AGENDA ITEM 6

APPENDIX 4

2018/0151/DET

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE RECOMMENCEMENT
OF MINERAL EXTRACTION AND FOR AN EXTENSION

AT

DALWHINNIE QUARRY, DALWHINNIE

VOLUME 3: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

March 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the potential impact upon the landscape fabric and visual receptors within the vicinity of the proposed development at Dalwhinne Quarry. For the purpose of this assessment the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource were grouped into four categories:

- Physical effects
- Effects on landscape character
- Effects on views
- Cumulative effects

Physical effects are restricted to the Site boundary and relate to the proposals for the Site and assess the direct effects upon the existing fabric of the Site. It is estimated that the moor in which the Site is situated covers an area of approximately 475Ha, the effect of the project upon the moorland will result in the loss of approximately 3.2% of it. The effect upon the existing quarry and heath/acid grassland within the Site is considered to be **negligible adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

The landscape assessment confirms that the proposed development would not significantly adversely affect the key attractive and distinctive land use elements or the wider baseline pattern of the local landscape areas or prejudice the nature or integrity of the existing landscape pattern and the landscape character setting of the Site.

It should be noted that a quarry, in one form or another, has been present in the landscape for 150 years. The current quarry however has not been sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and the screening bunds have become colonised with grass and weed species which make the bunds visible in comparison to the darker, muted heather colours of Cathar Mor.

Short distance views to the north, west and immediate south of the Site range from moderate/slight adverse to moderate neutral as the proposals will result in a perceptible change to the baseline, however with the proposed mitigation of turf transplanting and shallow graded bunds the proposals are not considered to be uncharacteristic for the area and will not in general affect the visual amenity. Short distance views are therefore considered **not significant**.

The visual assessment confirms that although there is potential for views to be afforded of the Site, these are primarily limited along the line of the glen. Views afforded to the south of the Site, covering Viewpoints 4 to 11 are limited to the southern screening bund. As illustrated in the photomontages, medium views will view the southern bund as a continuation of the hillside rising up from the glen floor to Cathar Mor. Medium distance views are therefore considered **not significant**.

An elevated distant view has been afforded from the hill path to Carn na Caim at a level of 205m above the level of the Site. Whilst a portion of the upper quarry face is visible over the top of the screening bund, the proposals form an apparent small element of a much larger view afforded from this location. Long distance views are therefore considered **not significant**.

Vibrock Ltd have assessed the effects of noise impacts on users of NCN 7, the highest predicted noise level is 38 dB LAeq,1h which is significantly below this recommended open space criterion suggested in PAN 50 of 65 dB LAeq,1h. Effects of the proposals on recreational users cycling along NCN 7 is **not significant**.

None of the locations at which cumulative effects arise have been assessed as significant, therefore cumulative impacts are **not significant**.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared in respect of proposals for Leiths (Scotland) Ltd (the Applicant) to continue extraction from the dormant quarry north of Dalwhinnie in addition to an extension to the existing quarry, the location of the Site is shown on **Figure 1**.

1.1 The Proposals

Planning permission for a quarry development at this location was first granted in 1999 since which time several further permissions have been granted, the most recent expiring in August 2016.

Over this period the aggregates produced at the quarry have been used in numerous construction projects both within and out with the National Park boundary.

The provision of a quarry at this location will provide significant environmental advantages through providing a source of high quality construction materials into local construction projects, significantly reducing haulage distances and associated vehicle emissions in comparison to sourcing materials from alternative existing facilities.

The proposals which are being assessed within this chapter consists of:

- The continuation of mineral extraction and extension to an existing quarry.
- Restoration of the Site back to an ecological after use.

1.2 Consultation

On the 29 September 2017 Johnson Poole and Bloomer wrote to The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) detailing the proposals for the Site and included detailed ZTV models and a proposal for 10 viewpoint locations to be included within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

The CNPA provided a response to The Highland Council as part of the formal Scoping Request made by Johnson Poole and Bloomer on the 11 October 2017. The CNPA recommended additional locations to be considered:

- Adjacent to the railway line.
- The A9 – north bound layby.
- A location on the section of General Wade's Military Road including the National Cycle Network route 7 (NCN 7).

The CNPA also requested that sequential assessments be undertaken along the A9, A889, railway line and the NCN 7 routes. The CNPA also requested that cumulative impacts with the Beauly to Denny pylon line should also be taken into consideration in the assessment.

In addition to the above, the CNPA also requested a Special Landscape Qualities assessment to be undertaken. This is included as a stand-alone report in Appendix 3.

1.3 Guidance

The following sources have been utilised in the formulation of the methodology for the assessment and presentation of graphics, including photography and photomontages:

- Advice Note 01/11 Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute, 2011).
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England 2014.
- Draft Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Qualities and Special Landscape Qualities (Version 5, 21 June 2017 (FT), CNPA).
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in association with the Landscape Institute, 2013).
- Visual Representations of Windfarms (SHN, December 2014).
- Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (The Highland Council, July 2016).

1.4 Limitations

Photographs, photomontages and other such visualisation imagery, digital terrain models for example, are for illustrative purposes only and whilst SNH made the following comment on visulaisations undertaken for windfarm developments, the same is true for any computer generated visualisation for a proposed development. SNH comment in its guidance titled 'Visual Representations on Windfarms, December 2014, that:

"Visualisations are very useful in communicating information, but they can never tell the whole story. They cannot replicate the experience of seeing a wind farm in the landscape, whether they are photographs, maps, sketches or computer-generated visualisations, prepared using the highest specification and skill possible. They are an aid to decision making which must be considered alongside further information."

In addition to which the aforementioned guidance document provides the following guidance on visualisations:

"Visualisations of wind farms have a number of limitations which you should be aware of when using them to form a judgement on a windfarm proposal. These include:

- *A visualisation can never show exactly what the windfarm will look like in reality due to factors such as: different lighting, weather and seasonal conditions which vary through time and the resolution of the image;*
- *The images provided give a reasonable impression of the scale of the turbines and the distance to the turbines, but can never be 100% accurate;*
- *The viewpoints illustrated are representative of views in the area, but cannot represent visibility at all locations;*
- *To form the best impression of the impacts of the windfarm proposal these images are best viewed at the viewpoint location shown;*
- *The images must be printed at the right size to be viewed properly;*
- *You should hold the images flat at a comfortable arm's length. If viewing these images on a wall or board at an exhibition, you should stand at arm's length from the image presented to gain the best impression.*

1.5 Category of Effects

This assessment takes cognisance of the guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (2013) (GLVIA 3) published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in association with the Landscape Institute.

GLVIA 3 describes the distinction between landscape and visual components as:

- Assessment of Landscape Effects: an assessment of effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right where changes in the physical landscape result in changes to the existing character and how the landscape is experienced;
- Assessment of Visual Effects: an assessment on specific views to the landscape and on the general visual amenity experienced by people relating to the changes in the composition of such views i.e. the inter-relationships between people and the landscape.

The LVIA is intended to determine the effects that the project will have on the landscape and visual resource. For the purpose of assessment, the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource are grouped into four categories:

Physical effects are restricted to the Site boundary and relate to the proposals for the Site and assess the direct effects upon the existing fabric of the Site, such as alteration to ground cover. This category of effects is made up of landscape elements, which are the components of the landscape such as heath and acid grassland which may be directly and physically affected by the project.

Effects on landscape character: Landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse (An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, October 2014 Natural England).

Effects on landscape character arise either through the introduction of new elements that physically alter this pattern of elements, or through visibility of the project, which may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived. This category of effects is made up of landscape character receptors, which fall into two groups; landscape character types and landscape-related designated areas.

Effects on views: the assessment of effects on views is an assessment on specific views to the landscape and on the general visual amenity experienced by people relating to the changes in the composition of such views i.e. the inter-relationships between people and the landscape.

Cumulative effects: result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments. The CNPA have requested that cumulative effects are assessed in conjunction with the Beauly to Denny pylon line.

Although the above elements are closely related, for clarity within this assessment the above four elements have been considered separately.

1.6 Viewpoint Photography and Photomontages

All photography and photomontages have been prepared in accordance with The Highland Council's Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments, July 2016 and as such is a visualisation booklet has been prepared including the following:

- Site and viewpoint location map, and for each viewpoint;
  - A Panoramic photomontage of Phase 3 (Fig. 1)
  - A Panoramic image of the existing landscape (Fig. 2)
  - A panoramic terrain model (Fig. 3)
  - 50mm single frame image of the existing view afforded (Fig 4).
  - 50 mm single frame view of Phase 3 (Fig 5).
  - 75 single frame view of Phase 3 (Fig 6).

Please note however, due to the proximity of viewpoints 4 and 5 to the Site, 50mm and 75mm single frame images have not been included.

The visualisation booklet is included as Appendix 1 of the assessment.

2.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

2.1 Landscape Character Assessment Methodology

The landscape assessment relates to the investigation and assessment of the different elements, features and characteristics which make up the landscape in and around the Site in order to establish the likely effects of the development upon the landscape. This initially involves establishing the value and sensitivity of the landscape, which provides a measure of its capacity to accommodate the proposed development without significant loss of character.

Landscape impacts relate to effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (GLVIA 3). A landscape impact is an alteration to people's perception of an area; these changes involve effects on topography, landforms and texture, as well as the use of the land and may directly or indirectly affect individual landscape elements, or patterns of landscape elements. A landscape impact relates directly to what is happening to the land and changes to its character.

2.1.1 Methodology of Landscape Assessment

This assessment also takes into account guidance laid out in An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment and the Cairngorms National Park Landscape Character Assessment.

2.1.2 Assessment of Landscape Effects Methodology

The principal criteria for determining the <u>significance</u> of landscape effects is outlined in GLVIA 3, which requires the consideration of the **Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor (Sensitivity)** and the **Nature of Effect (Magnitude)** on the landscape.

2.1.3 Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor (Sensitivity)

As discussed within GLVIA 3 the **Sensitivity** is assessed by combining judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to the type of change/development proposed (*Susceptibility to Change*) and the value attached to the landscape (*Landscape Value*).

