

Chapter 8: Landscape Character

Glossary of Terms.....	8-ii
8.1 Executive Summary	8-1
8.2 Introduction.....	8-2
8.3 Scope of Assessment.....	8-3
8.4 Policy, Legislation & Guidance	8-4
8.5 Methodology.....	8-6
8.6 Baseline Conditions	8-10
8.7 Mitigation Measures	8-28
8.8 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character.....	8-29
8.9 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Designations.....	8-50
8.10 Cumulative Effects.....	8-52
8.11 Conclusions.....	8-54
8.12 References.....	8-55

Figures

Figure 8.1: Zone of Theoretical Visibility during Operation

Figure 8.2: Landscape Designations and Constraints

Figure 8.3: Landscape Character

Appendices

Appendix 8.1: Regional Landscape Character Types

Glossary of Terms

Baseline	The current, pre-construction condition against which a development proposal is assessed.
Cumulative Assessment	The assessment of effects which may occur where more than one development of a particular type combine to create a greater level of effect.
Effect	The change resulting from the action taking place.
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)	Forms the basis for spatial planning within the Highland Council area as a whole.
Impact	The action being taken which may lead to an effect.
Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes	An Inventory of those designed gardens and landscapes, identified by a group of experts, considered to be of national significance.
Landscape Assessment	The assessment of the degree and significance of potential changes to landscape character and value resulting from a development.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	Area identified within SNH Landscape Character Assessment documents where it is considered that a recognisable distinction in landform, landcover and features leads to a unique sense of character.
Landscape receptor	A characteristic or feature of the landscape which contributes to its value, and has the potential to be affected by a development.
Landscape sensitivity	The ability of the landscape to accommodate change without compromising its key characteristics and components or landscape value – takes into account landscape value and landscape susceptibility to change.
Landscape value	The perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole and within the context of the study area, taking into account issues such as: designations; scenic quality; perceptual aspects; conservation interests; recreational value and rarity either in the national or local context.
Local Character Zone (LCZ)	Area identified within the study area where elements of the landscape combine to create a distinguishable character to surrounding areas.
Magnitude of change	The degree to which a development may alter the existing characteristics of the landscape, taking into account the nature, scale, duration and potential reversibility of the change.
Professional Judgement	The informed view of a qualified and experienced professional (Chartered Landscape Professional).
Scoping Opinion	The written opinion of the determining authority as to the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in an EIA report.
Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)	Sets out national planning policies which reflect Scottish Ministers' priorities for operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land.
Significant Effects	Effects deemed to be significant in relation to the EIA Regulations.
SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage)	The body responsible for promoting, caring for and improving natural heritage in Scotland, and advising Government on natural heritage issues.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Non-statutory designation applied by the Highland Council to areas of landscape considered to be of regional importance for their scenic qualities.
Study Area	A defined area within which the assessment has been undertaken – taken to be the area in which it is considered that significant effects may occur.

Susceptibility to change	The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.
Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3)	Sets the context for development planning in Scotland and provides a framework for the spatial development of Scotland as a whole.
Visual Assessment	The assessment of the degree and significance of potential changes within views obtained by members of the public.
West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan (proposed WestPlan)	More detailed Local Development Plan for the West Highlands and Islands area which focuses on where development should and should not occur in the West Highland and Islands area over the next 20 years. As yet un-adopted.
The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILP), 2012	Detailed Local Development Plan for the West Highlands and Islands. Superseded by the HwLDP but remains in force in some areas, primarily spatial planning within settlement boundaries. Will be superseded by the proposed WestPlan once adopted.
Wild Land Areas (WLAs)	Areas identified by Scottish Natural Heritage through the Mapping Scotland's Wildness Project as comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.
Wildness	A quality of landscape evoked where the influence of human activity is perceived to be minimal: considered to be identifiable where four perceptual attributes are experienced: a sense of sanctuary or solitude; risk or a sense of awe; arresting or inspiring qualities; fulfilment of physical challenge required to penetrate into such places.

8 Landscape Character

8.1 Executive Summary

8.1.1 This Chapter details the findings of the Landscape Assessment undertaken for The Proposed Development. The assessment considers the degree and significance of potential changes to the landscape character and landscape designations within the study area and also considers the potential for cumulative landscape effects.

8.1.2 The assessment considers potential effects during the construction phase and ten years after completion.

Landscape Character

8.1.3 Ten local character zones (LCZs) were identified to represent the different areas of different landscape character within the study area and separately assessed.

8.1.4 The landscape assessment has concluded that during construction of The Proposed Development, there would be significant effects to six of these LCZs. These relate to: the construction of both the lower reservoir works in the Great Glen and on the shore of Loch Lochy; and the upper reservoir works / dam within the upland landscape of Coire Glas and site establishment and access for both areas.

8.1.5 These activities are considered likely to lead to a reduction in remote and wild qualities, potential perceived loss of scale, loss of localised features and disturbance to existing panoramic vistas which contribute to the value of the local landscape.

8.1.6 By 10 years post construction, the level of effect would reduce as there would be minimal activity and movement associated with The Proposed Development, and vegetation disturbed during construction and tree and forest planting would have started to re-establish. This is considered likely to reduce the level of effect within areas around the Great Glen to non-significant levels with the opportunity for a well-designed new administration building to be seen as a new positive feature on the shore of Loch Lochy. Nevertheless, significant effects are anticipated to continue within upland areas surrounding the dam and upper reservoir, due to the scale of these new features. However, these effects would be relatively localised to the immediate area surrounding Coire Glas.

Landscape Designations and other Protected Landscapes

8.1.7 The assessment of landscape designations has included the potential for effects on the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area (SLA). Potential effects on Wild Land Areas (WLAs) has been scoped out the assessment with the agreement of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

8.1.8 The assessment has concluded that the landscape effects anticipated would lead to a moderate significant effect on the SLA during construction. This is due to the scale and intensity of construction works within a concentrated area which is anticipated lead to

temporary effects on three identified Special Qualities¹ of the SLA. However, during the operation of The Proposed Development, after 10 years, the reduced extent of the landscape effects is considered to result in this effect reducing to a minor, non-significant level. However, it is recognised that there would be a localised reduction in scenic quality around Coire Glas which may result in a reduction in the perceived value of this small part of the SLA.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

- 8.1.9 The assessment has concluded that there would be few other features within the surrounding landscape with which The Proposed Development would be likely to be perceived in association. Whilst cumulative effects during construction would be difficult to predict due to uncertainty of future events, no significant cumulative effect is anticipated during the operation of The Proposed Development.

8.2 Introduction

- 8.2.1 This Chapter details the findings of the landscape assessment undertaken for The Proposed Development. The character of the landscape relates to the natural processes and human activities that have been at work over time to shape the land to its present form. Factors contributing to landscape character include topography, vegetation cover, sense of space or enclosure and past and present land use. Landscape character and resources are considered to have an importance in their own right and are valued for their intrinsic qualities. The aim of the assessment is to determine the effect of The Proposed Development on the landscape character of the area and the elements which contribute to its quality and sensitivity.

Potential Effects

- 8.2.2 Adverse effects to landscape character may arise through the introduction of new components which are out of keeping with established landscape patterns and features. The scale and form of new development can prove inappropriate and intrusive in the context of existing landform, settlement and planting structure. Development may also result in the loss or fragmentation of important and distinctive landscape components.
- 8.2.3 In the context of The Proposed Development, key issues relate to:
- Temporary effects of construction activities taking place within the rural and upland landscape;
 - Long term presence of large scale infrastructure features and access within the upland landscape;
 - Long term presence of new features on the shore of Loch Lochy and changes to the natural shoreline;
 - Temporary and permanent effects of upgraded and new roads and access tracks within the rural and upland landscape; and

¹ Horner + Maclellan (2011) 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas' p129

- Effects relating to felling of forestry and trees.

8.2.4 The assessment considers the degree and significance of potential changes during the construction phase and operation of The Proposed Development to the landscape character and landscape designations / protected landscapes within the identified study area. In order to allow sufficient time for any vegetation reinstatement and planting to establish, operational effects are taken to be at ten years following completion.

8.2.5 The assessment has been undertaken by ASH design + assessment Ltd.

8.2.6 This Chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 9: Visual Amenity.

8.3 Scope of Assessment

Study Area

Defining the Zone of Theoretical Visibility

8.3.1 The ZTV is a computer generated diagram which uses a terrain model to indicate areas from which The Proposed Development would theoretically be visible. The ZTV for The Proposed Development was generated using ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) T5 DTM data. The ZTV was produced from points representing the operational height of the key built elements of the scheme as follows:

- Dam: points located at 50 m intervals along the length of the dam at crest height – 560 m AOD;
- Intake tower: points located at the four corners of this structure at 574 m AOD (the dam was added to the terrain model for this ZTV as it would screen this structure from some areas);
- Surge shaft: 3 m above existing ground level to represent any potential surrounding land form or barrier; and
- Administration building: points located at the outer corners of the building at 11 m above proposed ground level.

8.3.2 The operational ZTVs for The Proposed Development are shown on Figure 8.1.

8.3.3 Whilst the ZTV is a useful tool for the identification of potential effects, it is not indicative of an effect in itself. The ZTV is generated over a bare ground terrain model and does not take into account the potential screening effects of localised features, buildings or vegetation or reduction in perceptibility over distance. Nor does it give indication of the way in which a development may relate to its broader landscape context.

Defining the Study Area

8.3.4 The study area for the landscape assessment has been identified with the aid of ZTV diagrams, and initial site survey and comprises all areas within which any significant effects would be expected to occur. The study area stretches north-east along the Great Glen as far as Aberchalder at the northern end of Loch Oich, and south-west to Invergloy. To the north-west and south-east the edges of the study area run parallel to the Great Glen; approximately 5 km to south-east and 7.5 km to north-west. For consistency, this study

area has been used for both the landscape and visual assessments (see Chapter 9: Visual Amenity).

Scoping and Consultation

8.3.5 The Scoping Opinion and other pre-application consultation for The Proposed Development has identified key issues to be given consideration within the assessment. Issues of relevance to Landscape Character are outlined in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Scoping and Consultation Responses Relevant to Landscape Character

Consultee	Summary Response	Comment/Action Taken
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	SNH support the proposal to update the LVIA. The ES should explain the design process to select the final layout assessed in the EIA Report, alternatives considered and how L&V mitigation has been incorporated.	The design process and consideration of alternatives are set out in Chapter 2: Consideration of Alternatives and the Design Statement (Appendix 3.1).
SNH	SNH agree that impacts on wild land are unlikely to be significant and can be scoped out.	No action required
SNH	SNH recommend a cumulative assessment. In the analysis of alternatives, consideration should be given to the design compatibility with adjacent schemes, to mitigate cumulative L&V impacts.	Consideration of potential cumulative effects is included in Section 8.10
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)	Consider the implications of restructuring the stability of the woodland remaining and impact on landscape. Key is the Forest Design Plan and restocking proposals.	The effects of The Proposed Development on forestry and the current Forest Design Plans are considered in Chapter 21: Forestry.
FCS	Consideration should be given to the implication of felling operations on such things as habitat connectivity, landscape impact, impact on timber transport network and forestry policies included in the local and regional Forestry and Woodland Strategies and LDP.	Consideration of forest felling has been taken in the assessment of landscape effects in Sections 8.8 and 8.9.

8.3.6 It is recognised that Scoping responses from consultees relate to The Proposed Development and that previous comments which were made in relation to The Consented Development are also relevant. This assessment therefore considers all relevant aspects which were taken into account within the LVIA for The Consented Development.

8.4 Policy, Legislation & Guidance

8.4.1 The assessment has taken account of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to landscape character and visual amenity relevant to The Proposed Development. Detailed information on planning policy is contained within the Planning Statement

accompanying the application for The Proposed Development and Chapter 5: Planning Policy. The following provides a summary with respect to Landscape Character.

8.4.2 The following policy documents and statements have been referred to in carrying out this assessment:

National

- The Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3);
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP);
- Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60), 2000;
- Renewable Energy and the Natural Heritage, SNH Policy Document, 2010; and
- Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside, SNH Policy Statement 02/03.

Regional

- The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), 2012;
- The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILP), 2012; and
- The West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan (WestPlan), 2017.

