

Technical Note

Project name Glen Earrach	Subject Glen Earrach Grid Connection – Cultural Heritage Appraisal	Date April 2026	
Prepared by JS Associate Heritage Consultant	Checked by MC Project Manager	Verified by DL Technical Director	Approved by MC Project Manager

Background

Glen Earrach Energy (GEE) has instructed AECOM to undertake a desk-based cultural heritage assessment of the potential effects of a proposed grid connection (hereafter the Grid Connection Project) for the Glen Earrach Pumped Storage Hydro project (the Proposed Development). An indicative connection route has been identified between the substation forming part of the Proposed Development and the indicative connection point for the Proposed Development at the Bingally substation to the west (hereafter the Connection Route).

The Connection Route comprises an initial section (approximately 2km) of underground 400kV cable (UGC) from the Glen Earrach Pumped Storage Hydro substation to the start of a 400kV overhead line (OHL) section. The 400kV overhead line has an approximate length of 16km and connects the underground cable section to the Bingally Substation. The Connection Route is as shown in Figure A. To inform the assessment it is assumed that the 2km of 400kV cable will be installed through micro-tunnelling. It is also assumed that access tracks and temporary working areas will be required in the vicinity of the Connection Route during construction with construction lasting approximately 3 years.

The aim of this assessment is to identify whether the Grid Connection Project has the potential to result in any likely significant effects on cultural heritage, having regard to the cumulative assessment approach used in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the Proposed Development, during both the Construction Phase and the Operation Phase. This Technical Note should be read in conjunction with Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage of the EIAR for the Proposed Development (hereafter the Cultural Heritage Chapter).

Baseline Conditions

Study Area and Sources

A desk study was carried out to identify cultural heritage assets that had the potential to be impacted by the Project. A Study Area of 100m (i.e. 50m either side of the center line of the Connection Route) was used to examine potential physical impacts on designated assets as well as non-designated historic environment assets. A 'Wider Study Area' of 3km from the Connection Route was used to examine the potential for significant impacts resulting from changes to the setting of assets. This was restricted to designated assets, as their 'high value' is more likely to result in a significant effect.

The following sources were used for the appraisal:

- The National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) managed for Historic Environment Scotland (HES) for details on designated and non-designated historic environment assets;
- The Highlands Council Historic Environment Record (HER) web viewer; and
- Historic mapping available online at the National Library of Scotland.

While a site visit was not undertaken for the current appraisal, information collected as part of the walkover surveys undertaken to inform the original Cultural Heritage Chapter has been used.

Limitations

While the online The Highlands Council HER web viewer was reviewed, consultation has not been undertaken with the Highlands Council Archaeological Advisor (HCAA) regarding the Project, and a search of The Highlands Council HER was not undertaken. As such, it should be acknowledged that data on The Highlands Council HER web viewer could be out of date, and additional non-designated historic environment assets may have been recorded in the Study Area, although significant changes are not expected.

Baseline Conditions

A review of previously recorded assets within the Study Area did not identify any designated assets or non-designated historic environment assets within the Connection Route or the immediate surroundings. Furthermore, a high-level review of historic mapping did not record any previously unrecorded assets within the Study Area and suggested that the archaeological potential of the Study Area was low. This is a result of the marginal nature of the upland character of the landscape through which the Connection Route passes, much of which comprises areas of bog/wetland or steep rocky ground. This conclusion regarding the archaeological potential was also highlighted in the Cultural Heritage Chapter, which noted settlement activity from the prehistoric period onwards was largely limited to land below 300-350m above ordnance datum (AOD) (see Cultural Heritage Chapter, Paragraphs 12.6.69-12.6.74).

A review of designated assets within the Wider Study Area identified seven designated assets, all of which are listed buildings and comprise four Category B listed buildings and three Category C listed buildings (see Table 1).

The majority of the listed buildings are located in Glen Affric to the north of the Bingally Substation site at the western end of the Connection Route, and these include the Category B listed stables (LB8125) and Category C listed lodge (LB8106), both of which were associated with Guisachan House which is now a ruin. Other assets in Glen Affric include the Category C listed Plodda Cottage at the western end of the valley (LB8107), as well as a grouping on the western edge of the settlement of Tomich. These latter assets include Knockfin Bridge (LB8109), Guisachan East Lodge (LB8110), and Guisachan Cottage (LB8111), all of which at Category B listed.

A single listed building was also identified in the upland area to the south of the Connection Route. This is the Category C listed shooting box and bothy (LB19486) located on Loch Ashlaich.