<u>*Susceptibility to Change*</u>

The *Susceptibility to Change* is the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposals without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline. As recommended in the GLVIA 3 the *Susceptibility to Change* is recorded on a verbal scale as identified in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Susceptibility to Change

		Typical criteria
High	Exceptional	A landscape containing strong, balanced structure with distinctive features, capable of only absorbing an extremely small change.
	High	A landscape of particular distinctive character, capable of only absorbing a small change.
Medium		A reasonably valued landscape with characteristics tolerant to some degree of change.
Low	Poor	A relatively unimportant landscape containing some features of landscape value, tolerant of a large degree of change.
	Very Poor	A relatively unimportant landscape lacking valued landscape components, tolerant of a large degree of change.

<u>*Landscape Value*</u>

Whilst the particular designation of a landscape can provide a guidance to the level of importance and therefore the *value* of a landscape, no reliance in determining the *value* should be solely placed on the designation. GVLIA 3 states that assessments should reflect;

- internationally valued landscapes recognised as World Heritage Sites;
- nationally valued landscapes (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas or other equivalent areas);
- locally valued landscapes, for example local authority landscape designations or, where these do not exist, landscapes assessed as being of equivalent value using clearly stated and recognised criteria;
- landscapes that are not nationally or locally designated, or judged to be of equivalent value using clearly stated and recognised criteria, but nevertheless valued at community level.

The above landscapes have been combined with the *Susceptibility to Change* (as detailed in Table 2.1) into the table below which provides a guide on attributing the **Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor** (identified as 'Sensitivity' in Table 2.2 below).

Table 2.2 Sensitivity

Susceptibility to Change *[1]	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples	Sensitivity
High (Exceptional)	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution.	International, National	World Heritage, AONB	**Very High**
High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution.	National, Regional, Local	National Park, AONB, LLA, LCI, ALLI	**High**
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution.	Regional, Local	Undesignated but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use.	**Medium**
Low (Poor)	Low importance (or quality) and rarity.	Local	Area identified as having some redeeming feature or features and possibly identified for improvement.	**Low**
Low (Very Poor)	Low importance (or quality) and rarity.	Local	Areas identified for recovery.	**Very Low**

***[1]** – Refer to Table 2.1 for the typical criteria.

2.1.4 Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

Magnitude is defined within GLVIA 3 (p. 90, para 5.48) as being the **Nature of Effect**. The **Nature of Effect (Magnitude)** can be determined by judgements about;

- The size and scale of the effect – for example, whether there is complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change.
- The geographical extent of the area that will be affected; and
- The duration of the effect and its reversibility.

Table 2.3 Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

Level	Typical criteria
High	Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	Minor loss of or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre- development landscape and/ or introduction of elements that may not necessarily be considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Negligible	Very minor loss of or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape and/ or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.
No Change	No alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, resulting in a no change scenario.

Consideration of the **Sensitivity** of the landscape in question and the **Magnitude** of the effects allow us to evaluate the significance of the effects upon the landscape caused by the proposed development. The above therefore feeds into a comprehensive assessment in determining the significance of landscape effects, as identified in the matrix below.

Table 2.4 Significance

		Sensitivity*2				
		Very High	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
Magnitude*3	**High**	Major	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Slight
	Medium	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/Slight	Slight	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Slight	Slight/Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
		Significance				

*2 – Refer to Table 2.2 'Sensitivity'.
*3 – Refer to Table 2.3 'Magnitude'.

Landscape effects may be assessed as:

- Beneficial - a change that improves the quality of the landscape resource, the removal of undesirable existing elements or characteristics can also be beneficial, as can their replacement with more appropriate components;
- Neutral - a change that does not affect the quality of the landscape resource; and
- Adverse - a change that reduces the quality of the landscape resource

2.1.5 Landscape Effect Significance Threshold

It is considered that the significance threshold with regards to landscape effects is **Moderate Adverse** or higher.

2.2 Visual Effect Assessment Methodology

The Visual Effect Assessment was undertaken in accordance with the guidance contained in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (2013) (GLVIA 3) published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in association with the Landscape Institute.

This assessment also takes into account guidance laid out in An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment and the Cairngorms National Park Landscape Character Assessment.

The GLVIA 3 (p. 21, para 2.21) defines visual assessment as;

'Assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.'

2.2.1 Establishment of a Baseline

The following tasks have been undertaken in order to establish the baseline:
- The identification of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the proposed development.
- Undertake a field visit to review the Site within the landscape setting and undertake photography from eleven selected viewpoint locations.

2.2.2 Assessment of Visual Effects Methodology

The principal criteria for determining the significance of visual effects upon a receptor requires the consideration of the **Sensitivity of Visual Receptor (Sensitivity)** and the **Nature of Effect (Magnitude)** upon the receptor.

2.2.3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptor (Sensitivity)

In determining the **Sensitivity** judgements should be made about;

- The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposal and,
- The value attached to the receptor.

Settlements are considered to be of high sensitivity whereas industrial landscapes are considered to be of low sensitivity. Sensitivity is assessed on a scale of High-Medium-Low, the criteria used to evaluate sensitivity is detailed in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.5. Sensitivity of Visual Receptor (Sensitivity)

Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape. Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and views sporadic and short-lived. People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.
Low	People at their place of work, industrial facilities.

2.2.4 Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

Magnitude is defined within GLVIA 3 as being the **Nature of Effect**. The **Magnitude** can be determined by making judgements about;

- The size and scale of the effect – for example, whether there is complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change.
- The geographical extent of the area that will be affected; and
- The duration of the effect and its reversibility.

Magnitude has been determined within this assessment by the distance from the viewer, the extent of the change in the field of vision, the proportion or number of viewers affected and the duration of activity apparent at each viewpoint or sequence of points that may have transient views e.g. along a road. Higher magnitudes of change result where the proposed development would result in prominent, obvious visual changes for the receptor in question over the medium to long term.

Table 2.6. Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

Magnitude	Examples
High	The development would appear large scale and become the dominant feature of the view. Would result in a significant change in the existing view and permanently diminish the quality and character of the existing view.
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and would cause a noticeable deterioration in the quality and character of the view. The development would form recognisable new elements within the overall view and may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor.
Low	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the casual observer or receptor.
Low/Negligible	The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, without affecting the overall quality or would form an inconspicuous element in the wider landscape, which may be easily missed by the observer or receptor.
Negligible	Only a small part of the development would be discernible and / or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated.
No Change	No part of the development/proposal is visible.

Consideration of the **Sensitivity** of the receptor being assessed and the **Magnitude** of effect allow us to evaluate the significance caused by the proposed development. The above therefore feeds into a comprehensive assessment in determining the significance of visual effects, as identified in the matrix below.

Table 2.7. Significance

		Sensitivity*1		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Magnitude*2	**High**	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate
	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Slight
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/Slight	Slight
	Low/Negligible	Moderate/Slight	Slight	Imperceptible
	Negligible	Slight	Imperceptible	Imperceptible
	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
		Significance		

*1 – Refer to Table 2.5 'Sensitivity'.
*2 – Refer to Table 2.6 'Magnitude'.

Visual impacts may be assessed as:

- Beneficial - a change that improves the quality of the landscape resource, the removal of undesirable existing elements or characteristics can also be beneficial, as can their replacement with more appropriate components;
- Neutral - a change that does not affect the quality of visual amenity; and
- Adverse - a change that reduces the quality of visual amenity.

2.2.5 Visual Effect Significance Threshold

It is considered that the significance threshold with regards to visual effects is **Moderate Adverse** or higher.

2.3 Duration and Reversibility of Effects

Duration can be judged on a time basis appropriate to the nature of the assessment. Reversibility is a judgement about whether the proposed development is reversible or a permanent change in the landscape. These can be linked or not, according to the nature of the development and how long the change will last. The effects as a result of the proposed development would be considered short term when lasting less than 5 years; medium term when lasting between 5 and 10 years; or long term when greater than 10 years.

It is anticipated the Site will be operational for approximately 35 years, however, given the phased basis of the proposals, the entire quarry footprint will not be subjected to mineral extraction for that duration. Further information of the phased extraction proposals for the Site are detailed within Chapter 2.0 of Volume 2 of this submission.

Upon completion of mineral extraction, the temporary screening bunds which will store soil material for use in restoration, will be utilised in the restoration of the quarry void. The screening bunds will be of a temporary nature.

3.0 BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The following was undertaken during this baseline assessment:

- A review of historic Ordnance Survey maps.
- A review of SNH's Wild land areas map 2014.
- A review of the Cairngorms National Park Landscape Character Assessment, December 2009, accessed via the CNPA Landscape Toolkit website.
- Modelling of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the separate elements of the proposal.

3.1 Historic Site Setting

A quarry has been in existence at this location for nearly 150 years.

Both the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1873 and the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey of 1902 shows predominantly open hillside across the development area. The exception is a small quarry adjacent to the now designated A889 at the location of the modern quarry.

In 1897 John Grant commissioned the construction of the Strathspey Distillery at Dalwhinnie, though roughly at the site of Little Dalwhinnie. The distillery has been operational ever since, bar temporary closures due to wartime shutdowns and during rebuilds after fire damage. Further information in relation to impacts upon the Historic Environment can be read in Chapter 13.0 of the submission.

3.2 Current Site Setting

The Site extends to 15.1 hectares of which 2.5Ha covers the area of the Site disturbed by previous quarrying activities. The periphery of the existing quarry void contains the soil storage bunds, however the steep gradient of the bunds in relation to the surrounding landform and vegetation cover leads to a noticeable engineered structure when viewed from the south and east. The centre of the dormant quarry area contains the quarry void which has now infilled with rain water.

The remainder of the Site (12.6Ha) has been assessed as comprising of degraded heath/acid grassland.

