agricultural use.

5.10.1 Extension lands – western area

Within the extension lands—particularly the western portion—forestry plantation activities may have caused damage or destruction to archaeological deposits. However, it is also recognised that dense forestry can obscure archaeological features, making them difficult to detect during field surveys. In some cases, such plantations may have inadvertently preserved archaeological remains by shielding them from modern agricultural practices.

Due to the dense nature of the plantation in the western portion, full ground coverage during the walkover survey was not possible, introducing a degree of uncertainty regarding the presence and condition of ground that could have impacted on any subsurface archaeological remains. Notably, the survey did identify surface features, including structures not recorded in the HER, suggesting the potential for additional, unrecorded remains—possibly of post-medieval or earlier origin—within the inaccessible areas.

Based on current evidence, the potential for encountering deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest and prehistoric through to medieval period archaeological remains within the extension lands is assessed as **low**, indicating it is unlikely that such features would be encountered during groundworks. In contrast, the potential for post-medieval and modern remains is considered **medium**, indicating a reasonable likelihood of encountering such features during groundworks.

5.10.2 Extension lands – eastern area

The eastern area of the extension lands exhibits limited evidence of historical ground disturbance. While some tree planting has occurred along the southern boundary, the majority of the area appears to remain largely undisturbed.

Based on current evidence, the potential for encountering deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest and prehistoric through to medieval period archaeological remains within the extension lands is assessed as **low**, indicating it is unlikely that such features would be encountered during groundworks. In contrast, the potential for post-medieval and modern remains is considered **medium**, indicating a reasonable likelihood of encountering such features during groundworks.

5.10.3 Dredging areas

The previous use of the proposed development site for oil rig fabrication would have required extensive dredging of the access channels. This would have removed any submerged archaeological material and there is not considered to be any likelihood of any remains surviving.

6 Annex 3: Assessment of Effects and Setting Impact Assessment

6.1 Construction

6.1.1 Loss of or damage to known marine archaeological remains

No impacts are anticipated on the known marine archaeological remains recorded on the HER within the study area.

6.1.2 Loss of or damage to unknown marine archaeological remains

Due to previous disturbance within the inner harbour, there is considered to be no potential for the presence of unknown marine archaeological remains, and therefore no effects are anticipated.

6.1.3 Loss of or damage to known historic environment assets

Two known historic environment assets are recorded within the extension lands (western area), both of which are modern buildings dating from the 18th century.

ORCA 01 – Farmstead, Carse of Ardersier

No above-ground remains are present, and the site appears to have been totally removed. There would therefore be no impact or subsequent effect.

ORCA 09 – Farmstead

The remains of a post-medieval building, likely a farmstead, were recorded during the walkover survey. The building survives above ground as ruins and has a low heritage value. Construction activities would have a high magnitude of impact, resulting in a moderate overall effect in matrix terms. The use of professional judgement considers the ubiquity of the asset type and its state of preservation, has concluded the overall effect to be a **minor adverse** effect and **not significant**.

6.1.4 Loss of or damage to unknown historic environment assets

The proposed development site may contain evidence of human activity dating from the Mesolithic period onwards. While extensive forestry planting has taken place, particularly in the western part of the extension lands, which could have truncated or removed any archaeological, the potential remains that surviving deposits or features are still present.

The heritage value of any such finds could range from negligible to high, depending on their condition, context and cultural significance. Given that the extension lands would be cleared and covered with a platform, this would constitute a high magnitude of impact, resulting in a potential **minor** to **major** adverse effects (depending on the value of any assets), and this could therefore potentially be **significant**.

Given the low archaeological potential of the extension lands, these impacts should be considered to be unlikely, but possible and would therefore require proportionate mitigation.

6.1.5 Loss of or damage to deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest

As outlined in the Desk-Based Assessment (paragraph 5.5.2) the proposed development site is within an area of known Holocene deposits and raised beaches that may preserve evidence of past environmental conditions and early human activity. Previous development, including the construction of the Ardersier oil rig fabrication yard and land redevelopment, may have removed or disrupted any surviving deposits of significance, however in areas where there has been no significant development remains could potentially survive.

At this stage of assessment, the potential for deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest within the proposed development site is not clear. Assessment of borehole logs undertaken across the site is recommended, and this will inform on a suitable approach to mitigation.

6.1.6 Short-term changes to the setting of designated historic environment assets that reduces their value

Construction works could cause short-term (temporary) changes to the setting of designated heritage assets, temporarily affecting the way in which the asset is understood, appreciated and experienced, and thus the significance of the asset, albeit temporarily and where the asset derives significance from its setting.

Potential short-term (temporary) changes to the setting of assets could be caused by the presence and movement of construction plant, spoil heaps, site compounds and associated infrastructure, temporary gantries and construction areas close to designated heritage assets. Where this is the case, there could be temporary visual impacts on assets of medium and high value, the magnitude of impacts could be negligible to minor.

Taking the high value of assets and the negligible to minor magnitude of impact, the overall effect on the setting of designated heritage assets is considered **minor** adverse and **not significant**.

Table 3: Summary of assessment of significance of effect during construction

Receptor	Value	Potential impact (in the absence of mitigation)	Mitigation	Residual effect
ORCA 09: farmstead	Low	Loss of or damage to receptor	Historic building recording	Minor adverse
Deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest	Low to Medium	Loss of or damage to receptor	Assessment of existing borehole logs and watching brief if required based on assessment results	Uncertain
Unknown historic environment assets	Low to Medium	Loss of or damage to receptor	Watching brief	Minor to Major
Short-term (temporary) changes to the setting of designated historic environment assets that reduces their value	Medium to High	Reduction in value of designated heritage asset	None	Minor

6.2 Setting Impact Assessment

Thirteen designated heritage assets comprising listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, gardens and designed landscapes and historic battlefields have been identified for setting impact assessment, in agreement with HES and The Highland Council's Historic Environment Team.

The following provides a full description of the designated heritage assets, including their setting and what this contributes towards their significance. Photographs illustrating the assessment below are provided at the end of this document.

6.2.1 Listed Buildings

ORCA 11: Fort George: Category A (LB1721)

See Chapter 7 (Landscape, Seascape and Visual), Figure 7.5.4a, Viewpoint 4, taken from the Duke of Cumberland's Bastion.

By far the most obvious monument from this period is the imposing Fort George (Category A Listed Building, [LB1721](#)) that is located just over 3.5km to the southwest of the proposed development.

Largely designed and built in a single phase between 1747 and 1769, it was the largest construction project ever undertaken in the Highlands until the construction of the Caledonian Canal. The fort is one of the most exceptional and intact examples of an 18th century artillery fortress in the world and has been in continuous military occupation since the with minor additions and alterations to service its use by the British Army.

Setting

Fort George occupies a small promontory, Ardersier Point, in the Moray Firth, and the exposed location gives it a sense of remoteness and isolation. Despite its low profile, its scale makes it visible from much of the surrounding area, and from its ramparts there are long views in all directions, including westwards towards Inverness and the Great Glen, north to the Black Isle and south towards the Croy Ridge and the hills beyond; and these represent key factors of the fort's setting. Crucially, its coastal setting on the Moray Firth is integral to its historic function, symbolic purpose, and current heritage value.

The fort's location was selected for strategic reasons. The Moray Firth at this point narrows to just over 1km between Ardersier Point and Chanonry Point on the shore of the Black Isle opposite. This narrow channel allowed the fort to exert control over the shipping channel in and out of Inverness further west on the firth, and major land routes like the Great Glen, the coastal route towards Elgin and Aberdeen and the main route southwards towards Perth. The coastal location also allowed the fort to be resupplied by sea in the event of access by land being restricted. The value of strategic control over a transportation route is reflected in the positions of other fortifications within the network, such as Fort William at the opposite end of the Great Glen. The narrow nature of the headland also restricted the tactical possibilities for any terrestrial force attacking Fort George, seen as the most likely threat, forcing them to approach the fort from the east, and this is reflected in the defences being deepest and strongest on this side of the fort.

There have been some changes to both the immediate surroundings and the wider area since the fort was built. These include the insertion of car parks and access roads to the immediate east and south of the fort to accommodate staff and tourists; the growth of the ranges and associated infrastructure to the east and north-east; a small business park off the Old Military Road 500m to the east; and the expansion of Inverness Airport over the bay to the south. Despite this, the overall setting has not significantly changed since the 1700s and retains the same sense of remoteness and isolation the fort would have originally had.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of Fort George on the Moray Firth is integral to its historic function, symbolic purpose and current heritage value. The setting allowed for 360-degree visibility and access for sea-based resupply and military logistics and maximised its defensibility; and its remote, dominant position projected the power of the British government and its control over the Highlands after the Battle of Culloden.

Today, the contrast between the stark military geometry and the wild coastal landscape creates a powerful emotional and visual experience; and allows one to understand and

appreciate the fort within a setting that has not altered significantly since it was constructed at the end of the 18th century.

The strategic position and orientation of Fort George are integral to its original military purpose and continue to play a key role in its setting and significance.

There are expansive, largely open views to and from the fort and these are a fundamental part of its character and historic function. Outward views across the Moray Firth, particularly to the north, east and west, illustrate the fort's original defensive role in overseeing and controlling maritime and land access following the Jacobite Rising of 1745. These views remain largely uninterrupted, maintaining a high degree of authenticity and allowing for a clear appreciation of the fort's intended strategic dominance.

Inward views towards the fort from the surrounding area, including from Ardersier, Chanonry Point and the Black Isle, contribute to its prominence in the landscape. The low-lying land around the inner Moray Firth enhances the visual impact of the stone bastions and ramparts, which rise starkly above the surrounding terrain and reinforce the symbolic and physical authority of the British government during the mid-18th century.

