

Heritage and ecology

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we are conducting wide-ranging surveys and studies.

Cultural heritage

The ‘cultural heritage’ of an area comprises archaeological sites, historic buildings, inventoried gardens and designed landscapes, inventoried battlefields and other historic environment features. The ‘setting’ of an asset within the wider landscape may contribute to its cultural heritage significance. There are no designated heritage assets within the site boundary area but there are 56 heritage assets, seven of these historic environmental recorded (HER) sites are non-statutory register (NSR) sites, potentially of national importance and of schedulable quality.

The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment has identified cultural heritage assets that may be subject to significant impacts, both on the site and within 5km of the proposed turbines.

Other heritage assets identified within the Inner Study Area include a group of 17 shieling huts, standing on artificial mounds within a forest clearing south-east of Loch Dirigadale. A farmstead, shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (1860), as well as a stone-built sheepfold and byre, both of which survive, are recorded in Braids. Collectively, these assets attest to medieval to post-medieval settlement and pastoral agriculture on the westfacing hillside.

Several quarries identified at Cruach Na Naich and Cruach A’bhodaidh, along with the two limekilns and 11 dykes in Braids, further attest to the establishment of post-medieval farming settlement and exploitation of natural resources. We

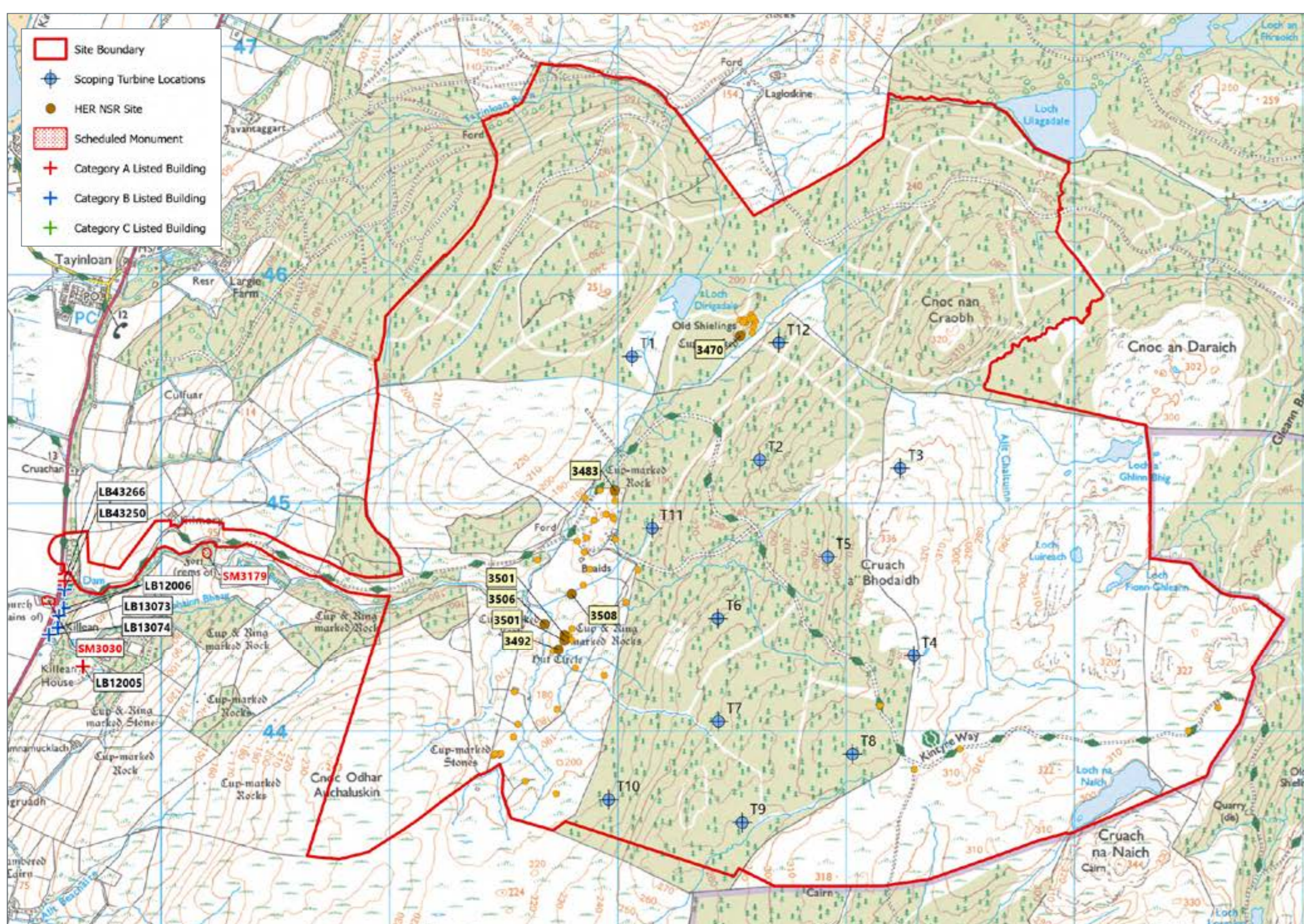
will be meeting with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to agree final assessment viewpoints prior to submission of our planning application.

Ecology

We take the protection of the site and surrounding area’s ecology seriously. The non-avian Ecology Impact Assessment has involved a range of studies including habitats, protected species, notable species (e.g. national and European Protected Species) and locally protected species. To date we have undertaken botanical survey work to identify habitats that are of conservation importance or have groundwater dependence, and protected species survey work to investigate for protected mammals, such as badger, bats otter, water vole, red squirrel and pine marten.

Ornithology

Avoiding impacts on bird species, wherever possible, is an important factor in the design of the site. Already, we have commissioned over 200 hours of baseline ornithological survey work over two years during breeding and non-breeding seasons to build our understanding of the species on site. Surveys have included flight path activity, breeding behaviour and winter walkover surveys, as well as specific black grouse and wader surveys. Some of the key species we have monitored in the area are Greenland white-fronted goose, whooper swan, barnacle goose, goldeneye, hen harrier and golden eagle. We have altered the site layout and reduced the number of proposed turbines from 12 to 10 to reduce the risk of conflict with geese flight paths.



Heritage designations