The Site is situated on the southern edge of Cathar Mor with levels on the undisturbed heath ranging from 390m AOD in the south east to 403.4m AOD in the north of the Site. The quarried portion of the Site ranges in level from 406mAOD to 400m AOD along the top of the peripheral screening bund. Inside the quarry, the water body is at a level of 390.75m AOD, however the floor of the quarry is known to be at a level of 384.5m AOD.

3.3 SNH Wild Land Areas

In June 2014 SNH published a new map of wild land areas for Scotland, this supersedes earlier maps which identified 'Search areas for wild land' in 2002, and 'Core areas of wild land' in 2013.

In total there are 42 wild land areas, a review of the Wild Land Areas (WLA) 2014 map identifies that the Site is not within a wild land area, however, the 'Rannoch - Nevis - Mamores – Alder' WLA is located approximately 1Km to the west and south west of the Site and the 'Cairngorms' WLA is situated 2Km to the east and south east of the Site, **Figure 2**. No viewpoints are within the WLA's therefore the WLA's have not been considered further in this submission.

3.4 Landscape Character Assessment Publications

The Site is wholly contained within the Cairngorms National Park Landscape Character Assessment (CNP LCA), with the majority of the Site in the *Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie* Landscape Area. A small section of the north western corner of the Site falls within the *Cathar Mor* Landscape Area, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

The *Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie* Landscape Area is identified as comprising of a wide floodplain contained by the shallow side slopes of Cathar Mor to the west and elongated rounded hills which sit in front of the steep escarpment which forms the edge of the Gaick plateau to the east. It is the aforementioned shallow side slopes of Cathar Mor on which the Site is situated.

Major communication routes follow the line of the glen with the A9, NCN 7 and railway line on the floor of the glen. Adjacent to the A9 and at a slightly higher elevation is the Beauly to Denny pylon line.

The heather moorland and lack of woodland vegetation leads to a sense of elevation and an open/expansive landscape, a landscape which is susceptible to sudden changes in weather. As a consequence of the open nature of the landscape, distant views are afforded of the higher hills to the north, east and south which tend to draw views along the glen floor and towards the mountains beyond.

Due to the open nature of the landscape, man-made structures, including the A9 and Beauly to Denny pylon line are clearly visible.

To the north of the *Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie* Landscape Area is the *Cathar Mor* Landscape Area which is predominantly a gently undulating landscape within the vicinity of the Site. The CNP LCA identifies that "*the moor feels open, expansive and often larger than it is in reality, despite the forestry, which is increasing the enclosure as it grows Travelling onto the moor along the A889, there is a strong sense of being elevated, which is reinforced by the steep slopes at either end, where the moor rises up above Glen Truim and Strathspey. This is most pronounced in winter, when snow drifts across the Cathàr Mòr corridor. Views down into the adjacent valleys are suddenly revealed when arriving at the crest of the elevated edges of the moor*" it is at this location where, the A889 descends towards Dalwhinne, that the Site is situated.

3.5 National and Regional Landscape Designations

Approximately 1.8Km to the north west of the Site is the Glen Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor Special Landscape Area (SLA). The SLA occupies a 402Km² area and is at the heart of the Central Highlands.

It combines a series of attractive, predominantly wooded glens interspersed with small-scale farmlands, and rising to moorland that leads to distinctive craggy summits and mountain plateaux which are of picturesque quality. Traditional estate farmsteads, cottages, castles and gatehouses occur throughout the glens and enrich the sense of history within the area (Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas, The Highland Council, 2011).

No viewpoints are within the SLA therefore the SLA has not been considered further in this submission.

3.6 Other Designations

Gardens and Designed Landscapes
The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland is a list of nationally important sites '*which enrich the texture and pattern of our landscapes and form a unique record of social, cultural and economic change through time*' these are typically created as a setting to historic buildings. The Site is not within nor in close proximity to any Gardens and Designed Landscape designations.

3.7 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The topography of the study area, **Figure 4**, will have a major impact upon the potential effects of the Site upon the surrounding landscape. To assist in the process of identifying typical views towards the Site, ZTVs were modelled of the existing quarry void including screening bunds and of the proposed maximum extraction. In addition to which ZTV models have been prepared illustrating the components of the Site that make up the ZTV, **Figures 5 to 8**.

The yellow shaded area indicates locations from which it is theoretically possible to view soils storage bunds. The computer model has shaded areas where only the quarry void can be seen as blue, there are no locations out with the Site from which only the quarry void is visible. The locations from which it is possible to see both the quarry void and storage bunding are shaded green.

Whilst the bundling will be visible from the locations hatched yellow and green on **Figures 6 and 8**, it is proposed to reshape the existing bunding to form a less prominent feature within the landscape.

All soil bunding will be no higher than 5 metres and the outward facing slopes will be formed at a shallow grade of 1:3, in contrast to the existing bunding which is up to 6.5m in height and in areas have slopes in the region of 1:1. Where the existing bunding is steeper than 1:3, the bund will be re-profiled to a gradient no greater than 1:3.

It is proposed to transplant the turf containing the existing heather vegetation from areas being stripped onto the current and future formed bunds. This will ensure that the vegetation covering the bunds better replicates the existing ground cover in order to help assimilate the storage bunds into the local landscape.

The formation of the bunds will also ensure that there are no close distance views are afforded into the quarry void where all crushing, processing, stockpiling and loading of HGVs will take place.

The ZTV models were created using a combination of topographic survey data collected in the field and Ordnance Survey Digital Terrain Model (DTM) data. It should be taken into consideration when viewing the ZTVs that the models do not take into account screening afforded by vegetation cover, buildings or similar features so therefore present a worst case scenario.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Physical effects are only found within the Site boundary, where the proposed development is to take place. The existing peripheral screening bunds retained along the south and west of the Site will be re-profiled to a shallower angle and reduced in height.

Development of the quarry will be on a phased basis with only the footprint of the area to be extracted stripped prior to works commencing. The phased extraction of the Site will ensure that the original land cover is not disturbed until the quarry has developed in to the relevant area of the Site.

Sensitivity
The Ecological Impact Assessment (Chapter 10.0 of Volume 2) has identified that the key impacts are likely to be on habitat and breeding birds but no residual impact is considered significant at more than the local level for the permanent localised loss of degraded heath and acid grassland, and the loss of habitat for individual pairs of breeding birds that may be displaced, for which breeding success is not likely to be adversely impacted. Additionally, the Applicant will ensure that final restoration of the Site will be undertaken in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed in consultation with SNH and the planning authority.

The combination of the medium susceptibility to change of the undisturbed portion of the Site results in a **medium** sensitivity for this landscape element.

Magnitude of Change
It is estimated that the moor in which the Site is situated covers an area of approximately 475Ha, the effect of the project upon the moorland will result in the loss of approximately 3.2% of it. This change will occur over a period of 35 years as the quarry develops to its maximum extent. As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **negligible**, resulting in a minor loss of the overall area of moorland and given the presence of the existing quarry the proposals are not uncharacteristic for the area. Upon maximum extraction, the Applicant will commence restoration and the Site will be restored to an ecological after use.

Mitigation Proposals
The objective of site restoration will be to restore the Site to an end use beneficial to local nature conservation. The restoration landform will aim to soften the regular quarry extraction faces as far as possible and to help assimilate the Site within the local landscape.

This will be achieved by re-grading the quarry floor and by the use of available quarry derived restoration fill materials (utilising the material stored around the periphery of the quarry) which will be placed against the worked out quarry faces in order to provide shallower slopes into the water body and therefore providing a variety of habitats within the restored site. These may include but are not limited to:

- One vertical face will be left along the northern side of the Quarry to provide habitat that may be suitable for cliff nesting bird species such as raptors.
- The quarry bund will be reinstated to the original ground level and sown with a species-rich acid grassland seed mix, or where possible the turf from the bund will be used in preference to planting.
- As the quarry has been shown to fill naturally with rainwater and surface water run-off it is proposed to allow the remaining quarry void to fill with water seasonally as nature dictates following the re-grading of its sides to provide the desired shallower slopes into the water. This may then benefit species such as Common Gull, Common Sandpiper, Oystercatcher, and other bird species associated with water as well as a range of invertebrate species. With the potential for use by such species it is not proposed to seed much of the shoreline of the seasonal water body but to allow it to colonise naturally, the remaining shoreline may be sown with a short-growing species-rich seed mix that reflects this type of habitat in the wider area, or may be left to colonise naturally.

- It is proposed to create a moderately large island with shallow margins into the water and a sheltered bay. This would provide species such as Common Gull and other ground nesting birds associated with water the opportunity to nest safely beyond the reach of casual predators such as Fox, although it will not deter predators such as Otter.
- The island will be sown with a species-rich acid grassland seed mix or similar as appropriate for the final soil chemistry and pH.

Ecological advice will be sought during final restoration process

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon the existing quarry and heath/acid grassland within the Site is considered to be **negligible adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The landscape assessment relates to the investigation and assessment of the different elements, features and characteristics which make up the landscape in and around the Site in order to establish the likely effects of the development upon the landscape. This initially involves establishing the value and sensitivity of the landscape, which provides a measure of its capacity to accommodate the proposed development without significant loss of character.

The assessment of effects upon the landscape character concentrates on those Landscape Areas in which viewpoints have been agreed with the CNPA. The following landscape areas have been assessed:

- Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie.
- Cathar Mor.
- Dalwhinnie Village.
- Drumochter Pass.

When assessing effects upon the landscape character it should be noted that the level of magnitude of change on the landscape character is usually higher at the viewpoint location than the magnitude of change over the entire landscape area. This is because viewpoints have been selected which focus directly towards the Site and may sometimes not portray the wider field of view afforded at certain locations within the landscape area.

5.1 Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie

Baseline Description
Seven viewpoints are located within this landscape area. From leaving the Drumochter Pass Landscape Area, the glen widens allowing for distant views to the north towards the Monadhliath Mountains. This landscape area borrows elements of adjacent landscape areas providing dramatic backdrops (Viewpoint 8). There is a strong sense of openness to the landscape, however, this allows for the A9, railway line and Beauly to Denny pylon line to have a strong presence in the landscape.

