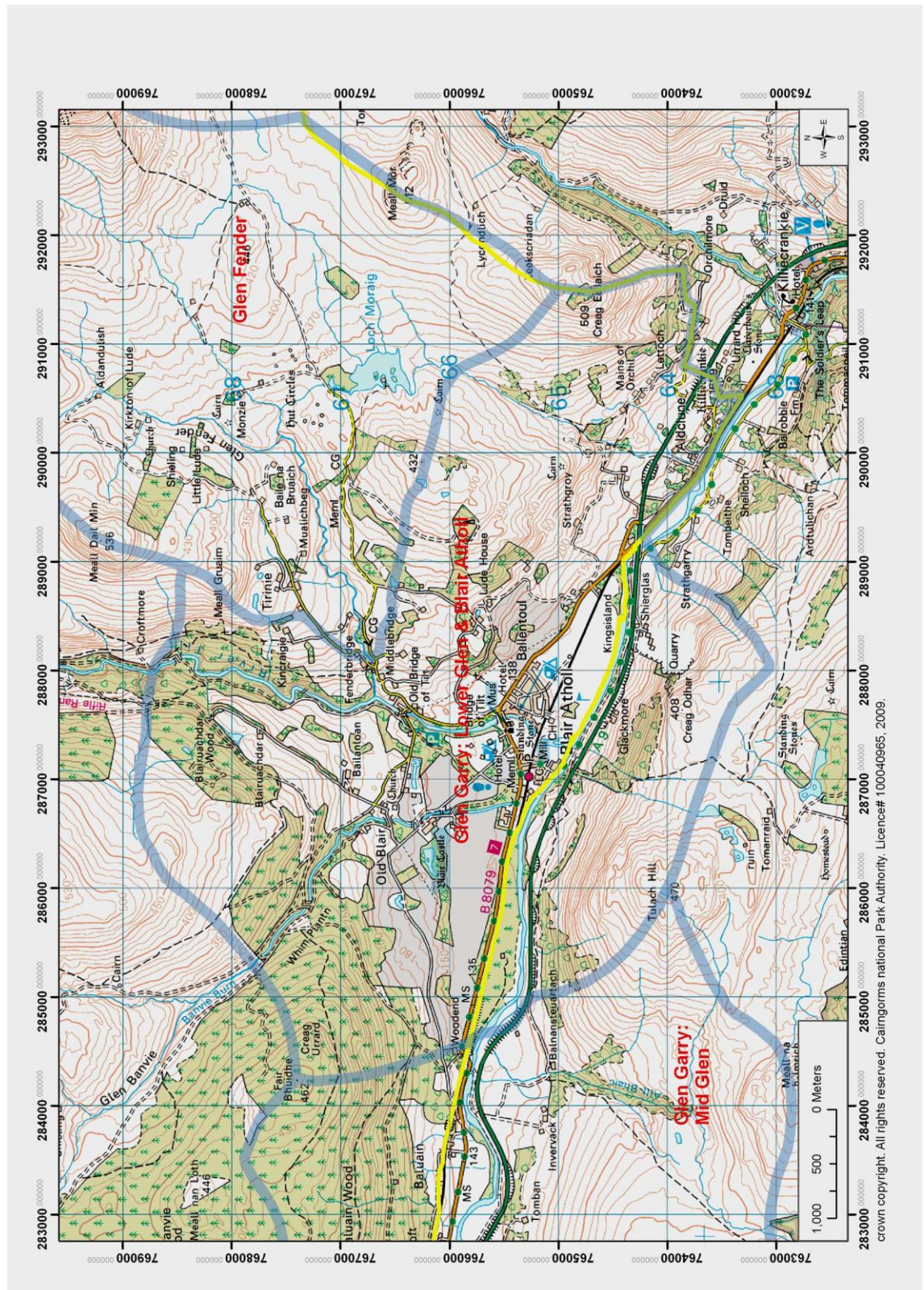


I.1 Glen Garry: Lower Glen and Blair Atholl



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

Surrounded by conical summits, the complex terrain of ridges, 'false' summits and undulations reflects the diverse composition of the metamorphic bedrock which has been subject to varied degrees of erosion

The main valley has been deepened by glacial erosion, and the valley sides are rough and knobbly where the bedrock is exposed

Several rivers drop steeply from tributary valleys and converge to join the Garry at Blair Atholl

This part of the glen combines gravelly glacial deposits with alluvial outlets from the tributary valleys forming terraces and mounds around an expansive basin of free-draining deposit which has been well-worked by the river systems along the floor of the glen

The complex geomorphology is reflected in the diverse vegetation and land use, as well as a long history of settlement which has taken advantage of the south facing aspect, but it is also unified by the frequency and consistency of designed landscape features across a number of conjoined estates

Policy woodland, specimen trees, parkland, field boundary trees, extensive commercial conifer woodlands on steeper slopes, semi-natural and riparian woodland are all present in this area

The extensive designed landscapes form an easily recognisable element of wider 18th/19th century improvements, and regularly shaped fields occupy the undulating lower slopes and more level land

These fields are often grazed, as is the extensive parkland, but there are also fields of arable crops adding further to visual diversity

Small settlements are hidden within wooded settings, generally clustered around watercourses, while large houses, including Blair Castle, are located on more prominent sites

The designed landscape of Blair Castle, an old clan chief base, includes centuries of historic land use focussed round this ancient, fortified site

Built features associated with the designed landscapes are common – with walls and gateposts, bridges and walkways all combining to reinforce the extent of the individual estates

The A9 occupies an elevated location along the southern side of the River Garry, and is partially screened by woodland

North of the River there is a network of narrow roads on gravel terraces linking the tiny historic settlements and winding between small scale topographical features

There are several waymarked access routes around Blair Atholl, as well as access to Blair Castle and visitor attractions in the villages.

This character area is also the threshold to access into the heart of the southern Cairngorms, through Glen Tilt and lesser known passes, as well as south through the Pass of Killiecrankie

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The influence of the designed landscapes is overwhelming, but travelling in and around the smaller roads and footpaths reveals the intimacy of the complex landform and the associated variety of features, both natural and historic, which reinforce the richness of this area. The A9 gives fine views to the Beinn a' Ghlo massif to the east. Often this is where the first snow is seen on a winter journey north

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is relatively self contained, but does provide a 'threshold' to access routes into the hinterland of the Cairngorms massif, for example through Glen Tilt.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The diversity of land form and land use, and the combination of prominent key focal points juxtaposed with features tucked away in more hidden, secluded settings, creates a rich landscape and experience. The designed landscapes created by individual estates underpin many of the distinctive features, and create a strong period setting.



Complex topography and diverse land use



This roundel of trees sits on a distinct gravel mound, while settlement is tucked into woodland



The River Tilt is one of several tributaries of the Garry



Blair Castle, elevated above the floodplain, and its policies