8.4.3 The HwLDP forms the key element of spatial planning policy for The Proposed Development. Policy 61 of the HwLDP concerns the protection of landscape qualities. This states that:

“New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue. The Council would wish to encourage those undertaking development to include measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area. This will apply particularly where the condition of the landscape characteristics has deteriorated to such an extent that there has been a loss of landscape quality or distinctive sense of place. In the assessment of new developments, the Council will take account of Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design, together with any other relevant design guidance.”

8.4.4 Policy 57 concerning the protection of Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage is also of relevant in relation to the protection of designated areas. With respect to areas of local/regional importance (e.g. Special Landscape Area) Part 1 of this policy states:

“...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.”

8.4.5 With respect to areas of national importance (such as Wild Land Areas), Part 2 of the policy states:

“...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”.

8.5 Methodology

Assessment Guidance

- 8.5.1 The assessment has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), 2013, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA3) and Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (SNH / The Countryside Agency).

Professional Judgement

- 8.5.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value, sensitivity, and magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Chartered Landscape Architects to provide a robust and consistent approach.

Key Stages of the Assessment

- 8.5.3 The GLVIA3 methodology involves an appreciation of the existing landscape and the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect the key landscape components, and the potential to mitigate adverse effects. There are five key stages to the assessment:
- Establishment of the baseline;
 - Appreciation of the development proposed;
 - Identification of key landscape receptors;
 - Identification of potential effects; and
 - Assessment of effect significance.

Establishment of the Baseline

- 8.5.4 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through combination of desk study and site appraisal. The following specific tasks have been undertaken:
- A review of the relevant development plans and supplementary planning guidance as described in Section 8.4;
 - A review of the Lochaber and Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment documents from the SNH programme of Landscape Character Assessment documents;
 - Review of Highland Council Special Landscape Area Citations;
 - Review of SNH wildness mapping and mapping of Wild Land Areas from the 'Mapping Scotland's Wildness' programme;

- Review of SNH Wild Land Area Descriptions; and
- Site appraisal of defined Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and description of key landscape components.

Relative Landscape Value

8.5.5 The relative value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape, when considered as a whole and within the context of the study area. Landscape value is established through consideration of the following factors:

- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes / landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;
- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and
- Rarity either in the national or local context or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

8.5.6 It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that that a landscape or component is not highly valued as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined below:

Landscape Value Criteria

- High
 - The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context;
 - The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or
 - The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
- Medium
 - The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context;
 - The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or
 - The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
- Low
 - The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important;

- The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.

Appreciation of The Proposed Development

- 8.5.7 Appreciation of The Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed, as detailed in Chapter 3: Description of Development. Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur on the landscape resource. As part of this process, the ZTV diagram has been consulted to inform the potential range of effects.

Identification of Key Landscape Receptors

- 8.5.8 The identification of landscape receptors is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant landscape effects to take place. Landscape receptors comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by The Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.5.9 Landscape sensitivity considers the nature of the landscape and its ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising its key characteristics and components. The appraisal of landscape sensitivity involves consideration of the sensitivity of individual landscape receptors. There are two aspects which are considered when establishing the landscape sensitivity:
- Value: The baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and
 - Susceptibility to change: The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.
- 8.5.10 Landscape sensitivity has been evaluated with reference to the subject areas above. A three-point scale is used as follows:
- High – A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed;
 - Medium – A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed; and
 - Low – A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.

Identification of Potential Effects

- 8.5.11 The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the impacts of The Proposed Development with the identified landscape receptors. The assessment takes into account

direct effects upon existing landscape elements, features and key characteristics and also indirect effects which may occur secondary to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The ZTV is used as a tool to gauge the extent of potential indirect change, supported by targeted field surveys.

Magnitude of Change

8.5.12 Magnitude of change concerns the degree to which The Proposed Development would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. The appraisal of magnitude involves consideration of the nature and scale of the change which would occur in relation to the identified potential effects and also the duration and potential reversibility of the effect. These changes are then combined to evaluate a magnitude rating for the LCA as a whole.

8.5.13 Magnitude is categorised on a four point scale as follows:

- High – Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area;
- Medium – Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area;
- Low – Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area; and
- Negligible – No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.

8.5.14 In recognition of the differing changes that would occur as proposed mitigation measures established and matured, two ratings for magnitude of change have been included: during the construction of The Proposed Development, and after ten years, post completion.

Assessment of Effect Significance

8.5.15 Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the identified landscape sensitivity and using a degree of professional judgement. The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.

8.5.16 The prominence of the scheme components in the landscape will vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The assessment has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e. on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained.

8.5.17 Effect significance has been evaluated using a four point scale and using the following criteria:

- Major – The Proposed Development is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area;
- Moderate – The Proposed Development is out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant

and/or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area;

- Minor – The Proposed Development does not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in an inappreciable reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area; and
- Neutral – The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.

8.5.18 As for magnitude of change, the differing potential effects have been considered during the construction of The Proposed Development and at 10 years following completion.

8.5.19 For the purposes of the assessment effects with a rating of Moderate or above are considered to be significant.

Limitations of the Assessment

8.5.20 ZTVs has been prepared to support this assessment. The use and limitations of ZTVs is described in Section 8.3.

8.6 Baseline Conditions

Overview

8.6.1 The key components of The Proposed Development would be located on the shore and within the hills to the northwest of Loch Lochy, approximately 19 km southwest of Fort Augustus. This is a landscape of large scale patterns and contrasting high mountain summits, deep glens and lochs. The predominant feature of the landscape is the Great Glen, a distinctive steep-sided and flat-bottomed, fjord-like valley, accommodating Lochs Lochy and Oich, which slices through the mountainous landscape providing a route for transport and infrastructure and containing much of the settlement within the area. The more subtle and intricate topography of Glen Garry and Loch Garry lies to the north. Much of the lower slopes and the glen sides are clothed in coniferous forestry plantation whilst the glen floors and fringes of the lochs are commonly colonised with native and deciduous woodland, interspersed with areas of rough agricultural land. This extent of tree cover emphasises the strong contrast between the low lying glen and the open, exposed high mountain slopes, crags and summits. The diverse landscape results in wide ranging experiences with changing views of mountain and loch combining with woodland, fields and settlement within the enclosed glens, and far reaching elevated views from mountain summits. Information about the hydroelectric heritage of the area is contained within Appendix 3.1: Design Statement.

Landscape Designations and Planning Constraints

National Context

8.6.2 There are no areas within the vicinity of The Proposed Development covered by statutory landscape designation. However, there are some areas which are recognised for their landscape qualities, considered to be of national importance.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

- 8.6.3 The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscape includes those designed gardens and landscape, identified by a group of experts, considered to be of national significance. Although it does not constitute a statutory designation, consideration of sites included on the Inventory is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 8.6.4 The Achnacarry designed landscape is located approximately 7.5 km to the south of The Proposed Development but would not be directly or indirectly affected. Therefore it has not been considered further in this assessment.

Wild Land Areas (WLAs)

- 8.6.5 Wild Land Areas (WLA) have been defined by SNH as those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland. Although not a designation, these areas are given protection within the Planning System through SPP.
- 8.6.6 The presence of wildness is based on the presence and strength of four perceptual attributes identified in SNH's 2002 Policy Statement 'Wildness in Scotland's Countryside' as follows:
- A sense of sanctuary or solitude;
 - Risk or, for some visitors, a sense of awe or anxiety, depending on the individual's emotional response to the setting;
 - Perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities; and
 - Fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places.
- 8.6.7 Because these responses are very much dependant on an individual's perceptions, five physical attributes are identified as considered likely to lead to these perceptual responses being present. These are:
- A high degree of perceived naturalness in the setting, especially in its vegetation cover and wildlife, and in the natural processes affecting the land;
 - The lack of any modern artefacts or structures;
 - Little evidence of contemporary human uses of the land;
 - Landform which is rugged, or otherwise physically challenging; and
 - Remoteness and/or inaccessibility.
- 8.6.8 The WLAs have been identified by SNH covering the areas where these attributes are considered to be most strongly present using a GIS mapping exercise and site survey (the Mapping Scotland's Wildness project).
- 8.6.9 Two WLAs fall partially within the Study Area (see Figure 8.2):
- A small part of the **Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA** protrudes into the western side of the study area covering the high mountain summits and eastern / south-eastern slopes of Sròn a Choire Ghairbh and its northern ridge Meall a' Choire Ghlais; and

- To the east of Loch Lochy, the top of the enclosing ridge and Glen Gloy beyond are included in the **Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh WLA**.

8.6.10 Both of the above WLAs are delineated to follow ridgelines and hill slopes which fall away from The Proposed Development. As such, the potential for intervisibility with these areas is very small, as illustrated by the ZTV. This would be limited only to higher summit parts of hills and is considered very unlikely to lead to any significant effect on the wild land value of either WLA. Therefore, and as agreed with SNH (see Table 8.1), no specific wild land assessment has been carried out for either WLA. However, the presence and potential effect on wildness characteristics more generally has been included in the assessment of landscape characteristics.

Regional Context

Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area

8.6.11 Planning authorities are able to designate particular landscapes considered to be of regional or local importance through the development planning process. Such areas are not considered to be statutory designations but are a material consideration to planning decisions. Within The Highland area, landscapes identified of regional importance are entitled Special Landscape Areas (SLAs).

8.6.12 All of The Proposed Development, with the exclusion of access tracks, site establishment and potential borrow pits between White Bridge and Ben Tee, would fall within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA (see Figure 8.2). This SLA encompasses the entire area of Lochs Lochy and Oich and their containing valley sides and extends westwards to include Gleann Cia-aig, Coire Glas and the mountains of Sron a Choire Ghairbh and Meall na Teanga.

8.6.13 The Highland Council has published citations of all SLAs identifying key characteristics and special qualities which contribute to the designation. Those of relevance to The Proposed Development are described below:

- Key characteristics
 - Large scale landform of the Great Glen creates a distinctive corridor providing coherence within which a diverse range of smaller scale features are accommodated at a local level;
 - Views up and down the glen create a strong sense of perspective;
 - Smooth moorland slopes form much of the lochs' sides, clothed in mosaics of heather and grass with woodland on some mid and lower reaches, and are often deeply incised by watercourses over exposed rocky outcrops and crags;
 - Imposing mountains form visual back cloth and contain edges to the settled glen;
 - Forest plantations which contrast in scale, colour, texture line with the glen slopes, and associated forest tracks are often prominent;
 - Settlement within small areas of low lying farmland, either clustered at the ends of lochs or at intersection of side glens, which provides a human scale in contrast to the surrounding hills and lochs; and
 - Loch shorelines are intricate in places with small bays, inlets and promontories.
- Special Qualities
 - The scale and linearity of the Great Glen including the steep sloping glen sides and eye-catching mountains;
 - The distinctive mountain views and classic highland scenery; and

- Combinations of smaller and more intimate features such as landform features, settlement, pasture and waterfalls and their contrast with the grandeur of the wider glen. These include the hanging valley Càrn Bhealach, and waterfall at the mouth of Gleann Cia-aig.

8.6.14 A number of key sensitivities are identified for the SLA including the following which may be of relevance:

- The area is sensitive to development such as large focal features which could disrupt the distinct linear composition of the landscape or diminish the sense of scale;
- The glen slopes are sensitive to the introduction of elements upon the slopes including footpaths and forest tracks, due to the simple landform and backcloth;
- The addition of new buildings or structures could interrupt or distract from the distinctive panoramas obtained from exposed mountain ridges;
- The addition / upgrading of roads may increase visibility of traffic from opposite sides of the loch or increase levels of noise through tranquil parts of the glen; and
- The area is sensitive to changes in land cover such as an increase in improved pasture or forest which may change the pattern of land uses and affect the sense of wildness when looking away from the glen floor.

Landscape Character

8.6.15 SNH, in conjunction with partner Councils, has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland. The study area is covered by the Lochaber Landscape Character Assessment² and a small part of the Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment³.

8.6.16 These documents together divide the study area into a total of seven Landscape Character Types (LCTs) where it is considered that a recognisable distinction in landform, landcover and features leads to a unique sense of character (see Figure 8.3).

8.6.17 These LCTs comprise:

- Broad Forested Strath;
- Broad Steep-sided Glen;
- Interlocking Sweeping Peaks;
- Rocky Moorland;
- Rolling Uplands
- Rugged Massif; and
- Smooth Moorland Ridges.

² Environmental Resources Management (1998) 'Lochaber: Landscape Character Assessment'. Scottish Natural Heritage Review No. 97.

³ Richards, John (1999) 'Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment'. Scottish Natural Heritage Review No. 114.