The location of the Site itself is on the shoulder of Cathar Mor, where shallow side slopes of the moor are interrupted by the screening bunds currently situated within the Site. This is particularly noticeable along the north western boundary of the landscape area. The smooth, undulating heather covered moorland is interrupted by the existing screening bunds of the quarry which adds an element of 'steepness' which is not readily found in the landscape area.

The ever present road noise associated with the A9 detracts from the landscape character as despite the sense of being in rural environment it is difficult to escape human influences.

Sensitivity
The Beauly to Denny pylon line has locally significant impacts upon this landscape as it traverses the glen. The pylon line, A9 and railway ensures that the sense of human intervention is never too far away.

The combination of the medium susceptibility to change in relation to the proposals, results in a **medium** sensitivity for this landscape element.

Magnitude of Change
As illustrated in the ZTV modelling the majority of this landscape area will be influenced by the continuation of the screening bund round the perimeter of the Site. In truth only the southern and eastern portions of the proposed screening bund will be visible from this landscape area.

The Applicant proposes to initially re-profile the existing screening bunds where they are steeper than 1:3. Paying particular attention to the section of bund which is situated along the southern boundary of the Site. As discussed above the current screening bund contrasts with the smooth contours of the shallow side slopes of Cathar Mor. The re-profiled bund will then be covered with turf stripped from the proposed extraction area. The re-profiled bund will replicate the existing contours more faithfully than existing. The re-profiling of the bund and replication of land cover will allow for the bund to better assimilate into the landscape, as illustrated in figure 1 of viewpoints 5, 6 and 7.

The will be a slow progression of the Site over the course of 35 years to ultimately reach its maximum limit of extraction. The majority of day to day operations will not impact upon the landscape as they will be undertaken in the bowl of the quarry. Occasionally a drill rig may be visible in the landscape as the operator prepares to blast, however these are temporary operations and the presence of a drill rig would easily be lost in the wider landscape. Extractive operations will not be visible from the majority of the landscape area. Where there is the potential for extractive operations to have an effect on the landscape, this is towards the southern extent of the landscape area. However as illustrated in viewpoint 9, the small section of the upper portion of the northern face is not discernible and as a consequence will not have an effect upon the landscape area.

As the Site develops so too will the bunding, as illustrated in the phasing planes contained in Volume 2 of the submission. The practise of sympathetic grading will continue as discussed previously, ensuring that the screening bunds are no steeper than 1:3.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **medium**, as the proposals will result in the introduction of elements that may be prominent but not uncharacteristic in the area.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon the Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie landscape area is considered to be **moderate adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

5.2 Cathar Mor

Baseline Description
Three viewpoints are located within this landscape area.

Whilst only a small portion of the Site is situated within this landscape area, it is clear from the field work that the Site displays more characteristics associated with the *Cathar Mor* landscape area, than the *Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie* landscape area. Cathar Mor, and also the undisturbed portion of the Site, is noted as being an expanse of undulating raised moorland consisting of heather moorland, with occasional wet heath in shallow dips. This moorland is managed as grouse moor.

As illustrated in Viewpoint 1 the existing quarry development has little to no effect upon the landscape at this distance. It is only in close proximity to the Site is the landscape interrupted by the bunds around the periphery of the Site (Viewpoint 2 and 4).

The A889 provides the main vehicular access across the moor, which follows the line of General Wade's Military Road and the Beauly to Denny pylon line crosses the moor to the north east of the Site.

Sensitivity
The landscape is tolerant to a degree of change resulting in a medium susceptibility to change in relation to the proposals, this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this landscape element.

Magnitude of Change
The ZTV models identify that the only element of the proposals visible within this landscape area, out with the Site, are the screening bunds. No views will be afforded of the extractive operations with all processing, stocking and loading of HGVs taking place within the bowl of the quarry.

The re-profiling of the existing screening bund will lessen the effect of the existing extraction area upon the landscape. The proposed development will progress slowly across the landscape over the period of 35 years. As illustrated in Viewpoint 2 the bund will increase the horizon line afforded from this landscape area, however the Munro of Carn na Caim (941m AOD) will still form the impressive backdrop to this landscape. The shallower nature of the proposed screening bund and landcover will add further undulation into an existing rolling/undulating landscape.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low**, as the proposals will result in the minor loss (3.2% as discussed in chapter 4.0 above) of the landscape, however the proposals are not considered to be substantial for the area given the presence of the existing quarry.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon the Cathar Mor landscape area is considered to be **moderate adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

5.3 Dalwhinnie Village

Baseline Description
No viewpoints are located within this landscape area, however a sequential assessment has been undertaken along the A889/NCN 7, Appendix 2.

Dalwhinnie Village can be found on the floor of the glen, served by a railway line and the A889/A9. The village seems, in part, to have been established as a result of 17th century cattle droving. The area of settlement steadily increases from the mid-17th century, though predominantly as a linear settlement along the road which served as a main route to the north. This road was later by-passed by the A9.

The village feels spread out and open, small areas of unimproved pasture are evident, however the River Truim has an important role to play, with noticeable flooding and wet pasture in adjacent fields.

Sensitivity
The landscape is tolerant to a degree of change resulting in a medium susceptibility to change in relation to the proposals, this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this landscape element.

Magnitude of Change
As illustrated in Appendix 2, the intervening properties and vegetation limits views afforded of the Site to predominantly glimpse intermittent. The existing bunding adds verticality to the shallow slopes of Cathar Mor, which interrupts the mid horizon.

The re-profiling of the southern bund of the Site will have the greatest effect upon this landscape as the Site forms the backdrop to the distillery from the northern extent of this landscape area. There will be no effects on this landscape area directly from extractive operations.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low,** as the proposals will result in the introduction of elements that may not necessarily be considered to be uncharacteristic in the landscape area.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon the Dalwhinnie Village landscape area is considered to be **slight adverse** and therefore **not significant**.

5.4 Drumochter Pass

One viewpoint is located within this landscape area. This landscape area is one of constraint and enclosure in comparison to the glen to the north. It is a relatively simple landscape, with steep slopes providing a narrow corridor in which the A9, railway and Beauly to Denny pylon line are all situated. Settlement is sparse in this landscape area.

The narrowness of the pass results in the landscape being relatively contained within itself, it is not until the constraining side slopes of the adjacent mountains become shallower and at a greater distance from the A9 that the landscape interacts with adjacent landscape areas, notably in the north of the landscape area.

The location of the viewpoint illustrates where panoramic views can afforded away from the 'pass' at higher elevations and at this location the width of the glen becomes apparent.

Sensitivity
The landscape is tolerant to a degree of change resulting in a medium susceptibility to change in relation to the proposals, this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this landscape element.

Magnitude of Change
The location of the viewpoint illustrates where panoramic views can afforded, however due to the wide open landscape view afforded the Site is easily lost in the bigger landscape.

The ZTV indicates that the upper portion of the proposed quarry face will be visible. However, one aspect of this landscape is the vulnerability to the weather. The accompanying imagery and photomontage represents a worst-case illustration of the proposals. It will take 35 years for the Site to reach maximum extraction. Until such time the Site will develop slowly, with screening bunds created before extraction takes place ensuring the majority of the proposals do not have an effect upon this landscape area.

The landcover and landform of the bunding will be sympathetic to the landscape in which the Site is situated, as a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low,** as the proposals will result in the introduction of elements that may not necessarily be considered to be uncharacteristic in the receiving landscape.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon the Drumochter Pass landscape area is considered to be **slight adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON VIEWS

This section of the assessment assess the effects of the proposals on both static views, in the form of 11 viewpoints and sequential assessments along the A9, A889 and NCN 7. Commentary has also been provided on the potential sequential views afforded to train passengers on the railway line.

6.1 Static Views

6.1.1 Viewpoint 1 – A889 Cathar Mor

Baseline Description
Situated on Cathar Mor the expansive heather moorland stretches out in front of the viewer. Here the A9 is relatively quiet, with only the noise discernible from larger HGVs. The expansive landscape allows for views to be afforded of the rolling slopes of the distant mountains. The lines of small streams and natural gorges is strongly emphasised by the snow lying on the ground.

The existing quarry, whilst theoretically visible is extremely difficult to identify in the view afforded. The Beauly to Denny pylon line is locally significant in this image, adding a strong sense of human influence within the view afforded.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would primarily be motorists and as a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change
The figures accompanying the viewpoint illustrate that a slither of the upper portion of the northerly screening bund will be visible upon commencement of Phase 3. It is estimated that Phase 3 will commence approximately 24 years after the Site commences mineral extraction. As a consequence the 'worst-case' view afforded will be short lived and only comprise a small part of the overall development. Upon restoration the screening bund will be used in the restoration of the Site and as a consequence the landform experienced at this location will essentially revert back to the baseline view afforded.

The magnitude of change will therefore be **negligible** as only a small part of the development would be discernible, with no apparent change to the quality of visual amenity.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **imperceptible neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.2 Viewpoint 2 – A889

Baseline Description
Similar to the view afforded in Viewpoint 1, the open moorland of Cathar Mor dominates the view and is backed by the slopes of Carn na Caim (941m AOD). The A889 provides the only transport link across the moor. The Beauly to Denny pylon line is less noticeable at this location. The lack of pylon lines and properties leads to a strong sense of isolation, however, the road noise emanating from the A9 is noticeably more audible than at Viewpoint 1.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would primarily be motorists and as a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change
Only the upper most portion of the existing northern screening bund is visible. The proposals will result in the creation of a screening bund along the northern boundary of the Site during Phase 3. It will take approximately 24 years for the Site to reach Phase 3 and in the intervening period views afforded will be as per the baseline view. The proposed design for the screening bunds will ensure that they better relate to the existing undulating landform than the existing bunds and will have a gradient no greater than 1:3.

