

8 Cultural Heritage

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8.1. Introduction

- 8.1.1. This Chapter of the Environmental Report evaluates the effects of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage and was undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd. Baseline information supporting the assessment is presented in **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment**, with an accompanying gazetteer (Annex A) which includes a Stage 1 Setting Assessment.

Scope of Assessment

- 8.1.2. The scope for this Chapter follows pre-application responses received from The Highland Council (THC) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES).
- 8.1.3. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) responded to a pre-app advice request on the 8th April (Planning Ref: 24/05054/PREMAJ) to review the provided information in terms of their historic interests. HES have confirmed there are no scheduled monuments, category A listed buildings, inventory battlefields, garden and designed landscapes or world heritage sites within the boundaries of the Application Site. HES did not consider the proposed development likely to have significant adverse effects on heritage assets within HES's remit.
- 8.1.4. A further response from the Historic Environment Team (HET) Archaeologist will follow in due course, however it was noted that in respect of a BESS application west of the site (Land At Corriemoillie Quarry – 24/050255/S36), a desk based archaeological assessment was submitted which did not make any recommendations for additional mitigation in advance of works. This was accepted by the HET, on the basis that a protocol to cover any chance findings of historic artefacts or features is included in a CEMP. It is considered likely that a desk-based assessment would be expected to be submitted with a planning application in this case.
- 8.1.5. The assessment considers potential direct and indirect physical effects of the Proposed Development upon the fabric of heritage assets within the Site, including the potential for previously unrecorded heritage assets to be discovered during construction (the 'archaeological potential' of the Site).
- 8.1.6. As documented in the Stage 1 Setting Assessment presented in **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (Annex A)** no operational effects are anticipated.
- 8.1.7. Consideration of effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development on heritage assets is scoped out of the assessment. Assuming that all land-take for the decommissioning works, including the access track, lies within the same footprint as the construction works any adverse effects would be fully mitigated during construction (as applicable) with no remaining archaeological potential.

Objectives

8.1.8. The objectives of this assessment are to:

- Describe the cultural significance, importance, location, nature and extent of any known heritage assets or areas of archaeological potential which may be affected by the Proposed Development;
- Determine any adverse effects of the Proposed Development upon cultural heritage;
- Outline suitable mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects; and
- Provide an assessment of any residual effects remaining after mitigation.

8.2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

8.2.1. The assessment has been undertaken with reference to relevant legislation, policy and guidance relating to the historic environment, the context of which is presented in **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment** (Section 2), including:

Statutory Protection

- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014.

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy (NPF) 4 (Scottish Government 2023).
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (HES 2019).

Local Planning Policy

- Highland Local Development Plan (adopted July 2012); Policy 57 Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage

Guidance

- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook (v5 NatureScot & HES 2018).
- 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' (MCHE) (HES 2020).
- Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG, 2019) to accompany HEPS.
- Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/2011.

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- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 'Code of Conduct' (2022).
 - Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment' (CIfA 2020).
 - Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (CIfA 2020).
 - 'Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (IEMA, IHBC and CIfA July 2021).

8.3 Methodology

Definition of Baseline Conditions

Desk-based Assessment and Field Reconnaissance Survey

- 8.3.1. Heritage assets within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 8.1** with detailed descriptions compiled in **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment** (and Annex A).
- 8.3.2. Designated heritage assets are labelled with the reference number assigned to them by HES; non-designated assets are labelled with the reference number in the HER (prefixed MHG) or the NRHE. A single asset number can refer to a group of related features, which may be recorded separately in the HER and other data sources.

Study Areas

- 8.3.3. Application Site: corresponds with the redline boundary of the application.
- 8.3.4. Study Area: heritage assets within 2 km of the Application Site are considered to inform the assessment of the Application Site's archaeological potential.

Data Sources

- 8.3.5. The baseline for the assessment has been informed by **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment**. The following sources of information were referred to:
- Designation data downloaded from Historic Environment Scotland in February 2025.
 - Historic Environment Record (HER) data, digital extract received from Highland Council in February 2025.
 - The National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), including the Canmore database and associated photographs, prints/drawings and manuscripts held by HES.
 - Historic Landscape Assessment data, viewed through the HLAMap website.
 - The National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP).
 - Geological data available online from the British Geological Survey.
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- Historic maps held by the National Library of Scotland.
 - Unpublished maps and plans held by the National Records of Scotland.
 - Relevant internet resources, including Google Maps, Google Earth, and PastMap.
 - Readily available published sources and unpublished archaeological reports.