8.6.18 A summary of the key characteristics of these LCTs and relevant guidance is included in Appendix 8.1.

8.6.19 Although useful for broad brush analysis of character, the above LCTs have been identified at a regional scale and do not always reflect the more local context and scale of the study area. For the purposes of this assessment the SNH LCTs have therefore been used as a basis for identification of Local Character Zones (LCZs) which relate more closely to the scale and character of the study area. LCZs are identified on Figure 8.3.

- Local Character Zone 1 – Steep-sided Valley with Loch;
- Local Character Zone 2 – Settled Valley Floor;
- Local Character Zone 3 – Mountain;
- Local Character Zone 4 – Corrie;
- Local Character Zone 5 – Steep-sided Glen;
- Local Character Zone 6 – Wooded Glen;
- Local Character Zone 7 – Rolling Moorland;
- Local Character Zone 8 – Forest;
- Local Character Zone 9 – Rounded Moorland Hills; and
- Local Character Zone 10 – Forested Strath with Loch.

LCZ1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch

8.6.20 This LCZ comprises the distinctive, long, fjord-like valley of the Great Glen. It includes parts of the Broad Forested Strath, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks and Smooth Moorland Ridges LCTs.



Photograph 8.1: LCZ1 - Looking up the Great Glen across Loch Lochy

8.6.21 This is a large scale and simple landscape defined by very steep, regularly sloped valley-sides which rise directly from the banks of large linear lochs and are almost continuously clothed to around half their height in coniferous forestry plantation. Tracks contour along the valley-side causing noticeable lines through the trees. Along with patchwork areas of clearfell and windblow these contribute to strong sense of a managed landscape. This is further accentuated by the abrupt line where the forest ends and the distinct contrast of the dark green trees with the open mountain slopes above. Occasional deep gorges and small streams break the valley sides, cutting vertical gouges in the otherwise even, forested slopes. These are sometimes colonised with native deciduous woodland, more visible in autumn, which also fringes the lochs providing small areas of interest and diversity to the landscape. This LCZ accommodates a variety of recreational and tourist activity. The glen also provides a transport corridor through the surrounding mountainous landscape as indicated by its use by the A82 trunk road, the Caledonian Canal and various overhead lines. This movement through the landscape helps to accentuate the linearity of the LCZ and is punctuated by very few properties scattered along the shores of the lochs, usually along the main routes. This contrasts with areas of undeveloped shore where access is made difficult by the lochs and steep slopes. There are a variety of experiences within this LCZ with extensive views of lochs with mountainous backdrop funnelled along the glen, contrasting with the enclosing qualities of the steep valley slopes. However, from higher areas more expansive views can be obtained of the surrounding landscape.

Principal Positive Components:

- Distinctive large scale landform with long, straight, deep valley and loch gives impressive sense of scale and provides transport corridor, allowing ease of experience;
- Occasional woodland along steep side streams and gorges, and fringes of lochs adds variety;
- Impressive views funnelled down valley of loch and mountain backdrop and expansive views from higher slopes; and
- Range of experiences of enclosure resulting from imposing glen slopes combined with extensive open views across lochs.

Principal Negative Components:

- Hard lines of forest edges, clear fell, tracks can be detracting and can introduce a heavily managed feel in places;
- Rock armour improvements to the A82 can look stark and catch the eye; and
- Occasional overhead lines and road embankments can draw the eye and interrupt views, and are sometimes inconsistent with the rural character of the landscape.

Landscape Value

8.6.22 This LCZ falls almost entirely within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA with the fjord-like glen and lochs considered to be key contributory elements. It is also popular for recreation whilst the presence of main road routes and the Caledonian Canal leads to popularity amongst tourists. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

LCZ2: Settled Valley Floor

- 8.6.23 This LCZ is comprised of the flat, low lying valley floor located between lochs in the Great Glen and Glen Garry which comprise parts of the Broad Forested Strath and Broad Steep-sided Glen LCTs. These two LCTs are identified within the two different character documents (Lochaber and Inverness District) and are considered to be broadly indicative of the same character type on either side of this boundary.



Photograph 8.2: LCZ2 – Looking across Laggan Locks at the northern end of Loch Lochy

- 8.6.24 The different sections of this LCZ share a settled and domestic feel, characterised by a patchwork mosaic of small areas of native and plantation woodland, fields grazed by cattle and sheep, river and canal, and small groups of properties. There is a noticeable linearity to the LCZ, emphasised by the enclosing landform and forest of the containing valley-sides and the use of the area as a transport corridor. Main roads, tracks, overhead lines, the Caledonian Canal and River Garry, and the Great Glen Way walking route pass through the various parts of this LCZ resulting in a regular movement of traffic, people and boats. Settlement is scattered evenly throughout the valley floor and is comprised of a variety of farms, 19th century properties and individual and small clusters of more modern developments, often set into the edges of woodland, but just as frequently located in open areas or alongside the road. Various large Victorian inns and hotels add additional interest and focus, as do the buildings and structures of the Glengarry hydroelectric scheme. Alongside the lochs there are occasional small piers and there is a small marina at the north end of Loch Lochy where sailing boats and barges combine with the lock features on the canal contributing to the diverse character. The human scale of this LCZ gives it a personal feel which is accentuated by the contrast with the surrounding scale of the mountains and lochs. Although the LCZ feels largely enclosed by the woodland and landform the mountainous backdrop is constantly present, resulting in impressive views, framed by the trees, properties and other features of the valley floor.

Principal Positive Components:

- Domestic, settled landscape, in contrast to the wider large scale mountains and lochs;
- Diverse mix of land use and land cover comprising areas of mature native woodland, plantation, agricultural fields, open water and river;
- Tourist routes such as the Caledonian Canal and the Great Glen Way enable many people to experience this landscape at a slow pace, in contrast to the quickly passing traffic on the A82;
- Various individual features such as 19th century inns and hotels, small piers, marinas and canal locks and the Invergarry power station provide areas of focus and interest;
- The patchwork combination of woodland, open fields and loch shore creates a variety of experiences ranging from the enclosed and intimate to expansive feelings of space; and
- Framed views of mountain backdrop through trees and other human scale features accentuates the contrast in scale.

Principal Negative Components:

- Movement of traffic along the A82 and A87 can distract and can have the effect of creating a barrier through the landscape; and
- Overhead lines can interrupt the view as they cross across the valley and are not in scale with other features of the landscape.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.25 This LCZ falls partially within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and, in these locations, is considered to be a central element to its appeal. It is also popular for recreational users and tourists. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

LCZ 3: Mountain

- 8.6.26 This LCZ comprises the high level mountain slopes and summits to the west of Loch Lochy including Ben Tee, Sròn a' Choire Ghairbh and Meall na Teanga, and falls within the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT.



Photograph 8.3: LCZ 3 – From the summit of Ben Tee

8.6.27 This is an exposed landscape, reaching up to heights of over 900 m with a mix of smooth, sweeping mountain-side, rugged summits and ridges and steep rocky crags and scree slopes which reach down into deep corries and valleys. The mountain-sides are scored by numerous streams which rush down the slopes in small gullies, visible on the steeper slopes as long streaks of white water. Occasional wind-blown trees cling to the steeper gullies and around waterfalls but in general, vegetation consists of a uniform mix of rough grasses and heather, broken occasionally by areas of bare rock and usually grazed by sheep and deer. This is a vast scale landscape with impressive panoramic views of surrounding mountains and glens from higher areas and exhilarating feelings of height and space. It is highly exposed to the climate and has a very windswept feel with the summits of the mountains frequently lost in low cloud and mist, or snow in winter. There is an ancient character to the landscape with signs of human influence limited to occasional stalkers / walkers paths and cairns. Although development is evident in the wider surrounding landscape it is generally reduced to a scale at which it appears to have little influence. As such, the landscape engenders impressions of wildness and of isolation.

Principal Positive Components:

- Vast scale landscape with impressive panoramic views and feelings of space; and
- Lack of obvious human influence giving impressions of antiquity and wildness.

Principal Negative Components:

- Some development, such as wind farms in the adjacent landscape are visible from some areas and reduce the impressions of wildness.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.28 This LCZ is valued for its impressive topography and recreational opportunities, and for its undeveloped qualities and sense of wildness. This is recognised by most of it falling within the Lochy Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, of which it is considered to form an important part, and a small part being within the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

LCZ 4: Corrie

- 8.6.29 This LCZ comprises the large scale, bowl shaped corrie of Corrie Glas, contained by the high, U-shaped ridge of Sron a' Choire Ghairbh, and by Ben Tee and Meall na Dearcaig to the northeast. It comprises part of the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT.



Photograph 8.4: LCZ 4 – Within Coire Glas

- 8.6.30 This is a very enclosed area surrounded by steep mountain slopes breaking into high crags and falls of scree at the head of the U-shaped corrie. The high slopes and rocky summits are very imposing as they loom above the deep, scooped depression of the corrie and consequently much of the area is often in shadow for large parts of the day, especially during the winter time. A burn rushes through the floor, fed by a small shallow loch at its head. This spills over boulders and rocks and through small passages of gorge with the bubbling sound of the water providing one of few sounds within the LCZ. Occasional semi-natural trees cling to the sides of the small sections of gorge and grow amidst the rocks of the small waterfalls. Otherwise the vegetation cover comprises heather and rough grassland with a large area of deeply hagged peat forming an elevated terrace on the northern side at the foot of Ben Tee. Although views are funnelled outwards to the northeast, towards the forested slopes above Glen Garry, there is very little obvious human intervention in the landscape, with only very subtle stalkers paths which are more frequently used by deer. This, and the sense of enclosure, gives the area a sense of wildness, and a sometimes eerie quiet which may feel intimidating to some.

Principal Positive Components:

- Imposing, large scale landform and impressive crags and mountain summits enclosing the corrie; and
- Lack of human intervention and sense of enclosure gives a sense of wildness and distinctive eerie or quiet atmosphere.

Principal Negative Components:

- There are no notable negative components to this LCZ although some people may consider its eerie atmosphere to be somewhat intimidating.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.31 This LCT may be valued for its wild and remote characteristics although it does not fall within a WLA. It is recognised for its contribution to the wider scenic quality as part of the mountainous landscape by inclusion within the SLA. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

LCZ 5: Steep-sided Glen

- 8.6.32 This LCZ is comprised of a steep and deeply cut V-shaped glen which rises up to the bealach between Sron a' Choire Ghairbh and Meall na Teanga. It forms part of the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT.



Photograph 8.5: LCZ 5 – Looking up the glen

- 8.6.33 The glen is enclosed by often dramatic, steep, craggy slopes of rock, rough grass and heather, and scree which reach almost continuously up to the ridge level of the mountains. Numerous streams and waterfalls cut down these steep slopes, often visible as streaks of white water and waterfalls and frequently eroding small, gravelly gullies. These collect

within the base of the glen to form a swiftly flowing burn which runs through a series of pools and small falls and latterly into a small, rocky gorge. The gorge and banks of this stream in its lower part are colonised with scrubby semi-natural woodland though this becomes more sparse with height. The predominant vegetation within the glen is a patchy combination of rough grassland, bracken and heather. This cover is frequently broken by scattered grey boulders and becomes less dominant with height where greater areas of bare rock are present. A rough gravelly path follows the northern side of the stream up the glen. This crosses the many side streams via a series of wide stoney fords and hints at the glen's past use as pass through the mountains. However, there is little other human influence on the landscape and this combined with the large scale and dramatic landform introduces a sense of wildness. The overall impression of this LCZ is a dramatic, large scale landscape with impressive topography. Although enclosed, as the viewer moves higher, towards the pass, impressive elevated views are experienced towards the forested shore of Loch Lochy, framed by the steep sides of the glen.

Principle Positive Components:

- Impressive steep sided glen contained by dramatic high, craggy slopes and mountain-sides;
- Numerous streams and waterfalls slicing down the valley sides in small gullies;
- Semi-natural woodland in lower parts of glen and sparse scattered trees following lines of streams and waterfalls;
- Impressive, elevated views towards Loch Lochy, framed by the sides of the glen; and
- Sense of wildness brought about by massive scale, dramatic topography and general lack of obvious man-made features.