Turf stripped as part of the extractive operations will be used to cap the screening bunds, therefore ensuring the bunds replicate the surrounding landcover quickly. Upon completion of mineral extraction, the screening bund will be used to dress off the regraded quarry faces to provide a rooting medium for vegetation to become established.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low** as development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate/slight adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.3 Viewpoint 3 – Old Drover's Road to Feagour

Baseline Description
A large proportion of the existing quarry area is screened from view by intervening woodland. Creag Ruadh (668m AOD) lies immediately to the rear of the Site, whilst the ridge of A'Mharconaich (882m AOD) linking to Cairn na Caim (941m AOD) provides the distant horizon. The lower ground comprises of heather moorland and is gently undulating.

The bunding associated with the existing quarry, particularly the western bund is noticeable from this location. The relative height difference in comparison to the road level is circa 6m and the steepness of the bund contrasts with the rolling nature of the surrounding landscape. The southern bund is less noticeable, however, the landcover is predominantly grass and weed species and not reflective of the surrounding habitat.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would predominantly be the resident of the property which the track accesses, there may also be the occasional walker heading to/from Feagour along the signposted Drove road. The viewpoint is therefore deemed as **high** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change
It is proposed to retain bunding around the periphery of the Site, however, the existing bunding along the western boundary will be reduced in height and re-profiled, as illustrated in figure 1 of Viewpoint 3. This will allow for more of the lower slopes of Creag Ruadh (668m AOD) to be viewed, the proposals in this respect is deemed as beneficial. There are no views afforded from this location of Phases 2 and/or 3 bunding, nor of the proposed extractive operations.

Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

Given that only a small part of the development is visible the magnitude of change will be **negligible**.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **slight beneficial** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.4 Viewpoint 4 – A889 South

Baseline Description
Situated on the A889 at a location where a large proportion of the southern bund of the Site becomes visible. The steepness of the road results in a blind summit and therefore very limited views further afield. The landcover in the foreground, to the south of the Site is heather moorland.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would primarily be motorists and as a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change
The current bund forms the horizon line, the proposed re-profiling of the screening bunds will result in the horizon being lowered. The proposed capping of the bunds with turf stripped from Site will result in the colour and texture of the new bund better reflecting the local landcover. This will result in a beneficial effect from the proposals.

The bund will however be extended along the southern boundary of the Site, therefore occupying a larger area than current. This is viewed as an adverse effect and on balance the proposals are viewed as neutral, i.e. the proposals will result in a change that does not affect the quality of visual amenity.

There are no views afforded from this location of the additional bunding created during Phases 2 and/or 3, nor of the proposed extractive operations. Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

The development will result in a noticeable change in the existing view which may be readily noticeable to the casual view, magnitude of change will be **medium**.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.5 Viewpoint 5 – A889/General Wade's Military Road (NCN 7)

Baseline Description
Situated at the junction of the A889 and the General Wade's Military Road, the military road departs the A889 and skirts along the southern edge of Cathar Mor, in the direction of Crubenmore. The smooth slopes of Cathar Mor have local undulations leading to a deceptively distant horizon. A small portion of the north eastern corner of the existing bunding is visible, this is due to this corner being approximately 6.5m higher than the surrounding terrain. The view is restrictive and basic, predominantly comprising of heather moorland.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would be cyclists on NCN 7 and motorists as a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint as motorists will be passing through the viewpoint and the enjoyment of the landscape maybe incidental to cyclists, rather than the main interest.

Magnitude of Change
Upon commencement of Phase 1 the southern bund will be re-profiled and extended along the southern boundary of the Site. As previously discussed, upon formation of the screening bund, the bund will be capped with turf stripped from the proposed extraction area in order to replicate the existing landcover. The gradient of the bunding will be no greater than 1:3 and as illustrated in figure 1 of viewpoint 5, the bund will appear as a continuation of the existing hillside.

Upon restoration the bund will be used in the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will be restored to heather moorland.

The magnitude of change will be **low** as there will be a perceptible change to the baseline view, without affecting the overall character and quality of the visual amenity. It is also considered that the bund extension may be missed by the casual observer.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate/slight neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.6 Viewpoint 6 – Dalwhinnie Distillery

Baseline Description
Situated to the rear of the distillery, this location is not available to distillery visitors. This viewpoint location was selected as the majority of views of the Site from the car park or entrance to the distillery shop are restricted by the distillery itself. The viewpoint replicates views afforded by employees at the distillery and residents in the neighbouring distillery cottages. This viewpoint also replicates views afforded from passengers on the adjacent railway.

The A889 follows the bottom of the moor, before turning due north and heading up and over the moor. The main landcover is heather, with the grass of the distillery in the foreground adding a bright splash of colour to the view. The Beauly to Denny pylon line is noticeable to the right of the image and breaks the horizon and disrupts views afforded of Cruban Beag (590m AOD).

The existing bunding of the Site is highly noticeable due to the sudden gradient change. The landcover of the bund consists of naturally regenerative grass and weed species which contracts with the muted colours of the heather moorland.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would be a combination of workers at the distillery (medium sensitivity) and residents at the distillery cottages (high sensitivity). Based on a 'worst-case' assessment scenario the viewpoint is deemed **high** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change
The current bund will be re-profiled and capped with heather turfs which is a beneficial effect of the proposals. The bund will then be extended along the southern edge of the Site boundary. The transplanting of stripped turfs and proposed shallow gradient of the bund will result in the bund appearing as a continuation of the existing hillside. Whilst the southern bund will be present for the duration of the extractive operations, once it has become established in the landscape, it may be easily missed by the observer. The proposals for capping the bund with locally stripped turfs will ensure the bund will not affect the overall quality of the view afforded.

There are no views afforded from this location of Phases 2 and/or 3 bunding, nor of the proposed extractive operations. Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland. On balance the proposals are deemed to have a neutral effect as the proposals will not result in a change that adversely affects the quality of visual amenity

The proposals will therefore not affect the overall quality of the view afforded and as a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low**.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.7 Viewpoint 7 – Dalwhinnie Train Station

Baseline Description
This viewpoint is situated on the platform at the local train station. The image in comparison to other views afforded in the local area is busy and cluttered with various elements associated with the railway, lamp posts, sign posts, fencing and overhead communication lines for example.

The view comprises of a mix of soft landscaping elements, straight edged coniferous plantation is visible on the left of the view, whilst to the centre right distant views are afforded to the mountains. The portion of the Site disturbed by previous quarrying activities and where the screening bunds are formed are noticeable due to the contrasting colour when compared to the heather moorland.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would be people using the train, whose interest in the landscape may be incidental rather than the main reason for visiting this location. As a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change
The southern bund will be lowered in elevation, allowing for a relative reduction in the horizon line in comparison to the existing site. The use of stripped turfs to cap the screening bunds and shallow gradients will ensure that the bunds assimilate into the local landscape, as illustrated in figures 4 and 5 of Viewpoint 7.

There are no views afforded from this location of the additional bunding associated with Phases 2 and/or 3, nor of the proposed extractive operations. As a consequence the proposals will not adversely affect the quality of the visual amenity.

Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **low/negligible** as the proposals will result in a barely perceptible change to the baseline view afforded and may be easily missed by a casual observer, the proposed landscaping of the bund will result in the bund appearing as a continuation of the Cathar Mor hillside.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **slight neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.8 Viewpoint 8 – A889 South of Dalwhinnie

Baseline Description
The viewpoint location selected was where the vegetation along the banks of the River Truim allows for views of the Site to be afforded. The existing screening bund along the south of the Site is noticeable if the observer is conscious of where the quarry is, however the existing quarry Site could easily be missed by the casual observer. The eye at this location is drawn to the higher Monadhliath Mountains (circa 930m AOD) to the rear of the Site; adding a dramatic snow covered backdrop to this view.

The foreground consists of a mix of coniferous woodland and isolated trees found along the line of the River Truim.

Sensitivity
As the A889 also forms part of NCN 7, the user at this location would be cyclists on NCN 7 and motorists. As a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint as motorists will be passing through the viewpoint and the enjoyment of the landscape maybe incidental to cyclists, rather than the main interest.

Magnitude of Change
The only portion of the proposals visible at this location will be the extension to the southern screening bund. The screening bund will be capped with locally stripped turf to transplant the existing vegetation onto the screening bund. This will ensure early colonisation of native plant species i.e. heather. This, in conjunction with the re-profiling the bund to a shallower gradient, will ensure that the bund appears as a continuation of the natural hillside, resulting in a change which does not adversely affect the quality of the visual amenity.

There are no views afforded from this location of Phases 2 and/or 3 bunding, nor of the proposed extractive operations.

Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **negligible** as only a small proportion of the Site will be visible and will appear as a continuation of the existing hillside. It is also considered that given the overall distance to the Site, the proposals will result in no discernible change upon the existing view afforded.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **imperceptible neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.9 Viewpoint 9 – A889 at the Junction with NCN 7

Baseline Description
Similar in composition to Viewpoint 8, the main difference being the greater dominance of the Monadhliath Mountains (circa 930m AOD) in the background of the view. Coniferous woodland to the left of the image and the Beauly to Denny pylon lines focus views along the line of the River Truim. Intervening vegetation restricts views along the glen being afforded to any great distance.

Road traffic noise is highly noticeable at this location, due to the presence of the A9.

The Site is noticeable to the rear of the view, due to the differing landcover when compared to the surrounding heather moorland and change in gradient of the peripheral screening bunds.

Sensitivity
As the A889 also forms part of NCN 7, the user at this location would be cyclists on NCN 7 and motorists. As a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint as motorists will be passing through the viewpoint and the enjoyment of the landscape maybe incidental to cyclists, rather than the main interest.

Magnitude of Change
As commented for at Viewpoint 8, the proposals will result in the apparent natural curvature of the heather moorland continuing in the vicinity of the Site, rather than the abrupt change in gradient that is currently visible. This in combination with the use of heather turfs will ensure that the Site assimilates into the local landscape and not adversely affect the quality of the visual amenity.