Long-range views also contribute to the wider historic environment, establishing visual connections with other heritage assets such as Chanonry Lighthouse (LB31799), towards Inverness and the Kessock Channel, north-east towards the mouth of the Cromarty Firth and across to the Black Isle. These visual inter-relationships highlight the integrated network of coastal defence and navigation systems along the Moray Firth, further enhancing Fort George's contextual significance.

Setting impact assessment

Fort George has a high heritage value. The setting of the fort contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Strategic Visibility:** Expansive outward views across the Moray Firth, particularly to the north, east, and west, illustrate the fort's original defensive role in overseeing maritime and land access.
- **Visual Prominence:** Inward views from Ardersier, Chanonry Point, and the Black Isle reinforce the fort's dominance in the landscape, with its bastions and ramparts rising starkly above the low-lying terrain.
- **Contextual Relationships:** Long-range views establish visual connections with other heritage assets, including Chanonry Lighthouse (LB31799), the Kessock Channel, and the Cromarty Firth, highlighting the fort's role within a broader coastal defence network.

Field observations confirm that the fort retains a high degree of visual integrity. Key sea views to the northwest, southwest, southeast, and east remain largely uninterrupted. The fort's elevated bastions and ramparts provide multiple vantage points from which the surrounding landscape and seascape can be appreciated.

The proposed development is located approximately 3 km to the north-east of Fort George and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider setting of the fort in the following ways:

- **Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m):** (Short-term (temporary), static): The proposed development has extant consents in place for 180m tall turbine structures. The proposed development includes for the fabrication of

offshore turbines with a maximum height of 330m. Although the turbines will not be operational or moving during their time on land, their exceptional height means they are likely to be visible from elevated positions within Fort George, particularly from the Duke of Cumberland's Bastion, the north casement curtain, and the Ravelin. Their scale alone may draw visual attention and contrast with the historic and natural character of the setting. However, their temporary and non-operational nature, along with their eventual removal, limits the duration and permanence of this impact. Although temporary and non-operational, the turbines height would introduce a low magnitude of change to the setting. Given Fort George's high value, this would result in a moderate short-term adverse effect.

- Permanent Buildings (Long-term (Permanent), up to 45m in height): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m and would also be behind a tree belt along the southwestern boundary of the proposed development site. While the proposed permanent buildings would add to the existing massing of the consented buildings, they would not significantly change the setting within the fort's wider visual envelope, and the tree belt would also provide some screening in views from the southwest. Their potential visibility from sensitive viewpoints within Fort George would therefore result in a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, and taking into account that it would not be possible to fully mitigate the impacts, it is assessed that there would be a **moderate** short-term (temporary) adverse effect on the Fort George during periods of turbine construction, which is **significant**; and a **minor** long-term (permanent) adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings, which is **not significant**.

6.2.2 ORCA 12: Chanonry Lighthouse, Keeper's House, Wall and Gatepiers: Category A (LB31799)

See Photomontage provided in Chapter 7 (Landscape, Seascape and Visual) and associated appendices.

Chanonry Lighthouse is a Category A listed building, recognised for its architectural and historic interest as a mid-19th century lighthouse designed by Alan Stevenson in the Egyptian Revival style. It was first lit in 1846, and has been fully automated since 1984, and plays a vital role in maritime navigation.

Setting

The lighthouse is situated at Chanonry Point, a narrow spit of land projecting into the Moray Firth between Fortrose and Rosemarkie. This location marks one of the narrowest points of the firth, directly opposite Fort George, and serves as a navigational landmark where the inner Moray Firth begins.

The lighthouse is visually prominent in a largely undeveloped an open coastal setting. It occupies a critical coastal position at the junction of the inner and outer Moray Firth, and this siting enhances understanding of its functional role in aiding navigation through a historically busy and challenging tidal channel. The lighthouse's direct visibility with Fort George on the opposite shore strengthens its strategic maritime context and offers insight into 19th century coastal infrastructure.

The surrounding land is predominantly rural and uncluttered, and this enables the lighthouse to be appreciated in silhouette against the sea and sky; and from it there are long-ranging views over the Moray Firth, to Fort George and beyond.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of the lighthouse contributes to its significance in several key ways. Its location at the junction of the inner and outer Moray Firth enhances understanding of its functional role in aiding navigation through a historically busy and challenging tidal channel, and its direct intervisibility with Fort George on the opposite shore strengthens its strategic maritime context, offering insights into 19th century coastal infrastructure.

The open coastal setting with surrounding rural land enables the lighthouses form and stylistic detailing to be appreciated in silhouette against the sea and sky, and its visual isolation reinforces the aesthetic experience of the site, supporting its architectural integrity. Likewise, the relationship between the lighthouse and its topography is a key element of its designed intent, and this enhances its scenic and landmark qualities.

The commanding, expansive views across the Moray Firth and along the coastline maintains strong visual connections with other contemporary heritage assets, particularly Fort George. These long-range views enhance the spatial understanding of the lighthouse's historic and present function and its relationship to maritime routes. The experiential qualities of the setting, such as exposure to the elements, soundscape of the sea, and changing lights, also contribute to the overall heritage value of the lighthouse.

Setting impact assessment

Chanonry Lighthouse has a high heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Visibility:** The setting of the lighthouse is fundamental to its historic and functional significance as a coastal navigational aid. The lighthouse's visibility from both land and sea, its relationship with the surrounding seascape, and its inter-visibility with other maritime landmarks—including Fort George across the firth—enhance its role within a broader network of 19th-century coastal infrastructure.
- **Visual prominence:** the open, undeveloped character of the headland reinforces the lighthouse's visual prominence and maritime context, contributing to its authenticity and continued legibility as a working aid to navigation.

Field observations indicate that along the south wall of Chanonry Point, at the approach from the car park, the proposed development site is not visible due to the enclosing walls around the lighthouse. Prominent views from this location are directed to the east, south, and partially to the south-west. From the point itself, there are clear views toward Fort George; however, the angle and distance to the proposed development site mean it is not clearly visible. Importantly, views to the lighthouse itself and its silhouette remain unaffected.

The proposed development is located approximately 5.5 km to the northeast of the lighthouse and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider setting of the fort in the following ways:

- **Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m):** The turbines, although tall, are located approximately 5.4 km from the lighthouse and will be static during their short-term presence. Given the lighthouse's lower elevation and the turbines' inland location, visibility is further limited by field observations, which

confirm that the proposed development site is not visible from the approach along the south wall due to enclosing walls and is not clearly visible from the point itself due to angle and distance. The turbines when fully assembled would be visible from the lighthouse for short periods of time however. The magnitude of impact is therefore assessed as low, resulting in a minor short-term (temporary) adverse effect.

- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m and would also be behind a tree belt along the southwestern boundary of the proposed development site. While the proposed permanent buildings would add to the existing massing of the consented buildings, they would not significantly change the setting within the lighthouse's wider visual envelope. The magnitude of change is still assessed as negligible, leading to a minor long-term adverse effect.

Overall, and taking into account that it would not be possible to mitigate the impacts, it is assessed that there would be a **minor** short-term (temporary) adverse effect on the Chanonry Lighthouse during periods of turbine construction, which is **not significant**; and a **minor** long-term (permanent) adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings, which is **not significant**.

6.2.3 ORCA 13: Old Parish Church, Ardersier – Kirkton Old Burial Ground and Watch House: Category B (LB1720)

The Old Parish Church of Ardersier, also known as Kirkton Old Burial Ground, is located to the northeast of Ardersier village in a rural coastal setting overlooking the Moray Firth. It was the site of the former Ardersier parish church, and the church here was recorded as being in a 'ruinous condition' as far back as 1792.

While the church itself no longer stands, its burial ground remains enclosed by an 18th–19th-century stone wall. Within the northwest corner of the site is an early 19th-century watch house, listed Category B, which served as a deterrent to grave robbing.

Within the burial ground are a number of good 18th and 19th century tombstones, including some associated with notable people from Fort George.

Setting

The site retains a secluded and tranquil setting, bordered by agricultural land to the south and an active military training range to the north. There are long-range views to the water and surrounding countryside. Located on slightly elevated ground overlooking the Moray Firth, the site offers a commanding position that reflects traditional church siting practices, where spiritual significance was reinforced through visual prominence and accessibility. The location served as a parish focus from at least the 13th century and retained religious and communal functions until the late 18th century.

The Old Parish Church's setting contributes materially to its historic interest through its well-preserved rural character, visible remnants of commemorative function, and rare associative features such as the early 19th-century watch house.

The burial ground, enclosed by a finely constructed 18th/19th-century wall, contains gravestones of local historical interest. The presence of a purpose-built watch house is particularly notable and links the site to broader concerns with grave robbing in 19th-century Scotland, enhancing its social historical value.

The site's rural and minimally altered setting supports the legibility of the church's former function, spatial arrangement, and historical landscape context. It retains a strong sense of place and spiritual continuity.

There are long-distance views from the Old Parish church north and northeast towards the proposed development that would have historically reinforced visual connections to and from maritime activity that was significant to the local economy and culture.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of the site is integral to understanding its role and significance. Key aspects comprise its visual prominence on elevated ground that reinforces its historical visibility.

The surrounding undeveloped agricultural landscape preserves the historic landscape character and also supports a strong sense of place of continuity. Internally, the relationship between the burial ground, watch house and surroundings enhances the interpretation of past parish life.