Principal Negative Components:

- In some areas the path has eroded and is an obvious feature, drawing the eye and reducing the sense of wildness.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.34 As part of the mountainous landscape, this LCZ is valued for its recreational opportunities, dramatic topography and impressions of wildness. This is recognised by its inclusion in the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA which notes this hanging valley as a particular feature, although it falls just outside the edge of the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

LCZ 6: Wooded Glen

- 8.6.35 This LCZ is comprised of the deep, narrow glen and gorge enclosing the Kilfinnan Burn, comprising part of the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT. Glen Buck has also been included in this LCZ as it is considered to have a similar character although this description refers to the Kilfinnan Burn only as Glen Buck would not be affected by The Proposed Development.



Photograph 8.6: LCZ 6 – Overlooking Kilfinnan Glen

8.6.36 This glen is characterised by its distinct woodland character. The glen is composed of high, steep side slopes, colonised by copses and larger areas of self-generated woodland, more dense within the deeper parts of the glen and along the stream. Higher slopes are clothed with a patchwork mosaic of grassland, heather and bracken with occasional small patches of scrubby woodland and individual trees reaching up. In steeper areas, the continuity of the slope is frequently broken into small crags and areas of bare rock. These become more frequent as the glen narrows, forming sections of rocky gorge. The burn flows swiftly through the glen with a boulder strewn bed forming numerous series of pools and rapids with frequent areas of white water. In some places sections of cliff are present and waterfalls drop into deep pools. This is an intimate scale character area with many secluded spaces formed within the woodland and gorge, and attractive views formed of combinations of moving water and woodland, framed by the sides of the glen. The woodland emphasises the steepness of the slopes and the sense of enclosure, contributing to a shady, dark atmosphere within the deeper gorge. However, from higher slopes there is a greater sense of space with elevated views towards Loch Lochy and across the great glen providing a diversity of experience.

Principal Positive Components:

- Steep, rushing stream with varying rapids, pools and waterfalls;
- Very naturalised areas of deciduous woodland create distinct character and emphasise steepness of glen-sides;
- Intimate scale with secluded spaces formed within woodland and gorge, and attractive views composed of woodland and stream; and
- Contrasting sense of space from higher areas with elevated views over the Great Glen towards Loch Lochy.

Principal Negative Components:

- There are no obvious negative components within this character area.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.37 This area is considered likely to be locally valued for its distinctive features lack of development and perceived scenic quality, as recognised through its inclusion in the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, although it is not an individually recognised feature of the SLA. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium**.

LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland

- 8.6.38 This LCZ comprises areas of broad, plateau-like moorland to the north and south of Glen Garry, above the line of the forest and stretching to the foot of the mountains and higher hills. It is partially included within the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT and the Broad Forested Strath LCT.



Photograph 8.7: LCZ 7 – Overlooking the plateau moorland from the foot of Ben Tee

- 8.6.39 This area has a gently undulating landform, occasionally rising up into low rounded hills. Small lochans with shallow, peaty banks inhabit some low points and there are frequent boggy areas contributing to an overriding wet impression of the landscape. These are drained by a few small bouldery streams situated within shallow valleys. Occasionally, small scrubby trees grow along the lines of streams which can draw the eye within the otherwise treeless moorland, as there are no other focal points. The predominant land cover comprises a fairly uniform mix of rough grasses and heather, sometimes broken by small rocky areas or boulders and occasionally by peat hags. This LCZ is very large scale with an open, windswept character and elevated feel. There are expansive panoramic views over the Great Glen and Glen Garry and sweeping views up towards the summits of the mountains but there are very few foreground features. There is a general lack of

obvious human intervention in the landscape and difficulty of access, particularly in boggy areas. This can introduce some impressions of wildness. However, the nearby influence of forestry edges and some overhead lines reduces this somewhat, particularly near the edge of the LCZ.

Principal Positive Components:

- Occasional small streams with scrubby trees can draw the eye and create foreground interest;
- Expansive panoramic views over the glens and towards the mountains; and
- Lack of obvious human intervention introduces some impressions of wildness.

Principal Negative Components:

- The influence of nearby forestry and overhead lines on the edge of the LCZ reduces the impressions of wildness in some areas.

Landscape Value

8.6.40 The area has some value for its wild land characteristics but is not as notable for its landscape as other nearby areas. Edges of the LCZ graze the edge of the Lochy Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and it contributes to some extent to the setting of adjacent mountain areas. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Medium**.

LCZ 8: Forest

8.6.41 This LCZ comprises large areas of coniferous forest plantation to the north, but predominantly to the south of Glen Garry. Southern areas form part of the Broad Forested Strath LCT, whilst northern areas are mainly within the Rocky Moorland LCT.



Photograph 8.8: LCZ 8 – Forest above White Bridge

8.6.42 These areas are undulating, rising up into numerous steep, rounded knolls and hills and clothed in a large scale patchwork of forest (mostly spruce with areas of pine and larch), clear-fell and regenerating woodland. Other patches of Caledonian Pine forest, add areas of localised diversity with a more varied range of groundcover and less dense tree cover. The LCZ is accessed via wide, well-built gravelled forestry tracks, with other less well constructed or overgrown tracks sometimes leading off them. In combination with forestry operations and areas of felling, which can produce brown scars and hard, well defined edges, and various large borrow pits, this introduces impressions of a functional and managed character to the landscape in places. The areas of forest have a dark and enclosing, sometimes overbearing atmosphere with continuously planted compartments of spruce, pine and larch. However, occasional clearings including the small hill summits and areas of steeper or difficult terrain, firebreaks or areas of felling can provide some contrasting open areas with views of the surrounding hills and mountains. Occasional streams run through the forest, lined by fringes of riparian woodland and provide localised corridors of interest and variety within the dark green of the coniferous trees. There are also a few scattered properties in small clearings. Forest walks, and associated features such as signage are present along some of the paths and tracks.

Principal Positive Components:

- Some areas of Caledonian Pine forest and riparian vegetation following streams provide localised areas of interest and diversity;
- Open areas and forest clearings provide some open views of the surrounding hills and mountains;
- Areas of the forest have a quiet and rural character; and
- The forest provides a setting for mountain views from some adjacent LCZs.

Principal Negative Components:

- Monocultural plantation areas can appear monotonous and often have hard edges which draw the eye; and
- Wide forestry tracks, quarry workings and borrow pits, and areas of clear fell and wind blow create hard edged scars and emphasis a functional and heavily managed character to the landscape.

Landscape Value

8.6.43 This LCZ contains some areas of Caledonian Pine forest, valued for their heritage, landscape and ecological importance and is also locally valued for its recreational opportunities. Forest walks along streams and waterfalls are popular and likely to be locally valued. However, it does not fall within any designated areas and is generally of a common type within the wider area. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Low** to **Medium**.

LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills

8.6.44 This LCZ consists of an extensive area of large rounded hills and mountains reaching to approximately 800 m in height to the east of the Great Glen. It forms part of the Smooth Moorland Ridges LCT.



Photograph 8.9: LCZ 9 –Rounded Moorland Hills

8.6.45 The large masses of rounded hills are generally separated by smooth sweeping valleys containing large burns or small rivers, with smaller streams, often within gullies and small ravines, creating scars on their side slopes. Occasionally higher and steeper slopes are broken into rough, rocky escarpments. Vegetation consists almost entirely of a uniform covering of heather and moorland grasses, usually grazed by sheep and deer. In low lying areas, this becomes wet and boggy, with a greater preponderance of bog plants. Infrequently there are scattered patches of semi-natural woodland alongside streams and within gullies on the lower slopes. There are also some larger forestry plantations in some glens which influence the landscape locally. This is a vast area, very open and windswept in character, with extensive panoramic views, particularly from higher areas. However, localised intimate scale spaces are also present, often located within the valleys and hollows, particularly around streams. There is very little obvious sign of human influence on this landscape, usually limited to a few stalkers paths or cairns, and therefore, there are strong impressions of wildness. However, this is sometimes reduced in localised areas where forestry is located in some sheltered glens.

Principal Positive Components:

- Vast scale landscape with impressive panoramic views and feelings of space; and
- Lack of obvious human influence and artefacts gives impressions of antiquity and of wildness.

Principal Negative Components:

- In some areas the moorland land cover and lack of focal points can feel monotonous; and
- Forestry located in some sheltered glens reduces impressions of wildness in some localised areas.

Landscape Value

- 8.6.46 The area is valued for its wild land characteristics and is partly included within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. The area also contains some features such as Parallel Roads which are designated for their geology. However, overall this is a generally unremarkable landscape type which is relatively common within the wider area. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium**.

LCZ 10: Forested Strath with Loch

- 8.6.47 This LCZ is comprised of the shallow valley and forested and wooded side slopes containing Loch Garry and forms part of the Broad Forested Strath LCT.



Photograph 8.10: LCZ 10 – Looking across Loch Garry

- 8.6.48 This is a deeply contrasting LCZ with varying experiences obtained when moving from the enclosed woodland areas to the shore, where expansive, panoramic vistas open out. The containing sides of the valley are very shallow but have an undulating and complex landform which leads to an intricate shoreline to the loch. Various small wooded islands add to this complexity. The loch operates as a hydroelectric reservoir and the rocky shoreline can increase in extent when the water levels are lowered. Forest is the predominant land cover to the south of the loch with a mosaic of largely monocultural planting and areas of clear-fell, firebreaks and regenerating scrub woodland. Occasional patches of naturalistic Caledonian Pine Forest add to a diversity of cover. To the northern side of the loch deciduous woodland is more common with broad swaths of mature native woodland reaching down to the shore. This creates a varying picture through the seasons. There is limited settlement in this LCZ, with just a few properties located on the loch shore and clearings on the woodland slopes. This LCZ is usually experienced from the A87 trunk road or minor Loch Quoich road which follow close to the north shore of the loch. This results in the most common experience of varying small and large scale spaces whilst moving through, and snapshot views of the loch, framed by the loch-side trees, often with

a mountainous backdrop. Although functional in character, the mosaic impression of the forest over the undulating landform is diverse in appearance and contributes to the varied setting of the loch.

Principal Positive Components:

- Varying experiences of openness and enclosure formed through contrast of woodland and forest, and open water;
- Areas of mature native woodland to the north of the loch and along the shore; and
- Intricate loch shore and islands combined with woodland and forest creates varied setting to loch with views formed through combinations of open water and woodland with mountain backdrop.

Principal Negative Components:

- The fast A87 trunk road follows the edge of the loch and forms a linear feature which can cut this off from the northern hill slopes and woodland;
- Areas of clear-fell and windblow create occasional brown scars and can give impressions of a functional landscape; and
- Rocky areas of drawdown can occasionally be revealed when water levels are low as a result of the operation of the hydroelectric scheme and may be considered distracting by some.

Landscape Value

8.6.49 The area is valued for its perceived scenic qualities but it is not included within any designation. It is a relatively common type within the wider area. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium**.

8.7 Mitigation Measures

8.7.1 Mitigation measures associated with the reduction of potential adverse effects on landscape character, involved the consideration and development of scheme alternatives, and in particular, the location and design of the structures on the shore of Loch Lochy. For detailed information on the design process adopted for The Proposed Development, refer to Chapter 2: Consideration of Alternatives and Appendix 3.1: Design Statement.

8.7.2 The reinstatement of areas disturbed during construction would be fundamental to ensuring that The Proposed Development would be successfully accommodated into the existing landscape. The natural regeneration of native species is the preferred method of achieving this, as outlined in the draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Appendix 3.3.

8.7.3 Careful reinstatement of landform would be employed, re-using materials excavated during the construction of The Proposed Development. Landform would be remodelled around new structures ensuring that these tied smoothly into their surroundings and minimising visual extent where possible. This would be supplemented where appropriate with planting or use of rocks and boulders to reflect the pre-construction landscape character.

- 8.7.4 At the lower control works, measures would include drawing soil up around the base of rock cuttings alongside Loch Lochy to enable planting of native woodland species, and encouraging self-regeneration of vegetation on benches and in crevices. Where possible, local stone would be used to help tie structures into the landscape and local vernacular character. The retention of existing trees and vegetation along the shoreline of Loch Lochy wherever possible would be key to minimising potential effects in this area.
- 8.7.5 In upland areas, landform would be used to help tie features into the landscape setting. Techniques such as mounding alongside tracks would help to minimise the visual extent of permanent elements of The Proposed Development.
- 8.7.6 In order to achieve the best possible reinstatement and remodelling of landscape areas, a Landscape Professional (Chartered Landscape Architect) would be employed to input into detailed design for The Proposed Development. This would include the development of a Landscape Strategy, which would outline the techniques and measures required for landscape reinstatement in individual areas. A Landscape Clerk of Works would continue to be employed during the construction and reinstatement phase to ensure that the measures detailed in the Landscape Strategy were implemented and to advise on the form and appearance of all areas to be reinstated along with other aesthetic elements.
- 8.7.7 More detailed description of proposed measures to refine the design of The Proposed Development and minimise adverse landscape and visual impacts is included in Appendix 3.1: Design Statement.