There are no views afforded from this location of Phases 2 and/or 3 bunding, nor of the proposed extractive operations. Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

As a consequence the magnitude of change will be **negligible** as only a small proportion of the Site will be visible and at such a distance that the proposals will result in no discernible change upon the existing view afforded.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **imperceptible neutral** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.10Viewpoint 10 – Hill Path to Carn na Caim

Baseline Description
The hill path is used by walkers heading to and from the nearby Munros. Layby 87 on the A9 provides a convenient parking location for hill walkers and the viewpoint is a short walk (approximately 1 hours' walking time) to reach from the layby. The hill path leaves the A9 and passes under the Beauly to Denny pylon line and as the path climbs in elevation views are afforded initially over the woodland vegetation along the eastern side of the A9, then over the village of Dalwhinnie.

The elevated nature of the viewpoint allows for an overview of the glen to be afforded. The panoramic view afforded is dominated by mountain ranges, which contrast with the glen. This leads to a sense of dramatic height when compared to the relatively low lying village of Dalwhinnie. The village of Dalwhinnie clearly clusters along the side of the A889, whilst the distillery is a noticeable landmark with it being painted in white.

The Site, whilst visible to the knowledgeable observer, is easily lost in the wide panoramic view offered.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location will be hill walkers whose interest would be in the views afforded, as a consequence the viewpoint is deemed as **high** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change
The ZTV indicates that a portion of the quarry face will be visible in addition to the peripheral screening bunds. However this portion of the quarry face will only be visible upon completion of quarrying activities. The proposed quarrying activities will slowly migrate over the footprint of the Site over a 35 year period. The proposals will not result in an immediate change from the baseline view afforded to that illustrated in figures 4 and 5 of Viewpoint 10.

It is considered that the magnitude of change will be **low/negligible** as the bund will not affect the overall quality of the view afforded.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate/slight adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

6.1.11 Viewpoint 11 – A9 – Layby 91

Baseline Description
Unlike the other viewpoints, which predominantly focus towards the southern boundary of the Site, this viewpoint affords views towards the east of the Site. The landcover is predominantly heather, with the River Truim and railway line traversing the viewpoint. Settlement ponds associated with the distillery are visible in the centre of the view.

The backdrop to the view is formed by the hills of Meall nan Eagan (658m AOD) and Creag Doire na h-Achlaise (560m AOD).

The southern bund of the Site is noticeable due to the landcover contrasting with the local heather moorland. The eastern screening bund is less noticeable due to it being in slight shadow.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity of the receptor at this location would be motorists and as a consequence this results in a **medium** sensitivity for this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change
The extension to the existing peripheral bund will result in the bund occupying a larger proportion of the view afforded. However the bund will not break the horizon and the Applicant's proposals to use turfs stripped as part of the Site preparation to cap the screening bung and grade the bunding no steeper than 1:3 ensures the visual elements of the proposal are in keeping with the surrounding landcover and landform.

The magnitude of change will be **low**, as the proposals put forward by the Applicant will ensure that the bund will be missed by the casual viewer. There are no views afforded from this location of Phases 2 and/or 3 bunding, nor of the proposed extractive operations.

Upon restoration the bunding will be removed and used for the restoration of the Site. The footprint of the bund will revert back to heather moorland.

Significance of the Effect
The effect upon this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate/slight adverse** and therefore **not significant.**

6.2 Sequential Assessment

Sequential visual effects typically occur when moving along a linear route, as the observer moves from one point to another and gains different views, or loses sight, of the same development. All routes were covered in both directions, noting where intervening vegetation, buildings or embankments would limit views and recording the elapsed time and linear distance to the Site.

6.2.1 A889 and NCN 7 – Traveling North

Approximately 3.29Km to the south of the Site, NCN 7 turns away from following the line of the A9 and links into the A889 to pass through the village of Dalwhinnie. The sequential assessment was undertaken on a bicycle replicating the worst-case scenario of a cyclist being afforded views for a longer duration than motorists.

The sequential assessment was undertaken at an average speed of 13kph, observation reference locations and supporting imagery using a 50mm focal length camera are included as Appendix 2.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A889/NCN 7 – 1	00:00	3.29Km	The southern bund will extend along the top of the hillside, however, the proposals will ensure the bund blends into the existing landscape. The orientation of the NCN 7 leads to the Site appearing in front of the observer when coming from the NCN 7 and onto the A889. Road noise coming from the A9 is highly noticeable from this location.
A889/NCN 7 – 2	03:12	2.64Km	The Site is not directly in the line of sight when travelling along this section of the road, but is off to the right hand side. The Site becomes intermittently visible through the intervening vegetation. The existing bunding around the perimeter of the Site is noticeably steeper than the surrounding topography.
			The proposals will ensure that the existing and future bunding mirrors the surrounding landcover and grading is more sympathetic to the surrounding landform. Views of the Site are intermittent and distant in nature. As with the previous location, the noise resulting from vehicles travelling along the A9 is highly noticeable. However where breaks in traffic allow, the adjacent river is audible.
A889/NCN 7 – 3	04:25	2.38Km	Heading from the A889/NCN 7 junction at the start of this sequential assessment the road reduces in elevation as the observer runs parallel to the River Truim. Views of the Site become lost behind the coniferous woodland situated in close proximity to the river. Views are only afforded of the Site through a gap where the overhead line passes. Views of the Site are increasingly limited and where views are afforded they do not cover the entirety of the Site.
A889/NCN 7 – 4	05:04	2.21Km	As the road curves in a northerly direction the Site becomes visible as views are afforded over the line of the River Truim due to the lack of intervening vegetation. This location is included in the visual assessment as Viewpoint 8, please refer to the commentary for this viewpoint for further analysis. The view afforded at this location is however short lived for 28 seconds.
A889/NCN 7 – 5	05:32	2.14Km	Approximately 200 yards from entering the village of Dalwhinnie views of the Site are intermittent through intervening vegetation comprising of mature trees. No views are afforded of the Site in its entirety.
A889/NCN 7 – 6	06:00	2.06Km	On entering Dalwhinnie the adjacent vegetation and building screens a large proportion of the road noise coming from the A9 which is a welcome relief, and enables the observer to gain a sense of remoteness. Views of the Site remain intermittent but the combination of properties and vegetation results in the entire Site not being visible from any vantage point. The direction of travel and enclosed nature of this section of road, resulting from roadside vegetation, focuses views along the line of the road and towards the mountains in the distance. The Site is easily missed as the eye is drawn towards the mountains in the direction of travel.
A889/NCN 7 – 7	06:40	1.85Km	For the short section of road, as it passes the hotel, the Site is screened from view. After passing the hotel the lack of roadside structures and vegetation leads to an open sensation, leading to the road noise associated with the A9 becoming strongly audible again. Along this section of the road the Site is noticeable along the mid horizon. However views are short lived through a gap in vegetation (illustrated in photo A889/NCN 7 -7). The differing landcover and gradient of the existing screening bund is noticeable. However, it is proposed to utilise turfs stripped during extractive operations and place them on to the newly formed screening bund. This will ensure that the bunding reflects the surrounding landform and landcover.

A889/NCN 7 – 8	08:12	1.57Km	As the road swings from a bearing of 341° to almost due north views of the Site become intermittent due to intervening roadside broadleaf trees. At no one instance is the entire Site visible. Views of the Site become increasingly infrequent until the Site is not visible due to the dense intervening vegetation, as illustrated at this observation reference location.
A889/NCN 7 – 9	08:27	1.50Km	After travelling 1.5Km the observer is now in the centre of the village. Views beyond the centre of the village are restricted due to properties and vegetation. The Site is intermittently visible through woodland vegetation, however no vantage point is afforded where the Site can be viewed in its entirety and where a portion of the Site is visible, views afforded are extremely restricted. The enclosed nature of this location results in the road noise of the A9 being less noticeable than anywhere else along the section of the sequential assessment. The upcoming distillery is the main object of focus as it becomes visible at the end of the stretch of road, beyond the town.
A889/NCN 7 – 10	09:53	1.21Km	On passing the residential properties and community hall the village feels to come to an abrupt end, the distillery becomes the main focus for the observer. The open nature of the landscape allows for road noise associated with the A9 to become apparent again. However, the sight of the distillery and aroma of whisky production leads to a strong sense of place, of one being in the heart of the Highlands. Despite the Site being visible to the rear of the distillery, it is hard to divert views away from the distillery complex. The portion of the Site that is visible is the screening bund along the southern boundary of the Site. The sudden change in natural landform to that of the steeper engineered bund makes and contrasting landcover makes the Site readily noticeable. The proposals will result in a slight reduction in height of the bund visible and the re-profiling and covering with heather will help assimilate the proposals into the landscape. The re-engineering of the bund when viewed from this location will be of a benefit to the current view afforded.
A889/NCN 7 – 11	10:24	1.06Km	Approaching the distillery the building starts to screen the Site from view. The Site is completely screened from view until the following observation location.
A889/NCN 7 – 12	12:15	820m	On passing to the east of the distillery the Site becomes visible, however it is not in the direction of travel but over to the left as the observer heads along the road. The southern bund will be extended along the southern boundary of the Site. The transplanting of stripped turfs and proposed shallow gradient of the bund will result in the bund appearing as a continuation of the existing hillside. Whilst the southern bund will be present for the duration of the extractive operations, once it has become established in the landscape, it may be easily missed by the observer. The proposals for capping the bund with locally stripped turfs will ensure the bund will not affect the overall quality of the view afforded.
			The road noise associated with the A9 is less noticeable, however ongoing construction works at the distillery were noticeable.
A889/NCN 7 – 13	13:22	486m	On approaching the railway bridge, the road swings from a direction of travel of 22° to one of 310°. As a consequence the existing bunding within the Site is in front of the observer. The eastern portion of the Site is screened by trees situated to along the northern edge of the railway line. The Site now forms the horizon at this location as stated for the observation reference above, the proposals for capping the bund with locally stripped turfs will ensure the bund will not affect the overall quality of the view afforded.
A889/NCN 7 – 14	13:40	423m	Viewpoint 5 of the visual assessment was undertaken at this location. Upon commencement of Phase 1 the southern bund will be re-profiled and extend along the southern boundary of the Site. As previously discussed, upon formation of the screening bund, the bund will be capped with turf stripped from the proposed extraction area in order to replicate the existing landcover. The gradient of the bunding will be no greater than 1:3 and as illustrated in figure 1 of viewpoint 5, the bund will appear as a continuation of the existing hillside.
A889/NCN 7 – 15	15:09	367m	The NCN 7 now follows General Wade's Military Road skirting the bottom of Cathar Mor. The shallow slopes of the moor result in only the upper portions of the proposed screening bund being visible. However, the Site is now over the left shoulder as the observer travels north eastwards on a bearing of 40°. The Site is on an approximate bearing of 270° relative to the observer and therefore not visible. The observer's main focus is now towards the distant mountains in the direction of the A9 and railway.