Setting impact assessment

The Old Parish Church, Ardersier has a medium heritage value and a medium contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Historic rural character and siting:** The site retains a secluded and tranquil atmosphere, bordered by agricultural land to the south and an active military training range to the north. Its slightly elevated position overlooking the Moray Firth reflects traditional church siting principles, where visual prominence and accessibility were closely tied to spiritual and communal significance. The church has served as a parish focus since at least the 13th century, continuing in religious use until the late 18th century.
- **Associative and commemorative features:** The setting materially contributes to the site's historical significance through its well-preserved rural landscape, visible commemorative elements, and rare associative features such as the early 19th-century watch house. The burial ground, enclosed by a finely constructed late 18th/early 19th-century wall, contains gravestones of local historical importance. The watch house is particularly notable, linking the site to broader 19th-century concerns about grave robbing and enhancing its social-historical value.
- **Legibility and continuity:** The minimally altered rural setting supports the legibility of the church's former function, spatial organisation, and historic landscape context. It retains a strong sense of place and spiritual continuity, which remains integral to its heritage value.
- **Views and landscape relationships:** The elevated position reinforces the site's historical visibility and prominence, while the surrounding undeveloped agricultural landscape preserves its historic character. Internal spatial relationships between the burial ground, watch house, and wider surroundings enhance interpretation of past parish life. Long-distance views from the church, particularly to the north and northeast, historically reinforced visual connections with maritime activity—an integral aspect of the local economy and cultural heritage.

Field observations confirmed that the proposed development site was not visible from the lower northeast corner of the cemetery, the southwest half, or from the watch house. The southern portion of the cemetery lies at a lower elevation and is screened by mature trees,

which obscure views to the north and northeast, although the sand bank is visible from certain angles. Vegetation in the near distance also obscures views from the western part of the site.

From the central yew tree within the cemetery, the proposed development was visible, with the yellow cranes being used for construction works being visible, as well as the at the northwest of the proposed development site. At the northern edge of the Old Church grounds yellow cranes were partially visible through distant trees, with a red and white pole from the military range also present in the near view. These nearby military structures and signage interrupt the visual setting of the cemetery when looking north.

The proposed development is located approximately 3km to the northeast of the church and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider setting of the listed structures in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): Although the turbines are of exceptional height, their visibility from within and around the buildings is largely screened by gorse, trees and landform. They may be visible from where screening cover is sparse. As the turbines will be static and non-operational during their short-term presence, the magnitude of impact is assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m and would also be behind a tree belt along the southwestern boundary of the proposed development site. These structures may be visible in the wider landscape, particularly in views from the centre of the graveyard looking north. However, their visibility from the immediate setting of the church is limited. While their industrial character may contrast with the rural and historic setting, the magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during turbine construction period, which is **not significant**; and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings, which is also **not significant**.

6.2.4 ORCA 14: Delnies Ice House and Bothy, The Nairn Golf Club: Category B (LB52544)

Delnies Ice House and Bothy are situated in the grounds of The Nairn Golf Club, close to the southern coast of the Moray Firth. The buildings are the sole surviving remnants of the Easter Delnies Fishing Station, which played a significant role in the area's salmon and sea trout fishing industry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Ice House was constructed in 1877 and is built into a natural slope near the shore. Its design includes a barrel-vaulted roof covered with turf, stone walls and an internal storage chamber. A small hatch in the rear wall facilitated the loading of ice.

The Bothy was erected after 1904 and is a single-storey and attic building. It served as seasonal accommodation for fishermen.

Setting

The immediate setting of the buildings remains largely unaltered since their original construction. Although now contained within the golf course, no new structures have been erected nearby, preserving their rural and coastal character. The proximity of the ice house to

the shore underscores its functional necessity for quick access to the day's catch, while the bothy's orientation towards the ice house reflects the operational relationship between them.

Contribution of setting to significance

While the buildings are not prominent landmarks, their visibility from both the golf course and the Moray Firth contributes to their distinctiveness in the landscape. The coastal setting enhances the historical context, illustrating the once-thriving fishing industry along this stretch of the coast.

The views from the buildings, encompassing the shoreline and the expanse of the firth, are integral to understanding the operation environment of the fishing station.

Setting impact assessment

Delnies Ice House and Bothy has a medium heritage value and a medium contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Historic context and continuity:** The immediate setting of the ice house and bothy has remained largely unchanged since their original construction, preserving their rural and coastal character. Although now situated within a golf course, no new structures have been introduced nearby, allowing the historic context to remain legible. The ice house's proximity to the shoreline underscores its functional role in storing the day's catch, while the bothy's orientation toward the ice house reflects their operational interdependence.
- **Landscape integration and visibility:** While not dominant landmarks, the buildings are visible from parts of the golf course and the Moray Firth, reinforcing their distinctiveness within the landscape. Their coastal setting is integral to their historical significance, offering insight into the once-thriving fishing industry that shaped this stretch of coastline.
- **Views and experiential qualities:** Views from the buildings across the shoreline and firth remain important in contextualising the working environment of the former fishing station. These views contribute to an authentic understanding of the site's original function and historical relevance.

Field observations confirm that the ice house and bothy face one another, with the bothy entrance oriented inland. From the internal space between the buildings, the proposed development site is not visible due to the angle of view and the presence of dense gorse.

The low-lying nature of the setting and the surrounding vegetation also obscure views from the adjacent fairways to the south and east. While the site is visible from the fairway to the north, views to the bothy from this location are limited, with only the roof discernible above the gorse.

From the flat area between the structures, only the tops of the vertical elements associated with the proposed development would be visible. No views are available from the north and east sides of the buildings due to gorse and landform, and from the base of the ice house, the proposed development would not be visible.

From the west side of the buildings, the proposed development would be visible, while from the north side of the bothy, views are again obscured by gorse, with primary views directed toward the sea to the north and east.

The proposed development is located approximately 2.20km to the north-west of the Delnies Ice House and Bothy and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider setting of the listed structures in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): Although the turbines are of exceptional height, their visibility from within and around the buildings is largely screened by gorse and landform. They may be visible when fully constructed, particularly where tree cover is sparse. As the turbines will be static and non-operational during their short-term presence, the magnitude of impact is assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. These structures may be visible in the wider landscape within the context of the consented buildings, however, their visibility from the immediate setting of the listed structures is limited. While their industrial character may contrast with the rural and historic estate setting, the magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during turbine construction period, which is **not significant**; and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings, which is also **not significant**.

6.3 Scheduled Monuments

6.3.1 ORCA 15: Moor of Balnagowan, enclosure 250m SW of (SM4737)

See the wireline (Image 12) below that has been prepared in accordance with HES's requirements to remove the woodland surrounding the monument and screening it from the proposed development, as this is not considered to necessarily be a material consideration when assessing setting impacts.

The monument comprises an enclosure of a type associated with burial and ceremonial activity in the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age, measuring 16.5m in diameter and consisting of a low platform surrounded by a ditch and outer bank. A causeway crosses the ditch on the south-west. The form of the monument suggests that it is a henge, and represents one of two likely henges within the immediate area – the other being at Lochside approximately 3km to the south ([SM6694](#)) (Dennison & Coleman 1999).

The monument is a well-preserved example of a type of ceremonial and burial site with a limited distribution, which has the potential to enhance considerably our understanding of prehistoric burial and ceremonial practices. Its significance derives from the survival of earthwork features, its archaeological potential and its placement within a broader prehistoric landscape.

Setting

The monument lies within Lagnagreishach Wood on a south-west facing slope of the Moor of Balnagowan. The woodland surrounding the monument has been in place since at least the late 19th century, and prior to this it would have been in a more open moorland landscape. Tree cover has reduced visibility and intervisibility, however the topography and remoteness reflects an authentic historic character.

The location of the monument is typical for henges, on low-lying flat ground close to agricultural land and watercourses. One known entrance is aligned southwest, and while there is no mention of an opposite entrance (as one would expect for a henge) this may be due to the obscuring of above ground remains due to damage caused by the plantation process.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting supports our understanding of how the monument functioned as part of a wider ritual or ceremonial landscape. The continued seclusion of the landscape contributes to the authenticity, integrity and experiential value of the monument, and the lack of modern development, preserves archaeological context and enhances research potential.

The setting of the monument therefore contributes to its significance by preserving its archaeological context, experiential qualities and historical character.

Setting impact assessment

Moor of Balnagowan, enclosure 250m south-west of (SM4737), has a high archaeological value and a medium contribution of setting. It is The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Typological and archaeological significance:** The monument form strongly suggests it is a henge, a type of ceremonial and burial monument associated with the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. It is one of only two likely henges in the immediate area, the other being at Lochside, approximately 3km to the south. The survival of its earthwork features and its placement within a broader prehistoric landscape enhance its archaeological potential and research value.
- **Historic landscape context:** The monument is situated on a south-west facing slope within Lagnagreishach Wood, part of the Moor of Balnagowan. Although enclosed within woodland since at least the late 1880s, the site would historically have been part of a more open moorland landscape. The topography and relative remoteness of the location continue to reflect an authentic prehistoric character, typical of henge siting—on low-lying ground near agricultural land and watercourses. The enclosure would have been sited to have expansive views over its surroundings, and to the north and northeast over the Moray Firth.
- **Experiential and interpretive value:** The continued seclusion of the monument contributes to its integrity and experiential qualities. Despite the reduction in visibility and intervisibility due to tree cover, the monument's setting retains a sense of isolation and ritual significance. The lack of modern development, aside from the plantation, preserves the archaeological context and supports its interpretation as part of a wider ceremonial landscape.

Field observations confirmed that the monument is entirely enclosed within woodland. The site lies slightly downslope from the adjacent field, which masks views to the north and east. The surrounding woodland obscures all views to and from the proposed development site. As a result, the setting is visually enclosed, with no intervisibility with the proposed development site.

