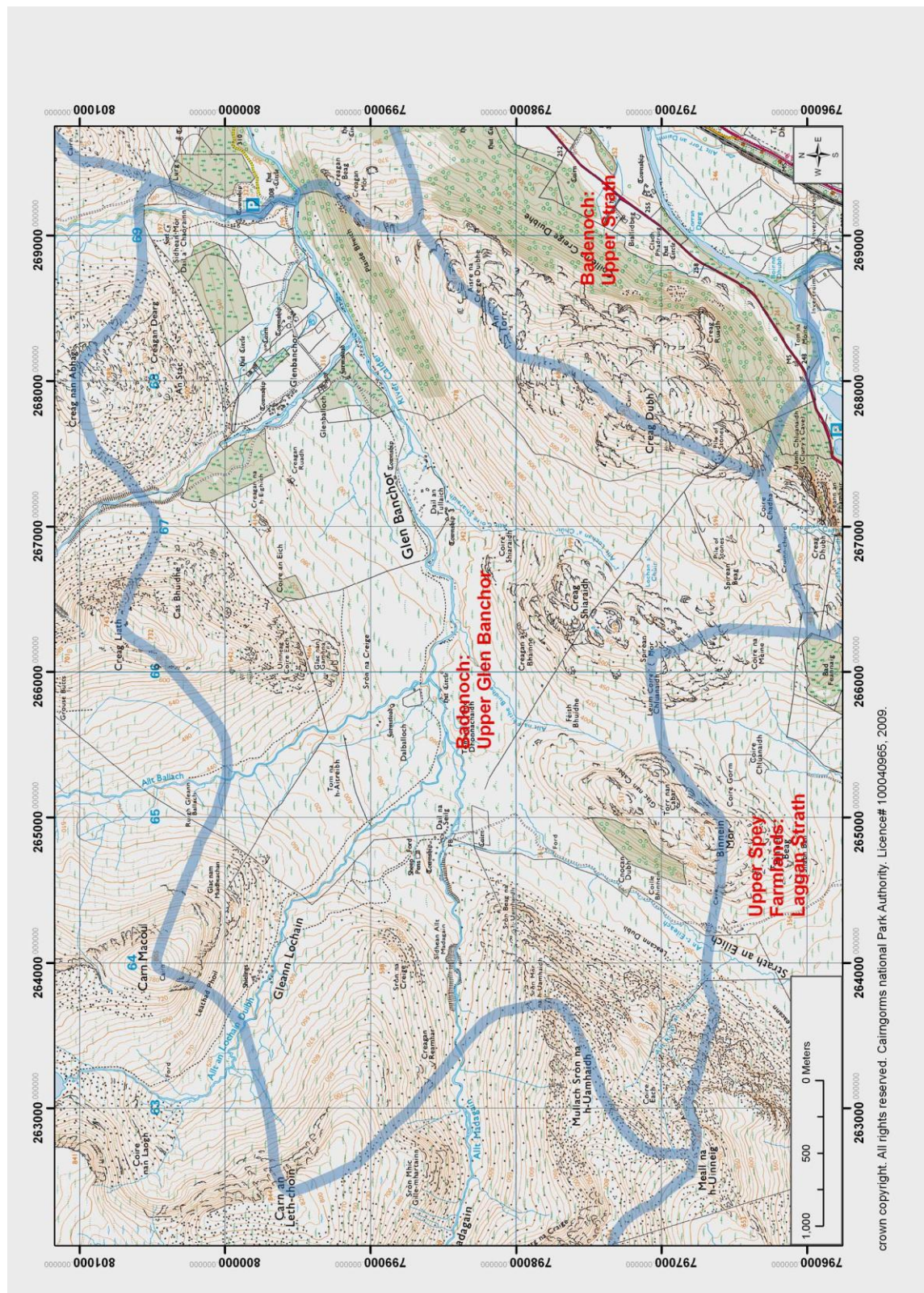


1.1 Badenoch: **Upper Glen Banchor**



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

This surprisingly broad glen has a relatively level floor contained by steep hillsides

The hillsides are strewn with shattered rocks and boulders left behind when glaciers melted and the support for the rockfaces was undermined

The slopes rise to rugged, rocky summits of individual hills

Several large well-drained glacial-fluvial terraces are located at the mouth of well defined side valleys, deeply cut between the hills

A series of tributaries feed into the braided boulder bed of the River Calder which extends along the south side of the glen floor

Most of the lowlying land is unimproved pasture on blanket peat, although a few fields of more improved grassland are located on the extensive alluvial fans and areas of well-drained gravelly, fluvial deposit

There are a number of geometrically shaped conifer shelter woods around the fields and along the side slopes at the eastern end of the glen

The north facing slopes are clothed with semi-natural broadleaved woodland which is regenerating across the hillside

There is extensive evidence of past settlement, including prehistoric hut circles with associated field systems as well as pre-improvement townships, farmsteads, turf walled enclosures, a fort and, in side glens, associated seasonal shielings (with origins in medieval or earlier times), all closely related to the free-draining gravel and alluvial outwash of the tributaries of the River Calder

The remaining settlement is sparse, with a few individual houses located where there was once more extensive settlement at Glenballoch and Glenbanchor

The bulk of the glen is not accessible on public roads, although there is a network of tracks and footpaths

The area is popular for local recreation, being relatively accessible from Newtonmore

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The area is secluded and very self-contained, partly due to its 'hidden' location and the visual restriction created by the enclosing hills

There is clear evidence of extensive past settlement which influences the perception of the landscape

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

The area is very self contained, although most likely to be accessed from the east through lower Glen Banchor, which forms a transition area between this 'hidden' glen and Strathspey.

1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

This glen has a strong sense of seclusion, although there is clear evidence of extensive early settlement and land use on well-drained, gravelly land over a long timescale. The dramatic contrast between the level strath floor and the craggy surrounding hillsides also contributes to a distinctive sense of place.



The unusually broad, almost level, floor of this side valley, encircled by steeper slopes with conifer shelter woods in the foreground



Rivers cut into the flat valley floor



Extensive birch woodland across the north west facing slopes of Creag Dubh



Traces of past settlement and land use on the alluvial fan of one of the tributaries to the River Calder