6.2.2 A889 and NCN 7 - South

The sequential assessment commences at observation reference A889/NCN 7 – 16 and traces the route back along that described above.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A889/NCN 7 – 16	00:00	1.63Km	Heading south along NCN 7 the road meanders along the floor of the glen with the shallow slopes of Cathar Mor to the right. Distant mountains of Cairn na Caim (941m AOD) and Meal Liath (911m AOD) form a dramatic backdrop to the view afforded. The Beauly to Denny pylon line crosses the view. No views are afforded of the Site.
A889/NCN 7 – 15	01:29	367m	The direction of travel along this minor road is in a south south westerly direction on a general bearing of 200°. It is not until the road turns to more of a south westerly direction, on a bearing of 230° that the upper portions of the proposed bund will be visible. The gradient of the proposed bund will be no greater that 1:3 and covered using turfs stripped as part of the stripping process prior to mineral extraction. This will ensure that the bund appears as a continuation of the natural hillside.
A889/NCN 7 – 14	01:47	423m	NCN 7 continues along the bottom of Cathar Mor and as a consequence the Site passes to the right of the observer until it is at right angles. The view at this location is discussed in detail as Viewpoint 5. However, taken as a sequential view, the view is short lived (circa 20 seconds) as the observer continues to the junction with the A889.
A889/NCN 7 – 13	02:05	486m	At the junction with the A889, the NCN 7 turns due south and as a consequence the Site is to the rear of the observer and not visible. The main focus of attention for the observer is the distillery complex and distant mountains.

Summary
Heading north along the shared section of the A889 with the NCN 7, it takes approximately 15 minutes to cycle from the junction of the A889/NCN 7 to the railway bridge north of Dalwhinnie. In contrast to a motorist travelling at 40mph the same journey takes 4 minutes.

Travelling in a northerly direction the only portion of the proposals visible will be the section of the screening bund along the southern boundary of the Site. No views will be afforded of the sections of screening bund formed during phases 2 and/or 3, nor will any views be afforded of the extractive operations.

The Applicant has confirmed that blasting will take place on average twice a year. This will result in a drill rig being visible on the skyline as it drills through the rockhead. However, this is a temporary operation with the drill rig only being on site for a week at a time.

All other Site operations including screening, crushing, and vehicle movements will take place within the quarry bowl. All lights on plant, machinery and the Site office will be directed downwards to ensure that light spill from the Site is kept to a minimum.

The application proposes the extraction of on average 70,000 tonnes of aggregate per annum. This equates to 2 HGV movements (i.e. 1 HGV arriving and then departing the Site) per hour. The A889 through Dalwhinnie and General Wade's Military Road which forms part of NCN 7 is currently used by HGVs, ranging from aggregate lorries, delivery lorries and logging lorries. Whilst undertaking the field work and cycling General Wade's Military Road towards Crubenmore, a couple of HGVs were encountered. There was no sense of degradation of enjoyment of the landscape and the addition of further HGVs along this section of road would not detract from the overall experience. It should be noted that the proposals state that HGVs departing the Site may either travel along the A889, through Dalwhinnie or along General Wade's Military Road towards Crubmenmore. As a consequence it may be a number of hours before an HGV travels along General Wade's Military Road heading to/from the Site.

Heading south potential views of the proposals are only afforded for approximately 1 minute as the observer runs parallel to the Site along the side of Cathar Mor. Views are primarily focused along the floor of the glen and towards the mountains beyond; not towards the Site.

HGVs were also encountered whilst cycling through Dalwhinnie. The road felt wide enough to accommodate a cyclist and the road traffic and there was no sense of fear or intimidation whilst cycling through the village.

Vibrock Ltd, as part of its assessment of noise impacts relating to the proposals, undertook noise monitoring at a nominal point on NCN 7, 1 km north east of the Dalwhinnie Distillery on General Wade's Military Road. The noise sources that contributed to the recorded levels were traffic passing the monitoring location on the minor road, distant traffic on the A9 and occasional train passes.

The average weekday daytime background noise level, LA90, was 42 dB, with measurements in the range 40.3 to 43.5 dB(A). The corresponding average weekday daytime LAeq,1h was 58 dB comprising 15-minute measurements in the range 50.5 to 60.7 dB(A), please refer to Chapter 12.0 (Noise Assessment) of the application for a detailed description of noise level terminology.

This receptor location is assessed against the public open space criterion suggested in PAN 50; 65 dB LAeq,1h. The highest predicted level is 38 dB LAeq,1h which is significantly below the PAN50 recommended value.

Vibrock interrogated the acoustic model to get an understanding of where the 65 dB LAeq,1h would be achieved. The worst case would occur when drilling was taking place, as the noise source is in an elevated position. However, even in these limited cases the public open space noise criterion, because of the perimeter screening bund, does not extend any significant distance outside the Site. For example, with drilling taking place in the south east corner of Phase 1 the 65 dB LAeq,1h criterion would be satisfied 60 m from the boundary. The NCN 7 route is at closest approach 330m to the south of the Site.

Based on the sequential assessment for users of the shared section of the A889 and NCN 7, and shared users of General Wade's Military Road the effects arising from the proposals are **not significant**.

6.2.3 A889 North

This commentary continues from observation reference A889/NCN 7 – 14 discussed above in section 6.2.1.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A889 – 17	00:00	539m	After passing the junction with the NCN 7 the road left onto a bearing of 220° resulting in the Site being at 90° to the observer. The primary view afforded is towards Meall Cruaidh (897m AOD) and the ridge line of 'The Fara'. This view is afforded for 190m. The existing screening bund is noticeable on the horizon due to the sudden change in gradient in comparison to the natural hillside. The southern bund will be extended along the southern boundary of the Site. The transplanting of stripped turfs and proposed shallow gradient of the bund will result in the bund appearing as a continuation of the existing hillside.
A889 – 18	01:29	411m	On passing the entrance to Heatherlea the road curves onto a bearing of 351° and reduces slightly in elevation. As a consequence the Site is not visible due to intervening landform. As illustrated in the photograph.
A889 – 19	01:47	90m	The road climbs steeply on to Cathar Mor and the Site forms a large proportion of the overall view afforded as the observer crests the first part of the rise. This location has been assessed as Viewpoint 4 as part of the visual assessment.
A889 – 20	02:05	5m	Situated at the entrance to the Site the existing bunding creates a keyhole entrance, preventing views being afforded of the extraction area. The bund north of the entrance and shown to the left of the access in the accompanying photograph will be reduced in height and re-profiled. The reduction in height and use of heather vegetated turfs will result in the bund appearing more natural in comparison to the current bund.
A889 – 21	02:05	10m	Views of the entrance are short lived for motorists. On passing the entrance the road continues on a bearing of 351° over the moor. The existing site passes over the right hand shoulder and distant views are afforded towards the distant mountains and over Cathar Mor. The proposals will see the creation of a peripheral screening bund which will therefore run along the western edge of the Site parallel to the A889. The bund will be created as the phases of the proposed development. Upon completion of the relevant section of bund associated with that particular phase of works, the turfs stripped in preparation of mineral extraction will be used to cap the outer slopes of the bund. This, in combination with shallow gradients, will ensure that the visual impacts are kept to a minimum.

6.2.3 A889 South

This commentary commences at A889 – 24.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A889 – 24	00:00	1.40Km	Situated at the same location as Viewpoint 1 the existing quarry is not visible from this location. Views are afforded over Cathar Mor and towards the distant mountains.
A889 – 23	00:15	1.12Km	At over 1.5Km to the north of the Site, the existing northern bund is visible if the observer takes the time to take in the view afforded across the moor. This section of the A889 is designated national speed limit (60mph) and even travelling at 50mph the Site is easily over looked, with the eye drawn to the mountains in the background.
A889 – 22	01:00	192m	The road undulates, following the contours of the moor and drops into dips which result in the bunding north of the Site being lost from view. It is not until the observer rises out of the second dip that the existing bunding becomes visible in the distance. As with the journey north along this section of the A889, the observer will travel parallel to the proposed peripheral bund to be located along the western boundary of the Site. Upon completion of the relevant section of bund associated with that particular phase of works, the turfs stripped in preparation of mineral extraction will be used to cap the outer slopes of the bund. This, in combination with shallow gradients, will ensure that the visual impacts are kept to a minimum.
A889 – 21	01:08	10m	It is at this location where the existing bunding becomes noticeable as the road climbs slightly in elevation. The bunding will be reduced in height and re-profiled, the heather turfs stripped as part of quarrying operations will be to cap the screening bunds, replicating the existing landcover.
A889 – 20	01:22	5m	Situated at the entrance to the Site the existing bunding creates a keyhole entrance, preventing views being afforded of the extraction area. The bund north of the entrance and shown to the left of the access in the accompanying photograph will be reduced in height and re-profiled. The reduction in height and use of heather vegetated turfs will result in the bund appearing more natural in comparison to the current bund.
A889 – 19	01:27	90m	On passing the southern bund of the Site, the road drops steeply downhill towards Dalwhinnie. The Site is on a bearing of 170° over the left hand shoulder of the observer and is therefore not visible.