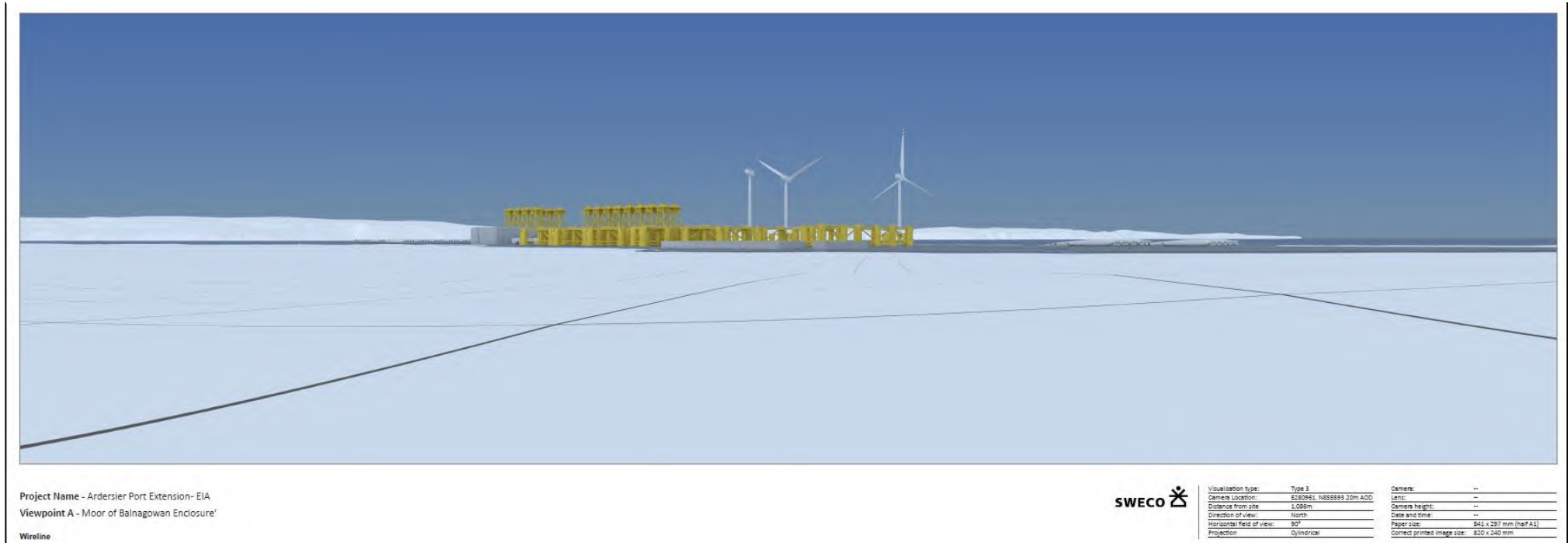
The proposed development is located approximately 1.1km to the north of the monument and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): in the absence of the woodland surrounding the monument, the turbines would clearly be visible from the monument. The presence of turbines under construction would result in views to the north towards the firth being temporarily obscured, although views to the northwest and northeast would remain open. This would result in a partial obscuration of a view that forms part of the monument's setting. The magnitude of impact is assessed as low, resulting in a moderate short-term (temporary) adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m and as such would not significantly alter the existing views north towards the firth. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **moderate** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period that is **significant**, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings, that is **not significant**.

Professional judgement has informed the conclusion that the temporary adverse effect associated with the turbines under construction is not significant. While it is acknowledged that, in line with HES's *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting* guidance, existing vegetation such as woodland cannot necessarily be solely relied upon to mitigate visual impacts, the scale, density, and continuity of the intervening woodland between the scheduled monument (SM4737) and the proposed development site is such that it provides a substantial and enduring visual buffer. The likelihood of this woodland being removed in its entirety is considered extremely low, given its extent and current land use. Therefore, even with partial clearance, a meaningful degree of screening would remain in place. On this basis, the potential for significant temporary adverse effects on the setting of the monument is considered to be negligible, and the effect is assessed as negligible and **not significant**.

Image 12: Wireline visualisation of the proposed development from ORCA 15 (note that this appears as if the intervening woodland between ORCA 15 and the proposed development has been removed)



6.3.2 ORCA 16: Cromal Mount, mound and earthworks (SM2823)

Cromal Mount is a well-preserved medieval motte, associated with early castle building and the assertion of feudal lordship in Scotland. Likely topped with timber defences originally, it functioned as a centre of local power and control.

Setting

The motte is located on low-lying agricultural land near Ardersier, approximately 1km inland from Fort George. It is situated at the interface between the developed edge of the village and the surrounding agricultural and coastal landscape. The motte occupies a visually and physically elevated position on a natural knoll, and its immediate setting comprises a grassy mound within a partially enclosed area, with a band of trees to the west with a steep drop towards the village and coast. There is domestic housing to the immediate east and south. To the north and west, the land slopes gently toward the coastal plain and mudflats of the Firth. The eastern aspect remains more open, affording broader views across agricultural land. The topography enhances the motte's prominence, especially when viewed from the east.

Contribution of setting to significance

The motte's elevated position and surviving height allow it to retain a visual presence locally, despite encroaching modern development. Views to the site, particularly from the east along rural margins of the village preserve its visual legibility as a distinct topographical feature; and views from it along the firth and inland facilitating surveillance and territorial control are key attributes that contribute to its archaeological and historical significance.

Setting impact assessment

Cromal Mount has a medium heritage value and a medium contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Typological and historical significance:** Cromal Mount is a well-preserved medieval motte, associated with early castle-building traditions and the assertion of feudal lordship in Scotland. Originally likely topped with timber defences, it would have served as a local centre of power and control. Its form and survival contribute to our understanding of medieval territorial organisation and defensive architecture.
- **Topographical prominence and landscape context:** Cromal Mount occupies a visually and physically elevated position on a natural knoll, situated at the interface between the developed edge of the village and the surrounding agricultural and coastal landscape. The immediate setting comprises a grassy mound within a partially enclosed area, with a band of trees to the west and a steep drop toward the village and coast. Domestic housing lies to the east and south, while to the north and west the land slopes gently toward the coastal plain and mudflats of the Moray Firth. The eastern aspect remains more open, affording broader views across agricultural land. This topography enhances the motte's prominence, particularly when viewed from the east.
- **Contribution to legibility and interpretation:** The motte's elevated position and surviving height allow it to retain a degree of visual presence despite encroaching modern development. Views to the site from the rural margins of the village preserve its legibility as a distinct topographical feature. Views from the summit, particularly toward

Fort George and the Firth, support interpretation of its historical role in surveillance and territorial control—key attributes that contribute to its archaeological and historical significance.

Field observations confirm that views to the north towards the proposed development are interrupted by nearby farm buildings. The proposed development is located approximately 3.2 km to the northeast of Cromal Mount and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): The turbines may be visible from the summit of the motte, particularly when fully assembled in the direction of Fort George and the firth. However, views are currently limited by vegetation and nearby structures. Given the monument's partial intervisibility with the proposed development site and the presence of intervening modern elements, the magnitude of impact is assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m and would also be behind a tree belt along the southwestern boundary of the proposed development site. These structures may be visible on the horizon from the summit of the motte, particularly in the direction of the firth, however their limited visibility and the presence of intervening buildings and topography reduces the overall impact. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a negligible short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a negligible long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.3.3 ORCA 17: Easter Lochend, fort 350m WNW of (SM11608)

The monument comprises a small Iron Age fort situated across a small ridge, lying in uncultivated pasture. The fort straddles a thin ridge and features the remnants of a bank and ditch forming a roughly oval enclosure.

Setting

The fort is located at approximately 115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and occupies a strategically advantageous position overlooking the coastal lowlands of the Inner Moray Firth, with long-distance views across the surrounding landscape. The fort is situated on a natural knoll within gently undulating terrain, and this elevated setting provides natural defences, that was almost certainly a factor that influenced its siting here in the Iron Age.

The surrounding land is used for pasture and rough grazing, with pockets of forestry and agricultural land use nearby.

Contribution of setting to significance

The rural character of the fort's setting preserves its general openness and topographic legibility of its setting.

One of the most important contributors to the fort's significance is its expansive and commanding views, especially towards the north and west over the Moray Firth and south-

west towards the inland hills and straths. These views would have served a strategic and symbolic function, enabling surveillance of movement through the landscape, control of resources and the assertion of territorial presence.

The fort is also likely to have been intervisible with other Iron Age sites, such as forts, duns or settlement enclosures in the region. This intervisibility would likely have supported a network of Iron Age communities that were aware of each other, with visual connections reinforcing social or political relationships.

Setting impact assessment

The fort has a high heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Typological and strategic significance:** The monument comprises a small Iron Age fort situated across a narrow ridge within uncultivated pasture. It features the remnants of a bank and ditch forming a roughly oval enclosure. Positioned at approximately 115m aOD, the fort occupies a strategically advantageous location overlooking the coastal lowlands of the Inner Moray Firth. Its elevated siting would have provided natural defences and was almost certainly a deliberate choice in the Iron Age for both practical and symbolic reasons.
- **Landscape context and rural character:** The fort is located on a natural knoll within gently undulating terrain. The surrounding land is used for pasture and rough grazing, interspersed with pockets of forestry and agricultural land. This rural character preserves the general openness and topographic legibility of the site's setting, contributing to its authenticity and integrity.
- **Views and intervisibility:** One of the most important contributors to the fort's significance is its expansive and commanding views—particularly to the north and west over the Moray Firth, and to the south-west toward inland hills and straths. These views would have served both strategic and symbolic functions, enabling surveillance of movement, control of resources, and the assertion of territorial presence. The fort is also likely to have been intervisible with other Iron Age sites in the region, reinforcing social or political relationships through visual connectivity.