8.8 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

- 8.8.1 The extent to which The Proposed Development would affect the existing landscape character varies depending on the individual components and the capacity of the existing landscape to accommodate these various components.
- 8.8.2 The following section provides an assessment of the effects that The Proposed Development would have on the LCZs during construction and also in the longer term during the operational phase, in accordance with the impact criteria outlined in Section 8.5. The results of the assessment of LCZs is then used to evaluate the anticipated level of effect of The Proposed Development on the Lochy Lochy and Loch Oich SLA (Section 8.9).

LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.3 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Large scale, linear landform with simple structure of loch-shore and forested slopes;
 - Woodland fringes of the undeveloped loch-shore; and
 - Impressive views funnelled along the valley and open across the loch.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.4 This is a highly valued landscape due to its distinctive structure and popularity. The large scale and the functionality of areas of forest would potentially enable it to accommodate a

certain level of well-placed and well-designed development in some areas. Important vistas and the uniformity of the landscape structure are more susceptible to large scale change.

- 8.8.5 Sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be *Medium* overall but it is recognised that variation within the LCZ results in areas where this could vary to both *High* and *Low*.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.6 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:

- Forest felling, construction of new structures relating to the lower reservoir works and access routes could interrupt the flow of the large and simple structured landscape;
- High level features such as the temporary access route to the dam and works and features at the surge shaft have the potential to be distracting on the undeveloped upper slopes, interrupt the simple structure and diminish the scale of the enclosing hills;
- New features and activities on the edge of the loch could create a greater sense of development; and
- Construction activities and new features could be distracting in valued panoramic vistas.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.7 During construction, there would be a very notable increase in activity within this LCZ relating to works at the lower reservoir area. This would include forest felling, formation of rock cuttings and construction of access tracks, the jetty and lower control works structure, site establishment areas, extraction of rock and day to day movement of large numbers of personnel. The works would also be evident on higher parts of the hill, with construction of the temporary haul road up to the dam likely to result in visible rock cuttings due to the steep gradient, and regular movements of large trucks. Construction works in the adjacent Mountain LCZ (LCZ 3) would also be likely to be evident at the surge shaft location from parts of this LCZ. The loading and transportation of rock and other features by barge would also extend effects into Loch Lochy. The presence of these high level and water based features is likely to broaden the area of the LCZ within which construction associated with The Proposed Development would be evident.

- 8.8.8 During operation, 10 years after works had been completed, regrowth of felled forestry would have commenced, some native species would have begun to self-generate and mitigation planting for The Proposed Development would have begun to establish and started to screen some areas. The main remaining elements of The Proposed Development present within this LCZ would be the lower control works structures, tunnel portals, administration building and jetty, all located on the shore of Loch Lochy. Rock cuttings would also be evident behind these structures though it is assumed that some vegetation would have grown to soften the appearance of these. Whilst the temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works is proposed to be temporary only, it is considered that this is likely to be difficult to reinstate due to the cross-gradient and that some evidence of this track would remain. With care it is considered that it would be possible to construct the

permanent surge shaft structure to avoid visibility from this LCZ and it is assumed that this would be the case for this assessment.

- 8.8.9 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be *High* during construction due to the extensive range of activities taking place. By 10 years post construction, it is considered that this would reduce to *Low*.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.10 During construction, the extensive range of activity present within this LCZ, within currently undeveloped areas, would become a very visible feature. This is anticipated to be distracting and form an interruption to the simple structure of this landscape. The movement of construction vehicles and personnel, and the temporary buildings associated with the site establishment would also result in an intensity of activity and small scale intricacy which would contrast with the large, simple structure of the LCZ and would be likely to draw the eye. Although these activities would be similar in character to existing periodic forestry operations, the scale, intensity and duration would be much greater.
- 8.8.11 The high level works which would be evident would be potentially distracting on the enclosing hill slopes. These works also have the potential to reduce the perceived scale of the enclosing valley slopes as they are likely to be visually associated with the lower works, particularly with the access track rising over the hill and vehicles on it. The cumulative appearance of the high and low level works would also increase the perceived range of effect across a larger area of the LCZ.
- 8.8.12 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to result in a **Major Adverse** and significant, but temporary effect.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.13 During the operation of The Proposed Development, 10 years post construction, most disturbed areas would begin to look like other managed areas of the forest. The felling of these areas could give opportunity to create earlier establishment of a more naturalised forest edge in line with existing Forest Design Plans. As longer term movement and activities would be limited to maintenance and management personnel based in the administration building, the extent of The Proposed Development would be very much reduced.
- 8.8.14 The remaining permanent structures would form new features and create an interruption to the otherwise undeveloped shore of Loch Lochy. Mitigation planting and reinstatement works would help reduce the prominence of these features but it is likely that the rock cuttings to the rear of the lower control works structures would remain a visible feature, forming noticeable 'bites' in the uniformity of the valley-side. However, it is anticipated that a high quality of design would minimise adverse impacts associated with the administration building, with the opportunity for this to become a positive feature on the shore of the loch (see Appendix 3.1: Design Statement).
- 8.8.15 It is likely that a perceptible line and potential rock cuttings would be present above the forest line as a legacy of the temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works. This could be a distracting feature and could potentially continue to slightly diminish the perceived

height of this slope and give some impression of a developed, rather than mountainous glen side.

- 8.8.16 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Minor Adverse** and not significant. Although features and evidence of the works would remain and would appear distracting or obtrusive in some areas, it is unlikely these would lead to a significant alteration of the existing landscape character.

LCZ 2: Settled Valley Floor

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.17 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Domestic, small-scale, settled landscape;
 - Diverse mix of land use and landcover including small scale fields, woodlands and open water;
 - Variety of experienced ranging from enclosed and intimate to expansive spaciousness; and
 - Framed views of mountainous backdrop.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.18 This is a valued landscape with a small scale diverse character which may be susceptible to large scale changes. However, it already hosts some degree of development which reduces sensitivity to some types of development to some degree.
- 8.8.19 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be Medium.

Potential effects

- 8.8.20 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Construction activities have the potential to dominate and disrupt the small scale domestic landscape;
 - Long term, widening of Kilfinnan Road has the potential to be out of scale with the small-scale domestic landscape;
 - The realignment and widening of the road may lead to the removal of trees and boundaries increasing sizes of spaces and reducing diversity and sense of intimacy; and
 - Construction activities within and outwith the LCZ may appear within valued mountain views.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.21 During construction, works to upgrade the existing minor public road between North Laggan and Kilfinnan (Kilfinnan Road) would occur within this LCZ. These works and subsequent use of this road would result in a notable increase in movement and noise

throughout this section of this small scale, settled LCZ and is likely to result in loss of some trees, alteration of field boundaries, construction of new cut and built-up slopes and regulation of some of the more intricate humps, dips and bends of the existing road. Works outwith this part of the LCZ are also likely to be evident and also influential in terms of noise from some areas, particularly the high level temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works.

- 8.8.22 In Glengarry, the access from the public road at White Bridge lies on the edge of this LCZ, although is likely to have limited influence due to the location in a densely wooded area. However, there is the potential for some of the works in the forest in this area, such as felling, borrow-pit works and track construction to be evident within the surrounding forested context.
- 8.8.23 During operation, the widened road would remain as a feature of Kilfinnan although re-establishment of vegetation, field and property boundaries would be expected around it. This would be a noticeably larger feature in the landscape than the present road and there would be likely to be a small increase in perceived use when compared to existing levels. The high level temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works would be reinstated and re-profiled into the landscape as much as practicable but it is anticipated that a visible line of this feature would remain due to the steepness of the traversed slope.
- 8.8.24 At Glengarry, the majority of features evident within the surrounding landscape during construction would be expected to be reinstated and any felled forestry re-stocked in line with FCS forest design plans.
- 8.8.25 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to range from *Medium*, to *High* during construction. By 10 years post construction, it is considered that this would reduce to *Low*.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.26 During construction, the area of this LCZ between Lochs Oich and Lochy would be affected by the upgrading, minor realignment and use of the minor road to Kilfinnan. This would introduce a level of activity out of keeping with the rural nature of this part of the character area and may be seen to mirror the negative characteristics of the existing trunk road on the other side of the valley, cutting through existing small spaces, increasing the transitional character and linearity and creating a barrier at the edge of the LCZ which separates it from the containing valley side. This would be emphasised by cut slopes, embankments and potential retaining walls alongside the road. However, the impact of this would be largely localised to one side of this part of this LCZ.
- 8.8.27 The appearance of the high level temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works would be a distracting feature in some valued panoramic views towards the mountains. This track may increase the perceived extent of the construction works beyond localised areas for some parts of the LCZ and may have the effect of diminishing the height of the enclosing hills.
- 8.8.28 In Glen Garry, the effect of works within the forest would be indirect, affecting the surrounding context only. These works would be similar in character to existing forestry management works although may appear more intensive and could be distracting. However, they would be evident from only localised parts of the LCZ. It is considered that

The Proposed Development would be unlikely to noticeably alter the character for the majority of the LCZ.

- 8.8.29 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to result in a **Minor** effect to the Glengarry section of the LCZ and **Moderate** effect to the Laggan section of the LCZ. However, it is recognised that for localised parts of the landscape during the works to widen Kilfinnan Road this effect may be **Major**. When considering the character of this LCZ overall, the effect is anticipated to be **Moderate** and significant but of temporary duration.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.30 During the operation of The Proposed Development, after 10 years, the remaining permanent element would be the widened access road to Kilfinnan. It is anticipated that over time, the re-establishment of vegetation would help to 'bed in' the road, making it a less prominent feature. Whilst the reduced levels of traffic on this road would result in less disturbance and a likely return to the gentle, settled character, there is the potential that the widened road may appear overly large for the small scale character of the LCZ. The larger road construction and associated cut slopes and embankments, in combination with removal of localised variations in the existing road which related to the landform, would result in a more robust feature in the landscape, emphasising linearity and creating a more transient character where traffic movement may become more of a focus. This could form more of a barrier and locally diminish existing intimate qualities which the existing small road contributes to.
- 8.8.31 Whilst the high level temporary haul road to the upper reservoir works would be reinstated and re-profiled into the landscape as much as practicable, it is anticipated that a visible line of this feature may remain in some panoramic and mountain views. This could be distracting but would be a very localised effect.
- 8.8.32 It is considered that there would be unlikely to be any perceptible effect on the Glengarry section of the LCZ.
- 8.8.33 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** and not significant as it is considered that the defining characteristics of the landscape would generally be unchanged.

LCZ 3: Mountain

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.34 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Impressive panoramic views and feelings of space; and
 - Impressions of antiquity and wildness.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.35 This is a highly valued landscape due to its drama, recreational appeal and impressions of wildness. Its open character with extensive views and lack of existing development limits

its susceptibility to new developments without these becoming prominent and eye catching.

8.8.36 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be *High*.

Potential Effects

8.8.37 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:

- Direct effects from construction activities, access and permanent features at the surge and ventilation shafts have the potential to reduce perceptions of wildness and antiquity;
- New high level access tracks from the lower reservoir works and to the surge shaft may increase perceptions of accessibility;
- Indirect effects relating to construction works and permanent features at the dam may reduce perceptions of wildness and the perceived height of mountains; and
- New features both within this LCZ and neighbouring LCZs may intrude into valued panoramic vistas.

Effects Magnitude

8.8.38 During construction, works at the surge and ventilation shafts would take place within this landscape, introducing areas of activity and movement which are not currently present within this LCZ. However, the proposed location of these works is such that they would not be very widely intervisible across the more remote parts of the LCZ. Access tracks and works around the dam area would be more broadly evident from the high slopes, summits and ridges of surrounding mountains including the Sròn a Choire Ghairbh horseshoe and Ben Tee and would be likely to form very noticeable new areas of activity and movement as well as large new structures. Access tracks and works at the surge shaft would also form physical changes to the landscape through the formation of flat working areas and routes through the rugged landform.