Summary

Heading north from the junction with the NCN 7, north of the railway bridge, views are afforded of the Site for approximately 2 minutes as the observer initially travels along the south of the slopes of Cathar Mor and then along the western boundary of the Site. Motorists heading south, towards Dalwhinnie, will experience the effects of the proposals for no more than 1 minute, as they pass by the western boundary. On reaching the Site entrance views of the Site are quickly lost as the observer drops down a steep hill towards Dalwhinnie.

The proposals will result in the extension of the screening bund along the southern and western boundary of the Site, however, as documented within this assessment the applicant proposes to turf the bunds using vegetation stripped as part of the extractive operations. Parts of the existing bund will be lowered in height and re-profiled to a gradient no greater than 1:3.

Based on the sequential assessment for users of the A889 north of the railway bridge, the effects arising from the proposals are **not significant**.

6.2.4 A9 North

This commentary commences at the bus stop at the junction of the A9 and A889. Due to the limitations of stopping directly on the A9, the sequential assessment made use of the numerous laybys found along this stretch of the A9. The average speed travelling north was 55mph.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A9 -1 Bus Stop	00:00	3.29Km	Distant views are afforded of the Monadhliath Mountains with the Site forming the mid horizon. The existing bunding is noticeable due to the contrasting colour and texture of the bund. The currently landcover comprises of weed and grass species. The steepness of the bund contrasts with the smooth slopes of Cathar Mor. The bund along the southern boundary of the Site will be extended but at a shallower angle and cover with the heather turfs stripped from the Site. As illustrated in Viewpoint 9, this will help the proposals to assimilate into the local landscape and the bund will be seen as a continuation of the lower slopes of Cathar Mor.
A9 – 2 Layby 89	00:56	2.04Km	After views of the village of Dalwhinnie have passed by, the distillery becomes the main focus for the observer, with the snow covered mountains forming the backdrop. As noted for the previous observation reference the bund of the existing quarry breaks the mid horizon. The proposals put forward will result in the bunding being more sympathetic to the landscape. Utilising stripped turfs and shallower gradients will help reduce the effects of the proposals on the wider landscape. The bunding will also ensure that no views are afforded of extractive operations taking part in the bowl of the quarry.
A9 – 3 Layby 91	02:19	852m	On passing the distillery the road turns on a north easterly heading of 31°. The Site is at 90° to the observer. Viewpoint 11 was taken at this location, however as a sequential assessment, this view is better assessed when heading in a southerly direction.

6.2.4 A9 South

This commentary commences at layby 95 on the A9. Due to the limitations of stopping directly on the A9, the sequential assessment made use of the numerous laybys found along this stretch of the A9. The average speed traveling south was 50mph.

Observation Ref	Elapsed Time (mm:ss)	Distance to the Site	Remark
A9 – 6 Layby 95	00:00	3.15Km	On leaving layby 95 no views are afforded of the Site due to intervening vegetation and landform. Ben Alder (1,148m AOD) forms a dramatic backdrop to the view. After 36 seconds the A9 enters into a cutting, limiting views further afield of the road.
A9 – 5 Layby 93	02:56	1.25Km	On passing layby 93 no views are afforded due to roadside vegetation and the road entering another cutting, it is not until a total of 2 minutes and 15 seconds has elapsed that the Site starts coming into view, however the Site is off to the right of the main line of sight when travelling along the A9.
A9 – 4 Layby 92	04:23	873m	Similar in composition to Viewpoint 11 the Site is off to the right of the direction of travel. The bunding will be reduced in height and re-profiled, the heather turfs stripped as part of quarrying operations will be to cap the screening bunds, replicating the existing landcover. It is intended that the re-profiling of the existing bund, proposed shallow grading and use of heather turfs will result in the proposals appearing as a continuation of the hillside.
A9 – 3 Layby 92	04:31	852m	As per the commentary for A9 – 4, the proposals are intended to make the peripheral bunding appear as a continuation of the hillside. After this layby the road curves to the south south west and travel on a bearing of 200° and as a consequence the Site is no longer visible.

Summary
Heading north from the bus stop the Site is visible for 2 minutes and 19 seconds, until the road curves away from the Site. The Site is only part of the main field of view for the observer for the initial 1 minute of the journey from the bus stop.

Travelling in a southerly direction along the A9 the Site is only visible for 2 minutes and 16 seconds as the road runs in between the aqueduct and River Truim. Views of the Site are therefore short-lived.

The proposals will result in the extension of the screening bund along the southern and western boundary of the Site, however, as documented within this assessment the applicant proposes to turf the bunds using vegetation stripped as part of the extractive operations. Parts of the exiting bund will be lowered in height and re-profiled to a gradient no greater than 1:3.

Due to the short duration that the Site is visible for along the A9 the proposals are deemed **not significant**.

6.2.5 Dalwhinne Railway Line

Due to limitations on accessing the railway line and ground conditions in adjacent fields to the north of the railway line, effects upon passengers travelling by train have been assessed using Viewpoints 7, 6 and the image provided at observation reference A889/NCN 7 – 14.

Views are generally only afforded from trains at 90° to the direction of travel. As illustrated in Viewpoint 7 no views will be afforded of the Site, and only of railway side vegetation. It is not until the train is heading in a north easterly/south westerly direction that views will be afforded of the Site. Viewpoint 6 is approximately the start of views being afforded for train passenger heading north.

The railway line follows the line of the glen floor and as a consequence views are limited to the southern bund of the Site. No views of the extractive operations or quarry void will be visible. The railway line then heads into a cutting and passes under the A889. After passing under the A road, woodland then screens views to the north of the railway line and therefore the Site. It is not until on reaching the edge of the stand of trees that views are afforded of the slopes of Cathar Mor, however views are no longer afforded of the Site.

Due to the extremely short duration for which views are afforded of the Site, the proposals are deemed **not significant**.

6.3 Cumulative Assessment

In its consultation response the CNPA have requested that a cumulative assessment is carried out in conjunction with the Beauly to Denny pylon line.

6.3.1 Cumulative Landscape Effects Methodology

Cumulative landscape effects are defined in GLVIA 3 (para. 7.3) as;

'... *effects that can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it.'*

Para. 7.21 of GLVIA 3 identifies three practical approaches to take when assessing cumulative effects upon the landscape. With para. 7.28 of GLVIA 3 stating "*The most significant cumulative landscape effects are likely to be those that would give rise to change in the landscape character of the study area of such an extent as to have major effects on its key characteristics and even, in some cases, to transform it into a different landscape type.*"

6.3.2 Cumulative Impact Conclusions

The assessment of effects upon the landscape and visual amenity has provided a detailed commentary on any potential impacts arising from the proposals, this takes into account the presence of the Beauly to Denny pylon line as it forms part of the baseline assessment.

The Applicant is conscious that the existing screening around the current quarry void is not in keeping within the landscape and as a consequence is visible from a number of short, medium and long distance viewpoints. The applicant proposes to reduce the height of the highest parts of the bunds and re-profile the slopes to an angle no greater than 1:3. Once the bunds have been re-profiled turf containing heather stripped from the proposed extraction area will be transplanted on to the bunds. This will ensure that the bunding will reflect the local landcover and when viewed from the south, mirror the shallow slopes of Cathar Mor along the northern edge of the glen.

As illustrated in the accompanying viewpoints cumulative effects are limited to where the receptor is travelling along the A9. This is due to the pylon line running parallel to the A road. The A9 corridor not only contains the A road and pylon line, but also the railway line. There is a strong sense of human intervention and the existing bunding is visible on the hillside in the distance (A9 – 1 of Appendix 2). The proposals discussed above will reduce the effect of the quarry by ensuring the landcover and landform replicates that found in the wider landscape, as illustrated in figure 1 of viewpoints 8 and 9.

None of the locations at which cumulative effects arise have been assessed as significant, therefore cumulative impacts are **not significant**.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The landscape assessment confirms that the proposed development would not significantly adversely affect the key attractive and distinctive land use elements or the wider baseline pattern of the local landscape areas or prejudice the nature or integrity of the existing landscape pattern and the landscape character setting of the Site.

It should be noted that a quarry, in one form or another, has been present in the landscape for 150 years. The current quarry however has not been sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and the screening bunds have become colonised with grass and weed species which make the bunds visible in comparison to the darker, muted heather colours of Cathar Mor.

Short distance views to the north, west and immediate south of the Site range from moderate/slight adverse to moderate neutral as the proposals will result in a perceptible change to the baseline, however with the proposed mitigation of turf transplanting and shallow graded bunds the proposals are not considered to be uncharacteristic for the area and will not in general affect the visual amenity. Short distance views are therefore considered not significant.

The visual assessment confirms that although there is potential for views to be afforded of the Site, these are primarily limited along the line of the glen. Views afforded to the south of the Site, covering Viewpoints 4 to 11 are limited to the southern screening bund. As illustrated in the photomontages medium views will view the southern bund as a continuation of the hillside rising up from the glen floor to Cathar Mor. Medium distance views are therefore considered not significant.

An elevated distant view has been afforded from the hill path to Carn na Caim at a level of 205m above the level of the Site. Whilst a portion of the upper quarry face is visible over the top of the screening bund the proposals form an apparent small element of a much larger view afforded from this location. Long distance views are therefore considered not significant.

Vibrock Ltd have assessed the report concluded with regards to users of NCN 7 that the highest predicted level is 38 dB LAeq,1h which is significantly below this recommended open space criterion suggested in PAN 50 of 65 dB LAeq,1h. Effects of the proposals on recreational users cycling along NCN 7 will not be significant.

8.0 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of this report is Richard Kenyon, an environmental consultant employed for over thirteen years in the mineral industry. He is a Chartered Surveyor, Member of the Institute of Quarrying and an Affiliate Member of the RTPI. His project experience is focused on the production of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports and Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments covering a variety of project sectors. He has prepared LVIAs for a variety of mineral sites, Combined Heat and Power Biomass Plants and asphalt & concrete batching plants for sites across Scotland.

9.0 REFERENCES AND SOURCES

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FIGURES

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 3