Field observations confirm that there are no views toward the proposed development from the southern side of the fort. From the north side, views toward the proposed development are obscured by middle-distance tree cover (Balnagowan Wood/Carse), although longer-range views to the north-east remain partially open.

The proposed development is located approximately 6km to the northwest of the fort and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- **Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m):** Due to the dense vegetation and topography surrounding the fort, the turbines are not visible from the accessible parts of the site. While they may be visible from higher points under different seasonal conditions and when fully assembled, current field observations suggest limited to no intervisibility. The magnitude of impact is therefore assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.
- **Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m):** The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of

45m, which are unlikely to be visible from the fort due to intervening vegetation and landform. Their presence within the wider landscape does not alter the fort's immediate setting or its archaeological context. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.3.4 ORCA 22: Ackron, three cairns 325m ENE of, Kinchyle (SM11607)

The scheduled monument consists of three cairns aligned from northwest to southeast, situated on the crest of a glacial ridge. The cairns are believed to date from the Bronze Age, and they lie approximately 25 metres above sea level, near the River Nairn.

Setting

The location of the cairns on a modest ridge with views across the surrounding lowlands, reflects typical prehistoric burial practices that emphasised visibility, alignment, and symbolic placement within the landscape.

The cairns are located in regenerating woodland, and each is visible as a mound covered in grass, broom and gorse which partially obscures them from close-range views. They are located in a gently undulating rural landscape, occupying a glacial ridge, aligned northwest to southeast, with a surrounding patchwork of pasture and rough grazing land, interspersed with hedgerows and small tree belts.

To the southwest lies Kinchyle Farm which has a small off-grid campsite that introduce low-level rural activity into the setting. To the southeast a line of electricity pylons crosses the landscape, introducing a modern infrastructure element that is visible from certain angles but does not dominate the skyline.

Further afield, the land rises gently to the north toward the Alton Burn forming a subtle ridge that shapes the cairn's immediate setting and also contains views to the north from the cairns. Beyond this, the terrain drops away toward the Moray Firth and the proposed development site

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of the cairns plays a key role in shaping their cultural and archaeological significance. Positioned on a gentle glacial ridge, they enjoy a modest elevation that offers views across the River Nairn valley. This topographic choice is not incidental, it reflects a broader Bronze Age tradition of placing burial monuments in prominent or elevated positions within the landscape, reinforcing their ceremonial and symbolic importance.

Surrounding the cairns is a largely rural environment with minimal modern development in the immediate environs. The quiet, natural setting enhances the experiential qualities of the site, and the subdued presence of modern infrastructure helps preserve the monument's ritual atmosphere that is central to its interpretation as a place of prehistoric significance.

The cairns proximity to the Alton Burn and River Nairn may also carry symbolic weight, as their alignment could reflect spiritual or cosmological beliefs that were believed to be associated with watercourses.

Finally, the undisturbed nature of the surrounding land enhances the site's archaeological potential. The absence of intensive land use increases the likelihood that subsurface remains, such as buried soils, environmental data, and/or associated artefacts, have been preserved. These could offer valuable insights into Bronze Age funerary practices, land use, and environmental conditions.

Setting impact assessment

The Ackron cairns are a scheduled monument of high heritage value, and their setting makes a high contribution to their overall significance. The setting contributes in several ways:

- Topographic and ritual significance: the three cairns are aligned along a glacial ridge within a rural, semi-wooded landscape. Their placement on elevated ground, approximately 25 aOD, reflects a deliberate choice to situate burial monuments in visually prominent and symbolically resonant locations. The ridge provides modest outward views, particularly to the northeast and east, reinforcing the cairns' role as ritual and commemorative features in the prehistoric landscape.
- Landscape context and rural character: the cairns are located within a landscape that retains a strong rural character, with minimal modern development in the immediate vicinity. The openness and legibility of the terrain contribute to the authenticity of the site, preserving its historical context and enhancing its interpretative value.
- Views and visual experience: while the cairns themselves are low in profile, their setting allows for partial views across the River Nairn valley. However, views to the north are notably constrained by a ridge of higher ground that effectively blocks long-range visibility in that direction, reinforcing the monument's sense of enclosure and seclusion within the landscape.

The Ackron cairns are on an area of higher ground forming a short ridge to the north of Hangman's Cairn and closer to the road. The wooded ridge immediately across the road dominates the views from here, there are no views of the coastal plain and the site is not visible. Although the weather was hazy, distant hills to the south-west could be made out and the hills of the Black Isle were visible from further along the B9091. The view towards Hangman's Hill cairn is interrupted by pylons and the playground of the campsite. The three separate cairns are only partly distinguished along the top of the ridge and are not as distinctive as Hangman's cairn.

The proposed development is located approximately 4.80km to the north of the cairns and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): due to the intervening topography, turbines under construction would not be visible from the monument. While the tips of the blades may be visible from elevated positions under certain seasonal conditions, intervisibility would be limited. The magnitude of impact is therefore assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Long-term (permanent), up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. These structures are expected to be entirely obscured from the monument by the raised ground near Alton Burn. Their presence within the wider landscape would not alter the monument's immediate setting or its archaeological

context. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, and a negligible long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.3.5 ORCA 23: Hangman's Hill, cairn 380m E of Kinchyle (SM11603)

Hangman's Hill is a well-preserved Bronze Age burial cairn located on the north bank of the River Nairn. It is constructed from water-worn stones and earth and is encircled by a low bank. It is considered to be a rare example of a 'Wessex-type' embanked cairn in Scotland and is of high archaeological and cultural significance.

The cairn has seen minimal disturbance and retains a high potential for buried archaeological deposits, including funerary remains and environmental evidence. Its survival as an uncultivated feature within improved pasture enhances its visibility and integrity.

Setting

The cairn is surrounded by open agricultural land, with a small, discrete off-grid camping site and associated farm to its immediate northwest. It remains an uncultivated island within a managed landscape, reinforcing its visual prominence and historical distinctiveness. The surrounding land use is largely sympathetic to the monument's character, preserving the rural and relatively undeveloped qualities that contribute to its authenticity.

The cairn's slightly elevated position allows for partial outward views, particularly to the south and southeast across the River Nairn valley. These views are not expansive but are open enough to suggest deliberate placement, allowing the monument to be seen from nearby routes and fields. The cairn's visibility would have been important in the Bronze Age, serving both commemorative and territorial functions.

The cairn is also intervisible with the Ackron cairns (ORCA 22), located approximately 500m to the west-northwest. This intervisibility is not incidental: both monuments are contemporary Bronze Age burial mounds, and their alignment and mutual visibility suggest a deliberate spatial and symbolic relationship.

To the north, views are constrained by rising ground near Alton Burn, with a ridge forming a natural visual barrier that blocks intervisibility with the coastal plain and the proposed development site. As a result, the cairn's visual focus is directed inward towards the river valley and its associated monuments.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting contributes to the monument's significance in several key ways:

- Typological and ritual significance: the cairn's prominent form and slightly elevated position reflect Bronze Age traditions of placing burial monuments in visible and symbolically resonant locations. Its construction using river stones further reinforces its connection to the surrounding landscape.
- Landscape context and rural character: the cairn is situated within a gently undulating rural landscape of improved pasture, rough grazing and scattered tree belts. This low-intensity land use preserves the openness and legibility of its setting, contributing to its authenticity and reinforcing its prehistoric context.

- Views and intervisibility: the cairn is visually prominent within its immediate setting and enjoys views across the River Nairn valley, particularly to the south and southeast. Views to the north are constrained by rising ground which blocks intervisibility with the coastal plain. Crucially, it is intervisible with the Ackron cairns (ORCA 22), located 500m to the west-northwest. These are contemporary Bronze Age burial mounds, and their mutual visibility suggests a deliberate spatial and symbolic relationship. This intervisibility reinforces the cairn's role within a broader ritual landscape and enhances its interpretive value.

Setting impact assessment

Access to the site from the B9091 is down a steep hill to the Barrows campsite. The site then slopes down gradually to the flat floodplain before the river, where the cairn is located. To the south of the cairn is a low fence surrounding a wheat field. There is an information board on the NW side of the cairn. The view to the north-west from the base of the cairn is dominated by the campsite and caravans and the view towards the Ackron cairns is also partly obscured from here. From the top of the cairn the view to the Ackron cairns is clearer. Due to the low location of the cairn there are no views towards the site, the horizon is dominated by the tree line on the other side of the road, where Easter Lochend hillfort is located.

The proposed development is located approximately 5km to the north of the cairn and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): due to the intervening topography, turbines under construction would not be visible from the cairn. While the tips of the blades could be visible from elevated positions under certain seasonal conditions, intervisibility is limited. The magnitude of effect is therefore assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term effect.
- Permanent buildings (Long-term (permanent), up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. These structures would be entirely obscured from the cairn by the raised ground near Alton Burn. Their presence within the wider landscape would not alter the monument's immediate setting or its archaeological context. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are not **significant**.

6.4 Conservation Areas

6.4.1 ORCA 18: Nairn Fishertown

Nairn Fishertown was designated as a conservation area in 1979. The designation recognises its character and appearance, particularly as a traditional fishing community with a distinctive layout and character.

Setting

The area developed as a tightly knit fishing community, characterised by narrow lanes and rows of solid stone cottages laid gable-end to the sea. The area is predominantly flat, rising gently from sea level, and is characterised by its close-knit urban fabric. The streets are lined with modest, single or one-and-a-half-storey cottages, many of which are harled and feature traditional Scottish architectural details. The layout reflects the organic growth of a working fishing community, with buildings oriented to maximise shelter from coastal winds.