8.8.39 During operation, the majority of activity and movement would cease with only occasional visits by maintenance personnel to permanent features. The structures associated with the surge shaft and ventilation shaft are likely to be small features, designed to be inconspicuous in the landscape. However, the dam, upper reservoir and intake tower would be large prominent features in the adjacent landscape (LCZ 4 – Corrie) with structures appearing larger when water levels in the upper reservoir were lowered and drawdown was visible. The access track to the surge shaft would remain as a direct impact on this LCZ and would be likely to be evident in particular from the higher slopes on the opposite side of Coire Glas. The temporary haul road from the lower reservoir works would be reinstated, although it is considered that some evidence of this route would be likely to remain due to the steepness of the traversed slope which would make full reinstatement difficult.

8.8.40 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be *Medium* during both construction and operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.41 During the construction of The Proposed Development, the level of activity relating to construction and use of access tracks, and construction of shafts, would be inconsistent with the existing remote and undeveloped nature of this LCZ. There is the potential that these works at such high altitude could appear somewhat incongruous and could therefore erode the existing isolated mountainous perceptions and sense of elevation. The new access tracks and appearance of traffic using these would also increase a perception of accessibility through this part of the landscape which could further erode the sense of isolation and wildness. However, these features and works affect a relatively small and fairly peripheral part of the LCZ.
- 8.8.42 The intensive areas of activity associated with works at the dam and within the upper reservoir footprint would feature within the panoramic vistas obtained from the high slopes, summits and ridges surrounding Coire Glas. This activity would be potentially dominating within the adjacent landscape and would further affect qualities of wildness and isolation which currently characterise these remote summit areas. The scale of the works and sheer size of the structures may also contribute to a reduced sense of elevation and exposure for these parts of the landscape.
- 8.8.43 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to result in a **Moderate** and significant effect.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.44 During the operational phase, after 10 years has passed, disturbed areas which have been reinstated are considered likely to have predominantly become revegetated although the former presence of these areas may be perceptible through different vegetation types.
- 8.8.45 The permanent features of The Proposed Development within this LCZ: the shafts and access thereto; and potential visible presence post reinstatement of the temporary haul road from the lower reservoir works, would be relatively small within the scale of this landscape and opportunities may exist to minimise their visual influence. However, the continued presence of these features would still be anticipated to lead to some reduction in perceptions of remoteness and isolation locally; particularly the track to the surge shaft which would lead to improved physical access.
- 8.8.46 The dam, upper reservoir, intake tower and associated access tracks would appear within vistas obtained from the higher summits and ridge around Corrie Glas. It is considered that the presence and scale of the dam would also result in localised erosion of wild characteristics to these areas. This would be more evident when water levels were low in the upper reservoir. It is not considered that the upper reservoir itself would have a negative impact on the character of this landscape. However, the periodic appearance of drawdown and the revealing of below water features would be potentially intrusive within these elevated views and would emphasise an increased sense of industrial scale modification and management. The massive size of these structures and increased water level may also contribute to a localised reduction in sense of elevation to these areas.
- 8.8.47 Wider parts of the LCZ beyond the enclosing summits and ridges of Coire Glas would remain unaffected by The Proposed Development during operation.

- 8.8.48 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore also anticipated to be **Moderate** and significant but would be localised to the mountain areas which surround Coire Glas.

LCZ 4: Corrie

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.49 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Imposing, large scale landform; and
 - Lack of human intervention and sense of enclosure giving impressions of wildness and distinctive quiet atmosphere.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.50 This LCZ is highly valued for its wild, remote character and association with the impressive mountain scenery. Whilst the large scale may theoretically suggest an ability to accommodate some degree of change, the simple structure, enclosing qualities and lack of existing development make it highly susceptible to relatively small changes.
- 8.8.51 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be High.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.52 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Direct temporary effects from construction activities associated with the dam, intake tower, and tunnel portals, including site establishment, quarrying and peat stripping and storage and access tracks could affect sense of wildness;
 - Direct permanent effects from the dam and upper reservoir, intake tower, tunnel portals and access tracks could affect sense of wildness;
 - The presence of the large scale reservoir and dam may have the effect of reducing the perceived height of surrounding mountains and sense of enclosure; and
 - Indirect temporary and permanent effects from the access track up to the surge and ventilation shafts could affect sense of wildness and remoteness.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.53 During construction a high level of activity associated with construction of the dam and upper reservoir works would take place within this LCZ and would be very noticeable throughout. This would include site establishment, quarry works and areas of peat storage within and outwith the reservoir footprint and the construction and use of access tracks to the dam, and surge and ventilation shafts. There would also be extensive physical changes to this landscape including the stripping of peat areas, excavation of borrow pits and formation of working platforms and routes within the rugged landform.
- 8.8.54 During operation, the majority of activity and movement would cease with only occasional visits by maintenance personnel to permanent features. The dam and intake tower would

remain as very large man-made features within this landscape and a large part of the corrie would be impounded to form the upper reservoir resulting in a very noticeable change. Periodic raising and lowering of the water in the reservoir would reveal sometimes extensive areas of drawdown (up to an indicative maximum operating drawdown of around 64 m), likely to appear as steep, stoney slopes, and may reveal some sub-surface features and landform modifications from the construction phase at times. Permanent access tracks would also be evident crossing this landscape to the dam and surge / ventilation shafts.

- 8.8.55 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be High during both construction and operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.56 During construction of The Proposed Development the majority of this LCZ would be affected by works associated with the construction of the upper reservoir works and dam introducing a substantial level of intensive activity and new, large scale structures which are inconsistent with its current, status as an undeveloped landscape. This large scale increase in activity would therefore result in a complete alteration of wild characteristics within the LCZ. The addition of the high level access tracks from the lower reservoir works and to the surge shaft works would extend this impression of disruption onto the enclosing slopes giving a greater sense of the extent of the work outwith the LCZ and potentially reducing the remote mountainous impression of the enclosing hills.

- 8.8.57 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to result in a **Major** and significant effect.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.58 During operation the extensive effect of movement and activity would cease and the distinctive quiet character may be retained. However, as very large man-made structures, the remaining features (the dam, upper reservoir, intake tower and tracks) would continue to reduce the wild land characteristics of the area. Opportunities would exist to reinstate track verges to reduce their visibility in the landscape (as described in Section 8.7) although these would continue to influence some areas; particularly the track to the surge shaft which is anticipated to require some degree of rock cutting due to its steep cross-fall. However, the dam would be a very large feature and would be likely to have the impact of blocking and shortening the corrie, reducing the sense of enclosure, and also shortening the perceived height of the enclosing mountain slopes as there would be few features to give impressions of true scale. Nevertheless, it is anticipated the dam would be a simple structure which would reflect the simple landform, and sensitive design would limit the input of human scale elements such as railings which would draw the eye (detailed description of the design development of the dam is included in Appendix 3.1: Design Statement). Although a major change, in general it is not considered that the introduction of a large body of water (the upper reservoir) would have a negative impact on the character of this landscape, although it would appear to reduce the height and depth of the corrie. However, the periodic appearance of potentially large areas of drawdown may be considered an unsightly and obtrusive feature in combination with the large dam structure.

- 8.8.59 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore also anticipated to be **Major** and significant.

LCZ 5: Steep-sided Glen

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.60 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Impressive, elevated views towards Loch Lochy, framed by the sides of the glen; and
 - Sense of wildness brought about by massive scale, dramatic topography and general lack of obvious man-made features.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.61 This landscape is valued for its recreational opportunities and dramatic topography and sense of wildness. The enclosed nature and steep, simple topography and land cover limit opportunities for development to be accommodated within this area although some areas may be less susceptible to small-scale features within if well designed and sited.
- 8.8.62 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be High.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.63 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Indirect impacts relating to the presence of construction activities and permanent scheme components on the shore of Loch Lochy may distract in elevated views towards Loch Lochy; and
 - The influence of construction activities in terms of noise and movement may reduce sense of wildness.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.64 During the construction of The Proposed Development there would be a concentration of construction activities within forest areas at the base of this glen. Although outside the LCZ itself, this activity may be noticeable within the elevated views funnelled by the steep slopes from some parts of the glen.
- 8.8.65 During operation, after 10 years, forestry felled to accommodate construction works would have started to re-establish along with additional mitigation planting. With the establishment of this forest and the position of the permanent features close to the shore of the loch it is likely that these features would not be perceptible from most of the LCZ, but from a few high slopes only.
- 8.8.66 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be Low during construction, reducing to Negligible during operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.67 During the construction of The Proposed Development the construction activities at the lower reservoir works would be noticeable within the elevated views funnelled by the steep slopes from some parts of the glen. The movement, activity and noise associated with these works would have the potential to form distraction in the view. There may also be some resultant reduction to the wild land character, although it is recognised that these activities would be within an area which is already subject to similar activities as a result of forestry management. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the proposed activities would be more intensive in character and of a greater duration.
- 8.8.68 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is anticipated to be **Minor**, temporary and not significant.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.69 During operation, once mitigation and reinstatement works had been allowed to establish, it is considered that the permanent features of the scheme would be barely perceptible and appear unremarkable within the landscape context. No noticeable alteration to landscape characteristics is anticipated.
- 8.8.70 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Neutral**.

LCZ 6: Wooded Glen

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.71 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Steep, rushing stream with varying rapids, pools and waterfalls;
 - Intimate scale with secluded spaces formed within woodland and gorge, and attractive views composed of woodland and stream; and
 - Contrasting sense of space from higher areas with elevated views over the Great Glen towards Loch Lochy.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.72 This is a moderately valued landscape for its distinctive features and perceived scenic quality. It is considered very susceptible to change due to its inaccessibility and small and intimate scale, which could be easily overpowered.
- 8.8.73 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be High.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.74 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Potential changes to the flows and character of the burn due to its impoundment by the dam further upstream;

- The presence of the temporary haul road between upper and lower reservoir works and the sound and movement of trucks using this road could be imposing above the small scale glen; and
- There may be indirect effects on the wider landscape context and elevated views due to the appearance of construction activities and permanent features within adjacent LCZs including access routes to the upper and lower reservoir works and the dam.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.75 During construction there would be no activities directly taking place within this LCZ. However, it is likely that some works would be evident within the surrounding landscape context, both visually and in the form of noise. This would include the temporary haul road between upper and lower reservoir works which would be high above the glen on the southern slope, likely to be particularly noticeable from the northern slopes of the valley and the elevated track to the surge shaft. Works at the dam and traffic on the lower and upper access routes may also be evident from the upper containing slopes of the valley and areas close to Kilfinnan at the bottom of the valley. However, the main intimate spaces around the burn, deep in the valley, would be unlikely to experience any change.
- 8.8.76 During operation, it is considered that some evidence of the temporary haul road would remain but with the absence of traffic this would be less noticeable. The track to the surge shaft would also be noticeable in the landscape as it cuts into the steep side slope of Meall nan Dearcag. From some upper slopes on the northern side of the valley, the dam would be noticeable as a large feature within views towards the mountains. The catchment area below the dam would continue to feed into the burn which would therefore continue to show variable flows reflective of weather conditions. Therefore, although flows in the burn and waterfall would be slightly lower in volume, it is unlikely that this change would be noticeable.
- 8.8.77 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be Low to Medium during construction, reducing to Low during operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.78 During construction of The Proposed Development the presence of construction activities within nearby adjacent areas, in particular the construction and use of the temporary haul road between the lower reservoir works and dam by large, heavy vehicles transporting rock, and the construction and use of the access track to the surge shaft, would be potentially disruptive to the intimate, close qualities of this LCZ in terms of noise and movement. This would be particularly influential on the high, open upper slopes of the valley. However, within the depths of the gorge, where the sense of intimacy is strongest, it is likely that woodland and the sound of the rushing stream would offset this effect. In addition, the appearance of these and other works on the lower Kilfinnan road and around the dam have the potential to be distracting within views towards the mountains and overlooking the Great Glen and may locally disturb the intimate, secluded qualities of the glen. However, overall, these activities would only affect localised parts of the LCZ and many of the valued characteristics associated with the enclosed confines of the burn would remain unaffected.

- 8.8.79 A medium magnitude change on this high sensitivity landscape is therefore anticipated to result in a **Minor to Moderate** effect which would be temporary and is considered to be not significant.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.80 During the operation of The Proposed Development, potential effects would reduce to those associated with the permanent structures. Whilst these features may be present within the surrounding landscape context, and would feature within potentially valued views, it is not considered that this would lead a very noticeable influence on the key characteristics of this LCZ. The reduction in the volumes of water flowing down the Kilfinnan Burn is considered likely to result in a barely appreciable change to landscape characteristics as variation in the flow would still occur and it would be difficult to perceive that flow rates were different to those present prior to construction.
- 8.8.81 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** with effects occurring being relatively localised.

LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.82 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Expansive panoramic views over the glens and towards the mountains; and
 - Impressions of wildness.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.83 This is a moderately valued landscape with an open, elevated and generally undeveloped character. Its large scale and the influence of existing forest and overhead lines in some areas may enable it to accommodate some small scale change although areas exhibiting a greater sense of wildness and exposure are more susceptible to change.
- 8.8.84 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be Medium.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.85 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Construction and use of the access track and potential borrow pits to the dam could reduce impressions of wild land and intrude into panoramic views towards mountains or across the glens; and
 - The presence of construction works and permanent scheme components at the dam area may have indirect influence on impressions of wildness and distract within panoramic mountain views.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.86 During construction this LCZ would be directly affected by the construction of the main access track to the dam and associated potential borrow pits which would introduce new

features and movement to the area at the foot of Ben Tee. Works to construct the track and vehicles using it may be more widely evident across some areas to the east. There would also be potential indirect change resulting from works to construct the dam and the access track to the surge and ventilation shafts which would appear as new features within the mountainous context to the south-west when seen from some elevated parts on the eastern part of the moorland.

- 8.8.87 During operation, the majority of activity and movement would cease with only occasional visits by maintenance personnel to permanent features and regrowth of soils and vegetation would be expected to take place around structures. As such, the access tracks may be less noticeable. It is assumed that borrow pits would be fully reinstated. The dam, sometimes seen with the top of the intake tower, would remain as a very large man-made feature within the mountainous context to the south-west.
- 8.8.88 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be *Medium* during construction, reducing to *Low* during operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.89 During construction of The Proposed Development works to establish the new access track to the dam (including potential borrow pits) and regular use of this track by construction traffic would introduce an increased level of movement and activity to a part of this LCZ which may locally reduce the impressions of wildness. This may also have the effect of leading the eye towards the development area at the dam and upper reservoir and may potentially reduce the apparent scale of the LCZ and emphasise a transitional quality. The presence of the construction area around the dam within the mountainous context would be likely to be a distracting feature within panoramic vistas and is also likely to reduce the existing sense of remoteness. In general however, only a relatively small part of the LCZ would be directly affected and the majority of the key characteristics would remain in place in other areas.
- 8.8.90 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Moderate**, temporary, but significant.

Effects Significance - Operation

- 8.8.91 During operation, there would be opportunity to reinstate the verges of the permanent access track to reduce its wider visual influence on the landscape. As traffic would be infrequent, the effect of this is likely to reduce to only a localised landscape influence. Although some evidence of disturbed areas associated with borrow pits may remain, these are unlikely to lead to affect the character of the landscape. The dam and intake tower, and the access track to the surge shaft would continue to be visible features within the mountainous context when seen from more elevated areas and potentially prominent in some mountain views, but would not be visible from most areas due to the undulating nature of the landform. It is likely that, viewed from the distance involved, the simple structure of the dam would enable it to sit well within the large scale landscape and backdrop with little sense of scale, and in general the open, undeveloped and expansive character of the LCZ would not be affected.
- 8.8.92 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** and not significant.

LCZ 8: Forest

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.93 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Areas of Caledonian Pine forest and riparian vegetation which provide local interest;
 - Views of surrounding mountains from open areas and forest clearings; and
 - The role of the forest as a setting in views towards mountains from some other areas.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.94 This LCZ has some value for areas of Caledonian Pine and recreational use. However, it is generally less valued than other areas within the study area. However, the existing managed character of the landscape and existing forestry operations would be likely to enable it to accommodate development if well located whilst the forested character provides good opportunities to minimise the impacts of new permanent features.
- 8.8.95 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be Low.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.96 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Forest felling to accommodate new works could increase managed appearance, change sense of enclosure, introduce new areas of distraction and reveal other works across a wider area;
 - Felling has the potential to lead to loss of distinctive Caledonian Pine trees and native woodland which provide diversity; and
 - Site establishment, access, potential borrow pits and ongoing activity and movement may distract from rural qualities.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.97 During construction, there would be an increase in movement and activity within this LCZ resulting from widening and use of existing access tracks, construction of new sections of access track formation, use of site establishment areas and potential borrow pits, and the felling of existing areas of woodland and forest to accommodate these features. This may be similar to existing forest management activities which already take place periodically within this landscape. However, they would be expected to be much greater in extent, intensity and duration with a much greater number of people and vehicular movements.
- 8.8.98 During operation, the majority of works would cease within this LCZ. Felled areas would be returned to forestry and woodland and are anticipated to be replanted. Infrequent maintenance access through the forest along the realigned access track to the upper reservoir works would be the only remaining activity, unlikely to comprise a noticeable change when considering existing forest access.

8.8.99 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be *Medium* during construction, reducing to *Negligible* during operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

8.8.100 During construction, the activities taking place within this LCZ would be of similar character to those activities which already take place in relation to forest management in some areas. As this is to some extent a working landscape, some activities of this type may not be out of character. However, much of the area within which proposed activities would take place, including site establishment and proposed borrow pits is denoted in forestry plans as 'low impact silvicultural system'; i.e. not to be clear felled. Given the much greater intensity and duration of the works these are likely to be more influential than existing forest activities, potentially dominating rural and recreational aspects of the character in some areas. However, surrounding existing forest areas would assist in minimising the visual extent of works to some degree.

8.8.101 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Moderate** and significant, but would be temporary.

Effects Significance - Operation

8.8.102 During operation, after 10 years, it is assumed that felled areas of forest would have been replanted and re-established with a forest character. As such, it is considered likely that these disturbed areas would no longer have any influence on the character of the LCZ. Tracks would appear no different from existing forest tracks and infrequent maintenance traffic would be likely to be barely discernible from existing levels associated with forestry operations.

8.8.103 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Neutral** and not significant.

LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills

Landscape Receptors

8.8.104 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:

- Impressive panoramic views; and
- Impressions of antiquity and wildness.

Landscape Sensitivity

8.8.105 This is a moderately valued landscape and its vast scale would enable it to accommodate some level of well-placed and small scale development although has greater susceptibility to larger or poorly located development which would could become prominent due to the low lying vegetation and lack of other features.

8.8.106 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be *Medium*.

Potential Effects

8.8.107 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:

- The appearance of construction activities and permanent features of The Proposed Development have the potential to be distracting within panoramic views and could affect impressions of wildness.

Effects Magnitude

8.8.108 No temporary or permanent features of The Proposed Development would be present within this LCZ. There is the potential for works around the lower reservoir works and surge / ventilation shafts, including high level access tracks between the lower reservoir works, shafts and dam, to influence western facing slopes and ridges in the south of the LCZ in the form of noise or visual disruption. There may be more distance influence on some slopes and summits in the northern part of the LCZ from works around the dam. In the longer term, structures at these locations would potentially be present and may have some visual influence over parts of this LCZ but would affect relatively small parts of a very expansive context.

8.8.109 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be Low during construction, reducing to Negligible during operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

8.8.110 During construction, the activities taking place within the broader landscape context have the potential to be distracting within the expansive vistas experienced from elevated areas. This would have the potential to result in some reduction in perceived wild land qualities where these activities appear to be located within undeveloped areas; for example works at the surge shaft, high level access tracks and at the dam. There could also be some localised disruption to wild land perceptions due to noise associated with the works within areas closest to The Proposed Development. However, the works would appear very small within the extensive landscape context and only relatively small areas, many of which are already influenced by activities in the Great Glen, would be affected with no impact on the majority of the LCZ.

8.8.111 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be temporary, **Minor** and not significant.

Effects Significance - Operation

8.8.112 During operation, although there may be some visible features within the wider landscape context, these would be largely static and often barely perceptible and it is considered that they would have a barely discernible influence on the character and qualities of the LCZ.

8.8.113 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Neutral** and not significant.

LCZ 10: Forested valley with Loch

Landscape Receptors

- 8.8.114 The principle aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the development comprise:
- Combinations of forest and woodland colonising intricate shoreline and islands which provides setting to Loch Garry.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8.115 This is a moderately valued landscape with perceived scenic qualities. It is considered that the managed character of the forested areas and the limited views within woodland areas would enable it to support some development if this was appropriately designed and located although other areas may be more susceptible to change where this would inhibit the setting of the loch.
- 8.8.116 Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to range between Low and Medium.

Potential Effects

- 8.8.117 Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise the following:
- Potential forest felling to accommodate construction works has the potential to affect setting of Loch Garry, both in itself and in relation to the construction works which this may reveal.

Effects Magnitude

- 8.8.118 No temporary or permanent features of The Proposed Development would be present within this LCZ. There is the potential forest felling to accommodate the works to reveal some activities within the forest context to the south such as potential borrow pit works or access track construction. However, this would be likely to form a minimal change to the existing situation as forest felling management around and within this LCZ is already a feature of this landscape to some degree.
- 8.8.119 The effects magnitude for this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be Negligible during construction and operation.

Effects Significance - Construction

- 8.8.120 During construction, the potential appearance of areas of forest felling or construction works is not considered likely to result in any alteration of the valued characteristics of this LCZ, as activities such as these already take place within this landscape to some degree. Whilst these works may be evident, it is not considered that they would alter the intrinsic landscape character of this area.
- 8.8.121 The effect of construction works on this LCZ is therefore anticipated to be **Neutral**.

Effects Significance - Operation

8.8.122 During operation, it is not anticipated that any elements of The Proposed Development would be evident within this LCZ and therefore no effect is anticipated.

8.8.123 The operational effect of The Proposed Development on this LCZ is therefore also anticipated to be **Neutral**.

Summary of Effects to Local Character Zones and Landscape Character Types

8.8.124 Anticipated effects to LLZs are summarised in Table 8.2 below. For the purposes of this assessment, effects with a rating of Moderate or greater are considered to be significant.

Table 8.2: Summary of effects on Landscape Character

Local Character Zone	Related Landscape Character Types	Effect during construction				Effect during operation (10 years)			
		Neutral	Minor	Moderate	Major	Neutral	Minor	Moderate	Major
LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Forested Strath; Interlocking Sweeping Peaks; and Smooth Moorland Ridges. 				*		*		
LCZ 2: Settled Valley Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Forested Strath; and Broad Steep-sided Glen. 			*			*		
LCZ 3: Mountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interlocking Sweeping Peaks. 			*			*L		
LCZ 4: Corrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interlocking Sweeping Peaks. 				*				*
LCZ 5: Steep-sided Glen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interlocking Sweeping Peaks. 		*			*			
LCZ 6: Wooded Glen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interlocking Sweeping Peaks. 		* ^a				*L		
LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Forested Strath; and Interlocking Sweeping Peaks. 			*			*		
LCZ 8: Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Forested Strath; and Rocky Moorland. 			*		*			
LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth Moorland Ridges 		*			*			
LCZ 10: Forested Strath with Loch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Forested Strath. 	*				*			

a – effect would be Minor to Moderate but not significant

L – effects are localised to one or more parts of the LCZ.

- 8.8.125 As can be seen in the above table, some significant effects are predicted to the landscape character of the study area as a result of The Proposed Development. These relate to the construction of both the lower reservoir works in the Great Glen and on the shore of Loch Lochy, the upper reservoir works / dam within the upland landscape of Coire Glas and site establishment and access for both areas.
- 8.8.126 At the lower reservoir works, significant effects on LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch (Major) and LCZ 2: Settled Valley Floor (Moderate) are anticipated to be temporary reducing to a Minor Adverse, non-significant level by 10 years post-construction. However, at the upper reservoir works the long term effect of the dam and upper reservoir is anticipated to continue to be significant due to the large scale change these features would cause. The effect during both construction and operation is anticipated to be Major for LCZ 4: Coire, and Moderate for the LCZ 3: Mountain, although the latter is predicted to reduce to a localised effect in the longer term.
- 8.8.127 When considering the effects of access, site establishment and other associated activities, significant Moderate effect is anticipated to LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland and LCZ 8: Forest. However, for both of these LCZs this is anticipated to be a temporary effect, relating predominantly to the increased levels of activity and movement, and temporary structures associated with construction activities. During operation, this is predicted to reduce to non-significant levels: Minor for LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland; and Neutral for LCZ 8 (Forest).
- 8.8.128 The effect on the remaining LCZs: LCZ 5 (Steep-sided Glen); LCZ 6 (Wooded Glen); LCZ 9 (Rounded Hills); and LCZ 10 (Forested Strath with Loch), would not be significant either during construction or operation. During construction, these effects are predicted to be Neutral for LCZ 10, Minor for LCZ 5 and LCZ 9 and Minor to Moderate for LCZ 6. This would reduce to Neutral during operation for all these LCZs other than LCZ 6 which would retain a localised Minor Adverse effect.