8.3.6. A field reconnaissance survey was undertaken on 3rd and 4th April 2025 in clear weather conditions.

Potential for Unknown Heritage Assets in the Site

8.3.7. The likelihood that undiscovered heritage assets may be present within the Application Site is referred to as archaeological potential. Overall levels of potential can be assigned to different areas of the Site, while recognising that the archaeological potential of any area will relate to particular historical periods and types of evidence. The following factors are considered in assessing archaeological potential:

- The distribution and character of known heritage assets in the vicinity, based principally on an appraisal of data in the HER;
- The history of archaeological fieldwork and research in the surrounding area, which may give an indication of the reliability and completeness of existing records;
- Environmental factors such as geology, topography and soil quality, which would have influenced land-use in the past and can therefore be used to predict the distribution of potential archaeological remains;
- Land-use factors affecting the survival of archaeological remains, such as ploughing or commercial forestry planting; and
- Factors affecting the visibility of archaeological remains, which may relate to both environment and land-use, such as soils and geology (which may be more or less conducive to formation of cropmarks), arable cultivation (which has potential to show cropmarks and create surface artefact scatters), vegetation, which can conceal upstanding features, and superficial deposits such as peat and alluvium which can mask archaeological features.

8.3.8. In the Archaeological Potential section of this assessment (see para 8.5.4 of this Chapter for summary, and **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment** for detailed assessment), the likelihood that the Site may contain undiscovered heritage assets, their likely location and potential density, and their likely level of importance is assessed, described, and justified.

Importance of Heritage Assets

- 8.3.9. The importance of a heritage asset is the overall value assigned to it based on its cultural significance, reflecting its statutory designation or, in the case of non-designated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor (Table 8.1).
- 8.3.10. Heritage assets are defined as “Features, buildings or places that provide physical evidence of past human activity identified as being of sufficient value to this and future generations to merit consideration in the planning system” (NatureScot & HES 2018, Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook, v5, p.122). Thus, any feature which does not merit consideration in planning decisions due to its cultural significance may be said to have negligible importance.
- 8.3.11. Heritage assets for which a level of importance cannot be defined based on current information are defined as ‘uncertain’ importance.

Table 8.1 Criteria for Assessing the Importance of Heritage Assets

Importance	Criteria
Very High (International)	Assets valued at an international level, e.g. World Heritage Properties and other assets of equal international importance that contribute to international research objectives.
High (National)	Assets valued at a national level, e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Category A Listed Buildings, Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Inventory Battlefields, Historic Marine Protected Areas, some conservation areas and non-designated assets that meet the relevant criteria for designation in the opinion of the assessor. Category B or C-listed buildings where the existing designation does not adequately reflect their value, in the opinion of the assessor.
Medium (Regional)	Assets valued at a regional level, e.g. Category B Listed Buildings, some conservation areas and non-designated assets of similar value in the opinion of the assessor. Category C-listed buildings where the existing designation does not adequately reflect their value, in the opinion of the assessor.
Low (Local)	Assets valued at a local level, e.g. Category C Listed Buildings, some conservation areas and non-designated assets of similar value in the opinion of the assessor.

Limitations to Assessment

- 8.3.12. Information held by public data sources is generally considered to be reliable; however, the following general points are noted:
- There is no LIDAR data available for the Application Site on the Scottish Remote Sensing Portal. This was addressed by cultural heritage field reconnaissance survey;
 - HER records can be limited because opportunities for research, fieldwork and discovery depend on the volume and frequency of commercial development and occasional research projects, rather than the result of a more structured research framework. A lack of data within the HER records does not necessarily equal an absence of archaeological potential;

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- Documentary sources are rare before the medieval period;
 - Wherever such documentary sources are used in assessing archaeological potential professional judgment is used in their interpretation;
 - Where heritage assets have been identified solely from aerial imagery without confirmation from archaeological excavation or supporting evidence in the form of find-spots for example, it is possible the interpretation may be revised in the light of further investigation;
 - The significance of sites can be difficult to identify from HER records, depending on the accuracy and reliability of the original source;
 - There can often be a lack of dating evidence for archaeological sites; and
 - Any cultural heritage field reconnaissance survey has inherent limitations, primarily because archaeological remains below ground level may have no surface indicators.

8.4. Design and Mitigation

Mitigation

- 8.4.1. Assessment of impacts is an iterative part of the design process. For any identified effect, the preferred mitigation option is always to avoid or reduce adverse effects through design, or through precautionary measures such as fencing off heritage assets during construction works to avoid accidental direct physical effects. Effects which cannot be eliminated in these ways will lead to residual effects.
- 8.4.2. It is possible to mitigate residual adverse direct or indirect physical effects by an appropriate level of survey, excavation and recording during or in advance of construction, and subsequent analyses and publication of the results, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (NPF4 Policy 7.0 and PAN2/2011 sections 25-27, and THC HWLDP Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage).

8.5. Effects

Baseline Environment

- 8.5.1. The Site is characterised mostly by woodland, peat, and a modern pheasant pen which forms the western boundary of the central part of the Site.
- 8.5.2. The topography of the Site is formed by a steep, south facing slope across its northern part, which flattens out further south. The flatter areas consist of less dense woodland but are boggy with more peat present. The land then drops off again towards the south of the Site towards the A832.

8.5.3. For a full discussion of the Baseline Environment of the Site see **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment**.