This layout reflects the community's maritime heritage and contrasts with the later Victorian-style buildings in other parts of Nairn.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of Fishertown is integral to its character. Located next to the sea, the orientation of the buildings and the narrow lanes leading to the waterfront emphasize the connection to maritime activities. Views into and out of Fishertown, particularly those towards the sea, are key elements of its setting, contributing to its historic ambiance and sense of place.

To the north-west expansive views over the Moray Firth provide a visual connection to the sea, these being integral to understanding the historical livelihood of the community. Inland, glimpses of the surrounding townscape and distant hills over a contrasting backdrop, highlighting Fishertown's unique position within Nairn.

In summary, Fishertown's setting is characterized by its traditional architecture and coastal location, and this is deeply enriched by the surrounding views. These views not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also provide context to the town's historical development and connection to the sea.

Setting impact assessment

Nairn (Fishertown) Conservation Area has a medium heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- **Architectural and historical character:** The area developed as a tightly knit settlement, characterised by narrow lanes and rows of solid stone cottages laid gable-end to the sea. The modest, single- and one-and-a-half-storey buildings—many harled and featuring traditional Scottish details—reflect the organic growth of a working maritime community and contrast with the later Victorian architecture found elsewhere in Nairn.
- **Coastal setting and spatial organisation:** Fishertown is situated on predominantly flat terrain that rises gently from sea level. Its layout, with buildings oriented to maximise shelter from coastal winds, emphasises its functional relationship with the sea. The narrow lanes leading to the waterfront reinforce this connection, and the orientation of the buildings—often with gables facing the sea—preserves the area's historic maritime character.
- **Visual relationships and experiential qualities:** Views into and out of Fishertown, particularly those toward the Moray Firth, are key elements of its setting. Expansive views to the northwest across the Firth provide a visual connection to the sea and the distant hills of the Black Isle, supporting interpretation of the community's historical livelihood. Inland, glimpses of the surrounding townscape and uplands highlight Fishertown's unique position within Nairn and reinforce its identity as a coastal enclave.

Field observations confirm that from the harbour at the northern edge of Fishertown, the immediate sea view encompasses the curve of the bay, the golf links, and the beach beyond.

The proposed development and sand bank are further around the coast and appear juxtaposed against the distant hills of the Black Isle. As one ascends the dunes, views shift to focus more directly north through the Moray Firth, with the harbour lighthouse and eastern dunes forming key visual elements.

Landscaping and consolidation of the sand dunes at beach level have obscured sea views from street level at the ends of Fishertown's lanes. Most views within the conservation area are inward-looking, with buildings being oriented gable-end to the sea. Interpretive signage within the area describes the buildings as having their backs to both the sea and the town. From the shore path north of Fishertown, the proposed development site is largely screened by Victorian houses and vegetation on the dunes. While the sea is visible from the path, views are broken by intervening vegetation, and Fishertown itself is only partially visible from the beach.

The proposed development is located approximately 9 km to the west of Fishertown and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): The turbines may be visible from elevated coastal viewpoints and from the harbour area, particularly when they are fully assembled and where views extend across the firth. However, visibility from within the core of Fishertown is limited due to building orientation and dune landscaping. The magnitude of impact is assessed as low, resulting in a minor short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. Their industrial character may contrast with the historic and natural setting, though their limited visibility from the conservation area's interior reduces the overall impact. The magnitude of change is considered negligible leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **minor** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.4.2 ORCA 19: Rosemarkie

Rosemarkie was designated as a conservation area in 1979. The designation acknowledged the village's character and appearance, aiming to preserve and enhance its unique character.

Setting

Rosemarkie features a cohesive streetscape with traditional stone buildings, narrow lanes and a layout that has evolved organically over the years.

Situated on the southern coast of the Black Isle, the village opens into a wide bay along the Moray Firth, offering expansive views across the water to Fort George, Chanonry Point and the Moray coastline. These coastal vistas are integral to the village's identity and should be considered key elements of its setting.

To the west of the village lies the Fairy Glen, a steep-sided valley that follows the Markie Burn inland. This provides a scenic backdrop and reinforces the village's connection to its surroundings.

Views into and out of Rosemarkie, encompassing both seascapes and landscapes, are vital to understanding and appreciating its historical context.

Contribution of setting to significance

The location of Rosemarkie on the southern edge of the Black Isle, opening onto the wide expanse of the Moray Firth has played a central role in shaping its development and historical character. The long views out across the Moray Firth, towards landmarks like Fort George on the opposite shore connect Rosemarkie to a broader historical geography.

Approaching the village from inland, along the route from the Fairy Glen in particular, there is a marked transition from woodland to settlement. This shift in landscape contributes strongly to the village's identity being a transition from the natural to the built, and from the enclosed to the open coastal edge that tells a story about how people historically inhabited and interacted with this environment.

The views into and out of the village are key elements of its significance. The long coastal vista create a strong visual connection between Rosemarkie and the sea, reinforcing its identity as a historic coastal settlement. These views help with the understanding and appreciation of the historical context of Rosemarkie, how it relates to the sea and how it is situated within the wider landscape.

Setting impact assessment

Rosemarkie Conservation Area has a medium heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- Architectural and historical character: The village features a cohesive streetscape of traditional stone buildings, narrow lanes, and an organically evolved layout. Its character reflects a long history of coastal settlement on the southern edge of the Black Isle.
- Coastal setting and visual relationships: Rosemarkie opens onto a wide bay along the Moray Firth, offering expansive views across the water to Fort George, Chanonry Point, and the Moray coastline. These coastal vistas are integral to the village's identity and contribute significantly to its setting. The views outward reinforce Rosemarkie's historic relationship with the sea and its role within a broader maritime landscape.
- Natural landscape context: To the west of the village lies the Fairy Glen, a steep-sided wooded valley following the Markie Burn inland. This scenic backdrop reinforces the village's connection to its natural surroundings. Approaching Rosemarkie from the glen, there is a marked transition from woodland to settlement, from enclosure to openness, which contributes to the village's sense of place and historical narrative.
- Experiential and interpretive value: Views into and out of the village—encompassing both seascapes and landscapes—are vital to understanding and appreciating its historical context. The long coastal vistas create a strong visual connection between the village and the sea, reinforcing its identity as a historic coastal settlement. These views support interpretation of how the village developed in relation to its environment and how it continues to be experienced today.

Field observations confirm that from the north end of the beach, the proposed development would be clearly visible as a distinct sand spit with industrial vertical elements. From this vantage point, Fort George is less distinct due to the viewing angle. Views to the south and south-east remain unimpeded. A clear view of the proposed development would also be

available from the graveyard adjacent to the church, which offers an elevated perspective across the Firth.

The conservation area includes the High Street and seafront, with relatively few internal lanes. Views from the High Street toward the sea are limited, though glimpses are available through the lanes. At street level, the proposed development would not be visible. However, midway down the lanes leading to the beach, the proposed development would become visible on the horizon, with the sand bar forming a distinct and contrasting feature.

The proposed development is located approximately 7.5 km to the east of Rosemarkie and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): The turbines may be visible when fully assembled from elevated and coastal viewpoints within the conservation area, particularly from the beach and churchyard. While they do not intrude upon the core streetscape, their presence in key outward views may affect the visual relationship between the village and the Firth. The magnitude of impact is assessed as low, resulting in a minor short-term adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. Their industrial character contrasts with the historic and natural setting, though their limited visibility from the village core reduces the overall impact. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **minor** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.5 Garden and Designed Landscape

6.5.1 ORCA 20: The Fairy Glen, Rosemarkie (GDL00357)

The Fairy Glen is a picturesque landscape located on the north-west boundary of Rosemarkie. Designated in 2003 as part of the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, it is celebrated for its unique geological features, cultural associations and scenic beauty.

In the early 19th century, the area was developed as a designed landscape celebrating Napoleon's exile to St Helena in 1815. Features from this period include 'Napoleon's Well,' enclosed within a circular structure planted with willows grown from cuttings of trees over the Emperor's grave.

The glen is also associated with the writings of Hugh Miller, who described it as a haunt of fairies, adding to its cultural lore. These associations, combined with its natural beauty, contributed to the growth of 19th-century tourism in the Highlands.

Today, The Fairy Glen continues to serve as a recreational area for locals and visitors, managed in part as an RSPB Nature Reserve, further emphasising its ecological and cultural value.

Setting

The glen is a steep-sided valley carved by the Rosemarkie Burn, featuring sandstone outcrops, waterfalls and mature broadleaved woodlands. The area includes significant geological formations, such as ‘the Dens’ – inaccessible gorges displaying rare ‘gully and pillar’ structures formed through glacial activity. These formations are considered the best examples of their kind in the Highlands.

A woodland path begins near a car park on the north side of Bridge Street and follows the Rosemarkie Burn past historical features like retting ponds, a mill pond and waterfalls. The mature trees extending across the valley floor and onto the cliff faces enhance the glen’s natural beauty.

The glen has high scenic value, with views along the burn, waterfalls and the surrounding woodlands. Recent tree growth has obscured some rock faces and views down the glen towards Rosemarkie.

Views outward from the glen are more limited due to the steep, wooded topography, which encloses the space. Where openings do occur, such as near the entrance or higher paths, they offer glimpses back towards Rosemarkie and the surrounding landscape and these views reinforce the contrast between the closed interior and the broader, open surroundings that heightens the sense of seclusion.

Contribution of setting to significance

The setting of The Fairy Glen, with its geological formations, historical features and scenic views, plays a crucial role in its significance as a site of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

The glen was laid out in the 19th century as a picturesque woodland walk with paths, bridges and waterfalls, reflecting a romantic design ethos. Its setting in a natural gorge with controlled views, enclosure and sudden dramatic reveals is essential to its character.

The proximity of the glen to Rosemarkie adds community and historical context, with the setting including transitional spaces between the glen and the settled/coastal landscape which provides cultural continuity and a strong sense of place.

The views out of the Fairy Glen are a meaningful yet secondary element in its setting, as they help to create contrast with the glen’s more enclosed and designed interior.

Setting impact assessment

The Fairy Glen has a high heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- Historical and cultural significance: The Fairy Glen is a picturesque, designed landscape located on the north-west boundary of Rosemarkie, and it is celebrated for its unique geological features, cultural associations, and scenic beauty. Developed in the early 19th century to commemorate Napoleon’s exile to St Helena, the glen includes features such as ‘Napoleon’s Well,’ planted with willows grown from cuttings taken from trees over the Emperor’s grave. The glen is also associated with the writings of Hugh Miller, who described it as a haunt of fairies, contributing to its rich cultural lore and its role in the growth of 19th-century Highland tourism.
- Natural and designed landscape character: The glen is a steep-sided valley carved by the Rosemarkie Burn, featuring sandstone outcrops, waterfalls, and mature broadleaved woodland. Significant geological formations, including ‘the Dens’—

inaccessible gorges with rare ‘gully and pillar’ structures formed through glacial activity—are considered among the best examples in the Highlands. A woodland path follows the burn past historical features such as retting ponds, a mill pond, and waterfalls. The mature trees extending across the valley floor and cliff faces enhance the glen’s natural beauty and reinforce its romantic design ethos.

- Scenic and experiential qualities: The glen has high scenic value, with views along the burn, waterfalls, and surrounding woodland. While recent tree growth has obscured some rock faces and views down the glen toward Rosemarkie, the enclosed topography creates a strong sense of seclusion. Where openings occur—near the entrance or along higher paths—glimpses back toward Rosemarkie and the surrounding landscape reinforce the contrast between the glen’s enclosed interior and the broader open surroundings, heightening its experiential impact.
- Community and contextual relationships: The proximity of the glen to Rosemarkie adds historical and communal context. Transitional spaces between the glen and the settled/coastal landscape provide cultural continuity and a strong sense of place. Views outward from the glen are a meaningful but secondary element of its setting, contributing to the contrast and enhancing the designed experience.

Field observations confirm that the initial open view from the glen is toward the car park on the south side of the burn. At the end of the Fairy Glen path, the seascape opens out, and the proposed development site is clearly visible on the skyline. The sand bank is particularly prominent on the horizon, more so than Fort George, and stands out in comparison with views from Chanonry Point.

The proposed development is located approximately 6.5 km to the east of The Fairy Glen and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): The turbines may be visible when fully assembled from the end of the Fairy Glen path where the landscape opens out. While views from within the glen are generally enclosed, the turbines could intrude on the outward views that contribute to the contrast and experiential qualities of the site. The magnitude of impact is assessed as low, resulting in a minor short-term (temporary) adverse effect.
- Permanent Buildings (Long-term (permanent) up to 45m): The proposed permanent buildings would be seen within a complex of already consented buildings that would have a maximum height of 45m. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **minor** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

6.6 Historic Battlefield

6.6.1 ORCA 21: Battle of Culloden (BTL6)

The Battle of Culloden, fought on April 16, 1746, was a pivotal event in Scottish history, marking the final major battle of the Jacobite Rising. It took place on Drumossie Moor and pitted the Jacobite forces against the British government army under the Duke of Cumberland.

The battle resulted in a decisive British victory, and this effectively ended both the Jacobite Rising, and Jacobitism as a significant element in British politics.

Setting

The battlefield is located on Drumossie Moor, to the east of Inverness, that is an open, windswept area, providing little natural cover, a factor that is integral to how the battle unfolded and how it is appreciated today. The battlefield terrain is slightly undulating but generally level, allowing for wide visibility. This open character significantly favoured the government army, which was better equipped with artillery and trained for linear formation fighting.

Drumossie Moor comprises peaty soils, rough grassland and heath, and was historically treeless and exposed. Much of the historic setting has survived, though 20th century forestry and development threatened parts of the landscape, and efforts are currently ongoing to return the place to its 18th century appearance. Historic tracks and field boundaries, though subtle, remain legible in places and are part of the archaeological landscape.

The key landscape elements of the battle are: to the north, Culloden House, the Jacobite headquarters before the battle; Leanach Cottage near the centre of the battlefield is a rare survivor and helps mark the Jacobite left flank; and the clan graves and memorial cairn that are 19th century additions, but which define the ceremonial focus of the site.

In terms of the wider setting and views the battlefield is within an open visual basin, with long sightlines across the moor and distant views to the Monadhliath and Cairngorms. Despite some modern intrusions such as infrastructure and forestry, much of the skyline remains undeveloped, preserving the sense of isolation and exposure that would have been present in 1746.

Contribution of setting to significance

The battlefield's setting contributes strongly to its significance by preserving the spatial qualities, openness and experiential character of the historic terrain. It enables an appreciation of the conditions faced by both armies and supports the battlefield's ongoing role as a site of national memory, reflection and interpretation.

Views out of the battlefield, particularly those to the north, east and south, preserve its visual relationship with the wider landscape, helping to situate it within its historic topographical context and enhancing our understanding of the events that unfolded there. The visibility from the battlefield towards key approach routes, including from Nairn and Inverness, contributes to interpreting how the armies advanced and the terrain's influence on the course of the battle.

Beyond the immediate battlefield, views towards the Moray Firth, Monadhliath Hills and surrounding uplands reinforce the sense of remoteness and exposure that characterised the site in 1746. These distant horizons help to preserve the battlefield's historic isolation and provides an authentic setting that supports its commemorative and educational roles today.

Modern development has encroached on some parts of the western and south-western periphery of the battlefield however, careful landscape management has helped to maintain the core visual envelope.

Setting impact assessment

The Battle of Culloden (BTL6) has a high heritage value and a high contribution of setting. The setting contributes to its significance in several key ways:

- Historical and national significance: Fought on 16 April 1746, the Battle of Culloden marked the final major engagement of the Jacobite that effectively ended Jacobitism as a political force. The battlefield remains a site of national memory, reflection, and interpretation.
- Topographical and landscape context: The battlefield is located on an open, windswept moor with little natural cover—conditions that were integral to the outcome of the battle and remain essential to its appreciation today. The terrain is slightly undulating but generally level, allowing for wide visibility. This openness favoured the government army, which was better equipped for linear formation and artillery warfare.
- Key features and visual relationships: Important landscape elements include Culloden House to the north (the Jacobite headquarters), Leanach Cottage near the centre (marking the Jacobite left flank), and the 19th-century clan graves and memorial cairn, which now serve as the ceremonial focus of the site. The battlefield lies within an open visual basin, with long sightlines across the moor and distant views to the Monadhliath and Cairngorms. Despite some modern intrusions, much of the skyline remains undeveloped, preserving the sense of isolation and exposure that characterised the site in 1746.
- Experiential and interpretive value: The setting contributes strongly to the battlefield's significance by preserving its spatial qualities, openness, and experiential character. Views out of the battlefield—particularly to the north, east, and south—maintain its visual relationship with the wider landscape and support interpretation of troop movements and terrain. Distant views toward the Moray Firth, Monadhliath Hills, and surrounding uplands reinforce the battlefield's historic remoteness and enhance its commemorative and educational roles.

Field observations confirm that views to the proposed development site are interrupted by modern housing and a tree belt. Behind this, conifer planting and mixed woodland further obscure visibility. Views toward the approach route from Nairn are similarly limited by housing and vegetation.

From Leanach Cottage, views are directed east, south, and west, with the northern view obscured by a large bank of trees near the road and site entrance. The proposed development is not visible from the cottage or the car park. From the higher ground at the memorial cairn, telegraph poles are visible to the north-east in the middle distance. Views within the 30° sector toward the proposed development are directed toward mixed woodland in the near distance. Apart from Ben Wyvis on the horizon, views from the northwest through to the northeast are dominated by tree cover. At Culloden House and its stables, there are no distant views due to the proposed development, with both buildings facing away from it.

The proposed development is located approximately 13km to the north-east of the battlefield and would introduce both temporary and permanent changes to the wider landscape in the following ways:

- Wind Turbines and floating bases (Short-term (temporary), Static, up to 330m): The turbines would not be visible from the core battlefield area or key interpretive locations such as Leanach Cottage, the memorial cairn, or Culloden House. Given the presence of intervening vegetation, topography, and modern development, the magnitude of impact is assessed as negligible, resulting in a negligible short-term adverse effect.

- **Permanent Buildings (Up to 45m):** These structures would not be visible from the battlefield due to screening by tree belts and built form. Their presence does not alter the battlefield’s core setting or its key visual relationships. The magnitude of change is considered negligible, leading to a negligible long-term adverse effect.

Overall, it is assessed that there would be a **negligible** short-term adverse effect during the turbine construction period, and a **negligible** long-term adverse effect from the presence of the permanent buildings. These effects are **not significant**.