Table 1: Designated assets within the 3km Wider Study Area

Name	Asset ID	Designation	X	Y	Distance from Connection Route (approx. km)
LOCH ASHLAICH, SHOOTING BOX AND BOTHY	LB19486	Category C listed	240930	823569	1.65km
BY TOMICH, GUISACHAN, ACHANAGLEISH COTTAGE	LB8106	Category B listed	229090	825507	1.9km
BY TOMICH, GUISACHAN, FORMER STABLES	LB8125	Category B listed	228391	824985	2.1km
TOMICH, EAST LODGE TO FORMER GUISACHAN HOUSE	LB8110	Category B listed	230283	826856	2.9km
BY TOMICH, GUISACHAN, PLODDA COTTAGE	LB8107	Category C listed	227945	824588	2.3km
TOMICH, KNOCKFIN BRIDGE OVER RIVER DEABHAG	LB8109	Category B listed	230144	826912	3km

TOMICH, GUI SACHAN COTTAGE	LB8111	Category B listed	230200	826911	3km
-------------------------------	--------	-------------------	--------	--------	-----

Assessment

The following impacts have been considered in the assessment:

- Physical impacts on previously unrecorded non-designated historic environment assets; and
- Impacts to designated assets resulting from changes to their setting.

This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the indicative Connection Route described above and is intended to inform consideration of likely significant effects on that basis. Any future grid connection proposal taken forward by SSEN Transmission would be subject to its own route development, survey work and detailed design process. That process would be expected to include walkover survey and allow for micro-siting or other design refinement, where appropriate, to avoid or reduce physical impacts.

A high-level summary of baseline conditions, together with an assessment for each of the above impacts is provided in Table 2 below. This shows that based on the current information, significant adverse effects are not expected.

Table 2 Cultural Heritage Assessment

Cultural Heritage Asset	Baseline and Evaluation	Impact Pathway	Impact Avoidance, Mitigation and/or Compensation Options	Potential for Likely Significant Effects
Designated heritage assets	There are no designated assets within the area of the Connection Route, with the nearest designated asset being over 1km away. As such, physical impacts are not expected.	Physical impacts during the Construction Phase	There are currently no designated assets on the Connection Route or its immediate surroundings, and as such no mitigation is required. A review would need to be undertaken if the Connection Route changed, however, it is assumed that all designated assets would be avoided.	Based on the current design, impacts are not predicted. It is assumed if the route changes, impact avoidance measures through micro-siting will likely remove the potential for physical effects. There is therefore a negligible likelihood for significant effects.
Non-designated historic environment assets	There are no previously recorded non-designated historic environment assets within the area of the Connection Route, with the nearest asset being over 0.5km away. As such, physical impacts are not expected.	Physical impacts during the Construction Phase	There are currently no non-designated historic environment assets on the Connection Route or its immediate surroundings, and as such no mitigation is required. A review would need to be undertaken if the Connection Route changed. It is assumed that any non-designated historic environment assets that fall within any revised Connection Route could be avoided through micro-siting. If avoidance is not possible, it is assumed mitigation through standard measures will be possible. This could include, but not be limited to, archaeological excavation and publication.	Based on the current design, impacts are not predicted. It is assumed if the route changes, impact avoidance measures through micro-siting will likely reduce the potential for physical effects. If avoidance is not possible, it is assumed mitigation through standard measures will be possible. This could include, but not be limited to, archaeological excavation and publication. There is therefore a low likelihood for significant effects.
Previously unrecorded non-designated historic environment assets	Based on the high-level review of baseline conditions, as well as the assessment undertaken for the Glen Earrach Pumped Storage Hydro project, there is limited potential for previously unrecorded non-designated heritage assets on the Connection Route. This is largely due to the marginal nature of the landscape. As such, physical impacts are not expected.	Physical impacts during the Construction Phase	There are currently no non-designated historic environment assets on the Connection Route or its immediate surroundings, and as such no mitigation is required. A review would need to be undertaken if the Connection Route changed. It is assumed that any previously unrecorded non-designated historic environment assets that fall within any revised Connection Route could be avoided through micro-siting. If avoidance is not possible, it is assumed mitigation through standard measures will be possible. This could include, but not be limited to, archaeological excavation and publication.	Based on the current design, impacts are not predicted. It is assumed if the route changes, impact avoidance measures through micro-siting will likely reduce the potential for physical effects. If avoidance is not possible, it is assumed mitigation through standard measures will be possible. This could include, but not be limited to, archaeological excavation and publication. There is therefore a low likelihood for significant effects.
Designated heritage assets	While a limited number of designated assets have been identified within the 3km Wider Study Area, these are largely located in lower lying areas. This positioning screens the assets from the Connection Route, and as such views are unlikely. Furthermore, the distance between the assets and the Connection Route will limit the potential for significant impacts resulting from changes to setting.	Impacts through changes to setting during the Operational Phase	Significant effects as a result of changes to setting are not expected. Mitigation associated with setting impacts is largely linked to mitigation by design, and therefore associated with routing and siting.	Based on the current design, impacts are not predicted. While a revised route might move the Connection Route closer to designated assets, it is assumed the distance between the assets and a Connection Route, as well as screening from topography and woodland, should limit the potential for significant effects. There is therefore a low likelihood for significant effects.

Conclusion

Based on the assessment, no likely significant effects on cultural heritage have been identified arising from the Grid Connection Project, having regard to the cumulative assessment approach used in the EIAR for the Proposed Development.

© 2026 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") for sole use of our Client (Glen Earrach Energy Limited) in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.