8.5.4. Heritage assets within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 8.1**.

Geology and Geomorphology

8.5.5. The underlying solid geology is recorded by BGS as Psammite of the Crom Psammite Formation. A metamorphic bedrock formed approximately 2500 and 541 million years ago between the Siderian and Ediacaran Periods¹. Superficial deposits are recorded in the surrounding area as Till, Devensian - Diamicton. Superficial Deposits formed between 2 million and 11 thousand years ago in the Quaternary Period.

8.5.6. Scotland's Soils Map database² records the Application Site as Arkaig peaty gleyed podzols with dystrophic semi-confined peat. The land form is recorded as a hummocky valley with sloped moraines and often bouldery (https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/).

Known Heritage Assets

8.5.7. There are no known heritage assets recorded on the HER/NRHE within the Application Site, and desk-based assessment and cultural heritage field reconnaissance survey for this chapter has identified no heritage assets.

Archaeological Potential

8.5.8. As a mixture of forestry plantation and peat bog, the Site is of generally negligible archaeological potential. The potential for hitherto unknown archaeological remains is further reduced by the establishment of forestry plantation during the 18th and 19th century across the Site which would have largely destroyed any remains which may have been present. It is acknowledged that in areas of peat, there is potential for previously unrecorded assets to survive below-ground and obscured by the masking effect of peat cover.

Construction Effects

8.5.9. Development activities within the Site have the potential to truncate or remove any hitherto unknown buried archaeological remains, resulting in an adverse effect on these assets. Direct physical effects may occur during construction as a result of intrusive groundworks. Indirect effects describe secondary processes, triggered by the development, that lead to the degradation or preservation of heritage assets. For example, changes to hydrology may affect archaeological preservation within waterlogged deposits.

¹ BGS, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> viewed June 2025

² https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/?layer=1

- 8.5.10. A description of the Proposed Development is presented in Chapter 3. Proposed ground works with the potential to impact upon archaeological remains include:
- Formation of the construction compound (potential future augmentation area) within the south-west part of the main BESS compound.
 - Construction of new access track from the existing A832 and existing farm track.
 - Levelling and preparation of the main BESS platform.
 - Preparation of battery unit and other foundation footings within the compound.
 - Trenching and laying of cables within the compound.
 - Trenching and laying cables to connect the BESS to the existing Corriemollie Substation to the east of the Application Site.
 - Preparation of car parking and formation of attenuation basin.
- 8.5.11. There are no known heritage assets located within the Application Site. There are no known heritage assets located in the Study Area that are likely to be indirectly physically impacted through works within the Site. No adverse direct or indirect physical effects are therefore anticipated.
- 8.5.12. Given the assessment of negligible archaeological potential, direct physical construction effects on previously unknown heritage assets in the Site are unlikely, but using a precautionary principle given the masking effect of blanket peat, adverse impacts are considered possible. Based on the assessment of archaeological potential, any currently unknown remains are unlikely to be of more than low importance. If such remains are present and discovered during construction phase groundworks, they may be fully removed. Given the potential for adverse direct physical effects upon hitherto unknown heritage assets of up to low importance within the Site, archaeological mitigation is proposed.

Operational Effects

- 8.5.13. Due to the nature and anticipated limited visibility of the Proposed Development as compared with the cultural significance and contribution made by setting of heritage assets in the study area, no adverse setting effects are anticipated. This is documented in the Stage 1 Setting Assessment presented in **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment** (Annex A).

Mitigation Measures During Construction

- 8.5.14. No adverse direct or indirect physical effects are anticipated upon known heritage assets during construction as there are none within the Site. Direct physical construction effects may however occur upon previously unknown heritage assets in the Site in areas of deep peat, where there is potential for previously unrecorded assets to survive below-ground and obscured by the masking effect of peat cover.

- 8.5.15. It is proposed that a chance finds discovery protocol is produced to be included as part of a CEMP during construction in areas where known or suspected peat deposits are proposed for removal as part of the construction of the Proposed Development. Should significant archaeological remains be discovered, archaeological monitoring and recording ('watching brief') of the remains in accordance with NPF4 Policy 7.o, PAN2/2011 sections 25-27, and THC HWLDP Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage. The scope and nature of any archaeological monitoring and recording, should it be required, will be outlined in a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and agreed with THC in advance of construction.

8.6. Concluding Statement

- 8.6.1. The scope for this Chapter follows pre-application responses the Proposed Development received from THC and HES.
- 8.6.2. There are no known heritage assets within the Application Site, and archaeological potential is considered to be negligible. It is acknowledged however that in areas of deep peat, there is potential for previously unrecorded assets to survive below-ground and obscured by the masking effect of peat cover. Direct physical construction effects on previously unknown heritage assets in the Site is therefore unlikely but possible.
- 8.6.3. A programme of mitigation is proposed to offset any potential direct physical effects on previously unknown heritage assets which may exist within the Site, to include potential impacts upon or beneath peat.
- 8.6.4. Following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures for identified possible adverse direct physical construction effects upon archaeological potential, there would be no residual effects.
- 8.6.5. The scope and nature of any mitigation, should it be required, will be outlined in a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and agreed with THC in advance of construction, in accordance with NPF4 Policy 7.o, PAN2/2011 sections 25-27, and THC HWLDP Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage.