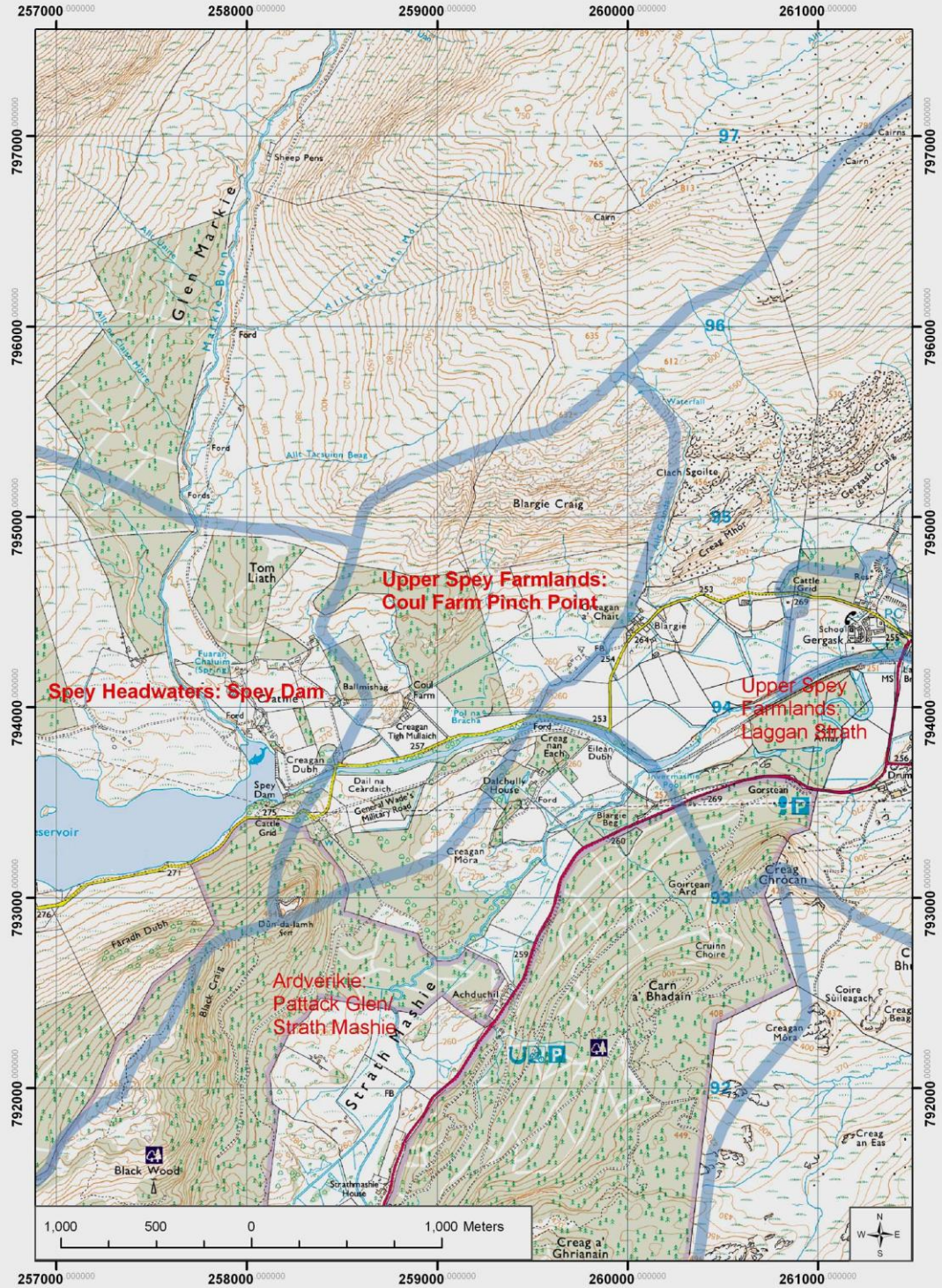


## I.1 Upper Spey Farmlands: **Coul Farm**



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#### 1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

- This small area is strongly influenced by a bed of rock which has been relatively resistant to erosion and weathering and now forms the precipitous slopes of Black Craig to the south and the rocky outcrops at the edge of the Monadhliath to the north
- The narrowness of the strath at this point forms a gateway to the upper reaches of the Spey
- The tapering form and narrow summit of Black Craig forms a dramatic focal point in the landscape, and is also the location of the Dun-da-lamh Iron-age or Pictish fort which overlooks the junction of Strath Mashie, the glen of the upper Spey and Laggan strath
- Where it extends as a band across the floor, the resistant rock has been dramatically scoured by glaciers to form low, rounded 'roches moutonnées' which reinforces the sense of enclosure when travelling along the road
- Conifer shelter blocks and more extensive woodland around Black Craig further reinforce containment
- The River Spey, which is relatively straight at this point, is bordered by riparian woodland, and there is also an avenue of broadleaved trees along the approach to Coul Farm and a line of poplar trees, which form additional features
- Pasture, with some fodder crops, occupies small, level, straight-edged 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century improved fields along the valley floor which fit snugly around the rocky outcrops
- The road follows the banks on the north side of the river, while the 'Wade Military' road stays south of the River
- Settlement, both at present and in the past, is set well back from the road, clustered along the edges of knolls, away from the fields

#### 1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

- The dramatic sense of 'threshold' between the flat strath floor to the east, and the more upland character of the Spey Headwaters to the west, is pronounced and reinforced by the 'gateway' of dramatic topography created by the resistant rock forms and further reinforced by woodland

#### 1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is small and is very much a 'threshold' between three different character areas which meet at this point.

#### 1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The relatively erosion-resistant rock formations of this landscape dominate the topography, including the drama of the towering, narrow ridge of Black Craig to the south and the crags of Blargie Craig to the north, along with the exposed rocky outcrops across



the valley floor. The small scale settlement is consistently placed at the edges of these rounded, rocky outcrops.



*Black Craig, topped by Dun-da-lamh fort, overlooks this area*



*Rocky outcrops – roches moutonnées – frame the flat fields*



*Settlement tucked back against the rocky outcrops*



*The River Spey – with riparian woodland at either side*