Landscape Effects on Regional Landscape Character Types

- 8.8.129 In the context of the broad LCTs defined in the Lochaber Landscape Character Assessment and the Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment, significant effects have been identified for LCZs which fall within or partially within the following LCTs:

Significant effects during construction only

- Broad Forested Strath;
- Broad Steep-sided Glen;
- Interlocking Sweeping Peaks;
- Rocky Moorland; and
- Smooth Moorland Ridges.

Long term significant effects

- Interlocking Sweeping Peaks.

- 8.8.130 Of the above areas, direct effects would occur to the Broad Forested Strath and Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCTs. Almost all of the permanent scheme components would be located in the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT with concentrations of development at

the upper and lower reservoir works. Access to these areas, along Kilfinnan Glen and through the forest at White Bridge would be located in the Broad Forested Strath LCT with the addition of site establishment and potential borrow pits in the forest at White Bridge.

- 8.8.131 Indirect effects relating to the appearance of The Proposed Development within the landscape context would potentially occur to the Rocky Moorland and Smooth Moorland Ridges LCTs. No noticeable effect would occur to the Broad Forested Strath LCT which is at considerable distance from The Proposed Development.
- 8.8.132 The assessment of LCZs has identified that during construction there would be potential Moderate and Major effects within the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks LCT due to the presence of intensive construction operations. As the LCT covers a large area, the effects would be expected to be localised, but significant in the context of the LCT overall. An overall **Moderate** effect to this LCT during construction is therefore anticipated. The significant effect would continue to some degree into the operation of the scheme due to the effect of the dam and upper reservoir. However, the extent of the effect would become more localised to the Coire Glas area as the effect of the lower reservoir works in LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch, would be reduced to a non-significant level.
- 8.8.133 The assessment of effects to LCZs affecting the Broad Forested Strath LCT has identified that there would be some significant effects during construction relating to the construction and use of access routes and site establishment / borrow pits. However, within the context of this large scale LCT these works would be relatively small and are considered likely to lead to a **Minor Adverse** effect only. This would further reduce with time with the long term effects anticipated likely to have a **Neutral** effect on the character of this LCT.
- 8.8.134 Effects on the Rocky Moorland and Smooth Moorland Ridge LCTs would be indirect. When considering the effects on the LCZs which fall within / partially within these areas, effects on LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch may lead to some localised effects on the Smooth Moorland Ridge LCT within the Great Glen. However, this would be localised within the context of this LCT as a whole with the majority of the area unlikely to be affected. The temporary **Minor** effect and long term Neutral effect of the LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills, is therefore considered more typical of the degree of effect experienced within this LCT. Effects on the Rocky Moorland LCT would be more limited and it is considered that limited intervisibility with The Proposed Development would lead to a **Neutral** effect during both construction and operation.

8.9 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Designations

- 8.9.1 This section of the Chapter discusses the potential effects of The Proposed Development on the landscape, character, values and integrity of landscape designations or otherwise protected landscapes within the study area. As discussed in 8.6.10 the assessment of effects on WLAs has been scoped out of the assessment to the agreement of SNH. Therefore, this assessment concentrates on the effects to the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA only.

Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA

- 8.9.2 The following of the identified LCZs fall within the SLA:

- LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch;
- LCZ 2: Settled Valley Floor;
- LCZ 3: Mountain;
- LCZ 4: Corrie;
- LCZ 5: Steep-sided Glen;
- LCZ 6: Wooded Glen;
- LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland (a peripheral part only); and
- LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills (a peripheral part only).

8.9.3 Of these, the assessment has identified potential temporary significant effects during construction to LCZ 1 (Major), LCZ 2 (Moderate), LCZ 3 (Moderate), LCZ 4 (Major) and LCZ 7 (Moderate). All of these areas of potential significant effect are relatively localised around the main features of the scheme. However, these are anticipated to affect some of the identified Key Characteristics, Special Qualities and key sensitivities (8.6.13 to 8.6.14) as described below:

The scale and linearity of the Great Glen including the steep sloping glen sides and eye-catching mountains

8.9.4 The SLA citation notes the scale and linearity of the Great Glen to be a Special Quality of the SLA, and identifies key sensitivities relating to this, including the introduction of large focal features which could disrupt the linear composition and diminish the sense of scale, and the introduction of elements upon the slopes such as footpaths or tracks.

8.9.5 During construction, the potential temporary significant effects identified for LCZ 1 (8.8.10 and 8.8.11) in relation to the works at the lower reservoir works, surge and ventilation shaft and high level access tracks have the potential to affect this Special Quality by forming a notable interruption to the linearity of the Glen and potentially diminishing the perceived height of enclosing slopes. These effects are also noted to some degree for LCZ 2 (8.8.26 and 8.8.27).

8.9.6 During operation, the effect on LCZs within the Great Glen are not anticipated to be significant although there would continue to be some small interruption to the linearity of the landscape alongside Loch Lochy due to the presence of permanent features. These effects may be considered to have some influence on this Special Quality but this would be small.

The distinctive mountain views and classic highland scenery

8.9.7 Distinctive mountain views and classic highland scenery are noted as a Special Quality of the SLA. Key sensitivities relating to this are identified including the introduction of large focal features which could diminish sense of scale, the addition of new structures which could interrupt or distract from distinctive mountain panoramas, and changes in land cover which may affect the sense of wildness.

8.9.8 During construction, potential significant effects identified for LCZ 3 (8.8.41 and 8.8.42) and LCZ 4 (8.8.56 and 8.8.57), concerning works at the dam, intake tower, surge and ventilation

shafts, and high level access tracks have the potential to affect this Special Quality through the introduction of intensive areas of activity and new, very large features which may lead to a reduced perceived height of mountains surrounding Coire Glas. The appearance of these activities within mountain views is also an influential factor in the identification of potential significant effects on LCZ 7 (8.8.89), and LCZs 1 (8.8.10 and 8.8.11) and 2 (8.8.26 and 8.8.28).

- 8.9.9 During operation, the continued presence of the dam and upper reservoir is anticipated to lead to an ongoing significant effect on LCZ 3 (8.8.44 to 8.8.47) and LCZ 4 (8.8.58), likely to affect this Special Quality. However, with a reduction in significant effects on the other surrounding LCZs, this would be more localised to the area surrounding Coire Glas.

Combinations of smaller and more intimate features such as landform features, settlement, pasture and waterfalls and their contrast with the grandeur of the wider glen.

- 8.9.10 The attraction of smaller features and their contrast with the large scale glen is noted as a Special Quality of the SLA. This specifically mentions the hanging valley of Càrn Bhealach which comprises LCZ 5. None of the key sensitivities identified relate in particular to this Special Quality. However, the introduction of new, large scale features has the potential to distract from areas of smaller scale and intimate character.

- 8.9.11 During construction, it is considered that the large scale of works within LCZ 1 would be likely to distract from some of the smaller elements within the landscape. In some views, these works would be particularly focussed within the area around Càrn Bhealach which is specifically noted. The effects noted for LCZ 1 (8.8.10 and 8.8.11) and LCZ 2 (8.8.26 and 8.8.27) are also considered likely to affect the sense of intimacy around Loch Lochy with the loss of some small scale features.

- 8.9.12 During operation, the effects of the permanent scheme components in these two LCZs are considered unlikely to be significant and there would be an opportunity for the small scale features of the landscape to re-establish around them. However, it is considered that there would continue to be some, small scale effect to this Special Quality.

Effect Significance on the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA

- 8.9.13 Whilst significant landscape effects are noted as likely to impact on all of the above Special Qualities it is important to note that this would affect only a part of the SLA with other large areas being unaffected.

- 8.9.14 The potential effects described above are therefore anticipated to result in a **Moderate** effect to the SLA during construction. During the operation of The Proposed Development, once reinstatement and mitigation measures had established, it is anticipated that this would reduce to **Minor**. Overall, in the long term, it is considered that the integrity of the designation would not be affected. However, it is recognised that there would be a localised reduction in scenic quality around Coire Glas which may result in a reduction in the perceived value of this small part of the SLA.

8.10 Cumulative Effects

- 8.10.1 Cumulative effects are those which occur where the effects of more than one development of a similar type within a particular landscape combine to produce a greater level of effect.

In relation to The Proposed Development, there are a number of ways in which cumulative effects may occur:

- During construction, other activities of similar type may increase the perceived presence of this type of activity in the landscape. Such activities may include other major construction projects or forestry felling; and
- During operation, permanent features of the scheme (such as the dam, upper reservoir, shaft and administration building) may be seen in association with other, similar features leading to a greater perception of this type of development in the landscape.

Cumulative Effects During Construction

- 8.10.2 The analysis of cumulative effects during construction is difficult due to uncertainty as to when The Proposed Development may be constructed and what other work may be ongoing at that time. Therefore, the consideration of effects during construction can only be considered on a theoretical basis.
- 8.10.3 Forestry plans indicate that felling of some compartments is proposed along the shore of Loch Lochy within the future 26 years. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that, at some point during the construction of The Proposed Development some forest felling would also be ongoing. This may have the impression of increasing the area of activities along a greater stretch of Loch Shore. However, given the level of effect anticipated from The Proposed Development alone, the addition of other activities within the surrounding area is considered unlikely to significantly increase this.
- 8.10.4 In the White Bridge area, the forest is predominantly shown to be either 'Low impact silvicultural system' or Natural Reserve, with areas of felling up on the higher slopes, proposed between 2018 and 2032. If felling were seen to be taking place in these areas, this similarly may increase the area of perceived activity. However, these areas are not widely evident and it is considered that this would not comprise a significantly increased effect.
- 8.10.5 In terms of other major development projects which may occur within the nearby landscape context, there is one consented wind farm proposal (Beinneun Extension) located around 9.5 km to the north of The Proposed Development. There is the potential that construction works for The Proposed Development could combine with this development resulting in a greater impression of development within the local area. However, any such effects would be temporary and, given the forested character of these areas, is considered likely to be of minimal increased effect when compared to The Proposed Development alone.

Cumulative Effects During Operation

- 8.10.6 During operation, cumulative effects would be most likely to occur with other similar development types. The administration building would appear as a large loch-shore building. Other buildings of this scale present within the Great Glen are most commonly hydroelectric power stations or sometimes hotels. Such buildings are relatively infrequent through the Great Glen and it is considered unlikely that the addition of The Proposed Development would be seen as any notable addition to a development type within this landscape.

8.10.7 Other features similar to the dam and upper reservoir also exist within the wider upland landscape. These may include dams at Loch Garry, Loch Quoich, Loch Loyne, Loch Cluanie, Glendoe and Loch Laggan. These dams have been constructed over a period of many years and are of different type and appearance, many of them considered to be architectural assets to the landscape. With the exception of Glendoe, these dams all exist on well-established lochs and therefore the appearance of reservoirs is not widely evident through the landscape. It is considered unlikely that The Proposed Development would lead to any recognisable cumulative effect in addition to these other features.

8.11 Conclusions

8.11.1 The assessment has concluded that significant effects to the landscape resource of the study area would be relatively widespread during the construction of The Proposed Development, as due to the scale and intensity of the works being undertaken. However, by 10 years post construction, once construction works had been concluded, and mitigation proposals and reinstatement had been undertaken and allowed to establish, it is anticipated that these effects would reduce. Significant effects would be expected to continue within the local area surrounding the dam and upper reservoir due to the sheer scale of these new features. However, these would be largely contained within one relatively small LCZ and, it is anticipated that the long term effects on the wider landscape resource would not be significant.

8.11.2 With regards to the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, the assessment has concluded that there would be significant effects to the designated area during the construction of The Proposed Development. Long term, it is anticipated that significant impacts would reduce to a comparatively small area around the dam and upper reservoir and, although this may result in a localised reduction in scenic quality, it is not considered that the integrity of the designation would be affected.

8.11.3 The assessment has further concluded that whilst cumulative effects during construction are difficult to predict, these are not considered likely, and no notable cumulative effects are anticipated during the operation of The Proposed Development.

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