

Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275kV Connection
Environmental Impact Assessment
Volume 4 | Appendix 8.3

Landscape Designations and
Classifications: Baseline Descriptions

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Appendix 8.3 – Landscape Designations and Classifications: Baseline Description

The location and extents of designated landscapes within 10 km of the Proposed Development are presented in **Figure 8.4a (EIAR Volume 3a)** and listed in **Table 8.3.1**, below. **Table 8.3.2** describes only those designations or classifications which would

have potential visibility of the Proposed Development. The assessment of residual effects on landscape designations and classifications is provided in **TA 8.5 (EIAR Volume 4)**.

While susceptibility to the change proposed may vary between them, by virtue of their designated status all landscape designations and classifications are considered to be of high value and therefore, for the purposes of this assessment, are considered to have a High sensitivity.

Table 8.3.1: Designated and Classified Landscapes within 10 km Study Area		
Designation	Distance and Direction from the Designated Landscape to the nearest transmission tower ¹	Included in Assessment
National Park (NP)		
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP)	5.5 km east	No. The ZTV shows some visibility from the LLTNP across high slopes along the northwest fringe, although this is intermittent and not widespread. In combination with increased distance from the development, and the presence of large areas of woodland and forestry in the intervening landscape actual visibility from these areas would be reduced and it is considered unlikely that the Proposed Development would be a discernible feature from within the NP. Therefore, it will not be assessed in the LVIA.
Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ)		
North Argyll Area of Panoramic Quality	The proposed development is located within this designated area	Yes
West Loch Fyne	7.6 km south	No – the APQ has no theoretical visibility of the proposed development and therefore no assessment has been undertaken
Wild Land Areas (WLA)		
9. Loch Etive Mountains	4.2 km north west	Yes. However, as the Proposed Development is not located within or adjacent to the WLA boundary, no formal Wild Land Impact Assessment has been prepared. Instead, effects on the classified area are discussed 'in the round' as part of the LVIA.
6. Ben Lui	2 km south east	Yes. However, as the Proposed Development is not located within or adjacent to the WLA boundary, no formal Wild Land Impact Assessment has been prepared. Instead, effects on the classified area are discussed 'in the round' as part of the LVIA
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)		
Ardenaisaig House	2.7 km east	Yes
Inveraray Castle	6.6 km north	No – the GDL has no theoretical visibility of the proposed development and therefore no assessment has been undertaken

¹ The distance and direction given are relative to the affected area of the designation rather than the boundary of designated areas.

Table 8.3.2: Designated and Classified Landscapes – Baseline Description

Designation	Distance and Direction from the Designated Landscape to the nearest transmission tower ²	Key Characteristics & Special Qualities
Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ)		
North Argyll Area of Panoramic Quality	The proposed development is located within this designated area	<p>Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs) are designated by ABC as areas of regional importance in terms of their very high scenic value and are an important part of Argyll and Bute’s regional identity. Their landscape quality derives from their physical landform, flora and fauna, and scenic value, in addition to the environmental assets they represent. In order to protect these qualities, ABC has designated these areas to limit insensitive development. There is no citation which describes the special qualities of the North Argyll APQ, so information from the ABC landscape capacity study has been used to inform the assessment instead.</p> <p>The full extent of the Proposed Development, and the majority of the study area is located within the North Argyll APQ. The special qualities of the APQ, according to the Capacity Study, are “likely” to comprise the dramatic mountainous landforms and the juxtaposition of these mountains with narrow lochs and the sea and with the settled loch fringes which produce a richly scenic landscape composition. These qualities are primarily appreciable from the interior of glens and lochsides, and from a number of key elevated summits in this APQ from where the contrast between uplands and glen and loch interiors would be most evident.</p> <p>The landscape within the APQ is sparsely settled. Where settlement occurs, it is mainly concentrated along the edges of Loch Awe and within the river plains, as the uplands and high tops are relatively inaccessible, rugged and in some places wild. These contrasts between landscape types and scales are some of the characteristics that add to the scenic quality of the area.</p>
Wild Land Area (WLA)		
9. Loch Etive Mountains	4.2 km northwest	<p>Key attributes of the Loch Etive Mountains WLA</p> <p><i>Arresting, steep, high mountains with precipitous rocky tops and ridges that offer panoramic views of elevated tops continuing far into the distance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WLA contains high, rugged and Rocky Mountains that are awe-inspiring in their scale and striking physical features. • The mountains south of Glen Coe, including the Buachallies, the Three Sisters and Bidean nam Bian, are particularly steep, individually distinctive and angular in form. • There are some lower hills and elevated plateaux and shelves in the west, although these share the same rocky and rugged attributes. • The height, steepness and ruggedness of all the mountains make them physically challenging to climb or traverse, with a resulting perception of high risk, although the main challenge of some is their towering steep rock faces, whilst for others it is their massive scale that involves lengthy access and ascent. • There is a predominance of rock cover over the mountains, including boulders, scree, smooth slabs and basalt columns. In combination with evidence of dynamic erosion and weathering processes such as rock falls, this contributes to a strong sense of naturalness • From the mountain tops and ridges, there are stunning panoramic views of other interlocking ridges continuing far into the distance that seem arresting by virtue of their great number and extent • Some parts of the mountain interior possess few human artefacts or evidence of contemporary land use and have a strong sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude, for example the remote corries and hanging valleys within Black Mount. <p><i>A series of deep glens carved through the mountains, with arresting side slopes and spectacular geological features that contribute to a strong sense of naturalness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This WLA is divided by a series of deeply carved glens, whose framed views and towering slopes seem imposing and arresting, whilst their aspect and steepness are also highlighted by contrasts of shadow; for example, Glen Coe, Glen Etive, Lairig Gartain and Lairig Eilde • The steep glen slopes create dramatic framed views through the landscape, but these also limit visibility in opposite directions • This shielding can contribute to a sense of sanctuary within the glens, whilst the slopes can be so steep and thus seem so impenetrable that they also increase the sense of remoteness. • Native woodland occurs within some of the glens, for example Glen Ure, often located where it is most inaccessible or adjacent to rivers or tributary burns • The trees create shelter within the landscape and contribute to the sense of naturalness. In some places, this is influenced by deer fences that indicate human intervention in grazing regimes, and thus diminish the sense of naturalness, as well as appearing as a human artefact. • The main access routes within and just outside this WLA run through glens. This includes some key infrastructure corridors around the outside containing roads, railway lines and/or power lines that appear as human artefacts, whilst their associated activity and noise diminishes the sense of sanctuary • Large forest plantations extend from outside the north, west and southern edges of this WLA, whilst isolated blocks are located within some of the glens within the interior. These diminish the perception of naturalness and represent contemporary land use, whilst numerous forest plantations around the edge also have cumulative effects <p><i>A high number of visitors that seek different wild land qualities and are able to experience a wide range of remoteness, risk and physical challenge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This WLA is experienced by a relatively high number of people, but in very different ways. The A82 road corridor, just outside the WLA, offers high numbers of motorists the opportunity to experience some of the awe-inspiring qualities of the adjacent landforms, but not high remoteness.

² The distance and direction given are relative to the affected area of the designation rather than the boundary of designated areas

Table 8.3.2: Designated and Classified Landscapes – Baseline Description

Designation	Distance and Direction from the Designated Landscape to the nearest transmission tower ²	Key Characteristics & Special Qualities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the good access to many parts of the WLA, there can be relatively high numbers of visitors within the most popular areas during the busiest times. This can temporarily diminish the sense of solitude within these areas, although other attributes remain strong. Nonetheless, there are other areas of the WLA that are remote and rarely visited by people at any time, and thus always possess strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude.
6. Ben Lui	2 km south east	<p>Key attributes of the Ben Lui WLA</p> <p><i>Contrast between the more massive and remote hills in the south west and the arresting, more visible and popular hills to the north east</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountains in the northeast (including Beinn a Chleibh, Ben Lui, Ben Oss and Beinn Dubhchraig) are particularly steep, individually distinct and angular in form Views of these hills are awe-inspiring, especially when seen from below Ben Lui is imposing, its form accentuated by the horizontal emphasis to the moorland below, especially on the approach from Cononish Hills to south west of the WLA (including Stac a Chuirn, Beinn Bhuidhe and Ceann Gearbh) are more massive and complex, with interlinking ridges These hills appear rugged but much more rounded and less arresting than those in the north east Ben Lui's proximity to settlement makes it popular with walkers – provides a sense of solitude Accessible and no more than 10km to a public road Greater sense of solitude in the south west, however constructed tracks reduce this somewhat Rugged and physically challenging to climb – steep slopes, crags, cliffs and scree Few recreational facilities Footpaths are obvious in places although there are extensive areas with no trails providing a stronger sense of remoteness and sanctuary <p><i>Rugged and highly natural mountains, penetrated by steep sided glens that contain well-used routes and provide arresting views</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High degree of naturalness Upland areas comprise exposed rock, cliffs, boulders, scree and crags Lower areas are covered by a mosaic of rough grass and heather with blanket bog Striking v-shaped glens cut deep into the mountain massif – create arresting craggy glen sides Fast flowing burns cut deep into the rock. Several glens contain fluvio-glacial landforms and small areas of native woodland, including some riparian woodland along the burns. Larger broadleaved woods of an open character also occur within some glens, enhancing their sense of naturalness, although deer fences around these woods diminish this attribute in places. The majority of stock and deer fences are restricted to lower ground, but can be prominent, introducing linear human artefacts and vegetation patterns that contrast with the rugged landform. ATV tracks also indicate active management of grazing regimes, introducing evidence of contemporary land use and reducing the sense of naturalness. The steep sides of the glens provide a strong sense of enclosure The proximity and massive scale of the enclosing hills are awe inspiring, and the corries, waterfalls, rock and scree faces provide a strong sense of naturalness. Side slopes also screen human artefacts and contemporary land uses within the surrounding landscape. With the absence of any indication of the extent of the WLA, this results in a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and remoteness. Many glens have long been used as passes and the drove road from Dalmally to Inverarnan follows Gleann nan Caorann. Shielings are common in more sheltered areas; some are now used as sheep or cattle shelters but most are difficult to distinguish as buildings at any distance. Some areas have been drained and the brighter green of fields around the shielings indicates former cattle grazing. These isolated human artefacts and contemporary land uses have a localised effect on the sense of naturalness, sanctuary and remoteness. <p><i>A landscape that generally well-defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the tops and upper slopes there are arresting views in all directions and the eye is drawn by the adjacent hill ranges - Ben Cruachan from the hills to the south-west and Ben Challum and Ben More from the north-eastern hills. Intervening forest plantations to the north, west and south form dark homogenous areas that interrupt the sense of a continuous mountain landscape and emphasise the limited extent of the WLA. Its relatively small extent is also evident from the various human artefacts that are generally visible around the margins. The busy A82 and A85, rail lines, the mine and farm buildings at Cononish and adjacent settlements of Crianlarich and Tyndrum also affect the sense of remoteness and sanctuary of the eastern part of WLA, where traffic noise is audible from the slopes above Strath Fillan and Glen Lochy.

Table 8.3.2: Designated and Classified Landscapes – Baseline Description

Designation	Distance and Direction from the Designated Landscape to the nearest transmission tower ²	Key Characteristics & Special Qualities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the western parts, hydro-electric dams, power stations, pipelines and high voltage electricity transmission lines are noticeable around the periphery. Access tracks for several run of river hydro schemes are visible from parts of the WLA and power stations lying just beyond the WLA also affect the sense of sanctuary when visible from within it. Wind farms impinge little on the wild land qualities, although Clachan wind farm affects the sense of sanctuary from nearby Beinn Bhuidhe. There is a stronger visual connection with Ben More-Ben Ledi WLA (07) from some parts of the north-eastern hills where the intervening road, rail route and transmission line are concealed by the steep sides of Glen Falloch, allowing the wild land qualities to appear to extend into the neighbouring hill range <p><i>Few human artefacts within much of the upland area, in contrast to some of the glens where hydro development is a recurring feature</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within much of the upland area, fences, fence posts, stone cairns and walkers' paths are the only obvious human artefacts. These isolated, minor elements have only a localised effect on the sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude. Some glens within the WLA contain extensive hydro-electric infrastructure, introducing very obvious human artefacts and contemporary land use. This includes dams, reservoirs, tracks, intakes, pipes, tunnels and aqueducts, many of which extend deep into the glens. Above ground pipelines are especially noticeable, forming strong linear elements that contrast with the rocky moorland slopes. Lochan Shira and Allt na Lairige reservoir lie within the WLA and are both dammed. High-voltage electricity transmission lines cut through this WLA, appearing as very obvious human artefacts that also diminish the sense of sanctuary, particularly when they are experienced at close range within the confines of the glens. These human artefacts have a cumulative effect on the sense of sanctuary within these glens, especially where access tracks connecting a series of intakes extend along both sides of the glen or where there is combined visibility of, for example, tracks, power lines and hydro infrastructure. When viewed from the upper slopes and summits, the more noticeable dams, pipes and tracks that lie within the WLA have the effect of reducing its apparent extent. Constructed access tracks are mostly restricted to the glens, although some of the more recently constructed tracks climb into the open lower hills and have a wider influence on the sense of sanctuary as a consequence. Access tracks allow walkers a quicker option to access the hills, so reducing the physical effort required as well as the sense of risk, remoteness and solitude, especially when the tracks are used by maintenance vehicles.
Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL)		
Ardenaisaig House	2.7 km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> situated on the western headland of Loch Awe where the River Awe joins the Loch approximately 14.5 km south east of Taynuilt. The GDL lies 5.5km east of Kilchrenan and is bordered on two sides by Loch Awe. A minor road and woodland form the boundaries on the north and south sides. Ardanaisaig House faces east towards Loch Awe and lies about 300m from the headland. The house is set on three large grass terraces. In the 19th century these were planted up with formal flower beds. Today, the grass banks are kept mown and lead down to the tennis courts and croquet lawn. Around the house several beds are attractively filled with colourful herbaceous and annual plants. The lower terrace extends down to the loch shore where wildflowers and spring bulbs are encouraged. It is protected from the wind by shelter woodlands. There are extensive panoramas of the upland scenery from various locations, especially to Ben Cruachan, and east across Loch Awe to Ben Lui. The woodland canopy on the edge of Loch Awe adds variety to the surrounding scenery and can be seen from the railway and the A85(T) along the north shore and the A819 on the east side of Loch Awe. The policies are laid out along the lower-lying land of the headland. The policies have remained about the same size since they were laid out in the 19th century. The pasture is enclosed by the remnants of woodland strips which were mainly oak, sycamore and some beech. There are still several specimen trees left, mainly oak, but some show signs of wind burn. The drive sweeps through the woodland garden before approaching the house from the south-west. The woodlands are mainly of hardwoods planted about 180 years ago. They are mostly oak planted c.1880. Conifers were also planted in blocks amongst the hardwoods at the end of the 19th century and during the 1950s