Table 4: Summary of assessment of significance of effect during operation

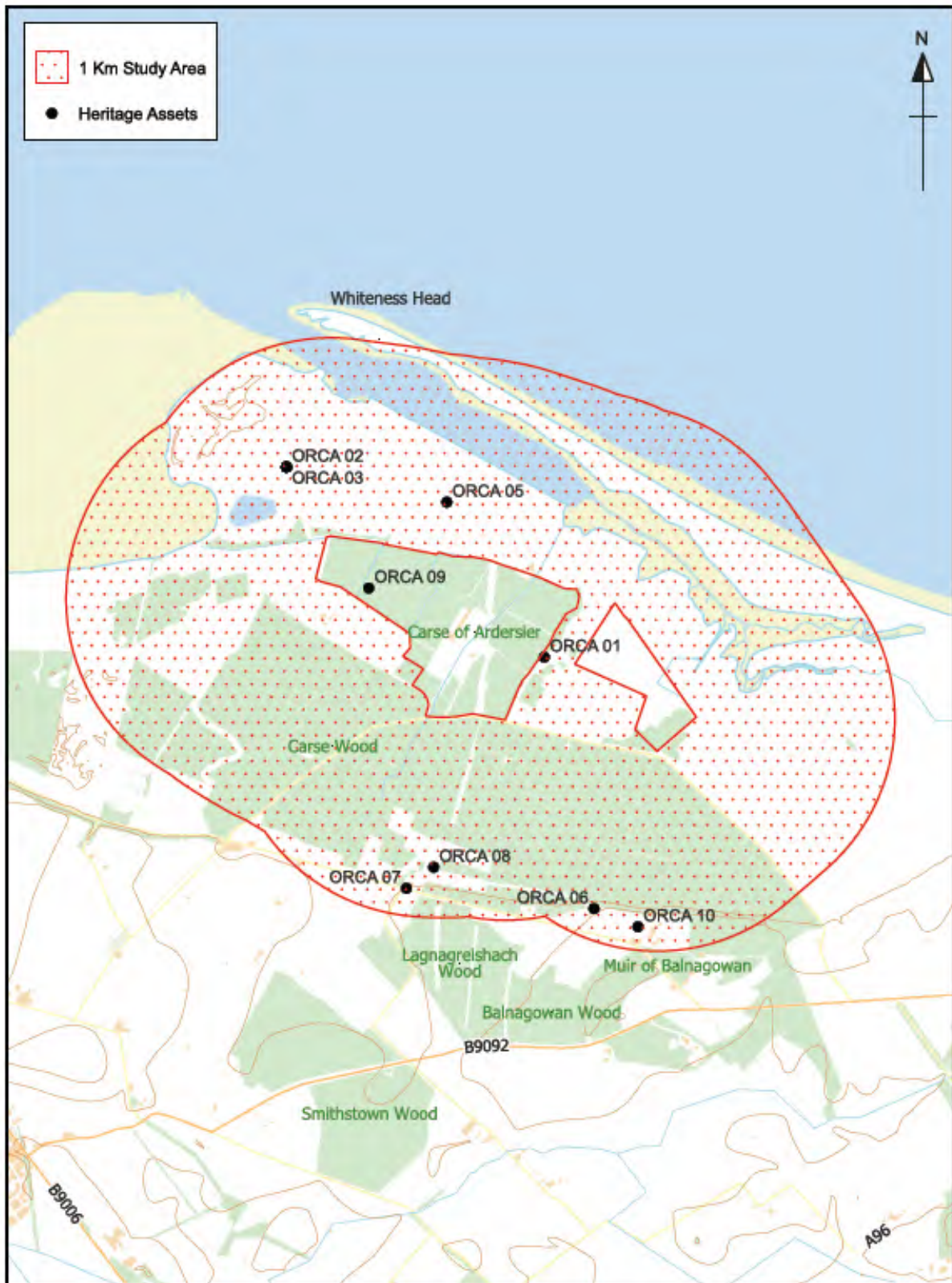
Receptor	Value	Potential impact (in the absence of mitigation)	Mitigation	Residual effect
Listed Buildings				
ORCA 11 Category A Fort George	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a notable change to the setting of the asset. • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a notable change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Moderate short-term (temporary) adverse</p> <p>Minor long-term (permanent) adverse</p>
ORCA 12 Category A Chanonry Lighthouse	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse</p> <p>Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse</p>
ORCA 13 Category B Old Parish Church, Ardersier	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse</p> <p>Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse</p>
ORCA 14 Category B Delnies Ice House and Bothy	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse</p> <p>Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse</p>
Scheduled Monuments				
ORCA 15 Moor of Balnagowan, enclosure 250m SW of	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse</p> <p>Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse</p>
ORCA 16 Cromal Mount,	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	<p>Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse</p>

Receptor	Value	Potential impact (in the absence of mitigation)	Mitigation	Residual effect
mound and earthworks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 		Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
ORCA 17 Easter Lochend, fort 350m WNW of	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
ORCA 22 Ackron, three cairns 325m ENE of, Kinchyle		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces no change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces no change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
ORCA 23 Hangman's Hill, cairn 380m E of Kinchyle		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces no change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces no change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
Conservation Areas				
ORCA 18 Nairn Fishertown	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Minor short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
ORCA 19 Rosemarkie	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Minor short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
Garden and Designed Landscape				
ORCA 20 The Fairy Glen	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a minor change to the setting of the asset. 	None proposed	Minor short-term (temporary) adverse Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse
Inventory Battlefield				
ORCA 21 Battle of Culloden	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary introduction of wind turbines under construction that introduces a 	None proposed	Negligible short-term (temporary) adverse

Receptor	Value	Potential impact (in the absence of mitigation)	Mitigation	Residual effect
		barely notable change to the setting of the asset. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent presence of buildings of industrial character that introduces a barely notable change to the setting of the asset. 		Negligible long-term (permanent) adverse

Figures and Photographs

Figure 8.A: location of HER assets within 1km of the proposed development




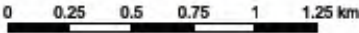
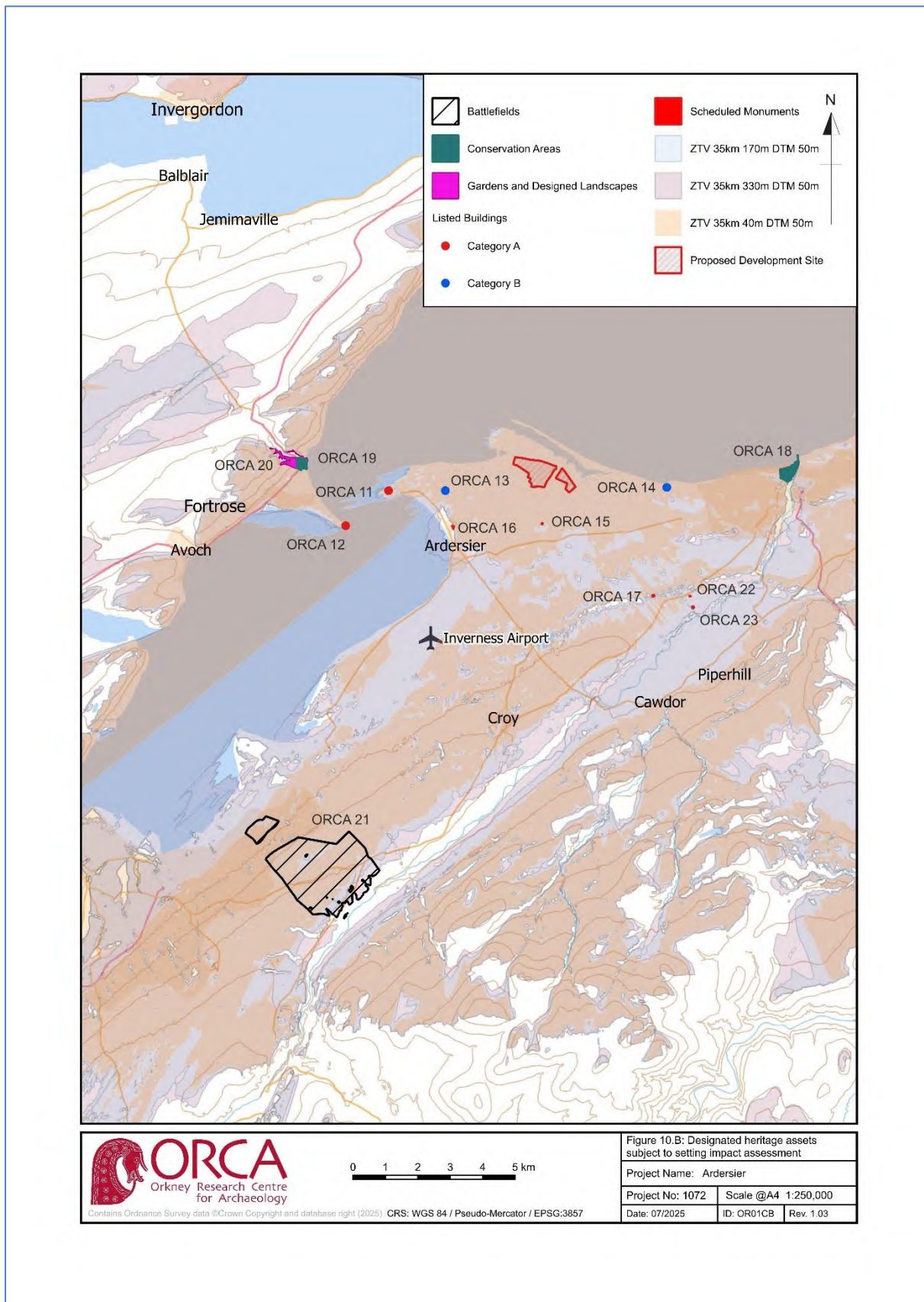
 <p>ORCA Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology</p> <p><small>Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right (2025) CRS: WGS 84 / Pseudo-Mercator / EPSG:3857</small></p>				Figure 10.A: Location of HER assets within 1km of the Proposed Development		
	Project Name: Ardersier					
	Project No: 1059			Scale @A4 1:50,000		
	Date: 06/2025		ID: OR01CB		Rev: 1.03	

Figure 8.B: designated heritage assets subject to setting impact assessment



Setting Impact Assessment Photographs